

HOSPITALITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY: A POLITICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL READING OF ANTIGONE

HOSPITALIDAD, RESPONSABILIDAD Y COMUNIDAD. UNA LECTURA FENOMENOLÓGICO-POLÍTICA DE ANTÍGONA

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Abstract: In Derrida's reflection on hospitality, the figures of Oedipus and Antigone play a decisive role. Derrida describes Oedipus as being *anomos*, an outlaw, since he transgresses the established *nomos*. According to Derrida, both Oedipus and Antigone are involved in an unsolvable tension between conditional and unconditional hospitality. A closer look at Sophocles' Antigone, however, fits poorly with this understanding of the relation between hospitality and the *nomos*. Arguing against Derrida, I propose a phenomenological reading of Antigone's actions as an attempt to disclose her suffering with the community. In this way, she demands hospitality neither for herself nor for her infinitely removed father but for the world disclosure that she embodies. Within this phenomenological framework, hospitality is not caught in an *aporia* between the general and the singular, the conditional and the unconditional; rather, it constitutes a site of dispute between conflicting configurations of the shared world.

Key words: HOSPITALITY; COMMUNITY; RESPONSIBILITY; DERRIDA; HEIDEGGER; ARENDT

Resumen: En la reflexión de Derrida sobre la hospitalidad, las figuras de Edipo y Antígona desempeñan un papel decisivo. Derrida describe a Edipo como *anomos*, un proscrito, ya que transgrede a los *nomos* establecidos. Según Derrida, tanto Edipo como Antígona están implicados en una tensión irresoluble entre la hospitalidad condicional e incondicional. Una mirada más cercana a la Antígona de Sófocles, sin embargo, encaja mal con esta comprensión de la relación entre la hospitalidad y los *nomos*. Discutiendo contra Derrida, propongo una lectura fenomenológica de las acciones de

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Antígona como un intento de revelar su sufrimiento a la comunidad. De esta manera, ella exige hospitalidad no por ella misma ni por su padre infinitamente retirado, sino por la revelación mundial que ella encarna. Dentro de este marco fenomenológico, la hospitalidad no está atrapada en una aporía entre lo general y lo singular, lo condicional y lo incondicional; más bien, constituye un sitio de disputa entre configuraciones en conflicto del mundo compartido.

Palabras clave: HOSPITALIDAD; COMUNIDAD; RESPONSABILIDAD; DERRIDA; HEIDEGGER; ARENDT

The concept of hospitality is tied up with the issues of responsibility, community, and law. To whom are we responsible and how? Who can we accommodate within our community? Which laws should govern our practices of hospitality? On the one hand, we can easily make a general rule about asylum and we can easily write a code of conduct that imposes rights and obligations upon the hosts and guests alike. On the other hand, such rules are easily broken, and what do we do with those who show up anyway and those who have no respect for the code of conduct? And, importantly, who is this “we,” if not people who have themselves previously arrived and, most likely, broken a code of conduct, when they did?

As a philosophical issue, the theme of hospitality became prominent through the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, but it has been central in Western culture since antiquity (which is not to say that hospitality is a Western phenomenon even if it as a Western concept). In this paper, I will concern myself with both of these traditions by establishing a dialogue between Derrida and Sophocles about the issue of hospitality. I will consider Derrida’s interpretation of hospitality and how it relates to the issues of responsibility, community, and law by focusing on his reading of Oedipus and Antigone in *Of Hospitality*, before allowing (or perhaps forcing) Sophocles to reply to Derrida.

I will argue that Derrida’s deconstructive logic of hospitality, as he unfolds it in his reading of *Oedipus at Colonus*, fits poorly with *Antigone*, which renders itself much more easily to a phenomenological reading. Drawing upon Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, I thus develop a contrasting logic of hospitality according to which Antigone is not the embodiment of an aporetic tension between the singular and the general but committed to overturning the laws that govern the political space of appearances. According to Derrida, Antigone weeps because she is denied mourning and allocated to a singular position outside of the social order, whereas I take her to see that things could be different and that her dead father/brother could be made visible within the shared space of appearances.

What will emerge in my interpretation of the play is a conception of hospitality as a site of contestation and conflict, i.e., hospitality as a possible transgression and transfiguration of the law and of the conventions of a given social order. In this sense, I will not provide answers to the questions about who or what should be welcomed but address hospitality ontologically as the movement that disturbs the law or *nomos*, that is always marked by its fragility.

1. Derrida's Wandering Oedipus and Weeping Antigone

In his interpretation of hospitality, Derrida focuses on how Oedipus after fleeing Thebes and gauging out his eyes to bear the shame of his destiny, arrives in Colonus as a blind stranger. Oedipus knows not where he is and has to rely on his daughter Antigone to inquire about their whereabouts. Antigone serves as his guide and link to the realm of human affairs.

Before Antigone gets the chance to ask someone, the two wanderers are approached by a local, who asks them to move, since they are currently resting on sacred ground, where no mortal is supposed to dwell. Oedipus and Antigone, who were once part of the royal family in Thebes and therefore those who determined the law – Oedipus was, after all, a *Tyrannus* – have become strangers and trespassers, ignorant of local law and custom. Even before they get to address the local authorities – even before they get to establish an intersubjective relation to an embodiment of the state – they encounter or transgress a local border, a demarcation or limit. They are already infiltrated into the local *nomos*, which means not only law, but also border. It is of some interest that they encounter the law before they encounter the authorities, since this reveals that what they are up against are not merely an intersubjective relation (whether one of recognition or one of empathy) but rather the kind of anonymous and historically sedimented sociality that makes up a world. This tension between the intersubjective and the social, the singular and the general comes to characterize the issue of hospitality as such. How do we accommodate those who arrive and transgress our borders? Can we make exceptions for those who do now know, or does this threaten the very generality of the law?

Oedipus, on his part, refuses to move from his seat on the sacred land, since he finds it strangely fitting that he should coincidentally find a resting place on the sacred land of the Eumenides – the goddesses of vengeance, those “who see everything” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 37; Sophocles, 1998b, l. 42).

At this time, numerous villagers have gathered around Oedipus and Antigone, and they agree that even if the foreigners trespass, they will not remove them by force. Instead, they start to question Oedipus as to how he was blinded, what his lineage is, and so on. The Chorus, quickly recognizes the tale of King Oedipus, which they have all heard in advance.

Later on, Theseus, the lord of Colonus, arrives. He too has heard the tragic rumors about Oedipus. Theseus himself has suffered in exile and therefore he immediately takes pity on Oedipus and offers him hospitality:

Dire indeed must be the fortune which you tell, for me to stand aloof from it; since I know that I myself also was reared in exile, just as you, and that in foreign lands I wrestled with perils to my life, like no other man. Never, then, would I turn aside from a stranger, such as you are now, or refuse to help in his deliverance. For I know well that I am a man, and that my portion of tomorrow is no greater than yours. (Sophocles, 1998b, l. 560ff)

Responding to this, Oedipus puts forth a strange offer that is also a demand: In exchange for hospitality, he offers Theseus his own body and says that it must be buried on his land, where it is said that it will bring Theseus and his descendants luck in the war against Thebes that will inevitably be triggered by their offer of hospitality. The only condition for this protection is that Oedipus' site of burial is kept secret.

Three elements in this tale are crucial for Derrida's reading: (1) the relation between the law and Oedipus, who is an outlaw (an *anomos*), and (2) the oath of secrecy that Oedipus imposes upon Theseus. In addition to this, we will have to consider (3) the way that Antigone mourns her father's death and – especially – how she mourns not knowing where her father is buried.

1.1 Nomos Anomos

The hospitality showed towards Oedipus' transgresses, quite literally, the *nomos* of Colonus. He dwells where no mortal is supposed to dwell, and yet they welcome him. We could read this as an instance of what Derrida calls *unconditional hospitality* as opposed to conditional hospitality. Derrida sees in the very concept of hospitality an unsolvable *aporia* between the law (in singular) of hospitality and the laws (in plural) of hospitality:

It is as though hospitality were the impossible: as though the law of hospitality defined this very impossibility, as if it were only possible to transgress it, as though *the* law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality, as through the categorical imperative of hospitality commanded that we transgress all the laws (in the plural) of hospitality, namely, the conditions, the norms, the rights

and the duties that are imposed on hosts and hostesses, on the men or women who give a welcome as well as the men or women who receive it. And vice versa, it is as though the laws (plural) of hospitality, in marking limits, powers, rights, and duties, consisted in challenging and transgressing *the* law of hospitality, the one that would command that the 'new arrival' be offered an unconditional welcome. (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77)

The law of hospitality demands that we offer hospitality to whoever arrives and that we impose no demands upon them. The law of hospitality demands that we offer unconditional hospitality to the stranger. The laws of hospitality, on the other hand, imposes conditions, norms, rights and duties upon hosts and guests alike. It even determines whom we should offer hospitality in the first place (say, by making criteria for those who can apply for asylum). These two laws are irreconcilable and, yet, they require each other. The unconditional law of hospitality is the impulse that enables the conditional laws of hospitality, while the conditional laws of hospitality are necessary in order to realize the unconditional law (Derrida, 2002, p. 251; Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 79). The imperative of hospitality demands that we transgress all laws, and therefore it is a "law without a law" (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 83). Derrida writes:

The law is above the laws. It is thus illegal, transgressive, outside the law, like a lawless law, nomos anomos, law above the laws and law outside the law (anomos, we remember, that's for instance how Oedipus, the father-son, the son as father, father and brother of his daughters, is characterized). (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 79)

Derrida invokes Oedipus at the very heart of this antinomy. Oedipus, the *anomos*, represents the unconditional law of hospitality in light of which the instituted *nomos* must be transgressed. *Nomos anomos* is the disturbing movement caused by Oedipus' arrival.

A little later, Derrida is reminded of the "written laws (...) that Antigone will have to transgress in order to offer her brothers the hospitality of the land and of burial" (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 85). Not only is Oedipus *anomos* and opposed to the law, but so is Antigone, in a transitive way: Antigone becomes *anomos* because of her relations or commitments to the other *anomois* (her brothers). We will return to this issue of transitivity, but before doing so, we must briefly look at the other elements in Derrida's reading.

1.2 The Oath of Secrecy

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, the aporia between the *nomos* and the *anomos* defines the relation between Theseus and Oedipus. This is evident,

when Oedipus makes Theseus swear not to reveal where he is buried. Oedipus says to Theseus

Immediately, with no hand to guide me, I will lead to the place where I must die. But as to that place, never reveal it to another man, neither where it is hidden, nor in what region it lies, so that it may be an eternal defence for you, better than many shields, better than the spear of neighbors which brings relief. [1525] But as for mysteries which speech may not profane [*ha d' exagista mēde kineitai logō*], you will learn them yourself when you come to that place alone, since I cannot declare them either to any of these people, or even to my own children, though I love them. (Sophocles, 1998b, l. 1520-1530)

Oedipus' tomb is to be kept secret for everyone except Theseus – including his own children. It is important to note how this place, where Oedipus goes to die, resists speech; it, literally, cannot be moved by *logos*. In this sense, Oedipus marks his distance to the realm of human affairs. His site of burial cannot be manifested, it cannot be talked about, and it must remain a secret.

This secret is entrusted to Theseus. Or, rather, it is imposed on him: Theseus – who offered unconditional hospitality – is forced to accept an oath of secrecy, because only if he keeps this oath will his city prosper. If he fails the gods will punish him (Sophocles, 1998b, l. 1534-1538). This oath is thus backed up with a promise that is also a threat. As Derrida notes, Theseus “does not see himself tied by an oath he would have spontaneously proffered, but by an oath [*orkos*] to which he has found himself – yes, *found* – unsymmetrically committed” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 107). The best host imaginable becomes an eternal hostage to this guest who is about to die.

For Derrida this is crucial, since the secrecy and encryption of Oedipus within the realm [*nomos*] of Theseus echoes the aporia between the unconditional law of hospitality and the conditional laws of hospitality. The oath of secrecy is what makes the aporia endure. The only way to accommodate the *anomos*, of being hospitable to him, is through secrecy. The reasoning is this: since if Theseus were to make the unconditional law of hospitality *manifest*, if he were to make it publicly known and official, the conditional *nomos* would be overthrown. This is the case since Oedipus promises that Colonus will prosper if Theseus keeps his oath but thereby also implicitly threatens that if Theseus fails to do so Colonus will suffer the wrath of the Gods. This promise/threat can also be subjected to a more pragmatic interpretation: If a community were to publicly announce that it follows the law of unconditional hospitality, the limited sphere of its *ethos*, its specific way of life, would quickly succumb due to the unlimited responsibility towards everyone. Accordingly, we can see that there is only

one way to keep the aporia at bay (though not to solve it), namely, to keep the unconditional law a secret, to encrypt it within the very heart of the *nomos* itself, as a law that cannot be publicly manifested.

The laws are thus maintained by hiding the *anomos* within, while the *anomos* can only remain *anomos* by a secret accommodation within the *nomos*. This is why Oedipus can have no proper grave, at least if we follow Derrida.

1.3 Mourning

Finally, we can turn to the character of Antigone. We have already mentioned that Derrida sees Antigone as an expansion of this logic of the *anomos*; that she too is *anomos* when she transgresses the laws in Thebes. But before we can turn to this transgression, we must see how she responds to Oedipus' transgression and encryption, that is, we must see how Oedipus' state of being *anomos* is, arguably, transitive and that Antigone too becomes *anomos* by responding to her father's encryption.

Oedipus at Colonus ends with Antigone in tears; she laments her dead father, but not only this. She weeps over the very secrecy imposed on Theseus; she mourns that Oedipus has not received a proper burial, and that she cannot, hence, mourn him properly (Sophocles, 1998b, l. 1705-1714). As Derrida puts it, Antigone

weeps at not weeping, she weeps a mourning dedicated to saving tears. For she does, in fact, weep, but what she weeps for is less her father, perhaps, than her mourning, the mourning she has been deprived of, if we can put it like that. She weeps at being deprived of a normal mourning. She weeps for her mourning, if that is possible. (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 111)

Lacking a site of burial where her mourning can take place, the death of her father has, in a certain sense, been denied Antigone. She cannot experience him as dead. Without even a grave, he is now truly absent within the human realm. In the hidden crypt, his death is not present, accessible and, hence, grievable. For Derrida, this reveals the structural impossibility of mourning. In mourning, the one who mourns seeks to appropriate the dead, to internalize them, but if this were to succeed the dead would be stripped of their alterity, of their infinite exteriority, and, hence, lost for good (Derrida, 2003). Antigone's mourning is exemplary of this logic because she, being denied a place of mourning for her father, is left solely with his bare singularity. Lacking a grave, Oedipus seems to be doubly absent—he is not only dead, but his death itself is strangely absent.

This means that Antigone cannot see Oedipus as dead. The emphasis on sight or lack thereof is important. Antigone begs her dead and ab-

sent father to see her weeping: “With these weeping eyes, father, I lament you” (Sophocles, 1998bl. 1709). In Derrida’s words: “[S]he asks him to see her weeping, to see her tears. The tears say that the eyes are not made primarily for seeing but for crying” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 113ff). The secrecy of Oedipus the *anomos* denies Antigone the community of mourning; it makes her unable to give her father a place in the shared world, and this is, perhaps, the worst destiny of all. On this reading, then, Antigone embodies a politics of weeping, since her tears bear witness to the aporia of the political community and its laws. Her grief has no place, and this marks her as being without *nomos*, without law, limits, place, and community. “[T]here remains but one route for Antigone, suicide” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 117), as Derrida concludes.

2. Antigone’s Contestation of the Secret

Derrida’s conclusion is, however, too hasty, and the logic of hospitality – of the relation between the law and that which is outside it – is not, I will argue, simply aporetic. Making this argument, I will, pace Derrida, not restrict myself to *Oedipus at Colonus* but also take Antigone into consideration. The reason is that in the third Theban play, Antigone speaks and acts in a way that puts Derrida’s reading of her into question. At this point she is no longer simply lamenting her father’s choice but actively contesting it as well as the laws that made it necessary. A closer look at her actions will provide us with a different understanding of the political conflict at the heart of hospitality.

2.1 *The Social Ontology of Burials*

The first thing we ought to note is that we wander from one denied burial to the next. Antigone returns to Thebes, where she finds her brothers’ dead, killed by each other in civil war. King Creon decrees that Polynices is not to be buried, because he turned against his city and sought to overthrow his brother Eteocles and Creon himself. Antigone thus goes directly from Oedipus’ encryption without a tomb to Polynices’ corpse that lies rotting outside the city gates.

In fact, the significance of a proper burial is one of the guiding themes of the play, and the lack thereof is constantly invoked as a cause of excessive grief. A guard thus reports that Antigone cried like an animal when she saw the naked and exposed body of Polyneices (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 384). As we have already seen, Antigone mourned not only the

death of her father but even more so the fact that she is bereaved of mourning him properly since he has no identifiable tomb. This pattern repeats itself all throughout *Antigone*:

First of all, Creon decrees, literally, that Polyneices should to be denied mourning [*kokusai*] and remain unburied [*athapton*] (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 204-205). Antigone echoes this double determination word for word, when she tries to convince Ismene to help her. As she says, they cannot permit the dishonor of leaving Polyneices unwept [*aklouton*] and unburied [*ataphon*] (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 29).

Secondly, towards the end of the play, Creon punishes the disobedience of Antigone by condemning her to death – without a tomb, of course. As Creon puts it, she is to be hidden [*krupso*] alive in a place that is deserted [*agon eremos*] and unvisited by mortals [*broton*] (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 773-774). Not only must she die, but she must do so in isolation, removed from the community. Like her father, she is to be encrypted. On the way to her lonely death chamber, *this* is what Antigone mourns. She does not lament the very fact that she is going to die, at least not primarily. Rather, what causes her pain is her exclusion from the community, that her place in the shared world has been denied:

Ah, spring of Dirce, and you holy ground of Thebes whose chariots are many, you, at least, will bear me witness how unwept by loved ones [*hoia philōn aklautos*], and by what laws [*nomois*] I go to the rock-closed prison of my unheard-of tomb [*taphou potainiou*]! Ah, misery! I have no home [*metoikos*] among mortals [*brotois*] or with the shades [*nekrois*], no home [*metoikos*] with the living [*zosin*] or with the dead [*thanousin*]. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 839-850)

Antigone mourns that no loved ones will mourn her and that no one will ever hear about her tomb. In this sense, it is possible to argue that she has already died, despite the fact that she is still walking. Embodying a liminal position, where she is biologically alive but dead to the community, she describes herself as a stranger or an alien resident [*metoikos*], who belongs nowhere. Antigone repeats this almost obsessively before her death: in just a few pages, we hear Antigone mourn that she is cursed [*talaiphron*] (l. 866, 876)], unmarried [*agamos*] (l. 867), *alektos* (l. 917)], unwept [*aklautos*] (l. 876)], a stranger [*metoikos*] (l. 850, 867)], without friends to mourn her [*aphilos*] (l. 876), *oudeis philon stenazei* (l. 882), *erēmos pros philōn* (l. 919)], denied rituals [*anumenaion*] (l. 917)].

This inscribes the burial into a rich social nexus: The lack of burial is equivalent to deriving Antigone of friends, of rendering her strange, of denying her a relation of belonging. What she mourns is not just death but social death – that she has been denied the social dimension of her life. She simply has no place in the shared world. The same thing goes for Oe-

dipus and for Polyneices – the horror of their destinies is not that Antigone loses them to death, but that they disappear from the shared world.

In this sense, Derrida is right when he emphasizes the difference between the crypt (or the encryption) and the tomb:

What this [Oedipus'] death is, is the becoming-foreign. For in death, the visibility of the tomb would have been able to signify a sort of repatriation for him. No, here, the dead one remains all the more foreign in a foreign land in that there is no *manifest* grave, no visible and phenomenal tomb, only a secret burial, an ungrave invisible even to his family, even to his daughter. (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 113)

The tomb provides a place in the shared world; it functions within the *nomos* and makes not only the dead visible for the community but also functions as an anchor point of those, who have been left behind. It gives them a place to remember (and thus make the dead present once again), a place to gather, and even comes with certain commitments and obligations. Without a tomb, it is as if the dead never lived.

The social ontological significance of the burial, however, shows us how Antigone – despite her own destiny – *does not fit* into Derrida's logic of the *anomos*. While she mourns her exclusion, and mourns that she cannot be mourned, she has up to that point done everything in her power to provide a place for her father and thus to render him anything but *anomos*.

2.2 Manifestation and Secrecy: A Battle of Vision

It is important to note the ambiguity of Antigone's kinship relations and how her references to her brother could just as well refer to Oedipus as to Polyneices. We see an example of this instability in a discussion with Creon, where Antigone describes how biological death is not a cause of grief for her, but only the social death that is the result of a lack of proper burial:

But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain. When anyone lives as I do, surrounded by evils, how can he not carry off gain by dying? So for me to meet this doom is a grief of no account. But if I had endured that my mother's son should in death lie an unburied [*athapton*] corpse, that would have grieved me. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 461-468)

The son of Antigone's mother refers to both Polyneices and to Oedipus. In this sense there is a substitution at play: She could not bury Oedipus, her brother and father, and as soon as she arrived in Thebes, she faced the unburied body of her brother Polyneices. As she says, it would grieve her if her brother remained unburied, and, therefore, she makes it

her duty to bury him. In this sense, Oedipus and Polynices are interchangeable. So when she arrives in Thebes, she gets the chance to finally right the wrong that her father denied her, namely, that of burying him. From this point of view, Antigone disobeys her father's last wish to the same extent that she disobeys Creon's decree.

When she buries Polynices, Antigone symbolically buries Oedipus. Even in her explicit reasoning, these two deaths are intimately related. As she will later explain, she transgresses the law to do justice to her brother, since she cannot get a new one with her parents being dead. So while she explicitly states that she would do this for no one else (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 909-912), her words ironically betray her and apply to Polynices and Oedipus alike. In burying her brother (whether Oedipus or Polynices), Antigone effectively contests Oedipus' oath of secrecy. He requested to remain hidden and tombless, and this is exactly what Antigone will not allow.

Antigone reads as if her entire motivation is to avoid the logic in which Derrida seeks to inscribe her. She refuses to let Oedipus rest in his tombless grave, and she refuses to accept his oath of secrecy. This is evident from the first lines of the play, where Antigone performs a complete reversal of the oath of secrecy that Oedipus forced Theseus to accept. I am thinking of the moment, when Antigone tells Ismene of her plans to bury Polynices and transgress Creon's decree. Ismene thinks it is a bad idea that can only end in disaster. Instead, she comes with another suggestion:

Then at least disclose the deed [*promenuses*] to no one before you do it. Conceal it, instead, in secrecy [*kruphe de keuthe*] – and so, too, will I. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 82-85)

Ismene suggests sticking with the Derridean logic of encryption and secrecy. Antigone violently rejects this:

No! Declare it [*katauda*]! You will be far more hated for your silence [*sigos*], if you fail to proclaim these things to everyone [*pasi kēruxēs*]. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 86-87)

Backed up with a threat (you will be hated!), Antigone commits Ismene to an *oath of manifestation*. Ismene must declare Antigone's transgression to everyone! There will be no secrecy here; everything must be illuminated.

This changes the relation to the *nomos*, as Creon also notes. She not only transgresses the law, she also boasts about it:

This girl was already practiced in outrage [*hubrizein*] when she overstepped the published laws. And, that done, this now is a second outrage [*hubris*], that she glories in it and exults in her deed. In truth, then, I am no man, but she is, if this victory rests with her and brings no penalty. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 480-485)

What challenges Creon's authority, his law, is not the mere transgression but the way that Antigone proclaims and manifests it. Creon will punish her severely not because of her crime but because of the oath of manifestation in light of which she acts. The problem is that she tries to make her crime a glory [*kallunein*: literally, to beautify it (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 496)].

Creon sees in the exposure a threat to his authority. The manifestation of the transgression threatens to overthrow the *nomos*: Antigone's claim (as Judith Butler (2000) points out it) reverses the roles of the powerful man and the silent woman. As in the case of Oedipus' threat, the city is doomed if the secret and the transgression are revealed. Contrary to Derrida's analysis, however, this is exactly the guiding principle of Antigone's actions.

So, why is this decryption so dangerous? More specifically, what is the relation between Antigone's oath of manifestation and the *nomos*? The problem is, of course, that the manifestation of the transgression appeals to the community and in this way, it undermines Creon's authority. This becomes clear, when Antigone states that

Antigone: All here would admit that they approve, if fear did not grip their tongues. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 502-505)

Creon responds to this by saying:

Creon: You alone out of all these Thebans see it that way [*horas*]. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 508)

This results in an almost childish dialogue where Creon and Antigone simply contradict each other without offering any actual arguments:

Antigone: They do, too [*horosi khoutoi*], but for you they hold their tongues.

Creon: Are you not ashamed that your beliefs [*phroneis*] differ from theirs? (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 509-510)

This strange exchange is, as I see it, really at the heart of the entire dispute. Creon and Antigone are not merely disagreeing about whether Polyneices should be buried or not. If, as I have argued, the burial is implanted in a larger social nexus (involving rituals, grievability, friendship and in the end community), this dialogue reveals that their dispute is not about an individual transgression versus the law; not about singularity as opposed to generality, as Derrida suggests. Antigone and Creon are constantly discussing *the proper way of seeing things* – it is all about the eyes [*horas*], the vision and the sight [**phantos*], and *phronesis* which is, as we

remember from Aristotle, about the proper way of seeing things (Aristotle, 1984, 1113a). For example, horror strikes Antigone when she *sees* the body her brother unburied and *exposed* (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 424). Similarly, when Antigone covers Polyneices with dust, he becomes *unseen* [*ephanisto*] from the perspective of the governing power (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 307). The conflict is thus a *battle of vision* – about who can make the Thebans see things in their way. “Are you not ashamed that your *phroneis* differ from that of the Thebans?”

So when Antigone mourns that she and her family are unwept, without rituals, friends and community, and that she is stranger, she is actually mourning that her way of seeing things have no resonance in the community (whether this is a fair assessment of things is, however, a separate issue). The oath of manifestation is concerned with the political phenomenological task of making the community see things in the right way, and this is at the heart of the conflict. *Creon and Antigone offer us different configurations of the shared world*. Should we see *this body* as something to be buried? This is not a cognitive task that demands deliberation and calculation; Antigone’s demand is that we see it *as she does immediately*. This is why it is crucial whether Antigone succeeds in making her transgression of the law appear *glorious* or *beautiful* – only by doing so, will she be able to provide a place for her family and her dead ancestors in the shared world, to mark them as significant and as part of the community, to make people see the world in the same way as she does.

For these reasons I think Derrida’s claim that Antigone’s “eyes are not made primarily for seeing but for crying” (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 115) is false. At the very least, the function of Antigone’s eyes changes: They *are* for seeing, and when she speaks, she does so in order to share her sight with the city. In a certain sense, she has not only vision, but a kind of *hypervision* in the same way that Heidegger claims that she is *hypsipolis apolis*, above the city and outside the city (Heidegger, 1983, 1984): Her liminal position at the border of the community, her way of seeing things differently, has the potential to reconfigure or reattune the world of the *polis*.

So where Derrida’s weeping eyes reminds us of a secrecy that denies relationality, that negates the social dimension of life and death, Antigone’s vision and her calls for manifestation affirms and potentially configures this relationality and our sharing of the world.

2.3 *Autonomos and Metroikos*

Creon understands the danger in this. He understands that a re-configuration of the shared world, a different way of seeing things, will undermine his rule:

But there is no evil worse than disobedience [*anarchias*]. This destroys cities [*poleis*]; this overturns homes [*oikous*]; this breaks the ranks of allied spears into headlong rout. But the lives of men who prosper upright, of these obedience [*peitarchia*] has saved the greatest part. Therefore we must defend those who respect order [*kosmoumenoiois*], and in no way can we let a woman defeat us. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 672-678)

Creon sees in Antigone's public disobedience a political power that threatens to destroy the city under his rule, his *arché*. The defense and burial of Eteocles is thus a way of preserving a specific social order. Creon tries to position Antigone as a purely anarchistic impulse, as the opposite of *arché* and order with reference to her femininity that renders her unfit to rule. "While I live, no woman will rule [*arxei*]," as he proclaims (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 525). These remarks, obviously, speak to Hegel's gendered reading of the play, where the woman is consigned to the realm of the household, while the realm of the state is reserved for the man, but as we have seen, Antigone's oath of manifestation defies this logic. Her true crime consists in the way that she enters the space of appearances. In this sense, we are wrong to see her as embodying an anarchistic impulse. By speaking her own truth and proclaiming the validity of her transgression, she is neither anomos nor anarchistic, neither opposed to the law nor to authority as such. As the chorus puts it, as she walks to her grave:

Then in glory and with praise you depart to that deep place of the dead, neither struck by wasting sickness, nor having won the wages of the sword. No, guided by your own laws [*autonomos*] and still alive, unlike any mortal before, you will descend to Hades. (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 817-822)

Antigone is not *anomos*, following a "law with a law," but *autonomos*. She is following her own law, according to the chorus. It is important to note two things regarding this notion of autonomy.

First of all, it is not, strictly speaking, a law that is of her own making. It is not the result of a free rational decision in the Kantian sense, not pure and untainted by heteronomous forces and influences. In fact, Antigone acts out of *affection* for her brother. She finds herself moved, gripped and overwhelmed by the sight of his unburied corpse, and this sight strikes her as being *improper*, as an abomination, and as being at odds with divine justice. In this sense, the law is entirely heteronomous – it grips her from outside and forces her to act. Strictly speaking, her responsibility is not spontaneous. As Heidegger notes, Antigone's choice consists merely in

the way that she chooses to suffer her terrible and uncanny faith (Heidegger, 1984, p. 127ff). She suffers the transgression. When Antigone refuses to listen to Ismene in the opening dialogue, she insists to follow her “own ill-counsel” [*emou dysboulia*], namely, “to suffer the terrible [*pathein to deinon*]” (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 95-96). She chooses to suffer; she chooses her own heteronomy, her own *pathological reasoning*, as we would say if we were to remain within a Kantian vocabulary (e.g., Kant, 1974, A133). Nevertheless, in choosing to suffer this transgression, Antigone makes it her law; she appropriates the affection that grounds her action and makes it her practical identity. In this way, the *pathos* gives her a sense of purpose and comes to define who she is. Complicating any dichotomy between activity and passivity, we would have to say that Antigone suffers the law of her own action. What is heteronomous becomes autonomous.

It goes without saying that Derrida is acutely aware of the complications that come along with the concept of autonomy and even argues that there is heteronomy at the very heart of autonomy. This is why he associates the instant of decision with madness: “It is a madness; a madness because such decision is both hyper-active and suffered [*sur-active et subie*], it preserves something passive, even unconscious, as if the deciding one was free only by letting himself be affected by his own decision and as if it came to him from the other” (Derrida, 2002, p. 255). Nonetheless, it seems to me that the conflation with madness cannot be quite right. When Derrida conflates the passivity and suffering that grounds action with madness, he also suggests that there is a hidden nucleus in action that is in principle unintelligible and absolutely singular. As we just saw, Antigone explicitly argues that she is not mad and that she has the right *phronesis* (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 308-310). Similarly, the oath of manifestation is Antigone’s attempt to render the affective ground of her action publicly available, to share her way of seeing things.

Madness corresponds to a lack of *phronesis*, the blindness of not seeing things in the right way and in the same way as others, we will surely fail if we try to apply this logic to Antigone. Antigone sees, and she sees clearly albeit from a certain perspective. In this way, Antigone’s action is not mad and unconscious, not based on an unintelligible secret. Rather, we might say that her suffering is *preconscious* in the same way that Heideggerian affectivity [*Befindlichkeit*] is prior to conscious deliberation. Her affection for and by her brother tears open her world, and her decision to suffer this affection is the way in which she becomes herself within the new situation that she suddenly finds herself in.² At this point,

[2] sFor a further comparison between Derrida’s and Heidegger’s concept of responsibility, see Francois Raffoul (2014).

it is clear that Derrida imposes a logic upon Antigone that is too Abrahamic and Kierkegaardian, when he takes the nucleus of responsibility and action to be utterly silent. In *Antigone*, hospitality and law are intimately connected to *logos* and to its communicative power. To be sure, Antigone is no paradigm for communicative rationality, since she is neither concerned with providing sound inferences and sufficient reasons nor engaging in coercion-free discourse. Antigone's reasoning is messy and resists formalization, since it is *raison d'être* is, simply, to make her pathic experience manifest and, hence, to reconfigure the shared world.

Secondly, Antigone's law is not autonomous in the sense of an internal happening. To say that she "chooses" it or that she chooses to suffer it, does not merely imply that she makes it her own individual will. Even this choice is intrinsically caught up with the space of appearances in the sense that it relies upon its resonance with the community. In an Arendtian way, her action consists equally of "the beginning made by a single person and the achievement in which many join by 'bearing' and 'finishing' the enterprise, by seeing it through" (Arendt, 1958, p. 189). The exposure is thus not limited to the *pathos* that causes her to act in the first place but includes also the exposure to the community with which she must subsequently share her *pathos*. This marks another sense in which "[t]o do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin" (Arendt, 1958, p. 190). That is to say, when Antigone chooses to suffer her destiny, her suffering has only just begun. It is still up to others to determine "who" she is, and in this sense, the success of her choice is not located within her but in the realm of human affairs in which her acts unfold.

Rather than being merely a psychological phenomenon, her law is inherently political and constitutes a site of contestation with Creon's law. Her strangeness or her uncanniness, as Heidegger would put it, requires a return to the *polis* in the form of a reconfiguration of their shared world (Heidegger, 1984, p. 144). Antigone is autonomous, insofar as she appropriates the preconscious affection and identifies with it, but this process of appropriation and identification does not render her immune to others and further affection. Autonomy thus becomes a process, which is pre-consciously initiated, responsibly taken up, and carried out among and by others. Antigone's autonomous action thus depends on whether others come to see the world in the same way as her, whether they "act in concert" (Arendt, 1958, p. 244).

This relation between the transgression and the law is decisively different from that of Derrida's for whom the crucial aspect is that Oedipus remains a foreigner, who in his secret and invisible grave can resist any attempt at "appropriation" or "domestication." Antigone's oath of ma-

nifestation shows us that her autonomy hinges on the way that it is received by the Thebans, and in this sense, the task for her is to make them “suffer” or rather to share her suffering, her *pathein*, with them, in order to make them see.

It is true that she can only do so by sacrificing herself. But as we have seen, she has already accepted this loss: “But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain” (Sophocles, 1998a, l. 461-468). In dying she finally succeeds in sharing her suffering with the city. The Thebans finally see things as she does, they see the urgency of raising tombs for her and her family, and they see the need for divine justice rather than Creon’s authority. Even if Antigone and her entire family die, we would also have to say that they acquire a place in the human realm through Antigone’s autonomy rendered visible by the tomb. Being mourned by the community, they are finally offered hospitality.

3. Conclusion

I have contrasted Derrida’s deconstructive and aporetic conception of hospitality with a phenomenologically informed reading of Antigone that takes her to be less of an embodiment of mournful secrecy than a political figure whose aim is to transform the law. Where Derrida sees Antigone as part of the same aporetic logic as Oedipus, i.e., as demanding unconditional hospitality in a way that resists public manifestation, I have read her as embodying a phenomenological impulse to make things manifest.

I have done this by showing that the conflict between Creon and Antigone is, in essence, a conflict about how the community sees things, and thus a battle that revolves around how the world is shared. Contrary to many traditional readings, I do not believe that what is at stake in the play is a conflict between two different spheres (human/divine, public/private) but rather two different modes of appearance, two different ways of being-in-the-world. I have suggested that the practical reasoning that drives Antigone is not concerned with private matters and that her ethical commitments exceed the realm of the family, and that we cannot understand her action if we do not understand how it is autonomous and yet something suffered. Drawing upon Heidegger and Arendt, I have suggested that we should understand this in a dual sense: Firstly, Antigone suffers her action in the sense that it originates in the pathic experience of seeing her dead brother naked and exposed. This *pathos* reconfigures Antigone’s world and causes her to act as she does. Secondly, in order to endure and maintain this reconfiguration of the world, Antigone must share her *pathos* with the community and make them see things as she

does. While this is an act of autonomy, since Antigone comes to identify with the sense of purpose offered to her in the horrible sight of her dead brother, her action is neither caused by herself not entirely carried out by herself. If she cannot make the citizens of Thebes see things in her way, she fails. This is the reason that Creon and Antigone literally discuss to which extent Antigone's actions are "beautiful", how the citizens perceive them, and whether they share her *phronesis*.

Where Derrida tries to illuminate the figures of Oedipus and Antigone as inhabiting the aporetic tension of the law between the singular and the general, I have sought to understand the logic of hospitality in *Antigone* phenomenologically as a conflict between world disclosures. In contrast to Derrida's politics of weeping, I have thus provided an admittedly rough outline for a phenomenological politics of vision. Rather than understanding the issues of alterity and hospitality based on an infinite responsibility towards the other, we should think of them as ways in which the space of appearances becomes a site of conflict and dispute and, possibly, a site of social change. Conflicts of hospitality are not simply conflicts between the law and lawless individuals. They are, rather, conflicts between different ways of interpreting the shared world that can only be settled through resonance with the community at large.

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