Antigone's Example

"*Antigone's Example* is a nuanced study of women's civil war writing by one of the leading experts in the field. Suzuki's argument that civil wars force ideational change through family fracture, placing the female voice central to the emerging new political narratives and interpretations, will shape future debate. A beautifully written book, this is a major contribution on women's political texts, one that raises vital questions about the history, genres, and chronologies of European political thought."

—Amanda Capern, *Editor, Routledge History of Women in Early Modern Europe*

"This is a major work of comparative literary and cultural history. Taking Sophocles' *Antigone* as a provocative point of departure by reading her story as an exemplary dramatization of the ancient concept of civil war as a war within the family or household (*oikeios polemos),* Suzuki argues that the tragedy—and spectacle—of civil war enabled a wide range of early modern French and English women writers to intervene substantively in the political and cultural discourses of their emerging nations. These women thus helped create the complex web of transnational debates about war that existed between France and England from the Hundred Years' War in the fifteenth century through the almost simultaneous religious civil wars in England and France during the mid-seventeenth century to the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century. Deeply researched, strikingly illustrated, and cogently argued, the book makes a compelling case for revising Giorgio Agamben's influential notion of a "state of exception" in the light of women's subaltern perspectives articulated in times of civil war. The book includes original interpretations of works by fifteen women writers. Among its many contributions to scholarship is a surprising and persuasive argument about Machiavelli as a writer who was influenced by Christine de Pizan and who formulated theories with which later women writers engaged critically. Suzuki's book illuminates a rich set of women writers' views of themselves as political counsellors who used their literary skills to evade censorship and thus speak truth to power."

—Margaret W. Ferguson, *Author, Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France*

"Expertly written and theoretically rich, *Antigone's Example* compels us to take notice of the political writings, history, and experiences of early modern French and Englishwomen during periods of civil war. Mihoko Suzuki shines a light on a historical trajectory of women writers from the fifteenth to the nineteenth

century, fundamentally challenging the masculinity of political thought and deepening our understanding of the meaning and impact of civil war. *Antigone's Example* is truly a field-defining book by its leading scholar."

—Joanne Wright, *Author, Origin Stories in Political Thought: Discourses on Gender, Power, and Citizenship*; *Coeditor, Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*

Mihoko Suzuki

Antigone's Example

Early Modern Women's Political Writing in Times of Civil War from Christine de Pizan to Helen Maria Williams

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Mihoko Suzuki
Department of English
University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL, USA

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Charlotte Stanley, countess of Derby (1599–1664), is a familiar figure in the history of the English Civil Wars for having heroically (and successfully) defended her husband's seat, Lathom House, from a parliamentarian siege (Fig. 0.1). Contemporary newsbooks refer to her as one who "stole the Earles breeches" and "prov[ed] her selfe of the two, the better Souldier" (*Scottish Dove*, 887; *Perfect Diurnall* 990). These characterizations were not wide of the mark, for in resolutely defending Lathom for three months, she had "overruled her husband's demand that she should leave" (K. Walker, 52). Yet what is not as well known—or emphasized—is that she was born in France to a prominent noble family as Charlotte de la Trémoille and grew up during the Wars of Religion (1562–98) in which her father, Claude, participated on both sides: first as a royalist, and later, after his conversion, as a leader of the Huguenots.[1] Although she never returned to France after her marriage at The Hague to James Stanley in 1626, her forty-year correspondence with her sister-in-law Marie de la Tour d'Auvergne, duchess of Trémoille

[1] A contemporary manuscript account, "A Brief Journal," refers in passing to Stanley's status as a foreigner—as "a woman, a *Stranger* divorced from her friends" (8^{v}, emphasis added)—without specifying that she was French. Although Antonia Fraser's account of Stanley focuses on the siege itself, she does refer to her extraction as a French Huguenot and her French accent even in her old age (165–69). According to Ranum, the La Trémoïlle family was known for its "tradition of rebellion," including a plot to overthrow Richelieu (12).

Fig. 0.1 Anthony van Dyke (1599–1641). *James Stanley, Lord Strange, Later Seventh Earl of Derby, and His Wife, Charlotte, and Their Daughter*, c.1636. Oil on canvas. 246.4 × 213.7 cm. 1913.1.40. Henry Clay Frick Bequest. Copyright The Frick Collection.

(1601–65)—some written in cypher—deals extensively with the politics of the civil wars in England and France.[2]

Stanley's letters are exemplary for my project of investigating women's political writings arising from and concerning civil war in England and France, with an emphasis on the transcultural connections between the

[2] According to Guizot de Witt, these letters were discovered in the nineteenth century "in a barrel at the bottom of the cellar" (vi); she included portions of these in *Lady of Latham*. The duchess of Trémoille added the key to the cypher as well as dated the letters (vi). For further discussion, see Kmec; and Suzuki, "Political Writing across Borders," 364–66. On Stanley's military activities during the Interregnum, during which she was in full command of the Isle of Man in place of her husband who was imprisoned, see K. Walker, 58–61.

two countries. Although none of her surviving letters concern the siege at Lathom House, or the execution of her husband by the parliamentarians, she discusses and analyzes the politics of civil war, engaging in debate with her sister-in-law concerning the significance of religion for the parliamentarian cause:

> If the Parliament had for their end religion and the glory of God, as you think they have, they would not act with the cruelty and injustice which characterize all they do. As for religion, they have so deceived the people that now, when they perceive their errors, and groan under the burden of their tyranny, even those who have been the most attached to their cause deplore our misery and their own. They would find it hard to tell you their creed, where there are as many religions as families. (132)

Here we see the slippage between the political and religious positions of participants in the French and the English civil wars: the Huguenot duchess of Trémoille has apparently expressed sympathy for the parliamentarians (though her husband has converted to Catholicism), while the countess of Derby, daughter of a Huguenot leader, takes a royalist position and attacks the puritans as hypocrites.

These letters join writings by Stanley's contemporaries on both sides of the Channel in directly contradicting the prohibition against women's political discourse. Only in the previous decade, Richard Brathwait's *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) enjoined his female readership to refrain from engaging in "discourse of State-matters" and "state-political action" (89–91). Margaret Cavendish, writing during the 1650s, similarly stated, "I have not been bred, being a woman, to publick Affairs, Associations, or Negotiations" (*Playes*, B1). Yet scholarship by Katharine Gillespie, Susan Wiseman, and Catharine Gray makes evident that women in England did indeed engage in political writing during this period, and that the English Civil Wars (1642–51) provided "exceptional opportunities to speak out and publish their concerns—and to justify their right and ability to do so" (Gillespie, 37). In *Subordinate Subjects*, I investigated the entry of women and nonaristocratic men into the political public sphere in seventeenth-century England. That scholarship, while moving beyond the strictly feminist aspect of early modern women's writings, nonetheless remained within the English national context. Similarly, Joan DeJean, Faith Beasley, and Patricia Cholakian confine their investigations to seventeenth-century

France.[3] An exception to this focus on the single national culture of either England or France can be found in Margaret W. Ferguson's *Dido's Daughters*, a study of early modern women and literacy through the cases of Christine de Pizan, Marguerite de Navarre, Elizabeth Cary, and Aphra Behn.[4]

Antigone's Example brings a transcultural and comparative perspective to the study of women's political writings in England and France during a period when cross-channel political and cultural interchanges between these two nation-states were frequent and significant.[5] Many French texts were translated into English, and many English women knew French; both countries experienced major civil wars during the mid-seventeenth century when the English court was in exile in France (see Knachel).[6] As many Mazarinades—pamphlets arising from the French civil wars called the Fronde (1648–53)—and contemporary memoirs indicate, participants on both sides of the political divide were acutely aware of developments across the Channel, especially the trial and execution of Charles I. Moreover, anti-royalist forces in both England and France developed political theories against the legitimacy of monarchical rule

[3] As an example of a striking omission of women in a study of political thought in early modern France, I will note here that Nannerl O. Keohane—who served as president of Wellesley College (1981–93) and Duke University (1993–2004)—wrote in the preface to *Philosophy and the State in France* (1980): "I take an ironic pleasure in writing about men who thought women incapable of participating in or discoursing about politics" (xii). Her chapter on the Fronde discusses the memoirs of cardinal de Retz but not those of Madame de Motteville, and the pamphlets of Cyrano de Bergerac but not those by Madame de Longueville—indicating how strong the prevailing assumption that excludes women from political discourse has been, as recently as the late twentieth century.

[4] See also David Norbrook, "Women, the Republic of Letters"; and Julie Campbell, "Cross-Channel Connections." Although Gray's focus is on English writers, she is alive to how "the imaginative content and material circulation of their work also crosses national borders" (14).

[5] Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe* is concerned with the English nation's struggle to define itself in opposition to France. The women writers I treat are more cosmopolitan in that they take the country across the Channel not as a demonized Other but as a political exemplar whose experience of civil war can be instructive for their own political culture. In addition, literary studies on Anglo-French relations by Hillman and Melehy have focused on male canonical writers.

[6] Nigel Smith has more recently argued for the commensurability of the English Civil Wars and the Fronde.

from specific grievances. In taking this approach, I heed Merry Wiesner-Hanks' and Jane Stevenson's call for transcultural approaches in the study of early modern women. A comparative (though not strictly transcultural) approach has informed the books by Sarah Gwyneth Ross (England and Italy) and Martine van Elk (England and the Netherlands).[7] Combining these two methodologies enables a more comprehensive view of women's interventions in politics and the public sphere which have until now been read as exceptional by scholars working separately on England and France.

To this end, I investigate the writings on civil war by Christine de Pizan (1363–c.1430), Anne Dowriche (before 1560–96), Mary Sidney (1561–1621), Elizabeth Cary (1585–1639), Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, duchess of Montpensier (1627–93), Françoise de Motteville (c.1621–89), Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, duchess of Longueville (1619–79), Marie d'Orléans-Longueville, duchess of Nemours (1625–1707), Margaret Cavendish (1623–73), Katherine Philips (1632–64), Aphra Behn (1640–89), Jane Barker (1652–1732), Louise de Kéralio (1756–1822), Stéphanie de Genlis (1746–1830), Germaine de Staël (1766–1817), and Helen Maria Williams (1759–1827). As this list of authors indicates, I take the term "early modern" more expansively than do most literary scholars: in addition to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors who are usually understood as belonging to that period designation, my study's chronological reach extends from the fifteenth-century Christine de Pizan, an important forerunner and exemplar for later women writers on civil war, to Germaine de Staël and Helen Maria Williams, who wrote during and in the wake of the French Revolution.[8] I thereby aim to elucidate both the historical specificity of the political writings of early modern women and the transhistorical context of civil war, a context, I argue, that enables women's participation in political thought.[9]

[7] Also relevant for my project is Jonathan Scott's investigation of "England's troubles" during the seventeenth century in a broader European context and his pursuit of his project through the "long seventeenth century" (1588–1688).

[8] On the challenge to conventional periodization posed by subaltern perspectives, especially that of women writers, see Suzuki, "Did the English Seventeenth Century Really End at 1660?".

[9] On the French Wars of Religion and the Vendée revolt against the French Revolution as civil wars in which women found expansion of their roles, see Viennot, "Les femmes,"

Oikeios Polemos: Civil War as War Within the Family

In "La guerre dans la famille," one of her important investigations concerning civil war in ancient Greece, Nicole Loraux examines the confrontation between Athenian oligarchs and democrats at the end of the fifth century as *oikeios polemos* (war within the family or household),

and Martin (the special issue of *Clio* on women and civil war also includes articles on the Roman republic and the revolution in El Salvador).

Joan Scott has posited that the emergencies generated by the World Wars of the twentieth century (though they are not of course civil wars) opened new opportunities for women ("Women and War"). For a parallel discussion of the context of "wartimes" for women writers in the English seventeenth century, see Murphy. Beyond France and England, Romero-Díaz has called attention to the writings of María de Guevara, who addressed the Spanish king on political matters in the 1660s during the years of the Portuguese revolt that began in 1640.

Drew Gilpin Faust demonstrates that the Civil War led confederate women to go beyond their antebellum roles to take on an increasingly wide range of social and economic responsibilities, including entering into the professions as teachers and nurses. Even earlier in US history, although Jane Franklin stated to her brother Benjamin, "I do not pretend to say anything about publick Affairs," the war that divided her own family between revolutionaries and loyalists led her to write to him about the contemporary political situation: "I hope … you will … put a Stop to the nesesity of Dragooning, & Haltering, they are odious means; I had Rather hear of the Swords being beat into Plow-shares … if by that means we may be brought to live Peaceably with won a nother" (Lepore, 193, 221). Friedlander shows that the Civil War presented Emily Dickinson with the opportunity—ultimately not taken—to enter into public discourse and into print.

Even beyond the European and American context, scholars have found civil war to be enabling for women whose writings challenged gender boundaries. For example, Li finds that Chinese women writers during the turmoil and crisis of the mid-seventeenth century transition from the Ming to the Qing "self-consciously developed a martial, heroic self-image and explored the idea of fluid gender boundaries in their writings" (179). She theorizes that "the experience of war and political disorder … heightene[d] the real and imagined space for heroic aspirations and endeavor, political engagement, and historical understanding" (213). Kitagawa similarly finds that in the late sixteenth-century Japanese culture of internal warfare and negotiation, women of elite samurai households deployed epistolary styles and forms closely approximating those of their male contemporaries; the use of this style notably ceased with the Tokugawa shogunate's reestablishment of political order.

David Armitage states that "civil war has been, throughout history, conceptually generative" (12). However, see Linda Colley's critique of Armitage's "deliberately selective approach to the past and its sources" that focuses on "erudite elite males," for its failure to do justice to "the full extent and vital diversity of the subject."

rather than a *stasis emphylos* (an internal confrontation engendered by the city itself). This conception of civil war that emphasizes the analogy between and conjunction of the city or State and the family is present in Thucydides, who describes the effects of civil war in Corcyra in 427: "fathers killed their sons; people were dragged from the temples and slaughtered in front of them" (130). The same conception figures as well in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* (467 BCE) and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (408 BCE), where dissension arises at the heart of the family. In *Seven Against Thebes*, Aeschylus expresses this contradiction by having Eteocles declare, "Leader against leader and brother against brother, enemy against enemy, I will take my stand" (672–74; p.52). Similarly, in the *Phoenician Women*, Euripides has the dying Polyneices aver, "My brother became my foe, but he was my brother still" (1446; p.361).

In "La guerre civile Grecque," on the civil war in Greece and the anthropological representation of the world turned upside down, Loraux discusses examples from Xenophon, Polybius, and Thucydides to argue that civil war overturns the normal social order, in particular the conventional hierarchy of humans over animals, which can be extended to the conventional hierarchy of men over women. In this essay, Loraux brings her observations concerning Greek civil war to the sixteenth-century French Wars of Religion as well as to the civil war in Mozambique that lasted from the 1970s to the 1990s.[10] Bringing together the two parts of Loraux's theory concerning civil war and pursuing its implications, I suggest that the imbrication of the State and the family in civil war renders ambiguous women's positioning between private and public; and the overturning of social order in civil war enables them to exceed and transgress their normative role within the family to become protagonists in matters of State. Indeed, while Loraux herself does not make this argument, she shows that Thucydides associates women with civil war in his account of *stasis* between the oligarchs and democrats in Corcyra: "the women boldly assisted [the people], hurling tiles from the tops of the houses and overcoming their nature to face the tumult" ("Feminine Nature," 231).[11] During the civil wars of seventeenth-century England

[10] Knecht states that during the First War (1562–63), "[a]ccording to the *Histoire ecclésiastique*, peasants and artisans suddenly turned into tigers and lions, while women took up arms alongside menfolk" (35).

[11] Loraux explains this association from the perspective of males (rather than from that of the female actors themselves), by stating that since civil war brings about pernicious

and France, daughters (Montpensier, Nemours) and wives (Cavendish, Philips) gave voice to political positions diverging from those of their fathers and husbands;[12] civil war thereby provided a context, harsh though it was, for subalterns within the patriarchal family to assert their political independence.

Sophocles' Antigone is exemplary of this shift in gender hierarchy when her two brothers have killed each other in civil war and she, as older daughter, becomes heir to Oedipus. She follows ethical norms that are opposed to State power (as represented by Creon) in asserting her duty to bury her brother, thereby emerging as the protagonist of the tragedy.[13] Taking *Antigone* as a point of departure, I posit in this book that civil war in early modern England and France constituted an enabling condition for women's intervention in politics through the public form of political thought and writing.

In advancing this argument, I revisit the influential theory of political philosopher Giorgio Agamben, who contends that "states of exception" including civil war (along with insurrection and resistance) lead to totalitarianism and exclusions from citizenship.[14] Agamben maintains that the

effects on civic language—as Thucydides famously argued—and *andreia* (manliness) is one of the notions in question, "this analysis makes the intrusion of the feminine into the historical account possible" (239). Pursuing this train of argument, Loraux states that women's participation in civil war brings about the threat that they could become "an internal enemy worse than any threat posed from outside" (243).

[12] Although Cavendish was purportedly a royalist like her husband, I and others have argued that her political positions displayed affinities with those of the parliamentarians. See Chapter 4 below.

[13] In discussing Antigone in *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, Loraux focuses on her suicide: "[Antigone] chose to die by her own will and so to change execution into suicide. By killing herself in the manner of very feminine women [by hanging], the girl found in her death a femininity that in her lifetime she had denied with all her being; she also found something like a marriage" (31–32). However, in "La main d'Antigone," she discusses the proliferation of words with the prefix "auto-" to discuss Antigone's autonomy, her familial identification with her brother as another self, as well as the multiple figures of self-destruction—fratricide, civil war, and suicide—that govern the text. She suggests that the civil war does not cease with the death of Eteocles and Polyneices but is renewed in the conflicts between Creon and Antigone and Creon and Haemon (180).

[14] Schmitt, *Political Theology*—originally published in 1922—deployed the concept of the "state of exception" to justify "sovereign dictatorship." While Schmitt was writing in Weimer Germany, his work is steeped in Hobbes, as well as early modern political thinkers such as Machiavelli and Bodin. See also his discussion of the distinction between "state of

sovereign uses a state of emergency or crisis to suspend the law and to consolidate greater power in controlling its subjects, for example in Nazi Germany or in the US after 9/11. Yet Agamben's theory of the state of exception imposed *from above* by the sovereign needs to be supplemented by theorizing another kind of state of exception—one that is experienced by non-State actors, *from below*. I am suggesting, then, that civil wars—experienced as states of exception by the women writers I discuss in this book—have compelled but also enabled them to exceed their assigned positions within the gender and social hierarchy to participate in politics and public affairs.[15]

In contrast to Agamben who considers the state of exception to be politically disabling, Alain Badiou argues, in "Politics as Truth Procedure," that what he calls the "political event" reveals the usually invisible excess power of the State. The "event" thereby unmasks the limits of the apparently boundless power of the State and makes available to its subjects knowledge of its true nature.[16] If Badiou's theory is applied to *Antigone*, the political event constituted by the civil war in Thebes and Creon's perpetuation of it by allowing Eteocles but not Polyneices to be buried gives rise to Antigone's apprehension of the truth concerning the limits of Creon's power.[17] Her assertion of that truth constitutes her as a political

exception" and "state of emergency." Foucault also maintains that "coup d'Etat" is "the assertion of raison d'Etat," a self-manifestation of the State itself (*Security*, 262).

[15] Honig, *Emergency Politics*, seeks to clarify "actually existing opportunities, invitations, and solicitations to democratic orientation, action, and renewal even in the context of emergency" (xv). Although her interest in the "connections between emergency and emergence by way of the *paradox of new rights*" (xvi, emphasis in the original) intersects with my argument, her emphasis is on how "each new emergent claim can be experienced as an emergency by the existing order" (49), while I suggest that the state of emergency enables the assertion of new rights. Moreover, her focus on gay marriage, the right to physician-assisted suicide, and "Slow Food's declaration of the right to taste" (45) makes her project very different from my own.

[16] See Foucault's discussion of *arcana secretum*, the secret knowledge belonging exclusively to the State and its ruler (*Security*, 273–75).

[17] In *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou provides a Lacanian reading of *Antigone* in which he considers Antigone and Creon to represent a mutually dependent anxiety and superego. However, he derives his theory of the subject from the *Oresteia*: Orestes and Athena represent courage and justice and bring about a new law to replace the old. See Bosteels, *Badiou and Politics*, 90–94. Although in the preface to *Incident at Antioch*, Badiou states that his play is based on Claudel and St. Paul, I suggest that perhaps an even more important subtext is *Antigone*: the heroine Paula opposes Cephas, "a leader as

subject and the tragedy itself as a political event. The ways in which the political event gives rise to what Badiou calls "truth procedure" explains the repeated affirmation of political truth apprehended and asserted by the women writers I discuss in this book.

Both Badiou and Jacques Rancière depart from Carl Schmitt's concept of "the political" as pertaining to the State, politics, and sovereignty. Indeed, Schmitt considers the challenge to the State's monopoly on politics in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, which led to internal struggles, to be pernicious in undermining the sovereign state, and regards individualism as the "negation of the political" (12, 70). On the contrary, Rancière argues that because policing maintains social order by assigning everyone their proper place, democratic politics opposes policing and thereby disrupts that order, undoing the supposed naturalness of that order by rejecting hierarchy and marginalization. Politics is therefore founded on dissent, and the presupposition of equality creates political subjects. I suggest that Antigone performs this movement from allotment and distributive justice to participation and political involvement and expresses her presupposition of equality by her very act of speaking—in dissent to Creon.[18] The early modern women I discuss also transgressed their allotted place to write about political matters. In doing so, they disobeyed the culturally sanctioned injunctions by Brathwait, among others; Cavendish, in fact, contradicted her own avowal of political disability that conformed to the dominant ideology by her extensive political writings in many genres. Cavendish and other women writing politics would constitute examples of what Rancière calls the emancipatory subversion of the "distribution of the sensible," challenging the

lucid and efficient as he is ruthless" (x); she attempts to save her brother—despite his "infantile ambition" of conquest (113)—from execution and to avert civil war. Moreover, as "the rebellious voice of emancipatory truth," Paula not only recalls Antigone, but also exemplifies Arendt's affirmation of action as representing new political beginnings (x). However, by contrast with Arendt who occluded gender, Badiou has Paula cite historical female precedents ranging from well-known political women such as Joan of Arc and Rosa Luxemburg to others less well known, such as Louise Michel and Elisabeth Dmitrieff (33).

[18] See Rancière, *Dis-agreement*; and May, *Political Thought*, chap. 2. While Rancière does not specifically discuss women in *Dis-agreement*, in "Democracy, Republic, Representation," he gives the example of Olympe de Gouges' *Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Citizen*, which bases woman's "right to mount the rostrum" on her "right to mount the scaffold," as one that "establish[es] the claim that women belong to the sphere of political expression" (60).

assignment of specific activities and capacities to women in their time ("Afterword").

Rancière is also useful for my project because he affirms the "principle of division" in the polity rather than that of unity and self-identity. According to Rancière, "a regime which wants all its laws and institutions to resemble its basic principle, condemns itself to civil war and ruin because of the very unilateralism of this principle." Although here he considers civil war to be a negative consequence of an insistence on unity, I extend his insight that unity and order serve to control and mask multiplicity and dissent to suggest that civil war as an extreme instance of what he calls "the regime of division" (which Rancière himself identifies with democracy) can be *structurally* enabling for the emergence of subaltern political voices (*On the Shore of Politics*, 42–43).[19] This is certainly the case with the early modern women writers in this book, in that, although their writings were often motivated by a desire to suture political divisions, it was precisely the civil war context and the regime of division that paradoxically opened up possibilities for their political interventions. This concept of the "regime of division" and its continuities with civil war in encouraging political analysis and counsel is useful for understanding Dowriche, Sidney, and Cary, for these writers lived and wrote during intense political divisions in England between Protestant and Catholic, divisions that could have erupted into civil war as they did in France during its prolonged religious wars.

My project thereby contests the Hobbesian *desideratum*—endorsed in the twentieth century by Carl Schmitt—of political order at the price of

[19] Loraux, *Divided City*, also sees continuities between partisanship, faction, and civil war as all included in the term *stasis*. The unity of the State is founded on the "forgetting" of these divisions, for example in the amnesty following the overthrow of the Thirty Tyrants. Similarly, the Edict of Nantes (1598) proclaimed: "the memory of all things … shall remain extinguished and suppressed, as things that had never been." Following the civil wars in France and England, Louis XIV proclaimed "amnistie" in a series of edicts in 1652 and the English Restoration Parliament passed an "Act of Indemnity and Oblivion" (1660). Louis' amnesty states, in language identical to the Edict of Nantes: "We prohibit all our subjects of whatever estate and condition, to renew the memory, to attack, injure, or provoke one another by reproaches of what is past, to contest or quarrel, to revile or offend by deeds or words; rather, we command them to be content and to live peaceably together as brothers, friends, and fellow citizens, upon penalty of being punished as breakers of peace and disturbers of the public quiet" (*Edict du Roy*, 5).

absolutism.[20] It also seeks to revise the history of political thought, by expanding the definition of political writing beyond political treatises of the kind that Hobbes wrote, to include a multiplicity of genres, both literary and nonliterary: essays, poetry, plays, letters, and pamphlet literature.[21] While much existing scholarship on the authors I treat focuses on their feminist "sexual politics," I suggest instead that women, like their male counterparts, were interested in questions concerning the polity—for example, the rights and obligations of subjects and sovereigns.[22]

When these writings are placed in the history of political thought, one significant thread that emerges is their relationship to Machiavelli, whose transmission among male writers and thinkers—but not among female ones—in early modern Europe has been thoroughly investigated (Raab; Baldwin, 110, 113; P. Burke, "Translating," 132). Machiavelli was, not insignificantly, a theorist and historian of political division and civil war, both in *The Discourses* (1531) and *The Florentine Histories* (1532), giving a positive assessment of the conflict between the people and the Senate as the foundation of a free republic (*Discourses*, I.4).[23] Not only did

[20] Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, considers "political antagonisms" to be pernicious because they cause the "weakening [of] the all-embracing political unit of the State," and of "the common identity vis-à-vis another state" (32). While Rancière and Loraux consider these divisions and instabilities to open up possibilities for the political subject, Schmitt finds them to be perniciously undermining of State power.

[21] Broad and Green also seek "to expand the definition of political, and with it the range of texts that count as political" (291). Wiseman similarly states that her project is to "expand[ ] the textual materials considered to crucially illuminate … political thought beyond those of the canon of political theory" (*Conspiracy*, 361). See also Gillespie, who points out that "female authors frequently utilized 'private' and domestic discourses and genres to acquire a public voice" and that "languages, discourses, idioms, and modes other than high political theory could participate in or construct conflict and debates" (*Women Writing*, 37). In investigating early modern women's historical writing, Matchinske takes up "mother's legacy, religious verse history, diary writing, closet drama and tabloid news … the unacknowledged and extra-disciplinary discursive forms" that go "beyond the boundaries of traditional history" (2).

[22] A move away from a strict focus on feminist topics in the political writings of early modern women that parallels my own can be found in Broad and Green; Wiseman, *Conspiracy*; and Wright, "Not Just Dutiful Wives."

[23] See Bock, "Civil Discord." Skinner considers Machiavelli's positive assessment of "tumults" that horrified contemporaries as one of his salient contributions to political thought (181–82). See also McCormick for Machiavelli's insistence on "the necessity of properly institutionalized class conflict for healthy domestic politics within popular

Machiavelli write in genres (mirror for princes, history, military treatise) and deploy methods (*exemplum* and aphorism) employed by Christine de Pizan, but Machiavelli closely echoes (and revises) Christine's works, as I will argue. Dowriche excoriates Catherine de' Medici as a Machiavellian ruler, and Cary revises Machiavelli by theorizing a new relationship between a female ruler and female Fortuna. Motteville explicitly criticizes Machiavelli's injunction to never do evil by halves; she also focuses on political "interest" as Machiavellian *ragion di stato* (reason of state).[24] Cavendish not only uses the phrase "Reason of State," she explicitly and implicitly refers to Machiavelli throughout her *oeuvre*; in addition, and perhaps more importantly, her use of dialogism and contradiction indicates an affinity with Machiavelli's characteristic methodology. Finally, in her analysis of the French Revolution and its aftermath, Williams follows Machiavelli's use of the exemplarity of the history of ancient Rome. Reading these writers in relation to Machiavelli as the early modern political writer *par excellence* indicates the self-consciousness with which they fashioned their political writings.[25]

Indeed, like Machiavelli, these writers assumed the role of political counselors: although women could not hold political office, they could provide counsel to monarchs through their writings.[26] Michel Foucault, who in his final seminars discussed the concept of *parrhesia*—speaking

governments" (viii). In contrast to Machiavelli, Guicciardini opposes popular government because it leads to "confusion," "disorder," and "discord" (*History of Italy*, 77–78). See also Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 194; Philips, 85.

[24] The concept of reason of state was associated with Machiavelli through the title of Giovanni Botero's attack on Machiavelli, *Della ragion di stato* (1589). On *raison d'état* in the seventeenth century, as the art of government focused on the preservation of the State, and *coup d'état* as the violent and theatrical assertion of *raison d'état*, see Foucault, *Security*, chap. 10.

[25] Starting with Pitkin, but even in more recent examples such as Falco and Cavallo, feminist criticism of Machiavelli has focused on the representation of women in his works and has not yet addressed this question of Machiavelli's relation to women authors or women writers' engagement with his works.

[26] For discussion of Margaret Fell Fox, Elizabeth Cellier, and Elinor James as women who sought to contribute to public and political discourse through counsel, see Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, chap. 7. Although Cellier's proposal to James II to institute foundling hospitals remained in manuscript, her *Malice Defeated* that exposed torture in prisons was published, as were Fox's open letters to Charles II and James' petitions not only to Parliament, but to Charles II, James II, and William and Mary.

frankly (*franc parler*) and truthfulness (*véridicité*)—as a foundational term for the history of political thought, called attention to the importance for counselors to speak the truth in order to fulfill their role as political advisors to the ruler (*Government of Self*, 69–71);[27] indeed, many of these writers explicitly affirm their commitment to speak truth to those in power.

Some present themselves as counselors to queens—Christine to Isabeau of Bavaria, Dowriche to Elizabeth I, Cary to Henrietta Maria, and Motteville to Anne of Austria—but others also to male rulers: Cavendish to Charles II, Barker to James II, and Genlis to Napoleon. The authority they claim, then, is that of a counselor unafraid to speak truth to the powerful. After the French Revolution, with the emerging acknowledgment of the importance of public opinion, Kéralio, Staël, and Williams sought to inform and counsel the public to which they addressed their writings.

While calling attention to the importance of *parrhesia* for political counsel, Foucault also traces the genealogy of political critique to *parrhesia*—the act of speaking truth to the powerful (*Discourse and Truth*, 68). Indeed, the texts examined in *Antigone's Example* can be broadly characterized as constituting political critique of a largely secular nature, though the authors' religious affiliations—Dowriche and Sidney's Protestantism and Cary's Catholicism, for example—certainly marked their political critique. In pursuing this critique, the authors in this study treat significant political issues of the period, such as the composition of the body politic, theories of just war, monarchism and absolutism, resistance theory, and republicanism. In calling attention to these contributions, I seek to advance the conversation concerning early modern women's participation in the political public sphere, well before they gained the franchise and were considered citizens with political rights.

[27] See also Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 57–64; *Discourse and Truth*, 59–60; Saxonhouse, *Free Speech*, esp. 85–99. Condren has suggested that "the rhetoric of counsel" carried with it an implication of opposition and resistance: true counselors, as privileged political participants, were duty bound to provide independent judgment, rather than its opposite, flattery. It also could be understood as a "theory of sovereignty," in that political counsel could restrain the monarch's actions; thus English parliamentarians cast themselves in the role of counselors to the monarch during various political crises throughout the seventeenth century (*Language of Politics*, 120–21).

Antigone's Example

In *Antigones*, George Steiner demonstrated the importance of Sophocles' heroine for European poets, philosophers, and scholars between c.1790 and c.1905 when Freud's taking up of Oedipus eclipsed Antigone (1, 6).[28] Yet in the later part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, Antigone has taken Oedipus' place as the exemplary tragic protagonist, signaling a shift from father to daughter, due to the heightened interest in female subjectivity engendered by feminist scholarship.[29] Antigone becomes an important exemplar for contemporary feminist theorists such as Judith Butler, who in *Antigone's Claim* argues that Antigone's defiance represents an appropriation of masculine sovereignty and brings into crisis the conceptual distinction between her and Creon. By refusing to be subjected to the State or to a patriarchal marriage, she embraces glory and death. Cecilia Sjöholm in *The Antigone Complex* maintains that Antigone relates desire to "ethics, politics, and the law, to the social sphere, the family sphere, and the public sphere" (xi). Butler and Sjöholm mediate the debate in Antigone scholarship between those who stress her incestuous passion for her brother and those who focus on her rebellion against Creon, which parallels an earlier debate within feminism between psychoanalytic and political approaches. Literary scholars who focus exclusively on Antigone's desire from a psychoanalytic perspective, though shifting their attention from Oedipus to Antigone, nevertheless remain within the Freudian paradigm that focuses on the id as the bedrock of motivations and actions.[30] The scholars of political

[28] Steiner posits that *Antigone* became an "emblematic text" after the French Revolution, either because it resonated with "the programme of feminine emancipation and political parity between the sexes," or because the character became a "surrogate for reality": "Antigone belongs, hauntingly but safely, to the idiom of the ideal" (9–10). The latter possibility is more in line with recent scholarship on women in the French Revolution, for example, by Lynn Hunt and Joan Landes. Steiner's study focuses on the uses of Antigone by Hegel, Goethe, Kierkegaard, and Hölderlin.

[29] On the "turn" from Oedipus to Antigone, see Honig, *Antigone, Interrupted*, who also discusses recent iterations of Antigone, such as Argentina's Madres of the Plaza. The continuing scholarly interest in Antigone can be gleaned from, for example, the essay collections edited by Wilmer and Žukauskaité, and Söderbäck.

[30] Yet, Quilligan's focus in *Incest and Agency* on the anthropological "traffic in women" leads her to call attention to Butler's Antigone as "a character for questioning the heterosexual traffic" (19).

thought who emphasize the political significance of Antigone's actions consider her as an *exemplum* of an individual who intervenes in the political arena. I follow Butler and Sjöholm in suggesting that it is not necessary to posit a strict binary between psychoanalysis and politics: for in stating that she values her brother more than her (future) husband, Antigone expresses an identification with (rather than a desire for) her brother as a political actor in order to rebel against Creon, her uncle and ruler of Thebes, and to intervene in the city riven by civil war.[31] In fact, a number of the women I will be discussing in the chapters to follow, such as Dowriche, Sidney, Longueville, and Barker found in their brothers alter egos who enabled their entry into the political public sphere. Strong ties to brothers thus repeatedly prove crucial in grounding claims of legitimacy for these writers.[32]

Sophocles' Antigone articulates ethical norms that are opposed to State power (as represented by Creon) when she asserts her duty to bury her brother.[33] In claiming this unique point of view, Antigone thus emerges as the protagonist and heroine of the tragedy in the wake of a fratricidal civil war. But it is not only Sophocles' *Antigone*, the most celebrated and most debated by scholars of classics and political thought, that is of interest here. Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, which predates Sophocles, and Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, which follows him, also contribute important examples for my argument.

In Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, which dramatizes the events leading up to Sophocles' play, and to which Sophocles refers in his

[31] Honig, *Antigone, Interrupted*, chap. 6, argues rather for the importance of Antigone's "conspiracy" and solidarity with her sister, Ismene.

[32] Hunt, *Family Romance*, argues that the monarchy was replaced by a brotherhood of citizens, with the consequence that women were confined to the domestic sphere and activities and thereby depoliticized. See also MacCannell; and Pateman, "Fraternal Social Contract." I am suggesting that these early modern women writers present another model of sibling relations—between sister and brother—that is politically enabling. In a related argument, Quilligan maintains that endogamy enables women to authorize themselves, though her examples include relationships between mothers and sons and between cousins, in addition to that between sisters and brothers. I also diverge from Quilligan's emphasis on incestuous desire in positing female agency (*Incest and Agency*, 6).

[33] According to Fradinger, Creon designates Polyneices as the internal enemy in order to forge the unity of the polity; Antigone contests this exclusion by defending the communal laws exemplified in the funeral rite, thereby affirming equality and democracy (54–84).

own *Antigone*, Eteocles' exchange with the Chorus of Theban women anticipates the *agon* between Creon and Antigone. Eteocles, expressing contempt for women whom he characterizes as "howling, keening—things hateful to sensible minds" (185–86, p. 40), repeatedly commands the women to keep silent: "Men's part is this, to offer the gods victims in sacrifice and for divination when testing their enemy; your part, however, is to be silent, and to stay inside the house (229–30, p. 41).[34] This passage echoes Hector's speech to Andromache in the *Iliad*—which by contrast to Eteocles' was without rancor—about the gendered division of labor and space; it also anticipates Creon's expression of antagonism toward Antigone in gendered terms. When the Chorus continues to express fear, Eteocles repeats, "Will you not be silent? Say nothing of this through the city!" (250, p. 42). The Chorus' expression of fear that they will fall into slavery, "overpowered and led away, / both young and old, / by their hair like horses, their garments / torn apart on them" (326–29, p. 44), indicates that their point of view as potential victims of war is justified. Later in the play, however, the roles of Eteocles and the Chorus are reversed as the women admonish him as "my son" and counsel him against meeting Polyneices "in unlawful bloodshed" (693, p. 53); it is Eteocles, in seeking to kill his own brother, who is guilty of "transgression" (741, p. 54), rather than the women who speak out of turn. When Antigone commands the stage at the end of the play, she defies Eteocles' earlier admonitions to silence and acts out the woman's "audacity" which he excoriated (189, p. 40). She openly scorns the Herald's "superfluous proclamations" (1043, p. 63), as she declares her intention to bury Polyneices:

> And I for my part say to your Cadmean leaders: if no one else is willing to share giving him funeral, I will give him funeral myself and risk the danger for having given it to my own brother; and I feel no shame in this disobedience, in defying the city's rule … His funeral and burial I will myself find means for, although I am a woman … Let no one think to the contrary: a means to act will come with courage. (1026–40, pp. 62–63)

[34] As Loraux had stated in reference to Thucydides, Eteocles fears that the women are "advanc[ing] the cause of the enemy outside—the city is being sacked by its own people from within!" (l.171). Just points out that a law ascribed to Solon limited the participation of women in funerals, "constitut[ing] a clear recognition that what could transform a private funeral into … [a] potentially dangerous public demonstration was precisely the uninhibited conduct of women" (198).

Antigone's final statement reaffirms her consciousness of speaking against the authority of the official voice of the Cadmean council as embodied in the Herald: "Strife is the last of the gods to end an argument; but I will give him funeral myself. Make no long speeches!" (1051–52, p. 63). Her invocation of the "powerful" tie of the "common womb" (1030–3, p. 62) as justification for her actions corrects Eteocles' wrongheaded determination to kill his own brother. At the conclusion of the *Seven Against Thebes*, the division of the Chorus into two Semichoruses, one accompanying Ismene and following the commands of the city not to bury Polyneices, the other accompanying Antigone to follow his body to be buried, anticipates the choices of Antigone and Ismene in Sophocles' *Antigone*.[35]

Euripides wrote his own version of *Antigone*, which has been lost, though it is referred to in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. His *Phoenician Women*—more popular than Sophocles' *Antigone* in its own time—follows *Seven Against Thebes* and *Antigone* in casting Polyneices as more justified than his brother Eteocles. When Eteocles brazenly praises tyranny and ambition and admits to injustice, the Chorus expresses outrage about his "speaking fair about ignoble deeds" (526, p. 263). Antigone's first appearance on the roof where her Pedagogue identifies the warriors besieging Thebes recalls the *teichoskopia* (view from the wall) in the *Iliad* where Helen identified the Greek soldiers for Priam (see Suzuki, *Metamorphoses*, 39–40). Both Helen and Antigone leave the domestic quarters assigned to women to view the battlefield from the liminal space of the wall and the roof, which enables an encompassing viewpoint from above. Antigone's willingness to leave her maiden quarters for this purpose leads her to transgress the space and labor that are assigned to women—as stated by Hector and Eteocles—to involve herself, albeit indirectly as a spectator at this point, with warfare, the business of men. While the scene in the *Iliad* calls attention to Helen's equivocal affiliation as both Greek and Trojan, Antigone's expression of enmity against the warriors besieging Thebes affirms her concern with the well-being of the city, important in light of her later desire to bury Polyneices, which rendered

[35] Some scholars, including Collard, consider this ending to be an interpolation influenced by Sophocles' *Antigone* (xxxv). Burian discusses the *Phoenician Women* as a response to *Seven Against Thebes*. While Roisman focuses on the Chorus as an example of "women's free speech in Greek tragedy," Saxonhouse, "Another Antigone," focuses on Antigone (in the *Phoenician Women*) as a "female political actor."

her a traitor in the eyes of Sophocles' Creon. Her position on the roof also parallels that of the women of Corcyra, who, according to Thucydides, threw tiles and stones against the enemy.

Antigone ventures directly onto the battlefield after Jocasta's failure to avert the fighting between her sons; Jocasta exhorts Antigone to leave the girls' quarters to confront her brothers among their armies, in order to put an end to their dispute:

> Daughter Antigone, come out before the palace! It is not in choral dances or girlish pursuits that the fortune sent by the gods proceeds for you: the two heroes, your brothers, are veering toward death, and you and your mother must prevent their being killed each at the other's hand. (1264–69, p. 343)

Just as Antigone left her maiden quarters to view the enemy troops, so here she leaves her house and her maidenly activities. After some hesitation and questioning—"Where shall I go, leaving my maiden chamber? … I feel shame before the crowd" (1275–76, p. 345)—Antigone joins her mother. By making Creon's decree against Polyneices' burial a repetition of an earlier order given by Eteocles before his death, Euripides undercuts its legitimacy. Moreover, Euripides justifies Antigone's defiance of Creon's decree by citing another that forbids desecration of the dead. Tearing her hair and calling herself a "bacchant of the dead" (1489, p. 365), she fulfills the role of women to mourn their dead relatives—as Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen mourned Hector at the close of the *Iliad*. Yet her self-reference as a bacchant and her refusal to marry Haemon—accompanied by her threat that "my marriage night will make me one of the Danaids" (1675, p. 385), who murdered their bridegrooms—indicate that she has become an anxiety-producing actor in the affairs of the city. By having Antigone call attention to the significance of Polyneices' name (1494, p. 365), meaning "manifold strife," Euripides implicitly calls attention to the meaning of Antigone's own—"against the family." While Sophocles had Creon confine her and then has her commit suicide, Euripides ends his play with Antigone leading Oedipus away, just as Tiresias' daughter accompanied the blind prophet; the play concludes as the two discuss the Sphinx, whom Oedipus calls "a part-maiden creature" (1730, p. 393)—a designation that can also apply to Antigone. Indeed, the riddle of the Sphinx anticipates that of Antigone, who has given rise to such extensive scholarly debate. Finally, these associations of Antigone with the

Bacchantes, the Danaids, and the Sphinx confirm Loraux's contention that women in civil war present an anxious threat to the males of the city.

The example of Antigone—though a riddling one, like the question posed by the Sphinx—has proven productive for scholars of political thought. Christian Meier discusses Antigone as the culmination of "the political art of Greek tragedy," stating that the apparently powerless Antigone, in opposing the tyranny of Creon, "represents a model of the sort of independent, unorthodox thought … indeed necessary ways of thinking." Her "removed stance"—which anticipates Christine de Pizan's self-characterization as *seulette à part* (a lone woman on the side)—calls into question the status quo of contemporary politics, thereby exemplifying a "new concept of civic responsibility" in contrast to the usually outdated heroism of tragic protagonists (201–2).

J. Peter Euben considers Greek tragedy useful for political philosophy because of the analogical thinking it encourages (*Greek Tragedy*, 6).[36] As a case in point, Froma Zeitlin suggests that Thebes in the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides was an "anti-Athens," in that it allowed the playwrights to instruct their audience on "how their city might refrain from imitating the other's negative example" (117). According to Zeitlin, "the city and the family interpenetrate, each offering a model to the other" (135). It is not only the analogy between Athens and Thebes that has led political theorists to think through contemporary political issues with Greek tragedy. Euben observes that Greek tragedy dramatized the crisis of and debate concerning political identity in late fifth- and fourth-century Athens. This crisis also characterized seventeenth-century England and France: for example, the debate concerning the Athenian "ancestral constitution" (*patrios politeia*) is repeated among the English parliamentarians when they invoke the "ancient constitution"; and playwrights such as Thomas May and Christopher Wase translated and adapted Greek tragedy for their own political purposes.[37] Not only did ancient Thebes become a safer site on which to displace the political turmoil of civil war England, but France and England

[36] See also Euben's multifaceted reading of *Antigone* in *Corrupting Youth*, 139–78.

[37] Finley treats "three periods of sharp political conflict, once approaching and twice reaching civil war" (35): the end of fifth century BCE in Athens during the oligarchic coup of the Thirty Tyrants after the defeat of Peloponnesian War, seventeenth-century England, and the struggle over the New Deal in 1930s America. See also Pocock, *Ancient Constitution*.

served as doubles and negative counterexamples for one another in the writings of both English and French writers: Dowriche warned against the consequence of civil strife in England through a depiction of graphic violence during the French religious wars, while Motteville presented the execution of Charles I as a portent of what could happen in France as a consequence of the Fronde.

The Reluctant Feminism of Hannah Arendt

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt derived her political thought from the model of the Greek *polis*, and celebrated political "action" as the highest category of human activity. Although Arendt does not explicitly concern herself with gender—for which she has been faulted by feminist scholars—her valuing of "action" as manifested in principled political deeds and words accords closely with the example of Antigone's burial of Polyneices and defiant speeches against Creon. Moreover, the combination of agonism and associationism that Arendt emphasizes as vital to political action corresponds very closely to Antigone's opposition to Creon, which is validated by the support of Haemon, Teiresias, and the Chorus.[38] Finally, Arendt's affirmation of courage as the political virtue par excellence, in particular risking one's own life to leave behind an identity that leads to immortality in story and history, finds a striking correspondence in the figure of Antigone and her afterlife. Yet Arendt repeatedly invokes Achilles as an example, even though Homer predates the *polis*, as she herself acknowledges, and more important, she excludes violence from what she considers authentic politics; when she mentions *Antigone*, it is to refer to the last lines of the play that invoke the capacity for "great words," not the eponymous character (*Human Condition*, 25, 193–94).[39] Indeed, Arendt leaves unsaid that it is Antigone who is the bearer of these "great words." Clearly, Arendt sought to universalize

[38] Feminist scholars have accused Arendt of "anti-feminism" and faulted her for positing a strict separation between the public and the private. See, for example, O'Brien, 100–10. Arendt, however, has been more useful for recent feminist scholarship that does not confine itself to the topic of women's reproductive roles. Lane, "The Feminism of Hannah Arendt," calls attention to the points of convergence between feminism and Arendt's thought in their concern for political equality. See also Honig, *Feminist Interpretations*.

[39] Arendt cites the Chorus on man in *Antigone*, again, without reference to the eponymous character (*Between Past and Future*, 42). Although, for Arendt, Achilles represents an "example"—in which "ethical principles [are] verified as well as validated" (248)—of

(and degender) her theory of political action, even though she may have been hewing to Antigone's example in constructing it.[40] Arendt therefore represents a twentieth-century female political thinker who, in developing her theory of political action, thought with Antigone's example without naming her.[41]

In *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Seyla Benhabib has argued for the importance of her early biography of Rahel Varnhagen in providing "an alternative genealogy" for Arendt's political theory, in the idea of "the social" as "sociability … the quality of life in civil society and civic associations"—an idea from which she moved away in *The Human Condition*, where she privileged "the political" over "the social," here referring to economic and societal concerns (22–23, 139).[42] Benhabib initially emphasizes Varnhagen's Jewishness rather than her gender as the point of identification for Arendt, stating that "her identity as a woman … do[es] not find explicit recognition in her work," calling her "almost reactionary" on the issue of women's confinement to the private domestic sphere and exclusion from the political public sphere; however, she later derives this idea of "the social" from Varnhagen's salon, which "is in the home yet public, that is dominated by women yet visited and frequented by men" (1–2, 22). Positing this idea of "the social" as an "alternate genealogy" suggests that this was a road that Arendt chose not to take, though Benhabib also states that "early works are also beginnings, and beginnings are frequently closer to the nerve of a thinker's oeuvre" (21). Agreeing with Benhabib's insight on the importance for Arendt of this

courage, Antigone would be an even more fitting "example" in Arendt's own terms, for the "*ethical* principle" of courage.

[40] Arendt discusses the inequality in the relationship between master and slave in the *oikos* but never that between husband and wife (*Between Past and Future*, e.g., 108–9, 117–18). However, her argument that the tyrant is a despot who illegitimately exercises over subjects in the public political realm his legitimate absolute authority over slaves in the private household accurately describes Creon (105–6).

[41] In support of this argument I call attention to another instance in which Arendt declines to acknowledge a text she clearly has in mind. Referring to Thucydides' account of civil war in Corcyra—without stating so explicitly—she observes that political crisis leads to the loss of consensus in the meaning of words: "everything can eventually be called anything else … such terms as 'tyranny,' 'authority,' and 'totalitarianism' have simply lost their common meaning" (*Between Past and Future*, 95).

[42] Benhabib argues that Arendt's attempt to separate the political and the social in this sense is "futile and implausible" (138–66, 158).

early work, especially its focus on a female subject—a focus to which she rarely returned—and borrowing from Benhabib's formulation of Arendt's "reluctant modernism," I argue here for Arendt's "reluctant feminism," particularly evident in her use and occlusion of Antigone's example in *The Human Condition* as she developed her theory of political action.

As indicated in her theory of political action, and like the early modern writers I discuss in this book, Arendt's political writings were motivated by "crisis"—first and foremost by the Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism that she experienced and witnessed. As George Kateb writes, "Totalitarianism pressed on her with such force that she had to respond and try to be theoretically adequate to those great horrors" (130). In addition, she chose as the subjects of her writings various instances of civil war or conflict: the American and French Revolutions, nineteenth- and twentieth-century workers' insurgencies, including the Revolutions of 1848, and US civil disobedience in the 1960s. Thus Arendt's statement that "politics is all the more authentic when it is rupture rather than when it is regular," and her valuing of the "extraordinary" over the "normal" counters Schmitt's authoritarian concept of "the political" and anticipates "the political" as conceived by Badiou and Rancière (*Between Past and Future*, 141).

Like Dowriche, Cary, Motteville, Cavendish, and Williams, Arendt engages with Machiavelli, praising him as the only classical theorist who made the extraordinary effort to restore its old dignity to politics, calling him the "spiritual father of revolution" (*Human Condition*, 35; *On Revolution*, 30).[43] Not only did she derive her concept of *virtù* from Machiavelli, she also valued the experience of political actors over theory and abstraction, just as Machiavelli based his political thinking on history rather than philosophy. Yet Arendt also challenged his justification of violence to achieve goals of *lo stato*, thereby uncoupling violence from authority (*Between Past and Future*, 138–39). Like the early modern women writers who affirmed speaking the "truth" as counselors, then, Arendt claims that "truth," rather than violence, compels assent (107).[44]

[43] Baluch argues for the importance of Machiavelli (even more than Heidegger) for Arendt's political thought, based on not only her published writings, but also her unpublished lecture notes on Machiavelli from 1955 that predate *The Human Condition*.

[44] On the adversarial relationship between truth and politics, the relationship between truth and opinion, and the different kinds of truth (philosophical, rational, factual), see Arendt, "Truth and Politics" (in *Between Past and Future*).

It is not only the context and substance of Arendt's political thought that closely corresponds to these women writers on politics who preceded her. Like her predecessors—though most likely unknown to her—Arendt deployed a form that was not conventionally associated with political writing. She explicitly discusses her choice of the essay as a political form in the preface to *Between Past and Future*, stating that it has a "natural affinity" to "exercises in political thought as it arises out of the actuality of political incidents" (14–15). Cavendish was a precursor to Arendt in the use of the essay form for political purposes in *The Worlds Olio*, where she addressed questions raised by the English Civil Wars and the execution of Charles I. The writers I discuss in this book, like Arendt, wrote from the specific context of a political crisis, and the forms in which they wrote emphasize those contexts, rather than occlude them in the form of the universalizing political treatise in which Hobbes and Locke wrote.[45]

In contrast to Arendt, feminist scholars of political theory have explicitly invoked Antigone's example. Ever since Hegel, Sophocles' Antigone has been read by many scholars as choosing her family over the city.[46] While Hegel considered Creon and Antigone as representing two legitimate, mutually exclusive opposites, Jean Bethke Elshtain has celebrated Antigone's choice as one that affirms "feminism" over "statism," and "traditional female social worlds" over "a fully public identity for women [which] would require … the final suppression of traditional female social worlds" (46). She seeks to "reclaim for women, construed as social actors in the world, an identity that pits them against the imperious demands of public power and contractual relations" (52). In reading Antigone, she considers that Antigone's "primordial family morality precedes and overrides the laws of the state" (53).[47] I agree with Elshtain that Antigone "refus[es] to accept [Creon's] *raison d'état*"; yet her contention that she

[45] Ashcraft recovers the historical context of Locke's treatises in the Exclusion Crisis and the political writings of the English Levellers.

[46] See Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1217–18. Hegel, however, does not see these alternatives as political ones, but as "something intrinsic [to the characters'] own actual being." Steiner emphasizes the gendered aspect of the Hegelian opposition between "the feminine hearth" and "the masculine forum," between the "feminine–ontological" and "masculine–political," though Antigone "stands above" even Oedipus because "her 'crime' is fully conscious" (35).

[47] This strict and gendered division between public and private follows Elshtain's argument in *Public Man, Private Woman*. Lane and Lane, "Politics of *Antigone*"; and Euben, *Greek Tragedy*, 162–82, argue against the notion that Antigone exclusively chooses the

"pits the values of family and particular loyalties, ties and traditions against the values of statecraft with its more abstract obligations" (54) insists upon an overly rigid binary between the family and the State.[48] If we keep in mind Loraux's insight concerning the imbrication of the family and State in civil war, and if we consider Antigone's actions in the context of Thebes where the family and the *polis* are inextricably linked, then Antigone's insistence on burying her brother constitutes *political* resistance having to do with *both* the family *and* the *polis*. And it is precisely Creon's *raison d'état* that gives the occasion for Antigone's resistance, making her action political and not merely confined to the "feminine," familial realm.

The gendered division in *Antigone* is not limited to the family and the State. Creon considers Antigone's opposition as a transgressive act that threatens his male prerogative to sovereignty. When he is informed that someone has buried Polyneices against his decree, he assumes that the culprit is male: "What? What man alive would dare—" (281, p. 71). When he learns that it is Antigone who is opposing him, he likens her to a horse to be tamed and a slave: "And I've known spirited horses you can break / with a light bit—proud, rebellious horses. / There's no room for pride, not in a slave, / not with the lord and master standing by" (532–35, p. 83). Yet a few lines later, he expresses anxiety that his male identity has been usurped by Antigone: "I am not the man, not now: she is the man / if this victory goes to her and she goes free" (541–42, p. 83). Similarly, when Haemon invokes public opinion in counseling Creon to desist, Creon repeatedly excoriates Haemon as fighting on "the woman's side," as "woman's accomplice," and "woman's slave" (828, 837, 848, pp. 97–99). The gendered opposition between Creon on the one hand, and Antigone, Haemon, and the Theban people, on the other, indicates that Antigone speaks for the *demos* against Creon's tyranny.

Even more important than the content of Antigone's speech is the fact that she speaks in public: by doing so, Antigone exercises *isegoria*, the equal right of public speech, and *parrhesia*, every citizen's right to speak his mind in public, both in the political assemblies and in all other

family over the *polis*. Euben suggests that her *philia* extends beyond the family, and that Polyneices represents for her a friend and comrade in arms (174).

[48] Dietz argues against Elshtain in stating that Antigone is a "political person" who "transforms a matter of private concern into a public issue" (29).

fora for public debate (Hansen, 400).[49] As I have already mentioned, Foucault's lectures on *parrhesia*—taking the form of speaking in public (as in the case of Pericles) or giving counsel (as in the case of Plato and Dionysius)—call attention to the importance of the term and concept in discussing the history of political thought and the intersection between politics and philosophy. Athenian women did not participate in *isegoria*, and thus Antigone's "example" in fact challenges the status quo of Athenian democracy that excluded women from its citizenry. As Loraux has reminded us, "the word for 'female Athenian' does not exist … there are only 'women of Athens,' *Attikai gynaikes*" (*Children of Athena*, 116). She demonstrates that Athenians considered women to be of a different race—*genos gynaikon*—and that the Greek ideology of citizenship was founded on "the exclusion of women, … an exclusion that is necessary and impossible at the same time" (73, 75). Examining Antigone as a political actor, I argue that she articulates and acts on rights that women did not have in Athenian democracy; precisely because of the state of exception declared by Creon in the wake of a civil war, her speech prefigures the writings of early modern women enabled by the states of exception of later civil wars through which they lived.[50] Yet although their writings can be theorized and understood using Antigone's example, they themselves do not invoke that example. In fact, it is male playwrights, such as Robert Garnier, Jean de Rotrou, Thomas May, and Christopher Wase, who make explicit use of Antigone's example during the French Wars of Religion and the English Civil Wars.[51] Only in 1725 did an anonymous "Lady" translate the first four acts of Racine's *Thébaïde ou les frères ennemis* (1664) as *The Fatal Legacy: A Tragedy* and added the last Act of her own.

[49] On the distinction between *isegoria* and *parrhesia*, see Saxonhouse, *Free Speech*, 94. Saxonhouse stresses "the daring and courageous quality" of the practice of *parrhesia* as well as its disregard for deference to social and political hierarchy (88); both of these qualities characterize Antigone's speeches to Creon.

[50] Žukauskaitė argues that the "state of exception" becomes a universal rather than a contingent condition, so that "universality starts speaking on behalf of Antigone and on behalf of all those who lack recognition as being human" (79). Fletcher considers Antigone to be speaking against Creon's edict on behalf of the *demos* and to thus "become[] the embodiment of democratic debate" (184). Tindemans discusses Antigone as a "figure of the *parrhesiastes*, the outspoken citizen of ancient Athens" (187).

[51] Miola, however, argues that "most early modern[s] … betray a deep unease with [Antigone, and] … implicitly, or explicitly, sided with Ismene" (223).

Robert Garnier and Jean de Rotrou

Robert Garnier (1544–90) and Jean de Rotrou (1609–50) produced translations and adaptations of *Antigone*: Garnier during the French Wars of Religion and Rotrou during Richelieu's campaigns against the Huguenots. Although both playwrights profess their loyalty to the king in their dedications, their choice of Antigone as subject leads (or enables) them to affirm the subject's right to challenge monarchical prerogative.

Garnier was a distinguished provincial magistrate—"conseiller du roi au siège présidial" (in the royal judicial office)—many of whose plays, such as *Porcie* (1568) and *Cornélie* (1574), deal with civil war. He dedicated his *Antigone* (1580), written during the seventh civil war, the "guerre des amoureux," to Barnabé Brisson, a jurist and royal counselor, significant in light of the question of counsel that will be highlighted in Haemon's unheeded counsel to Creon (aii). Garnier praises the king as "our good Prince, like a second Augustus," whose reign represents "the return of the age of gold" (aii^{v}–iii). He concludes the dedication by presenting Antigone as his daughter, and himself as Oedipus, whom she supports.

Garnier follows Sophocles only in the final two Acts.[52] The first Act, derived from Seneca, serves a number of important functions in the characterization of Antigone. It emphasizes Antigone's filial piety toward Edipe (Oedipus), which immediately justifies the subtitle of the play, "la piété," as well as Antigone's later rebellion against Creon as motivated by reasoned dissent. Garnier nevertheless takes pains to separate Antigone from Edipe, who praises his daughter's virtue, stating that a pigeon has given birth to an eagle (2^{v}). Even so, Antigone repeatedly excuses Edipe's crimes of parricide and incest, since he committed them unaware: "you did not intend it … / In truth, it was only an error, only an act of imprudence" (3).

In contrast to Antigone, Edipe excoriates his sons as "Traitors, reprobates, hungry for slaughter, / Steeped in cruelty, fraud, and outrages" (6^{v}). Iocaste agrees, saying that her sons will "quench their thirst with my lukewarm blood" (11^{v})—a perversion of mother's milk. The fratricidal

[52] Steiner points out that an Italian translation by Luigi Alamanni (1533), three Latin versions from 1541 to 1557, and the French adaptation by Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1573) were available to Garnier. He also states that Seneca's *Phoenissae* was "one of the most imitated texts in the history of western drama" (139). On Garnier's *Antigone* as a "humanist tragedy," see Mueller, 17–32.

rage of Eteocles and Polynice—"implacable in their bloodthirsty furor"—leads to the devastation of Thebes: "the city troubled / With tumults, cries, and filled with carnage" (14).[53] The vividly graphic description derives from Garnier's own experience of civil war: "The bodies of the citizens are piled on top of each other, / Askew, athwart, intertwined without order" (14^{v}). Steiner points out that "[u]nburied bodies, fratricidal encounters, the extirpation of ancient families were no literary–academic trope in sixteenth-century France, but a matter of everyday experience," and that Garnier witnessed the horrors of civil war as he travelled throughout France (138). The world turned upside down that according to Loraux marks civil war manifests itself in the repeated references throughout the play to crows and wolves feasting on human flesh.

Garnier does not justify either of the brothers; rather, he indicts their ambition to rule as self-serving and narcissistic, an indictment that reflects on both the Valois and the Guise. Referring to Machiavelli, who in *The Prince* famously advised that it is better to be feared than loved, Garnier has Polynice state:

> I don't care if my people hate me,
> As long as I am feared and obeyed.
> …
> To keep a Kingdom, and to conquer it,
> I would willingly see women and children killed,
> …
> To see a golden crown on my head,
> Is always worth whatever price it costs.
> No one who buys a Kingdom pays too much. (15^{v}–16)

According to Gillian Jondorf, Iocaste's speech to her sons concerning the particular folly of civil war when one side is led by the claimant to the throne could apply to both Henri de Navarre, second in line, and the duke of Anjou, the heir presumptive (*Robert Garnier*, 40). Inverting Machiavelli on subjects fearing their princes, the Chorus comments that kings live in constant fear of their subjects, tormented by the thought of losing their crowns: "Kings are always anxious / … / Care and fear never

[53] Garnier insists upon the self-destruction of civil war even on the verbal level: "s'entre-dehacher" (6), "s'entremeutrir" (6^{v}), "s'entredespouiller" (8^{v}), "s'entre-homicider" (10), "s'entre-occirir" (11), "s'entremassacrer" (12).

leave them / They can never rest: / For it seems at every moment / That the crown will be snatched from them" (16).

Garnier begins Act 3 by turning to Sophocles, with a dialogue between Antigone and Ismene. Antigone justifies her determination to bury Polynice in order to prevent him from being eaten by crows and she-wolves; she thereby seeks to set aright the world turned upside down of civil war. The exchange between the two sisters contrasts Antigone, who courageously resists what she considers to be an "unjust ordinance" (25), with Ismene, who more conventionally accepts Iocaste's earlier designation of women as the "imbecile sex" (26). Ismene further justifies her refusal to follow Antigone by her need to obey the law, which she equates with the king's commands: "The law is to obey what the King commands." When Ismene promises to keep silent about Antigone's rebellion, Antigone asserts that she considers her deed to be public and commendable: "Tell everyone about it, I'm glad for them to know about it, / It's only those who do ill, who need to hide themselves … / My aim is praiseworthy" (26^{v}). Although Ismene initially declines to follow Antigone's lead, she later defends her sister to Creon on the ground that her act is motivated by piety, while Creon accuses Antigone of simply attempting to defy his authority (31^{v}). Antigone's support by Ismene, Hemon, the Chorus, and even the guard placed by Creon to guard Polynice's corpse who voices sympathy for Antigone, indicates that she, not Creon, speaks for the *demos*.

Creon is discredited from the beginning, for Iocaste calls him a usurper and he explicitly identifies himself with the law: "Let no one contravene my severe law, / If he does not want to feel the anger of the King" (28^{v}). Arrogantly considering himself to be above all counsel, Creon refuses to heed Hemon, who advises him to follow reason, not passion:

> Submit your mind to reason's mastery,
> And don't allow passion to control it,
> Don't be like those who think they know all,
> Who refuse to accept another's counsel.
> It's not at all dishonorable for a wise Prince,
> To learn sometimes from one below him,
> And follow his advice, if he counsels well. (33)

Garnier's emphasis on the value of counsel in these lines prepares for the play's conclusion that dramatizes the catastrophic consequences for both the king and the polity of not heeding it: as Hemon says to Creon, "You

don't want to listen to anyone." Hemon's wise counsel gives weight to his praise of Antigone's act as virtuous, honorable, and loyal, as well as to his condemnation of his father's "tyrannical laws" (33^{v}).[54] The Chorus blames Creon's sentencing of Antigone: "Creon is truly wrong / To send to death / This royal virgin" (35). Furthermore, the Chorus repeats the earlier commentary concerning the fragility of monarchical rule. The peripeteia—with reference to the way that Fortune brings about an overturning, a "bouleverse[ment]" (39)—makes explicit the correspondence between Creon and Sophocles' Oedipus. Creon excoriates himself as a "Savage Tiger" (42) as he acknowledges his own responsibility and guilt for the deaths of his niece, his son, and his wife (42^{v}). Garnier here refers to the notorious pamphlet, *Epistre envoiée au Tigre de France* (1560), which was modeled on Cicero's denunciation of Catiline in excoriating the cardinal of Guise, Charles de Lorraine, as a tyrant.[55] The play concludes with his anguished cry that vividly recalls Sophocles' Oedipus at the end of his play: "Where should I turn my eyes? / … / O great immortal Gods! O father Jupiter! / I beseech you to end my suffering and my life" (44^{v}).

Through this conclusion, Garnier unequivocally affirms Antigone's rebellion against Creon as well as voices a critique of monarchical prerogative heedless of subjects' voices. According to Jondorf, the question of whether or not a subject ought to obey an immoral edict was much debated during the sixteenth century, for example, in Théodore de Bèze's *Du Droit des magistrats* (1574) (*Garnier and Political Tragedy*, 41, 48). Moreover, Antigone's repeated association with *la piété*, which leads her to act according to her own conscience, identifies her with the Protestants whom the French State continued to suppress. The Chorus praises Antigone, stating that her "innocent death" and her piety will gain renown (35^{v}). Garnier's play is evidence of the immortality of her fame,

[54] Jondorf derives Creon's tyranny from his refusal to heed public opinion, rather than his flouting of Hemon's counsel (*Robert Garnier*, 67, 102). But it is Hemon who counsels Creon concerning the "l'advis de la cité" (33^{v})—as presumably Garnier in his role as royal counselor did for Henri III.

[55] Kelley calls *Tiger of France* "the *J'accuse* of the religious wars in France" (*François Hotman*, 113). This pamphlet was published anonymously after the Amboise plot (March, 1560) without any date or place of publication, to argue for the duty to defend against tyrants. It was later attributed to François Hotman, author of *Francogallia* (1573), published in the wake of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre to discredit the French monarchy. See S. Carroll, 128.

with which he associates his own authorship. For Garnier's *Antigone* is not simply a reverential imitation of Sophocles: Garnier presents in his humbled Edipe at once a revision of Sophocles' prideful Oedipus and a critique of Creon as heir to Sophocles' Oedipus. If we remember Garnier's likening of himself to Edipe and his play to Antigone, we can see how his adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* has led him to (or allowed him to express) a position that challenges the authority of monarchical prerogative. Through his *Antigone*, and the analogy between the fratricidal Polynice and Eteocles on the one hand, and the Guises and the Valois on the other, Garnier condemns both parties engaged in the Wars of Religion as self-interested and heedless of the voices and suffering of the French people.

A similar literary and political evolution marks Jean de Rotrou's *Antigone* (1639). Rotrou was born into a family of magistrates in Dreux and earned a law degree in 1630. He became a client of Richelieu, who in 1627 successfully besieged the Huguenot stronghold La Rochelle, with the aid of Charles I's English forces led by Buckingham. The Peace of Alais (1629) abolished political rights and protections for the Huguenots, while maintaining the religious toleration granted them by the Edict of Nantes. In 1632, Richelieu put down a rebellion by Henri, duke of Montmorency, ordering his execution. Rotrou dedicated *Hercule mourant* (1636) to Richelieu, and he was one of the "Five Authors" whom Richelieu assembled to write plays; he was designated in 1639 as "gentleman by ordinance of the most eminent Monseigneur Cardinal of Richelieu."[56] Rotrou dedicated his *Antigone* to count Guébriant, marshall of the king's army: "as you serve him, I divert him, and I present to his Majesty the siege of Thebes, while you besiege Brizac" (np). As in Garnier's case, this explicit statement of loyalism in the dedication gives way to a more equivocal political position in the play itself.

Rotrou follows Garnier in a number of ways, while making his own contribution to the political commentary of his times.[57] For example, Rotrou echoes Garnier in representing a world turned upside down where human corpses have become food for crows and wolves. Tyresie (Teiresius) explicitly blames Creon for this state of affairs: "you … overturn the

[56] For Rotrou's biography, see Morello, chap. 1, which, however, does not consider the effect of Rotrou's close relationship with Richelieu on his dramatic output.

[57] On the relationship of Rotrou's version to Garnier's, but from "a strictly dramaturgical perspective" and "the psychology of the individual," see Mueller, 35.

laws of Nature" (102). Rotrou intensifies this inversion on the verbal level through his notable use of oxymorons that recall Thucydides' Corcyra: the Guard calls Antigone's burial of Polynice "criminal virtue" (67) and Antigone challenges Creon, "[h]ere the offense is just, and the law, criminal" (73). Rotrou agrees with Garnier in depicting Creon as a tyrant who has appropriated the law: to this end, he even repeats Garnier's rhymed couplet "Roy/loy" (King/law) (65). And as in Garnier, Creon's tyranny manifests itself in his refusal to heed counsel—though Rotrou adds Ephyte, another "Seigneur de Thebes" who advises Creon to follow Hemon's counsel.

Perhaps the most salient of Rotrou's innovations is his use and analysis of the language of "interest." Rotrou has Hemon couple in the same line "raison d'Etat" and "respect owed the Crown" (10), identifying the reason of state with the monarchy, as Richelieu had done. Yet the repeated coupling of "interest" and "tyranny" throughout the play suggests that tyranny is based on the private interest of the sovereign, a suggestion that demystifies Richelieu's *raison d'état* by which he justified absolutist rule. The emergence of a recognition of the validity of private interests that do not accord with the stated *raison d'état* is evidenced in Antigone's affirmation of "[a] close friendship … / … / In which the sister embraces her brother's interests as her own" (12–13). Hemon's love for Antigone is expressed in his support of Antigone's "interest" against that of his father Creon. Polynice identifies "my interest" with "that of Greece" and "right order" (22), later stating, "[e]ach makes a law of his own interest" (28). Thus *raison d'état*, identified with the king's interest, is counterpoised to the interest (and right) of noble families.

Rotrou's calling his protagonist "Princess Antigone" (67) and the emphasis on "rank" and "her descent" (73) underscore her aristocratic position and suggest a critical perspective on Creon's harsh punishment of her. As I have already discussed, Sophocles' Creon repeatedly expressed his panicked anxiety that he and Antigone had exchanged genders; Rotrou rewrites Sophocles in having Creon state, "I seem to be her subject, she seems to be my Queen" (73), indicating that the subversion of the hierarchical relationship between king and (noble) subject has become perhaps even more anxiety-producing than that between patriarch and female subject. In light of Richelieu's establishment of an absolute monarchy at the expense of the nobility (for example, by exiling the king's mother, Marie de' Medici and his brother, Gaston d'Orléans), the negative representation of Creon's harsh treatment of

Antigone suggests a similarly critical attitude toward Louis and Richelieu. That Antigone's rebellion against the king is motivated by her religious conscience—"Antigone is pious and reveres the Gods" (92)—makes her more closely approximate the Huguenots and thereby adds another dimension to Rotrou's challenge to royal authority, with particular reference to Richelieu's recently concluded campaign against the Huguenots at La Rochelle.

Thomas May and Christopher Wase

A surprisingly similar use of Antigone to register dissent from the dominant regime characterizes the output of two playwrights in seventeenth-century England: Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Antigone* (1631) and Christopher Wase's *Electra* (1649). As in the cases of Garnier and Rotrou, these works did not constitute translations in our strict sense of the word, but adaptations that actively engaged with classical texts in a dynamic and dialectical process to put the texts to present uses.[58] The focus in these Sophoclean tragedies on female protagonists, Antigone and Electra—whom Wase closely associates with Antigone—enables their translators to obliquely express their political opposition to the dominant regime. The translations by May and Wase present this unequal power relationship in gendered terms: the cross-gender identification of the male translator with the female protagonist enables the writers to engage the volatile subject of political resistance against the regime.

May, whose *Antigone* was published five years after his translation of Lucan, was a royalist who would go on to switch his allegiance to the republican cause. In his dedication of *Antigone* to Endymion Porter, May praises his dedicatee's close association with Charles I: "most worthy to stand (as you doe) in the presence of a King … blest in his Maiesties fauour" (A6). This choice of dedicatee, together with May's emphasis on tragedy's function as "a delightsome pastime," and especially on the way "the greatest Princes, both *Grecian* and *Roman*, in their highest iollity haue … beheld with delight the presentation of them" (A4) is strategically at odds with the play's indictment of tyrannical rule in the person of Creon. While May's *Antigone* allows him to dramatize the protagonist's

[58] I here follow Norbrook, who calls into question the sharp distinction between original texts and the reception of classical texts, "itself an active process" ("Lucan, Thomas May," 46).

principled resistance to a tyrannical ruler, the gender of the protagonist, as well as the prestige of Sophocles, allowed him to escape scrutiny for his veiled critique of Charles' increasingly autocratic rule.

May begins the play with the blind Oedipus led by Antigone, who recapitulates the plot of *Oedipus at Colonus* (401 BCE). May includes Oedipus in his version in order to contrast him with Creon: unlike Creon, Oedipus recognizes Antigone's "vertue" and is guided by her; he "forsooke a crowne, which others / Striue to attaine by all impiety" (B1^{v}–2). By contrast, Creon is repeatedly called a "tyrant," not only by Antigone, but by his own son, Aemon. Creon flouts Tiresias' counsel to desist from his "cruelty / To good Antigone" which will lead to "plagues"; he ignores as well the petition of the Chorus to spare "For *Thebes* … sake, that virtuous maide, /… to prevent a feirce and cruell warre." Exclusively focused on his own prerogative rather than the good of Thebes, Creon dismissively responds, "our command is past too farre already, / And must be iustifi'd not changed now" (E2^{v}); "No power must daunt me; 'tis not Kingly now / Vpon constraint to change my rough decree" (E3).

Although May was still outwardly a supporter of the monarchy at this point, his language in *Antigone* indicates otherwise. Antigone speaks of acting according to "the rule of nature, / And those pure principles, which human breasts / Did at their first originall deriue / From their Celestiall essence" (D5^{v}). Here, May implies that Antigone acts according to natural law, for which James I advocated against artificial reason, championed by Edward Coke; he thereby justifies Antigone's rebellion on grounds that James himself would have supported (though James, who affirmed cutting off the limbs to spare the head in the *True Law of Free Monarchies* [1598], of course would not have condoned the rebellion of a subject against a monarch). In addition, contravening absolutist doctrine, May writes approvingly of Antigone's support by "the generall voice of people" (C) and of those who seek to counsel the king for the sake of the common good: "Better that any one for good aduice / Should suffer from his fury, then the land / In generall should smart" (E2).[59]

May's *Antigone* was published three years after the Petition of Right of 1628, which insisted upon the right of the subject against the prerogative of the monarch. Even in 1627, he signaled his disillusion with

[59] Miola suggests, however, that May "diminish[es] Antigone … render[ing] her harmlessly, even cloyingly, pious"—to such an extent that he "repudiate[s] entirely the Sophoclean heroine" (238, 240).

the monarch by the dedication of each book of his Lucan translation to various peers, four of whom had refused to pay the Forced Loan mandated by Charles (Norbrook, "Lucan, Thomas May," 44). His *Julia Agrippina,* acted in 1628 and published in 1639 and again in 1654, can be read (and certainly was read by 1639) as an indictment of Henrietta Maria's pernicious influence on Charles I. In fact, in the *History of the Parliament of England* (1647), May made an explicit comparison between Agrippina and Henrietta Maria's mother, Marie de' Medici. Although May dedicated his *Continuation* of Lucan (1630) to the king, and Charles commissioned May to write the English histories of Henry II and Edward III (ironically, the only monarch mentioned in the Petition of Right as one who was associated with the statute establishing the rights of the subject and due process), a close reading of *Antigone* in conjunction with his other translations of the period indicates his far-reaching critique of Charles' rule.[60]

One of the dedicatory poems to Christopher Wase's *Electra* explicitly states that the translation not only "speaks our *Land*, as well as *Tongue*, and *cares* / Not onely for our *Words,* but our *Affayres*," while also emphasizing the ability of translators to defend against accusations of seditious intent: "For 'tis but *Sophocles* repeated, and / *Eccho* cannot be *guilty* or *arraign'd*" (¶5^{v}). May would undoubtedly have assented to both statements concerning the politics of translation. Published at The Hague in 1649, in the wake of Charles' execution, Wase's *Electra* was dedicated to Elizabeth, Charles I's second daughter, whom he praised for filial piety. Echoing Hamlet's speech to the players in stating that "Playes are the Mirrours wherein Mens actions are reflected to their own view," Wase refers to his play as "this dim Chrystal" that reflects the "Lines and Shadows of that pietie to your deceased Father" (¶2^{v}–3). Elizabeth was only thirteen at the time of her father's execution; she died a prisoner the following year in Carisbrooke Castle.

Since Wase was a classical scholar, his translation more closely follows Sophocles; his departures from the original, therefore, are the more notable. His text includes footnotes and glosses that emphasize the "scholarly" aspect of his work, and he takes great pains to explain the

[60] See Britland, "Buried Alive," for a detailed topical reading of the play; she maintains, however, that it cannot "be considered a polemical criticism of Charles's methods of government" (139).

way the Chorus, or in his words, the "Ancient Quire [Choir]" functioned (A). Yet the "*Eccho*"s from Sophocles and their implications for the contemporary political situation carry resonances that cannot be entirely controlled—or may have even been intended. While Aegisthus' correspondence with Oliver Cromwell—according to one of the commendatory verses, Wase will "be attaqu'd / For having broke Lord *Egists* new made Act" (¶7)—is relatively unproblematic for the intended political meaning of the play, that between Clytemnestra and Henrietta Maria is more vexed—as evidenced in Dale B. J. Randall's assertion that "Wase obviously had to sidestep the implication that Henrietta Maria was a Clytemnestra" (217). In fact, Agamemnon's guilt and Clytemnestra's perfidy suggest Charles' own responsibility for his fate and Henrietta Maria's contribution to Charles' destruction. Accordingly, in one of his extensive marginal glosses, Wase at once calls attention to and denies the "similitude" between Clytemnestra and Henrietta Maria:

> Here may not unproperly be urg'd the old caution, that similitudes run not upon all foure: Yet may this be a fit pourtraiture of an accumulative and aggregative Lady, the queen politick, which hath trull'd it in the lewd embraces of the souldiery, and to consummate the scandal, shall have conspired with it, & together heinously upon agreement, destroys her just and undoubted Lord. (5)

In his dedication to Elizabeth, Wase appears to praise her at the expense of her mother: "The Historie of your Name … shall draw forth Encomiums to bleach the defects of unaccomplisht Queens" (¶3). He also makes the satirist's traditional defense against censorship: "some, privy to the Uglinesse of their own guilt, have issued out Warrants, for the breaking all those Looking-glasses; lest their deformities recoyl, and become an eye-sore unto themselves" (¶2^{v}–3). These passages raise the question of why Wase chose to translate *Electra*, and to address himself to Elizabeth, rather than to her mother Henrietta Maria, or even to her nineteen-year-old brother Charles. Though the two poems appended as Epilogue, "The Return," and "The Restauration," announce a hope for Charles to reclaim his father's throne, the bombastic rhetoric betrays it as an unrealistic fantasy at this point rather than an expectation that could reasonably be fulfilled. Indeed, Wase states that Elizabeth's filial piety "seats you above the Age, and beyond your Years: Which makes you better then your Country, and higher then your Enemies: Which lodges you in our

Eye as our Example, and in our Heart as our Treasure" (¶2v–3). His praise of young Elizabeth as heir and avenger of the dead king indicates the bleak hopelessness of the royalist cause.

Wase significantly associates his Electra with Antigone, a more powerful Sophoclean heroine, by having Electra state to her brother Chrysothemis: "First to our Fathers and our Brothers dust, / Perform the Ceremony's of the Dead" (36–37), lines not present in Sophocles' *Electra*. In repeatedly using the word "counsel," Wase emphasizes the *political* nature of Electra's exhortation to Chrysothemis (36, 37, 39), who corresponds to *Antigone*'s Ismene in serving as a foil to his more audacious sister. This association between Antigone's sister and Electra's brother is already present in Sophocles, where Chrysothemis chides his sister for "declaim[ing] / In public at the outer gate" and giving in to "idle rage," but nevertheless acknowledges: "yet I know / Justice is on thy side, and I am wrong" (329–31, 337–38, p. 151). In addition, Wase's Electra proclaims to Clytemnestra in a self-characterization reminiscent of Antigone: "give it out, if you think good, / … / That I … to the depth of impudence am bold: / For if these vertuous qualities I shew, / I do not much degenerate from you" (23–24). Electra's hostility toward Clytemnestra as a measure of her allegiance to the memory of her father, while in line with Sophocles' Electra, suggests Wase's own hostility toward Henrietta Maria as worthy of blame for Charles' demise.[61]

Wase underscores the political valence of Electra's speech by having her address the Chorus as her "fellow citizens" (46) and rejoice in the turn from "speechlesse" anger (48) to the "freedome" with which she can speak upon Orestes' return (47). Sophocles had emphasized the importance for Electra of "speak[ing] the truth" (553, p. 167) and "free speech," which Clytemnestra had characterized negatively as "glib garrulity" and "wild tongue" (629, 623, 631, p. 173). Finally, Wase in another marginal gloss calls attention to Electra's ironic answers to Aegisthus, who believes Orestes to have died and is ignorant of his killing of Clytemnestra: "*Electra* in all her answers now onely mocks with a double meaning play's [sic] upon his ignorance to baffle him" (55). The

[61] Sophocles' Electra similarly declares to the chorus, "How indeed could any woman / Of noble blood who sees her father's home / Plague-stricken, as I see it night and day, / And each day stricken worse, not do as I? / For me a mother's love has turned to hate" (257–61, p. 145).

"double meaning" of a more knowing subordinate who enjoys her superiority over a more powerful figure corresponds to the "double meaning" these literary texts, and indeed translations, can deploy.

Writing during two distinct periods in the seventeenth century that nevertheless shared political volatility, both May and Wase took advantage of the possibility for indirection offered by translation to negotiate the tumultuous political culture in which they sought to intervene. This instability of the idea of "translation"—from the perspective of both language and politics—is embodied in the female protagonists in both May and Wase's translations of Sophocles. Antigone and Electra—closely associated with Antigone—become figures of resistance against the dominant regime, and as such, useful vehicles for the writers to represent their political interventions. At the same time, in contrast to such virtuous "daughters," Wase's Clytemnestra and May's Julia Agrippina enable the playwrights to demonize the political intervention by mothers and wives; even from the opposed perspectives of republican and royalist, both agree in this representation of positive and negative political positions through female characters. Their shared strategy indicates that, on the one hand, as subjects under the increasingly absolutist Charles I, and on the other, under the regime that had recently executed Charles, both translators found female protagonists such as Antigone and Electra—whose virtues as loyal daughters justify their boldness in "speak[ing their] Mind[s]" (Wase, 24) against tyrannical power—useful surrogates for representing political resistance.

Methodology and Description of the Book's Chapters

In *Metamorphoses of Helen*, I examined the analogous deployment of the figure of Helen of Troy by male poets to register their innovation in relation to the epic tradition in classical antiquity and the English Renaissance. In contrast to Helen, Antigone here is not a figure that constitutes a tradition, but an example "to think with" and through—as Thomas May and Christopher Wase did. It is significant that while the male writers project onto Antigone their own oppositional political positions, the women writers I discuss in this book—like Hannah Arendt in the twentieth century—do not themselves explicitly invoke Antigone as a model for their own interventions. Doing so would have underscored the transgressive aspects of their actions and would have contravened their

attempts to legitimate those very same interventions.[62] Indeed, Christine de Pizan, who does refer to the story of Thebes, invokes Argia, the widow of Polyneices who also sought to bury him, thus displacing Antigone's political opposition and domesticating it by taking as an example a figure of wifely devotion. Germaine de Staël, the devoted daughter of Jacques Necker and fierce opponent of Napoleon, while referring to Antigone, emphasizes her filial piety rather than her rebellion against the State. At the same time, although I argue that Arendt did use Antigone as an example without naming her, I am not claiming that each of the writers I examine was consciously following Antigone as a precedent for their political interventions. Rather, the "example" can be understood as a philosophical category, "the particular that contains in itself … a concept or a general rule," as Arendt stated in concluding her seminar on Kant's *Critique of Judgment*: "Most concepts in the historical and political sciences … have their origin in some particular historical incident, and we then proceed to make it 'exemplary'—to see in the particular what is valid for more than one case" (*Lectures on Kant*, 84, 85). The example of Antigone for my project can also be described as a Malinowskian "warrant" to theorize women's political intervention in the civil war context. As Malinowski states, "precedent accounts for subsequent cases, though it does so through an order of ideas entirely different from the scientific relation of cause and effect, of motive and consequence" (28, 89).[63] The classical example of Antigone, then, provides not a historical beginning, but a logical foundation for thinking through political concepts and principles.[64]

[62] In his brief discussion of the "role of the matter of Antigone in the actual lives of individuals and communities," Steiner adduces examples of women who defied the Nazis in burying male relatives (108–9). He observes that while the French Revolution made of Antigone an emblematic text of "female emancipation"—e.g., Madame Roland, Wollstonecraft, Madame de Staël—the contradiction remained between the rhetoric of liberation and conservative practice so that "Antigone belongs hauntingly but safely, to the idiom of the ideal" (10).

[63] Although Malinowski's study concerns mythology in primitive societies, he explicitly states that his work is relevant to "higher civilization" and to "literary texts" (90).

[64] For the alternative posed between a "historical beginning" and a "logical foundation," see Mecchia, 73.

Antigone's Example combines and extends the methodology of my previous books in employing not simply a comparative approach—nevertheless alive to historical particulars—but a transcultural approach that focuses on the exchange of ideas, texts, and people between England and France. It widens the field of inquiry from literary and canonical texts to include lesser known texts in different genres—poetry, drama, fiction, memoirs, letters, translations, and pamphlet literature—in both print and manuscript.[65] My methodology in analyzing these texts is at once literary, cultural, and historical, paying attention to the use of literary genres and forms and placing these writings in their historical and biographical contexts.

Finally, I seek to make a theoretical intervention from the perspective of specific literary and historical contexts, as I did in my two previous books. In *Metamorphoses of Helen*, I offered a critique of René Girard's theory of sacrifice and scapegoating by suggesting that classical and Renaissance epics question the efficacy and justice of scapegoating. In *Subordinate Subjects*, I called into question Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's contention that political identity in radical democracy can only come about through antagonisms and exclusions. And in *Antigone's Example*, I suggest that Giorgio Agamben's theory of the "state of exception" needs to be revised from the perspective of the subaltern in light of women's political interventions in times of civil war.

In my first chapter, I examine works by Christine de Pizan, as an exemplary figure who originated the genre of women's civil war writings. Christine wrote during the years leading up to and during the civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, for patrons on both sides of the conflict. *The Book of the Deeds and Good Character of King Charles V, the Wise* (1404), *Epistle to the Queen* (1405), *The Lamentations on the Evils of France* (1410), *The Book of the Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry* (1410), and *The Book of Peace* (1412) all provide evidence of the centrality of civil war to the development of her political thought. Christine has often been classified as a late medieval writer, but recent scholarship by Earl Jeffrey Richards and Jennifer Summit, among others, has demonstrated the humanist aspects of her work and thus her important position as one of the writers who marked the transition in France

[65] The collection of texts in Smith, Suzuki, and Wiseman represent a similar effort to expand the definition of what counts as "political" writing. I have described this methodology in "What's Political." See also Suzuki, "Recognizing Women's Dramas."

between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Richards, "Christine de Pizan"; Summit, 61–107). As Cynthia Brown has argued, "the advent of print played a critical role in the introduction of Christine de Pizan to a noncourtly French public during the early modern period." According to Brown, "Christine's authorship and literary reputation had become firmly reestablished by the mid-sixteenth century and … French publishers were directing her work to a male and female audience"; at the same time, the gradually decreasing sizes of her books made them more affordable to a wider public ("Reconstruction," 220, 227, 234n).[66] Christine's works also found an enthusiastic audience in England: most notably, Henry VII commanded William Caxton to translate *Deeds of Arms* and required it to be read by his nobility. Thus, on the grounds of the significance of her civil war writings, her humanist methodology, and the dissemination of her works to an early modern French and English audience, Christine de Pizan represents a foundational figure for this study.

The second chapter turns to consider, first, English women writing about or translating texts arising from the late sixteenth-century French religious wars (1562–98) in order to counsel Elizabeth I concerning the dangers of civil strife between English Catholics and Protestants. Anne Dowriche's *The French Historie* (1589) adapts a French prose chronicle by Jean de Serres, translated into English by Thomas Timme, to counsel Elizabeth I to pursue a more vigorous Protestant policy against France, invoking the counterexample of Catherine de' Medici as an evil counselor responsible for the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Mary Sidney's *Antonius* (1590) translates Robert Garnier's *Marc Antoine* (1578), written during the French religious wars, to counsel Elizabeth against following the example of Cleopatra, who sacrificed Egypt to her passion for Antony, in pursuing the "French match" with Alençon. The chapter then turns to Elizabeth Cary's *History of Edward II* (wr. 1627; pub. 1680), composed during the reign of Charles I and on the eve of the Petition of Right (1628) and dedicated to Henrietta Maria. This work takes as its subject the civil war initiated by French-born Isabella's attack on her husband Edward's forces. Cary, a Catholic like Henrietta Maria, found herself embattled against her husband and her king. The *History*, a work of counsel concerning the initially positive but ultimately negative political

[66] See 233–34n for an extensive discussion of sixteenth-century French writers and works referring to Christine.

role of a queen consort, proved to be prescient because Henrietta Maria, attacked as a Catholic who exerted excessive influence upon her husband Charles at the onset of the English Civil Wars, became an important political advisor especially after she fled to France (as Isabella had done earlier) and Charles remained to face his trial and execution.

Chapter 3 focuses on the French Fronde (the two civil wars during 1648–53) to discuss the writings of four women closely involved in the conflict, placing them in relation to the Mazarinades, the pamphlet literature concerning the Fronde. Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, duchess of Montpensier (known as the Grande Mademoiselle) secured Orléans for the *frondeurs* by making a military entry into the city; she subsequently wrote a memoir that includes an account of her experiences during the civil war. Françoise de Motteville produced an extensive memoir on the reign of Anne of Austria as her confidante, recounting and analyzing in detail the tumultuous events of the Fronde. Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, duchess of Longueville, published a "report to the public" explaining her political activity following the imprisonment of her brothers and husband, explaining that the state of exception facing the country and her family compelled her to act. Longueville's stepdaughter, Marie d'Orléans-Longueville, duchess of Nemours, apparently wrote from a royalist perspective, opposing the position supporting the Fronde taken by her stepmother, uncle (Condé), and initially by her father (duke of Longueville). The English Civil Wars impinge upon all three memoirs: during Henrietta Maria's French exile, discussions took place concerning marriages between Montpensier and the prince of Wales (later Charles II) and between Nemours and the duke of York (later James II). Moreover, Motteville and Nemours both analyze the French Fronde and its relation to the nearly simultaneous English Civil Wars. Finally, after the failure of the Fronde in Paris, Longueville participated in the Council of Bordeaux, which negotiated with Oliver Cromwell to secure his support against Mazarin.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the writings during the English Civil Wars of Margaret Cavendish, who accompanied Henrietta Maria in exile to France. Like Christine de Pizan, whose writings she may have known, she produced an extensive *oeuvre* in various genres. She registers her experience of civil war in her orations, essays, poetry, and plays, written during the 1650s and published after the Restoration in 1660. *The Life of William Cavendish* (1667), widely read by political and military historians of the English Civil Wars, corresponds closely to Christine's life of

Charles V. Despite her husband's role as Charles I's general and Charles II's governor, Cavendish stakes out a position that might be characterized as "ambiguous royalism"; I will be suggesting, in fact, that Cavendish tracks closely the aristocratic anti-monarchism of the *frondeuses* who were active during her sojourn in France. By analyzing the shortcomings of Charles I as king and military leader during the English Civil Wars, she proffers counsel to Charles II to avoid the mistakes his father made.

Chapter 5 takes a more expansive view of women's civil war writing to discuss Katherine Philips' post-Restoration translations of Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée* (1642) as *Pompey* (1663) and his *Horace* (1640) of which she translated four of the five acts before her death in 1664. Although—or because—royalist Philips was married to a parliamentarian husband, she emphasizes in these works the need for mediation between the two sides of the civil war, as well as calling attention to the costs to women of civil war. The duke and duchess of Monmouth performed parts in her version of *Pompey*, and her manuscript poetry was recovered from Monmouth upon his death after his failed rebellion against James II. Aphra Behn, who translated a number of French texts during the mid-1680s, published *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684–87), set in France (with references to both the Wars of Religion and the Fronde) and based on French genres, to comment on the Monmouth Rebellion. Although Behn in her other writings had affirmed her support of the Tories over the Whigs, the slippage in the correspondence between the characters and their plots in the novel and their supposed topical counterparts results in a complex and ambivalent political analysis. Jane Barker produced her manuscript collection, "A Collection of Poems Refering to the Times" (1701)—which includes poems concerning the Battle of Sedgmoor where Monmouth fell—and *Exilius: or the Banished Roman* (1715) at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where she accompanied James II in exile. Her works address the Jacobite conflict—another civil war—in relation to the Fronde, just as the mid-seventeenth-century French writers analyzed the Fronde in relation to the English Civil Wars. Philips, Behn, and Barker indicate that the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars were still important reference points and *exempla* for women's political writings after the Restoration, and even at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In fact, the English translation of Motteville's memoirs of the Fronde was dedicated to Sarah Churchill, duchess of Marlborough, the confidante of Queen Anne.

Chapter 6 brings the discussion forward to the French Revolution and its aftermath in the works of Louise de Kéralio, Stéphanie de Genlis, and Germaine de Staël. On the eve of the Revolution, Kéralio wrote and compiled a history and anthology of French women's writings that prominently featured Christine de Pizan. Kéralio also published a celebratory five-volume history of Elizabeth I, as well as translated from English a work that advocated the reform of prisons and hospitals. After the outbreak of the Revolution, she became the first woman publisher of a newspaper, *Mercure national*. Genlis was known as the governor of the children of the duke of Orléans, the brother of Louis XVI; she fled to England with her charges and wrote extensively concerning the Revolution. In addition to editing the memoirs of Madame de Bonchamps, an account of the Vendée rebellion by a widow of a royalist general (1823), Genlis repeatedly took up the topic of civil war, specifically the Wars of Religion, in *The Siege of La Rochelle* (1807) and the *History of Henry the Great* (1815). Staël, also exiled in England, wrote in her posthumously published *Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution* (1818), a comparative analysis of the English Civil War and the French Revolution. Kéralio and Genlis, accomplished and prominent authors in their own time, have been overshadowed by Staël in contemporary scholarship: their relative neglect, I believe, stems from their ambivalent and ambiguous positions concerning women in politics, even while they energetically produced political writing during and concerning the French Revolution.

The Epilogue takes up Helen Maria Williams' "letters" from France concerning the French Revolution, eagerly consumed by the English public. Through these letters—which in fact constitute political essays—Williams counters Edmund Burke and others who excoriated the Revolution, by defending its democratic principles while critically registering the abandonment of those principles during the Terror—a position that closely tracks Staël's. This discussion of Williams' eyewitness account of the Revolution, experienced as a state of exception calling for truthful counsel of her English readership, serves as a fitting conclusion for my project concerning women's political writings in times of civil war.

All these cases, then, provide evidence for my argument that civil wars make possible productive contributions to political discourse by women. The breakdown or imbrication of categories such as public and private in civil wars as regimes of division allows these writers to step forth from the spheres that confined them in a time of more stable social, gendered,

and political classification. Acknowledging that women deployed various genres to write about politics during these states of exception enables us to understand their important contributions to political discourse in the early modern period. I suggest that these examples constitute "universal exceptions," in the sense that the women writing on political subjects are "exceptions" that exemplify the universality of political participation by those hitherto excluded, as well as in the sense that their examples are not isolated ones but are repeated throughout the early modern period.[67] Finally, in pursuing this study, I embrace the goals of both contingency and universality: while firmly grounding my analysis in historical particulars, I hope to contribute to a more general understanding of the participation of non-State actors in the political process. We are fortunately no longer compelled to suppress (gendered) contingency in the service of universality, as Hannah Arendt did in the mid-twentieth century.[68] Yet Arendt's important insight that political action represents a new beginning, when applied to Antigone as well as to the women writers in this study, enables us to see how their examples present new possibilities for a politics that is subject to change.[69]

[67] I adopt the term "universal exception" from Žizek: "Politics proper … always involves a kind of short-circuit between the universal and the particular; it involves the paradox of a singular that appears as a stand-in for the universal" (*Universal Exception*, 183).

[68] See for example, Arendt, *On Violence*, 82: "What makes *man* a political being is his faculty of action; it enables *him* … to reach out for goals and enterprises which would never enter *his* mind, let alone the desires of *his* heart, had *he* not been given this gift—to embark on something new" (emphasis added). Hilda Smith, *All Men*, has argued that the "false universal" (i.e., of "men") implies inclusion of both men and women when it actually excludes women. Both Bar On (300–1) and Young-Bruehl (313–17) argue that Arendt chose to focus on the Jewish aspect of her identity (under the historical condition of the Holocaust) rather than on her identity as a woman. On Rahel Varnhagen as an "example" for Arendt, see Chapter 6 below.

[69] In "What is Freedom," Arendt asserts that "action and beginning are essentially the same" and that "every new beginning … breaks into the world as an 'infinite improbability' … which actually constitutes the very texture of everything we call real." Thus, human interventions in the historical process, "unforeseeable and unpredictable," constitute "'miracles' in the political realm" (*Between Past and Future*, 169).