

Antigone, Interrupted. By Bonnie Honig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 321 pp. \$29.99 paper.

Reviewed by Leonard Feldman, Department of Political Science, Hunter College, CUNY

Ismene did it. In a bold and fresh rereading of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Greek tragedy positively bristles with intrigue, conspiracy, and partisan political conflict. *Antigone* also turns into something of a whodunit: Ismene, sister of Antigone, emerges as Antigone's secret co-conspirator and, crucially, the heretofore unrecognized guilty party—responsible for the first burial of the traitorous but beloved brother Polynices. Honig does not convert Antigone into an agonistic democrat—indeed, crucial to the argument is the way in which Antigone's actions and words present an aristocratic critique of the surprisingly democratic Creon. Rather, Antigone manifests certain virtues for our democracy and these virtues appear through her conspiratorial action with her sister. *Antigone* needs to be retrieved from those readings of the play that present her as either a lonely hero manifesting humanist ethics above and against unjust law or as an extrapolitical figure of common human suffering and grief. Antigone is neither the saintly embodiment of a higher law nor a prepolitical devotee of private familial care—she is a thoroughly engaged partisan, a wily political actor.

In Honig's innovative and compelling reading, *Antigone* stages not a clash between ethics and law, or between higher law and human law, but between two rival political frames—the Homeric/aristocratic and the democratic. This conflict is seen most vividly in the conflict over burial and mourning practices. Creon's banning of Polynices' burial represents not (or not simply) the actions of a tyrant violating the moral order, but (substantively if not procedurally) the democratic approach to mourning and burial. Thus, in one of the compelling ironies of the analysis, Antigone becomes a rich figure for democratic theory, but not because she represents a democratic position (of civil disobedience or anti-statism) against a tyrant. On the contrary, Antigone brings an aristocratic frame to bear against Creon's position which substantively has more in common with the prevailing democratic culture of Athens. What makes Antigone a rich figure for democratic (as well as, I would add, legal) thinking according to Honig is the way she *grieves*. Honig points to the multiple senses of grieving—to mourn, to express grief, as well as to invoke law in order to redress an injustice. By repositioning Antigone as an engaged political actor with alliances, strategies, and partiality, *Antigone, Interrupted* provides a corrective to the current "mortalist humanist" Antigone that

sees the heroine as above and beyond politics, embodying a universal human experience of grief and suffering.

The book is neatly divided into two parts: The first half engages with a range of contemporary treatments of *Antigone* in philosophy, feminist theory, and film. This section provides a rich commentary on the pitfalls of the recent “ethical turn” that figures a common human experience not of rationality or speech but of suffering and vulnerability. In its place, Honig advocates an agonistic humanism that “is not reducible to an ethics nor founded on finitude” and which “draw[s] not only nor even primarily on mortality and suffering, but also on natality and pleasure, power (not just powerlessness), desire (not just principle), and *thumos* (not just *penthos*)” (p. 19). The second half turns to the primary text itself and presents the agonistic Antigone. Remarkably, the second half remains deeply engaged with the secondary literature on the play as Honig painstakingly situates her reading with and against other approaches. The second half is framed by the concept of conspiracy, which comes to denote forms of linguistic agency and political solidarity.

One of the most creative and provocative elements in this reinterpretation of Antigone is the use of the rhetorical concept of *adianoeta*—speech that is deployed with the purpose of being understood differently by two different audiences. (Such rhetorical devices can be weapons of civil disobedience but they can also be deployed by those in power—one thinks here of George W. Bush’s successful invocation of “compassionate conservatism” as a figure of *adianoeta*, signaling moderation to one political audience and born-again Christianity to another.) Building on the work of James Martel, Honig’s reading of Antigone through the lens of linguistic conspiracy and *adianoeta* provides contemporary theories of law and democracy with a richer understanding of discourse that is called forth by the theory of multiple publics.

So, to return to Ismene: In addition to conspiracy with and in language, Honig develops a novel reading of *Antigone* in which Antigone and her sister Ismene are not nearly as opposed as once thought. Honig rejects the view of Ismene as the meek and conventional opposite to Antigone’s bold heroism, and she also resists the temptation to simply reverse the valuations while maintaining the opposition, making Ismene the embodiment of care and relationality compared with Antigone’s willful rejection of all potential partners in a destructive go-it alone drive toward death. Honig finds that Ismene is bolder than previously thought and Antigone is more caring and relational and that the two form a fragile, conflictual political sorority. If these interpretations seem occasionally to place excessive weight on subtle turns of phrase, the three chapters providing the rereading of the original text nevertheless

provide an exhilarating reading experience: encountering a claim about Antigone that seems difficult to believe and then proceeding as the author provides a careful and nuanced presentation of the evidence in its favor. Contemporary studies of law and politics stand to be invigorated by this intervention.

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Up Against a Wall: Rape Reform and the Failure of Success. By Rose Corrigan. New York: New York University Press, 2013. 344 pp. \$65 cloth and \$24.00 paperback.

Reviewed by Renée Heberle, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Toledo

When considering the scope of rape law reform over the last 40 years, including the changes in how rape is defined, rules of evidence, and availability of services for victims, it would be easy to draw the conclusion that anti-rape activism has been relatively successful. Requirements as to witnesses and visible harm as grounds for prosecution have been changed. Marital rape statutes have been reformed. Hospitals and clinics provide rape exams to victims. Rape crisis centers exist in almost every jurisdiction in the United States, and victim advocates are alerted as first responders when a rape is reported. However, in *Up Against the Wall: Rape Reform and the Failure of Success*, Rose Corrigan shows that these reforms have not significantly changed the way rape is adjudicated or the manner in which legal and medical professionals treat victims. According to her extensive interviews with Rape Crisis advocates, in spite of statutory reform and social service resources being made available, sexual assault is still unlikely to be taken seriously and victims are still unlikely to be treated fairly or with respect. To explain why this is the case, Corrigan shows how the history of the anti-rape movement differs from other transformative social justice movements. She also considers the place and value of feminist perspectives and advocacy given the contemporary legal terrain with respect to sexual violence. In general, Corrigan's work lays out the contemporary terrain that anti-rape activists must negotiate.

Corrigan uses Michael McCann's model of legal mobilization to elucidate the differences between the rape reform movement and other social movements. She offers insight into the historical emer-