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Research Article

Constructing *Nuda Vita*¹ in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Behn's Oroonoko: A Biopolitical Perspective on the Concept of Life





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Abstract

The paper aims to offer a biopolitical interpretation of Sophocles' Antigone and Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* by exploring the role of power in constituting the characters' bare life. It argues that Oroonoko's relationship with Imoinda and Antigone's burial of Polynices reduce them to slavery and also shows that their captive killing epitomizes their outlawed life $(zo\acute{e})$. To elucidate their outlawry brewed by the sovereign's power, the paper looks into Antigone and Oroonoko's socio-politically excluded vulnerable life. Their precarious life manifested in legal exclusion appeals Giorgio Agamben's concept of homo sacer, an outcast who can be killed without incurring homicide. Departing from Michel Foucault's notion of life fostering biopower that supplants the sovereign power, Agamben discusses that modern power exercise encompasses sovereign power that inherits the right of taking life or letting it live in *Homo Sacer*. Tuning with Agamben's bare life, this paper critically analyzes Antigone and Oroonoko's life to slavery and death which suggest their production of biopolitical body. It infers that the state violence witnessed by Antigone and Oroonoko substantiates the killability of *homo sacer*. **Keywords:** Biopolitics, biós, nuda vita, homo sacer

Introduction

The selling of Oroonoko in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Antigone's immurement in Sophocles' Antigone reduce them to bare life. The sovereigns put a legal

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¹ Nuda vita refers to the bare life heavily connected with Biblical Adam and Eve before they fall from the grace. By alluding this theological sense in Homo Sacer, Giorgio Agamben analyzes the predicament of modern people whose socio-political security the state revokes letting them a bare life inclusively excluded in the political affairs. 'Bare life' is the prime object of modern politics suspended between biological life, zoé and public life, biós. To Agamben, bare life is not similar to Hannah Arendt's naked life, subject to oppression but a politically 'cared life', retained within a state of exception where laws no longer safeguard it but penalize ("Naked" 55).

ban over them justifies the political interference in their life. Subsequently, it turns them into the social outcast, homo sacer² ("Naked" 55) whose embodied bare life suggests their killability with impunity. With reference to Adam and Eve's fallen life, nuda vita that illustrates their deprived bare life, away from the grace of divine law, Giorgio Agamben develops the thesis of bare life to show the life deprived of social security resulting from sovereign ban. To substantiate his notion of bare life, he links it with Greco-Roman figure, homo sacer whose political rights are persistently contained. Put differently, Agamben's homo sacer thesis invokes the idea of bare life similar to animal life "shorn of all human qualification," says Durantaye (209). To him, a homo sacer resembles the animal because his socio-political qualifications have been revoked by the exertion of sovereign ban which forcefully welds the biós, politically qualified life with zoé, politically unqualified life. Agamben's biopolitics refers to the inclusive exclusion of life or the politicization of life that analyzes the bare life of the homo sacer who designedly loses citizenry rights, biós. Sophocles' Antigone and Aphra Behn's Oroonoko epitomize Agambenian homo sacer concept because these eponymous characters undergo sovereign ban over them. In tandem with the sovereign's total control over Antigone marks the wielding of biopower to manipulate population and create fear of law transgression in Antigone. Similarly, the sovereign's power exertion to control over the slaves' body, mind and sexuality stands as the signpost of the biopolitical management of population in *Oronoko*. Additionally, their docile life under political control and regulation exposed through their immurement signify their homo sacer life who is vulnerable and whom anybody may harm and kill with legal freedom. Antigone and Oroonoko's deprivation from dignified life in the absolute power regimes conforms Agamben's biopolitical protagonist, *homo sacer* to show their bare life manufactured by the states.

Biopolitics refers to the entry of biological life into the political domain. To put it differently, the term 'biopolitics' underscores the politicization of biology. Andrea Righi states that Michel Foucault associates biological processes with the controlling state apparatuses as biopolitics (1), which Swatie recaps as "politics at the level of life" (100). Biopolitics generally means that biological is the political in which the latter conducts the conduct of human population. In this way, the term suggests a new outlook in understanding the control and regulatory power exercise over population and its capacity in molding life processes from prenatal to death. Grounded on this fact, this paper offers a biopolitical interpretation of *Antigone* and *Oroonoko* by exploring the role of state power to constitute the bare life of the eponymous protagonists. In both texts, the state assumes their body as its political object or possession as if appropriating 'the personal is (bio) political.' Contrary to it, Antigone considers the body whether dead or alive is beyond the state control. The protest of Oroonoko and his entrapment also

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² In ancient Rome *homo sacer* an outlawed man who inherits bare life cannot be ritually sacrificed but can be killed without incurring the penalty of homicide. Since he is the outcast whose rights have been ripped off by juridico-political decision, Agamben links him with Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, Benjamin's mere life, Carl Schimitt's sovereign ban, and Hannah Arendt's statelessness to bring to light his outlawed state of killing. Agamben further extends *homo sacer* to gender and race based marginalization who is reduced to bare life stripped of all rights. After observing the pervasive violation of citizenry rights in modern nation-states, he tactfully concludes that everyone is the *homo sacer* (*Homo* 115) means everyone falls victim of state violence. He argues that modern democratico-capitalist projects transform the large number of population of the Third World into the bare life (180). He refers to the rampant violence over poor people in the name of development in modern era that produces *homo sacer* who does not need to transgress law and proclamation.

question on the control of body. By the same token, in their postulation, the state cannot bar human corporeality and the inherent traits. However, biopolitics functions through the two poles as per Foucault in *History of Sexuality*. The first is, "anatomo-politics that centers on human body as machine" (139) that disciplines and smartens the body for productivity and the second, "the interventions and regulatory control of life processes of the population from birth to old age" (139) known as biopolitics. In both cases, human body comes into the domain of power and control which Agamben in *Homo Sacer* recaps as "the growing inclusion of man's natural life in the mechanism and calculation of power" (120). Agamben focuses on the essence of politicization of life, biopolitics, which does not promote life but produces bare life which is the relegated to animal life. At this ground, this study explores the relegated life of Antigone and Oroonoko to bare life and their subjection to power that befits with Agambenian tenet of bipolitics.

In Sophocles' *Antigone* and Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, the heroes have got the royal grace of speaking life, *biós*, before they are relegated to the speechless animalized life, *zoé*, or the life of prisoner and slave whose citizenship has been vacated. In both of the texts, the regimes allegedly control their life and death through exile, incarceration and killing, the political technologies of power. For this reason, it is assumed that life and death are no more natural but political affairs which Foucault's biopolitics also reinforces when he alludes Aristotle's man as a political being. In sum, Antigone and Oroonoko survive between *biós* and *zoé*, which means that they embody *Homo sacer*, and live on the verge of death that indexes the pure political element of modern nation/state. To be precise, Antigone and Oroonoko suffer from the sovereign ban that compels them to endure social exclusion which indicates their political death. Taking recourse, this as the base of this study's argument, it further probes into the prohibitory nature of power that Agamben discusses unlike the life fostering power of Foucauldian biopolitics.

In Sophocles' tragedy, Antigone driven by divine law, performs the restricted burial of Polynices. It enrages Creon (sovereign) who vacates her royal stature, biós, deploying his sovereign power, let alone her bridal tie with his son, Haemon. Obviously, this sovereign ban immures her which is the semiotic of her bestial life and killing with impunity. Because she implicitly turns into a beast when she loses her human status, biós, in her incarceration. In fact, it is the crux of Agamben's biopolitics that brings into discussion how the sovereign produces the biopolitical life of homo sacer imbued with bare life (life without social security) by wielding sovereign ban inherited by Creon. Similarly, Oroonoko in Behn's novel gets exiled and sold to the plantation owner which resonates his state of homo sacer, a docile being whom anybody can harm enjoying the legal reprieve. Consequently, both Antigone and Oroonoko confined in cave/ camp resemble to the *muselmann* (Nazi's derogatory word for the indentured Jews) who witnessed the utmost injustice of outlawry in the camp. Their Muselmann life rendered in immurement resonates three things that power can do over life: "to make survive, to let live and to make die" (Remnants 155). These effects can render over life as Agamben professes in Remnants of Auschwitz. After their immurement and denial of (re/productive) life, oikos, they live the zoological life completely subjected to power's will whose political rights have been repealed. Put differently, under the effect of sovereign ban brewed by the state of exception they turn into the homo sacer, who witness strangulation in Thebes and Surinam respectively.

This study delves into how Antigone and Oroonoko come in the domain of political strategies and why do they suffer from state violence. Their incarceration further exemplifies the uncertainty of the seizure of citizenry rights that accords with Agamben's thesis of sovereign's hidden motif of producing the bare life which is neither *zoé* nor *biós*

but a politicized life possessed by homo sacer. Agamben in Homo Sacer argues: "The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as the originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, zoe and bios" (181). To him, power curbs life. Probing into the regimes' violence over Antigone and Oronooko and reducing them to bare life politically produced zoé that is inclusively excluded in the state affairs, this paper takes a recourse to Agamben's notion of biopolitics articulated in *Homo Sacer* series to show their relegated life to bare life that comes under the ambit of regimes. Because the notion of homo sacer whose inbuilt bare life oscillates between biós and zoé under sovereign's right to kill or allow to live.' Agamben's biopolitics offers a new insight to review regime's power dynamics over life of denizens, i.e., the revocation of their rights as exposed in Antigone and Oroonoko. Overall, I propose to distill their constructed homo sacer life who experience death-inlife before their decapitation in the purview of Agamben's biopolitics. I argue that both Sophocles and Behn critique the malign effect of power over life and death when the sovereigns wield their exceptional power as if it is the normalized power. In addition, the exertion of absolute power over their politicized corporeality appeals Agamben's notion of sovereign ban which adds a fresh insight in the biopolitical scholarship.

Literature Review

Michel Foucault, the leading figure of biopolitics that marks the inclusion of people's biological life in the state affairs which manages and regulates individual and group life. Literally, biopolitics enmeshes life with politics. Regarding biopolitics as the "Threshold of modernity" (143) in *History of Sexuality*, he explains it as "the calculated management life and administration of bodies" (140) which means both body of individual and life of population go with state policy in the modern era. Agamben recaps Foucauldian historicity of biopolitics as the turn of territorial politics into the state of population which becomes a problem of regime in the modern era. Foucault in Society Must Be Defended shows the upshots of biopolitics in Nazi's biocracy that focused on racism which is that he explains in as "political death, expulsion, rejection, and hiearchization of superior and inferior category of people" (256). Yet he insists on biopolitical state racism which sabotages life in order to put the possible biotic danger at bay. His analysis of thanatopolitical turn of biopolitics as illustrated in Nazi's biopolitical racism has been expanded by Agamben in Homo Sacer to show sovereign's vested interest of constituting bare life by exercising state of exception and sovereign ban. He also comes under the critical scrutiny because of his highlight only of the exceptional enactment of the regime. While focusing on the sovereign power, he undermines the resistance of the people against the juridico discursive model of producing homo sacer. A critic like Étienne Balibar notices on Agamben's political implication on it. To Maria Muble, Foucauldian swing from life fostering biopolitics to life taking thanatopolitics in the form of state racism that safeguards superior race (78) paves ways to the biopolitical critics. Among them, Roberto Esposito, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt adhere to the productive biopolitics whereas Achile Mbembe, Agamben and Didier Bigo explicate the destructive biopolitics through necropolitics³, thanatopolitics and banopticon⁴ respectively.

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³ Achille Mbembe extends Foucauldian biopolitics to necropolitics in which the sovereign decides "who must live and who must die" (66), or his authority over the mortality and life of the subjects creates the scary death world in which only the living dead survives. His notion of death farming necropolitics in which there occurs manipulation and killing of the ostracized race, immigrants, terrorists among others.

While delving into the earlier studies of *Oroonoko*, Anne F. Widmeyar in "The Politics of Adapting Behn's *Oroonoko*" points to the marginalization of Oroonoko under the European evil colonialist practices (191). She also indirectly targets at the bare life of Oroonoko conferred by the state when Oroonoko loves Imoinda. Similarly, Conner Hays analyses Behn's *Oroonoko* from the existentialist perspective with the conclusion of meaninglessness of life ("Aristocraticism"). What Hays excavates in his review of Oroonoko is the absurd life of Oroonoko when the regime does not acknowledge his valor and family life. Instead his camp life replicates the Nazi's atrocity on docile Jews.

With a different outlook, Bekhal B. Kareem buttresses his racial othering argument in Behn's novel. Oroonoko as a racial subject whose ordeals juxtaposes with colonial othering (595). Kareem examines the invasion over the personal life of Oroonoko and his tragic fate as a part of disqualifying him as human being under European Colonialism. In tune with Agamben's notion of sovereign's exceptional right to dismiss the human quality of the subjects, Catherine Molineux analyses *Oroonoko* from the sovereign's prerogative which is beyond the challenge of his subjects. Even if anyone dares to resist, he is subject to coercive power like Oroonoko (460). Pointing to Behn's use of the colonies as historical site to exert coercive power, Elliot Visconsi unpacks the medieval barbaric activity of the absolutist regime who lacks the rational of disciplining measures (675). That is why the regime retains the *muselmanner* like Oroonoko in the plantation camp wherein he is the personified *homo sacer* who survives losing citizenry rights in barbaric regime of the Old King who holds the right over life and death of his subjects.

To turn to *Antigone*, Eugene O'Brien explores the body politics in Sophocles's tragedy. Both the living body of Antigone in incarceration and the dead body of Polynices comes into the range of sovereign power (85) in order to be inclusively excluded in the state affairs. O'Brien focuses on the inescapability of body whether live or dead from the web of regime's power. On the other hand, Mariana Penha Ferreira Vieira delves into the lives of Antigone and Creon to observe the role of fate and chance (25). Here, Antigone's fate of immurement and death is not natural. Rather it is the formation of sovereign power that terminates life in Foucauldian analysis of sovereign power. Similarly, Elpida Christianaki revisits "the rebellion nature of Antigone" (35) to resist the sovereign's hegemonic power that robs her social stature. In line with politics over her life and its resistance, Rossana Laura Zetti underpins "*Antigone* to analyze the civil disobedience and desire of independent life" (17). Zetti's exegesis of *Antigone* somehow draws idea on the wish of Antigone to be in *polis* with political life (*biós*) that she loses after her protest.

The above critiques on *Antigone* and *Oroonoko* have a few scholarships on the bare life conferred to Antigone and Oroonoko as if they are Agamben's protagonist *homo sacer*. Thus, it is the novel issue to build a biopolitical literary discourse in these texts to explore their bestial life, that is, bare life. In the first part of the paper, there is the discussion of theoretical models developed in biopolitical theories. The latter part makes a comprehensive analysis of textual evidence drawing biopolitical insight from Agamben to discuss on Antigone and Oroonoko's bare life which is their symbolic death.

⁴ Didier Bigo reviews Foucault's biopolitics through his banopticon concept in which the subjects are banned through controlling mechanisms of disciplinary society. He forwards his notion of banopticon, an extended form of panopticon (unavoidable authorial gaze) that inculcates the truth formed by regime.

Theoretical Framework: Foucault's Biopolitics

This paper draws on Agamben's bare life abstracted from Foucault's thanopolitical twist of biopolitics to critically analyze Antigone and Oroonoko who hold bare life. Agamben's biopolitical purview conforms to Antigone and Oroonoko's incarceration and killing without committing homicide to show the state violence and their relegated bare life. Literally, biopolitics denotes a mingling of natural life (zoé) that an animal also shares confined in domesticity (oikos) without political affairs, polis (city) that adheres with biós (public life). Foucault argues that the tie between human life and political affairs of the nation/state marks the rise of biopolitics. He articulates that the politics has the prerogative to determine the being of people (History 142) to incite and multiply life because it makes people live and leaves them to die. He also reiterates it as "power's hold over life" (Society 239) to suggest the political influence over life process. With respect of Foucault's biopolitics, Agamben also agrees with it as "the politicization of life" (*Homo* 120). But this inclusion of life in political domain does not ensure to foster life. Rather, it inclusively excludes life by ripping its bios and letting it be a homo sacer whose "bare life remains included in politics in the forms of the exception" (11). This signifies the exclusion of life through the generalization of the state of exception, which breeds sovereign ban, is responsible. Thomas Lemke also explicates Foucault's reading of biopolitics that targets at population to be regulated by the state power because population becomes both the means and ends of political economy. On this ground, Foucault shows the linkage of life and politics. In effect, politics shapes and manipulates individual's life or of group. Mostly, the regime in relation to political power nudges the life process through disciplinary mechanisms. Further, Foucault brings into notice how biopower constructs subjectivity through governmentality, a political technology of governing through evoking public consent and norms.

While adding on Foucauldian biopolitics, Agamben illustrates the inclusive exclusion of homo sacer, who is retained under the perennial canopy of judicio-political power since the Greco-Roman era. On the other side, Agamben shows the negative repercussions of biopolitics over life which Foucault illustrates through Nazi's biocracy or state racism and yet he advocates for it to safeguard the German from the biotic danger. Building idea on Foucauldian state racism, Agamben forwards bare life and state of exception concepts to show the state violence over life. To this end, Agamben in Homo Sacer arguably claims: "[T]he original – if concealed-nucleus of sovereign power. It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (italics in original 11) which justifies the production of homo sacer out of the collision of simple life with sovereignty. His elaborative discussion on the rupture of the boundary between natural life $(zo\acute{e})$ and politically acknowledged life $(bi\acute{o}s)$ since the Greek time, further consolidates in the homo sacer. In line with it, he forwards the Roman homo sacer, who is a victim of legal ban, or outlawry and whom anybody may harm with impunity. Catherine Mills while summing up *Homo Sacer* states that it is included in state affairs in order to be excluded, so it is a highly politicized figure (45) who to Agamgben is "neither political biós nor natural zoé" but rather "sacred life (homo sacer) remaining in the zone of indistinction in which zoé and biós constitute each other in including and excluding each other" (90). Agamben suggests that zoé and biós are two distinct entities tracing in them the qualitative distinction since the Greek time to contest Foucault's biopolitics as modern political usage which get blurred in modern politics that purposefully produces the homo sacer. He alludes Aristotelian man as a political being (zoon politikon) who lives in city (polis). In tandem with Agamben, Jacques Derrida also incorporates Aristotle's "man as a political animal, or pointedly man who is by nature (physei) a political animal (politikon zoon)," whose natural life zoé merges with politics

(315), to show the fact that human life is political. By deciphering the biopolitical historicity since antiquity, Agamben focuses on the state of exception exerted by the sovereign for the construction of the bare life inbuilt in *homo sacer* and *muselmann*. Overall, both Foucault and Agamben agree with political involvement of life whereas to Foucault biopolitics which he imbricates with biopower fosters life, to Agamben biopolitics includes life in state affairs for excluding it and conferring him bare life which is akin to animal life. This paper draws the biopolitical concept of Agamben to bring outlawry and homicide amnesty to light in *Antigone* and *Oroonoko*.

Textual Analysis

Nuda Vita in Behn's Oroonoko

Aphra Behn's eponymous character in *Oroonoko* loses his royal grace (bios) which refers to his bare life. The passage from the brave waging prince to slavery in Surinam underscores the games of power over his life that subjugates him to homo sacer, who has lost the socio-political protection. At the same time, he turns out to be the object of the monarch to revoke his citizenship to confer him bare life. Then his dismissal from his princely role of warrior to exile from palace when he confronts to claim love of Imoinda, "the beautiful black Venus" (8), a betrothed to the king. The prince is stripped not only of his royal authority as the Prince who would succeed the old king but also he is deprived of his love of Imoinda which is the indication of his bare life. Once during the banquet while dancing Imoinda who is now at the harem of the Old King (sovereign), falls in the embrace of Oroonoko, which the sovereign regards as the transgression of his law (nomos) and immediately diverts Immoinda to her cabin and finally the outraged King reduces her into a slave and handovers her to Tefry in Surinam. In addition, he exercises the sovereign right over "disobedient offenders" (20), Immoinda and Oroonoko to turn them into the *homo sacer*. This position to Agamben equates with Oroonoko's killability with impunity. The duty consigned to Oroonoko objectifies him that illustrates the political concern over life of people. Additionally, the war camp resembles Nazi Camp where Oroonoko's legal and political status turns void and he is demurred and vulnerable. Finally, he is abducted and sold to Tefry which indicate his bare life with revoked citizenship in Agamben's sense. His and Imoinda's sales point out how the regime reduces one's life into the creaturely life which they cannot challenge due to their encamped muselmann state of life. Further, their life in the plantation replicates the Jews camp life, known as the *Muselmann*, a mere survivor.

With regard to the King's verdict of expelling Imoinda and Oroonoko and deploying his men to be watchful against them hints Foucauldian panopticon that goes with pervasive surveillance for the regulatory management of the subjects. In a way, this 'anatomo-politics of the human body' to Paul Rabinow, projects the capillary nature of power to make Oroonoko governable by deploying disciplinary apparatuses like "school, hospital, and army" (180) so that the bodies comply with the politico-economics of the state. The king in *Oroonoko* exactly usurps what "capitalism entails the socialization of body; that is transformation of the body into an object of continuous social monitoring and control," comment Lawlor and Nale (38) which can be summed up as the Foucauldian process of subjecting people to servitude. With reference of Oroonoko and Imoinda, the state power exploits them for economic activity in the plantation. This infers that they undeniably comply with the Foucauldian homo aconomicus, which means the human resource for political economy. Indeed, it is the biopower used over them to subject subjected to law that terminates their rights to confer them bare life.

Meanwhile, Imoinda's acceptance of the veil conferred by the king ratifies the fact that she is already a docile subject to power. The narrator recounts the traumatized

submission of Imoinda to sovereign's marriage proposal as "Delays in these cases are dangerous, and pleading worse than treason; trembling, and almost fainting, she was obliged to suffer herself to be covered and led away" (11). This refers the subtle exercise of governmentality that means an art of government to keep people under sovereign's canopy that besieges Imoinda's life when she foresees the trauma of "treason" that means severe disciplinary punishment, turning into slave and banishment from the nation. The awe inspiring milieu in which Imoinda survives proves her bare life before her auction.

Coincidentally, the same predicament Oroonoko undergoes after his dismissal from the palace. However, he submits to the service of the King; he takes part in the war, or performs the royal duty, by leading his troops against "Jamoan's Army" (28) and wins the battle. His servitude to the monarch marks his docility and subjection to power. Thus, Imoinda and Oroonoko's submission to power allows the sovereign to exercise his power (Foucault, *History* 29). Oroonoko and Imoinda's outlawry in harem and camp distills their politically constructed 'bare life'; however, they are loyal to the sovereign and their servitude exemplifies the efficiency of the disciplinary technologies of neo-liberal nation/state. To support it, Visconsi's remarks that Oroonoko and Imoinda are the degenerated beings (679) whose human qualifications have been revoked, i.e. they live a mere creaturely life.

At last, the exile of Imoinda and Oroonoko from the palace and their subjection to slavery and their killing proves Foucauldian sovereign power that takes life and makes it live or the power of the sword that subjects people to exceptional law. Their exclusion entails the inclusion implicitly because they are included in the state affair in order to render the law intact. Here, the colonial agents are doing the same upon Oroonoko by turning him into 'bare life' to vacate his royal identity, or in sum, his human identity is under erasure. Moreover, his exile from his country and making him a slave in Surinam corresponds to his outlawry which is his *nuda vita*, legal and social isolation that corresponds to the nudity of Adam and Eve in Christian theology who were graced yet deprived after the fall. Likewise, Oroonoko fall from the grace of sovereign functions as the signpost of being away from the protection of social security. To Kareem, bare life of Oroonoko and Imoinda stands as the semiotic of othering (593) which highlights their bare life.

Nuda Vita in Sophocles' Antigone

Delving into Sophocles' Antigone when Antigone transgresses Creon's juridicopolitical order through the funeral rites of Polynices, she encounters the sovereign ban and bare life in her entombment. Sophocles' Antigone entails the discrepancy of sovereign while wielding power over the body both of dead and alive. Antigone, undergoes her bare life; a concept Agamben borrows mere life from Walter Benjamin that he merges with Hannah Arendt's biological being, neomort in Homo Sacer. Creon decrees: "That no one shall mourn this man nor give him /A proper burial. He should be left for all to see, unburied, /His body ripped to shreds by vultures and wild dogs" (204-6). This excerpt underpins the power of sovereign that bans and takes life as Foucault mentions. Creon's decree also shows the control of monarch over the dead body of the subjects. The regime rips even the dead body to shreds, let alone the living body of the subjects. Therefore, except the monarch everyone is virtually the homo sacer (115) in Agamben's terms. Creon succeeds in forming the rituals of truth and disseminating it by stigmatizing Polynices as a traitor and disallowing anyone to go ritually with his corpse. It indicates that subjectivity is under power. Implicitly, by letting the body in public place to rot or chew by scavengers without funeral rites, Creon wants to create fear and

instill the sovereign law in the public so that he would be able to safeguard his regime. This awe-led discourse subscribes Foucauldian biopolitics that also attempts to produce the docile subjects through disciplinary measures targeting the body of Antigone and Polynices. Not only this, Creon also steers the conduct of Ismene by means of awe. In this way, the subjects would truly behave in a way that the regime expects them to.

In short, Creon fortresses his plan of social engineering paradigm. Therefore, he politicizes even the dead body of Polynices. Here, Polynices was already exiled and he fights back with Eteocles upon the breach of their agreement of sharing the Theban throne. Both of them get killed in a single day. As per the Greco-Roman law the exiled one has already experienced the social death and his legal protection or social security has been revoked. Admittedly, Polynices has already met this criteria of inclusive exclusion or has been a *homo sacer* subject to outlawry whom any harm can be made with impunity. Thus, he deems to be an easy prey whom the king imposes both legal and cultural ban known as 'sovereign ban' declaring him a "wicked man" (288) even over his dead body. Obviously the *zoe* of Antigone and Polynices infiltrates into their *bios* when they face Creon's ban. More precisely, his exposed dead body not only witnesses "the state of exception" but also signals the how an individual turns out to be a "werewolf" a bandit whose socio-cultural status is ripped by means of juridico-political procedure and he becomes a 'non-person' who is the subject to scorn and outlawry.

Further, the insidious effects of power that sovereign exerts to exclude Antigone and domesticate Ismene is pervasive in the play. Upon Antigone's plea, Ismene hesitates because she has already been submitted to the patriarchal power: "Do you really mean to bury him, even though it's against the law?" (44), proves Ismene a docile subject who abide by the veridiction (stately truth) of the sovereign. Her articulation: "You've got to remember that we are women" (61) further illumines her subjugated position. It infers the fact that she is indoctrinated by patriarchal ideology which signifies the motto of biopolitical governmentality to instill its ideology through discursive techniques. Ismene further shows her inferior identity to the regime:

ISMENE. We aren't meant to fight battles with men.

We are ruled by whoever's stronger,

And as a result we must obey this order and worse.

I am bound by these circumstances. (62-65)

Ismene here shows her docile ideological subjectivity which refers how she succumbs to power that subjugates the subjects and succeeds in insidiously implanting its ideology upon her. With her nudged subjectivity Ismene attempts to dissuade Antigone to do the cremation of Polynices.

To prepare docile and governable subjects the Theban regime also deploys the vigilance, spy which Foucauldian terms as surveillance. The security vigilant security guards the corpse of Polynices to prevent the burial. This is the prototype panopticon for gazing over population to normalize the sovereign ban which Bigo calls 'banopticon' over the politicized dead body of Polynices. The Guards reveal it as, "And sat we down by the hill against the wind,/Every man did keep his watch, and did make each other keep theirs" (411-13). A description by the Guards refers the panopticon surveillance over the corpse of Polynices to be watchful to execute and normalize the decree of Creon. In addition, it indexes as a signpost of the disciplinary society to produce the docile subjects or make them the decree abide by. The Guards further state how they arrest Antigone:

GUARD. "Seeing this we did her arrest straightaway/ But she was unafraid" (431-32).

The arrest of Antigone who knows the fatal consequence of transgressing the order of Creon stands as the lamppost of resistance that Agamben thoroughly avoids while explicating bare life endowed with the *homo sacer*.

On the other hand, Antigone's arrest replicates the Foucauldian exertion of power over the free subject marking the disciplinary society. After all Antigone contrary to Ismene's docile position admits that she willingly violates Creon's decree on behalf of pursuing the divine law; cultural value which is unwritten but eternal. She rhetorically befools Creon:

ANTIGONE. The son of my own mother to die and remain unburied, That would have tortured me, but this—this is nothing.

Am I the fool?

Or is it the fool that accuses me of folly" (467-70).

Here, Antigone turns out to be a daring girl to accuse Creon of not being rational in regards of the cultural pattern or the divine law practiced in Thebes. Her take on the funeral rites of Polynices draws on divine order. Indirectly, she flays Creon's for politicizing Polynices' dead body. Annie Pritchard incorporates the exceptional law wielded by Creon over the raw body of Polynices and states: "[B]y refusing Polynices' burial, Creon is condemning his body to degenerate into the natural" (79). But her remark explicates the Foucauldian notion of overarching sovereign power that leaves no escape. Creon's "sovereign ban" over Polynices' body that, Jyotirmaya Tripathy links with the Foucauldian sovereign power: "In ancient times, Foucault tells us, the subject's body and his well-being were always a gift from the sovereign, which the subject continued to enjoy as long as he did not challenge the sovereign's power. The sovereign was the greatest juridical being who wielded power "by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing" (27). Taking life or letting live would mark the unbridled power of the sovereign which Antigone projects from its onset in Prologue: "He who disobeys (Creon) in any detail/ Shall be put to death" (34–35). This means the coercive exertion of power to safeguard the power. But in Antigone's incarceration Creon supplies her meagre food which illustrates the little care of the regime to the homo sacer inbuilt with bare life. Conversely, Antigone's disobedience also illumines Foucauldian postulation, "where there is power, there's resistance" (95) because "power is exercised from innumerable points and it comes from below" (94). In this regard, Antigone posits herself as a rebel who is immured or entombed alive, in return. Her action against Creon's proclamation shows capillary nature of power and her death indicates unquestionable sovereign power of Creon

As mentioned above, the major focus of the paper is to explore the bare life of Antigone. In doing so, it anchors in her alive entombment. Moreover, Creon enrages because he postulates that Antigone out of her arrogance enacts the offence by transgressing the law (nomos) (480-84). He attempts to indict and criminalize Antigone because of her transgression and self-appeasing argument with him on ground of family ethics to bury Polynices. The Theban regime would retain the female folks inside the boundary of *oikos*, domestic life almost equal to bestial life (*zoê*) limited in eating, working and reproducing. To transgress this border deems to be the sign of arrogance which Creon gets in Antigone. In *Politicising Antigone in Twentieth-Century Europe: From Hegel to Hochhuth*, Rossana Zetti elaborately discusses the exit of Antigone from *oikos* which Creon regards as the transgression of law. Corresponding to political figure of Antigone as Lacan and Hegel also assume, Judith Butler regards *Antigone* not as the "representation of politics," but rather as the "politics of the unrepresentable" (68), states Zukauskaite to infer the rawness (biological life) of Antigone inclined to death. *Antigone*

misrepresents Antigone's bare life not to safeguard by law but to expose to death because she interrogated the patriarchal regime.

Creon imposes Antigone the carceral life (sovereign ban) in an outlying cave with meagre food so that she would starve, i.e., it is almost similar to Foucault's biopolitics that fosters life and lets it die. The supply of meager quantity of food indicates the inclusive exclusion of Antigone in Agambenian sense because she intrudes the male's domain of *polis*, as projected in Polynices's cremation by her. It reiterates the exertion of biosovereign power that can take life to safeguard the regime. Antigone's sovereign exclusion from polis to the cave that dehumanizes her as if she is the bandit (werewolf) a figure who is rusticated from the city. Thus, Antigone is the fiancée of Haemon, Creon's son whom he imprisons in a cave. However, he denies their *oikos* also.

Indeed, the cavern is both a home and tomb for her. The cave is a semiotic home of the beast assigned for Antigone. After the confiscation of her $bi\delta s$, she is doomed to be a beast whose rationale life has been exterminated when alive. In absence of rational life, the cave becomes the tomb at the same time. Her secluded immurement and denied bios life infers her social death. She internalizes it: "O tomb,/ o bridal chamber, o deepdug /Everlasting home" (891-92). Her deep sense of living dead life links with Agamben's tonality of, "hidden motif of regime to produce the biopolitical body" (11) that loses rational and social life.

Creon does not allow Antigone to live with her social and legal protection (biós) vacated life (zoé). Awhile he forbids Polynices to have funeral rites. Hence, in both cases, life as well as death comes into the political radar of Creon turning them into the homo sacer, neglected and outcast figures. Because while living in immurement Antigone loses her social security and dead Polynices turns out to be a politically living traitor involved in sedition. In sum, Antigone is biologically alive and politically dead whereas Polynices biologically dead but politically alive to undergo the homo sacer position. Admittedly, their imposed position blurs the dichotomy of life and death. Contrary to Creon's plan to let Antigone face living dead life (necropolitics) during her immurement which mimics Nazi's camp in Agamben, she commits suicide which is her exit from zoological life (zoé).

Antigone is not a single *homo sacer* in *Antigone*. Her revoked *biós* also converts Haemon into a *homo sacer*. Because they are not allowed to enjoy conjugal life. She comments on her forlorn state: "Unwept, unloved, unwed" (876). She after being condemned to *oikos*, confinement feels like castrated bestial life. Thus, in Creon's necropolitics, Haemon finds his palace as a tomb. Similarly, Antigone gets her tomb in the immurement. The fatal corollary of their denied *biós and oikos* signals more derogatory than *zoé* which leads them to suicide causing Eurydice, Haemon's mother's death.

Conclusion

In Sophocles' Antigone, Creon rips off Antigone's biós (public life) and so does the King to Oroonoko in Behn's Oroonoko. Consequently, Antigone and Oroonoko witness zoomorphic life being alienated from the society which results into their bare life. Antigone entails not only the politicization of life and death but also ends with necropolitics leaving Creon aloof and grief stricken over the doom of his family. Antigone opens a discourse of power dynamics which threatens the life of denizens for securing the regime. Likewise, Oroonoko's expulsion from palace and slavery at plantation camp, and Antigone's live entombment infer their robbed citizenship which signifies their aloofness from biós. It leads them to bare life and the state of homo sacer whom not only the state but anyone may harm with impunity. Further, Oroonoko's tragic

end in the plantation camp and Antigone's suicide during her immurement refer to Agamben's take on the reincarnation of sovereign's power to seize life and death which robs human qualification when alive and pushes to death world.

In sum, Antigone and Oroonoko's immured life marks their biological existence, bare life ever threatened by the ominous symbolic death of outlawry articulated through state racism that segregates people. Moreover, the absolute state power vacates the sanctity of their life and turns them into the killable bodies, the *homo sacer*. Their incarceration illustrates not only their *muselmann*, mere survival and state of killing, but also their murder beyond homicide proves that they are the epitome of politically constructed *homo sacer* who holds strangulated body. By ripping the citizenship of Antigone and Oroonoko both of the regimes bestow them bare life.

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