

HEGEL'S THEORY OF TRAGIC HEROES: THE HISTORICAL PROGRESS
OF SUBJECTIVITY

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
Rachel C. Falkenstern
May 2016

Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Kristin Gjesdal, Advisory Chair, Philosophy

Dr. Susan Feagin, Philosophy

Dr. Espen Hammer, Philosophy

Dr. Paul Kottman, External Member, Comparative Literature and Philosophy, The New
School for Social Research

©
Copyright
2016

by

Rachel C. Falkenstern
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that Hegel's theory of tragedy is best understood in combination with his theory of the historical progress of subjective freedom, and that this progress is manifested as the heroes of tragic drama in its different stages of antiquity, early modernity, and late modernity. The truth of tragedy for Hegel, like the content of all art, progresses concomitantly with human freedom, reason, and subjectivity. Likewise, humanity's self-understanding of these aspects of itself also historically progresses. In this light, I further argue that Hegel's theory shows tragedy to be not only a historically contextualized cultural practice and form of self-understanding but also a presentation of absolute truth: the truth of a culture at a particular historical moment is presented in its tragedy, yet that culture is a part of a larger narrative, so that a common thread running through tragic drama of all eras comes to light when tragedy is examined through the lens of Hegel's philosophy. Specifically, I show that Hegel views self-contradiction, alienation, and the drive to reconcile these as underlying universal human conditions, and in tragedy this universal truth is embodied in the tragic hero. This appears in tragic heroes as they take responsibility for unintentional actions, or as they remain fixed to their cause although it brings about their own downfall.

In consideration of our own historical standpoint and of my agreement with Hegel's view that tragedy retains an important role in our cultural self-understanding, this dissertation shifts the focus from ancient Greek tragedy, the prevailing theme in Hegel scholarship and in wider discussions of Hegel's theory of tragedy, and instead directs more attention to modern tragedy. According to Hegel, a key aspect of all tragic heroes is

that they either freely will their actions or take responsibility for them, or both.

Additionally, as subjective freedom historically progresses, so does our awareness of our freedom to choose our actions or to take responsibility for them. I show how this progress is manifested in ancient, early modern, and late modern tragic heroes—in works by Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Schiller, respectively—and, finally, in the tragic heroes of some contemporary works of film. The historical grounding of my reading of Hegel’s theory of tragedy combined with my focus on the tragic hero lends a unique perspective to our understanding of Hegel’s theories of tragedy and of subjectivity, and to our interpretations of the tragic works themselves. This dissertation thus sheds new light on Hegel’s theory of tragedy, an important endeavor in itself, with the larger aim of showing how Hegel’s philosophy of tragedy helps us better understand both tragedy and ourselves, as inheritors of and participants in philosophical discussions of tragedy, and as contemporary audiences that engage with tragic dramas in a variety of venues.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to everyone who supported, encouraged, questioned, didn't question, counseled, assisted, entertained, pressured, taught, inspired, humored, and believed in me during this long journey.

I am extremely grateful to my amazing committee. Kristin Gjesdal is an inspiration in her philosophical approach, work ethic, attention to detail, and body of knowledge. I am indebted to her intellectual and personal generosity; my project would be nothing without her counsel and critical eye. I was lucky to have been an assistant for four years to Susan Feagin when she was Editor of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, and then lucky again to have her keen eye and mind on my own work as a member of my committee. The countless things I have learned from her in both of these roles have already proven invaluable to my work on tragedy and in aesthetics, and to my larger professional career. My most sincere thanks to Espen Hammer for his comments, his time, and his encouragement to work more on this project, which I look forward to doing with him. I am grateful to Paul Kottman for lending his time and insight to my dissertation, which has benefitted from his research; I look forward to continuing our conversation.

Thank you to the Temple University Philosophy Department and community. Thanks to Miriam Solomon for her dedication to the department and for her sincere efforts in helping the graduate students succeed. Thanks to Paul C. Taylor for his humor, his kindness, his honest counsel, and for his time being on my proposal committee. I am grateful for the presence of Phil Alperson's musical and warm spirit in the department,

and for his time being on my proposal committee. I am indebted to Sonia Lawson for her attention to detail, her patience, and her kindness; without her professionalism, I probably would not be graduating. Innumerable thanks to Shawn Schurr for her generosity and kindness; her constantly going above and beyond her duties helped make it possible for me to get my PhD. Thanks to Paul Crowe for his help during my time at Temple. I am grateful to Lewis R. Gordon for his generosity, both personally and academically (if one can separate those areas). Thanks to Evelyn Rush for all of her help. I am lucky to count Avram Gurland-Blaker as a friend—and not just because we agree on Hegel—and to now also count Erin McConnell and the rest of their family as part of my own. Thanks to Aili Bresnahan for giving so much energy and time to the profession, and for being so kind and astute, both academically and personally. It was great working with Heather Coletti at the Journal, and many thanks to her for coming to my dissertation defense. Thanks to Joan Grassbaugh-Forry for all she did while she was also at Temple. Finally, thank you to all my other teachers and classmates at Temple University who helped make graduate school a wonderful experience.

Hunter College has been my second home, first as an undergraduate and then as a teacher while I completed my graduate work. Thanks to Frank Kirkland for believing in me; I respect and admire his dedication to philosophy and how he unflaggingly proves it. Laura Keating has been an amazingly generous and patient Chair to work with. I am grateful for all she has done for me, and from her I have learned a lot about the profession. Thanks to Omar Dahbour for his conversation, his professional counsel, his encouragement, and for writing a letter when I applied to graduate school; I am lucky to

still have him as mentor and as friend. Christa Davis Acampora is nothing short of a role model both as teacher and as philosopher; as her former student and as a teacher now, I am grateful for the time she invests in her students. I am also grateful to her for writing a letter for me when I applied to graduate school, and she has been generous to me in many other ways as I begin my career. Thanks to John Lango for being an excellent teacher, for writing a letter for me when I applied to graduate school, and for having a great sense of humor. I am indebted to Gerald Press for his astute counsel, keen insights, and generosity in giving these and giving his time in general; in his dedication to the profession and to his students, he has become a role model to me. Many thanks to Linda Martín Alcoff for being amazing on all levels; she is an inspirational human being. Due to my time at Hunter, I am lucky to count Dara Meyers-Kingsley as colleague and friend, for which I am extremely grateful. Many thanks to all my other mentors, teachers, colleagues, and students at Hunter; I have learned so much from you.

Finally, but not least of all, thanks to all my friends and family. So many of you have done so many things that detailing them would be longer than the dissertation itself. This work, and everything surrounding it, has been such a big part of my life that there is no way to separate the academic, emotional, philosophical, financial, intellectual, and personal effects of all the time, words, meetings, and things you have done for me and given me, intentionally or unintentionally. You are all my motivation and inspiration. I will thank you each, and celebrate with you, properly in person. Thanks to Mom, for seeing the mystical side, to Dad for seeing the funny side, to Max for seeing the musical side, to Dennis for seeing the far side, and to Jeremy for seeing the bright side, and for

doing and being everything. I am grateful to Susan Wicklow for being my best friend; can't wait to go on holiday with you, Eds. Thanks to Vincent Li for being one of the best friends any one could ever have, and for adding Sarah Li to my list of awesome friends (and Oliver!). Thanks to Fred Backus for being an amazing friend, still, after all this time, and to Pamela Sabaugh for being an amazing friend for almost as long (and to both of you for adding Evelyn to the family). I am grateful to Carlis Pistol for being fabulous and for being in my life. Thanks to James Rubin for his constant friendship, we have been through a lot; I look forward to our futures, and am so happy that Josh is in yours. I am grateful to count Celina Bragagnolo as a friend for all these years (though of course she could have been part of the Hunter list); I look forward to being geographically closer to you, Sam, and the family. Thanks to The Marx Sisters for being you. Thanks to Paul Arendt for being my brother's brother, for being an intellectual and musical magician, and for your warm spirit. I am grateful that The Olson Family is now also my family; thanks to each of you for your support, kindness, and generosity.

Thanks to all of you, and to any others I may be forgetting or who are not mentioned by name. You made this possible and worthwhile.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
INTRODUCTION	xi
CHAPTER	
1. HEGEL'S ESSENCE OF TRAGEDY AS HISTORICAL AND ABSOLUTE	1
The Essence of Tragedy?	2
Ancient Greek Individuality and Tragic One-sidedness	12
Modern Subjective One-sidedness	19
The Absolute Truth of Tragic One-sidedness	27
Absolute Truth as Tragic Drama	35
2. THE NAÏVE HEROES OF ANCIENT TRAGEDY AND HEGEL'S KING OEDIPUS	42
Oedipus' Rights	43
Oedipus' Historical Responsibility	49
Oedipus' Conflict	55
Oedipus' Reconciliation	63
3. EARLY MODERN TRAGIC HEROES AND HEGEL'S MACBETH	71
The One-Sidedness of Ancient and Modern Tragic Heroes	72
Evil Yet Admirable Heroes	81
Self-Reflection and Self-Determination	87

Self-Expression and Self-Destruction	98
4. HEGEL'S SPIRITUAL BEAUTY IN SCHILLER'S SUBLIME TRAGIC HEROINES	108
The Challenge of Late Modern Dramatic Figures	109
Ideal Heroes	116
The Deeper Spiritual Beauty of Late Modernity	120
Freedom in Hegel's Theodicy and in Schiller's Sublime	127
Hegel's Harmony in Schiller's Sublime Heroines	135
5. THE NEED FOR HEGEL'S TRAGIC HEROES IN MODERNITY	145
No Room for Heroes	146
Ancient and Early Modern Heroes in Late Modernity	157
Hegel's Spiritual Beauty in Contemporary Tragic Heroes	169
6. CONCLUSION.....	177
BIBLIOGRAPHY	184

INTRODUCTION

Hegel's account of tragedy has recently been described as "the most impressive since Aristotle's and has proved to be, in terms of influence on philosophers of tragedy, perhaps even more powerful."¹ This echoes A. C. Bradley's sentiment from a century earlier that since Aristotle "the only philosopher who has treated it in a manner both original and searching is Hegel."² These points may be hard to verify and may be contested when thinking of the likes of Nietzsche or Schopenhauer, but the importance of Hegel's theory of tragedy cannot be denied. The sheer volume of scholarship that treats it in various ways, as well as its ubiquity in wider cultural conversations, attests to this. Yet, despite its influence and popularity, the question of just what Hegel's theory of tragedy is, remains incompletely answered, leaving a gap in the literature. This dissertation answers this question and fills this gap by focusing on the tragic hero. I argue that Hegel's theory of tragedy is best understood in light of his wider philosophical theory of the historical progress of subjective freedom: this progress is manifested in the tragic hero and, when tragedy is understood as such, his theory proves tragedy an important and unique form of modern cultural self-understanding.

¹ Julian Young, *The Philosophy of Tragedy: From Plato to Žižek* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 110 (for the chapter on Hegel, see 110-138). Hegel's theory of tragedy has also recently been described by Mark W. Roche as "the most studied and quoted in the West" next to Aristotle's, in his "Introduction to Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," *PhaenEx* 1 (Fall/Winter 2006): 11; cf. 51 of his "The Greatness and Limits of Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," in *A Companion to Tragedy*, ed. Rebecca Bushnell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 51-67 (the two articles by Roche are very similar to each other).

² A. C. Bradley helped popularize Hegel's theory of tragedy in the English-speaking world with his 1901 lecture, which was published soon after in essay form; his "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy" was first published in *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. II (1903-04): 662-680, and then in 1909 in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. In this dissertation I use the version from the second edition of *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1912) reprinted as *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999).

Hegel's wider philosophy of art is also very influential, but within the vast amount of scholarship on his aesthetics there is surprisingly relatively little on tragedy as dramatic art. For example, no one has done more to prove Hegel's aesthetics relevant for modern and contemporary art than Arthur Danto and Robert Pippin in their separate but related bodies of work. Although relevant to this dissertation, neither Danto, who focuses on the plastic arts, nor Pippin, who writes on Hegel in relation to everything from modernist literature to abstract painting, treats Hegel's theory of tragedy. Further, although much attention has been paid in the recent Hegel renaissance to his theories of subjectivity and agency, there has been for the most part only missed opportunities to make fruitful connections to tragedy. Finally, within the scholarship on his theory of tragedy, the trend is to focus on ancient tragedy, especially on Sophocles' *Antigone*. This has led, on the one hand, to a huge body of work that does not explicate but instead uses Hegel's philosophy of tragedy in areas such as feminist and political philosophy, which is outside the scope of this dissertation as I focus on tragedy specifically as art. On the other hand, within aesthetics the focus on ancient tragedy is to the detriment of a full understanding of Hegel's theory, and at the expense of his views on modern tragedy. I aim to rectify these lacunas in Hegel studies by fully explicating his theory of tragedy as dramatic art and by focusing attention on his theory of modern tragedy.

Tragedy and Culture

Tragic drama is important because it is a part of both a culture's self-expression and its self-understanding; as such, Hegel's theory shows it also to be one of the most

explicit artistic presentations of a universal human truth. A philosophical study of tragic drama helps one to better understand tragedy not only as an art form but also more broadly as a culture's self-understanding, and helps to explain tragedy's role in that understanding. These related notions are the core of Hegel's philosophy of tragedy and a guiding thread of this dissertation. Both tragedy as drama and the theorizing of tragedy are ingrained in Western culture and have deeply shaped our self-understanding. From interpretations of Aristotle's catharsis to Freud's use of Oedipus to Shakespeare's innovative language, ideas in and about tragedy surround us, are in us, and shape us; Hegel is part of this legacy. This dissertation sheds new light on Hegel's theory of tragedy, an important endeavor in itself, with the larger aim of showing how Hegel's philosophy of tragedy helps us better understand both tragedy and ourselves, as inheritors of and participants in philosophical discussions of tragedy, and as contemporary audiences that engage with tragic dramas in a variety of venues. Specifically, I argue that Hegel views self-contradiction, alienation, and the drive to reconcile these as underlying universal human conditions, and that this truth presented by tragedy is embodied in the tragic hero.

But for Hegel, universal does not mean ahistorical. The discussions in this dissertation of universal truth are consistently and explicitly underscored by a major theme in Hegel's philosophy of art, namely, that the truth of tragedy, like the content of all art, progresses concomitantly with human freedom, reason, and subjectivity. Likewise, humanity's self-understanding of these aspects of itself also historically progresses. Thus tragedy, as a form of cultural self-understanding, takes on very different shapes at

different points of history. Ancient and modern tragedy are for Hegel two different animals—although of the same species—and the overall argument of this dissertation is that his wider philosophy of human spiritual progress explains why. This historical grounding of Hegel’s theory of tragedy lends a unique perspective to our interpretations of both ancient and modern tragedy, as well as to the argument for the possibility of tragedy today; we can see the truth of a culture at a particular historical moment presented in its tragedy, and as also related to the larger narrative of which we are all a part. This somewhat paradoxical general nature of tragedy as both historical and absolute is explained in Chapter One.

Thus, in consideration of our own historical standpoint and of my argument that Hegel holds that tragedy has an important role in our self-understanding (rather than being merely of archeological interest), this dissertation shifts the focus from ancient Greek tragedy, the prevailing theme in Hegel scholarship and in wider discussions of Hegel’s theory of tragedy, and instead directs more attention to modern tragedy. This shift is, on the one hand, done with the intention of filling this gap in the literature, in order to give a fuller, more complete picture of Hegel’s theory of tragedy. On the other hand, simply put, Hegel’s picture of the historical progress of self-understanding suggests that modern tragedy is more important and more relevant to us than ancient tragedy is. This is not to say that the legacy of ancient Greek tragedy has not left an indelible mark. Indeed, I argue that Hegel’s theory shows how universal aspects of humanity do and will continue to shine through these works and resonate with us indefinitely. In my discussion of Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* in Chapter Two, I argue not only for keeping it firmly

placed in its historical context to understand Hegel's reading of it, but also for its lasting relevance, as it presents the timeless problem of unintended consequences and shows the heroism in taking responsibility for the unforeseen results of one's actions. Further, because Hegel sees tragedy as historically progressing, an understanding of ancient tragedy also in turn helps us understand modern tragedy.

Yet, I argue, somewhat against the grain of the majority of scholarship, that Hegel's theory of tragedy supports the claim that modern tragedy is at least as important and relevant, if not more so, as ancient tragedy is to us today. Thus, despite his famous "end of art" claim, I argue that tragedy continues to thrive today as an artistic practice that we fruitfully engage with, both as audiences and philosophers.³ I not only argue that ancient and modern tragedy are relevant and important to us today, but also suggest that many contemporary dramas fall in line with Hegel's theory of tragedy, and even that tragic works of film or television could be considered a continuation of the tradition of tragic drama, as others have argued.⁴

³ This idea of the end of art is that the truth of spirit is no longer adequately presented to us sensuously—i.e., as art—but spiritually and conceptually (as religion and philosophy, respectively), so that "art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past"; G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 11. (All references to this work are hereafter cited in the text as *LFA* followed by page numbers, and all emphases are as in original unless otherwise noted.) Hegel by no means thinks that art disappears or becomes completely irrelevant, but "the 'after' of art consists in the fact that there dwells in the spirit the need to satisfy itself solely in its own inner self as the true form for truth to take. ... We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit" (*LFA* 103).

⁴ For example, Leonard Moss gives a detailed account of the influence of Hegel's theory of tragedy in philosophy, in drama studies, and on dramatists themselves, such as Arthur Miller; Leonard Moss, "The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (1969): 91-97. More recently, Susan Feagin places John Frankenheimer's 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate* in the context of tragedy (which I treat in Chapter Five), along with a comedy and a science-

My focus on modern tragedy via Hegel may *not* seem contentious when taking into account his view that art presents our self-understanding as historically progressing. In that light, modern tragedy could easily be explained as more relevant to us today because its truth is our truth, and we can more easily understand or identify with it. Further, it may even present a greater amount of truth or at least a more explicit form of truth than ancient tragedy, upon some interpretations of what Hegel means by reason and freedom progressing. Hegel nonetheless famously views ancient Greek tragedy as aesthetically best, although this view is complex. One way ancient tragedy is superior to modern tragedy is that its conflict is of greater weight; it presents a struggle between rights or ethical spheres of human life, and this also retains its universal appeal and validity. The exemplar of such tragic conflict for Hegel is Sophocles' *Antigone*, which is further aesthetically heightened because of its perfect presentation of another key element of tragedy: the heroes' one-sidedness, that is, the heroes' unflagging adherence to their goals. Thus, ancient tragedy is considered by Hegel to be more beautiful than modern tragedy, which has conflicts of less weight and heroes who can be evil or less firm. All modern art by definition is less sensuously beautiful than classical art according to Hegel's picture of the progress of subjective freedom and reason, because this progress leads to complexities and imbalances that reach beyond and are not so easily contained in the finite limitations of art, nor are they able to be presented following traditional conceptions of beauty as harmony or other formal characteristics.

fiction monster flick, among other dramas more readily accepted as tragedies; Susan Feagin, "Tragedy," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 291-305.

But for Hegel, beauty is not of primary interest, even in his aesthetics. Instead, his focus is the truth that art presents. For him, the beauty of art is higher than the beauty of nature because an artwork's content is spiritual and intellectual. Conceptual content and its presentation are key to art, and the intellectual aspects of humanity in general, are, simply but grandly put, the purpose and the high point of all existence (*LFA* 2). In this light, the orientation of this dissertation is what each era of tragedy or what a specific tragedy intellectually presents to us, and what Hegel's theory of tragedy can contribute to our understanding of the meaning and value of tragedy, rather than focusing on beauty.

One way of combining two of the threads of Hegel's aesthetics outlined so far—the historical progress of content and the decline of beauty (but not the third thread, art's universal import) is found in Arthur Danto's work that uses Hegel's theory of art. Danto claims that after Hegel, art no longer has to be beautiful, with the artwork's conceptual content or meaning becoming primary.⁵ Similarly, the decline of beauty and the disappearance of figurative representation in painting is the topic of a conversation between Robert Pippin and Stephen Houlgate.⁶ Houlgate argues that Hegel's philosophy does not lend itself to explain or accept non-figurative painting, based on humanity's need to understand itself as embodied—albeit as free and spiritual. In contrast, Pippin finds Hegel's theory of art useful in explaining the move away from figuration, showing

⁵ See, e.g., Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art," in *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton University Press, 1997) and "The Aesthetics of Brillo Boxes," in *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art* (Chicago: Open Court, 2003).

⁶ Stephen Houlgate, "Presidential Address: Hegel and the Art of Painting," in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, ed. William Maker (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 61–82; Robert Pippin, "What Was Abstract Art? (From the Point of View of Hegel)," *Critical Inquiry* 29 (2001): 1–24. Cf. Robert B. Pippin, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).

painting's logical movement to abstraction within Hegel's own framework, because abstraction presents humanity's greater subjective freedom in modernity.⁷ In this vein, focusing on lyric poetry, objective humor, and modern and contemporary novels (but not tragedy), Benjamin Rutter offers an argument for the relevance of Hegel's aesthetics in explaining the progress of subjective freedom in the modern arts.⁸

Along the same lines are connections Paul Kottman makes between Shakespeare and Hegel. Like Danto, Pippin, and Rutter, he shows the importance of Hegel's philosophy for modern art—in this case tragedy—and along the way shows how modern art, specifically Shakespeare, remains relevant today. Also like my own project, Kottman uses various aspects of Hegel's wider philosophy and his theory of tragedy to trace the progress of freedom in art, and to show the importance of this progress for our cultural self-understanding. Somewhat akin to Pippin's argument for the relationship between the dissolution of figuration in painting and an increase of self-consciousness and subjectivity in modernity, Kottman argues in one article that there is also a self-dissolution of the sensuous aspect of drama, seen already in Shakespeare.⁹ Kottman shows that Hegel's trajectory of the increase in freedom and subjectivity leads to a decrease in the need for materiality in drama.

⁷ For Pippin's suggestions on links between Hegel and contemporary literature (but not tragedy) see his "The Lack of Aesthetics in Hegel's Aesthetics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 394–418. For his more general discussion of modern literature (without Hegel) see Robert B. Pippin, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ Benjamin Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁹ Paul A. Kottman, "'The Charm Dissolves Apace': Shakespeare and the Self-Dissolution of Drama," *Memoria Di Shakespeare* 1 (2014): 83–107.

My dissertation agrees with these contemporary scholars that Hegel's theory of art is not only relevant today but also that this is so because of its stress on the subjective or intellectual content of art. Following the theme of the increase in subjective freedom, I argue that for Hegel there are two different sorts of beauty in tragedy, the sensuous beauty of ancient tragedy and the deeper spiritual beauty of post-enlightenment tragedy, and that early modern tragedy falls between them; this makes a key distinction in Hegel's aesthetics between these three—not two—eras that often goes otherwise unnoticed in the literature.

Further, it must be remembered that Hegel's theory of drama stresses the importance of its performative aspect and that sensuousness is key to his theory of art in general. Although he does not do so himself, Houlgate's argument could be extended, in agreement with my own, to go some way towards explaining the continued importance of drama, as here the human figure is presented to us *en toto*. Thus, I would be interested to see how Kottman's exploration of the dissolution of drama might be compatible—or not—with Houlgate's point and with my sympathy to it, as Kottman and I both argue for the progress of freedom and self-understanding presented in modern tragedy. If this decrease in sensuousness goes further, I wonder: What does a non-material hero look or sound like? Could we understand ourselves as embodied, historical, intersubjective beings via such drama?¹⁰ Beckett's *Not I* (first performed 1972) immediately comes to

¹⁰ Kottman also makes an innovative case for how Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* presents a struggle for individual freedom and self-realization for both Romeo and Juliet, via Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. While this has some relevance to my own work, I focus only on Hegel's aesthetics in this dissertation and not on his *Phenomenology*, nor do I treat *Romeo and Juliet*. Paul A. Kottman, "Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63 (2012): 1–38.

mind. I suggest here without arguing further, and thus leaving room for exploration, that Kottman is correct that Hegel's theory can be used to explain such artistic progress (or devolution, depending on your view) in drama, but that if we expand this trajectory it remains to be explained how such drama could continue to be an intelligible sensuous presentation of humanity's highest truth within the framework of Hegel's theory of art. Perhaps it could simply be alienation itself is presented, and alienation, I argue, is also a truth of humanity as Hegel sees it.

A unique perspective of this dissertation is that it argues for tragedy as a presentation of Hegel's picture of humanity as fundamentally characterized by self-contradiction and alienation, in a constant state of attempting to overcome and reconcile this alienation. This continual process is a part of humanity's coming to understand itself. That is, a major point of this dissertation is that Hegel sees this state as a universal truth of humanity: "man is ... not only the bearer of the contradiction of his multiple nature but the sustainer of it, remaining therein equal and true to himself" (*LFA* 240). Tragic drama for Hegel is an immediate yet explicit way of understanding this essential truth of human life: that we *are* contradictions. How this plays out in tragic heroes varies according to the historical standpoint of tragedy.

Art's Absolute Truth and its Historical Forms

Looking at some key points of Hegel's philosophy of art in general helps contextualize and support my claims that tragedy is a unique yet historically contextualized presentation of the universal aspect of human being as contradictory and

self-overcoming. According to Hegel, art brings to mind and expresses “the deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit” (*LFA* 7). In this light, then, the general question of this dissertation can be restated as: What is the truth that tragedy presents according to Hegel’s theory? Art, along with religion and philosophy, is a form of absolute spirit. This encompasses but is greater than its two simpler, more immediate moments: subjective spirit, the processes of individual mind or psychological life, and objective spirit, the processes of the common spirit found in social groups and institutions. Absolute spirit goes beyond the other two spheres by mediating them, showing what spirit thinks of and knows of itself as both subjective and objective spirit, and of the relationships between them. Art, religion, and philosophy are thus different forms of the same general content, namely, spirit’s self-understanding as absolute.

Hegel’s philosophy of absolute spirit explains the ways humanity expresses itself and thus comes to better comprehend itself through its confrontations with these expressions. Absolute spirit is humanity’s various activities in which it objectifies itself for itself, its truth as conscious self-expression (*LFA* 428). This objectification allows for an understanding of its true nature as free and rational and for the opportunity to react to itself. Art’s “task is to bring the spiritual before our eyes in a sensuous manner” (*LFA* 78). While Hegel recognizes that art is used for other purposes, such as entertainment or decoration, he treats mainly fine art in his aesthetics, as it alone is freely produced for no other end than to present these truths to spirit. Likewise, then, and in contrast to Kant for example, Hegel’s aesthetics prioritizes the beauty of art over the beauty of nature, as

nature is simply given and not “born of spirit” (*LFA* 2). Art holds a special place because it is not a natural but a spiritual, imaginative product intentionally *made* as such by humans.

It also follows that as absolute spirit, art is not only higher than nature but also higher than real or everyday life, that is, the world outside of art, again because art is a more minded or spiritual product. This higher reality excludes the mundane, the accidental, and the prosaic from the content of art: “The aim of art is precisely to strip off the matter of everyday life and its mode of appearance, and by spiritual activity from within bring out only what is absolutely rational and give to it its true external configuration” (*LFA* 289). If art presents the deepest truths of humanity, it should not present simply bare facts or the purely external, which is the task of history (or perhaps even the natural sciences) but instead the substantive and infinite aspects of spirit. As Hegel puts it:

Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world, and gives them a higher actuality, born of the spirit. Thus, far from being mere pure appearance, a higher reality and truer existence is to be ascribed to the phenomena of art in comparison with [those of] ordinary reality. (*LFA* 9)¹¹

For Hegel, an artwork is the rational objectified, a sensuous presentation of truth.

However, even the most mundane or “worthless objects” that “otherwise we would pass by without notice” can be transformed by poetic or artistic treatment, giving

¹¹ Similarly, “the truth of art cannot be mere correctness, to which the so-called imitation of nature is restricted; on the contrary, the outer must harmonize with an inner which is harmonious in itself, and, just on that account, can reveal itself as itself in the outer” (*LFA* 155).

this otherwise prosaic content “formal ideality” (*LFA* 163). And, on an even higher level, in contrast to what is just given or immediate,

our imaginative mentality has in itself the character of universality, and what it produces acquires already thereby the stamp of universality in contrast to the individual things in nature. ... This affords the higher ideality of the poetic in contrast to the formal ideality of mere making. (*LFA* 164)¹²

Indeed, ‘poetic’ for Hegel is synonym for ‘ideal’: “the truly poetical element in art is just what we have called the Ideal” (*LFA* 161). Hegel describes ideal as “inherent unity” that is a “harmonious and substantial self-reliance” in “self-enjoyment, repose, and bliss” (*LFA* 179).¹³ An artwork is truly beautiful, or ideal, when content and form adequately correspond with one another (*LFA* 73-75; cf. 433).

Hegel’s theory of tragedy rests on this understanding of art as absolute truth. However, it also rests on his view that truth is historically contextualized. In this light, in Chapter One I argue that tragedy presents both historical and universal truth, and that one must take account the differences between the two types of tragedy to understand the genre as a whole. Art in Hegel’s system is manifested into three stages, the symbolic, classical, and romantic forms. Each form is adequate to its content, the idea spirit has of itself, so that the different forms “are nothing but the different relations of meaning and shape” (*LFA* 75, cf. 300). At first, spirit’s self-perception is inadequate in that it does not

¹² Cf.: “in poetry the manner of expression is always the universal idea in distinction to natural singularity; instead of the thing, the poet always gives only the name, the word, in which the singular rises to a universality, because the word is the product of our ideas, and therefore carries in itself the character of the universal” (*LFA* 166–67).

¹³ Cf. (*LFA* 157) where he describes the Ideal as “self-enclosed, free, self-reliant, as sensuously blessed in itself, enjoying and delighting in its own self. The ring of this bliss resounds throughout the entire appearance of the Ideal.”

know its true nature, and its articulation in the symbolic form is manifested as a search for this truth (*LFA* 76). Because here spirit is seeking itself in the external world only, the symbolic form is imbalanced in its heavy materiality (form) at the expense of truth (content), and falls short of art proper (*LFA* 300, 303, 314). Because of these limitations, tragedy does not exist in the symbolic form.

As we press onward, classical art attains the pinnacle of beautiful art, that is, as the beautiful objective presentation of the spiritual, with content and form in perfect balance (*LFA* 77, 79, 301, 517). Here, spirit finds its adequate material manifestation in human form (*LFA* 432-35). In Hegel's picture of Ancient Greece, individuals unreflectively identify themselves with the objective world, and there is a harmonious unity between the divine and human, between the spiritual and natural (*LFA* 78, 433). Thus, of the types of art, Greek sculpture is the epitome of the classical form (*LFA* 520).

As he describes it:

the unity of the divine nature with the human, a unity which ... is only immediate and implicit, is adequately manifested also in an immediate and sensuous way. The Greek god is the object of naïve intuition and sensuous imagination, and therefore his shape is the bodily shape of man. (*LFA* 79)

But such a static form is not adequate to truly present art's content, the inner life of humans and their free actions. Here, ancient Greek tragedy appears on the scene as a presentation of free individuals.

But for Hegel, ancient Greeks are not truly free or reflective subjects. Finally, then, in the romantic form, spirit realizes it is infinite and absolute. Now, Hegel says, "nature is emptied of gods," and spirit turns inward, positing the finite, external world as inadequate and idealizing the human soul and spiritual inwardness (*LFA* 524, cf. 518,

792). In romantic art, like symbolic art, content and form are once again out of balance, but this time in the reverse: spirit has realized its true nature *qua* spiritual, and art sheds most of its external trappings (*LFA* 79, 81). What symbolic art sought and classical art found, romantic art transcends (*LFA* 967). This form coincides with the Christian era. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus have revealed that we are no longer in immediate harmony with the world; we see that spirit is truly infinite and free, so that overall the “content of romantic art is the inner” (*LFA* 525). Yet, Jesus also reveals humanity as divine and that negation and alienation are overcome in the spiritual reconciliation of the absolute; through this, we become self-reflective, subjectivity aware of ourselves as such. Romantic art is less beautiful than classical but is a *truer* presentation of spirit. Now we have “something higher than beautiful appearance in sensuous shape” (*LFA* 517). We have spiritual truth at the “cost of sacrificing beauty” (*LFA* 574). In this way, art’s double role as both absolute and historical paradoxically leads to classical art being ideal *qua* beautiful but not adequate for the truth of spirit. As a material object—the sensuous presentation of idea—art’s ideal is beauty, what Hegel calls absolute or pure beauty, and here classical art reigns supreme; but as a presentation of spirituality, romantic art has progressed further.

This progress is seen in the respective heroes of ancient and modern tragedy. As spirit’s knowledge of its independence progresses, the respective heroes of ancient and modern tragedy embody different stages of individual freedom. This entails that the bases for their actions are different. Ancient tragic heroes are intrinsically connected to the objective aspect of reality due to their unreflective standpoint, and they are immediately

identified with substantive aims (*LFA* 180-81). In antiquity, (Greek) virtue is the basis of heroes' actions, "so that right and order, law and morals, proceed from them and are actualized as their own individual work which remains linked with them" (*LFA* 185). Because they are unaware of the independence implicit within them, rather than possessing the modern knowledge of the separation and freedom that is now explicit, the ancient hero "has a consciousness of himself only as in substantial unity with this whole" (*LFA* 188). In this way, ancient heroes are firm and unified with themselves and their substantive aims, that is, they are ideal. They embody truth in a way that we see and understand, almost sculpturally: "art and its Ideal is precisely the universal in so far as the universal is *configured* for our vision and therefore is still *immediately* one with particular individuals and their life" (*LFA* 185).¹⁴ This is exemplified in Hegel's reading of Sophocles' picture of Oedipus, as I argue in Chapter Two.

On the flip side, although modern figures possess a deeper subjectivity and a greater degree of freedom, they lack substantive aims and are not inherently tied to objectivity. In modern characters "there remains a deficiency of deeper content and so the really most important thing remains only the subjective side, the *disposition*. The more objective content is given by the otherwise already existing fixed circumstances," so that "their inner subjective life" is the main interest, seen, for example in Shakespeare's Hamlet (*LFA* 193). They are aligned with purely subjective aims, so that they have the *formal* quality of self-reliance, but the content of their aims is not substantive; I discuss

¹⁴ In reference to the great heroes of ancient tragedy (esp. Sophocles') Hegel says: "In their plastic self-sufficiency they may be compared to the figures of sculpture" (*LFA* 239).

this in relation to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Chapter Three. This radical subjectivity gives modern heroes a false independence; that is, with no support from the objective world, they are in truth opposed to substance and not free, as they would be when integrated with substance—when subject and object are re-unified. Thus, because modern characters no longer have the perfect, unified balance of form and content they are less ideal. And, as I posit in Chapter Four, this is what leads Hegel to criticize some late modern tragedy that struggles or fails to present ideal heroes.

Yet, I also show how the differing truths of the different eras of tragedy are connected by the organic, historical development of spirit. This apparent paradox—that tragedy is both absolute and historical—is the focus of Chapter One; I see this as an underlying theme of Hegel's theory of tragedy as well as of his overall philosophy. Additionally, I argue that in Hegel's theory, both ancient and modern tragedy illustrate the breakdown and re-unification of the individual with forms of communal life. These relationships are different in ancient and modern tragedy, but are united as parts of spirit's greater journey. While in general all tragedy presents the same truth of spirit as eternally and necessarily self-differentiating and then reconciling by returning to itself, the respective truths of ancient and modern tragedy are different because of the historical progress of spirit.

Drama as the "Universal Art" and What Tragedy Presents

My claim in this dissertation that tragedy is relevant today and that the genre is particularly suited to present a universal truth of humanity rests on tragedy's status as

dramatic poetry; looking at Hegel's general treatments of poetry, drama, and tragedy in this Introduction will pave the way for my later arguments in the chapters that follow. While most types of art (architecture, painting, music, etc.) appear throughout history (i.e., in all three forms), certain arts are more adequate to certain forms because of their respective balance between content and form (*LFA* 966). Symbolic art is typified by architecture and the non-natural pairings of human and animal figures, such as those of the ancient Egyptian gods, showing how spirit works on nature but is not yet in harmony with it or with itself. Spirit's idea of itself (the content) is still inadequate—thus, so is its form, and so art is not truly beautiful (*LFA* 76-77, 353-61). When individuals immediately identify themselves with the world, there is a harmonious unity between the divine and human, between the spiritual and natural, and gods appear in human form or as natural things, such as Apollo who appears both in human form (although he is not human in the way that Jesus is) and as the sun (*LFA* 78, 433). Thus, as we saw, the classical form is epitomized in ancient Greek sculpture.

Following this, music, painting, and poetry are considered the romantic arts because they are the most spiritual. Their relative “lightness” of media lends them greater freedom of expression both in scope and depth of human spirit, freedom, and ideas. Of the romantic arts, poetry most concretely presents and articulates ideas, due to the fact that it deals in words (*LFA* 81, 626-27, 964-65). If we are to understand ourselves as free and rational, we cannot fully grasp this meaning purely through pictures, static shapes, or melodic sound; “speech is alone the element worthy of the expression of spirit,” as its content and material *are* thought (*LFA* 1158; cf. 960-61, 969). Hegel calls poetry the

“universal art,” the best artistic way to concretely present ideas, because it presents the fullest picture of spirit in any era and across nations and cultures (*LFA* 967). This is where the importance of tragic drama, as poetry, enters. While Greek sculpture is most beautiful because of its stasis, its beauty relying by definition on harmonic balance, the ancients also had a need for poetry because it is able to present a fuller and truer understanding of spirit. Poetry “makes the gods act” (*LFA* 486; cf. 1039). While Greek sculpture is the most beautiful type of art, it can only go so far; because of its fixity and inability to fully disclose inner life, sculpture cannot adequately present action nor articulate the deeper truth of spirit, i.e., as rational and self-determining. The romantic era’s coincidence with Christianity entails that the content of romantic art is no longer an *immediate* unity with the divine, but a *known* unity and “*the inwardness of self-consciousness*” (*LFA* 80). The truth of spirit is that it is infinite, so that the finite, external world and “what is apparent to the senses alone sinks into worthlessness” (*LFA* 81).¹⁵ This truth needs something fuller, more concrete than the abstractness of sculpture.

Tragedy is an adequate presentation of our truth, our self-understanding, not only because poetry is the highest of the romantic arts, but also because drama is universally the best artistic medium to convey spiritual truth. Based on both what it presents and how it is presented (as content and form are, for Hegel, inseparable), poetry is broken down into epic (most objective), lyric (most subjective), and dramatic, a balanced combination of the two. Drama presents objective events, through action, and the inner workings of

¹⁵ Cf.: “The animation and life of *spirit* alone is free infinity; as such, the spirit in real existence is self-aware as something inner, because in its manifestation it reverts into itself and remains at home with itself. ... Now spirit is only free and infinite when it actually comprehends its universality and raises to universality the ends it sets before itself” (*LFA* 155).

subjectivity, through spoken words, in monologue, dialogue, and choral song (in ancient drama) (*LFA* 1035-39, 1158-62). Drama's key function is to present conflicts between characters and their aims, and their consequent resolutions (*LFA* 1193). Spoken word is best suited to reveal the fuller, truer picture of humanity as spiritual and free through its greater ability to present movement, concepts, moods, emotions, and other similar inward or spiritual content. Sculpture and architecture in their fixity are unable to fully disclose inner life or present action, so cannot adequately articulate the deeper truth of spirit as rational and free.

Dramatic poetry holds a special place in Hegel's aesthetics. As art's task is to bring the spiritual before us in a sensuous presentation of truth, of all the arts drama most concretely does this; it unfolds objective events on stage, the action, and the inner workings of subjectivity through spoken word (*LFA* 1035-39, 1158-62). In drama, "the whole man presents, by reproducing it, the work of art produced by man" (*LFA* 627). With action and speech occurring directly in front of us, we get a fuller understanding of the words, spoken with expression (both vocal and bodily), and of the action unfolding in time; we also get a truer understanding of the meaning, as the directness allows no time for us to change it or to add our own meaning through reflection (*LFA* 1038-39, 1184). In its ability to concretely present the truth of spirit to spirit, drama is ultimately the highest stage of art. For active, thinking, feeling beings, drama presents action and thought—human life—in a way that no other art can.

The live, performative, and poetic aspects of drama are key in its purpose of unfolding this truth (*LFA* 1192). In Hegel's opinion, "no play should really be printed but

should remain, more or less as the case was in antiquity, in manuscript for the theatre's repertory and get only an extremely insignificant circulation" (*LFA* 1184). In its superior ability to concretely present the truth of spirit to spirit, drama is ultimately the best of all the arts: "Because drama has been developed into the most perfect totality of content and form, it must be regarded as the highest stage of poetry and of art generally" (*LFA* 1158). Presenting the truth of humanity to humanity via human beings is a key part of art for Hegel. As he puts it:

the spirit and the soul shine through the human eye, through a man's face, flesh, skin, through his whole figure, and here the meaning is always something wider than what shows itself in the immediate appearance. It is in this way that the work of art is to be significant and not appear exhausted by these lines, curves, surfaces, carvings, hollowings in the stone, these colours, notes, word-sounds, or whatever other material is used; on the contrary, it should disclose an inner life, feeling, soul, a content and spirit, which is just what we call the significance of a work of art. (*LFA* 20)

Tragedy, as a genre of drama, presents conflict and resolution, but is distinguished from other genres by the type of aims the characters adopt, and thus also differs in its conflict and resolution (*LFA* 1192-99). As I describe in Chapter One, the different "ways in which the characters and their aims, their conflict and the outcome of the whole action are brought on the scene," dramatic poetry divides itself into the genres of tragedy, comedy, and what Hegel simply calls dramas [*Dramen*] or plays [*Schauspiele*] (*LFA* 1193). Hegel often leaves plays to the side and treats only comedy and tragedy; he says this genre "is of less striking importance" (*LFA* 1203). Its boundaries are "less firm" than the others, and it "almost runs the risk of departing from the genuine type of drama altogether or of lapsing into prose" (*LFA* 1204). Perhaps because of this and because he

associates this genre mostly with his own era, so has less material to work with, he spends the least time on it in his lectures.

What distinguishes comedy is its stress on subjective personality as opposed to the substantive weight of tragedy. In comedy, the characters' aims are insubstantial, that is, purely subjective. They are only comical if their aims are not vice, folly, or otherwise not good. Further, comedy ensues only if the characters are light-hearted and unshaken when their aims are destroyed, as they must be, because they are insubstantial; the comic hero can laugh with us, rather than our merely laughing at her (*LFA* 1199-1202). I argue that part of tragedy's importance in contrast to comedy is that its reconciliation affords a "glimpse of eternal justice" (*LFA* 1198). This glimpse is afforded because, as the characters one-sidedly pursue their aims, they end up transgressing a right or ethical sphere, or—especially in the case of modern characters—committing crimes to reach their goal. In other words, the pursuit of their aims puts them in conflict with something fundamentally right, and that conflict must be reconciled in order for reason to prevail. This reconciliation is reason working itself out as harmony is restored, and in this way we get a glimpse of eternal justice in action. While not all tragedies end badly, and in fact, as I argue, for Hegel they necessarily include reconciliation, they certainly do not end on the light note of comedy. This is because reconciliation does not mean our aims or inherent contradictions are dissolved but that they remain, even as we are destroyed.

Like all art, tragedy presents the ineliminable, eternal fact of humanity's inherent contradictions, and tragedy's medium as drama and its form of conflict and reconciliation, driven by its heroes, is particularly suited to present this truth. This

dissertation thus somewhat goes against a common view of Hegel as the triumphalist or apologist for the march of reason. Instead, while reconciliation is ineliminable from his theory of tragedy, so is conflict. My argument about tragedy's importance is underscored by the further, implicit argument that Hegel's world-view is tragic: that we maintain contradictions without erasing them. Rather than presenting only particular stories of ethical dilemmas or innocents' failed attempts at living a good life, tragedy is the universal, tragic shape of our lives enacted before our eyes.

Tragic Heroes and the Historical Progress of Subjectivity

This dissertation thus argues that Hegel's theory of tragedy proves tragic drama to be an important and unique form of cultural self-understanding. It does so by showing the tragic hero's key role as the manifestation of the historical progress of subjective freedom. The overall arc of the dissertation traces the historically evolving presentation of subjective freedom as it appears in ancient, early modern, and late modern tragic heroes. This shows the differences and uniqueness of each type of tragic hero, while at the same time keeping in mind what unites all tragedy within Hegel's theory. Chapter One argues that the different manifestations of tragic heroes are united by the very historical development of subjectivity that also distinguishes them. This also lays the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation and contextualizes Hegel's theory of tragedy within his wider philosophy.

First, I argue that ethical conflict is not the essence of all tragedy in general, as is commonly understood, and that it has been misconstrued in the literature to be definitive

of all tragedy. Chapter One shows that ancient and modern tragedy in fact have two different essences, based on the historical standpoint of each. Further, I follow Stephen Houlgate who points to the hero's one-sided adherence to her aim as a distinctive feature of all tragedy for Hegel.¹⁶ I expand on Houlgate's view to show how tragic one-sidedness is historically coined along with human individuality and subjectivity as described throughout Hegel's philosophy.¹⁷

Chapter Two focuses on ancient tragedy and shows its relevance to contemporary discussions in philosophy of action and agency, as well as Hegel's aesthetics. As Hegel describes the conflict in Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, it sounds subjective: Oedipus is at the center of the conflict. Because Hegel holds that ancient individuals have not yet achieved full subjectivity or the standpoint of morality, the subjective quality of such a conflict in an ancient tragedy is striking, and also problematic. I argue that Oedipus' acceptance of and alignment with his fated deeds makes him the epitome of an ancient tragic hero for Hegel. I show that Hegel's historically-situated reading of *Oedipus* explains that Oedipus is both morally innocent and yet blameworthy for his crimes, and that his acceptance of blame makes him a great hero of tragedy.

However, the development of self-reflective modern subjectivity found in modern heroes poses problems for the required one-sidedness of tragic heroes. Focusing on

¹⁶ Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy," in *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," in *Hegel and the Arts*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Thus, in order to explain how tragedy does this, this chapter utilizes not only Hegel's lectures on aesthetics but also those on history as well as other parts of his mature works that illuminate the place and meaning of one-sided tragic heroes in absolute spirit.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Chapter Three, I argue, against the standard reading of modern tragic heroes as wavering, that they remain completely one-sidedly fixated on their goal. At the same time, this one-sidedness seems to jeopardize their very status as modern. Under Hegel's picture of the subjective freedom won in modernity, *Macbeth* is problematic in two ways: he seems to lack self-determination in his subservience to the witches, and to lack self-reflection as he relentlessly pursues his goal. I show that Hegel's theory of tragedy reveals how *Macbeth*, and Shakespearean tragedy in general, presents a specifically early modern subjectivity, one that is partially but not yet fully self-determining or reflective. *Macbeth*'s self-contradictory stance displays limited self-determination and reflection, but his dealings with supernatural characters, use of simile, and tragic reconciliation display the beginnings of modern subjectivity and freedom, and their inherent contradictions. Shakespeare's work shows both what is gained in early modernity and what is still lacking at this stage of spirit's progress.

Chapter Four shows how late modern characters pose a problem for Hegel's theory that tragic heroes are firmly fixed, in that they can appear weak or wavering. Using Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800), *Mary Stuart* (1800), *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), and his theory of the sublime, I address apparent conflicts between Schiller and Hegel: while for Schiller tragedy offers an experience of the sublime by imitating the chaos and meaninglessness of history, Hegel argues that tragedy should present the reconciliation of humanity's deepest conflicts. This examination elucidates how Schiller's sublime is very much like Hegel's spiritual beauty, a connection that helps to explain how a seemingly wavering character is a tragic hero within Hegel's theory. I argue that Schiller's Joan of

Arc and Mary Stuart present the beautiful triumph of an individual's subjective freedom over great spiritual conflict.

Finally, Chapter Five explains why in Hegel's contemporary society and his theory of the ideal state there is no room for tragic heroes, and tackles the seeming contradiction that follows when Hegel declares that we nonetheless do and should maintain both an interest in and a need for heroes in drama. I argue that it is the sense of alienation as described in Hegel's theory of modernity that engenders and maintains the need for tragic heroes of all eras, from ancient Greece through late modernity, to our present day. I suggest that Hegel's theory of late modern tragic heroes helps show how certain types of contemporary dramas can be better understood as centered around a tragic hero. In this way, this dissertation argues that Hegel's theory of tragedy is properly understood as a manifestation of the historical progress of subjective freedom and, when understood as such, his theory shows tragedy to be an important and unique form of cultural self-understanding for modernity.

CHAPTER 1

HEGEL'S ESSENCE OF TRAGEDY AS HISTORICAL AND ABSOLUTE

Hegel's theory of tragedy is commonly summed up as a conflict between two ethical forces or rights, embodied in the drama's heroes. That this is the prevailing view of Hegel's definition of tragedy is no doubt due in part to the prominence of Hegel's high regard for Sophocles' *Antigone*, which presents such a conflict.¹⁸ But this is only half the story, leaving out modern tragedy in which the conflict is merely subjective and never ethical—and if ethical conflict is the essence of tragedy, modern tragedy not only seems very different from ancient tragedy, but it also falls short. If this were the case, however, one wonders how modern tragedy relates to ancient tragedy, and, further, why Hegel praises Shakespeare's tragedies as some of the greatest in history. In answer, this chapter argues that ethical conflict is not the essence of tragedy but instead “the original essence of tragedy,” as Hegel puts it (*LFA* 1196). This essence then *develops* into another, purely subjective type of tragedy in modernity, so that ancient and modern tragedy indeed have two distinct but related essences, based on their historical standpoint.

Further, I argue that ancient and modern tragedy are united under a larger concept of tragedy, which is related to their status as absolute spirit. I show how Hegel's theory of

¹⁸ For examples of this prevailing view, see: Bradley, “Hegel's Theory of Tragedy”; Roche, “Introduction to Hegel's Theory of Tragedy” and “The Greatness and Limits of Hegel's Theory of Tragedy”; Robert R. Williams, “Freedom as Correlation: Recognition and Self-Actualization in Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit,” in *Essays on Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, ed. David S. Stern (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 73; Robert R. Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God: Studies in Hegel and Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 291–91; Young, *The Philosophy of Tragedy*.

the historical progress of subjective freedom – from individual to subject to substance – shows why the prevailing view of Hegel’s theory of tragedy is limited and thus incorrect. I follow some commentators, especially Stephen Houlgate, who point to the hero’s one-sided adherence to her aim as a distinctive feature of all tragedy for Hegel.¹⁹ However, *why* they are one-sided has not yet been addressed in the literature. I expand on Houlgate’s view to show how tragic one-sidedness is historically coined along with human individuality and subjectivity, as described throughout Hegel’s philosophy.²⁰ I show how ancient and modern tragedy both present the same absolute truth but from two perspectives, as two sides of a coin: both types of tragic one-sidedness show that either side of the coin alone is insufficient and that the conflict must be reconciled. Tragedy is absolute; it presents the falsity of one-sidedness via the reconciliation of the hero’s one-sidedness within the work as a whole. The truth that tragedy presents, and what makes tragedy an important form of absolute spirit for Hegel, corresponds to its form: it *is* a reconciliation of opposing forces. This chapter shows that Hegel’s picture of the development of subjective freedom explains the differences between ancient and modern tragedy, and also links them through this very development.

The Essence of Tragedy?

In Hegel’s lectures on art, he gives the following description of tragedy:

¹⁹ Houlgate, “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy” and “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy.”

²⁰ Thus, in order to explain how tragedy does this, this chapter (and the dissertation as a whole) utilizes not only Hegel’s lectures on aesthetics but also as those on history as well as other parts of his mature works that illuminate the place and meaning of one-sided tragic heroes in absolute spirit.

The original essence of tragedy consists then in the fact that within such a conflict each of the opposed sides, if taken by itself, has *justification*; while each can establish the true and positive content of its own aim and character only by denying and infringing the equally justified power of the other. (*LFA* 1196)²¹

This quote is consistently referred to in the literature as Hegel's definition of tragedy. At first glance, this seems a clear definition of tragedy, and appears in the lectures where he seems to be laying out the general requirements for all tragedy, that is, of the genre as a whole.

However, it must be pointed out that he prefaces the above quotation with the statement that this discussion, which many commentators have mistaken as a general discussion, is actually of tragedy "taken in its substantive and original typical form" (*LFA* 1194). Here, by 'original' Hegel means ancient Greek in contrast to modern tragedy. Why he gives the essence of only Greek tragedy is not immediately clear, but I posit that it is due to his immediately following point that it is difficult to discuss tragedy in general without particularizing it in a historical context, manifestation, or example. Indeed, Hegel gives "brief mention of only the most general basic characteristics of tragedy," as "their concrete particularization can come into view only in the light of the stages in tragedy's historical development" (*LFA* 1194). These general characteristics of tragedy are the hero's one-sided pursuit of her aim, the resulting conflict or collision, and its reconciliation (*LFA* 1194-98, 1215-20). Additionally, Greek tragedy is paradigmatic

²¹ Here is the original German: "Das ursprünglich Tragische besteht nun darin, daß innerhalb solcher Kollision beide Seiten des Gegensatzes für sich genommen *Berechtigung* haben, während sie andererseits dennoch den wahren positiven Gehalt ihres Zwecks und Charakters nur als Negation und Verletzung der anderen."

precisely because this type of conflict, as described in the above quote, is so great and so deep. Greek tragedy is great tragedy, and it is the original type of tragedy.

But simply because it is original or great does not mean it remains constant, or that it is definitive of the entire genre. If one jumps to the conclusion that this is the essence of all tragedy for Hegel, his overall theory of tragedy is misconstrued. In his lectures on art, Hegel describes ancient and modern tragedy as being very different. In his theory, ancient tragedy presents a conflict between two ethical forces or rights, driven by heroes who embody these rights or substantive spheres. Modern tragedy, in contrast, presents a subjective conflict driven by heroes who identify only with their merely personal aims, so the conflict is never ethical and seemingly of lesser weight. Further—and what I see at the root of the trend that takes the essence of ancient tragedy as *the* essence for all tragedy—in Hegel’s theory, Greek tragedy is more strictly defined (as I show in Section II) and thus easier to discuss more clearly and succinctly than modern tragedy. I posit that because modern tragedy has more freedom in various ways, especially in its freedom of subject matter, such as the characters’ aims, it is difficult to pinpoint its essence, and because the above quote is so clear, it seems that many commentators are easily misled into thinking that Hegel’s definition of the essence of tragedy is such an ethical conflict.

Indeed, this statement of Hegel’s has led to some unfortunate results in the secondary literature. On the one hand, it has disproportionately shifted the focus to ancient tragedy. This often leaves modern tragedy to be seen as defective, which would

contradict Hegel's great praise of Shakespeare, among other modern dramatists.²² As a result, in many of the wider discussions of Hegel's theory of tragedy, both inside and outside of academic philosophy, modern tragedy is simply ignored.²³ At very least, this leaves our understanding of Hegel's theory of tragedy lacking or unbalanced, because modern tragedy is a large, perhaps equal half, of Hegel's theory of tragedy, regardless of whether one is "better than" the other, or which one Hegel personally favors (a point also all too often focused on without giving philosophical reasons why that would be important). On the other hand, while the differences between ancient and modern tragedy are sometimes drawn out by commentators, this often leads to some weird maneuvering, either to fit modern tragedies under the rubric of ancient tragedy or to jimmy the definition to suit the author's agenda.

This latter trend began in the English-language literature with two essays by A. C. Bradley, which are largely responsible for introducing Hegel's theory of tragedy to the English-speaking world. Bradley outlines differences between ancient and modern tragedy in Hegel's theory, but finds his own way of unifying them. Bradley, as he puts it himself, gives a "restatement of Hegel's general principle" so that he can apply it to both ancient and modern tragedy.²⁴ He does this because "Hegel's theory applies only

²² Statements throughout Hegel's lectures show he clearly just as highly regards many modern works as those of ancient tragedy, most notably those of Shakespeare and Goethe (e.g., *LFA* 298).

²³ For example, Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God*.

²⁴ Bradley, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 86. Although in "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," Bradley is sometimes on track, for example when he says Hegel is right to emphasize action and conflict over suffering and misfortune: "the essential point to him is not the suffering but its cause, namely, the action or conflict" (70). Yet, puzzlingly, he immediately goes on to say that Hegel pays "too little attention" to pity, and spends the remainder of his essay explaining how and why he thinks the "noble endurance of pain that

imperfectly to the works of Shakespeare,” which is often Bradley’s main concern in these essays.²⁵ Bradley decides that the “common essence of all tragedies” for Hegel is a self-division of spirit in which both sides of the conflict are good, where good means anything of spiritual value (i.e., not just moral or ethical).²⁶ Despite its flaws, and despite more recent scholarship that improves upon it, Bradley’s essay remains influential—in fact, almost all of the current literature on Hegel’s theory of tragedy cites it, with very few exceptions.

Bradley may also be a cause of the *Antigone* craze in the English-language literature, as he purports to quote Hegel calling the *Antigone* “the perfect exemplar of tragedy.”²⁷ For example, Hegel’s famous regard of Sophocles’ *Antigone* as “the most magnificent and satisfying work of art of this kind” is by far the most often discussed quote in the literature (*LFA* 1218). The meaning of this statement is contested and ambiguous, but it certainly does not mean it is the best work of all art—by “of this kind” Hegel narrows it down to tragedy at least. T. M. Knox also posits in a footnote to his translation of Hegel’s lectures that it refers to one specific type of equal ethical tragic

rends the heart” is the greatest ingredient in tragedy (82). In highlighting how the audience is affected, Bradley steers his readers away from the importance Hegel places on what the tragedy itself presents. Bradley’s own focus is on the audience’s feeling of reconciliation and not on the fact that any affirmative action is within the play itself (83, 90–91). Thus, Bradley offers yet another revision of Hegel, based on what he sees as a weakness of Hegel’s theory: namely, that he does not stress enough the audience’s pity for characters’ suffering and their admiration for the characters’ endurance. Hegel addresses this in *LFA* 1197–98.

²⁵ A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2000), 16; cf. Bradley, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 71.

²⁶ Bradley, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 89; cf. 86, 90–91.

²⁷ Bradley, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 82. Bradley does not cite Hegel, and I am unable to locate such a quote by Hegel, but in what follows I point to some statements by Hegel that Bradley may be referring to.

conflict (*LFA* 1218, n.1). This is plausible, as here Hegel is laying out the different kinds of ancient tragic conflicts. Hegel elsewhere says that *Antigone* is “one of the most sublime and in every respect most excellent works of art of all time” (*LFA* 464). These points are often taken out of context or misconstrued to mean it is *the* rather than *one* of the best artworks. It is true that in Hegel’s opinion the *Antigone* is one of the greatest tragedies ever written, and I do not contest this fact. I merely think that his aesthetics holds a complex view with more to offer than it has often been given credit for, and that some of his statements have been taken out of context to the detriment of a full, accurate understanding of his theory of tragedy. As the *Antigone* is indeed excellent in Hegel’s view, there is a wealth of literature on this, and the focus on the *Antigone* in particular and on ancient tragedy in general is perpetuated.

Based on this common misunderstanding of Hegel’s view of the essence of tragedy, a trend in the literature is to summarize Hegel’s theory of tragedy as right versus right.²⁸ This often results in secondary sources that elaborate only on tragedy and its relation to objective spirit or ethical spheres, ignoring tragedy’s subjective aspects and modern tragedy. Frequently, the ancient essence is stated at the outset, but followed by an accurate description of modern tragedy—yet with no explanation of why they are different, nor with any criticism of modern tragedy’s failure to live up to the given

²⁸ For example, in addition to the others mentioned, see Robert R. Williams, “The Inseparability of Love and Anguish: Hegel’s Theological Critique of Modernity,” in *Hegel on Religion and Politics*, ed. Angelica Nuzzo (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 135.

definition, which would confuse an alert reader. For example, Mark Roche does so in what are to my mind otherwise accurate and informative secondary sources.²⁹

However, not all commentators subsume modern tragedy under the rubric of ancient tragedy or even mention an “essence of tragedy” for Hegel. In some cases, it is simply not on their agenda. For example, some recent scholarship discusses a certain work of modern tragedy without trying to declare an essence of tragedy at all.³⁰ Although these discussions do not seek to define Hegel’s overall theory of tragedy, they add to our understanding of it by broadening the discussion.³¹ Yet, despite this welcome addition of modern tragedy in the scholarship on Hegel’s theory of tragedy, we are still left with the questions of just what Hegel’s theory of tragedy is—whether there is indeed an essence of tragedy and, if so, what it is—and of the relationship between ancient and modern tragedy.

Stephen Houlgate does highlight one important similarity between ancient and modern tragedy, but without calling it their common essence, namely, the tragic heroes’

²⁹ Roche, “Introduction to Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” and “The Greatness and Limits of Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy.” However, Roche’s *Tragedy and Comedy: A Systematic Study and a Critique of Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), while an extremely detailed account and an interesting book in its own right, is not a completely reliable secondary source on Hegel’s theory, first, in its endeavor to reformulate Hegel’s categories and, second, to criticize Hegel’s theory in order to instead and ultimately offer his *own* theory of tragedy (and comedy). For further criticisms of Roche’s readings of Hegel, see the review by Max Statkiewicz in *Monatshefte* 94 (2002): 542–544.

³⁰ For example: Kristin Gjesdal, “Reading Shakespeare, Reading Modernity,” *Angelaki* 9 (2004): 17–31; Lydia Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart: Hegel, Tragedy, and Schiller’s *Wallenstein*,” *New German Critique* 38 (2011): 1–23; Kottman, “Defying the Stars” and “The Charm Dissolves Apace.”

³¹ One worth mentioning is Leonard Moss; he not only gives a clear (albeit condensed) breakdown of the two types and an extremely detailed account of the influence of Hegel’s theory of tragedy in philosophy, but also shows its influence in drama studies and on dramatists themselves, such as Arthur Miller. See Moss, “The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy”; unfortunately, this article itself seems to have gone unrecognized.

one-sided adherence to their aims.³² This is a key part of Hegel’s theory, and as I outline in this chapter (and show throughout this dissertation), this one-sidedness is the characteristic that makes these dramatic figures both tragic and heroic. On the one hand, the heroes’ one-sidedness is the problem that makes them tragic heroes, and not simply heroes. Hegel describes it as their “tragic fixity” because it leads to their committing crimes or ethical transgressions, to their downfall, and most often to their demise (*LFA* 1203). In pursuit of the aims with which they so fully identify, the heroes fail to see others’ rights or the fact that they are wrong. By “sticking to their guns,” tragic heroes bring ruin upon themselves (such as Oedipus), infringe on another right or another area of the ethical life of their community (Antigone, acting in the name of family, infringes on the state in her opposition to Creon, and vice versa), commit crimes or atrocities (Macbeth, Orestes, Lear, Oedipus, etc.), or, usually, a combination of these.

On the other hand, one-sidedness is not a negative attribute; it fulfills Hegel’s aesthetic requirement that dramatic heroes are firm and unified with themselves, “self-contained” in their complete unification with the idea that they embody (*LFA* 181).³³ That is, one-sidedness is key to their aesthetic greatness and is indeed necessary for them to be a hero at all—and not a victim or simply a tragic figure. In the case of modern heroes, who can reach the depths of evil and do not embody the ethical, their resoluteness holds our interest and allows them to bear the title of hero. Ancient heroes are likewise

³² In both Houlgate’s “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy” and his “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” throughout.

³³ Cf. *LFA* 240–41: “this ideal presentation appears when the universality of the powers is pervaded by the particularity of the individual and, in this unification, becomes a subjectivity and individuality which is fully unified in itself and self-related.”

aesthetically great due to their firmness, plus the fact that they are continually aligned with a right or an ethical sphere also keeps them ethically great (though, as mentioned, they are also in the wrong). All heroes, no matter their wrongs, unwaveringly pursue their aims and take full responsibility for their deeds. This one-sidedness is the hallmark of tragic heroes for Hegel, making them both innocent and guilty, or evil and great, depending on the case, but always steadfast to their aims (*LFA* 1198, 1214).

Where Houlgate and I diverge is regarding just what this tragic one-sidedness presents. Houlgate argues that in Hegel's theory, "tragic art reveals the intrinsic *limits* of heroic, individual freedom," and, in a sense, then, it "calls into question art's own aesthetic ideal."³⁴ Because individual freedom is necessary for a tragic hero, while at the same time her one-sidedness destroys her, Houlgate posits that tragedy "demonstrates the limitations not of human being as such, but of aesthetic heroic individuality."³⁵ He argues that this limitation is one that we should not take on in real life, that is, "in the world outside of art."³⁶ Or, put another way, for Hegel, tragic drama "teaches us not that tragedy is unavoidable, but that it stems from confusing life with art."³⁷ Houlgate's view is that tragic one-sidedness in drama teaches us not to take on such a stance in real life.

This is an interesting point that makes sense on its own, that is, outside of Hegel's theory. Indeed, it seems it could apply especially well to modern subjects, because our

³⁴ Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 146–47.

³⁵ Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 168.

³⁶ Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 168.

³⁷ Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 146.

freedom entails that we can choose not to be one-sided, as I show in Section III.

However, Hegel does not think that in reality many people are heroes, and if they are, they are not heroes by choice but become heroes unwittingly; thus, a warning not to be a hero would seem an empty lesson. More problematically, Houlgate comes close to saying that art is morally instructive, which Hegel denies is the aim of art (*LFA* 7). Houlgate implies that tragedy is a lesson to the audience not to aestheticize life, but for Hegel, art presents the deepest or highest truths of humanity—more akin to description than prescription.

In contrast to Houlgate, I posit that, by definition, tragic heroes *cannot* cease being one-sidedly aligned with their aims—as described, this is exactly what makes them both heroic and tragic.³⁸ If they let go of their aims, it would not be a tragic ending, but instead what Houlgate terms “the drama of yielding and forgiveness.”³⁹ (This type of drama is close to what Hegel simply calls dramas or plays, a genre somewhere between comedy and tragedy.) That is, if they let go, they are not one-sided and thus not tragic heroes, and therefore cannot be a lesson of what we ought not be or do. Instead, as I argue throughout this dissertation, since art for Hegel is a presentation of truth and not a lesson, one-sided heroes *are* an aesthetic manifestation of a truth of humanity; they are a presentation of a core aspect of humanity, they are show us the truth what we are, an inescapable fact of our existence. Further, Houlgate’s reading of one-sidedness as stubbornness reduces it to a psychological feature. However, tragic characters are not

³⁸ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 169.

³⁹ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 164–68.

real, finite individuals; they are characters in drama, which, as art, is absolute spirit. Thus, Houlgate's reading points to the further problem of how such a limited or one-sided perspective can leave room for the absolute; I answer this in Section IV. But before this can be answered, it is necessary to understand *why* tragic heroes are indeed one-sided in the two very different ways that ancient and modern heroes are.

Ancient Greek Individuality and Tragic One-sidedness

This discussion of one-sidedness has shown so far that at the most basic level, tragedy requires a conception of human individuality in order for a hero to be possible. But how does this relate to the question of the essence of tragedy, and its relation to the tragic hero? In Hegel's view, free human individuals truly appear for the first time in ancient Greece, and this is where the tragic hero historically comes on the scene.⁴⁰ Indeed, along with the emergence of the "principle of free individuality" as such, dramatic poetry truly begins for Hegel in ancient Greece (*LFA* 1206). In Hegel's view, the lack of free individuality in cultures before ancient Greece precludes the possibility of a truly dramatic presentation of action (*LFA* 1205). For example, Islamic poetry presents the individual as overpowered by God, and although there are the beginnings of drama in China and India, they too lack the necessary concept of free individuality (*LFA* 1205-06).

⁴⁰ For accounts of ancient individuality and the emergence of subjectivity see: Allegra de Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World: On Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); David James, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Subjectivity and Ethical Life* (London: Continuum, 2007); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); David Carlson, *Hegel's Theory of the Subject* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

And, as dramatic poetry emerges in ancient Greece, so does tragedy. Keeping in mind the three very general requirements of tragedy listed in Section I, until we have individuals, we cannot have tragic heroes.

Hegel sees the self-conceptions of other and earlier cultures (such as those of Eastern, African, and indigenous peoples) as always being subject to and powerless under nature or an abstract god, or both, and thus their art as imperfect.⁴¹ The art of earlier (other than ancient Greece) and even some of Hegel's contemporary cultures and religions, especially and no less than those of Asian, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu peoples, is imperfect in its reflection of their inadequate, abstract, and not yet explicit understanding of their true connection to nature, the divine, and their own individual freedom. This also includes what we would normally think of as symbolic art in all cultures, such as fables (*LFA* 76-77, 299-426). Such art Hegel terms symbolic because it can only symbolize or indicate but not adequately present the true nature of spirit, which includes independent individuals.

Ancient Greeks, in contrast to these cultures, do not see themselves as directly opposed to nature, but as both a part of and apart from nature (*LPH* 221, 225, 234-39). Rather than being completely submerged in nature or subsumed under a universal, and

⁴¹ Art of the Christian era, what Hegel terms the romantic form, is an exception and is treated in this chapter in relation to modern tragedy. There is not space here to further address Hegel's views of these peoples, although I'd like to note that despite any problems one might find with his view, he does have respect for much symbolic art in its own right. Hegel's general view of the progress of spirit in this respect is found throughout his works, but see e.g.: G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), "Part I: The Oriental World," this volume hereafter cited as *LPH* followed by page numbers and retaining original emphasis and capitalization unless otherwise noted; G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part III of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences (1830), Together with the Zusätze*, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), §§561-62, hereafter cited as *EM* followed by section numbers and retaining original emphasis unless otherwise noted.

rather than being alienated from nature, the gods, or the social world, an ancient Greek individual is connected to but also stands out from these: she takes what is given—by nature, her social situation, or the gods—then interprets it (as in oracular divination) or transforms it (such as art), making the given her own (*LPH* 237-39).⁴² By spiritualizing their given materials, the Greeks create their own world so that they see themselves and feel at home in it, leading to an understanding of themselves as free individuals, as creators of things separate from but inherently linked to them (*LPH* 225, 237). Hegel describes “the Greek character as that of *Individuality conditioned by Beauty*” because the individual shapes both her wider world and herself, “transforming the merely Natural into an expression of its own being” (*LPH* 238).

While key parts of ancient Greek individuals are naturally given, such as their disposition, they are solely responsible for then developing them (*LPH* 238). Related, all tragedies must be set in the past, in what Hegel calls a “stateless condition” or “heroic age,” when individuals were solely responsible for ascertaining and actualizing what is right, in contrast to an organized state in which individuals are not completely independent but are ruled by universal law (*LFA* 179-96). “Greek heroes appear in a pre-legal era, or become themselves founders of states, so that right and order, law and

⁴² “In summing up the constituents of the *Greek Spirit*, we find its fundamental characteristic to be, [*sic*] that the freedom of Spirit is conditioned by and has an essential relation to some stimulus supplied by Nature. Greek freedom of thought is excited by an alien existence; but it is free because it transforms and virtually reproduces the stimulus by its own operation” (*LPH* 238). The general, historical reason Hegel sees this artistic “Greek Spirit” as a wider cultural phenomenon of Ancient Greeks is that they created *themselves* as a nation and a culture out of various tribes and cultures that came together via immigration, emigration, wars, etc.; rather than wiping out or denying the previous cultures, rather than “starting from scratch” and completely inventing a new identity, they grew out of these other peoples and also transformed them into their own identity, one that retains all their diverse, distinctive characteristics, and not a homogenous mass (*LPH* 225–28). Further, the bond uniting the Greek individuals is not natural, but intentionally forged through laws and customs (*LPH* 225–26). Cf. *LFA* 436–37.

morals, proceed from them and are actualized as their own individual work which remains linked with them” (*LFA* 185).⁴³ A hero does not act for or under some already established law (legal or moral) but *is* the authority on which the ethical order rests. In a heroic age, “morals and justice ... depend exclusively on individuals,” as in Hegel’s example of Orestes’ revenge (*LFA* 184). He is not the appointed arm of the law, nor acting under a universal, nor carrying out a punishment in the name of an external or existing authority; he takes it upon himself to exact his personal revenge on Clytemnestra, which was justly done due to what she had done and based on his individual virtue, yet also harrowingly wrong, because he kills his mother.⁴⁴

The way Greek individuals are both connected to and transform the given world allows for the ethical greatness specific to ancient heroes in Hegel’s theory of tragedy. This brand of greatness is due to their immediate connection to the substantial. In the same way that the Greek individual is connected to what is natural, the hero does not see herself as contrasted with or independent from what is substantial, ethical, or right. This is because she actualizes the ethical and because she sees herself as intrinsically linked to and inseparable from what is given, which includes her family, her disposition, her social situation, and the will of the gods (*LFA* 188-90). Ancient heroes are one-sidedly aligned with the substantial and the objective side of action. As Hegel puts it, the hero “remains united in steadfast immediate identity with the whole substantiality of the spiritual

⁴³ And: “this immediate unity of the substantial with the individuality of inclination, impulses, and will is inherent in Greek virtue, so that individuality is a law to itself, without being subject to an independently subsisting law, judgement, and tribunal” (*LFA* 185).

⁴⁴ This is all Hegel mentions about Orestes here and does not say which work he is referring to (i.e., by Homer, Euripides, Aeschylus, or Sophocles), but the general plot point is clear.

relations which he is bringing into living actuality. In that identity the substantial is immediately individual and therefore the individual is in himself substantial” (*LFA* 189, cf. 1206). The ancient individual does not see a distinction between herself and the world she belongs to, between her intentions and any unintended consequences of her acts, between inner self and objective world. Thus, ancient heroes take full responsibility for all aspects of their actions, even those they do not choose or intend, such as what is inherited or fated, as in the case of Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* (*LFA* 187-88).⁴⁵ This intrinsic connection between the right and the individual entails that ancient tragic heroes are great because they are always on the side of a right or just cause. This helps explain why ancient heroes are the paradigm of tragic one-sidedness, and tragic heroes, for Hegel.

Further, a tragic hero must be in some way blameworthy or responsible for her one-sided actions, and the emergence of free individuality allows for this; as Hegel puts it: “*tragic* action necessarily presupposes either a live conception of *individual* freedom and independence or at least an individual’s determination and willingness to accept freely and on his own account the responsibility for his own act and its consequences” (*LFA* 1205). Even the most seemingly innocent heroes take full responsibility for the consequences of their deeds, even when fated—what could be more tragic and heroic at the same time than Oedipus’ taking full accountability for all that he could not have known? In Hegel’s view, tragedy requires this freedom or responsibility in order for the

⁴⁵ Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), §118R; this volume is hereafter cited as *PR* followed by section number and retain original emphasis unless otherwise noted. I discuss ancient tragic heroes and Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* in detail in Chapter Two.

individual to be a tragic *hero*, rather than victim. Truly tragic suffering of a hero is not the result of misfortunes befalling her but of her own deeds, and truly tragic pity for her requires that there must be something legitimate or of intrinsic worth about the individual or her action (*LFA* 1198).

In this way, in addition to being great because they are ethically right, these heroes are also aesthetically beautiful. The ideal is an “inherent unity,” a “harmonious and substantial self-reliance” in “self-enjoyment, repose, and bliss,” and in art the ideal manifests itself as beauty (*LFA* 179, cf. 73-75, 433).⁴⁶ Ancient tragic heroes are ideal in their fixity, beautiful much in the same way as classical sculpture (*LFA* 239). Because they see their actions as destined—that is, because they ultimately could not have done otherwise—ancient heroes can accept their fate, and this harmony is part of their artistic ideality, their beauty.⁴⁷

However, their immediate tie to the substantial and natural is the reason that ancient tragic heroes are, at the same time as they are great, also defective—the tragic and not just heroic or beautiful aspect of their one-sidedness. The Greek spirit does not

⁴⁶ Cf. Hegel’s description of the Ideal as “self-enclosed, free, self-reliant, as sensuously blessed in itself, enjoying and delighting in its own self. The ring of this bliss resounds throughout the entire appearance of the Ideal” (*LFA* 157). And: “Being in unity with oneself constitutes in art precisely the infinite and divine aspect of individuality. From this point of view, firmness and decision are an important determinant for the ideal presentation of character. ... [T]his ideal presentation appears when the universality of the powers is pervaded by the particularity of the individual and, in this unification, becomes a subjectivity and individuality which is fully unified in itself and self-related” (*LFA* 240–41).

⁴⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §147A, hereafter cited as *EL* followed by section number. I was pointed to Hegel’s discussion of the differences and relationships between modern and ancient Greek views of destiny, necessity, and Providence (among other things) in this part of *EL* by Michael Inwood, in the “Subject and Subjectivity” entry in his *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 282.

only begin with but also *needs* what nature supplies to be stimulated and express itself, so it is “not yet absolutely free; [*sic*] not yet absolutely *self*-produced” (*LPH* 238). That is, in Hegel’s view, while these individuals can willfully or somewhat freely act, they are merely transforming or interpreting the given and not taking the materials of self-production and expression from within themselves, so are not fully self-determining (*LPH* 239). To what degree this may be true is certainly debatable, but it at least meshes with the general ancient Greek conception of fate and the roles it and the gods play in their tragedy.⁴⁸ Rather than being self-directed, individuals take direction from what is given to them, such as their social role, disposition, or oracular divination—and not just humans but also the gods are subject to the fates; they are not fully self-determining and thus not absolute (*LPH* 249-50).

Related, because in Hegel’s view ancient Greeks do not see themselves as distinct from the roles that they see as naturally given, they have no concept of their own subjectivity outside of these roles (*LFA* 436-37; *PR* §§124R, 185R). That is, they are persons but lack interiority and self-reflection (*LPH* 250; *PR* §118R).⁴⁹ Following this, ancient tragic heroes are aware of being “only as in substantial unity with this whole” (*LFA* 188). Immediately tied to the objective aspect of reality, they are one-sidedly identified *only* with their substantive aims and are lacking knowledge of the subjective aspect of reality, so are not subjects in the true sense of the word for Hegel (*LFA* 180-81,

⁴⁸ William Allan, “Tragedy and the Early Greek Philosophical Tradition,” in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. Justina Gregory (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 71–82.

⁴⁹ This view could be considered as contentious as Hegel’s assessments of the cultures that produce symbolic art, but it is found throughout all areas of his philosophy.

437). As of yet, spirit has not confronted itself as separate from the given, which opens the way for realizing subjectivity, so the ancient individual who immediately identifies with the ethical realm is in this sense *too* at home in the world. Thus, the very thing that makes these heroes beautiful is also ultimately their limit, their defect: the one-sided fixity of ancient tragic heroes gives them substantial weight, but they are lacking subjective freedom and depth. This, I posit, leaves us with a need for a different type of tragic hero in modernity.

Modern Subjective One-sidedness

Thus far, I have shown how the birth of the concept of human individuality in ancient Greece and the concomitant birth of the tragic hero gave us the paradigm of tragic one-sidedness and tragic heroes. Based on the ancients' immediate ties to nature and to their societal roles, they are lacking subjectivity, yet completely united with the substantial or ethical realm. But on the flip side of the coin is the one-sidedness of modern tragic heroes, who are on the surface completely different. How does Hegel's philosophy account for, and allow for, such tragic heroes? That is, what explains the difference?

In Hegel's picture of the progress of spirit, it becomes unsatisfied with the immediate and the natural, and searches within for its absolute truth and freedom; in this way, modern subjects realize earlier individuals' implicit interiority and distinctness from

the objective world (*LPH* 250).⁵⁰ For Hegel, the decisive turning point for this deeper subjectivity is Christianity; when God appears before us as human and in his death, resurrection, and ascension, the true essence of both God and humanity is revealed. God's human manifestation shows humans to be spiritual and infinite, not merely natural but also divine; his resurrection and ascension show him to be limitless, beyond the ancient Greek gods whose highest phase is a merely material manifestation in products of the imagination, and never as truly human nor pure spirit (*LFA* 521; *LPH* 249-50; *EM* §564; *EL* §147A).⁵¹ With the ancient Greeks' lack of interiority, spirit's truth was adequately presented sensuously, and their gods were individualized in human form—as in sculpture—but spirit's truth in Christianity requires more spiritual and freer modes for adequate presentation (*LFA* 9-10).⁵²

Hegel's third art form, romantic art, coincides with Christianity and displays a greater degree of subjective depth and freedom than classical art (*LFA* 79). No longer must God appear in material form only, as did Greek gods and gods of earlier, natural religions, nor is God's or Jesus' *physical* beauty important (nor perhaps even existent); now art "presents him as only condescending to appearance, and the divine as the heart of

⁵⁰ Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁵¹ Cf. *LPH* 456. Also cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, The Lectures of 1825-1826; vol. III: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Robert F. Brown, trans. R. F. Brown, J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 17–18; all references to this volume are hereafter cited as *LHP* followed by page numbers and retain original emphasis. Cf. also countless passages throughout his lectures on religion.

⁵² This is true not only for content but also for form, so that the most appropriate types of arts to display this are painting, music, and poetry, which Hegel often refers to as the romantic arts (whereas architecture is the most appropriate for the symbolic form and sculpture for classical art).

hearts in an externality from which it always disengages itself. Thus the external can here appear as contingent towards its significance” (*EM* §562). As spirit turns away from the finite, external world and its inner, spiritual aspects are elevated, “what is apparent to the senses alone sinks into worthlessness” (*LFA* 81).⁵³ The sensuous has been “resurrected from death to absolute spirit” (*LFA* 436, cf. *EM* §557). Now, art’s content “is absolute inwardness, and its corresponding form is spiritual subjectivity with its grasp of independence and freedom” (*LFA* 519). Further, the inward turn and the spiritual revelations of Christianity entail that art no longer presents an immediate unity of human and the divine, as it was in ancient Greece, but a known unity, so that “the realization of this content is ... the *inwardness of self-consciousness*” (*LFA* 80). This movement and mediation of spirit proves a separation between the individual and the rest of the world previously unknown; while this can be alienating or dangerous (as, for example, opening the possibility of moral evil, discussed shortly), it also proves the individual’s independence and deeper subjectivity. Thus, while ancient drama presents the objective side of events, modern drama focuses on the subjective aspect of actions, individuals’ character, and their inner lives, displayed in such dramatic devices as monologue and simile (*LFA* 1206-07).

⁵³ Cf.: “Now if these two sides [(objective and subjective)], made adequate to one another for the first time by sculpture, are separated, then the spirit which has withdrawn into itself stands opposed to externality as such, to nature and also to the inner life’s own body; moreover, in the sphere of the spiritual itself, so far as the substantive and objective aspect of the spirit is no longer confined to simple and substantive individuality, it is cut apart from the living and individual subject. The result is that all these factors hitherto fused into a unity become free from one another and independent, so that now in this very freedom they can be fashioned and worked out by art” (*LFA* 792), my insertion.

However, in Hegel's view it is not until the Protestant Reformation that individuals begin to truly know themselves as subjects possessing self-determination. Such knowledge entails that one's choices and roles are not given, neither naturally nor by the gods, and that the subject is not necessarily linked to the substantial—contingency and freedom are now also real factors in one's actions. And yet, even while "Protestantism had introduced the *principle* of Subjectivity," spirit does not *fully* realize subjective freedom until it can be held under the scrutiny of its own reason, as introduced by the Enlightenment (*LPH* 438).⁵⁴ True freedom for Hegel is not merely having free will or freedom of choice but in *knowing* oneself and all subjects as self-determining, and, further, in being able both to fully realize one's freedom with others and to see one's own actions in harmony with one's community, rather than being alienated from oneself or from one's community. Thus, while there is a marked and monumental shift from antiquity to Christianity, it is not until the early modern period that subjectivity is truly born, and spirit then continues through Hegel's own time to progressively gain more subjective freedom and depth.

In this light, we can see how the heroes of modern tragedy are born concurrently with the subjectivity of early modernity as introduced by the Reformation. Modern subjectivity develops out of ancient individuality, with modern individuals becoming truly subjective, aware that they possess a greater degree of freedom and inner life than their ancient counterparts (*LFA* 79-80). As in the earlier description of the relationship between romantic art and Christianity, the focus and driving force of modern tragedy is

⁵⁴ Cf. *LHP* 131.

the characters' "inner subjective life" (*LFA* 193). Because of the subject's inward turn and resulting separation from the objective world, modern heroes' actions are not tied to anything of inherent objective value but are driven only by their subjective aims; the conflicts and resolutions center on their personality or passion, so there is no clash between ethical spheres or rights (*LFA* 1206, 1229). Even Shakespeare's greatest works are centered on such collisions driven by subject-centered heroes. For example, Macbeth's uncompromising quest for power is not on the side of a right or ethically justified, but is only his desire for personal gain.⁵⁵ Finally, in addition to the inward turn, modern heroes embody the subjective freedom spirit has gained by freely choosing their aims, rather than their aims or roles being given to them, as they were in ancient tragedy.⁵⁶

But, if modern heroes are so different than ancient heroes, it leaves the question open of what makes them heroic. That is: how can such inwardly turned heroes, whose freedom allows them to pursue purely subjective aims, be heroic, especially if they are not aligned with anything inherently good or right? Despite this greater subjective freedom in modernity, its tragic heroes are also one-sided, much like their ancient counterparts, and being unified with their aims also keeps them aesthetically great. Hegel

⁵⁵ Similarly, when comparing Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Aeschylus' *Choepori* and Sophocles' *Electra*, Hegel sees the collisions as the same in general, but "in Shakespeare it is simply and solely an atrocious crime and Hamlet's mother is guiltless of it. ... Therefore the collision turns strictly here not on a son's pursuing an ethically justified revenge and being forced in the process to violate the ethical order, but on Hamlet's personal character" (*LFA* 1225–26).

⁵⁶ Thus, while it is *possible* that a modern hero's goal is aligned with a just or ethical cause, it "remains a matter of chance whether the individual's character is gripped by something intrinsically justified or whether he is led into crime and wrong" (*LFA* 1226). The modern hero could just as easily pick an evil, mundane, or just aim, because she is free to pursue whatever she chooses.

consistently cites Shakespeare's characters as being at one with themselves, admirably steadfast in pursuit of their personal aims, even if it brings about their own or others' destruction (*LFA* 1229-30). Romeo and Juliet *are* love, and all of their actions are truly propelled by this pathos, despite their relationships with other characters or chance occurrences (*LFA* 239). Modern one-sidedness can also be subtle, making explicit what was already implicit: "For example, in *King Lear*, Lear's original folly is intensified into madness in his old age, just as Gloucester's mental blindness is changed into actual physical blindness" (*LFA* 1229). Even characters such as Juliet that seem hesitant or completely weak are tragically fixated, just "based in inwardness," as their aims remain within their hearts or minds rather than being externally realized (*LFA* 580). They do not realize their aims because they have no support from others, or are prevented by accidental circumstances, or simply because of their own inwardly turned nature, but nonetheless are one-sidedly fixated on them from start to finish (*LFA* 580-85). Modern heroes are one-sidedly fixed on their subjective or personal aims in the same way ancient heroes are fixed on their objective or substantial aims, also making them great.

Yet, at the same time, the stress on the subjective in modern heroes is at the expense of the objective, so that their one-sidedness is also their defect. In them, "there remains a deficiency of deeper content and so the really most important thing remains only the subjective side, the *disposition*" (*LFA* 193). While modernity has won deeper subjectivity, here Hegel means that the content of their aims is shallow, or *merely* subjective. As Michael Inwood points out, subjective can also be synonymous with merely private or personal, which can be pejorative (much in the same way today one

would colloquially use ‘egotistical’ or ‘self-centered’); subjective can be in contrast to, say, objective or predicative, but it can also indicate the contingent, arbitrary, or whimsical aspects of the subject, those aspects that are not truly tied to the substantive or rational.⁵⁷ The heroes’ actions and our interest in them are “unendingly particular” and not of universal import because of their lack of substantial ties, so that we are left with less than ideal heroes (*LFA* 194).

As purely subjective, modern heroes have a merely formal independence; cut off from others and opposed to the substantial aspects of society, they are not truly free, as they would be when integrated with the world, and they lack what makes life meaningful.⁵⁸ Aligned only with their subjective aims, they have no support of “an ethical substance” that “supplies objective firmness” (*LFA* 581, cf. 583). This radical subjectivity means they are effectively holding up their subjective aims as absolute and thus can also be evil, as exemplified for example by Macbeth. In being completely self-interested, such lone individuality exists outside of the divine, outside of the community to which one truly belongs (*LFA* 577-78). As Hegel puts it, “evil is nothing else than mind which puts its separate individuality before all else” (*EM* §382Z).⁵⁹ This is in direct contrast to

⁵⁷ Inwood, “Subject and Subjectivity,” 280–83.

⁵⁸ “True independence consists solely in the unity and interpenetration of individuality and universality” (*LFA* 180).

⁵⁹ Or, the “completely isolated, self-interested individual” is evil (*EL* §24A3). The purely particular aspect of subjective one-sidedness upholds the agent’s own interests over everything else, and she acts accordingly (*PR* §§140, 140R). Such actions are damaging to the individual and society. I discuss evil and early modern tragic heroes, especially Macbeth, in Chapter Three.

ancient heroes, who are intrinsically linked with a right or ethical sphere.⁶⁰ Thus, we are now in a better position to understand why it is that Hegel is famous for holding ancient heroes as paradigmatic.

We have seen that the one-sidedness of tragic heroes is explained by the progression of human individuality and subjectivity in combination with the fact that tragedy, like all art for Hegel, presents spirit's progressive self-understanding. For Hegel, art presents the truth of humanity as free, rational subjects, but subjectivity is also historically coined. As spirit's self-understanding changes from immediately substantial to more reflective, free, and subjective, the one-sidedness of the respective heroes of ancient and modern tragedy embody spirit's stages in this respect: ancient tragic heroes are inextricably linked to the substantial, and modern heroes are purely subjective. This one-sidedness is the largest factor in the aesthetic greatness of all tragic heroes—vacillating or weak characters who are easily led astray do not make for good heroes. Further, their one-sidedness not only gives each their specific brand of greatness, but also their unique flaws, that is, the different limitations of ancient and modern tragic heroes. This discussion has shown how tragic one-sidedness is both aesthetically necessary for heroes and historically coined in conjunction with human individuality and subjectivity. What remains to be answered is how tragedy presents spirit's absolute truth, rather than just two partial views of it.

⁶⁰ In Hegel's picture, evil is not an option for the ancient Greeks. The knowledge gained by Adam's Fall allows us to choose either good or evil; without being able to reflect on this choice, without having this choice, one is simply innocent or amoral (not immoral) (*EL* §24A3). See my Chapter Two for the lack of evil in ancient tragic heroes.

The Absolute Truth of Tragic One-sidedness

As human subjectivity and freedom evolves, the heroes' aims and type of tragic one-sidedness change. But this leaves us with two radically different kinds of heroes, with ancient heroes embodying the substantive and modern heroes being purely subjective. In this light, the only commonalities between them are the bare bones of their general formal structure. This is also seen at the larger scale of drama as a whole: ancient and modern tragedy share the same basic *form* (one-sided heroes driving the conflict and reconciliation), but the specific *content* of each type differs as spirit's self-understanding changes. If this investigation were to end here, we would have two pictures of spirit's truth at two different moments, and tragedy would be giving us two historical perspectives of the absolute. This is problematic because the truth of tragedy would then be limited and not absolute in that each type of tragedy presents spirit as only either substance or subject, when in truth it is both. That is, ancient and modern tragedy each seem to be presenting a different truth of absolute spirit, which is problematic, first, because each would be historically limited and thus not eternal and, second, each would be partial.

It is true that tragedy presents spirit's historically changing truth, as we have seen. However, is one of the intricacies of Hegel's aesthetics: the truth of art, as absolute spirit, is also eternal and universal (*LFA* 9). Each particular tragedy, then, and not the genre of

tragedy as a whole, must present spirit's eternal truth.⁶¹ Tragedy thus must present the same truth throughout history (as it must in all forms of absolute spirit), despite spirit's historical differentiation in its concrete manifestations.

In my reading, absolute truth is seen in ancient and modern tragedy respectively in the following two ways. First, as ancient heroes completely and immediately embody the substantive, through their tragic fixity what is ethical or right comes into conflict and is shown to be truly neither static nor eternal. Because ancient individuals do not see themselves as having a separate inner life, they are living in an unmediated and false harmony, unaware of the truth that they are indeed subjects not simply tied to but *also* separate from substance. Classical art thus presents "the untroubled harmony of the determinate free individuality in its adequate existence," the beauty of the substantial individual who is in harmony with the world (*LFA* 436, cf. *EM* §557). But as we have seen, this untroubled harmony is not completely a positive trait. Because ancient heroes lack subjective freedom, they conflict with the world that they are a part of. In their lack of subjective freedom they are unable to see that the ethical is not given or written in stone, and are unable to change their course. For example, in Hegel's reading, Sophocles' Oedipus could not see himself as a subject separate from the objective consequences of his deeds and could only react to what he was given.⁶²

⁶¹ Hegel's view that the truth of absolute spirit is eternal can be found throughout his works, but he explicitly says it in G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. III: The Consummate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart, with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 152. Cf., e.g., *LFA* 9.

⁶² I argue this in Chapter Two.

In truth, however, what is simply given is not enough; spirit must *know* it is giving itself the ethical, and it must know and exercise its subjective freedom. In this light, I argue that ancient tragedy shows that substance must become and necessarily is subject. The hero remains both right and wrong until her one-sidedness is reconciled by the absolute. The tragic work as a whole shows the truth of spirit as absolute, that all such oppositions are reconciled.

Second, their specific brand of one-sidedness leads modern heroes embody subjective freedom, but in a merely formal way. As spirit develops from substance to subject, modern tragedy retains the substantive truth presented by ancient heroes, but the inherited unity with the substantial is not *explicit* to the character, because the modern hero is one-sidedly subjective and turned only inward. That is, we gain subjectivity as we pass from the ancient worldview, but the truth of substance does not truly disappear. Yet, because we are no longer immediately aligned with substantial spheres and have turned inward, modern heroes are one-sidedly stuck only to the subjective; the truth that we are substantive is not in view to us still—or yet.

While spirit overall has progressed to gain subjective freedom at this historical moment, modern tragic heroes are an instance of what it looks like to falsely claim this as spirit's whole truth. Thus, I posit that modern tragedy presents how the purely subjective, cut off from others and the objective or ethical world, is opposed to substance and thus lacks the content that allows for a truly meaningful and harmonious life. For Hegel, this is true of the greatest Shakespearean heroes from Hamlet to Lear. All subjects need to and truly do exist in relation to a substantial background. Modern tragedy shows this

absolute truth of spirit when its radical subjectivity is reconciled with the absolute. The same truth, that subject is substance, is again shown in the work as a whole via the reconciliation of the hero's one-sidedness.

In this way, while tragic heroes themselves alone do not present the absolute truth that spirit is truly a reunification, they are a necessary part of the work that does so as a whole. While the focus of this dissertation is on tragic heroes, they are always contextualized as a necessary component of drama as a whole. One-sidedness alone is false in that it is limited or partial, but one-sidedness is necessary for the work to present the picture of reconciled opposition, which is the truth of spirit. The truth of the whole as harmony is not visible without one-sidedness, because without it, there is no conflict, and without the individual hero, there is no way to see one-sidedness. In my view, tragic conflict is what Hegel describes as the larger opposition that is “a thoroughgoing cleavage and opposition between what is *absolute* and what is external reality and existence” (*LFA* 53). When something is cloven, it is a split of what was essentially whole, and to see this cleavage we must also be able to see *both* sides of it, not just one. One-sidedness is thus not only aesthetically necessary for heroes but also logically necessary for the tragedy in its presentation of absolute truth, so these two aspects are inextricably linked.⁶³

⁶³ Perhaps one could look at tragic heroes as sensuously presenting the level of the understanding's one-sided oppositional structure, and at the reconciliation as operating in the same way as the unifying mode of speculative thought, which re-unifies what was opposed (the opposition revealed by the dialectic mode of thought): “*speculative* thinking ... is from one point of view akin to the poetic imagination. ... it conjoins in a free totality what under a finite type of consideration falls to pieces into aspects that are either independent or put into relations with one another without any unification” (*LFA* 976).

Each tragedy shows the deeper truth of spirit as both subject and object, as truly both subjective and substantial. Both types of tragedy present the tragic consequences brought about by their respective heroes' one-sidedness, they show the same truth but from two perspectives, as two sides of a coin. Both types of tragic one-sidedness show that either side of the coin alone is insufficient and that its conflict with the absolute must be reconciled. In tragedy's reconciliation, whether it is ancient or modern one-sidedness that is stripped away or let go, spirit is shown to be in truth both substance and subject, to be truly united with what the hero opposes or is missing.

Thus, the absolute truth that each tragedy presents is the un-truth of one-sidedness. Tragic heroes come into conflict with what they are truly a part of and so into conflict with themselves; tragedy presents the absolute in conflict with itself and its reconciliation. Whatever type of one-sidedness the hero embodies, it comes into conflict with the larger truth that the audience can see but that the one-sided characters cannot until, perhaps, the bitter end. Reconciliation occurs because reason prevails as harmony is restored when the hero either freely gives up her one-sided stance or it is "stripped away" by the absolute (*LFA* 1215). In the reconciliation, "eternal justice is exercised ... it restores the substance and unity of ethical life with the downfall of the individual who disturbed its peace" (*LFA* 1197). The tragedy's reconciliation shows the truth that one-sidedness is only partial truth, and that spirit is in truth absolute, not finite or limited. This is the absolute truth of every tragedy.

In this examination of the heroes' one-sidedness we have thus far been looking mainly at tragedy's *content*: spirit's historical standpoint provides the content of the

hero's aim, what she one-sidedly clings to, and thus of the tragedy in general. But the hero's one-sidedness is one of three necessary parts of tragedy for Hegel: (1) Their one-sidedness is the cause of (2) conflict, which must be (3) reconciled. Although the different eras of tragedy present different types of one-sided characters, conflicts, and reconciliation, all tragedy shares this basic *form*. Looking to the form of the tragedy as a whole helps bring to light its absolute truth because this is the very form of truth itself for Hegel. As he puts it, "truth is just the dissolving of opposition" (*LFA* 55).

I posit that what makes art, like religion and philosophy, absolute is that the subject-object distinction is overcome because the knower is the known: humanity's truth is presented to humanity. The subject objectifies itself to become more self-aware and ultimately absolute, when it knows it is both object and subject: "The spirit in its truth is absolute. Therefore it is not an essence lying in abstraction beyond the objective world. On the contrary, ... the finite apprehends itself in its own essence and so itself becomes essential and absolute" (*LFA* 101). For Hegel, the essence of humanity is self-conscious thought; this power allows us to know ourselves as thinking and rational (and self-aware) beings, as well as to comprehend additional necessary aspects of ourselves, such as feelings and senses (*LFA* 12-13). This essence is directly related to our subjective freedom or self-determination; thought allows us to understand ourselves as free, whereas any creatures that may be self-directed do not know that they are, so they are not truly

free.⁶⁴ Art's job is to present "the most comprehensive truths of the spirit" to itself, and these truths are ultimately that its true nature is absolute (*LFA* 7).

Yet, for Hegel, being a unification of diversity is the *truth of humanity*—our true nature: "man is ... not only the bearer of the contradiction of his multiple nature but the sustainer of it, remaining therein equal and true to himself" (*LFA* 240).⁶⁵ This means for Hegel that these activities—art, religion, and philosophy—reconcile spirit's inherent simultaneous contradictions—such as being finite and infinite, objective and subjective, natural and free (*LFA* 99-101). Art is the sensuous presentation of humanity's self-understanding as absolute, which means that any of its contradictions are shown to be merely apparent: "the beauty of art is one of the means which dissolve and reduce to unity the above-mentioned opposition and contradiction" (*LFA* 56).⁶⁶

As absolute spirit, as art, tragedy's job is to present to spirit the highest truth of spirit, to present

truth as such, [which] is the resolution of the highest opposition and contradiction ... between freedom and necessity, between spirit and nature, between knowledge and its object, between law and impulse, ...

⁶⁴ Hegel's concept of freedom is found extensively throughout his works, but a characteristic and succinct summary is that it is "being at home with oneself in one's other, depending upon oneself, and being one's own determinant" (*EL* §24 A2).

⁶⁵ Knox explains in a note to his translation of Hegel's lectures on art that Hegel's play on words with 'bearer' [*tragen*] and 'sustainer' [*ertragen*]*—*somewhat like the French *porter* and *supporter**—*inadequately translates into English (*LFA* 240, footnote 1).

⁶⁶ The other two forms of absolute spirit are the other means of doing so, with religion's material being faith and philosophy's thought. It is commonly agreed that Hegel views philosophy as the highest form of absolute spirit in modernity because—very simply put—its form (thought) is most adequate to its content (absolute Idea); see, for example, *LFA* 11, 101–104. Nonetheless, art continues to present spirit's absolute truth; see, for example, *LFA* 73, 103, 976.

opposition and contradiction as such, whatever forms they may take. (*LFA* 99-100)⁶⁷

Tragedy, both despite and because of its essential aspects of one-sided heroes and conflict, presents the “harmony and unity” that *is* truth for Hegel. Tragedy’s one sided heroes and conflict are necessary to show this unity as a result, a reconciliation of, false but deeply damaging oppositions within humanity, either within an individual or between an individual and society (*LFA* 100).⁶⁸

Tragedy for Hegel presents the logical *movement* of one-sidedness: “the drama is the dissolution of the one-sidedness” (*LFA* 1163). The drama does present the tragic consequences of its respective type of one-sidedness, but I posit that tragedy also presents the truth of spirit as absolute, that is, as both object and subject, and it does so in the reconciliation of the conflict within the drama. Thus, keeping tragedy situated as absolute spirit, tragedy presents not merely one side of the absolute, but the tragic truth that one-sidedness is not the absolute truth.

The substantial type of tragedy, the original essence of tragedy, develops— indeed, must develop—into subjective tragedy, so that the essence of tragedy is understood not as static but as logically and historically unfolding. Tragedy’s essence,

⁶⁷ The opposition is “between what is *absolute* and what is external reality and existence. Taken quite abstractly, it is the opposition of universal and particular ...; more concretely, it appears in nature as the opposition of the abstract law to the abundance of individual phenomena ...; in the spirit it appears as the contrast between the sensuous and the spiritual in man, ... between inner freedom and the necessity of external nature, ... between the dead inherently empty concept, and the full concreteness of life, between theory or subjective thinking, and objective existence and experience. These are oppositions which have not been invented at all by the subtlety of reflection or the pedantry of philosophy; in numerous forms they have always preoccupied and troubled the human consciousness” (*LFA* 53–54). Cf. *LFA* 99–101.

⁶⁸ This also hints at how his theory of tragedy and indeed of all art is neither fully optimistic (one of the inevitable triumph of the absolute) nor fully pessimistic (where the sway of negative dissolves everything), but instead requires both conflict and reconciliation, perhaps in a never-ending cycle.

like essence in general for Hegel, is constituted by its parts (and vice versa) and is inseparable from the truth of its being (*EL* §12, cf. *SL* 389). In doing philosophy of art, we can truly know tragedy's essence only through its full development, by looking at its original essence in relation to its end result (cf. *PdG* §20). Hegel's theory of tragedy is properly understood only when it is seen as entailing both a historical and a logical development from ancient to late modern tragedy. In this way, we can see that despite the two very different kinds of one-sidedness, all tragedy presents the same truth, namely, that spirit is absolute, and further, that one-sidedness is a necessary part of that truth.

Absolute Truth as Tragic Drama

In Hegel's theory, all art presents reconciliation of spiritual conflict. In other modes of everyday, spiritual, or intellectual life we cannot see the whole truth of the movement of the absolute before us the way that we can in tragedy. Philosophy may be a higher form of thought than art, but as embodied beings, art satisfies our phenomenal aspect: "Thinking is only a reconciliation between reality and truth within thinking itself. But poetic creation and formation is a reconciliation in the form of a *real* phenomenon itself" (*LFA* 976, cf. 73). I argue, of all the arts, even more than comedy, tragedy is particularly suited for the presentation of the fundamental truth that spirit is constantly in a process of reconciling the opposition with itself. There are three general reasons I hold this view.

First, tragedy is poetic drama, and poetry is "the universal art," not limited to any one period of time but the best way to present spirit to spirit in any era and across nations

and cultures (*LFA* 967). This also means it has eternal value as it explicitly articulates ideas in words (*LFA* 81, 626-27, 964-65). As Hegel puts it, “speech is alone the element worthy of the expression of spirit”—both its content and its form, part of its material, *are* thought (*LFA* 1158; cf. 960-61, 969).

Second, drama is the highest of all the arts because the *whole* human being as a free, thinking subject is present (*LFA* 519). Drama, as *live* performance of poetry, is best equipped for art’s purpose of unfolding reconciled opposition, with spoken words combined with the human body’s expressive action (*LFA* 1192). The increase in subjective freedom from ancient to modern tragedy is seen at the level of the individual arts. Sculpture, no matter how beautiful, is unable to fully present outer or inner movement, show action, or articulate thoughts. Thus it cannot adequately present the truth of spirit as rational and free, or as reconciled opposition, but only as unmediated harmony. We experience the rhythm of truth unfolding before us on stage, immediately knowing the same truth felt in religion and conceptually grasped in philosophy. As Hegel sees it, “Because drama has been developed into the most perfect totality of content and form, it must be regarded as the highest stage of poetry and of art generally” (*LFA* 1158).⁶⁹

Third, of the three genres of drama—comedy, tragedy, and what Hegel simply calls drama or plays—tragedy is unique and important because the “naturally harmonious

⁶⁹ In this way sculpture is also deficient in comparison to painting, music, and architecture (*LFA* 701–06). While it may be difficult, it is not impossible to see reconciled opposition in painting, and although less concretely, in music it may be even easier to intuit conflict and its reconciliation—even the language of music is of harmony, discord, resolution, and so forth. Cf.: “the privilege of dramatic art is to represent beauty in its most complete and profound development” (*LFA* 205).

ethical powers” are victorious over the individual’s one-sidedness (*LFA* 1198-99). Drama divides itself into genres based on the different “ways in which the characters and their aims, their conflict and the outcome of the whole action are brought on the scene” (*LFA* 1193). However, Hegel’s descriptions of dramatic genre do throw into question whether tragedy is indeed the supreme artistic presentation of absolute truth: The increase of subjective freedom in the types of arts is also found in genres of drama, increasing from tragedy, to comedy, to plays (what Houlgate terms the drama of yielding and forgiveness).⁷⁰ The last, perhaps surprisingly, poses less of a problem for tragedy than comedy poses. Hegel, interestingly, says it “is of less striking importance, despite the fact that it attempts to reconcile the difference between tragedy and comedy; ... these two sides meet in it and form a concrete whole” (*LFA* 1203). This it seems is because its boundaries are “less firm” than the others, and it “almost runs the risk of departing from the genuine type of drama altogether or of lapsing into prose” (*LFA* 1204). Perhaps because of this or because he associates this genre mostly with his own era, so has less material to work with, he spends little time on it in his lectures; we are left with an incomplete but intriguing picture, though overall it seems to fail in some part due to its ambiguity either as a distinct genre or as art in general.

⁷⁰ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 164–68; he gives an illuminating account of Hegel’s reading of Goethe’s *Iphigenie auf Tauris* as its epitome. Roche also treats this genre—which he calls “the drama of reconciliation”—throughout his *Tragedy and Comedy*, esp. 247 ff.

Comedy, however, does seem to fit the bill.⁷¹ If drama “is the dissolution of the one-sidedness,” then comedy is equal to tragedy as a drama (*LFA* 1163). Like tragedy, comedy presents one-sided characters who come into a conflict that is reconciled, though here one-sidedness is “inwardly self-dissolving” (*LFA* 1163). For comedy, subjectivity must have progressed further than for tragedy, so comedy seems superior in this way (*LFA* 1205). What distinguishes comedy is the triumph of subjective personality: as the comic character’s aims are destroyed, as they must be, being merely subjective and unsubstantial, she remains light-hearted and relatively unshaken—as we say today, she laughs with us, rather than us laughing at her (*LFA* 1199, 1202, 1220). This is somewhat like modern tragedy in the centrality of the subjective, but unlike the tragic hero, the comic character is not ruined when her aims are destroyed (even if the tragic hero *lives*, the *aims* that she completely identifies with are destroyed, as is much or all that the hero held dear). The triumph of eternal justice or eternal substance—the absolute—reconciles the conflict and shows the falsity of one-sidedness. Hegel’s view of comedy is less clear and less worked out than that of tragedy, so it is difficult to give a point-by-point comparison. Nonetheless, these are good reasons for comedy to be taken seriously as a presentation of spirit’s absolute truth, perhaps equal to that of tragedy.

⁷¹ For relevant discussions of Hegel and comedy see: William Desmond, *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic: Speculation, Cult, and Comedy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); Rodolphe Gasché, “Self-dissolving Seriousness: On the Comic in the Hegelian Conception of Tragedy,” in *Philosophy and Tragedy*, eds. M. de Beistegui and S. Sparks (London: Routledge, 2000), 37–56; Stephen C. Law, “Hegel and the Spirit of Comedy: *Der Geist Der Stets Verneint*,” in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, ed. William Maker (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 113–130; Roche, *Tragedy and Comedy*; Gary Shapiro, “Hegel’s Dialectic of Artistic Meaning,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35 (1976): 23–35.

However, I posit that tragedy's differences from comedy are enough to make tragedy at least as effective than comedy as a concrete presentation of reconciliation. Further, due to tragedy's substantial conflict, I argue that in Hegel's theory it is of even greater import and effectiveness. Due to comedy's requirements that the character be completely subjective, there is no room for substance, which leaves it lacking in weight (*LFA* 1199-1202, 1220). The comic character *does* have "something higher" in her because she is "not tied to the finite world," and this "absolute freedom of spirit" is what lends comedy its appeal and importance (*LFA* 1221). But comic one-sidedness is thus open to capriciousness, whimsy, and the like, and is either not as fixed as tragic one-sidedness, or it is fixed on and in conflict with issues more trivial than in tragedy. The comic hero does not cause any serious damage to herself or to others, because her actions are surrounded by absurdity, caprice, and folly—and the conflict is reconciled as well. In fact, for Hegel, comedy's ultimate job is to display the lack of substance in the society of which it is a part, via the self-dissolution of this unsubstantial subjectivity's aims, thus making it a sort of social critique of the purely subjective in a less harrowing way than tragedy.

The lack of substance seems to lend the comic character, and thus both the particular drama and the comedic genre as a whole, an air of triviality that does not match the greatness of the tragic hero. The lack of deeper or larger conflict means that the reconciliation is also not as clear as it is in tragedy. For Hegel, drama displays "to us the vital working of a necessity which, itself self-reposing, resolves every conflict and contradiction," a necessity that clearly appears in tragic reconciliation, but not in comedy

due to the fact that such triviality is more easily and perhaps not even necessarily reconciled (*LFA* 1163). Indeed, the comic character *begins* with “an absolutely reconciled and cheerful heart,” so that the absolute, as reconciled opposition, is not won, but given from the start (*LFA* 1220). In contrast, the struggle and then its resultant harmony in tragic reconciliation are accentuated by the greater weight or depth of the conflict.

In conclusion, then, I posit that tragedy for Hegel uniquely presents, first, that tragic one-sidedness manifests itself in two different ways due to the historical progression of spirit’s subjective freedom, and second, how tragedy’s form presents the eternal and absolute. Finally, I have suggested how tragedy uniquely does this of all the arts: It is the conflict and balance between subject and substance engendered by the one-sided hero that makes tragedy indispensable and unique as a form of absolute spirit, and this eternal truth means that tragedy will endure, even if art is no longer the highest form of truth.⁷² In reference to tragic heroes, Hegel says that “the interest in and need for such an actual individual totality and living independence we will not and cannot sacrifice” (*LFA* 195). The interest in and need for tragic heroes endures because, as dramatic characters, they sensuously present what we cannot otherwise see: what it looks like for substance to oppose itself or for us to be radically free, and for the necessity that these untruths be reconciled. Indeed, I argue in the final chapter that tragedy continues to flourish. In Hegel’s view, classical art “and its religion of beauty does not satisfy the

⁷² This is what is commonly referred to as Hegel’s “end of art” thesis: “art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past” (*LFA* 11). Hegel does not think that art disappears or becomes completely irrelevant, but “the ‘*after*’ of art consists in the fact that there dwells in the spirit the need to satisfy itself solely in its own inner self as the true form for truth to take. ... We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit” (*LFA* 103; cf. 81, 967). This topic is discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

depths of the spirit; ... it still remains abstract for spirit because it has ... not that movement and that reconciliation of infinite subjectivity which has been achieved out of opposition” (*LFA* 436).⁷³ Despite the evolution of subjective freedom, tragic heroes have an eternally recurring role; they play a key part in vividly showing us the tragedy of one-sidedness, and the beauty and harmony in the truth of its reconciliation. If the essence of tragedy for Hegel could be summed up, it is this: Tragedy is a manifestation of the limits of one-sidedness that at the same time points to the constant overcoming of these limits, which can only be done at the expense of or at great cost to tragedy’s own heroes.

⁷³ In my view, this progress continues from early to late modernity: late modern heroes (in distinction from those of early modern tragedy) of Hegel’s day present a deeper harmony born of a more spiritual opposition made possible at this time of greater subjective freedom; I argue this in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 2
THE NAÏVE HEROES OF ANCIENT TRAGEDY AND HEGEL'S
KING OEDIPUS

As Hegel describes it, the conflict in Sophocles' *King Oedipus* is not only less clearly ethical than a clash between two ethical forces, which is famously epitomized in his view of Sophocles' *Antigone*, but it also sounds subjective: Oedipus is at the center—though just what he is in conflict with is also a question. Because Hegel holds that ancient individuals have not yet achieved full subjectivity or the standpoint of morality, the subjective quality of such a conflict in an ancient tragedy is striking, and also problematic. In this light, Constantine Sandis uses Hegel's reading of *Oedipus* to argue that Oedipus is morally accountable for his transgressions but that his arrogance blinds him to this.⁷⁴ However, Sandis puts Oedipus in the standpoint of morality, and I argue that this is a misreading both of Hegel's theory of tragedy and of his related pictures of subjectivity, agency, and morality as historically coined. In contrast, I show how Oedipus is unable to see the distinctions between what he intended to do and what actually turned out to be the case because he is a pre-modern individual, and thus not morally accountable.

Yet, because it is indeed unclear what is in conflict and thus what exactly is reconciled, we are left with the problem of what this tragedy positively shows us; as absolute spirit, in Hegel's theory of art it must present an important, universal human

⁷⁴ Constantine Sandis, "The Man Who Mistook his *Handlung* for a *Tat*: Hegel on Oedipus and Other Tragic Thebans," *The Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 62 (2010): 35–60.

truth. Stephen Houlgate points us in the right direction: It shows humans universally have the right to not be held morally accountable for consequences they did not intend and could never have foreseen, despite they did in fact do the deeds and were causally responsible for the aftermath in some way.⁷⁵ However, in contrast to Houlgate, I see Oedipus as completely aligned with his fated deeds and thus wrong to take the blame—making him the epitome of an ancient tragic hero for Hegel—and his eventual knowledge of the true nature of his deeds as the reconciliation of a conflict with himself. Using Hegel’s theories of agency and ancient tragedy to mutually illuminate one another, this chapter shows that for Hegel, ancient tragedy presents an unmediated, naïve consciousness in conflict with something that is substantial or just, which does not have to be embodied in another individual, as is often thought. Hegel’s reading of *Oedipus* shows how Oedipus can be both morally innocent and yet blameworthy for his crimes, all the while remaining a great hero of tragedy.

Oedipus’ Rights

In Chapter One, I showed how Hegel’s theory of the historical progress of subjective freedom explained important differences between ancient and modern tragic heroes in his aesthetic theory. I argued that the hero’s one-sided adherence to her aim is a necessary and distinctive feature of all tragedy for Hegel, and that tragic one-sidedness is historically coined along with human individuality and subjectivity. This connection between tragedy and subjectivity nicely lends itself to exploring Hegel’s theories of

⁷⁵ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 156–58 for his views on *Oedipus Rex*; cf. Houlgate, “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy.”

agency, action, and ethics in conjunction with tragedy, as this chapter does via Hegel's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, mutually illuminating these various aspects of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel himself sees *Oedipus* as a tragedy of a conflict of rights and uses Oedipus in *Philosophy of Right* as an example of someone who is causally responsible for his deeds but not morally accountable for all that they entail.

In a recent article, Constantine Sandis uses Hegel's account of agency and responsibility in *Philosophy of Right* to argue that what Oedipus thought were unintentional deeds were actually willful actions for which he is morally accountable, and that Oedipus' arrogance blinds him to the possibility of his accountability.⁷⁶ Sandis bases a key part of his argument on Hegel's view that a single event undergoes qualitative shifts when the agent's will relates to that event in different ways. Sandis bases this part of his argument (and the title of his article) on two terms: 1) A deed or act [*Tat*] is merely a change in the external world, while the same event can be considered 2) an action [*Handlung*] when the agent relates her freely acting will to it. Ultimately, for the purposes of this chapter, the importance of the difference between deed and action is its relevance to a corresponding distinction between causal responsibility and moral accountability. While the change in the external world remains ontologically identical whether one considers the event a deed or an action, a shift in the quality of the event from mere deed to an action occurs when the agent's will or intention is intimately involved; she can then be held morally imputable, in addition to being causally responsible. An agent can be

⁷⁶ Sandis, "The Man Who Mistook his *Handlung* for a *Tat*"; at various points in the article, Sandis also makes some use of the other Theban plays, but there is not room here to engage with these points.

held morally accountable only for a purposeful action, that is, a deed that has presupposed ends via the subject's will (*PR* §117).

To illustrate, Hegel gives the example of the French Revolution as an event for which we can find a number of causes, in that many people and things are causally responsible for it, but there is no one agent who is morally culpable (*PR* §115R). One must be causally responsible in order to be held morally accountable, but it “does not follow that, because I am responsible, the thing done may be imputed to me” (*PR* §115A). That is, causal responsibility is necessary but not sufficient for moral imputability. Additionally, an agent can aim for a specific outcome but be unaware of the consequences of her actions in the bigger scheme of things, so that not all the consequences are necessarily imputed to the agent, even though she is causally responsible for the deed itself. I can be held accountable for the consequences of my freely done acts only if they were part of my aim, even though the act was “mine,” as Hegel puts it, in the sense that I did it (*PR* §§115, 116). For Hegel, then, accountability is a complex matter. It involves not only the results the agent hopes to achieve, but also other consequences that she should know *could* happen—as in Hegel's own example of an arsonist who sets a piece of wood on fire, but should have taken into account the possibility that neighboring houses could also catch fire (*PR* §§118-19).

Hegel also lays out various rights that the subjective and objective sides of an action have, which we look to when taking stock of its moral status. One is the right of the will to accept responsibility only for the aspects of the action that the agent was consciously aware of, which I call the “right of will and knowledge” (*PR* §117). The

agent has the right to accept accountability only for the consequences of her action that were *not* due to “external forces” or those so “alien and distant” that the agent had no idea they were possible (*PR* §118). In this aspect, Hegel’s view does not allow for an agent to be morally accountable for things that she has no chance of knowing. Another is the “right of intention,” which is the right for the action to be judged morally only if the universal it is subsumed under was fully known, and able to be known, by the agent, including taking into account her mental capacities and capabilities (so that children, for example, are not morally judged) (*PR* §§120, 120R). This aspect of an action, although also subjective, is in addition to merely willing that an event should occur; it also includes the agent’s own description of the action and explanation of why she did it, as well as a wider sense in that the agent must also take into account the context in which the act is judged by others (*PR* §§119-21). Thus, the right of intention is also for the action to be judged as inseparable from what the agent knew and willed, that is, how she wanted it to be taken by others.

Further, when determining moral accountability, not only does the subject’s inner state come into play, but on the other side of the coin is the objective aspect of action, as all true action has both sides in Hegel’s theory. One’s will and intention go in concert with the right of objectivity. This is the right for the action to be taken to include what the agent *should* have known would occur *and* how it would be taken by others in light of the moral standards of her context—the flip side to the right of intention (*PR* §120). The agent’s purpose includes all consequences that belong to the objective nature of the action, regardless of the subject’s take; this entails that even the consequences that one

did not hope for but could have foreseen can be morally imputed. To build off of Hegel's example, the arsonist *should* have known that there *could* have been people in the house (*PR* §118R).

As should be clear, Hegel holds (contra Kant) that the recognition we deserve for our action is not based merely on good will but also on the objective nature of the deed, which, as we have seen, may entail a multitude of things including but not limited to various contexts and consequences, in combination with its subjective nature (*PR* §§124, 110A). According to Hegel, although one is causally responsible for the consequences of her action, moral accountability is not imputed if the agent did not intend them *or* if she is missing knowledge of the full situation, and thus had no way of knowing they could occur. On the flip side, as rational agents we are held morally accountable for what we should have known was in our purpose, and thus can be held accountable for consequences we did not strictly intend in the narrow sense but should have known, had we given the situation proper consideration (*PR* §132).

In this light, Sandis is a bit off track when he claims that Oedipus mistakes his action for deed. He posits that what Oedipus thought were mere deeds were actually willful actions for which he is morally accountable, and when he later realizes this truth, he blinds himself to show he is responsible for the full ethical weight of his actions. In one way, Sandis is right: Hegel thinks that Oedipus does *not* see the difference between his unwitting crimes and what he is truly morally accountable for. However, Sandis's conclusion is actually in direct contrast to Hegel's view that Oedipus is merely causally responsible for the deeds he did unintentionally, and thus morally *innocent*. In some

people's minds, whether Oedipus intended to kill the old man at the crossroads indeed may be up for grabs (e.g., perhaps he intended only to strike him, but killed him accidentally). One might even argue that Oedipus *could have known* that it was possible that the old man was his father—he was told the “rumor” that he was adopted, and knew he was destined to kill his father (which, after all, is the reason he left Corinth). Parricide then could be considered part of the purpose of the act of killing the old man.

However, in Hegel's view, there is no way Oedipus could have known who his real parents were, so he is not morally culpable; he did not know that the man was his father, so is not guilty of parricide (*PR* §117A). That is, Oedipus is the cause of the objective deed (the death of Laius) but not morally accountable for the full-blooded action of murdering his father. That would entail his knowledge that the man at the crossroads was his father, as well as having the intention to kill his father, neither of which Oedipus had (*LFA* 187-88). Thus, Hegel holds that although Oedipus was causally responsible for the death of the old man at the crossroads, he cannot be held morally accountable for parricide; he is innocent of this, as well as of the related crimes that follow. But this does not seem a fully satisfactory answer to the riddle of why Oedipus is innocent, nor of where Sandis's explanation goes off track. In what follows, I argue that Hegel's theory of agency and moral accountability as *historically* situated is necessary to properly explain both of these issues.

Oedipus' Historical Responsibility

As we have begun to see, for Hegel, moral judgment is not a black-and-white matter of applying universal principles. When applying abstract principles we cannot answer what is right when two rights conflict, so we must take into account not only the individual agent's intention, but also the context of the act, as well as the agent's knowledge of that context. What the agent knows about what she is doing, including the relationship between the subject and the objective world, can change the nature of the deed itself—from, for example, accident to crime (*PR* §§103-04, 104A). Further, in Hegel's view, to be a moral agent one must be aware of the existence both of her freedom and of contingency. This awareness is key to changing not only the status of the action but also the agent's status (from person to subject), which opens the way to becoming a truly moral agent. To be a moral agent, the subject must be able to distinguish between her self, the objective deed, and the duty or right under which, or for which, she is freely acting (*PR* §§104, 104R, 105). That is, the subject is not simply immediate, in the way that the being of a person is (in-itself), but she is also aware of herself as a self-relation and as having a self-determining will (for-itself) (*PR* §§105-08). Persons are not fully self-reflective and thus not truly acting as subjects—or, as we might put it today, while persons act, they are not full-blooded agents. This low-level type of agency is crucial for understanding Hegel's take on Oedipus's responsibility.

Sandis's view of Oedipus is that he is so convinced he is right, he fails to see that he could be responsible for the things he was unaware of. Sandis posits that Oedipus is so arrogant that he does not realize that he should be fully blamed for what happened. It is

reasonable for Sandis to see the self-centered characteristics of Oedipus as the root of his mistake; we may read his pride in being the knower or his stubborn insistence on finding the truth as the causes of his downfall. When referring to the heroes of Sophocles' Oedipus Trilogy, Sandis says that the "Theban heroes ... remain centres of that single subjective conviction which Hegel describes as a 'monstrous self-conceit,' an absolute self-complacency which 'fails to rest in a solitary worship of itself but builds up a sort of community.'" ⁷⁷ That is, Oedipus' conceit blinds him to the fact that he might be committing wrong acts (while thinking he is in the right), and instead might actually be morally accountable for the things he did, albeit unintentionally. ⁷⁸ When taking stock of Oedipus' unshakable belief that he is right, it certainly seems reasonable for Sandis to connect Oedipus with Hegel's picture of agents whose "monstrous self-conceit" leads them to wrong actions. In this light, Oedipus could exemplify the type of self-consciousness that sets itself up as absolute, as some modern tragic heroes do: as one who is not aligned with an ethical sphere or right but is instead completely subject-centered.

Yet, in this vein, Sandis aligns Oedipus with Hegel's description of a modern standpoint of morality. This is problematic because it skews Hegel's theories of agency and of tragedy. In Hegel's philosophy, both human agency and the truth of tragic drama are historically coined, so that in order to properly understand an instance of either, it must be kept historically contextualized. That is, part of an action's context is the agent's historical standpoint, just as part of a drama's context is historical.

⁷⁷ Sandis, "The Man Who Mistook his *Handlung* for a *Tat*," 42, quoting *PR* §140R.

⁷⁸ Sandis, "The Man Who Mistook his *Handlung* for a *Tat*," 49.

As described in Chapter One, in Hegel's view, ancient Greeks have not yet broken from their natural, unreflective standpoint.⁷⁹ While they can willfully or somewhat freely act, they take direction from what is given to them, such as their social roles, disposition, or oracular divination (*LPH* 249-50). In doing so, they are merely transforming or interpreting the given and not taking the materials of self-production and expression from within themselves, so are not fully self-determining (*LPH* 239). They are immediately connected to these roles and lack the ability to see themselves as separate from them; thus they see themselves as having no choice about what or who they are outside of these roles (*LFA* 436-37). That is, while they act as individuals within society, they do not possess the reflection that allows them to discern that they are particular individuals acting under a universal, that they are subjects in the full sense of the word (*LFA* 437; *PR* §§124R, 185R). In this way, ancient Greeks one-sidedly align themselves with the right of objectivity, regardless of their knowledge or intention, because they are unaware of the subjective aspects of action. They have not yet broken into the sphere of morality, as they lack awareness of themselves *as* subjects and are not yet moral agents (*PR* §118R)

This ancient unreflectiveness has implications for Oedipus' responsibility. Hegel sees Oedipus as being aligned only with the objective side of his actions and not aware of his subjective relationship to them—and this lack of awareness entails that he is not fully a moral subject in the true sense of the word for Hegel:

⁷⁹ Cf. *LPH* 238 where Hegel says that the Greek spirit is “not yet absolutely free; [*sic*] not yet absolutely self-produced.”

The self-consciousness of heroes (like that of Oedipus and others in Greek tragedy) had not advanced out of its primitive simplicity either to reflection on the distinction between act and action, between the external event and the purpose and knowledge of the circumstances, or to the subdivision of consequences. (*PR* §118R; cf. *LFA* 187-88)

That is, from where he stands, Oedipus can *not* see the difference between objective events and what he did intentionally and knowingly, or between intended consequences and those that result from chance or accident, those that are not essentially part of his action. That is, as Sandis and Hegel both put it, he cannot see the distinction between *Tat* and *Handlung*.

This is where my reading of Hegel is in direct contrast to Sandis: Oedipus can see only the objective aspect of his actions, simply put, because he is not a subject in the true sense of the word for Hegel; it is not a mistake on Oedipus' part but an ability he inherently lacks. Oedipus can identify with the objective aspects of his action *only*, due to a lack of reflectivity. While Oedipus is an individual with will, he is not a fully reflective subject, and without being aware of his freedom, he is not fully free. Thus, on Hegel's account he cannot be morally culpable. On the surface, Sandis's claims about Oedipus' moral accountability may seem reasonable not only based on Oedipus' actions within the drama, but also based on his appearance in *Philosophy of Right (PR)*; this book is where Hegel gives his most detailed account of his philosophy of rights, morals, and ethics.⁸⁰ Further, according to Hegel's theory of tragedy, the conflict in ancient tragedy is based

⁸⁰ Hegel's views on morality and ethics do appear throughout his corpus, but the only other sustained account is the, much shorter, section "Objective Mind" in his Encyclopedia, which corresponds in outline to *PR* (I did not find any references to Oedipus in it); *EM* §§483–552 (pages 241–91).

on rights or an ethical sphere, so it makes sense to turn to *PR* to help solve the riddle of *Oedipus*.

However, in *PR*, Hegel uses Oedipus to *contrast* ancient Greek agency with the modern standpoint of morality. The points in the Remark to *PR* §140 that Sandis quotes are criticisms of specific types of modern subjectivism and morality in which some agents, by aligning themselves only with the subjective side, fail to fully account for the objective nature of their actions, which they possess the ability to see but deny. These defective moments or aspects of self-consciousness are found in Hegel's pictures of Jacobi's merely formal and subjective (i.e., not substantive or universalized) conscience, early German Romantic irony (especially F. Schlegel's), and Fichte's absolute ego.⁸¹ In each case, subjectivity is so deeply turned inward that it is not aligned with objective moral standards or substantial aims, and may even hold itself up as god-like in its self-reliance; this is a problem for late modern subjectivity, in general and simply put, because it should know better. At this point in *PR*, Hegel is arguing, first, for the necessity of conscience in order to be a truly moral subject, and, second, for the limits of conscience as a moral arm, that is, the deficiency of morality in isolation from universal checks and balances (cf. *PR* §§136-40, esp. §§137R, 138A, 139R). To be clear, in Hegel's view ancient Greeks are amoral, not immoral. Their state of innocence, before The Fall of Adam, is not a state of goodness, but one closer to nature (*EL* §24 A3). The knowledge gained by Adam allows us to choose either good or evil. Without being able to reflect on this choice, without having this choice, one is simply innocent, as a child and as the

⁸¹ Cf. LFA 64–69.

ancient Greeks are. But if one fails to see that this part of *PR* is in fact describing evil, modern agency or morality, and defective types of modern subjectivity, as Sandis seems to, then Oedipus can be misrepresented as such.

As I have shown, Hegel believes that ancient individuals do not possess self-consciousness *or* conscience because ancient individuals immediately identify with their given world. Oedipus thus cannot be placed in a standpoint of, or used to illustrate, a type of subjectivity that possesses these qualities. In Hegel's view, it is impossible for Oedipus, as a pre-modern hero, to fit the mold of post-Christian conscience-based morality. Oedipus does not search within himself for truth nor claim his moral innocence based on his conscience, as the modern subject of morality does. Instead, when he finds out the truth of his deeds, he aligns himself only with the objective side of his actions, despite his *original* knowledge and intention. This is because, from where Oedipus stands, he cannot see that he is *not* morally accountable for the crimes that he is only causally responsible for. Ancient innocence is clearly not a lack of causal responsibility, but it is lack of knowledge of the subjective nature or aspect of action; this is the ancient Greeks' naivety.

Thus, in contrast to Sandis's reading, Hegel actually holds that when Oedipus finds out what has really happened and blinds and exiles himself, he is taking *unwarranted* accountability. That is, Oedipus mistakes his *Tat* for a *Handlung* rather than the other way around: he treats his mere causal deeds as full-blooded actions. Oedipus' deeds were "unconsciously committed crimes," but because he could not see the differences between *Tat* and *Handlung*, or between the objective and subjective

subdivisions of consequences, he takes accountability for them all (*LFA* 1219). As Hegel says, he takes full responsibility for “the whole compass of the deed” (*PR* §118R).⁸² Due to his historical standpoint, Oedipus has no choice *but* to own up to the full compass of his deed, as he is unable to separate his knowledge and intention from the objective facts and consequences of his acts—so he tragically takes the blame. Thus, Sandis’s misreading of Hegel’s view of *Oedipus* is based on a misreading of Hegel’s theory of subjectivity, a reading that does not take into account that it is historically coined. However, how exactly this relates to *Oedipus Rex* as a tragic work of drama is still not yet fully clear. The next section thus looks closer at the necessary relationship between Hegel’s theory of tragedy and his pictures of subjectivity and agency.

Oedipus’ Conflict

As I have shown so far, Hegel does not hold Oedipus morally accountable for his unwitting transgressions. As these events take place before the start of the drama, they cannot be the conflict within Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*—they are outside of the action of the play. But what is in conflict within the drama? Further, in Hegel’s theory of ancient tragedy, the conflict must be driven by the hero’s aims and at least one side of it must be ethical or involve a right, so what right or ethical sphere is Oedipus aligned with? While throughout the drama he clearly is bent on revealing the truth, the nature of the conflict is problematic, first, because truth as such is not so clearly a right according to Hegel and, second, just what Oedipus’ aims come into conflict with is equally unclear.

⁸² In his argument against this point of Hegel’s in *PR* §118R, Sandis also quotes this (but misattributes it as “*PR* §117–8”) in his “The Man Who Mistook his *Handlung* for a *Tat*,” 48.

Stephen Houlgate also points out that the conflict in *Oedipus* is problematic for Hegel's theory of tragedy because it is not "strictly *ethical*."⁸³ However, Houlgate's point is a bit odd because, as he correctly notes in an earlier text, only one of the three types of ancient tragic conflicts in Hegel's aesthetics is strictly ethical, and the conflict in *Oedipus* is one of the other two types.⁸⁴ The first and most famous type of ancient tragic conflict is the ethical clash between the state and the family, as in Sophocles' *Antigone* (*LFA* 1212-13).⁸⁵ Of the second type Hegel says only that these conflicts depend "partly on special circumstances and partly on the general relation between an individual's action and the Greek ... [fate]. For our purpose these are of less importance" (*LFA* 1214).⁸⁶

The third conflict is the kind in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*:

What is at issue here is the right of the wide awake consciousness, the justification of what the man has self-consciously willed and knowingly done, as contrasted with what he was fated by the gods to do and actually did unconsciously and without having willed it. (*LFA* 1214)

Even in Hegel's own description it is not very clear exactly what *Oedipus* is aligned with and thus what his aim conflicts with. Turning once again to the account of rights and responsibility in *Philosophy of Right* helps to untangle what Hegel is saying here about *Oedipus* in his lectures on art.

⁸³ Houlgate, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 157, emphasis in original.

⁸⁴ Houlgate, "Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy," 201–202.

⁸⁵ According to Hegel, this type of conflict is the most concrete, the clearest, and continues to be relevant and effective, as a truly ethical life is one in which the state and family are in harmony; thus, "despite all national differences," anyone can understand this type of tragedy (*LFA* 1213; cf. 1177).

⁸⁶ Knox inserts 'fate' to translate the Greek word that appears in the original text, which I do not reproduce here.

The first side of the conflict, “the right of the wide-awake consciousness” is described as the justification of what Oedipus has “willed and knowingly done”; this sounds to me to be what I previously called “right of will and knowledge”—the right of the will to accept responsibility only for the aspects of its action that it was consciously aware of (*PR* §117). This lets it easily fall into Hegel’s category of ancient tragic conflict that includes the opposition of a justified aim or a right (*LFA* 1210). The other side of the conflict is what Oedipus “was fated by the gods to do and ... did ... without having willed it”; this sounds to me like a deed [*Tat*], as opposed to an intentional action [*Handlung*], in that he was the causal agent of his deeds but did not will them—the gods did. In other words, the conflict as described above is, in my reading, between, on the one hand, the right for Oedipus to be held accountable for the aspects of his actions he willed and knew of and, on the other, Oedipus’ mere deeds done unknowingly.

According to Houlgate, Oedipus justifiably claims the “right of the wide-awake consciousness.”⁸⁷ Houlgate directly refers here to what is quoted above (*LFA* 1214). Yet, Houlgate goes on, what Oedipus “violates is the equal right of the *unknown* and *unconscious* to be accorded recognition.”⁸⁸ He bases this on a point in Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, where Hegel says that Oedipus “falls unconsciously into this horrible deed ... so that he falls as deeply into guilt as the height on which he stood. Here, then, is the antithesis of the two powers, that of consciousness and that of

⁸⁷ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 157.

⁸⁸ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 157, emphasis in original; here, Houlgate is referring to G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. II: Determinate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart (University of California Press, 1987), 666, hereafter cited as *LPR* followed by page number.

unconsciousness” (*LPR* 666). However, this is all Hegel gives us on the matter of Oedipus in this remark in his lectures on religion.

Houlgate’s reading of Hegel’s take on *Oedipus* is helpful in pointing us in the right direction, toward the unknown and the unconscious as key. However, my view on this point differs from Houlgate’s in a few ways. First, I do not take consciousness and unconsciousness as two rights for Hegel. Indeed, from what I can tell, there *is* no right of the unknown or unconscious, as Houlgate calls it, found in Hegel. However, by the right of the unconsciousness to be respected, Houlgate could reasonably mean the agent’s right to be held accountable only for the consequences of her action that were not due to “external forces” or so “alien and distant” that she had no idea they were possible, as described earlier (*PR* §118). In this aspect, Hegel’s view allows for an agent not to be held accountable for things that she has no chance of knowing. In keeping with this, as I have shown, Oedipus is not accountable for the unknown aspects of his deeds.

Nonetheless, this is the second way I diverge from Houlgate: The very right that Houlgate posits as claimed by Oedipus, the right of the wide-awake consciousness, is the right he tragically does *not* claim but *should*. In fact, *pace* Houlgate, I posit that the conflict involves not two clear-cut rights, but only one, which is violated or at least not recognized by Oedipus. These points will take some unraveling to support.

The “right of the unconsciousness” just described is simply the flipside of the right of the wide-awake consciousness (i.e., “right of will and knowledge”): the right of the will to accept responsibility only for the aspects it was consciously aware of and *also* to not be held accountable for things that it had no chance of knowing. In contrast to

Houlgate, in my view, Oedipus does *not* claim the right of the wide-awake consciousness, but claims full responsibility for the aspects of the deed he was *unaware* of—and this is exactly what makes him a tragic hero. From our modern standpoint, *we* know he should claim the right of the wide-awake consciousness, but due to his unreflective nature as an ancient individual, he tragically cannot (*PR* §§117, 118A). As discussed earlier, because Oedipus is not fully subjective for Hegel, he immediately identifies himself with the objective side of action. In contrast again to Houlgate, rather than violating the power of the unconscious, I hold that Oedipus aligns himself with it. I read Hegel as saying that by being what he was fated by the gods to be, and by causing what he did—albeit unconsciously and without having willed it—Oedipus comes into conflict with the right of will and knowledge, yet which he does not recognize.

I take Hegel to mean that what we do and what we do not know can be antithetical, and both can hold sway over us—and that is what *Oedipus* shows. Ultimately, the conflict is between Oedipus and Oedipus. Hegel says elsewhere that “the consciousness of his deed . . . drives him on, through this previously unconscious transgression, into dissension and contradiction with himself, once he imputes the transgression to himself as caused by him” (*LFA* 213).⁸⁹ At first this may sound like an inner conflict and therefore, problematically, like modern tragedy. However, he continues: “The antagonism between his consciousness and intention in his act and the later consciousness of what the act really was constitutes here the basis of the conflict”

⁸⁹ While this quote from Hegel sounds close to Houlgate’s own wording, I could not find this passage referred to in either of Houlgate’s texts under discussion here.

(*LFA* 213). Thus the conflict is between, on the one hand, his consciousness and intention externalized in his actions and, on the other, the objective truth revealed to him *later*. The conflict does involve consciousness and knowledge, so is somewhat subjective in a broad sense, but it is not a conflict *within* Oedipus, because he is unaware of the subjective side of action. Only from *our* standpoint as a modern audience we know it is the subjective side of action in conflict with the objective side. Put in another way, in connection to Hegel's other way of describing the conflict, what is at issue here is the right of what Oedipus intended and knew about what he originally was doing—a right, in my view, he does not claim—clashing with deeds done unconsciously and fated by the gods (*LFA* 1214).

If ancient tragic heroes are aligned with subjective rights, they do not know this and therefore cannot claim them; only from our modern standpoint do we see this. In the very act of taking accountability for unintentional deeds or consequences, Oedipus recognizes only that he did objectively wrong deeds—that is, wrong by the standards of his society—but he cannot see the fact he should not be held morally accountable for them after all. As we have seen, individuals in Hegel's picture of ancient Greece are driven by what is given. They are agents in the bare sense of the word and are not fully subjective or self-determining. They—even the gods—are at the mercy of the fates, and seek the advice of oracles and signs to direct their own actions (*LPH* 249–50). As an ancient Greek, Oedipus is unreflectively a part of and driven by the given world, the substantive ethical order (*LFA* 1195). He is blind, not fully free or truly moral, and merely objectively right. And yet, this objective stance is related to his heroism.

The way in which ancient heroes immediately and fully identify with their just aims or the ethical substance can also lead them into wrong or criminal deeds and often to their own demise. In their unbending stance, they transgress an ethical sphere or violate a right. For example, Oedipus' unyielding pursuit of the truth, which for a time was admirable—solving the riddle did get rid of the sphinx and gave him a new throne—also poisoned Thebes and ultimately brought about his downfall. Indeed, it was his own righteousness in killing the old man at the crossroads that brought the sphinx to Thebes in the first place. At the same time that Oedipus acts in the name of truth and on the side of the gods so that his acts are “legitimate,” he also nonetheless commits horrible crimes, so they are at the same time “blameworthy” (*LFA* 1198). Further, ancient heroes are not passive and can take the blame upon themselves because they will their own actions, and this responsibility is a necessary component of tragic heroes for Hegel: “*tragic* action necessarily presupposes either a live conception of *individual* freedom and independence or at least an individual's determination and willingness to accept freely and on his own account the responsibility for his own act and its consequences” (*LFA* 1205).

From the modern standpoint, we can see the differences between innocent deeds and intentional crimes and know that one should not be held morally accountable for things impossible to know:

The right of our deeper consciousness today would consist in recognizing that since he had neither intended nor known these crimes himself, they were not to be regarded as his own deeds. But the Greek, with his plasticity of consciousness, takes responsibility for what he has done as an individual and does not cut his purely subjective self-consciousness apart from what is objectively the case. (*LFA* 1214)

We can see that Oedipus should have taken the right of will and knowledge and not taken full ownership of those deeds. Yet for Hegel, doing so makes him a hero, and any pity would be an insult. As Hegel says of ancient tragic heroes,

they do not claim to be innocent of these at all. On the contrary, what they did, and actually had to do, is their glory. No worse insult could be given to such a hero than to say that he had acted innocently. It is the honour of these great characters to be culpable. (*LFA* 1215)

Despite the objective fact of his causal responsibility, by taking into account the subjective side of his actions we can see that Oedipus should be considered morally innocent (*LFA* 187-88). But Oedipus cannot see this, because he is only immediately and completely identified with the objective nature of his deeds. As an ancient figure, he takes accountability for what it turns out he has done as an individual, regardless of the knowledge he had earlier, at the time of his deeds. However, he is nonetheless the agent who transgressed the ethical bounds of natural right, so in Oedipus' own time he was *right* to take responsibility for his transgressions—doing so is exactly the kingly and righteous action such a character would and must, and therefore did, do. But his actions were also wrong, and they diseased his society and his family, the larger whole of which he is a part; the hero is also the cause of the plague. In this way, ancient heroes are “just as much innocent as guilty” (*LFA* 1214).

Hegel's reading shows Oedipus as both right and wrong, and by taking responsibility for the full compass of his deeds, as if he should have known all along what he had no way of knowing, Oedipus is truly heroic (*PR* §§117A, 120). The same unbending stance that leads ancient tragic heroes to wrong is also their greatness:

It is just the strength of the great characters that they do not choose but throughout, from start to finish, *are* what they will and accomplish. They are what they are, and never anything else, and this is their greatness. (LFA 1214)

Judged by our standards, Oedipus is wrong to punish himself for the deed that was done unintentionally; from our modern standpoint, we know that the right of the wide-awake consciousness absolves him of guilt (LFA 187-88). But what we see as the wrongful or mistaken ownership of and self-punishment for his acts is completely fitting for ancient tragic heroes, so in his own context, he is right. His bearing moral culpability is his greatest display of blindness and, at the same time, is supererogatory. Thus, for Hegel the very fact that Oedipus takes full accountability for his deeds even though he is innocent is exactly what makes him not a pitiable victim of fate, but instead a true hero of ancient tragedy.

Oedipus' Reconciliation

My last point regards the nature of the reconciliation in *Oedipus*. The reconciliation is problematic because it coincides with the fact that the true nature of Oedipus' deeds presents itself not in the original deeds themselves but only after, when Oedipus consequently takes full blame for them upon himself. Further, Hegel says only that the conclusion "discloses Oedipus as the murderer of Laius," so that readers of Hegel are left to do some work to figure out how this is reconciliation of the conflict caused by Oedipus' one-sidedness (LFA 1167). This is complicated by the fact that the conflict is not only driven by his search for the truth but also revealed by the truth. That is, his

search for the truth opens up the conflict and turns out to also be a part of the reconciliation.

My earlier point that the conflict is between Oedipus and himself helps clear up some of the problematic nature of the reconciliation. Oedipus has

unknowingly and unintentionally ... done something which later proves in his own eyes to have been a transgression of ethical powers essentially to be respected. The consciousness of his deed, which he acquires later, then drives him on, through this previously unconscious transgression, into dissension and contradiction with himself, once he imputes the transgression to himself as caused by him. (*LFA* 213)

At first this seems like a paradox: If the conflict is revealed to Oedipus when he discovers the truth, how can his knowledge of the truth also be reconciliation? Or, put another way, if the conflict is between, on the one hand, the right of Oedipus' original intentions and knowledge and, on the other, the fact that the actions were fated by the gods and done innocently, how can knowledge of the truth reconcile his ethical transgressions, if he did not know they were ethical transgressions until the truth is revealed?

This problem may have misled Sandis to equate one side of the conflict with Oedipus' relentless search for the truth, as we saw. While Oedipus' aim to reveal the truth is intrinsically linked with the conflict, it is not on its own what comes into conflict with something else; his aim is the root of the conflict. His one-sided search for truth reveals the true nature of his original deeds and thus brings him into a conflict with himself. Houlgate's insight is once again helpful. A point in his earlier text is close to what I see as Hegel's view, namely that in Oedipus' "legitimate desire to bring truth into the light," he "brings himself into tragic conflict with the 'sins' of which he has remained

ignorant but which are nevertheless his own.”⁹⁰ Yet much in the same vein as Sandis, Houlgate’s more recent text describes Oedipus’ relentless pursuit of Laius’ killer as blinding him to the possibility that it in fact could be himself.⁹¹ Along these lines, Houlgate offers in both texts a reading that may resonate with some readers but is against Hegel’s overall philosophy; in short, Houlgate implies that Hegel is saying that ignorance is bliss. Clearly to avoid the horror of the truth Oedipus should not have gone hunting for it—but, of course, this is only something one can say in retrospect. Further, this reading is a problem for understanding the nature of *Oedipus*’ reconciliation, because he must and should reveal the truth despite—or perhaps, better, because of—the fact that it reveals conflict and causes him to suffer. In my view, it also flies in the face of Hegel’s view of the purpose of spirit’s progress and of philosophy: to know thyself.

On this matter, Houlgate says: “As Hegel points out, the Oedipus story parallels the story of Adam’s Fall. Man who sets his right to *know* above all else, thereby gains knowledge of his sinfulness and tragically destroys his happiness.”⁹² It is true that for Hegel the successful search for knowledge opens the way to sinfulness. However, it is a necessary evil. As mentioned, this knowledge opens the way for the very possibility of being moral at all, so is not merely a loss of innocence but also an important gain.⁹³ But

⁹⁰ Houlgate, “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy,” 201–202.

⁹¹ Houlgate, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy,” 157.

⁹² Houlgate, “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy,” 202, emphasis in original. Here Houlgate points his readers to *LFA* 1214 and 1219, and to G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Together with a Work on the Proofs of the Existence of God, 3 Vols.*, trans. Rev. E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, ed. Speirs, (London, 1895), vol. II, 265.

⁹³ *EL* §24A3.

one cannot gain retrospective knowledge of sinfulness, because one can only sin knowingly. As described earlier, the knowledge gained by Adam allows us to choose to be either good or evil; without this choice, one is simply innocent, as Hegel paints the ancient Greeks. Further, we have also seen that Hegel views humanity as having progressed by his own time to a state of maturity, one that entails subjective freedom, evil, and morality. If one agrees with Houlgate's assessment that "knowledge of sinfulness tragically destroys happiness," then Hegel's view of human life would certainly be tragic in the loose sense of the term. But for Hegel, the Fall is the awakening of self-consciousness (*EL* §24). It does entail a disruption and breach of the pre-reflective unity we once had; it is painful, and we do give up innocence. However, he stresses just as much the importance of the reconciliation and positive outcome as he does the conflict, and knowledge gained is one of the outcomes. Knowledge is a necessary factor for living a fully free life, in harmony with others—a fully aware, not naïve, harmony.

In the same vein, Houlgate claims that "Oedipus tragically neglects the possibility that he may 'stand in the power of the unconscious' and that there may be something about himself of which he is—and perhaps should take care to remain—unaware."⁹⁴ In one sense, Oedipus does not have a choice to remain unaware, as his one-sidedness does not allow him to relent in his search for truth. Second, as I have just shown, neither is his innocence a choice historically. In a third sense, the work of art itself has no choice: as absolute spirit, it must present absolute truth. In response to Aristotle's theory of tragic

⁹⁴ "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," 158. Among the places Houlgate points his readers to here are *LFA* 1219, which I discuss in what follows, and to *LPR* 666; see his footnote 47 on page 173 for more references.

fear and pity, Hegel posits that the “only important thing for a work of art is to present what corresponds with reason and spiritual truth” (*LFA* 1197). In Hegel’s view, tragic pity and fear are not directed at outside forces, but at the “power of the Absolute,” of which we are a part (*LFA* 1198). As individuated, all characters (and all humans) are limited and thus do come into conflict with each other and with the absolute. If the character, in a one-sided way, opposes the absolute, then harmony must be restored, as what is essentially a unified whole should not be in conflict with itself: “Above mere fear and tragic sympathy there therefore stands that sense of reconciliation which tragedy affords by the glimpse of eternal justice” (*LFA* 1198).

The conflict indeed was brought about by Oedipus’ own act of revealing the truth. The resolution, although a result of their own one-sidedness, does not lie in the hands of the individual characters, but instead is driven by “the eternal powers, i.e. what is essentially moral, the gods of our actual life, in short what is divine and true” (*LFA* 1162). The reconciliation is divine in that it is the necessary and rational working itself out through humanity as a whole, absorbing and dissolving the one-sidedness of individuals, the divine as lived within the human community (*LFA* 1163). Reconciliation is found in the restoration of ethical harmony in that the wrong is alleviated through the characters’ one-sidedness being “stripped away” (*LFA* 1215). This is reason working itself out and harmony restored, and no matter what Oedipus desired as an individual, his one-sidedness is stripped away by the power of the absolute.

Further, both points by Houlgate, about the fact that Oedipus would have been better off not searching for the truth, refer to a similarity Hegel draws between Oedipus

and Adam, but in Hegel draws this comparison in a discussion of the reconciliation in *Oedipus at Colonus*, not *Oedipus the King*. Although Hegel does (unsurprisingly) mention that all three of the dramas in the trilogy are related, he also implies that it is problematic to align the reconciliation of *Oedipus the King* with that of *Oedipus at Colonus* for a few reasons (*LFA* 204, 1167). First, one cannot locate the reconciliation of one play in another, as Hegel treats them separately, each with their own conflict, resolution, and characters: “the *one* collision which is at issue [in a given play] must find its settlement in that one independently finished work. . . . each of these three tragedies taken apart from the others is an independent whole in itself” (*LFA* 1167).⁹⁵ The conflict of *Oedipus the King* is within—not outside of—the action of the drama. As we have seen, in Hegel’s view the conflict is not the ethical transgressions committed unwittingly by Oedipus before the start of the drama but within it, so the reconciliation must also be within it. Second, although Hegel does say Oedipus “lost his happiness as Adam did when he came to the knowledge of good and evil,” Hegel’s point here is that Oedipus is exiled from Thebes, just as Adam and Eve were from Eden (*LFA* 1219). For Hegel this story of Adam and Eve is not about an exile to hell, but tells of how we created the human world from nature, and of our freedom from nature. It is part of the story of how we became truly human, through our own deeds and acquisition of knowledge; it is not banishment by the gods but a self-imposed exile (*EM* §405Z).

Finally, the “solution of the conflict, like the action itself, must be both objective and subjective,” so the resolution must cancel and also connect the one-sidedness of each

⁹⁵ Bracketed insertion by Knox.

side of the conflict into a unified whole (*LFA* 1166). As discussed in Section I, all action has both an objective and a subjective side; related, the conflict in *Oedipus* is not purely subjective or objective, but between the subjective and objective sides of Oedipus' deeds. The resolution, then, must dissolve the contradiction between his original take and the objective facts of his deeds, between what he (thought he) knew he was doing and what actually happened. When taking into account the fact that Oedipus one-sidedly pursues the truth, his aim is fulfilled when the truth is disclosed. That is, what is reconciled is his ignorance. The conflict between his fated deeds and the right of intention is reconciled in the larger truth that we can all—just as Oedipus is—be simultaneously justified and wrong, but our one-sidedness must be stripped away by the absolute.

In this way, Hegel's reading shows that Oedipus' aim is fulfilled and the conflict is reconciled by his knowledge of the truth of his actions. Oedipus' search for the truth and for Laius' killer turns out to be a fulfillment of the edict on the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Oedipus reveals, to us and to himself, to be what he has been all along—the murderer and son of a king, the rightful heir to a throne, and an exile from his homeland. It is not simply his knowledge of the truth that is the reconciliation, but also, as drama presents both (subjective) words and ideas and (objective) action, what he does with this knowledge. His self-punishment is fitting because the truth has revealed him to be what is poisoning Thebes, and thus he can restore harmony by exiling himself. His search is fulfilled, and in the end he rightly takes his place once again as knower—as he has been all along—and as exile, as he has been since birth. In Hegel's theory of tragedy, ancient tragic heroes remain one-sidedly fixed from start to bitter end. In his role of seeking the

truth at all costs, Oedipus solves the riddle that is humanity. For Hegel, Oedipus is only at the stage of humanity's childhood, and in this state of immaturity human freedom cannot be fully exercised because it is not fully known to the agent. The process of maturity is painful but inevitable, yet a process driven by humanity itself, and Oedipus points the way for spirit to progress to maturity by revealing this truth of humanity to itself.

In this light, Hegel's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* also points to a universal aspect of humanity stressed throughout Hegel's philosophy. While ancient tragedy can only be produced by antiquity so that its truth is historically contextualized, it is not the case that all of its truth is now simply an archeological curiosity. In my view, much ancient tragedy for Hegel, like all art, still presents something fundamental to us today about humanity—this is one reason why it still resonates with us. People can and do sometimes wrongly, but purposefully, take full moral accountability. Even today, as Hegel says, although doing so is in a sense wrong, at the same time, it is still heroic. We admire those who go down with their ship, even if—or, especially because—they don't necessarily have to, because they are heroically reacting to and taking control of the situation handed to them. It is with a mixed sense of admiration and despair that we watch people take responsibility for the gravest yet most innocent wrongs they have committed. Heroes like Oedipus are both a warning and an exemplar of who we were and what we can be.

CHAPTER 3

EARLY MODERN TRAGIC HEROES AND HEGEL'S MACBETH

Hegel's definition of tragic heroes and his theory of modern subjectivity seem to conflict. As I have shown, tragic heroes are one-sidedly fixed on their aims, yet modern individuals possess subjective freedom and interiority that seem to preclude such a fixation. This chapter investigates the question of whether there room for modern tragic heroes based on these two pictures, i.e., that of modern free subjectivity and that of the fixated tragic hero. In answering this question in the affirmative, this chapter comes across another problem: When considering Shakespeare's tragic heroes who wantonly commit so much crime and destruction that they are on the verge of evil or beyond, such as Macbeth, the title 'hero' seems less apt than perhaps simply calling them great dramatic characters—for, while they are fascinating and powerful, any righteousness that one associates with them pales in comparison to their depravity. This is especially accentuated when contrasting modern heroes with those of ancient tragedy, who are always on the side of a right or identified with an ethical sphere, as we have seen. I argue, against the standard reading of Hegel's theory of modern tragic heroes as wavering or weak, that they also are one-sidedly fixated to their goals, and it is their very one-sidedness that allows them to be both evil and great heroes.

However, at the same time, this one-sidedness seems to jeopardize their status as *modern* characters. To illustrate, this chapter focuses on Macbeth, and when held up against Hegel's picture of the subjective freedom won in modernity, he is problematic in two ways: he seems to lack self-determination in his subservience to the witches, and to

lack self-reflection as he relentlessly pursues his goal. In answer, I show that Hegel's theory of tragedy can explain *Macbeth*, and Shakespearean tragedy in general, to be presenting the uniqueness of *early* modern subjectivity as, indeed, partially but not yet fully self-determining or reflective. Due to his place in history, Macbeth's self-contradictory stance displays a degree of self-determination and reflection through his dealings with supernatural characters, use of simile, and tragic reconciliation, and these aesthetic elements help display his particular brand of early modern subjectivity, freedom, and their inherent contradictions. Thus, my focus on the early modern tragic hero shows both the aesthetic freedom found in the work as a whole, and the relative lack of freedom found in early modern subjectivity in comparison to that of late modern subjectivity. Through the lens of Hegel's theory of tragedy, Shakespeare's work shows us both what we have gained in early modernity and what is lacking at this stage of spirit's progress.

The One-Sidedness of Ancient and Modern Tragic Heroes

A key part of my argument is that in Hegel's theory of tragedy, one-sidedness is a necessary feature of all tragic heroes, as we have seen. As described in Chapter Two, the one-sidedness of ancient tragic heroes is both their limitation and their greatness. While ancient heroes are wrong in that they violate a right or an ethical force in pursuit of their aims, they are always aligned with an inherent good, keeping them firmly on the side of right throughout the entire drama (*LFA* 181-88). The example Hegel is most famous for is Sophocles' *Antigone*: Antigone and Creon each uphold a right or just cause, while at

the same time, in opposing each other, they also violate the other's right. But any wrongs or crimes committed by these characters are counterbalanced or even perhaps outweighed by their justification, as they embody a right or ethical sphere of life. And, although their adherence to their cause leads to their downfall and usually their demise, this very trait, which Hegel calls their tragic fixity, is also what makes them the epitome of tragic heroes and aesthetically great or beautiful.

Almost as well known as Hegel's praise of Sophocles is his admiration of Shakespeare. I posit that Shakespeare's heroes are for Hegel some of the greatest due to their solid characterization and one-sided fixation on their goals. Hegel describes these early modern heroes as being "simply the one power dominating their own specific character"—and here, Macbeth immediately comes to mind (*LFA* 1194). However, my claim that early modern heroes are also one-sided could be seen as problematic for a few reasons. First, a prevailing tendency is to read Hegel's theory as placing ancient and modern tragedy in direct contrast or at least very different from each other, so that such a prominent similarity may be questioned; this seeming problem has already been somewhat laid to rest by Chapter One, which argues that ancient and modern tragedy are unified by the fact that they both present the absolute truth of spirit. In what follows, I lay out how this truth appears in early modern tragedy.

However, this does not sidestep the second worry: another prevailing tendency in Hegel scholarship takes Hegel's view to be that the deeper subjectivity and greater freedom of modern individuals—seen in characterizations of modern drama and in modern art in general—prevents modern tragic heroes from being completely fixated on

anything, and thus not one-sided. That is, tragic fixity sounds like it lacks the room for characteristics of modern subjectivity. Or, put the other way, if heroes are one-sided by Hegel's definition, and if modern subjects are complex and free, then there is little room for tragic heroes in modernity—it seems a poor fit between the two. And if so, then why does Hegel praise Shakespeare's heroes?

The first step toward answering these questions is to take into account the historical standpoint of early modern tragic heroes. In Hegel's picture of modernity, with the advent of Christianity we have gained a deeper subjectivity than we possessed in antiquity; God's human manifestation as Jesus shows humans to be spiritual and infinite, not merely natural. Further, the hallmark of the modern Western world for Hegel is humanity's knowledge of its true nature as inherently free, and this freedom and self-consciousness progress in stages (*LPH* 412).⁹⁶ For Hegel, Christianity opens the way for a deeper and freer spirituality than what he calls the natural or abstract religions (taken together these encompass pretty much everything except Christianity).⁹⁷ Then, after the Medieval Period, individuals begin to know themselves and all subjects to possess self-

⁹⁶ Hegel's concept of freedom is found extensively throughout his works, but a characteristic and succinct summary is that it is "being at home with oneself in one's other, depending upon oneself, and being one's own determinant," *EL* §24A2.

⁹⁷ Hegel sees the self-conceptions of other and earlier cultures (such as those of Eastern, African, and indigenous peoples) as always being subject to and powerless under nature or an abstract god, or both, and thus their art as imperfect. See *LPH*, "Part I: The Oriental World," and *EM* §§561–62. The art of earlier (other than ancient Greece) and even some of Hegel's contemporary cultures and religions, especially and no less than those of Asian, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu peoples, is imperfect in that it reflects an inadequate, abstract, and not yet explicit understanding of their true connection to nature, the divine, and their own individual freedom. This also includes what we would normally think of as symbolic art in all cultures, such as fables (*LFA* 76–77, 299–426). Such art Hegel terms symbolic because it can only symbolize or indicate but not adequately present the true nature of spirit, which includes independent individuals.

determination and an inner subjective life (though of course we are not constantly thinking about these things) and we come to know that we are also subject to contingency, laws of nature, and so forth. As described in Chapter One, the first stage of subjective freedom for Hegel truly begins with the Reformation. This is connected to Protestantism's view of the equality between humans in their freedom and ability to be connected to God through faith, as well as its stress on a subjective, and not external, physical, or embodied, connection to God (*LPH* 412-17).

European art of this era embodies the principle of subjectivity found in Protestantism. Art, philosophy, and religion all present the deepest and highest truths of humanity (albeit in different mediums), so that the same truth of a certain culture is presented in each of these forms of self-understanding at the same historical moment (*LFA* 7). In all eras, art's "task is to bring the spiritual before our eyes in a sensuous manner" (*LFA* 78). The inward turn of Descartes' philosophy, which establishes thought as self-grounding and free, correlates with ideas of the Reformation happening at the same time, and is also presented in contemporaneous artworks as "the *inwardness of self-consciousness*" (*LFA* 80). Rembrandt's *Philosopher in Meditation* (1632) is an example of this presented as painting. Hegel also describes art of this time as presenting "spiritual subjectivity with its grasp of its independence and freedom" (*LFA* 519). Following this, early modern drama is focused on the characters' "inner subjective life," and its characters embody and enact this subjective freedom (*LFA* 193). And, along with Descartes and Rembrandt, this is also the time of Shakespeare.

Specifically in modern tragic heroes, Hegel describes this subjective freedom as manifesting itself in two ways. Looking at Hegel's descriptions of these two characterizations will do important two things: First it supports my argument that Hegel's picture of the progress of subjective freedom appears in his theory of modern tragedy. Second, it also supports my other claim, that modern heroes are one-sided, by showing in what ways Hegel thinks modern heroes are one-sided, not despite but because of their modern subjectivity. As it turns out, their one-sidedness is not as clear-cut as it was for ancient heroes, because their inner lives are more complex. In his breakdown of the two types of modern heroes, which I describe as two types of modern tragic one-sidedness, Hegel by and large turns to Shakespeare's characters as illustrations and exemplars of great tragic heroes throughout his lectures on art.

The first type of early modern hero is a "*subjective* totality, but one which persists undeveloped in its inwardness and undisclosed depth of heart," exemplified by Hamlet and Juliet (*LFA* 577). Or, put another way, these are "substantial hearts which incorporate a totality but in their simple compactness generate every deep feeling only in themselves without developing it outwardly and unbosoming themselves of it" (*LFA* 580). Miranda in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for example, is

an inherently total and unrestricted heart which, touched on some specific side of its inner being, now concentrates the breadth and depth of its whole individuality on this one point, yet, by possessing no development into the external world, falls into a collision and cannot find itself and help itself prudently. (*LFA* 585)

Such figures as Miranda and Hamlet never fully realize their aims, either because they have no support, or because they are prevented by accidental circumstances or their

own inwardly turned nature (*LFA* 580-85). Despite the subjective freedom and deep feeling exhibited in these characters, I posit that Hegel sees them also as being tragically fixated on their aims. Even characters that may seem hesitant or completely weak, such as Hamlet and Juliet are, in Hegel's opinion, formally fixed, just "based in inwardness" (*LFA* 580). Although they never realize their aims, this fixity, their unwavering solidity, is related to their greatness and the depth of their personality.

However, not only are they properly one-sided as heroes, but they also exhibit qualities of modern subjectivity: "if these one-sided characters ... are to interest us not only superficially but profoundly, we must ... see in them that this restrictedness of their personality is ... an entanglement of their peculiar restricted character with a deeper inner life" (*LFA* 585). This type of hero is one who "grasps with deep feeling the substance of existing circumstances" but is "not complicated by the whole concatenation of particular interests, concerns, and finite ends," nor "distracted by ordinary emotions or by the seriousness and sympathies ordinarily involved" (*LFA* 581). Here, one can catch a tone of Hegel's admiration of these deep but firm and untouched hearts.

Certainly, however, one might question whether it is indeed the case that this fixity entails that heroes are not able to waver or be torn; Hamlet immediately comes to mind as a vacillating yet great hero, as more than one recent commentator has noted.⁹⁸ According to Hegel, however, Hamlet "was not doubtful about *what* he was to do, but only *how*" (*LFA* 244). That is, in contrast to the prevailing view, I argue that Hegel sees

⁹⁸ Gjesdal discusses relevant connections between Hegel's readings of Descartes and *Hamlet* in "Reading Shakespeare, Reading Modernity," esp. 18–21. See also Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 9.

Hamlet as always one-sidedly fixed on his aim of revenge, not split or wavering. What he lacks is not fixity but the resources to go about fulfilling his goal, as he never found either definitive proof or the perfect opportunity to exact his revenge. Inwardly turned figures such as Hamlet and Juliet indeed possess a deeper subjectivity than ancient Greek heroes, but Hegel consistently describes Hamlet in particular and Shakespeare's heroes in general as being ideal, firm, and decisive. In this discussion of Hamlet, Hegel immediately continues: "the Ideal consists in this, that the Idea is *actual*, and to this actuality man belongs as subject and therefore as a firm unity in himself"—suggesting, in my view, that Hamlet is an ideally unified character (*LFA* 244). This unusual reading of Hamlet is one way Hegel explains Hamlet's greatness of character. (I explore this further in Section II.)

Lear and Macbeth are the second type of early modern tragic hero. They are just as fixated on their subjective aims as the first type, but in contrast are able to outwardly direct their energy into fulfilling their aims. Hegel describes this trademark quality as the "self-sustaining firmness of character which limits itself to specific ends and puts the whole power of its one-sided individuality into the *realization* of these ends" (*LFA* 577). This type of hero may easily be seen as one-sided, as she is so focused on realizing her goals that she succeeds. However, this is complicated by the fact that these goals are an intrinsic part of her character, so that she is accomplishing her own self-actualization at the same time. This "is not merely a development out of the individual's *action*, but is at the same time an inner growth, a development of his *character* itself" (*LFA* 579). This is tricky because any change in character is actually a development of "something that was implicit ... from the start. For example, in *King Lear*, Lear's original folly is intensified

into madness in his old age, just as Gloucester's mental blindness is changed into actual physical blindness" (*LFA* 1229).⁹⁹ The expression of what was implicit or the accomplishment of aims makes the character *more* of what he *already* was: "the achievement of the action is *eo ipso* a further development of the individual in his subjective inner life and not merely the march of events" (*LFA* 579). What was within Lear and Gloucester is now outwardly developed, not simply displayed but "intensified" and made actual, fully brought to light.¹⁰⁰ Their pathos or one-sidedness may be intensified, but they ultimately remain what they always were at the core. Gloucester physically actualizes his blindness *through* his metaphorical blindness, and Lear's folly develops *into* madness. Thus, this second type of character remains one-sided and does not change from being one thing to another; "what he has, does, and accomplishes, he draws immediately ... from his own specific nature" (*LFA* 577).¹⁰¹

While this description may seem overly literal, I posit that it has a crucial, deeper meaning for Hegel. Although in modernity we have gained a deeper subjectivity than we had in antiquity, in early modernity we do not have the post-Enlightenment freedom that we will come to have later. I argue that for Hegel, the firm characterization of early

⁹⁹ This may have interesting implications for Hegel's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*: If there is no character development in ancient heroes and Oedipus remains the same from start to end, then perhaps his act of literal self-blinding is an intensification of his inner blindness, that he never was the seer he claimed to be and was famed for being; certainly this makes sense when he was so blind and deaf to the truth all along, taking quite some time to truly know himself.

¹⁰⁰ This character development follows the pattern of conceptual development from implicit to explicit that is the basis of all of Hegel's philosophy. For Hegel, the concept is the principle of reality, which unfolds in every aspect of life—in pure thought, in nature, and in all aspects of human activity—as it develops itself from its implicit to explicit truth.

¹⁰¹ "Shakespeare's characters especially are of this kind" (*LFA* 577).

modern heroes is directly related to the historical progress of subjectivity and freedom. The wavering that plagues some dramatic heroes is only possible in *late* modernity; thus, Shakespeare's heroes are immune to it and remain formally firm to the bitter end. The kind of radical subjectivity that leads to split or wavering characters in post-Enlightenment drama is seen most especially in the context of Hegel's critique of early German Romanticism.¹⁰² This highlights a subtle but important distinction Hegel makes within romantic art, often overlooked in the literature.

While "Protestantism had introduced the *principle* of Subjectivity," humanity does not *fully* realize subjective freedom until it can hold itself under the scrutiny of its own reason, as introduced by the Enlightenment (*LPH* 438).¹⁰³ That is, the last stage of this progress only begins at the *end* of the 17th century, when modernity truly starts for Hegel. This is because true freedom for Hegel is not merely having free will or freedom of choice but in *knowing* oneself and all subjects as self-determining; he does not see this happening in Europe until the principles of Descartes and Protestantism have infiltrated and have been implemented in all aspects of culture and society. This means being able both to fully realize one's freedom with others and to see the products of one's own actions as such, rather than being alienated from oneself, one's products, or one's community.¹⁰⁴ Thus, for example, it took post-Cartesian philosophy to eventually

¹⁰² I argue for the deeper and freer subjectivity of late modern tragic heroes in Chapter Four.

¹⁰³ Cf. *LHP* 131.

¹⁰⁴ In general, by alienation Hegel means the opposite of being free, that is, one is *not* at home with oneself—and here I *very* briefly summarize—the human condition caused by divides such as those between human and nature, individual and community, etc. (that the Ancient Greeks, for example, did not

complete what Descartes started, such as mediating the alienating subject-object divide he opened (*LPH* 440).¹⁰⁵ Likewise, while all art of the Christian era—what Hegel calls the romantic form—displays a greater degree of subjective depth and freedom than ancient art, artworks of Hegel’s own post-Enlightenment era present an even greater degree of subjective freedom and a deeper spirituality than works of early modernity, seen for example in some of Schiller’s tragedies but not in those of Shakespeare.¹⁰⁶

Evil Yet Admirable Heroes

Yet, this tragic fixity, the very thing that makes these early modern heroes great, also makes them evil. This certainly leads one to question if being one-sided is enough to make one a hero. In Hegel’s view, however, this is not a paradox: in their firmness and consistency we can find interest in and even admiration for some of the most villainous characters (*LFA* 1224-30). Although one-sided in a way similar to ancient heroes, these early modern heroes possess qualities that allow them to be evil in ways that ancient heroes can never be.

In Hegel’s general philosophy, the evil of individuals has three related facets that help to explain the ways in which these early modern characters are *uniquely* evil.¹⁰⁷ First, regardless of which of the two types of early modern hero they are—that is, which

experience), perpetuated in the 18th-century (for example in Kantian dualisms and antimonies), experienced in all areas of life, and which need to be reconciled and thus overcome.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *LHP* 131–151, 272.

¹⁰⁶ I argue this in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁷ I treat only evil done by individuals, though Hegel discusses other types of evil throughout his work, such as evil in history or nature, which are also based on the same logical form as individual evil.

direction they are turned—the formal firmness of both types inherently entails the potential for evil, because they are unified only with their merely subjective aims. While it may not immediately be obvious that the personal entails evil, in Hegel’s philosophy this is so because if it is *merely* personal, then it is not ethical. The merely personal is what he calls empty, in that it is devoid of greater or higher content; by only taking oneself into account, one does not consider others and excludes the greater good. And for Hegel, formal or empty subjectivity is by definition evil.¹⁰⁸ Because the aims of these modern characters are purely subjective, they are also completely particular and not tied to any universal; this is the logical form of evil, the part of Hegel’s wider definition that appears in all types of evil (*JPS* 147).¹⁰⁹ As mentioned above, in contrast to ancient heroes, modern heroes are without “ethical justification, but upheld solely by the formal inevitability of their personality” (*LFA* 1230).¹¹⁰ Regardless of the specific content of the modern heroes’ aims, their form of subjective one-sidedness prohibits recognition of or ties to the universal, that is, to the greater spheres of social community or state. This type of one-sidedness, their formal fixity, is the form of evil.

Second is moral evil. Both evil and morality as such are only now possible as a result of the progress of subjective freedom; subjective freedom entails that we now know we can just as easily will good as we can will evil. Indeed, for Hegel, “in

¹⁰⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805-6) with Commentary*, trans. Leo Rauch (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 99; hereafter cited as *JPS* followed by page numbers.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *PR* §§139, 139R.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *LFA* 456–57, 1212.

independent self-certainty ... morality and evil have their common root” (*PR* §139R).

This means that if one chooses to rest on oneself only, as for example on one’s conscience, one can just as easily justify good as one can justify evil. In order to do either good or evil, one must exercise free will; the good is willing the universal, and evil is willing the particular (*PR* §139A). Thus, in doing evil, one is also not taking into account one’s community when acting. The purely particular aspect of subjective one-sidedness upholds the agent’s own interests over everything else, and she acts accordingly (*PR* §§140, 140R). As Hegel puts it, “evil is nothing else than mind which puts its separate individuality before all else” (*EM* §382Z). In general, for Hegel the “completely isolated, self-interested individual” is evil (*EL* §24 A3). In being completely self-interested, such lone individuality acts on aims that are outside of the divine, outside of the community to which one truly belongs (*LFA* 577-78). Such actions are damaging to both the individual and the society. A character who acts based purely on her own personal interests has no ethical basis or justification for her actions and clashes with whatever comes against them.

In this light, the early modern hero who is tied only to herself and is cut off from what is substantial and meaningful can be evil, in contrast to ancient heroes who are immediately linked to the substantial or ethical world. For example, when comparing Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to Aeschylus’ *Choephoroi* and Sophocles’ *Electra*, Hegel finds that the collisions in these dramas are the same in general, but,

whereas in the Greek poets the King’s death does have an ethical justification, in Shakespeare it is simply and solely an atrocious crime and Hamlet’s mother is guiltless of it. ... Therefore the collision turns strictly here not on a son’s pursuing an ethically justified revenge and being forced

in the process to violate the ethical order, but on Hamlet's personal character. (*LFA* 1225-26)

Hamlet's desire for revenge is purely self-interested, so that any harm done to his mother by way of this revenge would be evil because she is not to blame for his father's death, as Hegel sees it. Hamlet is capable of moral evil, because he *knows* it is wrong to kill, as seen in his hesitation while Claudius is praying (at the end of Act III), and perhaps also when he is not satisfied with Claudius' reaction to *The Mousetrap*—he must be sure his revenge is justified before he acts. Hamlet is without proof from the objective world or support from anyone, and remains isolated. Rather than being at home with another, such a character remains homeless. Rather than thinking of himself as fundamentally being with others, “the character ... which fixedly considers itself alone ... therefore is easily on the verge of evil” (*LFA* 579).

The third way in which early modern heroes can be evil is similar to the second (and all three are related), but here the focus is the historical standpoint of agency in early modernity. Ancient agents are not able to be evil because they are immediately identified with the substantial or natural world, as we have seen. In modernity, evil is a choice because of the greater degree of subjective freedom and depth gained. Without being able to reflect on this choice, without having this choice, one is simply innocent, or amoral—evil is not an option for ancient individuals. In Hegel's picture of the Fall of Adam, the knowledge gained by him allows us to choose either good or evil (*EL* §24 A3). When *choosing* one's particularity at the expense of the universal, one is exercising freedom; modern freedom and evil are thus inextricably linked.

All three facets of evil are clearly seen in Macbeth. He is pitted against the rest of the world, following his merely personal (i.e., particular and thus non-universal) desire for power at all costs, with no justification for the crown other than that it was “prophesized” by the witches. Further, he shows no recognition of his ties to the universal aspects of action (*LFA* 1206-7). From his standpoint, he does not see that the particular and universal are only seemingly opposed, while in truth they are necessarily related and thus necessarily must be reconciled (*LFA* 1225-26). He is identity thinking incarnate; he allows his determinate passions to cloud the truth (*LFA* 53). By remaining fixated on his own subjective aims, however outwardly turned as he realizes them, he remains finite and opposed to the world. While his original crime might seem from Macbeth’s own standpoint to have set up a domino effect of other deeds that necessarily follow, in truth he has a choice—though only we, the audience, have this perspective. He is self-bound by his firm character and the path he chooses to relentlessly pursue; if he changes his course of action, he will not be able to accomplish what he set out to do, and would not be the type of tragic hero he is. He is evil in maintaining his own one-sidedness, which he must do in order to be who and what he is, a hero—he is caught in a trap of his own making that he is too blind to see.

Yet, Macbeth’s subjective one-sidedness, the very thing that entails his formal evil, is, at the same time, his heroic greatness. The one-sidedness that makes Macbeth evil is also what makes him aesthetically great and—and this may sound odd—admirable, as Macbeth admirably and steadfastly pursues his aim. Further, his actions are in a sense positive, in that he achieves his aim—he does, after all, take the crown, if only

for a minute (*LFA* 1224). Although this does not do away with the evil nature of his deeds, they have the positive side that all accomplished action has. Simply put, what is positive in all actions is that the agent is knowingly working toward some goal or aim (and, as we saw in Chapter Two, this can be contrasted to deeds done unknowingly) (*PR* §§140, 140R). Overall, despite Macbeth's evil and crimes, we can admire him for following through. In this light, Macbeth is admirable in his willingness and ability to do whatever it takes, helping to make him heroic.

Likewise, Hegel sees Lady Macbeth as similar to and even stronger and colder than Macbeth—indeed, her description of “dashing the brains out” of her own smiling infant at the end of Act I is chilling. According to Hegel, while at first Macbeth hesitates, she never does; she is “decided from the start” (*LFA* 579). Hegel points to her lack of emotion combined with her complete identification with ambition for power, citing her reaction to Macbeth's letter containing the witches' prophecy: “Glamis thou art and Cawdor; and shalt be what thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature. It is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way” (*Macbeth* I.v, 14-17; *LFA* 578). Hegel regards even Hamlet, the noble soul, as possessing this “formal greatness and firmness of evil” (*LFA* 244, cf. 1226). In this way, we see the connection between heroes' greatness and their evil: they rest on the same one-sidedness. Macbeth's achievement of his aims, although criminal, is also aesthetically positive in that it is a manifestation of his character development. Modern tragic one-sidedness inherently has the potential to be evil, but it also allows the hero to be aesthetically great. As I shall explore in the following sections, and as Hegel puts it:

What the Shakespearean figures carry out, their particular end, has its origin and the root of its force in their own individuality. But in one and the same individuality they preserve at the same time the loftiness which wipes away what they really are, i.e. in their aims, interests, and actions; it aggrandizes them and enhances them above themselves (*LFA* 585).

In *Macbeth*, we watch the “progress and history of a great soul” (*LFA* 1230).

Self-Reflection and Self-Determination

Although we have seen how Macbeth in his purely subjective one-sidedness is the epitome of an evil yet admirable early modern hero, we are left with some problematic holes in the story. In the pictures of Macbeth painted so far, his one-sidedness leaves us with seemingly little room for the deeper, reflective subjectivity or freedom that Hegel argues we moderns have gained (as described in Section I). But, as we also have seen, to be evil one must be a subject able to reflect on one’s choice, and Macbeth is evil (*LFA* 52). Yet, Macbeth’s formalism entails his complete concentration on his aim, “which he made emerge completely in its firm severity, which he expressed and carried through” (*LFA* 580). As Hegel describes Macbeth’s one-sided pursuit of power: “what he has, does, and accomplishes, he draws immediately, without any further reflection, from his own specific nature which is just what it happens to be” (*LFA* 577). Macbeth takes his personal aim immediately from himself and keeps it directly in front of him. Even when facing his demise, Macbeth remains “inflexible” and unreflective: “what he meets, whether from the rule of fate, from necessity, or from chance, likewise just *is*, without his reflecting on whither or why” (*LFA* 580). Thus, Hegel’s reading of Macbeth’s one-

sidedness seems to contradict his own theory of the historical progress of modern subjectivity as involving a depth of personality.

I posit that Hegel replies to the problem of unreflective modern heroes by proposing a dramatic device employed in modern tragedy to do the job, namely, supernatural characters. In *Macbeth*, I argue, Hegel sees the witches as revealing what already was implicit within Macbeth, in keeping with the self-actualizing type of modern hero he is, rather than the witches as giving him new knowledge or being an external influence. The witches are “only the poetic reflection of his own fixed will,” showing to him and to us what is lying within him and otherwise unarticulated by Macbeth (*LFA* 585). They are disclosing to him the realm from which he is cut off due to his tragic fixity, revealing the truth of his subjectivity to himself and to the audience. In this way, they are a part of his self-actualization, as described earlier. Just as what was within Lear and Gloucester developed outwardly, the witches are a way for Macbeth’s inner realm to be more fully brought to light.

Yet, viewing the witches in this light could be problematic. They could be seen as a completely outside or alien force, thus suggesting that Macbeth was lured to evil deeds by an external influence. This would suggest that he is weak or less firm, making him less admirable and heroic. If the witches are on the side of evil and he listens to them, is he even more evil—and perhaps even less heroic? Their influence would also mean he was acting less freely than if he were fully driven by his own passions and ideas, putting him back in the problematic situation of not being a free modern subject. If he is lured to his

deeds by external circumstances, would that not limit his self-determination, making him un-modern?

Since the first productions of *Macbeth*, the problem of the witches' power over Macbeth has been given different answers, as witchcraft was both popular and controversial during Shakespeare's lifetime. King James was a self-proclaimed witchcraft expert and was well known for his persecution not only of (supposed) witches, but also of those who did not believe that witches existed.¹¹¹ However, the outlook on witchcraft changed considerably during the Enlightenment (although violent witch-hunt and persecution continued in Europe well into the 18th century). This shift in attitude about actual witches (as opposed to characters in drama) is reflected in the stagings and interpretations of Shakespeare's plays during Hegel's lifetime—and Hegel was well aware of both the history of witch-hunts and of the reception of Shakespeare during his own lifetime (*LPH* 426-27). Shakespeare became a central figure in Germany during this time, so how these late moderns, in an era when people supposedly no longer believed in witches, dealt with Shakespeare's witches was a live issue. For example, Schiller and Goethe's *Macbeth* (with Schiller as translator and Goethe staging their 1800 production in Weimar) makes the witches less ambiguous. Their witches are clearly evil, although in a symbolic fashion: they are less visually grotesque, more humanlike, and clearly state

¹¹¹ Before *Macbeth* was written, King James had published his own, well-known account of witchcraft, *Daemonologie* (indeed, it was published before his translation of the bible appeared), so Shakespeare was most likely aware of it; whether he read it I do not know.

their evil intentions.¹¹² As a result, the Weimar witches bring Macbeth to ruin, rather than Macbeth doing this to himself; here Lady Macbeth also has more power over her husband than in Shakespeare's original, so that this production paints a less evil Macbeth (perhaps as a result of their moral aims for art in this period).¹¹³ These choices present both a less free and a less heroic Macbeth.

Hegel's reading, in contrast, paints the witches as more ambiguous and also as having less power over Macbeth. He gives Macbeth more freedom and responsibility for his actions (including his own demise) than Schiller and Goethe do, leaving both his evil and heroic natures more intact. In this way, Hegel can use the witches as an answer to the problems of how Macbeth is not only a reflective subject, but also how he exercises his freedom as an early modern agent. Hegel's theory thus shows the witches as both necessarily ambiguous and fitting in early modern tragedy. Further, from his standpoint in late modernity, Hegel argues that he can explain Shakespeare's use of such otherworldly figures as witches and ghosts in a way that Shakespeare himself, entrenched in the early modern mindset, could not. In Hegel's view, we are influenced by the legends and stories of Christianity and *invent* witches and ghosts (*LFA* 230, *LPH* 425). Because they are products of our imagination, we should not obey them; in truth, we have the freedom to act on our own (*LFA* 230-31). Macbeth, who seems at first to be an unreflective subject under the spell of external supernatural forces, turns out to be a modern agent freely pursuing his goal.

¹¹² Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume I: 1586-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 95; see 94–100 for the discussion of Schiller and Goethe's *Macbeth*.

¹¹³ Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, 96.

However, the witches in *Macbeth* could seem another problem for Hegel's aesthetics, because "in art nothing is dark ... everything is clear and transparent"; the "truly ideal character has for its content and 'pathos' nothing supernatural and ghost-ridden but only true interests in which he is at one with himself" (*LFA* 243). *Macbeth* believes (wrongly, according to Hegel) that the idea to be king was prophesized and given to him by the witches, not that his ambition was a pre-existing condition, as it were. The witches' influence would take away from Hegel's aesthetic requirement that dramatic characters be unified and whole within themselves, making *Macbeth* less aesthetically ideal. In contrast, in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, Hegel allows for Attinghausen's prophecy because he is on the brink of death and thus, I presume, closer to the spiritual world (*LFA* 243). However, modern characters for the most part should not be attuned to visions, nor should they be split personalities, as this would take away from their tragic fixity (*LFA* 243).¹¹⁴ So we have mixed views from Hegel as to what counts as appropriate uses of the supernatural in drama, and we are left to decipher on our own to what extent they make sense in *Macbeth*.

I argue that supernatural forces are appropriate in modern art for Hegel if they do not overpower the individual's freedom—and in my view this is the case in *Macbeth*. As Hegel describes: "the witches appear as external powers determining *Macbeth*'s fate in advance. Yet what they declare is his most secret and private wish which comes home to him and is revealed to him in this only apparently external way" (*LFA* 231). In this quote

¹¹⁴ Oddly, he does not mention Johanna's visions or voices, her father's dreams, or the Black Knight, which is some sort of apparition or hallucination, in Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*, although he discusses other details of that drama in his lectures; see my Chapter Four for Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*.

we see connections between self-reflection and self-determination, and Hegel's confirmation that what seems to come from without truly comes from within. Just as Hegel sees the witches' words to ultimately stem from or correspond to Macbeth's already existing desires, so too can we then explain his actions that stem from those desires to be his own, and see that he is freely acting of his own will. Hegel does not see the witches to have any real power over Macbeth; the witches are a manifestation of his will, making Macbeth the doer of his own deeds. In his explanation of the witches, Hegel implies that they serve the purpose of a device for Macbeth to be self-reflective and to exercise his subjective freedom, however limited, on the way to the realization of his one-sided aim.

Similar to the witches, the ghosts in early modern tragedy are for Hegel a spiritual and yet objective revelation of the subjective, a manifestation of what was implicit within the subject who makes it explicit to herself, albeit in this "supernatural" way. In an early writing, Hegel discusses the meaning and significance of Banquo's ghost; although here his discussion is somewhat outside of the scope of aesthetics, a few points are directly relevant.¹¹⁵ For Hegel, Banquo's ghost—not Macbeth's conscience—shows Macbeth that he was wrong. Although the ghost may actually be a product of his conscience, Macbeth sees the ghost as completely other, not as self-created or self-related. For us, Macbeth is projecting the truth, but as an early modern tragic hero he is too one-sided to see that the truth comes from within himself. A similar argument could be made of Hamlet's ghost—

¹¹⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate," in *Early Theological Writings, with an Introduction & Fragments*, trans. T. M. Knox and Richard Kroner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), hereafter cited as *ETW* followed by relevant page number.

that he is unable to *completely* externalize his thoughts naturally—that is, deep in Hamlet’s mind he knows what evil Claudius has done, and Shakespeare relies on another means for Hamlet to know the truth, revealed to Hamlet and to us as an audience as coming from the ghost (*LFA* 583).¹¹⁶ The ghost could be seen as the truth attempting, but not fully able, to reveal itself, mirroring Hamlet’s own limitations.

Along these lines, what we know to be Macbeth’s own doing seems to him to be fate, his being trapped in a bloody circle; although it is truly of his own making, it seems to him inescapable. Hegel views this trap indeed of Macbeth’s own doing, although in his early writing, Hegel also describes it as a fate. Hegel’s view of fate is that it is a reaction to our action, not to an external force; we bring about our own fate. Hegel describes Macbeth’s fate, his demise, as a reaction to his own evil deeds, that is, as ultimately stemming from him:

In his arrogance he has destroyed indeed, but only the friendliness of life; he has perverted life into an enemy. It is the deed itself which has created a law whose domination now comes on the scene; this law is the unification in the concept, of the equality between the injured, apparently alien life and the trespasser’s own forfeited life. It is now for the first time that the injured life appears as a hostile power against the trespasser and maltreats him as he has maltreated the other. Hence punishment as fate is the equal reaction of the trespasser’s own deed, of a power which he himself has armed, of an enemy made an enemy by himself. (*ETW* 229-30)¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ In this light, one is left to wonder why Gertrude cannot or refuses to see the ghost in *Hamlet* III iv. Maybe she refuses to see the truth—whether she refuses to admit she is also a guilty party in the murder is a question left open, just as Shakespeare leaves it ambiguous at the end of Act I whether Marcellus and Horatio hear the ghost telling them to swear.

¹¹⁷ This point is also made in a different context by Williams in *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God*, 122, where he also refers to the same passage of Hegel’s *ETW*.

Hegel also refers to this notion of fate throughout his discussions of tragedy in his later lectures on art, and this, in my view, connects to a crucial point in his theory of tragedy: namely, that a true hero takes responsibility for her deeds (*LFA* 1038-39, 1228, 1230). If whatever fate befalls the hero is truly her own doing, this entails the hero's responsibility for her actions. Simply put, whether the hero does his deeds unknowingly as Oedipus did, or fully aware of her situation as Schiller's Mary Stuart (as I discuss in Chapter 4), or seemingly under the command of witches, Hegel views them *all* as responsible for their actions. Even if one's actions are not done fully consciously or completely willed, or if one is not aware of all circumstances, to be a great hero for Hegel one must nonetheless take responsibility for all of one's deeds (*LFA* 1215). As Hegel puts it: "*tragic* action necessarily presupposes either a live conception of *individual* freedom and independence or at least an individual's determination and willingness to accept freely and on his own account the responsibility for his own act and its consequences" (*LFA* 1205). The deeds must stem from them or be their own in these ways, even if it means retroactively taking responsibility for them, or they will simply be victims and will not entail "truly tragic suffering" or pity (*LFA* 1198).

Jennifer Bates has also recently shown that in Hegel's reading, the witches are not responsible for Macbeth's actions.¹¹⁸ Bates also points to the ambiguities and problematic nature of Macbeth's self-determination and self-reflection, but she argues that Hegel's theory does not allow Macbeth to be evil, because he is not free. If she were correct that

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Ann Bates, *Hegel and Shakespeare on Moral Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 201–221; see 210–17 for her discussions of Macbeth.

he is not free, then she would be correct that he is not evil, because, as I have shown and as she points out, in Hegel's philosophy an evil subject requires subjective freedom. But, as we have seen, he is evil. Although Bates does connect evil and the moral sphere within Hegel's philosophy, she concludes that due to his superstition, Macbeth is not operating as a modern agent but as a pre-modern one, and, against Hegel, she argues that it is his superstition that drives him to murder the King.¹¹⁹

Her close reading of *Macbeth* is persuasive and shows that Hegel's reading of *Macbeth* is idiosyncratic on some counts. However, ultimately Bates poses a false dichotomy between ancient Greek consciousness and modern consciousness because she misreads Hegel's nuanced theory of early modern subjective freedom. That is, she is forced to call *Macbeth* a "pre-modern tragedy" on what she considers to be Hegel's own terms, because she sees only the un-modern aspects of this early modern tragedy, and not how Macbeth is at the same time a modern—albeit early modern—hero.¹²⁰ She argues that Hegel is wrong within his own framework to deem Macbeth a free, responsible modern subject, and therefore also wrong to call the play modern. Bates deems Macbeth not free because she discerns the ambiguous natures of early modern subjectivity in general, and of Macbeth as an early modern hero. Because of his qualities due to his one-sidedness and his pre-Enlightenment standpoint, she is in this sense correct in calling *Macbeth* pre-modern. But she misses Hegel's point that Macbeth embodies the principle

¹¹⁹ Bates, *Hegel and Shakespeare*, 212-213.

¹²⁰ Bates, *Hegel and Shakespeare*, 217.

of subjectivity found in the era of Protestantism and Cartesian thought, and therefore is wrong to accuse Hegel of wrongly labeling Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as a modern tragedy.

In light of Hegel's reading of *Macbeth*, the important role of the ghosts and witches in early modern tragedy, I argue, is to highlight this very ambiguity of early modern subjectivity, the ambiguity that misleads Bates to conclude that *Macbeth* is not a modern tragedy according to Hegel.¹²¹ This ambiguity does leave early modern tragic heroes somewhat un-modern in their lack of subjective freedom, just as they are also not able to be fully self-reflective without these "supernatural" figures (the heroes' self-expression is further explored in the next section of this chapter). In truth, humans possess self-determination, yet at the same time these heroes are only abstractly free because they do not know their implicit freedom: the "responsibility for oneself alone and the greater subjective independence thus gained is ... only the abstract independence of the person" (*LFA* 189). As in the earlier description of their merely formal subjectivity, modern heroes who are cut off from others are also merely formally and not concretely free: "True independence consists solely in the unity and interpenetration of individuality and universality" (*LFA* 180). Freedom for Hegel is not solipsism or pure autonomy but involves "being at home with oneself in one's other" (*EL* §24A2). We are truly free when we know that our freedom depends on others in various social contexts; without others, we are nothing. *Macbeth*, however, does not know this. In this light, Hegel also says that in killing Banquo, *Macbeth* really injures himself because "the destruction of life is not ... the nullification of life, but its diremption, ... transforming life into an enemy" (*ETW*

¹²¹ Bates, *Hegel and Shakespeare*, 216.

229). Here, the aspect (mentioned in Section I) of the modern tragic hero who sets herself against the whole, thus making her evil—injuring herself and her society by pitting her particularity against the universal—comes to the fore. This is what Hegel means by pointing to the “equality between the injured, apparently alien life and the trespasser’s own” (*ETW* 229-30).

Just as Hegel’s theory of the progress of subjective freedom illuminates his theory of tragedy, his reading of early modern tragedy in turn sheds light on his theory of agency. Using Hegel to explain the supernatural figures in *Macbeth* shows them to be both illustrative and a result of what I see as Hegel’s view of the tensions in early modern Europe—tensions between myth and Christianity, and between feudalism and later social systems that allow for more freedom. These otherworldly figures and their intimate relationship to tragic heroes reflect the deeper subjectivity of modernity in contrast to that of antiquity, but in a way unique to *early* modernity in contrast to late modernity. Like all forms of absolute spirit, early modern tragedy presents spirit’s truth, and as we saw in Section I, at this point of spirit’s progress we have only the principle of subjectivity and self-ratifying thought. In this light, we see that for Hegel, agency in early modernity is a gray area of limited yet radical self-determination. In art, this is presented by heroes such as *Macbeth*. It is with these otherworldly figures, witches and ghosts, that we can see how early modern heroes do, despite their one-sidedness, display the subjective depth and freedom that spirit has achieved, although spirit gains true freedom later. And as art, in addition to presenting truth, these tragic heroes are aesthetically great, as I show in the final section.

Self-Expression and Self-Destruction

Despite Macbeth's formal fixity, we have seen how, as a modern subject, his self-reflection and self-determination are displayed. Not only in evil characters, but also within the larger structure of modern tragedy itself one can see the problem of unreflective modern heroes. While in ancient tragedy the substantial truth, the view of the community, is voiced through the chorus, modern tragedy has no such device (*LFA* 192, 1210-15). Instead, there must be another way for a modern tragic hero to express her subjective depth and freedom if she is to be truly modern.

We have also seen how in Hegel's theory, early modern tragic heroes are ambiguous in two ways: First, their subjective one-sidedness allows them to be self-determining and self-actualizing, yet in ways limited and often unknown to themselves, and second, they are evil but at the same time admirable heroes. But this does not satisfactorily explain how for Hegel these heroes are also *aesthetically* great. In this final section, I show how their aesthetic greatness is due to their poetic self-expression and eventual self-destruction, which are also two additional displays of early modern subjective freedom in art. Through the hero's use of simile, an artistic form of reflection, we see both their heroic strength and the greatest "depth and wealth of spirit" (*LFA* 585). Their self-destruction displays their freedom and aesthetic greatness, in their solidity of character and resulting tragic reconciliation.

The context of the following passage indicates that Hegel is referring to Shakespeare's dramatic works, and I quote it at length because it is extremely helpful in

understanding how simile operates as an artistic means of presenting early modern subjectivity:

[S]imiles have the aim of showing that the individual has not merely immersed himself directly in his specific situation, feeling, or passion, but that as a high and noble being he is superior to them and can cut himself free from them. Passion restricts and chains the soul within.... But greatness of mind, force of spirit, lifts itself above such restrictedness and, in beautiful and tranquil peace, hovers above the specific 'pathos' by which it is moved. This liberation of soul is what similes express.... It is only a profound composedness and strength of soul which is able to objectify even its grief and its sorrows, to compare itself with something else, and therefore to contemplate itself *theoretically* in strange things confronting it; ... it is the *dramatis personae* who appear as themselves the poets and artists, since they make their inner life an object to themselves, an object which they remain powerful enough to shape and form and thus to manifest to us the nobility of their disposition and the might of their mind. (*LFA* 417-18)

Here, three important ways that these early modern heroes display freedom and self-reflection in simile are highlighted.

First, we can see a depth and freedom of subjectivity in Shakespeare's heroes that is absent from ancient heroes, which has been unexplored thus far in this chapter. The poetic self-expression of Shakespeare's characters is engendered by and reveals their subjective creative world, presenting their inner truths to themselves and to the audience in a way more concrete and truly human than some of the characters of lesser modern playwrights (in Hegel's opinion) or than any ancient characters. According to Hegel, Shakespeare equips his characters with a "wealth of poetry" and "actually gives them spirit and imagination" (*LFA* 1227-28). It is through the artist's imagination that the characters themselves have imagination and thus exhibit freedom. But for Hegel art is not merely the artist's self-expression; it is the larger truth of spirit at that moment of its

historical progress. Spirit in early modernity is subjectively free, but still pushing forward, still searching for reconciliation or reunification with the substantial. Macbeth exists in an ambiguous state of having the ability to set himself free but not knowing it, so remains tethered—not weighed down in shackles, but hovering above himself in “beautiful and tranquil peace” (*LFA* 417).

Second, by objectifying their ideas and spirit in simile, these characters can *know* their freedom—and such knowledge, as mentioned, is a necessary part of true freedom for Hegel. Their use of simile exhibits their ability to imagine themselves as different than they are and the possibility to change. In his poetic self-expression, or self-objectification, Macbeth can see and hear his own desires externalized; he sees himself not only in the ghosts and witches but also in the similes he creates. He sees his own freedom *in* his creative act, once it is actualized. With this creation of self-knowledge, Shakespeare

lifts especially his criminal characters above their evil passion by endowing them with a greatness of spirit alike in crime and in misfortune. ... [H]e gives them this force of imagination which enables them to see themselves not just as themselves but as another shape strange to them. (*LFA* 420)

When expressing themselves in simile they compare themselves to something different, something other, so that these heroes develop themselves through creative and aesthetic means. Likewise, when Hegel says that Shakespeare’s characters are “free artists of their own selves,” I take him to be referring to the type of tragic hero that Macbeth is, the type who is self-same, yet self-actualizing and self-creative (*LFA* 1228). What was implicit in them they freely and creatively express and make explicit. Yet, this creative imaginative

act still does not get Macbeth and other early modern figures far beyond their merely formal freedom, because, at the end, they are left only with ghosts, metaphors, and themselves, whom they do not even recognize; it is a vague or dim awareness they have of themselves, not concrete freedom. Nonetheless, it is a positive display of freedom, one that the audience picks up on. We see them as the free poets and artists they truly are, who “manifest to us the nobility of their disposition and the might of their mind” (*LFA* 418).

Third, simile is a form of thought and language that overcomes the power of one’s own passions. Shakespeare’s characters are “men of free imaginative power and gifted spirit, since their reflection rises above and lifts them above what they are in their situation and specific ends” (*LFA* 585). Such self-overcoming is an aesthetic greatness particular to modern tragic heroes. It requires a strength and presence of mind to estrange and confront oneself that ancient figures, immediately connected with the substantial world, do not have. Alienating oneself is a way of *not* being at home with oneself or with the world, which is a state available only to modern characters. Such alienation is a modern condition. In the same discussion of this “greatness of spirit” in Shakespeare’s characters above, Hegel immediately goes on to quote Macbeth’s sound and fury speech, “when his hour has struck” (*LFA* 420, *Macbeth* V.v, 25-30). Here, the connection between his poetic self-expression and his self-destruction begins to come to light. Facing one’s own demise gives one a sense of alienation from the world and from oneself. Macbeth “tries by comparisons to free himself from his immediate unity and makes the liberation actual and obvious by showing that he is still capable of making similes” (*LFA*

419). His use of simile shows his awareness that death is a way of being something other. In this way, simile points to implicit freedom, albeit as death, and also is a form of self-reflection.

Following this, the subjectivity and freedom of these early modern heroes, seen in their supernatural and poetic self-expressions, is also displayed in their self-destruction. It is not always the case that the tragic hero dies, nor is it usually the case that she commits suicide. However, they often do perish, and if not, the one-sidedness of all tragic heroes ends up fundamentally destroying their lives, leaving them alone or in ruins. Further, and more contentiously, in Hegel's theory the modern hero's death is *always* a self-destruction in some way. This is tied to his view of fate and responsibility discussed above: to maintain their heroic stature even in death, Hegel's theory requires heroes be responsible for their own death, rather than being a victim. Even what seems an accidental switching of swords is not the ultimate cause of Hamlet's death, which in Hegel's view lay in Hamlet's mind from the start (*LFA* 1231). As Macbeth demonstrates, death is one form of his character type's self-development. He cannot reconcile his purely subjective aims with the objective world he has set against himself, the same world in which he must realize those aims. Due to his fixity, the only way to move beyond this contradiction is to die; the development of his purely subjective aim combined with his formal freedom necessarily results in self-destruction. What makes him who he is also destroys him.

The same formal characteristics described earlier that cause both Macbeth's evil and his greatness thus also end up leading to his demise. Because these heroes are so

firm, they eventually break. Carrying through their personal aims at all costs eventually costs them their lives:

[T]he more idiosyncratic the character is which fixedly considers itself alone and which therefore is easily on the verge of evil, the more has the individual not only to maintain himself in concrete reality against the hindrances standing in his way and blocking the realization of himself, but the more he is also driven to his downfall through this very realization. In other words, because he succeeds, he is met by the fate proceeding from his own determinate character, i.e. by a self-prepared destruction. (*LFA* 579)

Macbeth puts such a concentrated effort into obtaining his goal that in accomplishing it, he simultaneously brings about his own downfall. He is so fixated on his aim that he *becomes* his aim at all costs; his one-sided fixation on his freely chosen subjective aim blinds and prevents him from changing his course of action. The determinate aim that Macbeth keeps in front of him is both one that he draws from within himself and one that he also realizes objectively, so that his goals, actions, and very character are all self-determined, yet, finally, bring about a self-imposed ruin (*LFA* 1199, 1230).

In my view, this is for Hegel the essence of early modern tragedy: a combination of subjective freedom, not tied to anything else, and a fixated character, which necessarily results in this kind of resolution. For Hegel, early modern tragic heroes are necessarily ambiguous in order to show that with such radical and formal freedom, we can slip into evil. Further, in pointing toward death, one can see that Hegel views Macbeth and similar Shakespearean heroes as self-contradictions, because early modernity itself engenders ambiguous and contradictory positions (*LFA* 240). As we saw, Macbeth's purely formal and particular stance does damage to both himself and his

community; he is a self-contradiction because particularity and universality are both truly part of the absolute—any opposition between them is false and must be reconciled.¹²²

With the demise of Macbeth, tragic reconciliation of the conflict occurs as justice is served; in Hegel's view, he deserves "nothing better than" what happens to him in the end, because of the horrible crimes he committed (*LFA* 1230). As described earlier, when the hero—or an evil person—commits crimes, she both sets herself up against society and injures herself. Tragedy thus presents a conflict that is the "cleavage between the Absolute and reality," between what actually is a whole and what we mistakenly see as a fixed and real opposition; thus it must present the reconciliation of this opposition (*LFA* 53). Absolute spirit is historically contextualized, so that early modern art presents its own limits—the limits of spirit in early modernity and of modern art itself (these ideas are explored further in Chapters Four and Five). That is, the one-sidedness of early modern tragedy, like the subject-object divide opened by Descartes' philosophy, has also left open a divide that must be reconciled. Hegel describes such reconciliation as possible through death, and in this sense, death can be described as an affirmative move:

[D]eath is only a perishing of the *natural* soul and *finite* subjectivity, a perishing (related negatively only to the inherently negative) which cancels nullity and thereby is the means of liberating the spirit from its finitude and disunion as well as spiritually reconciling the individual person with the Absolute. (*LFA* 523)

In his contradictory blends of evil and greatness and of fixity and freedom, Macbeth is ambiguous and the epitome of an early modern tragic hero. As an early

¹²² Perhaps one could compare Macbeth to Socrates, engendered and killed by his polis, yet also heroically allowing himself to die—thus, in a sense, committing suicide, similar to Hegel's description of Hamlet's death (*LFA* 1231).

modern tragic character, Macbeth can be seen as being closely related and similar to both his ancient counterparts and the heroes of later modernity, such as those of Schiller and Goethe. In his blend of tragic fixity and self-determination, Macbeth is midway between ancient plasticity on the one hand and late modern freedom on the other. Shakespeare can only give us a tragic character that *must* act according to his passion, a passion that he just *is* but at the same time reaches beyond. It is only the tragic action itself—Macbeth’s own activity—that opens the possibility for Macbeth’s reflective thought. He exhibits the possibility of reflection in his use of simile and his encounters with witches and ghosts, and although this reflection is a step forward from ancient thought, it is not the end of spirit’s journey. After he posits his subjective aim in front of himself and freely pursues it, he begins to see reflections of himself, of how he has fashioned himself into a fixed image of evil.

In Hegel’s view, human beings will always be contradictions; as creatures both finite and spiritual, both natural and free, we must recognize those different aspects as both necessary, and as constitutive of what we absolutely are. Macbeth’s formal freedom, false independence, and pure subjectivity leave him in opposition to what is “truly substantial” and “the true content of life” (*LFA* 180). Yet, despite his evil, Hegel sees Macbeth as great; in addition to the reasons already discussed, I posit that perhaps it is also because Macbeth presents the possibility for progress. Just as Macbeth freely chooses to follow his lust for power, he also can choose to give up that path; as a modern subject, as a kingly character, and as a noble soul in romantic drama, he has the ability to change and go in the way of grace but, tragically, chooses to continue in his path of evil.

At the end, perhaps he realizes that his life is nothing more than what he made of it, his own tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing, and so he chooses to exit the stage. And, after all, this is exactly what is so tragic: if what would otherwise have been a great soul brings about his own demise for merely subjective reasons, this does seem to amount to nothing, for our lives are only meaningful or worthwhile when we acknowledge that they are united with a greater whole. Thus, in Hegel's reading, what Shakespeare's *Macbeth* leaves us with is the tragic vision of a radically free subject pursuing his personal aims at all costs, with yet a small possibility of change, as his freedom and creativity point toward the future.

This chapter has shown how early modern tragic heroes for Hegel are a unique blend of freedom and fixity, and of evil and greatness, based on their historical standpoint; as art, as absolute spirit, they present a truth of the human condition at that moment in time. We see that these early modern heroes are different from ancient Greek tragic heroes, in that they possess a greater amount of freedom and deeper subjectivity. Ancient heroes remain the same from beginning to end of the tragedy and merely transform or interpret what is given; they do not take the materials of self-production and expression from within themselves but from the outside world, whereas the early modern hero presents self-reflection and self-expression. At the same time, in contrast to the prevalent reading of Hegel's theory of tragedy, I have shown how modern heroes are, like their ancient counterparts, one-sided, which fulfills Hegel's requirement for tragic heroes. Further, this one-sidedness is the root of both their evil and their greatness as heroes of tragic drama. Yet, their evil and aesthetic greatness are only possible in this new

character type, due to their modern subjective freedom. Grasping the seemingly contradictory ideas of being both self-same and self-developing and of being both evil and great is key to understanding Hegel's theory of early modern tragedy, as well as his view of universal aspects of humanity: that we are contradictions, and that by setting ourselves up against the seeming other we are injuring ourselves and our community—and that taking responsibility for our deeds is heroic. Early modern tragic heroes show how we have gained subjective freedom, but at the cost of substantial ties, and this imbalance must be reconciled. Macbeth lacks the richer intersubjective ethicality that Hegel endorses and that the Enlightenment introduces as a possibility, a possibility that Macbeth and early modern tragedy point toward.

CHAPTER 4

HEGEL'S SPIRITUAL BEAUTY IN SCHILLER'S SUBLIME

TRAGIC HEROINES

Despite the importance of Hegel's theory of tragedy and the amount of scholarship surrounding it, very little work has been done on his view of late modern tragedy, including of Schiller's works. This may come as a surprise when one remembers that Hegel not only admired Schiller, but that Hegel's philosophy of art is also greatly influenced by Schiller's aesthetic writings. In this light, it may also be surprising that Hegel rarely praises Schiller's tragedies; he is often ambiguous or negatively critical. Even when not naming Schiller, Hegel's criticisms of modern dramatic figures as being weak or overly subjective in characterization can apply to Schiller's heroes. Further, Schiller's theory of tragedy, which he implements in his dramas, is far from Hegel's: For Schiller, tragedy offers the audience an experience of the sublime by imitating the chaos and meaninglessness of history, but Hegel argues that tragedy presents the larger truth that humanity achieves reconciliation of its deepest conflicts. Using *Wallenstein* (1800), *Mary Stuart* (1800), and *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), I address these issues to show how Hegel's theory of tragedy fruitfully engages with Schiller's late tragedies.

But the heroes of these tragedies pose a problem for Hegel's aesthetic theory: They seem to fall prey to his criticism of many late modern characters that vacillate or inwardly conflict, which results in poor characterization and is part of the decline of the ideally beautiful in Hegel's picture of modern art. However, I argue, this seeming flaw of certain characters, such as in Schiller's heroes, is actually their asset, namely, a "spiritual

beauty” (*LFA* 518). I show that for Hegel there are two kinds of artistic beauty, which evolve with the historical progress of subjective freedom, and Schiller presents a truth deeper than the merely beautiful art of ancient Greece, a spiritual beauty at the necessary expense of classical beauty. This is seen when Joan of Arc and Mary Stuart—but not Wallenstein—overcome their turmoil and achieve an inner reconciliation. As it turns out, Schiller’s sublime is very much like Hegel’s spiritual beauty, not in chaos and meaninglessness, but in the strength and dignity it takes to face and overcome the almost overwhelming pull of forces greater than us, whether from within or without. Hegel’s theory of tragedy thus offers a new understanding and a deeper appreciation of the importance of Schiller’s late tragedies, works that continue to captivate audiences and theorists alike by presenting the beautiful triumph of an individual’s subjective freedom over great spiritual conflict.

The Challenge of Late Modern Dramatic Figures

It is widely accepted that Schiller’s aesthetic works, such as his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry,” and “Grace and Dignity,” influenced Hegel’s philosophy of art, as Hegel himself notes in his lectures (*LFA* 62).¹²³ Indeed, Schiller is a constant if sometimes somewhat shadowy presence

¹²³ For works in English on Schiller’s influence on Hegel see, e.g.: Michael H. Hoffheimer, “The Influence of Schiller’s Theory of Nature on Hegel’s Philosophical Development,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 231-44; Daniel O. Dahlstrom, “The Legacy of Aesthetic Holism: Hamann, Herder, and Schiller,” in *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel, and Their Contemporaries*, vol. 50 of *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 67-92; Andrew G. Fiala, “Aesthetic Education and the Aesthetic State: Hegel’s Response to Schiller,” in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, ed. William Maker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010),

throughout Hegel's wider corpus, with references to and quotations from Schiller's historical, theoretical, and literary works appearing in such diverse places as Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, *Philosophy of Right*, and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, among others.¹²⁴ However, despite this presence, including various treatments of Schiller's literary works in Hegel's lectures on art, issues of how Hegel's philosophy of art relates to Schiller's artistic works or how Schiller's literature fits into Hegel's aesthetics remain under-examined in the scholarship.

However, although there are agreements between Hegel's and Schiller's aesthetic theories in general, there are important differences between their respective theories of tragedy in particular, most notably on the issue of the sublime.¹²⁵ As I discuss in Section IV, for Schiller, the sublime is of utmost importance to tragedy, while Hegel all but ignores the sublime, giving it no place in modern art or even classical art, only in pre-classical art (which he calls symbolic art) before tragedy comes on the scene. This problematizes reading Schiller's late tragedies through the lens of Hegel's aesthetics, as one must take into account that Schiller's theory of the sublime was on his mind as he

171–186; Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel's Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/hegel-aesthetics/>.

¹²⁴ In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel even gives Schiller the last word, closing with a somewhat loose quotation from Schiller's poem "Freundschaft." (This poem also appears in his lectures on history and on religion—though, to my knowledge, not in his aesthetics.) For a discussion of this poem in the *Phenomenology*, see Robert B. Pippin, "The Status of Literature in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: On the Lives of Concepts," in *Inventions of the Imagination: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Imaginary since Romanticism*, ed. Richard T. Gray, Nicholas Halmi, Gary Handwerk, Michael A. Rosenthal, and Klaus Vieweg (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 102–120.

¹²⁵ That is, while there are differences between Hegel's and Schiller's wider aesthetic theories—for example, for Schiller art is key to morality and morality key to his aesthetics, while for Hegel art's purpose is not to play an instrumental role in shaping modern society's morality (*LFA* 55)—this chapter focuses on the issues that most directly pertain to tragedy for both thinkers (although, as will become evident, what is relevant to their respective theories of tragedy turns out to be wide in scope).

penned, revised, and staged these dramas. More problems in this endeavor arise, because, simply put, much of what Hegel says about Schiller's dramas is negative or ambiguous. Further still, many of Hegel's criticisms of modern dramatic characters are applicable to Schiller's works, even if not explicitly called by name. These criticisms for the most part concern heroes who fail to live up to Hegel's picture of ideal characterization, which requires that heroes be firm and unified with themselves.

Hegel describes this requirement for unity and firmness of dramatic characters as "the infinite and divine aspect of individuality" in art (*LFA* 240). However, he continues, "by making this demand, we must attack many productions, especially of more modern art"—and as his attack that follows and other criticisms illustrate, and as I argue in Section III, by "more modern" he means specifically late modern, works after Shakespeare and through Hegel's own time (*LFA* 241). He then gives a descriptive if dense list of literary works that fail to present ideal characters: Corneille's *Le Cid* presents a heart split in two, Racine's eponymous *Phèdre* shifts the blame on another, and Goethe's hero of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is inwardly weak—though nonetheless interesting (*LFA* 241). Next, the "beautiful soul" in Jacobi's *Woldemar* gets the worst of it for being too weak to endure contact with the world, so that it turns completely inward and holds itself in a false superiority, which cannot endure anything from true love to everyday events (*LFA* 241-42). Following this, von Kleist's *Der Prinz von Homburg* fails, apparently for its use of sleepwalking and probably also for what is commonly known as the "fear of death scene" (*LFA* 242-43). Such supernatural devices as visions, magic, magnetism, and apparitions are a problem for Hegel's aesthetics because, as a

presentation of truth, “in art nothing is dark ... everything is clear and transparent”; the “truly ideal character has for its content and ‘pathos’ nothing supernatural and ghost-ridden but only true interests in which he is at one with himself” (*LFA* 243).¹²⁶ Finally, he ends this somewhat breathless attack on “these perversities which are opposed to unity and firmness of character” with a general criticism of the irony of his early German Romantic contemporaries for creating self-destructive characters (*LFA* 243).¹²⁷ In general, these various but related aesthetic devices all result in less than ideal characterization; literary and dramatic characters should not be unstable or indecisive, but firm.

Elsewhere in his lectures Hegel goes into further detail of how tragic heroes in particular fail in three general ways. First is the “swithering” type, vacillating characters who are irresolute or completely perplexed about what to base their decisions on. Of them, Hegel says, “such dithering figures generally appear by being themselves in the grip of a twofold passion which drives them from one deed to another simultaneously” (*LFA* 1228). These are not solid characters aligned with inherently valid duties or spheres of life—such as family or state, as in Sophocles’ *Antigone*—nor are they tethered to their subjective passions or goals, as Macbeth and Othello are. Instead, they are incapable of

¹²⁶ Hegel has mixed and ambiguous views of the witches in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and the ghost in *Hamlet* (*LFA* 230–31; 583). In Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell*, Hegel allows for Attinghausen’s prophecy as appropriate because he is on the brink of death and thus, I presume, closer to the spiritual world (*LFA* 243). To my knowledge, in his discussions of Schiller’s *Maid of Orleans*, Hegel does not mention Johanna’s visions or voices, her father’s dreams, or the Black Knight, which is some sort of apparition, hallucination, or visitor from underground (at the end of his visit he goes underground anyway). For an early discussion of Banquo’s ghost see *ETW* 229–30; for a discussion of this part of *ETW* see Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God*, 120–24.

¹²⁷ Elsewhere, he criticizes Tieck and Schlegel not just for their use of irony but also for their own personal self-centeredness (*LFA* 1175).

aligning themselves with anything, characters “in two minds who cannot acquire a finished and therefore firm individuality,” split in their very core (*LFA* 1228). Hegel advises against putting this kind of discord “into one and the same individual,” because it “must always involve much awkwardness. For mental distraction into opposed interests has its source partly in a vagueness and stupidity of mind, partly in weakness and immaturity,” citing Goethe’s “Weislingen [in *Götz*], ... Fernando in *Stella*, and Clavigo ... above all” (*LFA* 1228).¹²⁸ Divided in this way, they cannot fixate on anything and lack a central pathos or unification with it, and thus cannot fulfill Hegel’s requirement of firmness or solidity for ideal characterization.

Second, and the worst of the three, is to have the indecisiveness and swithering of character as the *point* of the drama. This type of drama shows the (actually false) “fact” that no one is “inwardly firm and self-assured” (*LFA* 1229). Hegel is quick to point out that good drama has characters who struggle to attain their goals, and that they sometimes should come into opposition with the circumstances of everyday life or other individuals, so that they experience “their finitude and instability”—a universal, unavoidable truth of all human beings (*LFA* 1229). Although Hegel does not give much detail here, so that how this type is different than the others is unclear, what is interesting is that he seems to be pointing out that such struggle should be within in the drama as a whole, and not within one character: This experience of finitude and instability, which is the only appropriate conclusion of a drama, “must not be inserted by a sort of dialectical machinery into the individual’s own character” (*LFA* 1229). Doing so would create an

¹²⁸ Insertion by Knox.

“empty indeterminate form instead of growing in a living way along with determinate aims and a defined character” (*LFA* 1229). This means that ideal characters are defined or determined by their aims, so that they are not merely formal or empty—that is, not hollow or flat characters, or not caricatures or mere “types.” The specific contents of the characters’ aims should allow them to organically come into conflict with their environment in a realistic, fully fleshed out way.

Third is “the tragic case where someone is led astray by passion against his better judgement into opposite aims ... and now must perish unless he can rescue himself from this discord both within and in his external actions” (*LFA* 1229). Here Hegel gives as an example Johanna in Schiller’s *The Maid of Orleans*, his depiction of Joan of Arc.¹²⁹

Hegel cites her because, after her encounter in Act III with Lionel, an English knight, she is torn between her duty to God and France and her romantic feelings for him. Hegel warns that poets should avoid making this “personal tragedy of inner discord” the “lever of the tragedy” because it is “sad ... painful ... and aggravating” (*LFA* 1229).¹³⁰

However, as it stands at this point in the lectures, it is not clear that Hegel is referring specifically to *The Maid of Orleans* as being part of this warning, although he may be; that is, it could be that this third type may sometimes be appropriate, and that Johanna’s

¹²⁹ The full title is *Die Jungfrau von Orleans. Eine romantische Tragödie*. I will use ‘Johanna’ throughout so as to be clear I am referring to Schiller’s character, not the historical person.

¹³⁰ *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* also has problems *qua* tragic drama according to Hegel in at least two ways that are not directly related to the concern of this chapter: First, it over-uses external display such as décor and costume, rather than leaving the poetry as fundamental, as it should be (*LFA* 1191). Second, it leans close to epic, especially in what Hegel sees as Montgomery’s use of objective circumstances and in his supposedly calm description of them during his plea for his life (Act II); he calls Montgomery’s expressions “unmanly” and more suited to comedy (though I am not so sure Hegel is being fair in his assessment here, all gender stereotypes aside, as Montgomery tearlessly and valiantly tries to convince Johanna to spare his life) (*LFA* 1084–85).

conflict may *not* be merely personal while others used it as the “lever” in an aggravating way. In another part of the lectures, Hegel describes the conflict of *The Maid of Orleans* as between the right of subjective love and “the eternal substantial powers themselves, the interests of the state, patriotism, family duties, etc.,” and is not judgmental but simply descriptive (*LFA* 566). Coming back to this point in the final section, I argue that this helps give a different, more positive reading of Schiller’s tragedy than Hegel’s warning would otherwise leave room for.

Throughout his lectures Hegel gives many other examples of Schiller’s characters, as well as those of Goethe and others of the time, that fail in the ways just described. For example, he says: “Goethe in his youth did try to achieve a similar truth to nature and an individuality of personality but without achieving the inner force and height of passion [of Shakespeare’s characters], and Schiller again has fallen into a violence which has no really solid kernel in its expansive storming” (*LFA* 1228).¹³¹ Hegel also describes Schiller’s *Wallenstein* as being of the third type; like Johanna, he is led by his personal desire from his duty and ultimately perishes as a result (*LFA* 195-96). This point helps to understand what he finds defective about *Wallenstein* and yet, as I argue in the final section, great about Johanna. Despite this, they at bottom seem to have the general problem: truly great heroes must be committed to one aim and not stray from it, waver, or be split, and *Wallenstein*, Johanna, and a slew of other modern heroes seem to come up short here.

¹³¹ Knox’s insertion.

Ideal Heroes

But what does Hegel mean by ideal characterization for tragic heroes?

Throughout his aesthetics (and elsewhere) Hegel often uses the word ‘ideal’ [*das Ideal*] as an equivalent to the beautiful [*das Schöne*] and equates its corresponding adjective ‘ideal’ [*ideal*] with ‘beautiful’ [*schöne*]. In general, the ideal is the embodiment of the idea [*Idee*] in an individual, where idea is “the concrete unity of Concept and objectivity,” meaning that the idea of something is the existence of its concept in material reality (*LFA* 108).¹³² That is, the ideal is the sensuous presentation of truth.¹³³ For Hegel, the beautiful is “the Idea of the beautiful. This means that the beautiful itself must be grasped as Idea, in particular as Idea in a determinate form, i.e. as Ideal” (*LFA* 106). Beauty and truth are thus related in that the idea is truth, and it is externalized and immediately presented sensuously as the beautiful. The ideal exists in the world as a product of the imagination in the beauty of art. In art, the idea appears sensuously as a harmony, balance, or unity—that is, as the beautiful or ideal—so that artistic beauty *is* truth.

In Hegel’s vivid description, the idea exists as “self-enclosed, free, self-reliant, as sensuously blessed in itself, enjoying and delighting in its own self. The ring of this bliss resounds throughout the entire appearance of the Ideal” (*LFA* 157). He continues:

And precisely as a result of this alone is the Ideal genuinely beautiful, since the beautiful exists only as a total though subjective unity; wherefore

¹³² For a discussion of concept see *LFA* 108–115.

¹³³ Also following this, the idea for Hegel is simultaneously real and knowable, unlike ideas in the Kantian sense, for example.

too the subject who manifests the Ideal must appear collected together in himself again into a higher totality and independence out of the divisions in the life of other individuals and their aims and efforts. (*LFA* 157)

This quote is helpful in illustrating how Hegel can quickly move from ideal as beautiful generally to, more specifically, ideal tragic heroes—and perhaps questionably, as tragic heroes are not known for their beauty (rather, they are magnificent, determined, admirable, etc.). Ideal tragic heroes are inseparably unified with their aims, so that they are solid and “self-contained” characters (*LFA* 181). This subjective unity is beautiful, and any wavering, as we have seen, diminishes this.

Such an unflinching adherence to one’s view is the essential aesthetic feature prized by Hegel for tragic heroes. This one-sidedness is the driving force of the drama’s action, and is central to Hegel’s three necessary criteria for tragic drama: 1) The hero must be so one-sidedly fixed on an aim that she comes into 2) conflict, which must be 3) reconciled (*LFA* 1194-98, 1215-20). One cannot have tragedy for Hegel without conflict and its reconciliation, and these are both driven by the heroes’ one-sidedness. Hegel describes the heroes’ one-sidedness as their “tragic fixity” because it causes them to commit crimes, ethical transgressions, and other atrocities in unrelenting pursuit of the aims with which they so fully identify, coming into conflict with what is substantial or right (*LFA* 1203). It also leads to the reconciliation of this conflict, which ends up being their own downfall, if not their death, as they are fundamentally destroyed. Yet, however harmful it ends up being to the character, one-sidedness fulfills Hegel’s requirement that dramatic heroes be self-contained in complete identity with their pathos, the aim that defines them. If they are inwardly torn or cannot decide on an aim, they are not ideal.

In addition to the one-sidedness of ideal *tragic* heroes specifically, Hegel has a tri-fold requirement for aesthetically ideal dramatic heroes in general that adds some dimension: First, they must possess a multi-faceted richness of character that gives them a life-like fullness of personality, rather than a flatness that results from being purely and simply just one pathos (*LFA* 237-38). However, second, out of this diversity, ideal heroes are defined by one “essential and conspicuous trait of character,” a particular pathos that “leads to specific aims, decisions, and actions” (*LFA* 238). They retain their diversity to allow for believability, interest, and to engage in a variety of relationships and situations, but they are determined by this one dominant trait in order to have solid, coherent characterization, and so remain true to themselves, to what they are at heart, throughout the drama (*LFA* 239-40). Third, the ideal presentation of character requires that this multiplicity should be unified by the free subjectivity of the character herself. She maintains herself “as an inherently *fixed* character” by welding, to use Hegel’s verb, her diversity and determinateness into one totality (*LFA* 236).

Certainly there is a lot to unpack here, which will be done as this chapter progresses, but this is how Hegel explains this third requirement for ideal dramatic heroes:

Being in unity with oneself constitutes in art precisely the infinite and divine aspect of individuality. From this point of view, firmness and decision are an important determinant for the ideal presentation of character. ... [T]his ideal presentation appears when the universality of the powers is pervaded by the particularity of the individual and, in this unification, becomes a subjectivity and individuality which is fully unified in itself and self-related. (*LFA* 240-41)

This third and last requirement of ideal heroes, *maintaining oneself* as a fixed unity of diversity, is key to understanding the greatness of Schiller’s tragic heroes. For Hegel, being a unification of diversity is a fundamental truth of humanity—our true nature.¹³⁴ Hegel describes humanity as “not only the bearer of the contradiction of his multiple nature but the sustainer of it, remaining therein equal and true to himself” (*LFA* 240).¹³⁵ Our multiple nature includes simultaneously being finite and infinite, objective and subjective, natural and free (*LFA* 99-101). This truth, which philosophy articulates conceptually and which is felt in religion, art presents sensuously. This unified totality of diverse parts is somewhat manifested artistically in individuals as sculpture and in painting, but more explicitly so in poetry, and most fully fleshed out as characters in drama.¹³⁶ Even more than sculpture, in drama the entire human *being* is present, active,

¹³⁴ This is the aesthetic equivalent, or aspect, of the backbone of Hegel’s speculative philosophy. Reflective thought (utilized by the understanding and epitomized for Hegel in Kantian philosophy) distinguishes and identifies difference. Speculative thought both re-unifies the parts of what was an unmediated whole that had been sundered by reflection, and at the same time maintains the identity and difference of the diverse parts within and as the whole. Though this is in a sense a criticism by Hegel of Kant’s philosophy in that it stops at the level of reflective thought, both Kant’s philosophy and reflective thought are necessary steps to get to the stage of re-unification in speculative reason (in that they create or supply the disunity), and he credits Kant’s philosophy with being the most complete articulation of reflection; see Hegel’s *Differenzschrift*. Further, Hegel acknowledges that Kant’s philosophy itself points the way out of reflection to speculation in his unity of apperception in the first *Critique*, esp. the B Deduction, and in his *Critique of Judgment*; see G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977). For Hegel’s description of this progression in philosophy, see his *LHP*. One reaches the standpoint of speculative philosophy in *Phenomenology of Spirit* at the last stage, that of “Absolute Knowing”; G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 479 ff.

¹³⁵ Knox notes here that Hegel’s play on words with ‘bearer’ [*tragen*] and ‘sustainer’ [*ertragen*]—somewhat like the French *porter* and *supporter*—inadequately translates into English (footnote 1, *LFA* 240).

¹³⁶ Drama’s performed, spoken, and enacted dialogue is the best artistic medium to convey the highest truths of humanity. Art’s task is to bring the spiritual before us; it is a sensuous presentation of truth. Of all the arts, drama most concretely does this; it unfolds objective events on stage, the action, and the inner workings of subjectivity through spoken word (*LFA* 1035–39, 1158–62). Hegel says: “Because drama has

and expressive (*LFA* 519). And of all genres of drama, tragedy affords the greatest opportunity for portraying the ability to maintain one's fixity under great stress. In what follows, I argue that the ability of Schiller's tragic heroes to do this rests on a deeper subjectivity possible only in late modernity, yet which is at the same time the ground of the defective withering of late modern characters described in Section I.

The Deeper Spiritual Beauty of Late Modernity

The deeper subjectivity of late modern heroes is explained by Hegel's more general theory of the historical progress of subjective freedom. As spirit's knowledge of its freedom increases, this progression is also presented in art, so that art's content becomes increasingly self-reflective and self-conscious.¹³⁷ Likewise, its dramatic characters present this progress, so that heroes of modernity possess a deeper subjectivity than ancient heroes. Because of the subjective turn in early modernity, coinciding with Protestantism and early modern philosophy such as Descartes' *Meditations*, art of this era presents such modern subjective freedom. Modern drama specifically is focused on the characters' "inner subjective life" (*LFA* 193). For example, one might think of those heroes such as Hamlet and Juliet who present a deeper inner life through their poetic

been developed into the most perfect totality of content and form, it must be regarded as the highest stage of poetry and of art generally" (*LFA* 1158).

¹³⁷ Robert Pippin explores this idea as it relates to abstract painting, arguing that Hegel's theory shows it to be a logical culmination of the self-consciousness of painting and of modern subjectivity in "What Was Abstract Art?" Pippin looks more broadly at modern painting in *After the Beautiful*, and explores this idea somewhat in relation to literature in "The Absence of Aesthetics in Hegel's Aesthetics."

expression, reflecting not only on the objective situation but also on their own inner, subjective condition.¹³⁸

But it is important to note that the progress of subjective freedom does not stop at Descartes or Shakespeare; the last stage of this progress *begins* near the end of the 18th century, when modernity truly starts for Hegel (*LPH* 412). At this time, with the flowering of the Enlightenment, individuals gain greater depth of subjectivity and greater freedom than they possessed in the early modern period (*LHP* 131). In Hegel's view, late modern individuals know they possess greater freedom and a deeper subjectivity than they did in early modernity (*LFA* 187). According to him, spirit does not fully realize subjective freedom until it can hold itself under the scrutiny of its own reason, as introduced by the philosophical and cultural movements of the Enlightenment (*LPH* 438-442). As spirit becomes increasingly self-reflective, it is aware not only of its subjective side and of the objective world, but also of its own truth as responsible for (re)unifying itself with the objective (for example, as the individual in Hegel's rational, post-Enlightenment state is).¹³⁹ Individuals of late modernity are aware of the subject-object divide in a way that those in antiquity and early modernity are not (*LFA* 187). The scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution are revolutions in critical and rational thought that create debates about human freedom and responsibility. Not only their gains but also the resulting alienation of the individual from nature, from herself, and from society, lead to a new way of human being. Now, we are aware of the

¹³⁸ For a relevant discussion of connections between Hegel's readings of Descartes and *Hamlet*, see Gjesdal, "Reading Shakespeare, Reading Modernity," esp. 18–21.

¹³⁹ For his theory of the state, see *PR*; I discuss this in relation to modern tragedy in Chapter Five.

need for reconciliation that follows, and the fact that such reconciliation is only up to us. This new self-knowledge is presented in drama as characters who waver, stray from their path, or are torn within.

Thus, according to Hegel's own picture of the historical progress of subjective freedom and all that it entails, it is only characters in works of *late* modernity—beginning with the Enlightenment—that do not make the cut as ideal because of their swithering. That is, in my view, Hegel's criticisms of literary works for failing to present ideal characters are not arbitrarily only on late modern dramas. Only late modern heroes *can* present the deeper subjective freedom that allows for this character trait; all earlier forms of individuality are not as subjectively free and are completely one-sidedly fixed on their aims (*LFA* 113). The deeper subjective freedom that was implicit within us in early modernity has now been fully won in real life, but at the cost of ideal heroes in art (*LFA* 189). The swithering or internal discord that shows up in these late modern dramatic characters causes them to be less than ideal, less beautiful. The rise of subjective freedom is parallel to the decline of beauty in art, in reverse proportion. As our spirituality increases, the sensuous beauty of art decreases.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Along similar lines, the decline of beauty and of figurative representation in painting as related to the progress of subjective freedom is the topic of a conversation between Robert Pippin and Stephen Houlgate in Houlgate, "Presidential Address" and Pippin, "What Was Abstract Art?" Pippin finds Hegel's theory of art to go toward explaining the move to abstraction in painting, because Pippin argues abstraction follows from greater subjective freedom in humanity; whatever Hegel himself would have thought of abstract painting, Pippin holds that his theory shows it to be a logical culmination of the self-consciousness of painting and of modern subjectivity. In contrast, Houlgate does not find that Hegel's theory lends itself to non-figurative painting. He argues that abstraction is not suitable for the presentation of human spirit for Hegel because we cannot see our essence in it, and that this is exactly why painting is superior to music, and why it progressed from sculpture: Painting's use of color and depth allows spirituality and subjectivity to shine through in a more lived way than the fixity and solidity of sculpture, and painting's (or the painter's) triumph is to make *natural objects* spiritualized in this way—not to denaturalize them beyond the

At first glance, because of the well-known fact that Hegel finds classical art the high point of artistic beauty, his listing only modern works as deficient in their characterization may not come as a surprise. This is especially so if one thinks of ancient tragic heroes in general and particularly of Sophocles' *Antigone* as the epitome of solid dramatic characterization for Hegel, and modern heroes thus falling short of this standard. That *Antigone* is known as Hegel's archetypal hero is no accident; *Antigone* is frequently referred to in the literature as the supreme tragic hero partly because she is so *clearly* one-sided, and so *unshakably* determined to bury her brother at all costs. She is the embodiment of her aim, nothing more, and nothing less. This is an example of how artistic beauty for Hegel reaches its peak in classical drama. In fact, and uncharacteristically, he predicts that after classical art, "Nothing can be or become more beautiful" (*LFA* 517).¹⁴¹

Further, art in modernity is not only less beautiful, it is also less important as a vehicle of truth; this idea is what is now commonly known as Hegel's end of art thesis. While we enjoy art, it is not a sacred part of life as it was in ancient Greece and before; religious icons and music are a part of religious worship, for example, but the divine truth is now gained in subjective faith and knowledge. Truth is most explicitly presented to us in the conceptual thought and language of philosophy. As humanity becomes more inwardly focused, material means are less adequate. Although materiality is an inherent

point of recognition. On the flipside, music is too subjective, almost completely escaping the objective world altogether, and thus not able to present an intellectually comprehensible truth, much like abstract painting. Cf. Pippin, *After the Beautiful*.

¹⁴¹ Arthur Danto famously takes this idea of Hegel's and applies it to contemporary visual art, claiming that after Hegel, art no longer has to be beautiful and the conceptual content or artwork's meaning is primary; see esp. his "The End of Art," and "The Aesthetics of Brillo Boxes."

part of lived human experience, our essence is spirit and our highest achievements are freedom and reason. The truth of humanity is thus no longer adequately presented sensuously as art, so that “art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past” (*LFA* 11). Hegel does not think that art disappears or becomes completely irrelevant, but

the ‘*after*’ of art consists in the fact that there dwells in the spirit the need to satisfy itself solely in its own inner self as the true form for truth to take. ... We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit. (*LFA* 103)

Because we have attained more freedom and deeper subjectivity in modernity, modern art’s material limitation in presenting this has become part of its very content: “romantic art is the self-transcendence of art but within its own sphere and in the form of art itself” (*LFA* 80).¹⁴² Its content becomes more spiritual as it nonetheless remains a sensuous presentation.

But, in addition to reading this as a decline of art’s beauty and of its importance, the idea of art’s self-transcendence *within* its own sphere is at the same time key to what Schiller’s tragic heroes have to offer. Although the ideal appears in beautiful art as repose and bliss, its “inner and spiritual element exists nevertheless only as active movement and development. But this development is nothing without one-sidedness and separation” (*LFA* 177-78). This makes Hegel’s notion of the ideal in art more complex than originally indicated, and points to a way of seeing some inwardly torn heroes as nonetheless ideal—but ideal in a different way than the sensuous beauty of classical art. As a presentation of

¹⁴² Cf. *LFA* 81, 967.

the spiritual truth of humanity, art must include inner, subjective movement and the progress of spirit; this includes the awareness of one-sidedness, and the separation and alienation that post-Enlightenment individuals can experience as a result of the progress of modernity. There is the possibility for late modern artworks to present this deeper spiritually beautifully: “Works of art are all the more excellent in expressing true beauty, the deeper is the inner truth of their content and thought” (*LFA* 74).

Hegel elsewhere indicates these complexities of beauty and the ideal when he says that “*beautiful* art can belong only to those religions in which the spiritual principle, though concrete and intrinsically free, is not yet absolute” (*EM* §562). Art of the ancient Greeks was beautiful because they have not yet passed from their simple harmony in which they have not fully achieved subjective freedom, but it thus cannot present as deep an inner truth as romantic art can.¹⁴³ Therefore, Hegel finds room for a different kind of beauty, one born of separation and struggle, as exemplified in Christ, which he calls spiritual beauty (*LFA* 518). There is the sensuous beauty epitomized in classical art, and then a deeper spiritual beauty in romantic art. While the progress of subjective freedom can result in wavering and thus less-than-ideal heroes, as we have seen, it can also result in the deeper spiritual beauty some late modern heroes embody and that can be found in later modern art in general. This is indeed different than the ancient heroes who are beautiful in a more traditional sense of the term—*immediately* unified and in harmony with themselves—but this difference is what gives each their unique value. Beauty

¹⁴³ For Hegel’s discussions of ancient Greek individuals’ lack of full subjectivity and freedom, and therefore as not absolute, see: *LFA* 180–81, 436–37; *LPH* 238–39, 249–50; *PR* §§118R, 124R, 185R.

sensuously devolves *and* spiritually deepens along with history, and the spiritual beauty of modern art is higher than the merely beautiful appearance of classical art (*LFA* 517). And, while early modern art does indeed present a deeper subjectivity and greater freedom than classical art, it cannot do so as fully as late modern art, as spirit still has further to go. The shift in subjectivity surrounding the Enlightenment is presented in the heroes of late modern tragedy.

The self-transcendence of art combined with this deeper spiritual beauty is a complex picture of simultaneously remaining and changing, one that implies great inner strength if this self-transcendence is embodied in an individual, as it is in dramatic heroes. Hegel's view that humanity is fundamentally the bearer and sustainer of contradictions, as we saw in Section II, appears in the very same discussion as his third requirement for ideal characterization in art (*LFA* 240). It thus follows that contradiction and conflict are also fundamental to this aspect of art, as a dramatic presentation of spiritual truth; ideal characters weld their diversity and determinateness into one totality (*LFA* 236). This appears in romantic art as inner discord; now, art maintains an underlying dissonance as well as harmony. For Hegel, while art is inherently serene, "in romantic art the *distraction* and dissonance of the heart goes further and ... the oppositions displayed in it are deepened and their disunion may be *maintained*" (*LFA* 158). To maintain such a split or inner discord requires great inner strength, which I argue late modern tragic heroes possess and, of all art, most explicitly present. While discord indeed shows up throughout all the arts, such as in music and painting, nowhere does it appear as conceptually explicit as in tragic drama. And, although there is conflict

in other genres, tragic heroes afford the most intense display of both discord and strength. I posit that, in addition to being one-sided, late modern tragic heroes can *also* maintain self-separation due to their discord. This separation and discord is not only unique to late modern characters, making them less sensuously beautiful, but in light of what has just been discussed, it can also be seen as a positive trait, namely, the deeper spiritual beauty of late modern art. This quality is most explicit in the great heroes of late tragedy, especially in Schiller's depictions of Joan of Arc and Mary Stuart.

Freedom in Hegel's Theodicy and in Schiller's Sublime

I posit that the deeper spiritual beauty of art in Hegel's late modernity is actually very much like Schiller's sublime; in this way, Hegel's philosophy and Schiller's tragedy are complementary. Hegel's spiritual beauty sheds light on Schiller's late tragic heroes as being ideal in this new way. However, not all of Schiller's dramas fit Hegel's bill. In this vein, Lydia Moland recounts a young Hegel's review of Schiller's *Wallenstein*: he is appalled at the trilogy's ending, calling it horrifying and un-tragic.¹⁴⁴ Moland uses Hegel's lectures on art to shed light on his view of *Wallenstein*, but her article also has two larger aims: First, it points to the contemporary relevance of *Wallenstein* (begun in 1796, first performed in 1798-99, and published in 1800); she details connections

¹⁴⁴ Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 3–4. Note that Hegel's review is of the text, not a performance, of *Wallenstein*. (Also note that, *pace* Moland, it is not Hegel but Schiller himself who divides the trilogy into two parts, the first part consisting of *Wallenstein's Camp* and *The Piccolomini*, and the second part is *Wallenstein's Death*.) For related studies on Schiller's *Wallenstein* (but not Hegel) see: Steffan Davies, *The Wallenstein Figure in German Literature and Historiography: 1790-1920* (London: Maney Publishing for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010), esp. Chapters 2 & 4; and Ritchie Robertson, "Wallenstein," in *Friedrich Schiller: Playwright, Poet, Philosopher, Historian*, ed. Paul E. Kerry (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 251 ff.

between *Wallenstein*, Peter Stein’s 2007 Berlin production, and Schiller’s theories of history and the sublime. Second, she shows how Hegel’s review of *Wallenstein* is illuminated by his own theory of history, especially as it appears in “The German Constitution,” also written around 1800.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, this in turns sheds light on fundamental differences between Hegel’s and Schiller’s respective theories of history.¹⁴⁶ This is important because Schiller’s theories of history and the sublime are intertwined and make their way into his later tragedies. Moland’s reading is that it is in part due to Hegel’s and the later Schiller’s opposing conceptions of history that Hegel finds problems with *Wallenstein*.¹⁴⁷

Hegel’s philosophical theodicy, in short, finds reason in the events that unfold in history, as human reason historically progresses along with freedom. What exactly Hegel means by reason in history is up for debate—as is how much his view varies between this early essay and the 1820s and 1830 lectures on history, and his 1820 *Philosophy of Right*.¹⁴⁸ But two of his key points are clear and remain constant: First, he is talking about

¹⁴⁵ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 19–20. Moland also discusses the fact that both Schiller’s drama and Hegel’s essay focus on the Thirty Years’ War, and makes connections here between Hegel’s view that freedom is fully realized in the rational state, a picture that is not presented in *Wallenstein*, and his review; Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 20–21.

¹⁴⁶ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 5.

¹⁴⁷ Joshua Billings comes to a similar conclusion (although Moland’s article is not referenced in his book) but in light of Hegel’s “Natural Law” essay; Joshua Billings, *Genealogy of the Tragic: Greek Tragedy and German Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 150–51. Indeed, this general picture seems well-known—for example, Walter Hinderer also connects Hegel’s negative review of *Wallenstein* to the differences between his and Schiller’s theories of history, in his “Introduction” to Schiller, *Wallenstein [and] Mary Stuart* (New York: Continuum, 1991)—but Moland’s article goes into it with great detail.

¹⁴⁸ Much of the debate about Hegel’s view of reason unfolding in society is related or can be traced to his famous saying: “What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational [Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig]” in his Preface to *Philosophy of Right*; G. W. F. Hegel,

our understanding of freedom unfolding in history and, second, this progress is shown to be logical, or *rational*. That is: “The History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom; a progress whose development according to the necessity of its nature, it is our business to investigate” (*LPH* 19).¹⁴⁹ Philosophical thought shows that the “seemingly chaotic” events of human history are truly “instruments in the hands of higher powers—primordial fate and all-conquering time.”¹⁵⁰ Hegel knows that seeing the necessity in what otherwise looks random and contingent is

Elements of the Philosophy of Right, ed. Allen Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20. Many of the different interpretations can be grouped into two general camps: On one hand, critics see Hegel as a conservative or an apologist, as saying that things as they stand are rational and thus good, or as saying that everything that is rational already exists; either way, they see Hegel as saying that there is no room for social criticism or that we cannot work towards making things better. On the other hand, the currently more accepted view sees Hegel as finding room for criticism and improvement, often based on the fact that Hegel’s use of ‘actual’ here leaves room for things that merely *exist* but have not fully *actualized* or realized their essences (e.g., an existing state that is not actual could allow practices such as slavery, and people could criticize it and work toward the actualization of a truer state by abolishing it). For discussions of this debate with detailed bibliographies see: M. W. Jackson, “Hegel: The Real and the Rational,” in *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ed. Jon Stewart (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 19–21; Robert Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*: A Neutral Reading,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44 (2006): 235–66, esp. 236–38 for his summary of these two camps (the quote above from Hegel’s Preface to *Philosophy of Right* is often called his *Doppelsatz*, meaning “double dictum”). Perhaps starting a third camp, Stern argues that the *Doppelsatz* is not normative but that it is a descriptive statement about the rational methods of Hegel’s philosophy.

¹⁴⁹ Hegel then immediately gives the famous description of this progress: “Eastern nations knew only that *one* is free; the Greek and Roman world only that *some* are free; while *we* know that all men absolutely (man *as man*) are free” (*LPH* 19). Even if not everywhere in the world are all people actually free—slave labor still exists, for example—“we” know that all humans are inherently free, so that such unfreedoms as slavery are wrong; that is, we now know that all humans are truly free in theory, we just haven’t fully put it into practice yet. Although today most interpretations of Hegel agree that he sees freedom and reason as ultimately prevailing, how that plays out in the actual state of his time or in the future also remains up for debate. For discussions of this see: Ido Geiger, *The Founding Act of Modern Ethical Life: Hegel’s Critique of Kant’s Moral and Political Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Frederick Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2000); Frederick Neuhouser, “Hegel’s Social Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 204–229; Allen W. Wood, *Hegel’s Ethical Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Allen W. Wood, “Hegel’s Ethics” and “Hegel and Marxism,” both in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Frederick Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993), 211–33 and 414–44, respectively.

¹⁵⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, “The German Constitution,” in *Political Writings*, ed. Laurence Dickey and H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 51; cited by Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 19.

difficult.¹⁵¹ Indeed, his claim that we can see reason in history is often criticized, but his view is not that everything that exists or that has happened is *good* or right—Hegel is well aware of and does not condone evil, cruelty, suffering or the like.¹⁵² Nor is it his view that *everything* that happens is an essential part of the progress of freedom and reason.¹⁵³ Rather, logical thought shows how a particular event necessarily followed from another, and thus how some things are retrograde, evil, or irrational, so that we can be disappointed or outraged when freedom and reason do *not* prevail. And when Hegel laments that *Wallenstein* ends not in a theodicy but with the triumph of nothingness and a meaningless death, he has this theory of history in mind.¹⁵⁴ Further, I argue below, his negative reaction is also based on the fact that, art, like philosophy, is supposed to present the higher truth of humanity. This means that it should show us as essentially rational and free, and not that things are at their core irrational or contingent, which also leaves out the mundane aspects of life.

In contrast, Schiller has a less comforting philosophical outlook and a more nihilistic picture of history, and he feels that any attempt to see reason unfolding in it is

¹⁵¹ Hegel, “The German Constitution,” 8; cited by Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 19.

¹⁵² Robert Stern points out some of the most famous of such misguided interpretations: Friedrich Engels misquotes the *Doppelsatz* then calls it “a philosophical benediction bestowed upon despotism, police-government, Star Chamber proceedings, and censorship” (cited in Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*,” n. 4, 236); Karl Popper sees the *Doppelsatz* as entailing that “what is, is good,” in *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume II; The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*, Fifth Edition (London: Routledge, 1966), 41, cited in Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*,” 236–37; Bertrand Russell claims that “the identification of the real and the rational leads unavoidably to some of the complacency inseparable from the belief that ‘whatever is, is right,’” in *History of Western Philosophy*, Second Edition (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 702, cited in Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*,” n. 5, 236.

¹⁵³ Cf. Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*,” 252.

¹⁵⁴ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 21–22.

futile or delusional. Schiller's later historical world-view, his theory of the sublime, and his view of tragedy are all connected, and this connection is most explicit in his essay "Concerning the Sublime," published in 1801. This is the last of a handful of essays on these related topics, written just before *Wallenstein*, his first drama after taking a break to study and write philosophy, followed by *Mary Stuart*, *The Maid of Orleans*, and others.¹⁵⁵ By the late 1790s, Schiller has rejected the idea of progress in history that he had held before the Terror of the French Revolution (1793-94).¹⁵⁶ At this point Schiller says that the "world as a historical object is at bottom nothing but the conflict of natural forces among themselves and with human freedom."¹⁵⁷ As if he were directly criticizing Hegel, Schiller describes those who use the intellect to reduce the chaos of nature to harmony as wanting "to have everything organized in the grand course of the world as it is in a well-run inn"—but that they would be better off if they gave up trying and, by accepting things as they are, finding their own little pocket of freedom within themselves.¹⁵⁸ There

¹⁵⁵ Schiller's essays on the sublime and tragedy can be found in English in Friedrich Schiller, *Essays*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Walter Hinderer (New York: Continuum, 1993), all translated by Dahlstrom: "On the Art of Tragedy" (based on a 1790 lecture, written in '91, and published in '92); "On [Vom] the Sublime" and "On the Pathetic" (originally published as one essay in 1793); "Concerning [Über] the Sublime" (probably written 1794-96, although its exact date of composition is unknown, and published in 1801). On 16, Moland notes that Frederick Beiser dates the last essay as being written much earlier than is generally accepted; Frederick C. Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 238. As Moland points out on 17, Beiser sees Schiller's view of tragedy as changing throughout these essays (Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher*, 240); this is true (although there are also continuities), and I, like Moland, focus on the last essay. Schiller's early plays, from *The Robbers* (1781) to *Don Carlos* (1787), appear before these essays as well as before his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795, revised 1801) and "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry" (1795-96, revised 1800). His later dramas then follow: *Wallenstein* (1800), *Mary Stuart* (1800), *The Maid of Orleans* (1801), *The Bride of Messina* (1803), *William Tell* (1804), and *Demetrius*, left unfinished at his death in 1805.

¹⁵⁶ Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 16; Hinderer, "Introduction," ix-x.

¹⁵⁷ Schiller, "Concerning the Sublime," 81; cf. Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 16.

¹⁵⁸ Schiller, "Concerning the Sublime," 80.

is no reason or harmony to be found in the world, only pointlessness and random conflict. This world-view of Schiller's is seen especially in *Wallenstein's* anti-climactic ending, in which Wallenstein is unceremoniously and un-heroically murdered on his way to bed as an indirect act of revenge, killed not by the man whom he offended but by yet another man's henchmen.

In general, for Schiller the sublime is related to the conflict between the physical or natural and the rational or spiritual aspects of human being. Not only human reason but also freedom plays an important role here. We experience the sublime when asserting our freedom in the face of the irrational forces of history and nature.¹⁵⁹ For example, we will ourselves to overcome physical and emotional despair, and doing so gives us a sense of dignity, even in the most horrific fate.¹⁶⁰ In this way, the "human spirit" can in an intellectual (i.e., not physical) sense "transform actual suffering into a sublime emotion," and, Schiller exclaims, "a human being can soar no higher!"¹⁶¹ The feeling of the sublime "lifts us above the power of nature and extricates us from every corporeal influence."¹⁶² The epitome of this is embracing death, so that we are not overcome by it as an external,

¹⁵⁹ Although Kant's theory of the sublime involves the faculties of reason and imagination, ultimately resulting in a feeling of pleasure, in ways that Schiller's theory of the sublime does not, there are many similarities between the two, most notably in the feeling of superiority of the power of reason over nature. Further, they both divide the sublime into two types: the experience of a magnitude that is hard to imagine (Kant's mathematical and Schiller's theoretical sublime), and the experience of overcoming a physical threat, especially threat of the powerful aspects of nature (Kant's dynamical and Schiller's practical sublime—the latter is the focus of this chapter). Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, eds. and trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), see esp. §§24–28.

¹⁶⁰ Schiller, "Concerning the Sublime," 84.

¹⁶¹ Schiller, "Concerning the Sublime," 83.

¹⁶² Schiller, "Concerning the Sublime," 74.

irrational force but instead make it our own by an act of will. The experience of the sublime reminds us of our dignity, as mentioned (and reminiscent of Kant), and strengthens our moral character.¹⁶³

And for Schiller, we experience the fortifying effects of the sublime in tragedy, here perhaps more productively than anywhere else, partly because tragedy is art and not real life. Like viewing a storm from afar, while watching drama we know that we are in no real danger, so we are clearly aware of our own freedom; when storms and misfortune ascend on us in real life, we feel powerless or are indeed rendered defenseless, but drama opens a space for us to safely exercise our freedom by seeing what it would be like to react to such a situation, without actually experiencing misfortune.¹⁶⁴ The terrible events that do occur to us in life come upon us unsuspectingly, whereas we approach drama “fully equipped” and ready—in fact, willing—to engage with tragedy.¹⁶⁵ For Schiller, tragedy presents evil prevailing or the suffering and unfortunate events befalling human beings, whether due to their own fault or to blind fate, placing before us the imitation of the recurring themes of history.¹⁶⁶ Tragedy presents the imitation of the horrible events of

¹⁶³ Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 82. Related but outside the scope of this chapter, Schiller interestingly says: “The beautiful renders itself deserving on account of the *humanness* in a human being, the sublime on account of the *purely demonic* in him. Because it is our calling to orient ourselves, in the face of all sensuous limitations, according to the lawbook of pure spirits, the sublime must come to the assistance of the beautiful in order to make the *aesthetic education* a complete whole and expand the human heart’s sensitivity to the entire scope of our calling, extending even beyond the world of the senses”; Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 83–84; cf. ff. and 73–74.

¹⁶⁴ Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 82.

¹⁶⁵ Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 82.

¹⁶⁶ This predates Schopenhauer’s strikingly similar view of tragedy presenting the awful truth of the irrational world. For Schopenhauer, tragedy is the “portrayal of the terrible aspect of life,” in which “the unspeakable pain, the misery of humanity, the triumph of wickedness, the scornful domination of chance,

history: “the pathetic picture of humanity *wrestling* with fate, a picture of the incessant flight of fortune, of confidence betrayed, injustice triumphant, and innocence violated.”¹⁶⁷

In contrast to Hegel’s picture of reason in history, Schiller’s view is starker, and rather than Hegel’s reconciliation, Schiller views tragedy as a chance to face the harsh facts of life in a fictional setting in order to build the moral courage to face them in reality.

Repeated exposure to tragic drama builds our moral character so that we may spiritually rise above the chaos and destruction of real life with strength and dignity.¹⁶⁸

In this light, we can see not only that Wallenstein fails to live up to Hegel’s criteria for firm tragic heroes but that he also fails to experience Schiller’s sublime. As Moland points out, he is not given a chance to “face death courageously.”¹⁶⁹ Nor does he show any other signs of greatness during the drama itself, despite the fact that before the action of the play he has earned a reputation among soldiers and his superiors alike as a respected and courageous military leader.¹⁷⁰ Yet, as Moland argues, instead of the dramatic *character* experiencing the sublime, Schiller’s point is to provide the *audience* with such an experience via tragedy. In the theater, we are accosted with the horror and senselessness of the events in the plot, as Wallenstein succumbs to forces beyond his

and the hopeless fall of the righteous and the innocent are brought before us”; Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation, Volume I*, eds. and trans. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 280. Cf. 281–82 for his discussion of the suffering and misfortune brought upon the characters and his praise of Schiller’s *Die Braut von Messina*, along with praise of Sophocles and Shakespeare.

¹⁶⁷ Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 83.

¹⁶⁸ Schiller, “Concerning the Sublime,” 82–83.

¹⁶⁹ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 18.

¹⁷⁰ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 13.

control; we must face the harsh truth and then “carry on nevertheless.”¹⁷¹ Schiller does not explicitly claim in his essay that the hero rises above fate or nature, but instead that the tragedy’s plot presents the audience with a way to experience the sublime via art, safe from the irrational forces of nature and history. Further, Moland’s claim seems reasonable, as one would expect that, as a playwright, Schiller is concerned with the audience’s experience.¹⁷² However, in addition to what Moland has shown, it is important to note that Schiller’s theory of art is mimetic; tragedy presents the spectacle or display of suffering and misfortune before the audience’s eyes via the imitation of such events in history and nature. In the concluding section I argue that *The Maid of Orleans* and *Mary Stuart* clearly *present* the sublime, that not only the audience but these heroines, too, experience Schiller’s sublime, as Johanna goes down fighting and Mary Stuart boldly faces death with dignity.

Hegel’s Harmony in Schiller’s Sublime Heroines

Johanna in *The Maid of Orleans* exemplifies both Schiller’s sublime and Hegel’s deeper spiritual beauty, due to what are in my view important similarities between these respective concepts in Schiller and Hegel. She sustains a “dissonance of the heart” that allows one to see her both as asserting her freedom in the face of irrationality and destruction, and as therefore possessing the deeper spiritual beauty of late modern art that

¹⁷¹ Moland, “An Unrelieved Heart,” 18.

¹⁷² This is attested to by Schiller’s own commentary on *Wallenstein* (as well as various comments throughout his letters to Goethe and Körner); Friedrich Schiller, *Wallenstein: Text und Kommentar* (Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2005).

entails separation and self-transcendence, as described earlier (*LFA* 158). However, one may argue that Johanna looks like an ancient or early modern tragic hero in her one-sidedness. From the very start of the drama, Johanna proves herself a warrior. Her first words are to demand a helmet, which she snatches and then runs off to battle, after giving rousing speeches first to the other characters and then as a monologue in which she describes how her mission has been given to her by holy spirits and, knowing she will die in her quest, bids her beloved home good-bye forever. Throughout the drama and to the very end, she is completely devoted to her cause of fighting for France under the hand of God, vowed to die a virgin to keep her love of heaven and country pure and steadfast. Related, she is also one-sided in her merciless battle ethic, as when she kills Montgomery in Act II. Her one exception is when she uncharacteristically spares the life of an English opponent in battle at the very end of Act III. Dramatically, this moment stands out, in contrast to the fact that she had not spared any opponent's life until his.

This is when, in addition to her heroic one-sidedness, Johanna displays what may seem to be inner weakness unworthy of a solid tragic hero. However, I argue, she is one-sided and also possess a deeper subjectivity that is more complex than simple one-sidedness, which allows for her spiritual beauty (or Schillerean sublimity). Here, she diverges from her path and comes into conflict with her true aim. As mentioned in Section I, when faced with Lionel, the English knight she spares, Johanna is caught between what Hegel describes as an eternal, substantial power—he lists “state, patriotism, family duties” as examples—and her romantic love (*LFA* 566). Although romantic, it is important to note that Hegel also describes this sort of love (as opposed to

maternal love or love of one's country, for example) as linked to physical or sexual attraction. This is in line both with Schiller's philosophical picture of the sublime as nature versus spirit or as freedom overcoming nature, and with Johanna's actions and reactions during and after their brief encounter. She is overcome only when she lifts Lionel's visor to reveal his face, and, immediately after, is again unable to slay him a second time when looking upon him unmasked. Then, the entire following scene consists of her monologue describing her inner turmoil, alternating between regret and guilt on the one hand and feelings of love on the other, as she recounts Lionel's physical attributes—his voice, his eyes, his noble brow—the stage directions even calling for soft music and flutes (IV.i).

Despite that her only physical contact with Lionel is in combat, Johanna feels that by letting herself fall in love with a human and an enemy she has *spiritually* and thus truly broken her vow to be loyal to only god and country, and has strayed from her rightful path. Hegel describes this conflict as being between love “as a vital right of subjective emotion” and her objectively valid duties; because Johanna *recognizes* the validity of both sides, her heart “engages in a fight with itself” (*LFA* 566). I posit that it takes a great depth of spirit to know and a great inner strength to maintain this discord, and that this is key to her greatness as a tragic heroine; this fight with her self is what opens the space for her sublimity and her spiritual beauty. What then confirms and at the same time connects these two aesthetic qualities is that she wins this fight with her self and follows her higher calling. Johanna dramatically presents what it looks like to overcome an inner struggle, to return to the path (or pathos) from which she strayed.

Johanna the virgin and warrior of god must atone for letting herself fall in love with a human—no less than an enemy soldier. She redeems herself in death, and, in Schiller’s version, is not burned at the stake, but miraculously breaks her chains to die gloriously on the battleground aiding the victory of France. She started out demanding the helmet, and she meets her end head on, wearing it; she fights her own way back to the path from which she strayed.

In this light we can see further why Wallenstein fails to be a great hero for Hegel, in addition to the reasons outlined in the previous section. If we take Hegel at his word that he sees Wallenstein as the same character-type as Johanna, then we also see that he never returns to his original path. Throughout the entire play we wait for him to return to his original glory—which we never actually see, but know—but he disappoints. Hegel’s reading is also that he is led from his duty by his personal desire and ultimately perishes as a result (*LFA* 195-96). Unlike Johanna, however, his demise is brought about externally and not as a result of following his duty or of acknowledging his failure to do so. Thus a reading of Wallenstein as a power-driven figure much like Shakespeare’s Macbeth would be misguided; for Hegel, Macbeth perishes as a result of *not* straying from his lust for power, and he accomplishes his aims (albeit ever so briefly). In this light, Moland points out that Wallenstein seems to embody the defective character type that never commits to anything. Throughout the play, he repeatedly flip-flops, and so she

aligns Wallenstein and Hamlet in their indecision.¹⁷³ However, while Wallenstein and Hamlet both do seem to be indecisive (to a deadly fault) Hegel's unusual reading is that Hamlet is *not* wavering but actually as fixed to his aim as Macbeth is.¹⁷⁴ Due to the progress of subjective freedom from early to late modernity, Shakespeare's heroes are firm, and Schiller's are not.

Further, when understood through the lens of Hegel's theory of late modern tragedy as an *objective* presentation of spiritual beauty and subjective freedom, *Wallenstein* fails if key aesthetic qualities are completely left up to the *audience* after they leave the playhouse, rather than being presented in the work itself. Schiller is indeed asking a lot of his audience both during this drama and after: After watching a ten-hour play in which "very little happens" (as Moland puts it) and the hero is very un-heroic, only to find out that is exactly the punch line, we certainly do not feel any sort of uplift or sense of moral fortitude during or even immediately after.¹⁷⁵ Instead, as Moland aptly describes, we take that sense of irrationality and futility home with us. Thus, if we find any sort of moral strength or reconciliation within us, that is work left for us to do on our

¹⁷³ Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 9. For a review of Peter Stein's 2007 production that also likens Wallenstein to Hamlet, see Jonathan Kalb, "The Thirty Years' War, All 10 Hours of It," *The New York Times*, 1 July 2007.

¹⁷⁴ According to Hegel, Hamlet "was not doubtful about *what* he was to do, but only *how*" (*LFA* 244). Hamlet is one-sidedly fixed on his aim of revenge, not split or wavering. Instead, he lacks the resources to go about fulfilling his goal, as he never finds either definitive proof or the perfect opportunity to exact his revenge. Hegel then goes on to say, "the Ideal consists in this, that the Idea is *actual*, and to this actuality man belongs as subject and therefore as a firm unity in himself"—suggesting, in my view, Hamlet is an ideally unified character (*LFA* 244). This is one way Hegel explains Hamlet's aesthetic greatness. Macbeth is a different character type, just as fixed on his aims but able to fulfill them. Hegel describes this trademark quality as the "self-sustaining firmness of character which limits itself to specific ends and puts the whole power of its one-sided individuality into the *realization* of these ends" (*LFA* 577).

¹⁷⁵ Moland, "An Unrelieved Heart," 8.

own. However, Johanna not only affords the audience an opportunity to experience the sublime, but this is so because she presents it to the audience through her own experience of this feeling. That is, the same qualities that lend her the deeper spiritual beauty just described are akin to Schiller's sublime, but in contrast to *Wallenstein*, this is presented directly to us by *The Maid of Orleans* itself.

I have yet to find any mention by Hegel of Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, but I posit that she fits the bill here at least as well as Johanna does. These descriptions of sublimity and spiritual beauty would fit both heroines equally well. Always true to her country—this time Scotland instead of France—Mary for a moment believes that she has a chance to make peace with her cousin, Elizabeth, Queen of England. Certainly this is motivated by Mary's desire to be freed from prolonged house arrest under Elizabeth's orders, but under Schiller's description it seems, at least for a moment, to become a true desire for gaining acceptance and familial love from her cousin. However, reconciliation is complicated by the fact that Mary also feels that Elizabeth's crown is rightly her own, as Elizabeth has been legally de-legitimized. Whether her ultimate motivation is for familial love or simply to be free, however, we see Mary depart from her fixed allegiance to her beliefs when she considers acquiescing to Elizabeth. She has always been fiercely true to Scotland and believed the English crown was hers; even when she hears a meeting has been set up for her to have the chance to talk with Elizabeth face-to-face, she vows she will not kneel before her, even for the possibility of freedom and being returned to Scotland (III.iii). But when they meet, despite her inner conflict, she momentarily bows down to Elizabeth and falls at her feet (III.iv).

However, like Johanna, Mary immediately regains her composure, and she becomes even greater than before. She passionately tells Elizabeth how she truly feels, and then proceeds to face her own resulting death sentence not only with dignity, but also fully embracing it. Both heroines win their inner struggles to overcome self-caused grief and suffering, creating a re-unification with what she has separated her self from.

Hegel sees struggle and conflict as an inherent part of our lives, and the search to overcome alienation as a fundamental drive of all humans; this is manifested in art, as in all activities of absolute spirit (*LFA* 55-64). This is what is presented by tragedy, what makes these heroines great for Hegel, and, in my view, where he agrees with Schiller. As Hegel puts it:

Human life as such is a life of strife, struggles, and sorrows. For greatness and force are truly measured only by the greatness and force of the opposition out of which the spirit brings itself back into unity with itself again. The intensity and depth of subjectivity come all the more to light, the more endlessly and tremendously is it divided against itself, and the more lacerating are the contradictions in which it still has to remain firm in itself. In this development alone is preserved the might of the Idea and the Ideal, for might consists only in maintaining oneself within the negative of oneself. (*LFA* 178)

In this we can see that greatness is fully revealed through maintaining oneself under great opposition. Such a unity entails the strength to maintain a spiritual discord as well as a richness of character, and I see this description of greatness as falling fully in line not only with Hegel's ideal characterization but also Schiller's sublime. This greatness is solidified in the reconciliation of the conflict: "a recognition that its fate, however bitter, is merely the one appropriate to its action, ... when the strength and equanimity of the

character persists, even to destruction, without breaking, and so preserves its subjective freedom” (*LFA* 1231).

Hegel also describes the overcoming of such dissonance as a “transfiguration of grief. ... This expression in romantic art generally is ‘smiling through tears’” (*LFA* 158). One can see this in both Johanna’s and Mary’s demise, as they gladly go down fighting, knowing that their destruction is worth what they are fighting for. Further, their inner reconciliation also fits Hegel’s description of a “satisfaction” that is “religious when the heart knows that it is assured of a higher and indestructible bliss in exchange for the destruction of its mundane individuality” (*LFA* 1231). In addition to reconciliation in the final battle, earlier in the drama Johanna shows reconciliation with herself and her fate when she does not defend herself from her father’s accusations of witchery. Likewise but more intensely, Mary celebrates her execution as a way to freedom and as an honor befitting a true queen, and looks forward to meeting God in heaven (V.vi). Hegel describes the heroism of romantic drama as one of submission, and Johanna and Mary are perfect examples of those who submit to fate and to “reconciliation with God” (*LFA* 525). In romantic art, reminiscent of Christ’s crucifixion and rebirth, there is “a spiritual inwardness, a joy in *submission*, a *bliss* in grief and *rapture* in suffering, even a delight in agony” (*LFA* 158). There is reconciliation between an individual and god—in the sacraments, confession, absolution—and there is the resulting spiritual harmony. In this light, referring to *Wallenstein*’s prologue, Hegel’s perhaps strange sounding point that “Schiller’s phrase holds good: ‘Life is serious, art *cheerful*’” becomes clear (*LFA* 157). In life, such a submission, especially one that results in death, is certainly not one that could

be called cheerful (or, perhaps better translated, ‘serene’); but in art it is not a real, existing life, and the audience can thus see it from a larger perspective, one in which we can see this truth but without the pain of losing a real life. And this is exactly like Schiller’s sublime.

Finally, we can also see what Hegel’s view adds to Schiller’s theory of tragedy on this point. Hegel describes how one could “sum up in *one* word this relation of content and form in romantic art.... The keynote of romantic art is *musical* and, if we make the content of this idea determinate, *lyrical*” (*LFA* 528). This is a harmony that is a result of the hero bringing herself back home. As Hegel also says, this harmony must be found even in strife: “Even in suffering, the sweet tone of lament must sound through the griefs and alleviate them, so that it seems to us worth while [*sic*] so to suffer as to understand this lament. This is the sweet melody, the song in all art” (*LFA* 159). As we saw, the ideal in art is not a simplistic one-sidedness but a unification of diversity (*LFA* 236-38). Even though in their lapse these heroes lose a certain aspect that Hegel finds important for ideal tragic heroes—that is, they are not beautiful in the traditional sense of the word that applies to classical art, nor are they perfectly one-sided as heroes should be—they also maintain a many-sidedness and are able to more explicitly display this due to their breach and return. One needs diversity, not one note, in order to have discord *or* harmony, and one needs movement to have melody. This beauty is not purely one-sided, but infinite and free (*LFA* 112-14).

Hegel’s picture of spiritual beauty and inner reconciliation helps us better understand how Schiller’s sublime is not only experienced but also presented on stage by

some of his greatest tragic heroes. His Johanna d'Arc and Mary Stuart are what it looks like to allow oneself to submit to the very live possibility of leading oneself down the wrong path, but then of finding one's own way home again. In Schiller's great heroines, we see spirit pulling itself apart then back home into itself, a painful process that ends with harmony restored, yet at a cost that keeps the reconciliation from being flatly affirmative and keeps the drama within the realm of tragedy. These heroes know the satisfaction that comes from bringing themselves back into the unity from which they strayed. Through the reconciliation of their inner discord, Johanna and Mary present Hegel's beautiful, or sublime, melody of lament.

CHAPTER 5

THE NEED FOR HEGEL'S TRAGIC HEROES IN MODERNITY

In this dissertation I have argued that there are three types of tragic hero in Hegel's aesthetics. Chapter One showed how tragic heroes are one-sidedly fixated on their aims, but they differ as each manifests a different stage of humanity's subjective freedom, corresponding to their respective historical standpoints in antiquity and early or late modernity. Ancient heroes are free individuals whose complete and inherent alignment with an ethical sphere or right at the same time results in their ethical transgressions; they are paradigmatically heroic by being on the side of a right and by taking full responsibility for their deeds, even when they could not have done otherwise, shown in Chapter Two via Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. Early modern tragic heroes are completely fixated on aims that, in contrast to ancient heroes, are personal rather than objective, due to the subjective freedom won in modernity; early modern freedom, which at this point is not full-fledged post-Enlightenment subjectivity, allows heroes such as Shakespeare's Macbeth to slip into evil and yet to be aesthetically great, as we saw in Chapter Three. Finally, in Chapter Four, I argued that Schiller's dramatizations of Joan of Arc and Mary Stuart epitomize Hegel's late modern tragic heroes: possessing a deeper subjective freedom that gives them the power to return to the original aim from which they momentarily strayed, they display the sublime strength and spiritual beauty unique to the self-understanding and subjective freedom of late modernity.

But are tragic heroes relevant for our contemporary self-understanding? This chapter explains, first, why in Hegel's contemporary society and his theory of the ideal

state there is no room for tragic heroes. Second, it tackles the seeming contradiction that follows when Hegel then declares that we nonetheless do and should maintain both an interest in and a need for heroes in drama. I argue that it is the sense of alienation as described in Hegel's theory of modernity that engenders and maintains the need for tragic heroes of all eras, from ancient Greece through late modernity, to our present day. Third, I suggest that Hegel's theory of late modern tragic heroes helps show how certain types of contemporary dramas can be better understood as centered around a tragic hero. Thus, the answer this chapter gives is less to the question of what a tragic hero is for Hegel—the other chapters have shown what that is—but more so to what the tragic hero in late modernity does, and why tragic heroes are valuable to us now. Finally, in this chapter I use Hegel's theory of tragic heroes to show that we do meaningfully engage with tragedy, by illustrating how the different types of tragic heroes—ancient, early modern, and late modern—appear in some well-known films. This shows what Hegel's theory of tragedy has to offer our engagement with tragedy today and that tragedy remains an important form of cultural self-understanding in modernity.

No Room for Heroes

This dissertation has shown the importance of modern tragedy within both Hegel's philosophy of art and his theory of subjectivity, and it has gone some way toward showing the importance of Hegel's theory of tragedy for our own understanding today of tragedy. Yet much of what Hegel says about late modernity in general leaves one to doubt whether he sees tragic heroes as important or even relevant to the self-

understanding of late modern or contemporary culture. While works by Schiller, Shakespeare, and many others indeed continue to be produced during Hegel's lifetime and after, the question remains whether Hegel's philosophical picture of modernity leaves room for recent or new tragic drama to be important in his own day or beyond. Specifically, when keeping in mind that art is a presentation of a culture's self-understanding of its highest truths at a particular historical moment, the diminished and ineffectual role of the individual in Hegel's descriptions of his contemporary society and in his theory of the ideal state seem to make the tragic hero irrelevant, meaningless, or simply impossible. As he puts it simply: "Once the state has been founded, there can no longer be any heroes" (*PR* §93A). What, then, can we make of his declaration that we will not and cannot let go of our interest in dramatic heroes (*LFA* 195)?

Hegel's explanation of why—both descriptively and normatively—tragedians set their dramas in certain past historical eras, which he calls collectively "the heroic age," brings the problem of tragedy in modernity, and the contrasts between the heroic age and his own day, into sharp relief. Hegel's heroic age is not a specific historical epoch, but a catchphrase for what he calls a "stateless condition" in which individuals are solely responsible for ascertaining and actualizing what is right. In Hegel's theory of tragedy, to be a tragic hero one must be *fully* responsible for her actions. Even if one could not have done otherwise—as in Oedipus' fate, or Ajax being tricked by the gods—Hegel's view is that "*tragic* action necessarily presupposes either a live conception of *individual* freedom and independence or at least an individual's determination and willingness to accept freely and on his own account the responsibility for his own act and its consequences"

(LFA 1205). In the heroic ages, “the security of life and property depends entirely on the personal strength and valour of each individual who has to provide for his own existence and the preservation of what belongs and is due to him” (LFA 185). Hegel’s criterion for tragic heroes to take responsibility is made possible in part by the dramas’ setting in this type of situation, giving them the space to freely act without the rule of universal law or a completely organized state (LFA 184).

For example in “the Christian west,” tragedies are set in societies based on systems of feudalism and chivalry, where individuals are self-reliant and considered heroes when they act independently in order to achieve their own interests, or to secure their own safety or that of others, because there is no rule of state to secure these interests for them (LFA 186). In the days of knights and warrior kings, such free individuals are not held under an abstract law but instead create the law of the land themselves, as it were (LFA 196). Thus,

Shakespeare, for example, has drawn much material for his tragedies out of chronicles or old romances which tell of a state of affairs not yet unfolded into a completely established organization, but where the life of the individual in his decision and achievement is still predominant and remains the determining factor. (LFA 190)

Hegel’s contemporaries Schiller and Goethe follow suit—if not setting their dramas directly in the distant days of medieval times, then during civil war or other times of unrest when law and order are relaxed or under upheaval, as in Schiller’s *Wallenstein*, for example. Likewise, Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen* takes place when “chivalry with the independence of noble individuals was passing away before a newly arising objective order and legal system. Goethe’s great insight is revealed by ... this contact and collision

between the medieval heroic age and the legality of modern life” (*LFA* 196). The setting allows Götz to act freely and heroically—until he succumbs to the state at the end.

In Hegel’s picture of modernity, in contrast, individuals and the state are interdependent. Indeed, individuals must subordinate themselves to the state, “since no longer are they with their character and heart the sole mode of existence of the ethical powers” (*LFA* 182).¹⁷⁶ Neither the general welfare nor the individual’s own well-being any longer depend solely on the “concrete action of one individual, nor can it be entrusted to one individual’s caprice, force, spirit, courage, power, and insight”; instead there is an “innumerable mass of agents” working together simultaneously for their own ends and for the greater good (*LFA* 183). Further, individuals in modernity are aware that their freedom and identity are truly created within their various roles in society *qua* members of their society, so that their mutual dependence precludes meaningful action outside of this relationship. Or, put the other way, every sphere of society is now so completely organized that individuals have no room to act other than within their roles, and thus are not fully self-reliant (*LFA* 193).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ This idea of the individual being subordinate to the state is also where Hegel is criticized from all sides of the spectrum in political philosophy for such various charges as positivism, quietism, communism, and fascism—as well as *by* those who fall into these very camps. For discussions of these various charges—although the literature on this topic is vast—see: Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory* and “Hegel’s Social Philosophy”; Wood, *Hegel’s Ethical Thought*, “Hegel’s Ethics,” and “Hegel and Marxism.” It must be noted that my aim at this point is only to explain the basic ideas of this area of Hegel’s thought as related to the discussion of tragic heroes, and not to cover any of the many available criticisms of Hegel’s theory of the state beyond that; I will be addressing some questions about relationships between the individual and the state in the following sections.

¹⁷⁷ Houlgate also notes but doesn’t explore the difficulty of heroes in Hegel’s modernity in “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy,” note 115 on page 283; cf. 212.

In these discussions, it sometimes seems as if Hegel conflates or elides the concepts of state and modernity; that is, he often very similarly or simultaneously treats two seemingly different notions, one of a political entity or organization and the other of a general historical designation and its various characteristics. This can lead to some confusion, and the reasoning for his doing so is complex, but a few points important for this chapter can be explained in the following way. First, when he refers to modernity in these contexts, it is specifically *late* modernity. In other discussions or texts, when not in conjunction with ideas of the state, “modernity” for Hegel can refer to the wider epoch typically characterized by the primacy of subjectivity and the establishment of thought as self-grounding (and all that this entails) as famously inaugurated by Descartes, and also for Hegel by Protestantism (*LPH* 438). Second, the state is, in part, built on and endeavoring to manifest Enlightenment principles of human individual autonomy grounded in rational and critical thought and thus includes but goes beyond Cartesian subjectivity. That is, Descartes and Luther (and, as I argued in Chapter Three, Shakespeare) opened the way for subjective freedom, which then progressed through the Enlightenment, and reached maturity in Hegel’s time. Third, then, another way of clarifying the overlap between Hegel’s ideas of state and modernity is that both culminate in—or are the culmination of—his particular brand of intersubjective freedom that goes beyond simple self-determination. One way that Hegel describes freedom is “being at home with oneself in one’s other, depending upon oneself, and being one’s own determinant” (*EL* §24A2). This means that true freedom includes but is also *more than* purely solitary autonomy, self-determination, or negative freedom (as he sees Kantian

and Rousseauian freedoms, for example) (*PR* §258). True freedom is seeing one's self-determined activities as being in harmony with one's world and with other individuals, and this can be most fully realized in the late modern state. And, while Hegel's notion of freedom is endlessly debated, what can be gleaned from these basic points is that this brand of freedom is not that of self-reliant heroes.

Thus, it is crucial to see that in his theory, late modern individuals are free *within* the state. The state is a political system, essentially a constitutional monarchy, which also encompasses—or should operate in conjunction with—civil society (which includes economic institutions) and family life, the other two necessary social spheres that make up his picture of what Hegel calls ethical life (all of this is detailed in and is the content of his *PR*).¹⁷⁸ The ideal of freedom is actualized in modern ethical life (*PR* §142). Hegel's modern ethical life is somewhat modeled after the beauty and harmony of the relationship between individual and *polis* in his idealized depiction of ancient Greek ethical life. The key difference, however, is that ancient Greek individuals are not yet fully reflective subjects; they are naturally and *immediately* in harmony with their environment and community (*LPH* 238). Late modern subjects give themselves freely to the state, and they are *aware* that this willing submission allows them true freedom in all three spheres of ethical life. They too are at home in their community, but rather than seeing their laws as given and immutable as the ancients did, modern subjects are at home because they see their will actualized as the laws of the state, which enables them to pursue their interests within these spheres along with other subjects in their community (*PR* §153).

¹⁷⁸ For a helpful reading of this, see Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*.

Hegel describes the modern subject's sense of feeling at home in the state thus:

In a state which is really articulated rationally all the laws and organizations are nothing but a realization of freedom in its essential characteristics. When this is the case, the individual's reason finds in these institutions only the actuality of his own essence, and if he obeys these laws, he coincides, not with something alien to himself, but simply with what is his own. (*LFA* 98)

This is the reconciliation modern subjects experience within the socio-political sphere; they achieve reconciliation with the state, civil society, and family by expressing their freedom through action in these spheres.¹⁷⁹ In this way, reconciliation is made both necessary and possible by the awakening of subjective freedom in early modernity. With the emergence of Cartesian subjectivity and resulting autonomy, the way is also opened for the separation of the subject from the objective world, a divide between self and other, between oneself and the natural and social worlds, which instills within us a feeling of estrangement that has characterized modernity for many philosophers since. An overarching goal of Hegel's philosophy in general can be seen as an effort to comprehend and rationally explain the emergence of the subject and the subsequent attempt at self-reconciliation.¹⁸⁰ This philosophical endeavor is itself an attempt at reconciliation, to philosophically demonstrate that individuals can be at home in their world.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ I rely here on Michael Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 90–121.

¹⁸⁰ Along these lines, Michael Forster argues that a goal of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is overcoming alienation; Michael Forster, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. 61–83.

¹⁸¹ Hegel is often criticized for overemphasizing reconciliation in modernity, epitomized in his famous saying in the Preface to *PR*, called the *Doppelsatz* (or “double dictum”): “What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational [Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig].” Some critics see Hegel as a conservative or an apologist, as saying that things as they stand are rational and

This is not to say that the state ever fully existed as Hegel visualizes it, or that he thinks it did—the principles it is founded on and that he outlines in his philosophy are, after all, ideals—though he thinks it *partially* exists in his own day in Western Europe (and probably the United States of America). It is a difficult balance to strike, for an individual to be independent and fulfilled while at the same time acknowledging that this freedom and satisfaction are made possible only in and through her community, by her participation in ethical life.¹⁸² However, at least this much of his view can be defended: that the modern Western world is for the most part *founded* on post-Enlightenment ideals, which in theory at least are supposed to allow individuals to pursue their own interests and to work toward what they see as a good life. Hegel’s unique and contentious view is that the individual can only do this by recognizing that it is rational to do so within late modern ethical life. Thus, Hegel equates key aspects of modernity with ethical life, which culminates in the actualization of individuals’ freedom within the state. For Hegel, then, within his own system, the highest and best ideals of the state and of late modernity coincide.

thus good, or as saying that everything that is rational already exists. For example, Friedrich Engels calls (his understanding of) it “a philosophical benediction bestowed upon despotism, police-government, Star Chamber proceedings, and censorship” (cited in Stern, “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*,” 236). The currently more accepted view sees Hegel as finding room for criticism or even improvement, often based on the fact that Hegel’s use of ‘actual’ here leaves room for things that merely *exist* but have not fully *actualized* or realized their essences (e.g., an existing state that is not actual could allow practices such as slavery, but people could criticize it and work toward the actualization of a truer state by abolishing it). For discussions of these criticisms see: Jackson, “Hegel: The Real and the Rational,” 19–21. Robert Stern in his “Hegel’s *Doppelsatz*” argues that the *Doppelsatz* is not a normative but a descriptive statement about the rational methods of Hegel’s philosophy; that is, Hegel is not saying people ought to be reconciled with what is ultimately, simply put, wrong with society, or that everything that exists or that has happened is *good* or *right*—Hegel is well aware of and does not condone evil, cruelty, suffering or the like—but that philosophy helps us to be reconciled with the world (though this is itself a contentious idea).

¹⁸² For an account of subjectivity seeking satisfaction in another self-consciousness in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, see Pinkard, *Hegel’s Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*.

This picture of modernity clearly contrasts with the heroic ages, when “the security of life and property depends entirely on the personal strength and valor of each individual who has to provide for his own existence and the preservation of what belongs and is due to him” (*LFA* 185). Even the ancient Greeks set their tragedy in mythic times, a pre-legal era, so that heroes are not bound to any settled order but instead own the entirety of their actions (*LFA* 185-86). Hegel is well aware of the historical facts of the ties between myth, religion, and tragedy in ancient Greece, but this is his philosophical explanation for why this move is aesthetically necessary, and it highlights the idea that tragedy becomes possible during or because of socio-historical paradigm shifts. Thus, it seems possible that if the state de-stabilizes, then there would be room for heroes. If there were a need to *completely* re-formulate society’s practical principles (or found a new state), it would not be a rational state and there *would* be room for heroes. But, as long as it is stable, that is, at least as long as its working relatively well towards its goal in light of the ideal of rationality, then the heroic ages are equated with past ages.

On the flipside but related to the question of the state, one may question the existence of an actual heroic age: did such a time ever *really* exist as he describes it, when individuals were *completely* responsible for themselves or for their society’s ethical order? It is not clear whether Hegel thinks so. But two things are clear: First, he does consider certain existing individuals, such as Napoleon, to be real heroes. These are the founders of the state. Such people are unconscious “living instruments” of history (*PR* §348, cf. §71). These “world-historical individuals,” as they are referred to, act in pursuit of their personal aims—even if politically motivated or grounded—and do not see (and

cannot foresee) the full meaning of their actions on the world-historical level, but nonetheless end up being, in retrospect, real heroic figures.¹⁸³ Second, as described above, he makes it clear that he does understand specific eras as heroic, and the fact is that we indeed *do* view certain eras this way; in Hegel's day and in our own, the times of Greek mythology and the early medieval period, for example, are commonly referred to as heroic ages. I posit that today we can also re-imagine more recent eras, mythologizing the individuals living then into heroes of contemporary drama. For example, the real-life counterparts of heroes in westerns, the genre of American film, in fact were living in stateless conditions so that their security, life, and property *did* depend entirely on themselves; the heroes in westerns embody this ideal.¹⁸⁴

Now, in contrast, individuals in an organized state who take the law into their own hands are generally deemed criminals, and political leaders who single-handedly rule are dictators, not the sort of elected state rulers in existence in the West (during Hegel's life, anyway). Even public authorities such as heads of state do not make good heroes. Monarchs decree not their personal will that is then actualized in the state, but instead decree what has already been settled largely independently of them; their ends are given, and they do not create the means (*LFA* 194; *PR* §280A). The objective content of their

¹⁸³ This is a key part of Hegel's famous view that the "cunning of reason" is enacted in history by somewhat unwitting individuals (*LPH* 33). In tragedy, for example, Schiller's *The Robbers* and *Wallenstein* can be seen as artistically presenting instances of the cunning of reason in history (see *LFA* 1173).

¹⁸⁴ Robert Pippin has recently given an account through the lens of political philosophy of westerns as mythic, epic stories of the founding of America. Hegel is only mentioned four times in the book, but interesting connections could be drawn between Pippin's readings of westerns and his work on Hegel, or between his account of heroes in westerns and Hegel's account of tragic heroes. Robert B. Pippin, *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth: The Importance of Howard Hawks and John Ford for Political Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

actions as rulers is already given, so their actions are only formal. In Hegel's view, the monarchs of today, "unlike the heroes of the mythical ages, are no longer the concrete heads of the whole, but a more or less abstract centre of institutions already independently developed and established by law and the constitution" (*LFA* 193).

Therefore, Hegel's concept of modernity includes the social and political systems of late modern Western life and thought described above, in which no single individual is the sole vehicle for actualizing right, law, or morality.

As Hegel describes it, the heroic ages are for us a thing of the past:

And even if now too the modern person is in his own eyes, as subject, infinite in his heart and character, and if right, law, moral principles, etc., do appear in his acting and suffering, still the existence of the right in this individual is just as restricted as the individual himself; ... he is now ... no longer the vehicle and sole actualization of these powers as was the case in the Heroic Age. (*LFA* 194)

A person indeed may have the greater good as her aim, have right on her side, or act on the intention of securing the law or a just cause, but now, sounding quite the opposite of the heroic ages, "the essence of ethical life, i.e., justice and rational freedom, has already been worked out and preserved in the form of a *legal* regime, ... an inflexible necessity, independent of particular individuals and their personal mentality and character" (*LFA* 182). Thus, real individuals in modernity are not good material for tragic heroes, so dramatists turn to the heroic ages, while the "established social order" of modernity, in

which individuals are restricted members, leaves no need and no room for heroes (*LFA* 194).¹⁸⁵

Ancient and Early Modern Heroes in Late Modernity

But why, then, do we turn to the heroic ages—*now*? If there is no room in modern life for tragic heroes, why turn to tragic drama? Why not have art present the truth that today, the individual is reconciled with society, rather than presenting heroic individuals who are now irrelevant to or no longer fit our world? What do we see when we are confronted with the heroes of Shakespeare, Sophocles, or Schiller in late modernity? These questions are pressing for Hegel because, according to his aesthetic theory, art is our historically contextualized cultural self-understanding. In this light, it would seem that we no longer see ourselves in heroes of mythic and past eras—we can be entertained or captivated by these figures, but regard them only as fantasy, history, or romantic nostalgia, not as true representatives of the human individual today. Or, on the flip side, if a drama does place such heroic figures in modern times, it runs the danger of being a quixotic spectacle, as Hegel notes, and we seem to be left with the possibility of comedy, or at least drama without the greater weight of tragedy (*LFA* 196).

¹⁸⁵ Robert Pippin has also made connections between Hegel's theory of art and the un-heroic nature of modernity in relation to—perhaps surprisingly—abstraction in painting; Pippin, "What Was Abstract Art? For Pippin's suggestions on links between Hegel and contemporary and modernist literature (but not tragedy) see his "The Lack of Aesthetics in Hegel's Aesthetics." For his more general discussion of modern literature (but without Hegel) see Pippin, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life*.

Despite the fact that there is no room for heroes in modern ethical life, in these very discussions of the differences between the heroic ages and modernity, referring to dramatic heroes Hegel declares:

But the interest in and need for such an actual individual totality and living independence we will not and cannot sacrifice, however much we may recognize as salutary and rational the essential character and development of the institutions in civilized civil and political life. (*LFA* 195)

However, although he immediately goes on to admire Schiller and Goethe for “their attempt to win back again within the circumstances existing in modern times the lost independence of the [heroic] figures,” Hegel doesn’t explain *why* we need them or should be interested in them (*LFA* 195).¹⁸⁶ Indeed, he then gives Schiller’s *The Robbers* (1781) and *Intrigue and Love* (1784) as *failed* attempts at creating heroes. Because the protagonists’ “revolt against the whole of civil society itself” happen during a time of civil order, not in stateless conditions or heroic ages, they are self-proclaimed “heroes” who are more like lone vigilantes pursuing “private revenge” than heroes who actualize right (*ibid.*). Here he also mentions Wallenstein’s failure of power (who, as we saw in Chapter Four, is not a great hero for Hegel) and Goethe’s *Götz* being overcome by the state, but only credits the playwrights for ingenuity of setting and not the characters for greatness. He does credit the main characters of Schiller’s *Fiesco* (1783) and *Don Carlos* (1787) as being proper heroes due to their noble aims, but doesn’t give us more detail (*ibid.*). So, the questions remain: If there is no room for real heroes in modernity, why is there a need for dramatic heroes, and why must we remain interested in them?

¹⁸⁶ Knox’s insertion.

In attempting to reconcile this seeming contradiction, a tension in Hegel's picture of modernity comes to the fore: While there is an increase of subjective freedom, in both its dimensions as reflective thought and as self-determining action, the full picture of modernity involves an individual subordinating herself to the state, as we saw in the previous section. What this entails, in addition to the reconciliation already described, is that the individual is *not* fully responsible for the group but only for *herself*. In contrast to the individuals in the heroic age, modern persons are subjects largely independent from and distinct from other agents and from their spheres of society:

We ... separate ourselves, as persons with our personal aims and relationships, from the aims of such a community; the individual does what he does as a person, actuated explicitly by his personality, and thus is answerable only for his own action, but not for the doings of the substantial whole to which he belongs. (LFA 188)

At first, this might seem counter-intuitive—reconciliation and submission involve connection, not separation. However, in order to actively reconcile ourselves to all three spheres of ethical life, which Hegel refers to here as the substantial whole, we must see and know ourselves as particular individuals contrasted with it, with its universal laws, in order to *be* reconciled with this difference—the difference between self and world that was made explicit in early modernity. The idea of willingly submitting or connecting to something must first be preceded by the knowledge of the other as separate from oneself.

This, combined with the picture of modernity just given in Section I, is an indication of Hegel's mixed views of modernity. While his theory of the ideal state does overlap with the real conditions of modernity as he experienced it, Hegel never paints a utopian picture of either the ideal or the real in any of his works. The complexities of

modern life and the control of the state do not produce the happy harmony between it and individuals that Hegel (and, I submit, many of us) would prefer. The heroic ages and ancient Greece are contrasted to modernity because modern individuals are private and secularized, rather than being immediately linked with ethical life or the substantive whole, as the ancients were (as we saw in Chapter One). Modern subjects see themselves as individuals contrasted to the universal ideas of the ethical order and the laws of state. And the resulting picture of modern responsibility that Hegel paints is less than flattering: “nowadays, owing to the complexity and ramification of action, everyone has recourse to everyone else and shuffles guilt off himself so far as possible” (*LFA* 188). I posit that this, in Hegel’s view, is a form of bad faith.

For Hegel, as we have seen, the tragic hero is a free individual who is self-reliant and fully responsible for her actions despite, but in relation to, her fate or her finitude, which include her inherent or chosen but strong connections to institutions and other individuals close to her. Even though modern subjects find true freedom in the state, within Hegel’s own framework the state diminishes our responsibility for the ethical whole. And this, I posit, is exactly why according to Hegel heroes of *ancient* tragedy still resonate with us: In truth, we *are* responsible for more than our merely private lives—maybe not for the entire ethical sphere, but many of us certainly do hold responsibilities related to our roles in family, civil life, and state.

My suggestion could seem paradoxical or retrograde: how could Hegel, the philosopher of historical progress, argue that an outdated presentation of subjectivity be adequate for us? Because, Spirit’s progress does not completely leave the past behind; as

we mature, we retain essential aspects of what we were before, so that modern subjectivity has gone beyond but does not obliterate ancient individuality. Further, simply put, as we have seen, tragedy presents a universal truth, and we need heroes because they are an ideal presentation of human beings taking responsibility for their actions. Despite all the progress and benefits of modernity, I posit that Hegel sees the clouding of the higher truth of the subject's responsibility for and connections to her society as one of its less than desirable results. As Hegel puts it, "for *art* the cleavage between universal and individual must not yet come on the scene... no matter how necessary this difference is for other ways in which spiritual existence is actualized" (*LFA* 185). In fact, the heroic age could just as easily be called "the ideal Age" (*LFA* 260). This is because the

Heroic Age retains the advantage over a later and more civilized state of affairs, in that the separate character and the individual as such does not yet in those days find the substantial, the moral, the right, contrasted with himself as necessitated by law, and thus far the poet is immediately confronted with what the Ideal demands. (*LFA* 190)

The ideal of the hero is not simply an unattainable goal, but, as an artistic ideal according to Hegel's definition, a deep truth of human being. It is true that individuals in drama are ideal, not necessarily in the sense of closer to perfection, but more *true*, the way that according to Hegel a portrait is more like the individual than the real person herself.¹⁸⁷ Heroes are ideal presentations of responsible individuals. They embody the higher, eternal truth of our connection to the universal that remains, even while we are also separate, free individuals.

¹⁸⁷ Houlgate, "Presidential Address," 68, citing *LFA* 866-67.

Thus, I argue, some of the ideal characteristics of ancient tragic heroes remain valid for us today, and, further, they can appear in contemporary drama. One fact that remains is that we can act without full knowledge of circumstances, which can go horribly wrong, as in the case of Sophocles' Oedipus. Tragedy highlights this unavoidable, universal truth: that so much surrounding our actions is out of our hands. We often find ourselves in situations we did not choose or foresee, and even who we are or how our lives go is largely not up to us—and this can be due not just to the gods or to fate, but to other great forces outside of our control.¹⁸⁸ Hegel's own description of the state could be included here.

Somewhat along these lines, Susan Feagin has recently argued that some films have plots that can be considered tragic dramas, and her use of John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) is apt for the present discussion.¹⁸⁹ Raymond Shaw, the protagonist, was captured during the Korean War, placed with prisoners in a Communist camp in Manchuria and brainwashed to forget what happens during their captivity. The enemy captors program Shaw to later carry out their commands through post-hypnotic suggestion. As it turns out, his mother is affiliated with the Communist brainwashers and holds the strings to get her husband elected President of the United States, all the while

¹⁸⁸ In this light, see Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁸⁹ I follow Feagin in the claim that a film has enough similarity with drama to be equally capable of presenting a tragic plot; Feagin, "Tragedy," 291, 299. Within Hegel's aesthetics, the key aspects of drama that make it unique and important can be carried over to film: an artistic presentation of human beings speaking and interacting. I leave open for further exploration the differences between film and live drama. Feagin has a larger argument surrounding the suitability of these particular films, especially in light of Aristotle's theory of tragedy; I focus only on the aspects of her account of *The Manchurian Candidate* that are relevant to the hero in my account of Hegel's theory of tragedy.

posing as an anti-Communist. On the way to reach her goal, she instructs her hypnotized son to kill one of her husband's opponents, Senator Jordon, who happens to be the father of the woman Shaw is romantically involved with. Hypnotized, Shaw kills Jordon and his daughter, and when he hears of their murders, he is stricken with grief. As Feagin points out, Shaw and Oedipus are alike in that their actions are involuntary but nonetheless cause them pain and regret, presumably because, had they possessed full control or knowledge of the situation, they would have done otherwise.¹⁹⁰

This plot illustrates how modern subjects can, like ancient tragic heroes, ultimately be causally responsible for acts they did not intend or desire, as I argued in Chapter Two regarding Oedipus. Just as a real person may become a world-historical individual without such an intention or knowledge, we can be instruments of history, of others, and of political plots (regardless of belief in or the existence of gods or fate). As Feagin points out, some theories of contemporary psychology, among other sciences, explain how we can indeed perform such acts unwittingly.¹⁹¹ And while Shaw's circumstances, like those of Oedipus, are somewhat extreme, they are realistic enough for us to recognize that similar tragic situations can and do occur to us. Further, I argue, Shaw's setting is enough like the heroic ages that it fits Hegel's bill as appropriate for tragedy. Times of war or social and political conflict are the stateless conditions that open the way for heroic action and responsibility.

¹⁹⁰ Feagin, "Tragedy," 301.

¹⁹¹ Feagin, "Tragedy," 302.

While Feagin argues that such a plot is a tragedy, I extend her argument to show more specifically how Shaw and modern characters like him are specifically tragic *heroes*. Shaw and Oedipus *choose* to take responsibility for what they didn't truly intend to do. As part of a political plot, Shaw has been programmed to kill the presidential candidate, so that his stepfather can become president. However, Shaw's commander who was with him in Manchuria figures out what happened to them there, and attempts to break the trigger for Shaw's hypnosis, so that he will no longer be controlled by the Communists. At the last minute, Shaw does *not* shoot the presidential candidate, but instead shoots and kills his step-father and mother, and then himself. Under the lens of Hegel's theory, Shaw is a hero and not a victim or a villain (though he could also be considered a combination of all of these things). Because Shaw was not fully conscious of his acts nor did he freely commit them while under hypnosis, he is not acting as a fully modern subject but instead fits the bill for an ancient tragic hero. Such "ancient" heroism requires that the individual fully own up to her deeds, even though they were unwitting. To be an ancient tragic hero requires one to take full responsibility and, I argue, modern subjects are still unfortunately capable of being such tragic agents. While the possibilities for doing so are more limited due to our deeper subjectivity, they exist nonetheless. Such heroes present to us today not only this horrifying danger, but also the fact that even within our extremely constricting circumstances, we are capable of being heroes.

But what about modern heroes in modernity? So far, what has been said is applicable to tragic heroes in general, but the discussion for the most part has referred only to ancient tragic heroes. While I have shown that the similarities between ancient

and early modern heroes—their one-sidedness, their setting in the heroic age, and all this entails—warrant their being grouped together and contrasted to real modern subjects, there are important differences between them, as we have seen. Most notably, early modern heroes present a greater amount of subjective freedom but manage to retain heroic characteristics of one-sidedness and responsibility.

I posit that in the same way that early modern heroes are formally free in contrast to ancient heroes, they also possess this independence *in contrast to individuals in the state*, where “[t]rue independence consists solely in the unity and interpenetration of individuality and universality” (*LFA* 180). In other words, early modern heroes, as we saw in Chapter Three, show that true freedom is not being *purely* self-determining. In Hegel’s picture of modernity, we are in this respect more like ancient heroes than early modern heroes: our reconciliation with the state is like the ancients’ ties to their ethical life, as we saw in Chapter One. And a similar description can be applied to dramatic heroes: individuals whose aims are linked to the universal. Ancient tragic heroes—whether originating from ancient Greece or more recent heroes—present to the modern audience an ideal version of ourselves. They present not the need to return to the innocent, naïve individuals of antiquity—which is impossible and undesirable—but what we are truly and therefore should take responsibility for.

Rather than a merely positive picture of freely taking on responsibility, early modern tragic heroes present a negative picture: what it looks like to be unconnected to substance. They also present the tension between being responsible for oneself and yet part of an organized society, described at the beginning of this section. While the ancient

type of hero shows us what we positively can be—what we truly are and should claim as ours—the early modern hero type shows us what we negatively can be. Following one’s personal passion, under the false assumption that we are not tethered to a community, we slip into evil, as we saw in Macbeth’s case, for example.

Another way to put it is that early modern heroes show us the need to be, that we truly are, at home in society, that we are free and yet alienated, just as Descartes’ *cogito* is. But immediately the question arises: Why would we need to be shown this if indeed the individual in modernity is at home? As Robert Williams points out, while a key aspect of modernity for Hegel is the individual’s reconciliation, many of the most prominent voices in Hegel scholarship over-emphasize the reconciliatory aspects at the expense of the reasons we search for reconciliation in the first place.¹⁹² While, in general, Hegel’s various notions of alienation are well known and have been co-opted and critiqued from all sides, his related *critique* of modernity is less discussed. Williams looks at the necessity of conflict—or, as he puts it, anguish—from the perspective of the relationship between Christianity and modernity. Williams posits that “in Hegel’s view, modernity has a dark side that includes the death of God, a nihilism that threatens all substantial values and generates a situation of cultural fragmentation.”¹⁹³ In stressing the reconciliatory aspect of Hegel, one can lose sight of the fact that the need for reconciliation is due to alienation—that harmony follows discord.

¹⁹² Williams lists Nussbaum and Dennis Schmidt as those in the scholarship who over-emphasize the reconciliatory in Hegel, and considers Hardimon as a better, though still flawed, alternative; in “The Inseparability of Love and Anguish,” 133–34. Cf. Forster, *Hegel’s Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*.

¹⁹³ Williams, “The Inseparability of Love and Anguish,” 146.

This highlights the fact that modernity for Hegel is not utopia. Hegel's state not only secures individual freedom *within* a collective (taking away heroic individualism), but its encroaching industrialism is also a double-edged sword of mutual exploitation and alienation. In this "universal culture" (as Hegel also calls the state), the individual is ineffectual and "not at home," neither as a worker, who does not get to enjoy the products of her work, nor as a member of the upper class, because what one owns has been "produced by others, and indeed in a most mechanical and therefore formal way, and acquired by him only through a long chain of efforts and needs foreign to himself" (*LFA* 260). He goes on to explain that

the long and complicated connection between needs and work, interests and their satisfaction, is completely developed in all its ramifications, and every individual, losing his independence, is tied down in an endless series of dependences on others. His own requirements are either not at all, or only to a very small extent, his own work, and, apart from this, every one of his activities proceeds not in an individual living way but more and more purely mechanically according to universal norms. (*LFA* 260)

This form of alienation highlights another tension, which began to surface in the discussion of the heroic ages in Section I and is now explicit: this picture of modernity sounds exactly the *opposite* of Hegel's own pictures of the ideal of ethical life described earlier. This is where we see what may be Hegel's own uncertainty as what to make of modernity. On the one hand there is reconciliation and freedom, and on the other there is alienation and loss of responsibility. Individuals in modernity "are and always remain only incidental, and outside the reality of the state they have no substantiality in themselves" (*LFA* 183).

Related, Hegel gives conflicting accounts of the ideal and the lived experiences of individuals in his own day: The individual in modernity experiences alienation from the state and institutions that she is supposed to feel at home in. The poverty, atomization, and ineffectualness of individuals seen in modernity are at odds with the harmony that Hegel argues all humans seek. I posit that Hegel sees modern tragedy as both the attempt to overcome alienation and, at the same time, the presentation of the impossibility of erasing it.¹⁹⁴ It is due to the alienation in modernity as described by Hegel himself that we need heroes, and modern heroes embody this alienation. As we gain more subjective freedom but have less power or control over our lives, we have the need to see our freedom as effectual in the world.

Through the lens of the tensions and conflicts in Hegel's accounts of modernity, early modern tragedy presents the truth not only of modernity's reconciliation but also of its alienation. Early modern heroes were not only valid in their own time as presentations of the emergence of Cartesian subjectivity and the resulting homelessness, but today they are also valid presentations of the individual's estrangement within post-Industrial society. And perhaps, as we constantly attempt to connect with one another in an

¹⁹⁴ My view differs from Williams in that his goal, as I see it, is to argue for the connection between conflict and reconciliation—or love and anguish—in Hegel's Christianity. His point is well taken: Christianity is key for understanding Hegel's critique of modernity, as well as what we have gained. Both Williams and I argue for seeing the importance of the inherent and inseparable connections between conflict and reconciliation in Hegel's thought. And while in his *Tragedy, Recognition and the Death of God*, Williams also purports to connect this modern alienation to tragedy, he mainly treats Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and his theological works (perhaps because his focus is religion). This seems to lead to problems with his reading of Hegel's theory of tragedy as found in his lectures on art, most detrimentally when Williams posits that the conflict in tragedy for Hegel is between right and right; Williams, "The Inseparability of Love and Anguish," 135. As I have shown in Chapter One, it is not the whole story. This leads Williams to completely ignore modern tragedy, and also creates the problem of his calling things "tragic" based in this incomplete definition of tragedy.

increasingly globalized world—whether success at these attempts decreases or increases our sense of estrangement from the world or from each other—these very attempts are a sign that this alienation remains a problem in our even more technologically “developed” modernity. At very least, the ill effects of industrialization remain today, so that Hegel’s critique of modernity and its relevance to tragedy could place him within related contemporary conversations.

Hegel’s Spiritual Beauty in Contemporary Tragic Heroes

As the alienating effects of industrialization and bureaucratization march on, does Hegel’s philosophy help us find room for the continued relevance of tragic heroes in our own day? So far, I have shown that there is room for ancient and early modern tragic heroes in Hegel’s picture of modernity. In conclusion, I argue that his theory of late modern tragic heroes, who find reconciliation within themselves after they stray from their aims or experience internal discord, also fits in relation to the present discussion of alienation in modernity. Although the heroes of late modern tragedy possess a deeper subjectivity than those in early modernity, they are also set in the heroic ages, such as we saw with Schiller and Goethe in Section I (and in Chapter Four). Despite the differences between the subjective make-ups of early and late modern heroes, they both are placed in stateless conditions so that much of the preceding discussion concerning early modern heroes pertains to them. The question remains whether contemporary tragic heroes, those in works *after* Schiller and Hegel’s time, are a relevant form of self-understanding for us according to Hegel’s theory of tragedy. I argue that late modern tragic heroes appear in

contemporary tragic works, albeit in new guises, and continue to be relevant and important to us today.

This last move may be problematic, first, because many contemporary works place heroes in what may not be considered heroic ages and, second, because their heroes are not nobles or knights—they are middle class or even common people. Hegel argues that tragedians take their heroes from a certain class of people, which he calls the “class of Princes.” Doing so allows for their complete independence; being a member of this class allows for the necessary self-reliance and “the perfect freedom of will” required for all heroes (*LFA* 192). In a nutshell, members of this class are not subject to the necessities of daily life that the lower classes are subject to, thus they make better heroes (*LFA* 191-92). In this sense, tragic drama *avoids* poverty, because as Hegel sees it, the poor have little to no agency.¹⁹⁵ As Hegel points out, not all tragic heroes are actually princes, but “are therefore transferred to the times of the civil wars in which the bonds of law and order are relaxed or broken, and therefore they acquire again the required independence and self-reliance,” as we have seen (*LFA* 192-93). That is, heroes do not necessarily have to be part of a ruling class, but the situation must allow individuals to be responsible for meaningful action. What he means by a class of princes, then, are those who are free from both nature (as much as any human can be) and from alienating work, and who freely pursue their aims, actualizing themselves by doing so.

In regards to the heroic age, perhaps one may wonder why Hegel would approve of reverting to the past if art in his theory presents a historically contextualized truth,

¹⁹⁵ Lower classes, however, are appropriate in comedy (*LFA* 192, 1220–21).

namely the progress of human freedom—art is its own time in a sensuous medium. There are a few reasons for this, in addition to those outlined in Section I. First, because we are familiar with things from the present, they are laden with accidental and insignificant details, which take away from their universality by masking or distracting from the essential, making them less ideal (*LFA* 189). In contrast, the past “belongs only to memory, and memory automatically succeeds in clothing characters, events, and actions in the garment of universality, whereby the particular external and accidental details are obscured” (*LFA* 189). Things from the past are more ideal because memory clouds what is inessential; the essential is the true nature of the person, place, thing, or event. Related, when the poet makes the changes necessary for things from the present to ideally fit as an artwork, such as by leaving out insignificant details, they seem “manufactured or premeditated” (*LFA* 189). Therefore, artists must always reach into past (or sometimes foreign) situations that are, as we have seen, either stateless conditions or clothed in the “garment of universality” (*LFA* 190). But must we always set tragedy in the past, or can we have tragic heroes set in our contemporary times?

Hegel describes the situation for ideal art as that which “stands midway between the golden ages and the perfectly developed universal mediations of civil society,” allowing individuals both to work and to obtain their goals (*LFA* 260). Of the Golden Age Hegel says: “Of course at first glance such a state of affairs has a touch of the ideal, ... [b]ut if we probe it more deeply, such a life will soon bore us. ... For a restricted mode of life of this kind presupposes an insufficient development of spirit”; a “full and entire human life requires higher urgings, and this close association with nature and its

immediate products cannot satisfy it any longer. Man may not pass his life in such an idyllic poverty of spirit; he must work” (*LFA* 259). The Golden Ages or idyllic times were only seemingly ideal, in that individuals were content merely with what immediately or easily came from nature, but such a life without struggle does not satisfy our deeper interests (*LFA* 259-60).

Hegel goes on: “Even the immortal gods of polytheism do not dwell in perpetual peace. ... Even the God of the Christians was not exempt from passing to the humiliation of suffering, yes, to the ignominy of death... human life as such is a life of strife, struggles, and sorrows” (*LFA* 178). Thus, I argue that in Hegel’s view, work and struggle make us greater, and as the gods struggle and suffer, work and struggle are proven to us as being part of a divine or meaningful life, one which we take part in. The Golden Ages were not ideal; the heroic ages were, full of conflict and ripe for action. Hegel’s ideal thus includes work, but a meaningful work or struggle, not the alienating labor of post-industrialization.

In this light, it could be argued that, after all, today’s conditions *are* much like the heroic ages, a time of struggle and social uncertainty. In keeping with but extending Hegel’s theory, not only in ages of chivalry and feudalism, but rather in any time of social upheaval and unrest I posit that there is room for heroic action. I do not argue that we live in a heroic age as Hegel saw it; instead, I claim that the higher urgings of spirit that he describes as necessary can appear in various settings, that, in disagreement with Hegel, we can and need to have heroes set in contemporary times, and further, they do not have to be from the class of princes.

By way of conclusion to this dissertation, I posit that it is important to note that one could, and should, turn to film, as it is the most popular means of engagement with tragedy, perhaps of all drama, although it is not actually performed live. Works that are more readily accessible to a culture—due, for example, to their familiarity of plot, setting, content, or language—should be considered under Hegel’s theory, as his view is that art is for the larger population. As Hegel says:

[W]orks of art are not to be composed for study or for the learned, but must be immediately intelligible and enjoyable in themselves without this circuitous route of far-fetched and far-off facts. For art does not exist for a small enclosed circle of a few eminent *savants* but for the nation at large and as a whole (LFA 273).

However, it could be argued that some well-known contemporary tragic dramas would be easier or more acceptable choices than popular American film to illustrate instances of Hegel’s picture of tragic heroes today. Works that present modern tragic heroes amidst alienation and loss, such as Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, are often named.¹⁹⁶ This may be so, but I take Hegel’s above point to mean that we should attempt to take popular works seriously as art, as a *cultural* self-understanding, and so I argue we should include both. Additionally, we should also consider works that may not be so readily accessible in various ways. For example, a good case for Beckett’s modernist pieces could be made, but I leave that for further exploration—indeed, his works pose a certain problem to my own project and thus to Hegel’s theory, in that there is often no discernible hero in them.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Young, *The Philosophy of Tragedy* and Moss, “The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy.”

What Hegel's theory of tragedy has to offer contemporary works is how it highlights certain aspects of otherwise ambiguous characters to reveal their tragic heroism. In fact, all three of my main test cases in this dissertation were ambiguous: Oedipus, Macbeth, and Johanna. And this, I submit, remains the case for more contemporary tragic works, especially, for example, those such as Sam Mendes' *American Beauty* (1999) that present modernity as alienating. The audience knows that Lester Burnham, the protagonist of *American Beauty*, is fated to die from the very first scene, just as many tragic heroes are—as narrator, Lester announces this, much like Schiller's Johanna does. Further, rather than merely an American dad going through a mid-life crisis, as he appears to be, through the lens of Hegel's theory of tragedy, Lester's ambiguity can be seen as similar to that of a late modern tragic hero. He strays from his original and true path—that of loving father—but returns to it in the end. He is physically attracted to his teenage daughter's friend, but does not follow through, even when she seduces him, because he finds out she is a virgin. Likewise, although for most of the film he searches for something beyond his family life, at the very end of the film—just before he is shot—he smiles at a family photo; right after he dies, he narrates how he felt joy and “soul-shaking gratitude” for his family and for all the beauty in the world. As Hegel's theory of tragic heroes depicts individuals who take responsibility or maintain inner conflict, or both, it helps audiences understand certain works as tragic through understanding these aspects of the protagonists, to see them as heroes.

Of the three types of heroes discussed in this dissertation, late modern tragic heroes are certainly the closest to our own time and therefore, one would expect, the most

prevalent type found in dramatic works today. There are a great many cases one could look to as a possibility for tragedy, even those that do not immediately fall into the genre, such as *American Beauty*. I argue that what is meaningful and important about these contemporary bittersweet, tragic works can be explained through their heroes, and that their protagonists are understood as heroes through the lens of Hegel's theory, as we saw with the example of *The Manchurian Candidate*. In this light, the heroine of *Roman Holiday* (Wyler, 1953) could be seen as the epitome of late modern tragic hero, indeed, the contemporary version of Schiller's Joan. She wants nothing more than to run away with the American reporter and live a carefree life of romance. But she is bound by duty, as princess of her nation, to return to her post, to serve family and country and not to live out her merely personal whims. However, the fact of her freedom, as a modern woman, means that she actually has a choice. She *chooses* to return to her duty, and the inner strength she displays is moving. She shows that heroism takes great sacrifice, and it takes the strength to maintain the dissonance, which she displays. Her heart-wrenching and admirable actions are not simply the stuff of drama, but are understood as heroic when we see that they are tragic.

When Hegel's theories of late modernity and tragedy are combined, we find that interest in tragic heroes endures: we need them to see that we are not merely self-reliant, but that self-reliance is still a part of who we are. Individuals in late modernity are fully aware of their freedom, and in Hegel's picture they should also be in harmony with the society they have created, in which radically free individuals are damaging to the state and to themselves. And, for that very reason, we continue to need tragic heroes: they

show us our responsibility even while being a part of society and maintaining various roles within it. Hegel's view is that we turn to tragedy not to emulate particular people, but rather to understand what human being as such can be at its greatest, in the most trying times. Tragedy presents heroes whose strength is a universal trait that only comes to light when faced with the greatest challenges. Tragic heroes show us the dignity and worth of the individual, as they present the truth of human responsibility and our inner strength, or the spiritual harmony that results from conflict.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Philosophical questions about the possibility of tragic drama in modernity, about either its relevance or its need, are not new—indeed, Aristotle’s *Poetics* can be seen as an attempt to justify poetic drama against Platonic criticisms. More recently, Nietzsche’s famous picture of Socrates and Euripides ushering in the death of tragedy also comes to mind.¹⁹⁷ Following this story of Socratic optimism killing off ancient tragedy, is that of rationalism and scientific positivism erasing the need for modern tragedy or making it redundant. One way to put the general problem that follows is: if rationalism and the sciences can truly explain everything away, is there a need for tragedy? This question echoes throughout philosophy in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries and into our own.¹⁹⁸ And, some would argue, as Socrates and his ilk did away with the mysteries of life, and Descartes and the Enlightenment philosophers opened the way for free subjectivity, we are no longer able to be tragic heroes. No longer are we at the mercy of the gods or fate.

¹⁹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), see esp. §§11–17. Nietzsche’s views changed as they evolved from the days of his support for Wagner’s opera as a re-birth of tragedy and as a metaphysical comfort in the face of the illusions of rationalism, but the problems he tackled in this early work remain an issue throughout his works (as well as for later philosophers, such as Heidegger and Benjamin). For Nietzsche’s later views on this, see especially Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols: And, The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003) and the “Birth of Tragedy” chapter in his *Ecce Homo*, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1992), both originally from 1888. See also his 1886 “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” that precedes the re-issue of *The Birth of Tragedy*; Friedrich Nietzsche, “Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 19.

¹⁹⁸ See, for example, Billings, *Genealogy of the Tragic* and Young, *The Philosophy of Tragedy*.

This dissertation places Hegel within this conversation. Taking into account Hegel's view of the progressive unfolding of humanity's knowledge of its self-determination and freedom from nature, and his Socratic credo that the highest aim of humanity is a philosophical understanding of itself, it would be no surprise if Hegel were to say that we have reached the end of tragedy. While his contemporaries Schelling and Schopenhauer were arguing for the importance of art in general and, to differing extents, of tragedy in particular, Hegel was declaring the end of art.¹⁹⁹ However, as this dissertation has argued, not only does Hegel's own philosophy show tragedy to be important within his theory of art, but also that his theory of tragedy shows tragic drama to be important to us. The tragic hero presents to us an embodiment of our own subjective freedom. The unique philosophical reasons found in Hegel for why we cannot sacrifice the tragic hero are directly related to his theories of agency and, at the same time, to the insignificance of the individual rendered by modern society.

I have argued that according to Hegel's theory, all tragic heroes are one-sidedly fixed to their aims. However, tragic one-sidedness manifests itself in two different ways due to the historical progression of spirit's subjective freedom, namely, as ancient and modern tragic heroes. I have also shown how tragedy uniquely does this of all the arts: the conflict and balance between subject and substance engendered by the one-sided hero makes tragedy unique as a form of absolute spirit. The interest in and need for tragic heroes endures because, as dramatic characters, they sensuously present what we cannot otherwise see: what it looks like for substance to oppose itself or for us to be radically

¹⁹⁹ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*.

free, and for the necessity that these untruths be reconciled. Despite the evolution of subjective freedom for Hegel, tragic heroes have an eternally recurring role; they play a key part in vividly showing us the tragedy of one-sidedness, and the beauty and harmony in the truth of its reconciliation. This was the argument in Chapter One.

I then traced the progression of subjective freedom through its manifestations in ancient, early modern, and late modern tragic heroes. Chapter Two explored Hegel's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* to show how he is an epitome of an ancient tragic hero for Hegel. This added a fresh perspective to the literature on Hegel's theory of ancient tragedy, which largely focuses on the *Antigone*. On the one hand, this showed the importance of keeping artworks historically contextualized in order to fully understand them, according to Hegel's framework, by showing how one recent commentator was misled into placing Oedipus in the modern standpoint of morality. On the other hand, this showed how Oedipus' conflict and resolution still resonates with us today; it is heroic to take blame for what one is not morally accountable for. We admire those who go down with their ship, even if—or, especially because—they don't necessarily have to, because they are heroically reacting to and taking control of the situation handed to them.

Following this, in Chapter Three I turned to Hegel's nuanced picture of early modern subjectivity as it is presented in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. His theory proves early modern heroes to be a contradictory blend of freedom and fixity, as they must remain one-sided to be tragic heroes, even as they also embody the subjective freedom won in modernity. Further, I posited this one-sidedness as the root of both their evil and their greatness as heroes within tragic drama. Early modern tragedy shows how we have

gained subjective freedom, but at the cost of our substantial ties, an imbalance that must be reconciled. My reading, in contrast to the prevalent readings of Hegel's theory of tragedy or even of this theory of modern subjectivity, highlights this nuance and seeming contradiction, squarely placing early modernity between antiquity and late modernity. This helps us better understand both Hegel's philosophy and tragedy in general.

Chapter Four simultaneously engaged Hegel and Schiller to explore late modern tragic heroes. I argued that the ideal in art, for Hegel, is not a simplistic one-sidedness but a unification of diversity. Due to the progress of subjective freedom, late modern heroes lose certain aspects that Hegel finds important for ideal tragic heroes—that is, that they are not beautiful in the traditional sense, nor perfectly one-sided. However, they have a spiritual beauty and inner reconciliation that I argue is akin to Schiller's sublime, which is presented by Johanna d'Arc and Mary Stuart.

Finally, in Chapter Five I looked at Hegel's conflicting views of modernity and the heroic ages. I argued that our interest in tragic heroes endures because we need to see that we are not merely self-reliant as is the hero, yet that self-reliance is still a part of who we are. Individuals in late modernity are fully aware of their freedom, and in Hegel's picture they should also be in harmony with the rational state they have created, in which radically free individuals are damaging to the state and to themselves. I showed that for that very reason, we continue to need tragic heroes: they show us the place of our responsibility even while part of modern society. Indeed, we are responsible not only for ourselves, as some modern tragic heroes show us, but also for the ethical order, as the ancients were.

Throughout this dissertation, I have implicitly stressed that in Hegel's view, classical art "and its religion of beauty does not satisfy the depths of the spirit; ... it still remains abstract for spirit because it has ... not that movement and that reconciliation of infinite subjectivity which has been achieved out of opposition" (*LFA* 436). That is, one underlying goal of this project was to bring to light the importance of modern art in general and modern tragedy specifically for Hegel. This goal is in part to balance the over-emphasis placed on ancient tragedy in the literature. However, I also kept this quote of Hegel's in mind as I worked because it nicely illustrates a key characteristic of late modern tragic heroes, one reason why, I argue, they resonate with us.

I leave room for further exploration in three areas: First, to engage Hegel's theory of tragedy with the more problematic cases of modernist literature, such as Beckett. While my intuition is that it would be difficult for Hegel's theory to make sense of such works, it would be fruitful to follow the trajectories traced by scholars such as Pippin and Kottman of how Hegel could lead us forward into modernism, and to compare it more closely with the views of others, such as Houlgate, who seem not to hold out hope that Hegel is useful on this front. Second, I hope to connect my work in Hegel's theory of tragedy with work in his theory of comedy. It is a more ambiguous genre, yet one that Hegel praises. I would like to be able to give a more solid philosophical explanation for what Hegel sees of value in comedy, while perhaps supporting my lurking suspicion that tragedy nonetheless remains higher in his view.

Third, I plan to continue my investigation into connections between Hegel's theory of late modernity and tragic heroes as they appear in contemporary film (and such

an investigation could show connections between tragic heroes in drama and similar figures in real life). In my view, Hegel's theory of tragic heroes illuminates what is so moving and important about a number of films that are otherwise of ambiguous genre. That is not to say that all films or plays unambiguously fall into a genre, but that Hegel's picture of the tragic hero helps explain what is culturally important about certain dramatic figures, such as George Bailey in Frank Capra's 1946 *It's a Wonderful Life*. While one may hesitate to call the film as a whole a tragedy (especially if one considers the ending to be a happy one—though that is debatable), George himself is the epitome of the late modern or contemporary tragic hero: He not only takes full responsibility for deeds that were not his (*he* did not lose all the company's money, but takes full accountability for it nonetheless), but also returns to life fully embracing these deeds, as well as the life itself from which he strayed—he tried to commit suicide but comes running back to life.²⁰⁰ Hegel's theory of tragic heroes shows that such figures are both right and wrong, wavering but strong, flawed and great—why they are both tragic and heroic—and shows that this is exactly why they remain important, as a presentation of a truth of humanity.

This dissertation has added an important aspect of Hegel's theory of tragedy to the literature: the connection of the tragic hero to Hegel's theory of the historical progress of subjectivity, and that this progress is manifested as the heroes of tragic drama in its different stages of antiquity, early modernity, and late modernity. Hegel's theory shows tragedy to be not only a historically contextualized cultural practice and form of self-

²⁰⁰ I also posit that the father in Ingmar Bergman's 1961 *Through a Glass Darkly* could be read in this light as a late modern tragic hero.

understanding but also a presentation of absolute truth: the truth of a culture at a particular historical moment is presented in its tragedy, yet that culture is a part of a larger narrative, so that a common thread running through tragic drama of all eras comes to light when tragedy is examined through the lens of Hegel's philosophy. Specifically, I have shown that Hegel views self-contradiction, alienation, and the drive to reconcile these as underlying universal human conditions, and in tragedy this universal truth is embodied in the tragic hero. This appears in tragic heroes as they take responsibility for unintentional actions, or as they remain fixed to their cause although it brings about their own downfall.

It is my hope that this dissertation has shown the importance of Hegel's theory of tragedy to his wider philosophical project, and to our understanding of tragedy; his theory helps us to see the continuing importance of engaging with tragedy both as philosophers and as audiences. Understanding what moves us deeply when engaging with these works helps us understand not only why they are indeed great works of art, but also, and more importantly, what it is that we connect with, what it is about ourselves that we see in these tragic heroes. Hegel's theory of tragedy shows us how tragic heroes bring into sharp focus what we might not otherwise perceive on a day-to-day basis: they embody the great burden of freedom that is placed on us, the freedom that we have no choice but to have achieved and that we exercise in a world full of other people, the freedom to take responsibility for even the most innocent or troubling of our actions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allan, William. "Tragedy and the Early Greek Philosophical Tradition." In *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, edited by Justina Gregory, 71–82. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
- Avineri, Shlomo. *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Bates, Jennifer Ann. *Hegel and Shakespeare on Moral Imagination*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame: A Play in One Act; Followed by "Act without Words", a Mime for One Player*. New York: Grove, 1958.
- . "Not I." In *The Collected Shorter Plays*, 213–24. New York: Grove Press, 2010.
- . *Waiting for Godot*. New York: Grove Press, 1954.
- Beiser, Frederick C. *Schiller as Philosopher: A Re-Examination*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Billings, Joshua. *Genealogy of the Tragic: Greek Tragedy and German Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Bradley, A. C. "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy." *The Hibbert Journal: A Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology, and Philosophy* 2, no. 4 (1904): 662–80.
- . "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy." In *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1909; repr. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999.
- . "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy." In *Hegel on Tragedy*, edited by Anne Paolucci and Henry Paolucci. New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1962; repr. Smyrna, DE: Griffon House, 2001.
- Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim Kinship between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Carlson, David. *Hegel's Theory of the Subject*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Changfoot, Nadine. "Hegel's Antigone: A Response to the Feminist Critique." *Owl of Minerva* 33, no. 2 (2002): 179–204.

- Dahlstrom, Daniel O. "Chapter 5: The Legacy of Aesthetic Holism: Hamann, Herder, and Schiller." In *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel, and Their Contemporaries*, 67–92. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
- Danto, Arthur C. "The Aesthetics of Brillo Boxes." In *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2003.
- . "The End of Art." In *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Davies, Steffan. *The Wallenstein Figure in German Literature and Historiography, 1790-1920*. London: Maney Publishing for Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010.
- De Laurentiis, Allegra. *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World: On Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Desmond, William. *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic Speculation, Cult, and Comedy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Feagin, Susan. "Tragedy." In *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, edited by Peter Kivy. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Fiala, Andrew G. "Aesthetic Education and the Aesthetic State: Hegel's Response to Schiller." In *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker, 171–86. Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Forster, Michael N. *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Gasché, Rodolphe. "Self-Dissolving Seriousness: On the Comic in the Hegelian Conception of Tragedy." In *Philosophy and Tragedy*, edited by Miguel de Beistegui and Simon Sparks, 37–56. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Geiger, Ido. *The Founding Act of Modern Ethical Life: Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Gjesdal, Kristin. "Reading Shakespeare - Reading Modernity." *Angelaki* 9, no. 3 (December 1, 2004): 17–31.
- Hardimon, Michael O. *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- Hegel, G. W. F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. Translated by Hugh Barr Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . *Faith & Knowledge*. Translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977.
- . *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805-6) with Commentary*. Translated by Leo Rauch. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983.
- . *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Translated by T. M. Knox. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- . *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the "Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences" (1830)*. Translated by William Wallace and Arnold V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- . *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Translated by T. M. Knox. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- . *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825-1826, Volume III Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. Edited by Robert F. Brown. Translated by R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- . *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Volume II: Determinate Religion*. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson. Translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- . *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Volume III: The Consummate Religion*. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson. Translated by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart, and H. S. Harris. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- . *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- . *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*. Translated by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.
- . "The German Constitution." In *Political Writings*, edited by Laurence Winant Dickey and H. B. Nisbet. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- . *The Philosophy of History*. Translated by J. Sibree. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.

- . “The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate.” In *Early Theological Writings, with an Introduction and Fragments*, translated by T. M. Knox and R. Kroner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.
- Hinderer, Walter. “Introduction.” In *Wallenstein; And, Mary Stuart*. New York: Continuum, 1991.
- Hoffheimer, Michael H. “The Influence of Schiller’s Theory of Nature on Hegel’s Philosophical Development.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 2 (April 1985): 231–44.
- Houlgate, Stephen. “Hegel and Nietzsche on Tragedy.” In *Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, 182–220. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . “Hegel’s Aesthetics.” Edited by Edward N. Zalta. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2014 Edition)*, n.d.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/hegel-aesthetics/>.
- . “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy.” In *Hegel and the Arts*, 146–78. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.
- . “Presidential Address: Hegel and the Art of Painting.” In *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker, 113–30. Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Inwood, M. J. “Subject and Subjectivity.” In *A Hegel Dictionary*, 282. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Jackson, M. W. “Hegel: The Real and the Rational.” In *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, edited by Jon Stewart. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996.
- James, David. *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Subjectivity and Ethical Life*. Continuum Studies in Philosophy. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Kain, Philip J. “Hegel, Antigone, and Women.” *Owl of Minerva* 33, no. 2 (2002): 157–77.
- Kalb, Jonathan. “The Thirty Years’ War, All 10 Hours of It.” *The New York Times*. July 1, 2007.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- . *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Edited by Paul Guyer. Translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Kottman, Paul A. “Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in Romeo and Juliet.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2012): 1–38.
- . “‘The Charm Dissolves Apace’: Shakespeare and the Self-Dissolution of Drama.” *Memoria Di Shakespeare* 1: Thinking with Shakespeare (January 2014): 83–107.
- Law, Stephen C. “Hegel and the Spirit of Comedy: Der Geist Der Stets Verneint.” In *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker, 113–30. Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Moland, Lydia. “An Unrelieved Heart: Hegel, Tragedy, and Schiller’s Wallenstein.” *New German Critique* 38, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 1–23.
- Moss, Leonard. “The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28, no. 1 (1969): 91–97.
- Neuhouser, Frederick. *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- . “Hegel’s Social Philosophy.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 204–29. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 1992.
- . *The Birth of Tragedy; And, the Case of Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- . *Twilight of the Idols: And, The Anti-Christ*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Pinkard, Terry. *Hegel’s Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Pippin, Robert B. *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

- . *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- . *Henry James and Modern Moral Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- . *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth: The Importance of Howard Hawks and John Ford for Political Philosophy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- . "The Absence of Aesthetics in Hegel's Aesthetics." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 394–418. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- . "The Status of Literature in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: On the Lives of Concepts." In *Inventions of the Imagination: Romanticism and Beyond*, edited by Richard T. Gray, N. Halmi, G. J. Handwerk, M. A. Rosenthal, and K. Vieweg, 102–20. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.
- . "What Was Abstract Art? (From the Point of View of Hegel)." *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 1 (September 2002): 1–24.
- Popper, Karl R. *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*. Fifth edition. The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. 2. London: Routledge, 1966.
- Robertson, Ritchie. "Wallenstein." In *Friedrich Schiller: Playwright, Poet, Philosopher, Historian*, edited by Paul E. Kerry. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Roche, Mark W. "Introduction to Hegel's Theory of Tragedy." *PhaenEx* 1, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2006): 11–20.
- . "The Greatness and Limits of Hegel's Theory of Tragedy." In *A Companion to Tragedy*, edited by Rebecca W. Bushnell, 51–67. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2005.
- . *Tragedy and Comedy a Systematic Study and a Critique of Hegel*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Russell, Bertrand. *History of Western Philosophy*. Second edition. London: Allen & Unwin, 1961.
- Rutter, Benjamin. *Hegel on the Modern Arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

- Sandis, Constantine. "The Man Who Mistook His *Handlung* for a *Tat*: Hegel on Oedipus and Other Tragic Thebans." *The Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 62 (2010): 35–60.
- Schiller, Friedrich. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. Edited by Horatio S. White. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901.
- . *Don Carlos; And, Mary Stuart*. Edited by Peter Oswald. Translated by Hilary Collier Sy-Quia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *Essays*. Edited by Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Walter Hinderer. New York: Continuum, 1993.
- . *The Maid of Orleans*. Translated by John Elliot Drinkwater. London: privately printed, 1885.
- . *The Robbers; Wallenstein*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1979.
- . *Wallenstein: Text und Kommentar*. Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2005.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation, Volume 1*. Translated by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark*. Edited by Edward Hubler and Sylvan Barnet. New York: New American Library, 1963.
- . *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Edited by Alfred Harbage. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958.
- . *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Edited by Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar. New York: Washington Square Press, 1959.
- Shapiro, Gary. "Hegel's Dialectic of Artistic Meaning." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 1 (1976): 23–35.
- Sophocles. *Sophocles I: Oedipus the King; Oedipus at Colonus; Antigone*. Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Stern, Robert. "Hegel's Doppelsatz: A Neutral Reading." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44, no. 2 (2006): 235–66.
- Statkiewicz, Max. Review of *Tragedy and Comedy: A Systematic Study and a Critique of Hegel*, by Mark William Roche. *Monatshefte* 94, no. 4 (2002): 542–44.
- Taylor, Charles. *Hegel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

- Williams, Robert R. "Freedom as Correlation: Recognition and Self-Actualization in Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit." In *Essays on Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, edited by David S. Stern. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013.
- . "The Inseparability of Love and Anguish: Hegel's Theological Critique of Modernity." In *Hegel on Religion and Politics*, edited by Angelica Nuzzo, 133–56. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013.
- . *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God: Studies in Hegel and Nietzsche*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Williams, Simon. *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume 1: 1586-1915*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Wood, Allen W. "Hegel and Marxism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 414–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- . *Hegel's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . "Hegel's Ethics." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Frederick C. Beiser, 211–33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Young, Julian. *The Philosophy of Tragedy: From Plato to Žižek*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.