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Feminine Consciousness and Greek Spirit in Hegel

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**Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the PhD degree in Philosophy**

**Department of Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa**

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ABSTRACT

FEMININE CONSCIOUSNESS AND GREEK SPIRIT IN HEGEL

Hegel's inherently universal conception of modern subjectivity recognizes the principle of the modern subject is "the self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality of the individual." Hegel's deepest and most genuine intentions require all humanity to lead a universal life of full and concrete personhood in accordance with the definition of human nature as a concrete unity of substance and subject. These are not fulfilled in his treatment of feminine consciousness. Women have not been fully reconciled with modern subjectivity.

The thesis investigates opportunities to *systematically* resolve the inconsistencies inherent in Hegel's feminine consciousness, consistent with his logical imperatives and genuine intentions. The main contribution will be to locate sources of the problem that have been identified but not fully analysed in the literature of feminist philosophy. Beyond the standard references (*The Phenomenology of Mind* and *Philosophy of Right*) the thesis examines other works, notably, *Science of Logic* and relevant passages from throughout the *Realphilosophie* including history, aesthetics, and the philosophy of religion. The problem is situated within the framework of Hegel's developmental account of historical Spirit. The special relationship between feminine consciousness and Greek Spirit is studied in Hegel's *Antigone* story. She represents the Beautiful Individual whose freedom lies in self-sacrifice for universal ends of the community. Hegel's theory of modern ethical life once again casts women in the dutiful role of Beautiful Individuals and leaves them to perform the essential function of preserving objective Spirit, at the expense of their own self-consciousness. The thesis studies Hegel's contradictory treatment of women in the larger context of his effort to systematically resolve the ancient conflict of Nature and Spirit integral to the character of the ancient subject. Antigone reappears as a sign that, notwithstanding the modern principle of subjective freedom and Christian egalitarian principles that underlie the secular world, Hegel was unable to rationally and logically resolve this problem. The development within the theory of modern ethical life of a responsible standpoint towards Nature and finitude is necessary, for Hegel's intentions for women and men to be realized.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent research concludes that Hegel's logical and historical account of objective Spirit leading to rational self-consciousness excludes feminine consciousness¹ from participation in the dialectic of Spirit beyond the limits of the ethical world of the ancient Greek polis. By doing so, it denies to feminine consciousness opportunities for self-development and rational freedom in accordance with the principle of subjective freedom, "the self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality of the modern individual."² Hegel described the ethical world of the Greek polis as the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom, and the form of subjectivity native to this realm is known as beautiful individuality.³ The *Antigone* of Sophocles was important to Hegel because the heroine reaches the apotheosis of the beautiful ethical individual whose freedom is found through sacrifice of self for the universal ends of the community. He maintains that women in the ancient and modern worlds share the ethical disposition of Antigone.

The thesis will argue that modifications to Hegel's logical and historical account would allow feminine consciousness to resume participation in the dialectic of Spirit that halted at the

¹The works of Simone de Beauvoir, Seyla Benhabib, Kimberly Hutchings, Luce Irigaray, Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, Heidi M. Ravven and many others cited in the bibliography, have shown conclusively that Hegel's philosophical account excludes women from the realm of history and Spirit and confines them to a mode of consciousness analogous to ancient subjectivity and to the Beautiful Individual as described in *Aesthetics*. By Hegel's own definition, this mode of consciousness is inadequate to the principle of subjective freedom.

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* ed. Allen W. Wood trans. H.B. Nisbet, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 223.

³See the Appendix "The Phases of World History" to G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History Introduction: Reason in History, Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics*, trans. H.B. Nisbet with an introduction by Duncan Forbes (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1975, paperback edition, 1980), 202.

stage of beautiful ethical individuality and would allow development beyond the immediate and natural ethical substantiality of the polis and family towards ultimate reconciliation with the conception of modern subjectivity. The definition of these modifications requires a study of Hegel's philosophical account of feminine consciousness, one that is properly situated in the context of the complete account of objective Spirit and supported by appropriate references internal to his system of philosophy. A central aim of the thesis is to undertake such a study and to identify where there are inconsistencies and contradictions present in his account and how these culminate in the exclusion of women from the developmental progress of Spirit. The objective will be to modify Hegel's philosophical account in a way that reflects his own principles and deepest intentions for humanity and achieves a degree of consistency with the internal principles of his system, a consistency greater than he was able to realise from within the conditions and limitations of his own times.

Thesis Statement

Hegel's conception of modern subjectivity is, "The principle of the *self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality* of the individual, [*des Einzelnen*], the principle of subjective freedom ".⁴ As this principle is inherently universal, the conception of modern subjectivity requires people to become full and concrete persons. Hegel has neither fully reconciled women with the principle of the modern subject nor has he developed them beyond the limits of consciousness in the form in which it was found in the ancient community of ethical substance.⁵ Instead, his account of feminine consciousness stops short at a stage that is

⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 185.

⁵ See the notes by J.B. Baillie to "The Ethical World" in G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 464-465. The community of ethical substance is a form of social order composed of members whose fulfillment

analogous to the form of subjectivity found in the ethical world of the ancient Greek polis. By contrast, the masculine aspect of Spirit is developed to where it more closely realizes the model of free and infinite personality which is distinctive of modern subjectivity. This assertion that masculine and feminine consciousness attained different outcomes in Hegel is supported by §165 and §166 of the *Philosophy of Right*. The text containing Hegel's treatment of women will be read. It is restricted to two locations in the body of his work; the first location is in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and it gives treatment to ancient *Sittlichkeit*, while the role of women in modern *Sittlichkeit* is considered in the *Philosophy of Right*⁶ in the context of a discussion of the ethical significance of sexual difference.

Hegel's project is to reconcile the insights given in classical Hellenistic culture with the principle of modern times inherited from Christian religion. The harmony of these contradictory elements will become the basis for his political theory of a modern world where human beings are able to feel at home. It will be useful to review the principled base to the distinction between antiquity and modernity. The principles to the stages of Spirit as world history are succinctly stated in §353 of the *Philosophy of Right*, which is used as the reference for this overview. The ancient Greek world was governed by the principle of *knowledge* on the part of substantial Spirit. This is defined as reason and freedom realized in a form of a unity of individual will and the will of the state. Individuality in the ancient Greek world is not simply submerged in substantiality as in previous civilizations of the Orient. It has instead become a "positive content and fulfillment of Spirit and its being for itself as its own living

consists in unreflecting performance of actions in fidelity to a regime of laws and customs of conventional community life. Of particular note, the membership of ethical substance is not yet conscious of any estrangement from one another or from the social whole.

⁶See Section 1 "The Family", to Part Three *Ethical Life* in Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 142- §169.

form - i.e. *beautiful* ethical individuality [*Individualität*]"⁷. By contrast, the principle of the modern world is "the principle of the unity of divine and human nature and the reconciliation of objective truth and freedom which have appeared within self-consciousness and subjectivity"⁸. The principle of subjective freedom, "the right of the subject's *particularity* to find satisfaction" now makes its appearance and the universal ends of the state cannot be valid unless they have been activated through the knowledge and volition of particular individuals.⁹ This difference between antiquity and modernity is captured succinctly in the following sentence: "The right of the subject's *particularity* to find satisfaction, or - to put it differently - the right of *subjective freedom*, is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern age*." ¹⁰ This distinction between the ancient and modern worlds is essential to the analysis because it is regarded as the underlay to the contradiction between the account of feminine consciousness and modern subjectivity. Hegel developed his account of Spirit steps short of fully acknowledging that feminine consciousness also has the right to its subjective determination of freedom.

The difference between ancient and modern *Sittlichkeit* must be established in order to give proper consideration to the texts. Many feminist scholars agree Hegel did not significantly develop feminine consciousness beyond the Greek polis. The philosophical account of modern women in the *Philosophy of Right* adds nothing new to the understanding of feminine consciousness developed earlier in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Instead, it simply recapitulates themes taken from the *Antigone* story. The parallel treatment of ancient

⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §353.

⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §358.

⁹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §260.

¹⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §124.

and modern women is remarkable given the lapse of historical time dividing the ethical world of the ancient Greek polis from the nineteenth-century modern ethical state. The family has undergone extensive structural and functional changes from the *oikos* of ancient Greece to the modern European bourgeois family but these changes are not reflected in Hegel's account insofar as it treats of women. There is an impression that feminine consciousness is ahistorical and has been preserved as it was in the past, independent of historical change and development. The conclusion to be drawn from comparison of the texts is that Hegel's account depicts modern feminine consciousness as persisting in a mode similar to the form of subjectivity found in the ancient Greek world. This is the reason why feminine consciousness retains the features typical of the model of individuality associated with the ethical Greek world, otherwise known as the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom. Beautiful it may be, however this form of consciousness is incompatible with the Spirit of modern times because it lacks the principle of subjective freedom essential for modern individuality. The problem is that feminine consciousness cannot be reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity while it continues to represent the Ideal of Greek Spirit.

Hegel was unable to complete his project to reconcile the conflicting principles of antiquity and modernity, however his system of philosophy contains all the resources that will bring this project to eventual completion. This will come to light in the course of this study of feminine consciousness. Hegel maintained the principle of modern times represents a dialectical advance over the Beautiful Freedom of the ethical Greek world. However, modernity has permitted individualism to go to worrisome extremes. He believed that in Greek Beautiful Freedom, the idea of the relation of the subject to the ethical whole was raised to unsurpassed heights, and he thought this idea was necessary to remedy the excesses of the

present. The problem of how to reconcile Hellenistic ideals with the individualistic ethics inherited in religion remains a philosophical issue for the modern world.¹¹ In Hegel, the problem assumes critical significance for women because they have a special relationship with the Hellenistic ideal. The vision of a fuller incorporation of feminine consciousness with the dialectic requires a grasp of an overarching theme of Hegel's philosophy – the need to reconcile the conflicting elements of classical and Christian heritage. It is difficult to imagine any solution to the feminist issues in Hegel that does not include a decisive outcome to that conflict. That is why it is vitally important to extend the focus of the investigation beyond the passages that deal explicitly with women, and to bring into discussion broader themes in the *oeuvre*.

One such theme is Hegel's *philosophical* interpretation of Christian religion. By interpreting the key Christian theme of reconciliation in a more Hellenistic light, Hegel did not develop the wealth of resources in modernity for a fuller reconciliation of the principles of antiquity and modernity. Elements of Hellenism persist in his philosophy of Christian religion and these restrained his vision of the opportunities for rethinking the conflicted relation of Nature and Spirit. However, a rethinking of that relation is implicit throughout his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel clearly stated his most genuine intentions for humanity, when he defined its vocation as consciousness of the unity of divine and human nature:

By consciousness of the unity of divine and human nature we mean that humanity implicitly bears within itself the *divine idea*, not bearing it within itself like something from somewhere else but as its own substantial nature, <as its own vocation or the

¹¹ For a discussion of Hegel's sympathy for the pre-Christian Hellenic ideal, see the monograph by J. Glenn Gray, *Hegel and Greek Thought*, originally published under the title *Hegel's Hellenic Ideal* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941; Harper and Row Publishers, Incorporated, 1968).

unique possibility of such a vocation: this infinite possibility is its subjectivity.> In this consciousness humanity knows <the divine idea,> the universal, and [knows itself] to be determined for the universal, i.e., elevated above all locality, nationality, condition, life-situation, etc. **Human beings [are] equal; slavery [is] intolerable; [there is] worth and absolute validity only in this perspective. (β) Humanity's vocation [is] in the spiritual realm, its goal is a universal goal, it is in itself utterly fulfilled, and all that matters here is that the subject should bring itself into conformity with it,** i.e., that the subject should know or intuit that it has the possibility of an infinite value within itself, and that (β) it should actually give itself this value; [but it is] not its *merit* to produce the good, the divine idea. [*emphasis added.*] ¹²

These intentions for humanity are expressed in the German text of Hegel's manuscript 1821 as follows:

Es ist dies das Bewußtsein der Einheit der göttlichen und menschlichen Nature, daß der Mensch AN SICH die göttliche Idee in sich trage – nicht nur in sich trage wie irgend sonst was, sondern daß dies seine substantielle Natur sei, seine Bestimmung sei, er die einzige Möglichkeit derselben – die unendliche Möglichkeit - , ist seine Subjectivität. α) In diesem Bewußtsein weiß der Mensch die göttliche Idee, das Allgemeine, und sich bestimmt für das Allgemeine, d.h. erhaben über alle Lokalität Nationalität, Stand, Lage das Lebens usf. **Menschen gleich, Sklaverei unerträglich. Wert, absolute Gültigkeit nur nach dieser Seite; β) seine Bestimmung im Geistigen, oder dieser Zweck ist allgemeiner Zweck, er ist an sich schlechthin erfüllt, und es ist nur darum zu tun, daß das Subjekt sich ihm gemäß mache,** das er es α) wisse, zur Anschauung komme, die Möglichkeit eines unendlichen Werts in sich zu haben und β) sich diesen Wert wirklich zu geben; nicht sein Verdienst, das Gute, die göttliche Idee hervorzubringen. ¹³

The disadvantaged circumstances of modern feminine consciousness signal tensions and contradictions between antiquity and the modern age that were not fully overcome in the theory of modern *Sittlichkeit*. These will need to be brought to light as a precondition for working out a strategy for modification.

The thesis accepts the theory that a correspondence exists between the logical and

¹² See "Hegel's Lecture Manuscript" (1821) in Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol III *The Consummate Religion*, trans. R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson and J.M. Stewart with the assistance of H.S. Harris, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (University of California Press, 1998, c1985), 110.

¹³ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* Teil 3 "Die vollendete Religion" Hrsg. von Walter Jaeschke, VORLESUNGEN Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte Band 5 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983-1985), 45-46.

historical dimensions of Hegel's account. The challenge was to identify the appropriate logic for a study of Spirit in the ancient world. The doctrine of Being in the *Logic* is identified as the appropriate logic. In addition to producing insights about the structure and logical content of ancient Greek Spirit and the character of the beautiful ethical individual, a study of the doctrine of Being will show that while it is true that men and women had different ethical dispositions and lived under conditions of segregation while performing different roles in the life of the ancient polis, it is also true their common participation in the principle of the Beautiful Individual conferred on them a certain measure of substantive equality. This claim for the equality of the sexes in the world of ethical substance is important, and it precedes the next and obvious question of how the substantive equality was eventually undermined and replaced by inequality.

The study of the development of the logical doctrine Being in Chapters Six and Seven will disclose that there were incoherencies in Hegel's exposition of the logical movement from Becoming to Being-There or *Dasein*. These produced negative consequences for the development of feminine consciousness by overturning the substantive equality of the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom and abstracting from the dialectic the finite element of natural individuality while neglecting its full reinstatement at a subsequent phase. As a consequence, feminine consciousness which is associated with natural individuality, was arrested at the stage of ethical substance. The analysis of this logical inadequacy is indebted to *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim*¹⁴ by Dale Schlitt and this will be brought to bear on the problem of feminine consciousness and its reconciliation with modern subjectivity.

It has been noted in the literature that by not developing feminine consciousness

significantly beyond the Greek polis, Hegel denied women the opportunity to become fully modern individuals.¹⁵ His account of femininity retains obsolete features. The evidence in support of this criticism is to be found in the texts. A good example would be the following statement from the *Philosophy of Right* one which is particularly revealing of Hegel's thought because it is intended clearly to hold true equally for women in ancient and modern times: "Woman however has her substantial vocation [*Bestimmung*] in the family, and her ethical disposition consists in this [family] *piety*." ¹⁶ The failure to properly differentiate ancient and modern forms of feminine consciousness hampers the prospects for modern women to participate in the life of civil society and the state. Their described consciousness is not adequate to the requirements for the concrete freedom of the modern individual.

Modern women do not pursue universal interests and, instead, they have their substantial vocation in the family. By definition, the family realm is one where personal individuality and its personal interests do not reach full development, the recognition of right is absent, and the universal interest is not "knowingly or willingly acknowledged" or ever pursued actively as an ultimate end because for feminine consciousness, the knowledge and volition of the substantial remains at the level of feeling. That women have not been reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity is a consequence of this inadequacy. The thesis problem becomes how to interpret the Hegelian account in a manner that is open to the reconciliation of women with the principle of modern freedom, but also consistent with the

¹⁴ Dale M. Schlitt, O.M.I. *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim: A Critical Reflection* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984).

¹⁵ See: Nadine Changfoot, "Hegel's *Antigone*: A Response to the Feminist Critique" in *The Owl of Minerva* 33, no. 2 (2002), 182; Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, "Hegel's *Antigone*" 59-88 and Heidi Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" 225-252, both in *Feminist Interpretations of Hegel*, ed. Mills (Penn State University Press, 1996), and Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit,"* trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 364.

¹⁶ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §166.

logical imperatives of Hegel's system of philosophy.

The thesis acknowledges the modern bourgeois family differs significantly from the family of the ancient Greek *oikos*.¹⁷ But the philosophical account of feminine consciousness in *Philosophy of Right* does not take these differences into consideration and it purports to be equally valid for the ancient and modern worlds. In itself, this is peculiar. The explanation for the quality of apparent timelessness surrounding his account of women is given in his claim that the *substantial unity* of the moments of subjective particularity and objective universality is a feature which is common to both the ancient *oikos* and the modern family. His idea of the role of women is to maintain the unity of these moments at the subjective level of piety and their role has changed little from ancient Athens to the present day. By contrast, masculine consciousness will undergo diremption and the separation of these two moments into the particular needs and abstract legal universality of civil society.

Women do not participate in civil society and the state. In feminine consciousness, the unity of universal substance and particular individuality remains at the level of an inner feeling of piety. But participation in the modern state carries the requirement for a more developed form of unity in which particular self-consciousness is raised to the rational universality of the *in-and -for- itself*.

In summary, Hegel's philosophical account does not develop feminine consciousness beyond the limits of the ancient Greek polis; as a result of this underdevelopment, women are unprepared for participation in the institutions of modern ethical life and must pursue their vocation in the family as in the past. The problem is that modern subjectivity requires

¹⁷ See Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Great Britain: British Museum Press, 1995) and W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece: Aspects of Greek and Roman Life*, (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson)

individuals to become full members of the state in order to attain “objectivity, truth and ethical life”. Feminine consciousness is judged to be capable of participating in the form of individuality constitutive of the modern state, and therefore it cannot be reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity. The reasons why this absence of reconciliation should persist in the account given of modern ethical life are complex. A study of feminine consciousness will raise philosophical awareness of present-day challenges that beset women and men in their quest to find a home in the modern world.

The main contribution of the thesis will be to identify and investigate resources in Hegel’s system of philosophy that are useful for understanding and resolving the feminist issues but have not been explored in depth and fully analysed in the literature.¹⁸ These include the *Logic*, *Aesthetics*, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and *The Philosophy of History*.

Research Methodology

There are a number of good approaches to the study of Hegel and presentation of his thought. The thesis has taken the approach of creating a synthesised presentation of his thought based on an overall reading of selected passages from relevant texts. This approach has benefits and drawbacks. It is within the category of generalized presentations and as such, carries the risk of falling short of the standards of scholarly rigor for clearly ascertaining what Hegel may have meant on a given topic. On the other hand, a synthesized general presentation

¹⁸ Kimberly Hutchings suggested that many of the standard and feminist readings of Hegel’s *Antigone* focus on explicit passages of text in *Phenomenology* and *Philosophy of Right* and do not consider other, more complex resources in his philosophy that would address the issues about sexual difference and self-consciousness in women. See: “Antigone: Towards a Hegelian Feminist Philosophy” in *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great*

does allow for a richer and more complex account of the subject matter.

An alternate approach would have been to select individual texts for sustained reading and analysis therewith to distil Hegel's essential thoughts into a concise statement of ideas to be discussed and critiqued. The results of this approach may be assessed more objectively and it is preferable in many, but not all instances. However, in this particular instance, it was found to be unsuitable. The obstacle is that Hegel did not think systematically about feminine consciousness, and without systematic thought, there does not seem to be a specific text containing a concise statement of his thoughts on the feminine. Few passages of text speak directly about the feminine, and unless the search for a more comprehensive presentation is to be abandoned, the relevance of other texts has to be recognized and they must be included even though they may not directly address the subject of the feminine.

The analysis of the thesis problem will proceed according to a methodology selected because of its consistency with Hegel's own conception of philosophy as a scientific method of knowing. A succinct statement of the method of philosophy as a science is available for consultation in the "Preface" and "Introduction" to Hegel's *Logic*. On the subject of methodology, it is useful as well to read the "Introduction" to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*:

...Philosophy, if it would be science, cannot, as I have remarked elsewhere, borrow its method from a subordinate science like mathematics...On the contrary, it can be only the nature of the content itself which spontaneously develops itself in a scientific method of knowing, since it is at the same time the reflection of the content itself which first posits and *generates* its determinate character.¹⁹

However the exposition alone of what alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of

Britain no. 41-42 (2000), 120-131.

¹⁹Hegel, *Logic*, 27.

logic...All that is necessary to achieve scientific progress - and it is essential to attain this quite simple insight - is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness but essentially only into the negation of its particular content...because the result, the negation, is a specific negation, it has a content ...it is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessors...²⁰

According to this methodology, progress comes about through the logical principle, “the negative is just as much a positive”. The logical principle generates progress as it moves through a succession of increasingly rich and complex forms of the Concept. The dimensions of these movements are logical and historical, they are logical because the method of progress is inherent in the nature of logic itself and also historical, because the unity of the finite and the infinite in Hegel’s Absolute must become explicit in historical time. Hegel’s conception of philosophy as a scientific method of knowing is only possible through the completion of a sequence of logical and historical processes. Both historical and logical dimensions are equally indispensable to the Absolute and the methodology of the thesis gives consideration to both, to remain consistent with Hegel.

The thesis engages Hegel’s philosophical account of women through the study of consciousness as Spirit, with a focus on the historical and logical dimensions as these are integral to the definition and inherent methodology of Spirit. There are many perspectives on Hegel’s Spirit, but from this standpoint Spirit is understood as consciousness that progresses dialectically through immediacy and externality to phenomenologically higher forms, by thinking about itself in ever more adequate ways. There are important remarks about consciousness in the *Preface to the First Edition of the Logic*:

²⁰ Hegel, *Logic*, 53.

Consciousness is Spirit as a concrete knowing, a knowing too, in which externality is involved; but the development of this object, like the development of all natural and spiritual life, rests solely on the nature of the pure essentialities which constitute the content of logic.²¹

Consciousness is historical and the study of Spirit as consciousness requires careful consideration of the historical and logical dimensions of each form. There is a contradiction between the principle of antiquity underlying feminine consciousness in Hegel and the principle of modern times underlying modern subjectivity is one that will not be clarified and resolved until its elements have been fully situated within the framework of Hegel's logical and historical account of Spirit.

Reflection on the scientific method of philosophy and its application to the thesis problem led to the key idea that will frame the problem for discussion and analysis. This is the idea that to progress the study of feminine consciousness in Hegel, the historical and logical dimensions have to be drawn into the discussion. Hegel's philosophical account preserves feminine consciousness in a shape incompatible with a conception of modern subjectivity that recognises "the principle of the self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality of the individual [*des Einzelnen*] the principle of subjective freedom".²² This incompatibility is a puzzling characteristic of the theory of modern ethical life. It grows out of the contradiction between the principles of antiquity and modernity. From the scientific methodology, the way to prove this argument is to study the feminine in historical location, identifying its internal contradictions in relation to the relevant form of historical Spirit. The study will show the feminine is not a discrete concept in Hegel. As a form of consciousness, it resembles Spirit

²¹Hegel, *Logic*, 28.

²² Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §185.

thinking about itself in ways particular to the ethical Greek world. Greek Spirit exerts powerful influence on feminine consciousness. This observation is key to the thesis and, once more, it brings to the foreground of discussion the pivotal distinction between ancient and modern subjectivity. When the condition of the feminine is related to this distinction, it is removed from the margins and restored to a proper position in the system of philosophy. This is a prerequisite for reconciliation. Many of the eccentricities in Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness may be explained as influences of Greek Spirit and antiquity.

By definition, the conception of modern subjectivity requires a reconciliation of the conflict between the ancient and modern worlds. The modern personality has reconciled and surmounted the contradictions internal to ancient subjectivity. Hegel said this reconciliation has its source in Christianity which he declared to be the religion of modern times. The principle of the modern age is a secular development of the Christian idea that God and humanity are reconciled. However, the secular development of this reconciliation seems to be incomplete, for if it were otherwise, feminine consciousness would not have been preserved in a shape that is incompatible with the conception of modern subjectivity. The texts suggest it has been preserved in such a shape and therefore, the reconciliation central to the modern age is not complete. We must look again to the original source of reconciliation in Christianity and find the blockages that restricted the feminine from progressing to the higher form of the self-determining individual. We will find these by studying the intricate steps and missteps in the dialectical progress of Spirit from antiquity to modernity and in this area, it is helpful to refer to the *Logic*.

When we adopt the distinction between ancient and modern subjectivity as the standpoint for considering the condition of feminine consciousness in Hegel's system of

philosophy, what comes to view is the thought that the explanation for the problem is not limited solely to the idea that Hegel does not wish to allow for the development of feminine consciousness, or even to the idea that his views on the feminine reflect biases. Another possibility is that Hegel was unwilling or unable to relinquish completely the conception of ancient subjectivity and he found it necessary that feminine consciousness should continue to preserve the character of the beautiful individual, within his theory of modern ethical life or *Sittlichkeit*.²³ This possibility allows that the ongoing tension between antiquity and modern life may not be fully resolved and is instead displaced onto the feminine, leading to the thought the reconciliation of the feminine and the future developmental direction of modern subjectivity. This possibility will be considered in the conclusion.

Spirit

There is a need to situate feminine consciousness and avoid treating the problem in isolation from the context of the account of objective and historical Spirit. In support of this requirement a good place to begin is with a broad definition of Spirit followed by a narrower definition focussed on its specific meaning in the ancient world. The doctrine of Spirit in Hegel remains a subject of considerable controversy. For the purposes of the thesis, there will be no intent to enter into these controversies or to critique the doctrine of Spirit but simply to investigate the logical and historical dimensions of Spirit as a context for the treatment of feminine consciousness. For this limited purpose it will be sufficient to use the definition of

²³Some scholars (Ilting, Theunisson) think that the whole sphere of objective Spirit suffers from this defect. The thesis has refrained from globalising their insights, but their work has been useful in doing the analysis of the problem of feminine consciousness. The suppression of feminine consciousness points out the theory of modern objective right unsuccessfully reconciles the universality of modern *Sittlichkeit* (the state), with its dependence on natural foundations (the family) for its natural self and concrete individuality.

Spirit given in text. One of the more accessible definitions of Spirit available in Hegel is to be found in his "Introduction" to *The Philosophy of History*:

Spirit on the contrary may be defined as that which has its centre in itself. It has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists in and with itself. Matter has its essence out of itself; Spirit is *self-contained existence* (*Bei sich selbst seyn*). Now this is Freedom exactly. For if I am dependent my being is referred to something else which I am not; I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence is none other than self-consciousness - consciousness of one's own being. Two things must be distinguished in consciousness, first the fact *that I know*, secondly, what I know. In *self consciousness* these are merged in one; for Spirit *knows itself*. It involves an appreciation of its own nature, as also an energy enabling it to realize itself; to make itself *actually* what it is *potentially*. According to this abstract definition it may be said of Universal History, that it is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially²⁴.

This passage declares the truth of Spirit to be the self-consciousness whose essence is the freedom of self-contained and autonomous existence. Hegel taught that Spirit as world history undergoes the shapes and forms of distinct historical worldviews, all the while advancing through progressively higher forms of consciousness towards the ultimate aim of self-realisation as the concretely actual and logical Idea. When Spirit as world history has developed to a stage where it is fully adequate to the truth of Absolute Spirit then the philosophy of history will have reached completion.

The reference to the truth of Absolute Spirit means the idea of reason as, "the unity and interpenetration of universality and particularity." Absolute Spirit only unfolds in the practical setting of the state because the state is the realm of objective freedom in which the idea of reason as "the unity and interpenetration of universality and particularity" becomes actual. The

²⁴G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree with an introduction by C.J. Friedrich

passage of text below pertains to the modern state and it is reproduced to highlight the linkages among the concepts of Absolute Spirit, the state, rational freedom, and the actuality of the logical Idea. When these are taken together they produce one of the more controversial feature of Hegel's system, namely the apparent tendency towards an enlargement of objective Spirit at the expense of the subject:

The state in and for itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of freedom, and it is the absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual. The state is the spirit which is present in the world and which *consciously* realizes itself therein....Any discussion of freedom must begin not with individuality [*Einzelheit*] or the individual self-consciousness but only with the essence of self-consciousness for whether human beings know it or not this essence realizes itself as a self-sufficient power of which individuals [*die Einzelnen Individuen*] are only moments...²⁵

Spirit, Nature and Finitude

The connection of feminine consciousness with the natural element therefore remains a problem. The issue is whether Hegel was able to reconcile the presence of an element of the natural order of things with “self-reliant truly subjective Spirit”. The implication here is that “self-reliant truly subjective Spirit” is not compatible with being *in a particular mode* or with “the limitations of humanity” given by nature, and the further implication is that a truly free and Absolute Spirit would be able to dispense altogether with natural limitations as if they were fetters. If Greek Spirit was overtaken by the dialectic because it was unable to dispense with the phenomenal side of things, then Roman Spirit was able to dispense with the phenomenal side of things only by retreating to the sphere of abstract universality. The theme of rejection of natural limitations runs consistently throughout the doctrine of Spirit in Hegel

(New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 17.

²⁵Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §258.

and does not subside even at the stage where the Christian religion is first encountered in the philosophy of history. The theme is contradictory to the Christian doctrine of Incarnation, which holds that free and absolute Spirit has been fully reconciled with the natural element of humanity:

For Spirit makes itself its own [polar] opposite-and is the return from this opposite to itself. Comprehended in pure ideality, that antithetic form of Spirit is the Son of God; reduced to limited and particular conceptions, it is the World-Nature and Finite Spirit: Finite Spirit itself therefore is posited as a constituent element [Moment] in the Divine Being. Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed – that the unity of Man with God is posited in the Christian Religion. But this unity must not be superficially conceived, as if God were only Man, and Man, without further condition, were God. Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: for the Natural is the Unspiritual.²⁶

This passage highlights the perspective of Hegel on Nature and its involvement with the life of Spirit, a perspective that does not seem to be fully adequate to Christian doctrine or even to the logical imperatives within his philosophical system. As a position from the standpoint of modern religion, it gives inadequate recognition to the natural element of spirituality. Earlier, reference was made to the location in the science of logic where this retreat to the earlier position “the Natural is Unspiritual” registers as an inadequacy in the movement of Becoming. In Christian doctrine of reconciliation, the natural element of humanity has to be sacrificed for Spirit to be manifested as abstract universality however it is recovered and reconciled with Spirit. The theory of modern *Sittlichkeit* itself is based on the principle of Christian freedom.²⁷ But there is no sustained and systematic exposition of the process of this recovery in *The Philosophy of History*. Without a resolution to this

²⁶ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 324.

contradiction between the spiritual and the natural dimensions of Spirit, it will be difficult to reconcile feminine consciousness to the conception of modern subjectivity. While there is no evidence that either sex is any more natural than the other, a good case can be made that in lived historical experience, men and women have adopted different standpoints towards Nature. The standpoint that Nature is unspiritual requires a rigorous critique from the perspective of both masculinity and femininity. In the absence of this critique, the natural aspect of the human condition cannot be developed to a stage of compatibility with rational self-consciousness.

The treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel is a problem for reasons that originate in the conflict of Nature and Spirit that is fundamental to his exposition of the progressive incarnations of historical Spirit. This conflict is definitive of the ancient world. Hegel's resolution of the conflict is decisive in determining the outcomes for modern feminine consciousness in modern times. The theogony of classical art portrays this conflict of Nature and Spirit vividly and is treated at length in the texts. Classical theogony is built on the story of the conquest of the old nature-based gods by the spiritual order of Olympian deities. This is discussed extensively in *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (hereafter referred to as *Aesthetics*) where the conquest of the old gods is recognized as "the beginning of the superiority of the spiritual over the natural".²⁸ The content to the story is that Spirit enters existence in the mode of finitude and natural existence. In Hegel, the realm of natural existence is synonymous with difference, particularity and contingency. Various life forms proliferate in nature, appearing as individual entities that are different from another and exist

²⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §124.

²⁸ Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts*, trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975,

independently. The natural realm is a realm of contingency, meaning, “what has the ground of its being not within itself but elsewhere”²⁹ and as contingency, the natural cannot be actual. The study of the classical Ideal of art reveals this Ideal is imbued with antagonistic attitudes towards natural existence and especially towards the sheer contingency of finitude and particularity, which are inescapable elements of natural existence.

This antagonism towards the naturalness of the classical Ideal has negative consequences borne by women and the family. The family, because it is the natural form of ethical life, and women whose ethical disposition is for family piety are impacted. In a broader sense, women are linked empirically with the natural realm. Although the classical ideal recognizes naturalness by displaying the gods as figures manifested in natural existence, it is limited to displaying them only with the external appearance of flawlessness “from which every trait of weakness and relativity has been obliterated”³⁰ By continuing to hold itself aloof from the “deficiency of the finite”,³¹ the classical Ideal is embodied in a way that reflects ambivalence towards natural existence. The unresolved tension between spirituality and natural existence will “drag classical art to its ruins”.

For Hegel, the troublesome aspects about Nature include natural existence and finitude, the contingency of particularity, and immediacy. All these aspects are interrelated. Immediacy and immediate individuality are terms used in this context to mean Spirit as consciousness in a mode of being-*in-itself* rather than *for-itself*, Spirit that has not undergone the division of distinguishing itself from and returning to natural life. Hegel’s idea of Nature is more a

paperback, 1988), 465.

²⁹See the discussion of contingency as a one-sided moment of the actual that especially holds in nature, in Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, Part 1 of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, H.S. Harris (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 219 (§145).

Hellenic idea than a Christian idea and it is influenced by the same antagonism towards natural existence encountered in his study of the classical Ideal;. and this is perhaps why its troublesome aspects do not seem to have been surmounted with consequences that in the human realm, are borne by women and the family as will be seen in the thesis.

A clear example of Hellenistic content in Hegel's conception of Nature surfaces in his interpretation of the biblical story of the Fall. The substantive meaning of the Mosaic myth is that every human being is destined to step away from the original unity with Nature and experience the antithesis that is the beginning of consciousness. Labour is both a result of, and means, for overcoming the original schism with nature. But Hegel understands labour in a more Hellenistic sense in which humans appropriate materials from Nature and use them as means to satisfy their needs, but they also shape these materials and in using them, they relate only to themselves. Thus so, they remain free because they are not conditioned by what is external to themselves. This understanding of the biblical story of the Fall and origins of labour reflects the conception of the principle of Greek Spirit as Nature transforming to the spiritual and anticipates his metaphor of Greek Spirit as a plastic artist. The discussion of the Mosaic myth contains the observation that for man, nature is "only the starting point that he ought to transform". Again, this interpretation of the biblical account is more closely aligned with the standpoint of Greek Spirit rather than that of Christianity. The Christian doctrine of reconciliation proclaims Nature ultimately is vindicated and redeemed as a legitimate moment in the life of Divine Spirit.

In Hegel, the preservation of the Hellenistic standpoint of antagonism towards Nature

³⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 483.

³¹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 483.

contributes to the exclusion of feminine consciousness from the mainstream of modern ethical life, because it presents an obstacle to an adequate resolution to the dialectic of Nature and Spirit. This exclusion does not come about because women are any closer to natural existence than are men, although it may be reasonable to argue that certain aspects of natural experience are unique to women. It comes about because it is the idea of Hegel that spiritual freedom is attained only through annulling natural being. But this idea is only an incomplete version of the truth of human nature. Humans are natural beings. The retention of the Hellenistic standpoint towards Nature has had a distorting influence on the conception of modern individuality of both men and women. The distortion produces effects that are specific to men and to women because of their different social and historical experiences, but in the end analysis, this is an issue about the nature of human being and not about the social roles of men or women.

The full participation of women in modern ethical life is suppressed in the texts, but the cessation of this suppression is, for reasons to be clarified, a logical imperative of Hegelian philosophy. The demonstration of this logical imperative will serve to enrich the conversation about whether the conception of modern subjectivity is incomplete for the reason that it contains distortions such as the suppression of the feminine that will need to be eliminated in order to realize the modern project

A better understanding is needed of the logical and historical dimensions of the causes that led feminine consciousness to a developmental impasse on the outskirts of the ethical Greek world. As part of its original contribution, the thesis will identify the historical moment where feminine consciousness reaches the impasse beyond which it is unable to continue the dialectical process of Spirit towards free and rational self-consciousness. References will be

made to the *Logic* with a view to clearly defining the logical and spiritual stage of the dialectic, where feminine consciousness reached its impasse. This will lay the basis for a more systematic and structurally-based account of how and why feminine consciousness falls outside the progress of the dialectic. On this basis it will be possible to develop a contrast between the structural features of feminine consciousness present at the stage of ethical substance, and features that appear in the subsequent phase of the Roman World, during which phase feminine consciousness loses relevance and is excluded from the progressive dialectic. The objective is to identify the key difference between these two phases in order to establish what feminine consciousness lacks for completion of its development. The outcome will be a revelation of what modifications to Hegel's account are necessary for there to be a fuller reconciliation of masculinity and femininity in the philosophy of modern ethical life.

Spirit as World History, the Principle of Freedom

This section will put forward the elements including the principle of freedom that constitute the relationship between Spirit and logic and will express the relevance to the thesis of this relationship.

A good brief account of the phases of world history may be found in *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.³² The first stage of Spirit as ancient world history is the stage of the substantial, a stage in which everything is immersed in substance; the individual is accidental to the Oriental state and the principle of subjective freedom has not yet come to light.

Ancient Spirit passes from the stage of substantiality to its second stage in the ethical

³² G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* trans. H.B. Nisbet with an introduction

Greek world also known as the realm of beautiful freedom, where the principle of the individual has developed only in the context of the immediate and natural ethical existence of the polis and the family. That principle has not yet discovered its autonomy. Spirit in the Greek world reflects an aesthetic unity of substance and subject achieved in the natural and unreflective form of the beauty of art. In the absence of mediation, the superficially harmonious unity of substance and subject is exposed to be a relentless opposition of the poles of substance and subject eventually this opposition causes the dissolution of the realm of the Beautiful Individual in preparation for transition to the next phase. Subjects in the ethical Greek world looked upon the polis as their universal end and the union of substance and subject is subjectively true for their world, but true in a natural and unreflective form that is inadequate to the Concept. Feminine consciousness does not develop beyond the limits of the ethical Greek world and in Hegel's philosophical account it endures at the stage of the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom. For this reason, no understanding of feminine consciousness is complete which is not well-informed by an analysis of Greek Spirit.

Ancient Spirit passes from the world of the Greek polis to the next stage of abstract universality consistent with the historical setting of the Roman era. Here, the union of substance and subject formerly held in the subjective form of the beautiful ethical individual is completely dissolved and reconstituted in an appearance from the side of objective Spirit and the state. Individuals participate in abstract universality as legal persons and in exchange for service to the state, the universal element of personality is awarded recognition and the subject acquires the status of a legal person, but recognition comes at a great cost because the concrete

individuality of the subject has been sacrificed for the sake of the abstract concept of the legal person. This sacrifice of concrete individuality and finitude in the interest of abstract legal personhood is the movement that defines Spirit at this stage of abstract universality and it contributes to the exclusion of feminine consciousness from the dialectic of Spirit.

Women and the family have a long historical association with natural existence, finitude and particularity for reasons discussed previously. Hegel regarded the family as a *natural* ethical community, "as the *immediate* being of the ethical order, it stands over against that order which shapes and maintains itself by working for the universal; the *Penates* stand opposed to the universal Spirit."³³ Feminine spirituality maintains the *unity* of universal substance and particular individuality in the *Penates* of the family from a standpoint of unconscious unity that is "not open to the daylight of consciousness". The spiritual movement of the Roman world is to set aside the natural element of finitude and relegate it to a subordinate position as the inessential. This happens in a controversial movement where the dialectic advances from Becoming to determinate Being. The reasons will be elaborated in later chapters. The problem is that for Hegel, what is natural, cannot be spiritual and must be cast off.³⁴ The exclusion of feminine consciousness from the dialectic takes place at the stage where Spirit appears as the principle of abstract universality in historical Rome. The imperative is for the natural and unreflected unity of substance and subject familiar from Greek antiquity to develop to a higher, more fully spiritual and reflective stage; the subjectively-held, aesthetic unity of substance and subject must move out from the subjective

³³ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* trans. A.V. Miller with analysis of the text and foreword by J.N. Findlay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), (para 450) 268.

³² Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 324.

inwardness of beautiful freedom into the open where it will be constituted from the side of the state in relation to the subject. This movement gives rise to the struggle of abstract universality and the individual. Feminine consciousness does not participate in this development and seems to remain instead in the realm of beautiful ethical individuality. It seems to have reached a developmental impasse.

The conflict of abstract universality and individuality that plays itself out during the Roman era is in preparation for the arrival of the genuine reconciliation of substance and subject given in the Christian teaching that Spirit has appeared in the form of a human being. The idea is central to Christianity that Divine Spirit is in unity with humanity. This idea is given secular development and became the basis for Hegel's conception of modern subjectivity and the principle of modern times.

The Greek and Roman phases of antiquity need to be differentiated and the spiritual content of each phase defined before an investigation of the reasons why this succession of historical phases had such lasting negative consequences for women. There are important distinctions between these stages that do not emerge fully into view and cannot be studied without giving close reference to the *Logic*. Where these distinctions have not been made in the literature it is perhaps because the lack of attention to the logic has made it difficult to articulate them with accuracy and clarity. In addition, there needs to be an affirmation in principle of the consistency of the logic with the philosophy of history and phenomenology because for Hegel, the starting points of logic and the history of philosophy are one and the same:

According to this idea I now maintain that the succession of the systems of philosophy in *history* is *the same* as the *succession in the logical derivation*

of the conceptual determination of the Idea.³⁵

For Hegel, philosophy is its own historical times comprehended in thought, meaning that philosophy has to be grounded in history as well as in logic. The above quotation may be logically extended to include a correspondence between the starting points of logic and the philosophy of history. This correspondence will be stated generally in principle for the purpose of the thesis because a complete and detailed exposition of these correspondences is unavailable at present, however a useful outline of relationships might be as follows.

Spirit is rational self-consciousness that is always involved with externality and realises itself by becoming concrete and historical actuality but the development of Spirit can only be grasped systematically in terms of the movement of its logical content and it is thus necessary to apprehend that content. The relationship of Spirit and the scientific logic is founded on the principle of freedom. This principle holds that the process or science that guides consciousness to the Idea is both logical and historical and it is also a free process, because its truth is the unity of substance and subject. It was proven in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* that this unity is the content of freedom. "Everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance* but also equally as *Subject*."³⁶ An existence is free when it depends solely on itself and not on any external thing other than itself. The true human vocation is to realise the inherently universal capacity for freedom. "...every human is free by virtue of being human, ...freedom of spirit comprises our most human nature."³⁷ *The Philosophy of History* presents

³⁵ Hegel, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy* (1820), GW 18, 49-50; trans. Allegra de Laurentiis and quoted in Allegra de Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World: On Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity* (Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd., 2005), 15.

³⁶ Hegel, "Preface" to *Phenomenology*,

³⁷ Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History with an Appendix from The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988), 21.

the course of world history as a record of the principle of freedom unfolding in the context of an expanding awareness of Spirit as self-consciousness whose essence is freedom. The contribution of the science of logic to this presentation is in the way of a systematic understanding of the methodology of the unfolding of the principle of freedom in the development of Spirit.

The principle of freedom is universal but the knowledge of consciousness as essentially freedom is knowledge that has been distributed unevenly across differing cultural and historical processes. The result is that not everyone has arrived at the stage of full and concrete modern personhood and there are many people who have yet to be fully reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity. The principle of freedom does contain the logical imperative for its own complete realisation but the means it uses for its realisation are specific to historical events and, in the end, it relies on the actions of individual human beings. This calls to mind the important distinction that Hegel said should be kept in mind between the principle that *implicitly* is, and the principle that has arisen in consciousness and developed to actuality in the external world. All humans *qua* human are implicitly free, but the realisation of human freedom in history is a long and incomplete process. The principle of freedom may be inherent in human nature but only in some and not in all cases has it risen into consciousness and developed to actuality in the external world. It would mislead to speak about the universality of the human vocation for freedom while ignoring the sequel to this which is that work remains vitally important, and the work of Spirit is necessary to expand the awareness of freedom for without the awareness freedom cannot come into actuality. By extension, the principle of freedom has not emerged and developed into actuality in the presentation of feminine consciousness in Hegel because it was not found in the historical setting to that

presentation. It will not suffice simply to announce that women also are free and infinite modern subjects without an exposition of the processes by which the work of Spirit can be completed in that regard and this exposition requires attention to the logical and historical dimensions.

Spirit produces consciousness by progressing through different stages of civilization each with a distinctive historical world-view that is progressively more adequate as a definition of the Idea. Consciousness as a historical product of Spirit preserves the determinations of lived historical experience until all their outstanding contradictions with external reality have been folded within a more complex reconciliation. Feminine consciousness as an historical product of Spirit has retained aspects of Spirit from the earlier stage of the substantive community. The difficulty is that the historical experience of life lived in the condition of an immediate individuality, is experience that has not been fully reflected in rational self-consciousness, thus it is not available in a form that is transparent or accessible for rational self-consciousness and without the transparency only possible through reflection, the substantive community as a determination of historical experience cannot be included in the complex reconciliation of the modern ethical world. The conflict internal to Spirit in the shape of the substantive community has not been resolved in a way that sublates its determinations in the progress of the dialectic. Having inherited its ethical disposition from the substantive community feminine consciousness suffers from the same, unresolved internal conflict.

Spirit is the unfolding of the logic of freedom that is the common core to historical experience; ultimately it unfolds as Absolute Freedom and Knowledge. Spirit proceeds through higher developmental stages in dialectical rather than linear movements, meaning its

advance is not determined strictly by previous content. The creativity in the movement of the dialectic is capable of establishing new relationships that do not wholly reduce themselves to the content of the prior position. The creative dialectic is able to bring about original results through a sublation of its moments that does not destroy them but eliminates the immediacy while preserving within their original determinateness within them.³⁸

One of the strong points of Hegel's conception of Spirit is its infinite capacity to bring forth originality. This strength counters any deterministic tendencies within the system and is resistant to the possible argument that a singular model of historical experience has exclusive access to rational self-consciousness. The idea of a genuine world history of Spirit is inherently an inclusive idea and undermines claims that any model of historical experience has exclusive access to freedom and knowledge. The position of *The Philosophy of History* within the Hegelian *oeuvre* is undergoing scholarly review however it seems reasonable to presume Hegel's viewpoint is that philosophy of Spirit as world history is not only possible but utterly necessary. The inherent actuality of the Idea cannot be realized except through the active involvement of Spirit in history. When the originality of Spirit is taken together with the system of logic that is not exclusively attached to the historical experience of masculinity, then the conclusion is that nothing stands in the way of reflection on dialectical development to complete feminine consciousness. This is not revisionism and it is consistent with Hegel's intentions.

The principles of Spirit as world history contained as their inner truth historically-specific definitions of freedom that when linked together, form the rational process for the

³⁸See the "Remark on The Expression 'To Sublate'" in Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 106-7.

realisation of the principle of freedom. These definitions emerge in subjective awareness in the form of an expanding consciousness of freedom. The element of subjectivity is shown to be necessary to the process of Spirit and that element is found only in history – yet another reason why the study of Spirit cannot relinquish the historical dimension.

The process that guides consciousness to the logical Idea is necessarily historical and logical. The investigation of the logical dimension begins with consideration of the distinction made in the *Logic* between the systems of objective and subjective logic. This is followed by comment on the implications of this distinction for the ancient and modern forms of subjectivity that will come under study in this thesis. The system of objective logic gives treatment to Being [Immediacy] and Essence [Reflection] because these are the two moments of substance whose internal relation constitutes the genetic exposition of the Notion.

The Logical Dimension of Spirit

The insight that must be reached with the aid of the *Logic* is that the spiritual world of ancient subjectivity has a structural and logical definition, and all its internal distinctions, including the Oriental world, the Greek polis, the Roman era, and the transition to the Christian era, are reflected in that structure and logic. Greater definition is necessary to effectively contrast the spiritual worlds of Greek and Roman antiquity and to establish the reasons why feminine consciousness reaches its impasse at this particular juncture and nowhere else in the journey of historical Spirit. Again, the use of the logic is warranted because any treatment of the systematic *Realphilosophie* would be inadequate if it did not involve the logic, “the structure and movement of reality in its universal truth”.³⁹

³⁹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 23.

It is good question whether it is possible to establish exact correlations between logical categories and the phenomenological and world-historical stages of Spirit. The thesis adopts the position that it is possible to determine these correlations using the methodology of dialectical progression. This position is an extension of the principle that the stages of historical Spirit are structurally and logically distinct from one another and they develop progressively and logically according to a dialectical methodology. The logic and history of Spirit must correlate. The logic of Being progresses in a series of transitions while the logic of Essence progresses through inward reflections and appearances in an other. Dialectical movement at the stage of the Concept is characterized neither as a transition or an appearance but as a development. The distinction between the methodologies of the transition and development is highly important for the thesis and will be elaborated in later chapters. The complete exposition of the first category of logic, the sphere of Being, is found only the system of objective logic while the third sphere of the Concept is given treatment in the subjective logic. The logic of Essence bridges these two systems.

The existence of correlations between dialectical methodology and Spirit is essential to the thesis argument that feminine consciousness inherited the historical shape of ancient subjectivity and has to be analysed on terms of ancient subjectivity. It follows that the dialectical progression of this shape conforms to the dialectical methodology of the transitional movement, a movement firmly belonging to the dialectical structure of ancient subjectivity. If one accepts Hegel's argument that the structures of ancient and modern subjectivity are fundamentally incompatible, then the persistence of a form of ancient consciousness must be viewed as an anachronism incompatible with the principle of the necessity of dialectical progression, one that threatens to disrupt the internal consistency of Hegelian philosophy. The

restoration of internal consistency demands this anachronism be resolved. The thesis will argue a resolution may be developed using resources internal to Hegel's philosophy.

It will be useful to identify and define the major concepts and ideas taken from the specialised Hegelian vocabulary that recur throughout the paper and have a bearing on the relation of Spirit and logic.⁴⁰ Among these, the first requiring consideration is the distinction within the science of logic between the two systems of objective and subjective logic and this section begins with an outline of that distinction. The purpose of this outline is to underline the fact that the presentation of feminine consciousness by Hegel is given entirely in the context of the system of objective logic, also known as the logic of the substantial. This logic is anchored in the historical setting of the ancient world. Hence, Hegel thought of the feminine as having a special affinity for the ancient world, and it is important to study the ancient world and understand the reasons for this affinity. Following this, there will be explanatory remarks about these terms and ideas together with their accepted English translations, including: the Concept or Notion (*Begriff*), Substance (*Substanz*), the logical categories of Being (*Sein*), *Being-There* or determinate Being (*Dasein*) and *Wesen* (Essence), and the determination *Becoming* (*Werden*). The present remarks aim to capture the particular significance these terms and ideas hold for the thesis. In addition there will be remarks to address the distinction in the methodology of the dialectical movement between Transition and Relation.

The exploration of the logic of ancient Spirit begins with Hegel's conception of the Notion; as a definition, the following excerpt has been reproduced from the *Logic*:

⁴⁰ An excellent reference is the Glossary and Notes to the Glossary which is to be found in the translation in English of G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze* trans. with Introduction and notes by T.F. Geraets, Suchting and Harris (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 336-352.

But if the truth of the matter is what we have already stated and also is generally admitted, namely that the nature, the peculiar essence, that which is genuinely permanent and substantial in the complexity and permanence of appearance and fleeting manifestation is the *notion* of the thing, the *immanent universal*...the indispensable foundation, the notion, the universal which is the thought itself, in so far as one can make abstraction from the general idea expressed by the word thought cannot be regarded as only an indifferent form attached to a content. ...the profounder basis is the soul itself, the pure Notion which is the very heart of things, their simple life-pulse, even of the subjective thinking of them. To focus attention on this logical nature which animates mind, moves and works in it, this is the task.⁴¹

It is clear from the quotation that in Hegel the truth of creation is its logical nature; this truth “animates mind, moves and works in it”; it is the heart and soul of all things, it is what is “genuinely permanent and substantial”. The task of the complete system of logic to demonstrate the logical nature of created existence and this logical nature is also what is meant by the Concept of Logic, often translated as its Notion. This inquiry into ancient Spirit will be guided by the question of what ancient Spirit has to say about the nature of created existence and the response to that question, because of the affinities mentioned previously, will shed light on the standpoint of feminine consciousness. That standpoint has not been resolved in the movement of sublation and continues to be problematic.

The *Logic* is structured by a distinction between the objective and subjective logical systems that reflects Hegel’s thesis about the logical and historical division between the ancient and modern worlds. This difference needs to be defined. It is the key to the thesis argument that feminine consciousness in Hegel resembles the historical shape of ancient Spirit and must, therefore, be understood on these terms.

While an adequate treatment of Hegel’s claims about the strong relation of logic and

⁴¹Hegel, *Logic*, 36.

history would be well outside the parameters of the thesis, this treatment seems to be a work in progress, and acknowledgement must be given to a recent publication by Allegro de Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World*.⁴² This work includes a chapter-length version of the argument that the history and logic of Hegel's philosophical thinking correspond to one another. One of the motivations for establishing this correspondence is the need to understand the shapes and forms of Spirit on their own merits and to grasp them as much as possible as they were at their inception and in distinction from subsequent historical developments - such a treatment requires that consideration should be given to the historical dimension of Spirit. For example, beautiful ethical individuality is inexplicable apart from the ancient Greek world. The principle of the self-sufficient and inherently infinite modern personality is a relatively recent development not found in the ancient world; the history of this principle and the events leading to its emergence are presupposed by the system of objective logic. While the subjective logic is useful for doing an analysis of the principle of personality, it presupposes features and developments not found in the ancient world, and cannot shed light on the nature of immediate individuality. Similarly, the character of an ancient subject such as Sophocles' Antigone cannot be made to bear all the weight of the presuppositions of the modern principle of personality. This imposes limitations on what modifications may be undertaken with respect to the account of feminine consciousness based on Antigone. There is a need to explore other resources internal to the system of philosophy in the interest of reconciliation of feminine consciousness. For these reasons it is important to recognize the specific shapes and forms of historical Spirit and respect their unique logic – this is key to an

⁴² Allegro de Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World: On Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity* (Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd., 2005).

understanding of feminine consciousness.

Hegel's Philosophical Interpretation of Christianity

Hegel's commitment to articulate a philosophical interpretation of Christianity is central to his system of philosophy. This is stated clearly in *Philosophy of Right* :

The right of the subject's *particularity* to find satisfaction, or – to put it differently – the right of *subjective freedom* is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern age*. This right, in its infinity, is expressed in Christianity, and it has become the universal and actual principle of a new form of the world.⁴³

Hegel accepted the Christian principle of equality of all persons before God and adopted it as the foundational principle of the modern ethical state. Beyond dispute, Hegel's philosophy of Christian religion continues to have contemporary importance for understanding his system of philosophy.

Hegel's interpretation of Christian religion is a source for his treatment of feminine consciousness that has not been well-explored in the literature. His lectures on the philosophy of religion and history consistently affirm the imperatives in Christian teaching that all people, male and female should be included in the human vocation for reconciliation with Spirit. Hegel's philosophical conception of the Christian theme of reconciliation became the foundational principle for his conception of modern subjectivity. The difficulty is that Hegel interpreted Christian theology in ways that undermined these same inclusionary imperatives. His conception of modern subjectivity does not include all people and in the view of many scholars, excludes feminine consciousness specifically. His interpretation of the central Christian theme of reconciliation is influenced by the pre-Christian principle of classical

⁴³ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 124.

antiquity and does not fully surmount the conflict of Nature and Spirit integral to the ancient world. Hegel's philosophical conception suppresses the full reconciliation available in Christianity and revives the conflict of Nature and Spirit in the form of an insistence on renunciation of the natural element as a condition for freedom and reconciliation with God. This is illustrated in the following passage taken from *The Philosophy of History*:

Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed - that the unity of Man with God is posited in the Christian Religion. But this unity must not be superficially conceived, as if God were only Man, and Man, without further condition, were God. Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth and knows that he himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being, for the Natural is the Unspiritual.⁴⁴

Hegel's philosophical interpretation of Christianity is influenced by the classical idea that Nature and Spirit are two distinct provinces.

After the creation of the natural universe, man appears on the scene as the antithesis of nature; he is the being who raises himself up into a second world. The general consciousness of man includes two distinct provinces, that of nature and that of spirit. The province of the spirit is created by man himself, and whatever ideas we may form of the kingdom of God, it must always remain a spiritual kingdom which is realised in man and which man is expected to translate into actuality.⁴⁵

This interpretation of the Christian theme of reconciliation does not move the status of Nature and the natural element of finitude beyond the classical position that the conflict of Nature and Spirit is implacable and essential.

Spirit must withdraw from harmonious unity with Nature and human existence in order to accomplish the spiritual destiny of humanity to attain consciousness of the freedom and

⁴⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 324.

⁴⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 44.

infinity of subjectivity. By rights, the opposition of Nature and Spirit is sublated in the transition from antiquity to the higher truth of Christianity. In *Aesthetics*, Hegel's position on renunciation underwent a subtle shift in emphasis away from the idea that the natural must be annulled, towards the less radical possibility that its inadequacies might be surmounted:

Of course in Christianity renunciation is an essential feature, but only in monastic ideas does it require man to kill in himself his mind, his feeling, the so-called natural impulses, and not to embody himself in the moral, rational and real world, in family and state - ...whereas, according to the truly Christian view, renunciation is only a factor of mediation, **the point of transition in which the purely natural, the sensuous, and the finite in general sheds its inadequacy** in order to enable the spirit to come to higher freedom and reconciliation with itself, a freedom and blessedness unknown to the Greeks **[emphasis added]**.⁴⁶

Hegel's attitudes towards Nature record profound ambivalence - his intentions are directed towards the higher truth of Christianity offering "a freedom and blessedness unknown to the Greeks", yet he remains sympathetic to the conflicted Greek imagination. In the passage above, Hegel seems to cast the requirements for modern freedom in terms of a quest for self-sufficiency that demands the renunciation of the natural element of the human. This is an impossibility for there can be no human being without Nature and the finite in general. The *Elements* reflects the idea of creation divided into distinct provinces of Nature and Spirit. Women are assigned to the province of Nature, men to the province of Spirit. Gender roles are formulated on the basis of the classical dialectic of Nature and Spirit. The antagonism of Nature and Spirit is not overcome so much as it is perpetuated and Hegel's own intentions for a full reconciliation that would include women in the spiritual kingdom of reason and freedom, are not realized.

Hegel's exposition of the Trinity does not clarify in a systematic way that the finite

world of Nature has been reconciled with the life of Spirit. Instead, the Christian standpoint towards Nature is interpreted as if it carried forward much of the antagonism that was characteristic of ancient Greek Spirit. Once again, Nature must be conquered and annulled, because “the Natural is Unspiritual”. It is unclear what destiny for the natural lies beyond the transitory moment of renunciation. This is not because Hegel did not understand the theological ground to the significance of Nature and the finite in general. His main concern is the recovery of ethical life in a form modelled on the ancient polis but adequate to rational self-consciousness and thus it is not surprising, his vision retains attributes of the Greek imagination.

The distinction between antiquity and modernity is undermined not only by the influence of classical aesthetics but also by Hegel’s absorption of Lutheran teaching about the Incarnation. The Incarnation is an essentially *spiritual* event and seemingly without reference to the external world:

Luther’s simple doctrine is that the specific embodiment of Deity - infinite subjectivity, that is true spirituality, Christ – is in no way present and actual in outward form, but as essentially spiritual is obtained only in being reconciled to God – *in faith and spiritual enjoyment*.⁴⁷

Hegel’s philosophy of Christian religion perpetuates the idea of creation as a hierarchy of Spirit and Nature. The insight needs to be reached that this insufficient resolution to the logical problem of the classical world largely determines the treatment of feminine consciousness. There is a misconception that Hegel identified women with Nature but this is not entirely inaccurate and in fact, women represent consciousness at a stage of immediate

⁴⁶ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 507-08.

⁴⁷ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 415.

unreflected unity of Nature and Spirit. Recognition of this as an historical stage is what rescues women from timeless identity with Nature. The problem is not that Hegel associates women with the province of Nature, but that the encounter with the natural world is not brought within the horizons of his vision of reconciliation of God and humanity. This deficiency cannot be solved by arguing that Hegel was wrong to associate women with the natural world. This will not resolve the root difficulty that association with the natural should not be incompatible with modern subjectivity. Human existence includes relations with the natural world as well as with other subjects. Whether women exercise a privileged role in relation to the natural world is a separate question that may not be resolved within the parameters of the thesis. What may be resolved is the question of what has to be done in order that the vital relation with the natural world - a relation indispensable to human existence - will not stand as an obstacle to attainment of rational self-consciousness, whether it is exercised by men or women. The human role in relation with the natural world has to be raised to the level of reflection and exercised in a way consistent with the principles of modern ethical life. This should be possible in Hegel.

In conjunction with this proposal to enrich the account of the modern subject world beyond, it is worth reading these remarks from the Additions (1826-27) to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*:

God has created man in his own image, for man is a spiritual being. Man must therefore become what he is intended to be; that is, he must fulfil his destiny as a rational being.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See the Additions from the winter semester of 1826-27 in Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* trans. from the German edition of Johannes Hoffmeister by H.B. Nisbet with an introduction by Duncan Forbes, Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics (New York: Cambridge University, 1975, paperback edition, 1980, reprint, 1982) 216.

These remarks imply it is a matter of internal necessity that the philosophy of Hegel should develop further in order to include people whose consciousness has not arrived at the stage where they have fulfilled their destiny as rational and spiritual beings created in the image of God but who nonetheless are capable of progress. The conception of modern subjectivity will only be enriched by these developments and to anticipate these will take place, and to expect they will be accommodated within the philosophy of Hegel, is fully consistent with his idea of what it means to be a human being.

A later chapter will explore the Christian idea of reconciliation as source of an imperative for inclusion of all people in modern ethical life and will theorize the reasons why this central teaching was not brought to bear on the treatment of feminine consciousness.

The Christian doctrine of Incarnation poses issues of central importance to the thesis. The Incarnation is about the historical appearance of God in the form of a human being. What is at issue is its logical structure, relation to the finite world of Nature and Spirit and to the human self that lives only within the horizons of that world. Only if Hegel is able to give a successful exposition of the Incarnation will he be able to reconcile Nature and Spirit and sublate the ancient conflict within a new form of world. That conflict is a particular dilemma for women because their relation with natural existence is presumed to be incompatible with rational self-consciousness.

In Hegel, the historical event of the Incarnation takes place in the Roman world. Therefore, it has to have the logical structure of *Dasein* because that is the logic peculiar to the Roman world. This correlation is implied in the quote from Schlitt in which the logical structure for the event of the Incarnation is said to be “the settling of becoming in concrete existence.” As these historical events happened in the Roman world, then the settling of

becoming (understood to mean the transition of Being to Becoming and to Dasein) must correlate to the Roman world:

The settling of becoming in concrete existence is for Hegel the logical structure of the three-fold immediacy of the Incarnation, an immediacy of "form", of content and of coming-to-be. This three-fold immediacy coalesces for Hegel in religious consciousness into the unique historical event of divine self-revelation in a concrete divine-human Self or self-consciousness.⁴⁹

If it is true that Hegel intended *Dasein* to be the logical structure for an historical event that took place in the Roman world then it follows the Incarnation would not be accessible to consciousness in the form of the ethical Greek world for that world represents a different logical structure. The event of the Incarnation would not be accessible to *any* form of consciousness including the feminine that is not developed beyond the boundaries of the ethical world.

What is interesting is the argument in Schlitt that unity of the divine and human natures is an event whose acknowledgment would require the faculty of reflection, because its structural nature could not be available immediately to natural consciousness. This requirement for reflection exceeds the capacity of consciousness at the stage of immediacy .

To sharpen the critique of Hegel's proposed intuition of a historical divine-human unity as finite Self it will be helpful first to state in global fashion what Hegel has really done. He correctly saw that faith perceives some divine-human unity in the Mediator. However, this perception of such a unity is itself the result of further reflection on the finite Self, which has thereby come to be perceived as a divine-human unity. Hegel has effectively replaced the original historical and finite Self with an already interpreted or developed divine-human unity. The original historical event has been replaced by a unity which was supposed to be immediately intuitable but the intuition of which is in fact the result of further development beyond the historically intuitable finite Self.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim*, 168.

⁵⁰ Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim*, 170.

Hegel's exposition of incarnational immediacy does not do justice to the *finitude* of the original historical event. The revelation contained in the Incarnation cannot be apprehended by the original historical and finite self and in fact, that finite self has been taken out of the narrative of Spirit and replaced by a more complex self that ought not to appear until later. The historical and finite self is excluded from the reconciliation of the spiritual and natural selves. This finding is consistent with the thesis finding that the standpoint of Hegel towards Nature and finitude is closer to Hellenistic than to Christian philosophy.

The abstraction of immediacy from the theory of the finite Spirit has repercussions because in Hegel, women have a special association with Nature, finitude and the condition of immediacy.⁵¹ This is because they have exercised their role in the natural community of the family and this is a sphere that encompasses natural individuality and finitude. Hegel's abstraction of determinateness and immediate content from Becoming and subsequent inability to recuperate it for determinate Being in a convincing way, produces negative consequences for the development of women and the family. Feminine consciousness has remained in a condition bearing close resemblance to that of ancient subjects. The challenge is to understand the meaning to retention in modern ethical life of ancient subjectivity. This will yield a better understanding of the conception of modern subjectivity and it will clarify what developments in the unfinished process will need to take place for Hegel's deepest intentions for all human beings to be realized.

⁵¹ The condition of Spirit that has not yet undergone the division of distinguishing itself from, and returning to, natural life, is being-in-itself or immediacy.

Feminist Responses to Hegel

The thesis will review highlights of the discussion of Hegel and feminine consciousness ongoing in the literature and examine a representative selection of feminist interpretations and criticisms. The intention is not to conduct a complete study of feminist responses to Hegel because that would fall outside the parameters of the thesis, rather to identify the main lines of critical inquiry and then select from the field a number of philosophers who are representative of the major philosophical positions that constitute the feminist response to Hegel. Again, the objective is not to do a complete literature review but to capture what has been accomplished in the analysis thus far and suggest directions for future research in order to progress the feminist response nearer to completion. There is no single feminist standpoint on Hegel. Although it will not be possible to conduct a systematic classification of feminist responses, every attempt has been made to organize the different philosophers and their respective positions beneath a heading of the appropriate school of political thought.

The first school includes feminist philosophers whose positions are rooted securely in the tradition of Enlightenment rationalism and liberalism. This school includes liberal feminist thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, and the philosopher H.S. Harris. Liberal feminists argue that Antigone is a self-conscious and rational actor. The thesis will critique the tendency of Enlightenment liberalism to conflate feminine consciousness with the standard developmental account of rational self-consciousness that is for all intents and purposes, a masculine account.

Patricia Jagentowicz Mills is a feminist spokesperson for the Frankfurt School of neo-Marxists and critical theorists which she believes has importance for feminist issues. Her work is focused on the first generation of the Frankfurt School - Horkheimer, Marcuse and

Adorno. Mills' intellectual posture is critical towards the Enlightenment tradition for setting in train processes of rationalization that have led to the domination of the human and natural world through the application of instrumental reason. Her work is defined by an analysis of the interrelationship of the domination of Nature and women and illustrates the importance for feminist issues of understanding the conflict of Nature and Spirit ⁵². The philosopher Judith Butler is included here. These philosophers share a conception of the emancipation of women as a *political* project. Although their project to *denaturalise* naturalised ideas about masculinity, femininity and kinship roles holds emancipatory promise, ultimately, their work is a continuation of the Enlightenment project to *overcome* natural constraints. This overcoming is not the *Aufhebung* that will bring about the reconciliation of Nature and Spirit.

The third group of feminist thinkers mixes elements of Rousseau-ean romanticism with naturalism and essentialism. Representatives would include Andrea Dworkin, Adrienne Rich, Luce Irigaray and Mary Daly. Their philosophical work focuses on retrieval of the natural feminine difference that in their view, was suppressed or depicted negatively in Hegel as unconscious feeling. The liberation of the feminine would free women from the oppressive influence of masculine ideals and permit them to express an authentic individual identity. The problem with the romanticist position is that it collides with the Hegelian standpoint that the inner truth of human being cannot be gotten at the level of natural existence and must be brought forth in the history of the labour of consciousness. The romanticist project to retrieve natural difference without further development of that difference *in itself* will not suffice to emancipate feminine consciousness.

⁵² See: "Hegel: Recognition, Intersubjectivity and Desire" in Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-49.

A fourth response is provided from the expanding field of environmental philosophy⁵³. The general approach of environmental philosophy is to propose an alternate framework for political theory that recognizes the inter-relatedness of the human and non-human worlds. This approach lends itself well to addressing feminist concerns. Environmental philosophers and ecofeminists contribute to this discussion a critique of the deleterious aspects to the association of women and Nature that differs from liberal, post-Marxist and post-Modern readings by not rejecting this association as oppressive, in itself. They claim the logic of western culture is at the root of the devaluation of women and Nature. A spokesperson is the Australian environmental philosopher Val Plumwood [1939-2008] leaves as legacy her work to advance a conception of rationality compatible with the fact that it is sustained by the natural world.⁵⁴ Alison Stone⁵⁵ is a feminist and environmentalist philosopher who finds Hegel's philosophy of nature to be relevant with respect to environmental issues and feminist concerns. She represents the potential within the environmental philosophical inquiry to significantly alter the feminist response to Hegel, by challenging to the conventional view that his philosophy is pervaded by the theme of subjugation of Nature to Spirit.

The fifth group of feminist respondents is composed of philosophers whose diverse viewpoints are unified by an interest in challenging the limits of western philosophical tradition, from the standpoint of Hegel's philosophy. This group is expanding and it includes the voices of Kimberly Hutchings, the self-identified Hegelian feminist, Antoinette M.

⁵³ For a good introduction to this area of inquiry see: Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley, eds., *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006). This volume of essays examines the impact of environmentalism on the major western political tradition and includes new contributions by Robyn Eckersley and the noted ecofeminist philosopher, Val Plumwood.

⁵⁴ See: Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (UK: Routledge, 2002).

⁵⁵ Alison Stone, *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 2004).

Stafford⁵⁶, Heidi Ravven, and most recently, Nadine Changfoot. These thinkers do not subscribe to all the positions taken by Hegel nor do they endorse his treatment of feminine consciousness, yet they do not reject him outright, as others have done. All find in Hegel something constructive for feminist theory. Hutchings concluded that Hegel certainly excluded women from reason and history, however the resources in his philosophy open possibilities for resolving intractable debates in feminist philosophy about whether immutable differences exist between men and women beyond the reach of the dynamics of history.⁵⁷ Heidi Ravven finds in Hegel's account of the polis possible new directions for thought about the need for development of the family in the interests of freedom and justice to individuals and the community.⁵⁸ The work of Nadine Changfoot⁵⁹ employs gender perspectives as a useful way to apprehend the interrelationship of Human and Divine Law, however she emphasises these laws are universal moral principles that equally constitute the community and are not surrogates for masculinity and femininity. Her feminist response challenges the idea put forward by Mills that Hegel's ethical life is constituted from a conflict of gender categories that ultimately he does not resolve. Since the community and its ethical laws are susceptible to the dynamic of history, according to Changfoot there is no basis in Hegel on which to argue for a transhistorical feminine essence. Her work suggests that by not developing women beyond the Greek polis and by portraying them in *Philosophy of Right* as if

⁵⁶ See: Antoinette M. Stafford, "The Feminist Critique of Hegel on Women and the Family," *Animus* 2 (1997). Internet. www.mun.ca/animus/1997vol2/stafford.htm.

⁵⁷ See: "Towards a Hegelian Feminist Ethical Theory" Section 6.3 of Chapter Six in Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 148-155.

⁵⁸ Heidi M. Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" in Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel* 225-252.

⁵⁹ Nadine Changfoot, "Hegel's Antigone: A Response to the Feminist Critique," *The Owl of Minerva: Journal of the Hegel Society of America* 33, no. 2 (2002): 179-204.

they do indeed possess a transhistorical essence, Hegel took a position contradictory with the principles of his own philosophy. By extension, it is legitimate and consistent with Hegel's intentions to explore modifications to his account that would permit women to participate fully in modern life.

This review of highlights of the discussion of Hegel and women concludes on the note that the feminist response to Hegel is unfinished and a work in progress. There is a need to continue exploring resources internal to Hegel's philosophy that could help to resolve the feminist issues and to enrich our understanding of the future possibilities that exist for his conception of modern subjectivity. Many feminist philosophers agree with the position taken by the thesis that Hegel does not develop women beyond the limits of the Greek polis.⁶⁰ He is seemingly unaware of the inconsistency in his argument that the ancient and modern worlds are divided by fundamental differences, yet Antigone manages to serve in both as the model of feminine piety. One approach to a better understanding of the reasons why this is so, is to investigate the Roman world where the degraded status of feminine consciousness is a clear indication that *here* is where the dialectical development moved in a direction with long-term negative consequences for women. This movement is worth further study. The logical structure of feminine consciousness needs to be clarified in order to understand its limitations and future possibilities.

Lastly, feminist philosophy would benefit by consulting Hegel's interpretation of Christian philosophy and its decisive role in shaping the outcome for women. Hegel presented modernity as a secular development of the Christian religion whose central doctrine proclaims

⁶⁰ See: Mills, "Hegel's *Antigone* ", 59 and Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" , 233 in Mills, ed., "Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel"; Changfoot, "Hegel's *Antigone*: A Response to the

that all human beings have been reconciled with Spirit. It is worth discussion of the possibilities in his theory of modern political life for a more inclusive account of human emancipation. The lack of critical feminist literature on the centrally-important subject of Hegel's interpretation of Christian religion is not a surprise because feminist philosophers and theologians have argued that Christianity has played a role in the suppression of woman and Nature. Without glossing over the detrimental influence of Christian teachings and practices, it is possible to investigate other resources in the tradition that could be interpreted as constructive for women and Nature and worthwhile to query whether these have any bearing on Hegel's interpretation of religion.

Among the major works in the Hegelian oeuvre that were consulted for the thesis, there are several that emerge rarely in the literature of feminist responses to Hegel. The feminist response to Hegel has concentrated on the prominent passages on women found in *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right* with special attention to Hegel's Antigone. It has not been possible to engage the views of feminist philosophers in other key areas of interest for the thesis. Works not adequately included in the feminist critique include the *Logic*, *Aesthetics*, and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel has not been taken seriously as a philosopher of history and *The Philosophy of History* also has been overlooked as a resource.

There are broad implications for feminine consciousness that fall out of the philosophy of logic and history. However these have not been fully explored in the literature.

The bibliography reflects the limited availability of feminist sources for consultation, in the key areas of logic, history and religion. Without a more extensive selection of secondary sources on this subjects, it has been necessary to rely on a close reading of the primary text.

This is to be expected for a thesis that seeks to enrich the debate by concentrating on the sources that to date, have not been fully explored in the literature

Related Critical Sources

Additional sources were consulted because they are relevant to the thesis although they may not have engaged directly with the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel. The reading of Hegel by Dale Schlitt from the standpoint of Christian theology will be introduced because it contributes to a better understanding of Hegel's conflicted position towards the finite world of Nature. Schlitt's critique that Hegel's logic shortchanges finitude sheds light on the *logical* structure of the dialectical movements that lead to the exclusion women and Nature from reason and freedom.

The work of Michael Theunisson is another related source of critical analysis. He argued that Hegel reinstated substantiality and repressed intersubjectivity in his theory of modern ethical life. Without subscribing to this view, it is possible to draw upon elements in his work to bolster the argument that there are inconsistencies in the conception of modern subjectivity and these are symptomatic of unresolved tension between antiquity and modernity.

Outline of Chapters

This is a brief outline of the eight remaining chapters, and the conclusion. Chapter Two, "An Overview of the History of Consciousness in Hegel," contains preliminary remarks about the science of logic and the principles of the philosophy of history, integrated with an overview of the history of consciousness. These will be necessary to construct the framework for discussion of the treatment in Hegel of feminine consciousness. Chapter Three, "Hegel

and the *Antigone* of Sophocles”, will review the highlights of the discussion about Hegel and feminine consciousness in the literature with reference to selected interpretations and criticisms broadly representative of the leading positions. The rationale to inserting the literature review in Chapter Three is to allow for the insertion of preliminary remarks in Chapter Two.

Chapters Four, Five and Six will examine the thesis problem from different perspectives afforded by Greek Spirit. The rationale for this in-depth examination is that the treatment of ancient and modern feminine consciousness falls entirely within the account of the ethical Greek world. There is a need to understand why feminine consciousness in Hegel has an exceptional relation with Greek Spirit. Chapter Four, “Greek Spirit as an Aesthetic Spiritual Unity” examines Greek Spirit from an aesthetic perspective. Chapter Five, “Greek Spirit: Beautiful Individuality and the Relation to Nature” will study ancient Greek consciousness in the form of Beautiful Individuality and will explore the relation to the finite world of Nature. Chapter Six, “Greek Spirit and the Logical Foundations of Feminine Consciousness” will study the logical structure of Greek Spirit in pursuit of insights to the logical foundations of feminine consciousness. Chapter Seven, “The Transition From the Greek to the Roman World,” will take up the decisive transition of Spirit from the ethical Greek world of the Beautiful Individual to the Roman world of the abstract legal person. Hegel does not develop women beyond this point. The aim is to identify the logical structure of the transition and evaluate the implications for feminine consciousness. In Hegel, the universal and abstract legal person and not the Beautiful Individual is destined to encounter the principle of reconciliation that will become the principle of modern times. Many philosophers agree that women in Hegel’s philosophy do not complete this transition and as a result, they

are not fully included in the conception of modern subjective freedom as a reconciliation of Spirit and humanity. Chapter Eight will explore the idea that Hegel's interpretation of Christian theme of reconciliation is incomplete. He makes claims that are universally true for humanity but does not acknowledge there are implications that if pursued to their end would require rethinking of the place of women and Nature in his philosophy. Lastly, Chapter Nine, "Feminine Consciousness and Modern Subjectivity" will demonstrate the validity of criticisms set down in previous chapters that the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel is contradictory to his conception of modern subjectivity. The conclusion will offer suggestions for further research.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN HEGEL

Thus far, the argument under development has been that the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel and its exclusion from full participation in all aspects of modern ethical life is symptomatic of an incoherency in the logical exposition of the dialectic of Spirit, one whose existence is suggested by tensions that are present in the conception of modern subjectivity. In the course of the exposition of dialectical progress from the logical determination of Becoming to determinate Being or *Dasein*, the natural moment of immediacy and the element of finitude seem to have been obliterated and were not recovered subsequently in the dialectical movement. The status of the natural moment becomes incoherent. There is no subsequent opportunity for the full recovery of natural immediacy in the dialectic. When the natural moment of immediacy and finitude is lost to the dialectic in its logical exposition, there are ramifications to be considered for the concrete philosophies of Hegel. If the criticism is valid that in the course of the progress of the dialectic immediacy and finitude have been short-changed,⁶¹ then this would have to be considered an incoherency in the logic of the dialectic, one that is not consistent with statements in the philosophy of Hegel about what is the proper relation of Nature and Spirit. The following is a good example of a statement about what this proper relationship should be:

But nature is not just something fixed and complete on its own account, which could therefore subsist even without spirit; rather it is only in spirit that nature attains to its goal and its truth. Similarly, spirit, for its part, is not just an abstract world beyond nature; on the contrary, it only genuinely *is*, and proves to be spirit, insofar as it

⁶¹ The argument presented against Hegel's position by Schlitt is that he shortchanged finitude by not giving an account of the truly finite self of the Redeemer and by insisting on a divine-human unity in which the content of finitude is inaccessible. See Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim: A Critical Reflection* (Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1984), 185.

contains nature sublated within itself.⁶²

The beginning of human individuality lies in Nature, although it does not end there because the destiny of Nature is to attain its goal in Spirit, but without, on its part, undergoing annihilation. Historically, women have occupied a position of greater proximity to the sphere of natural individuality, and it has been the case universally that their social role was exercised in the family and domestic sphere where they contributed support to the natural dimension of individuality. The locus of their role in the natural community since has proven to be disadvantageous to the development of rational consciousness in women, and as a result feminine consciousness does not surpass the stage of natural individuality that was found in the ancient Greek world and today would be found in the family and domestic sphere. For Hegel, there is a strong parallel between the family and the Greek polis because they are both communities of immediate and unreflected harmony in which the individual is identified with the group. The family and the polis both belong to the phenomenon of Spirit as an ethical substance.⁶³ The dissolution of the polis spelled the end of the ethical Greek world. The development of the family beyond the realm of ethical substantiality is halted because it was Hegel's position; the natural ethical community of the family could not be included in the sphere that gives rise to the developments of reason and history. Likewise, women who have historical linkages with the family have been excluded and so remained at a stage of development, which in many respects is analogous to the stage of consciousness found in the ethical Greek world otherwise known as the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom. But the

⁶² Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, 153.

⁶³ The argument that the Greek polis and family represent the same ethical phenomenon is developed in Heidi Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, *Re-Reading the Canon*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press,

conception of modern subjectivity upholds an ideal for human beings which is very different from the one found in the ancient world. The modern ideal holds that humans should free themselves from the traditional and natural constraints that were accepted in the ancient world, they should therefore celebrate the ideal of autonomous self-consciousness. This is wholly incompatible with the ideal of Beautiful Individuality, an ideal that informs the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel. The upshot is that feminine consciousness cannot be reconciled with modern subjectivity because in the Hegelian account, it continues to be informed by an ideal that presumably was sublated amidst the dissolution of the ethical Greek order. It then becomes the issue whether this ideal of the autonomous modern subject can be modified in such a way as to preserve the gains wrought by the dialectic of world-historical Spirit while advancing an understanding about humanity that adequately includes its relation to the natural dimension of existence and the natural world, an understanding that provides for a more satisfactory reconciliation of the opposition of Nature and Spirit than was available in the ethical Greek world.

Interest in the historicity of consciousness has been renewed through the writings of the philosopher Charles Taylor whose work, *Sources of the Self*⁶⁴ is an in-depth inquiry into the sources of the modern subject. One of Taylor's themes is the idea that modern subjects need to come to terms with the richness and complexity they have inherited in western civilization in order to better to understand the modern identity and defend it against its critics. If consciousness is truly historical, then it stands to reason that ancient people did not think in the same way as did people in the Middle Ages, and even less did they think like their

1996), 227.

⁶⁴ See: Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Massachusetts:

counterparts in the modern world. The logical extension of this argument would be that, if there were genuine differences in the historical experiences of men and women, then these differences also would have to be weighed in any assessment of the standing of masculine and feminine consciousness with respect to the principle of the modern person because this would be in keeping with the principle of the historicity of consciousness. That being so, it is not sufficient to speak about the ideal of the free and modern subject as if this were a neutral ideal that transcends sexual and other human differences, or at least, it will not be sufficient to do so without clarity on the issue of how these differences have been reconciled in the modern ideal, because, in the case of women, it is clear that reconciliation has not been realized fully in the theory of modern ethical life. Any suggestion otherwise would amount to a denial that there is, in Hegel, any fundamental distinction between the consciousness of free and modern subjects and the consciousness of ancient subjects or Beautiful Individuals because it is clear from the texts that feminine consciousness is informed by the latter, of which Antigone is an exemplary model.

The idea that consciousness is historical is central to the explanation given in the thesis for why masculine and feminine consciousness realize such different outcomes in Hegel's theory of modern life. This thesis deserves further exploration. To properly explore this idea and its ramifications for the thesis, it is essential to provide some background by briefly outlining the principles governing successive historical configurations of Spirit as consciousness from the ancient to the modern world.⁶⁵ Again, the historicity of consciousness

Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁶⁵See: Hegel, PR, §352-360. The compilation of Hegel's lecture notes on the philosophy of history is undergoing revaluation and to avoid any possible concerns, the thesis will follow this outline of the principles of world-historical Spirit.

has to be kept in view together with differences in the content of historical experiences of men and women, as this factor is important to understanding the marked differences in consciousness. Hegel classified the phases of Spirit according to four principles, each governing a configuration of Spirit in one of the four world-historical realms.⁶⁶ The idea that a philosophy of history is possible has not been repudiated altogether today; it is accepted that the specific historical and geographic references require revision. The underlying principles, however, have retained validity and logical consistency because they capture the logical sequence of development of Spirit, and by means of these principles, it becomes possible to identify the movements of logic in historical events. For the thesis, these principles need to be recalled, because with these principles modern feminine consciousness is easily recognizable not simply as an aberration from modern subjectivity, but as an actual historical form that falls on the continuum of dialectical movement from the ancient to the modern world. Having identified the historical model, it becomes possible to determine the logic peculiar to this stage of consciousness—an essential discovery for better understanding the nature of the contradiction with modern subjectivity. References to these principles aid in identifying what aspects of Spirit are at work in historical events, and in separating aspects of contingency from what has lasting significance for Spirit.

The first configuration of Spirit reflects the principle of substantial and natural Spirit, and in *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel assigned it to the Oriental world-historical realm; it is better understood in a broader, more generic sense. Generally, this principle has prevailed in

⁶⁶ See: Appendix 2 “The Phases of World History” in Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. from the German edition of Johannes Hoffmeister by H.B. Nisbet with an Introduction by Duncan Forbes, *Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1975, reprint, 1984), 196.

pre-political and patriarchal societies. Of keynote, the principle of natural and substantial Spirit specifies conditions where the unity of substance and subject exists in the form of an immediacy, a condition in which individual consciousness and the universal ends of the community form a seamless identity. The former is too utterly submerged in substance to recognize that substance is, in fact, identical with its own rational and universal essence. The immediate unity of substance and subject must be strictly maintained by external authority or through force, because it cannot yet be willed by its subjects for the reason that Spirit has not engaged their wills. In the world of substantive Spirit, customs and traditions were enforced and did not need to concur with individual conscience as they did in the next realm of Greek Spirit.

The principle of substantial Spirit manifests itself in and through Nature and it features the existence of inwardly undivided communities that are incapable of distinguishing clearly between family and state. The tribe or state may be taken as an actual extension of the family in which the ruler or patriarch fills the role of a father figure. The basis for the distinction between family and state is the deeper distinction between the objective and subjective sides of rational freedom, but this distinction has not arrived on the scene, and individuals remain fully immersed in the substantial. The absence of politics and history and the incomplete distinction of the institutions of family and state mark the condition where the substantial exists *purely* in natural forms and does not know itself to be free and self-determining.

The rise of Greek Spirit signals the transition to the second world-historical principle. This second principle is deemed to be *knowledge* on the part of substantial spirit and, like the first, it belongs to Spirit in the phase of substantial freedom. The crucial difference is that in this phase of Spirit there is now *knowledge* on the part of the substantial, knowledge which

represents objective freedom because it is constituted by the state and the arrangements of political life, and does not require subjective reflection. What distinguishes the stage of *knowledge* on part of the substantial from the *natural* substantial found in the previous realm of Oriental civilization is the emergence of the new principle of individual personality. The conspicuous feature of this new and higher phase of substantial Spirit is the rise of a strain of individuality that is no longer merely accidental to the universal ends of the whole, but is able to retain its ideal unity with substance. Very importantly, within this ideal unity, substance attains knowledge of itself. It comes to this knowledge through the unique genius of Greek Spirit, a genius for appropriating materials of Nature and transforming them into aesthetic artefacts of Spirit. The unity of the substance and subject, which previously was achieved only through subjugation and immersion of the subject in substance, now is present to individuals as *knowledge*, meaning the unity has become an object of awareness for individuals and is understood by them in terms of their obligations to external ethical powers. This *knowledge* is the beginning of *Sittlichkeit*. Ethical power is experienced as if it were bifurcated by two realms of obligation. The older Divine Law is associated with the household gods, family and the underworld, while Human Law encompasses the powers of the city, the institutions and arrangements of the political life of the collective whole.

For Hegel, ancient Greece is the homeland for this new configuration of Spirit as the principle of *knowledge* on the part of the substantial. This new spiritual realm is deemed to be the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom, a Kingdom whose subjects find freedom through self-sacrifice for the universal ends of the whole. They conform unreflectively and habitually to a body of customs and traditions and do not grasp the implication of the unity of subject and substance fully enough to know that rational self-consciousness itself, and not an external

ethical order, is the seat of ethical authority. The unity of the substantial and subject is no more the unfathomable attribute of a divine ruler. Spirit, as it was configured in the Oriental realm, offered its inhabitants merely a substantial freedom in which custom and tradition were prescribed inflexibly, and obedience was coerced without the engagement of individual volition. Here, the distinction between substantiality and the human subject exists in outline, and grounds have been laid for the rise of subjective freedom. In contrast with the Oriental realm, customs and traditions have been internalised by individuals and raised to the level of awareness as ethical obligations and then enacted on the strength of their own volition, as opposed to external authority.

Hegel discerned in Greek mythology a clear and compelling record of the momentous change that occurred in the relation of Nature and Spirit with the movement of world-historical Spirit from the Oriental to the Greek realm, and he wrote about this change at length in *Aesthetics* as well as in *The Philosophy of History*. His commentary on Greek mythology is essential reading for an understanding of the fundamentally conflicting nature of the relation of Nature and Spirit at the stage of Spirit as ethical substance. When Zeus, patron of political life, defeated the Titans he inaugurated an order of recognizably individual divinities that replace the abstractions of nature, such as "Necessity" or "Time" worshipped earlier. Dwelling in both the material and spiritual realms, the split condition of the new gods captured the essence of Greek Spirit; Spirit is manifested in Nature but knows it does not exist only at that level. This is Spirit configured as the principle of knowledge on the part of the substantial.

The principle of substantive freedom realised itself in the ethical Greek world through a harmonious unity of subjective volition with the universal ends of the community. But the emergence of the distinction between substance and subject already is foreshadowed in the

dependency, and hence, the vulnerability of ethical life to individual agency and character. The dependency of the ethical order on the agency and natural character of individuality constituted its vulnerability, and this vulnerability is what brought about the downfall and dissolution of the ethical Greek world. The element of natural individuality is the foundation for the character of the individual subject. However, inasmuch as it was a determination of Nature, character proved to be too unpredictable a base for the ethical Greek world.

This vulnerability of the ethical world to the unpredictable contingency of natural individuality is dramatized in Sophocles' *Antigone*. This tragedy is in part the story of a political regime brought to ruin because the legitimacy of its rulership was invested in the principle of natural succession and, with the outbreak of fratricidal war among the contending successors, this legitimacy was dissolved. Natural character is the forerunner of the principle of personality, and, inevitably, it develops into the distinction between substance and the subject. The tragedy is that it then becomes impossible to evade any longer the evidence of conflict beneath the surface of the harmonious unity of the ethical world together with the need for a deeper reconciliation of substance and subject than was available in terms of the principle of substantive freedom.

After the Greek polis collapsed under the weight of its internal contradictions, Spirit configured itself as the principle of abstract universality and assumed the form of the legally constituted state whose historical content is ancient Rome. Spirit in the Roman world has the task of advancing the development of the distinction between substance and subject. This distinction is the legacy of Greek Spirit but it could not be resolved on the terms and conditions available in the ancient polis and it was the ruination of the ethical order. The Roman state differs from the ethical Greek world in that it is constituted not from the natural

element of individual character, proven to be treacherous, but instead, from the realm of abstract universality. This abstract universality became the source for the legitimacy of the Roman state and served as the foundation for a regime based on the subordination of individuals to the universal and abstract state. Roman subjects dutifully served the state in exchange for which they were duly recognized as abstract rights-bearing persons possessed of a personality that, unlike character, contains the element of universality, and hence is a more advanced stage of subjectivity. Personality means the inherent freedom of the abstract ego which must be distinguished from individual idiosyncrasy and, unlike character, it is not bound to natural individuality.

Rome became the first state to recognize personhood and, in doing so, it created unintentionally an opposition to itself in the form of the principle of personality. The dialectical antithesis developed between the abstract universality of the state on one side, and on the other side, the equally abstract subject. This antithesis signified Spirit reaching the limits of its negativity. Force, and not individual volition, was the exclusive bond that joined abstract state sovereignty with equally abstract persons. The Roman world conceived of the unity of substance and subject [the Idea], as a unity of the whole (state) and parts (citizenry) held together by force⁶⁷ and not by character. But the displacement of character by the principle of personality had consequences. In the ethical Greek world, the element of natural human character served the function of setting limits to individual agency, but this function diminished in importance because the purely natural limits on subjectivity that applied in the ethical Greek world did not apply to abstract personhood. With the removal of ethical

⁶⁷ See Chapter 3, "The Essential Relation" of Book Two: "The Doctrine of Essence" in *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 518.

character as a natural constraint on agency, what remained was nothing more than the capricious passions of the ruler. Despotism arose out of these capricious passions, and the Roman state was deserted by the collective self of its subjects, who then withdrew from the terrible spectacle of despotism into the consolations of private life. The quest for consolation amidst the hopelessness of Roman public life culminated in the Hellenistic philosophies of Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism. This philosophical quest for consolation is the beginning of the recurrent theme of the divided “unhappy consciousness” in search of unity with unchangeable reality. There are several historical shapes of “unhappy consciousness” accompanied by the antithesis of spiritual and worldly realms; this division leads directly from the age of Hellenistic philosophies to the Christian era.

The modern world is the most recent world-historical realm and it is a secular development of the principle that arose in the Christian religion, which holds that humanity has an immediate relation with Spirit in Christ, through whom subjectivity has become the dwelling place of the truth of substance. Spirit is configured as the principle of reconciliation within which there have been reconciled a number of complex oppositions. The utter estrangement of substance and subject that became conspicuous in the late Roman world has been overcome, and now it becomes possible for the first time for the unity of substance and subject to be grasped from the side of self-consciousness and subjectivity. The principle of modern freedom stands for the reconciliation of objective and subjective Spirit which is made possible through the Christian doctrine of the unity of the infinite and finite in the Incarnation. This principle is given its secular and political development in the civilization of post-Reformation Western Europe, and this development is given an exposition in *The Philosophy of History*. The moral and substantial principle no longer is enacted arbitrarily and under state

compulsion, nor experienced as external ethical power, because it has developed to a stage where it has become a free choice of human beings compatible with individual conscience and insight. It becomes the task of Spirit in this modern world-historical realm to discover its own free and rational nature in the second nature of the political order of the state. Philosophy has no further interest in history beyond the recognition that the antithetical relation of substance and subject that appeared in the first natural order of existence has been reconciled in the second order, "the province of Spirit which is created by man himself". The history of the realisation of that principle of reconciliation is a "purely empirical matter".

The meaningful content of world History is a staged unfolding of a rational process culminating in the disclosure expressed famously in two well-known propositions found in the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*:

What is rational is actual,
and what is actual is rational.⁶⁸

For Hegel, writing a philosophy of history is an undertaking inconceivable apart from the doctrine that reason is reconciled with actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] as concrete freedom. Plato's metaphysics taught that reason and phenomena occupy separate realms, but Hegel's thesis is that the principle of freedom is given as the reconciliation of substance and subject. Plato taught in *The Republic* that the polis and individual freedom are incompatible, but modernity achieves this reconciliation of universality of Spirit and individual particularity. This is a new scenario within which to consider the fundamental problem of how human beings may know the truth given the staggering disproportion that exists between finite human beings and the absolute and infinite Truth.

⁶⁸ Hegel, "Preface" to PR, 20.

Without speculative reason, the reconciliation of reason and actuality would be impossible. What is singular about speculative reason is its capacity to grasp the inherently dialectical nature of finite determinations, and in grasping their dialectical nature speculative reason anticipates a reconciliation of reason and actuality. The anticipation of reconciliation does imply taking up a critical stance towards the present. This is important for the present thesis because the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel is so contradictory that it compels one to adopt a critical stance towards the conception of modern subjectivity not only as it is unfolded in *Philosophy of Right*, but also as it has developed in the modern realm. This is presumably because the theory of modern ethical life has solid references to and is in part an exposition of the world-historical modern age and not an invention of Hegel. Speculative reason functions to develop the contradiction between finite determinations and the logical Idea. It is possible to make the objection that when speculative reason is used to go beyond the comprehension of actuality to the next stage of thinking critically about the world, there has been a violation of the doctrine of *Wirklichkeit* which holds the actual is rational, and the rational actual. Our proposal here is to reinterpret Hegel's account of Spirit and the actuality that it claims to comprehend by using resources internal to the system of philosophy. One of the concerns has been how to go about thinking critically about subjectivity in the modern age from a Hegelian standpoint but without violating the doctrine of *Wirklichkeit*. Some insight into this problem is given in Section 142 of *The Encyclopaedia Logic*,⁶⁹ which distinguishes between actuality and contingency based on the definition: 'Actuality is the unity, become immediate, of essence and existence, or of what is inner and what is outer.'⁶⁹ While it may be

⁶⁹ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, §142. This Section on *Actuality* usefully supplements the remarks on reason and actuality given in the *Preface to Elements* with the reminder that not all that is, is

true that the actual is rational, and the rational actual, the determinations encountered in everyday sensible experience may be neither rational nor actual. Even determinations that are confirmed as rational and actual do not have such status on a permanent basis because they remain subject to change and development. The critical element of the dialectic has not been superseded in the doctrine of *Wirklichkeit*. Speculative reason would conclude that, in the modern age, the figure of the Beautiful Individual is an outmoded expression of the logical idea and that it cannot be fully actual and rational in the modern context and must undergo further development to attain rational actuality. Similarly, aspects of the feminine that are analogous to ancient subjectivity must undergo development precisely in order to be consistent with the doctrine of *Wirklichkeit*, i.e. that what is actual is rational. There is no contradiction between the critical standpoint of the thesis towards the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel and the doctrine of *Wirklichkeit*.

Hegel left neither a systematic nor comprehensive record of his views on the subject of women, nor was he able to resolve all the issues surrounding their status in the brief passages of text containing his abbreviated treatment of women. Still, it does not have to be a foregone conclusion that because his account has not completely resolved all the issues, feminine consciousness is destined unchangeably to remain marginal to the dialectic of Spirit. It is a principle of Hegelian philosophy that nothing standing outside of the dialectic of Spirit as world history is either real or actual and when this principle is applied it becomes clear the available alternatives for the account of feminine consciousness are reduced to two: either the account is capable of development and women are historical and spiritual beings included rational or actuality.

within the progress of the dialectic, or the account is incapable of change and development, in which case the conclusion must be that in Hegel women do not become real or fully human beings. The philosophy of Hegel does not allow for the contradictory state of affairs where women are fully human beings while being simultaneously excluded from change and development. Logic and reason would argue against any denial of the full humanity of women, and, by extension, logic would argue against the exclusion of feminine consciousness from the modern principle of subjective freedom. Exclusion would contradict the principle of modern freedom, which holds that humanity is destined to fulfil itself as rational being. There can be no other conclusion than that both men and women are included fully in the dialectic of Spirit and must undergo concrete development sufficient to fulfil their destiny as rational beings that will become concretely free.

For Hegel, modern feminine consciousness is presented as a direct descendant from ancient objective Spirit⁷⁰ that has the character of beautiful ethical individuality. The Beautiful Individual possessed the type of soul whose true nature is only fully revealed through art. Beautiful individuality is described at length in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts*⁷¹ as a shape of consciousness that emerges in the ancient Greek world and notably embodies the Ideal of unity of universal and particular as the beauty of art. It will be helpful to

⁷⁰ The Beautiful Individual is not to be confused with the *Beautiful Soul* who is an aberration of the modern consciousness of Spirit that is certain of itself, morality. The self of moral conscience has arrived at certainty of itself as all reality and harmony, and knows itself to have the power to obey or disobey the laws, but its self-certainty has no relation with anything objective, without which it becomes impossible to judge whether actions are self-interested or reflect universal standards of morality. The *Beautiful Soul* attempts to escape this quandary by withdrawing into itself and committing to nothing; it cannot put forward itself without reviving the antagonism of universal standards versus self-interest. It thus dissipates itself in empty yearning. See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, paras 655-658, 397-400.

⁷¹ Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts* trans. T.M. Knox, vol. 1 (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1975, paperback, 1988), 153-160.

bring to the discussion an appreciation for the Ideal of the beauty of classical art and for the significance of this ideal in bringing the spiritual and the human into correspondence with one another and in representing this correspondence in the form of an individual being. The originality of classical Greek art lies in its ability to produce works of art that emphasise the adequacy of the human form in relation to the content of Spirit and it does this not abstractly but in such a way that the essence of Spirit is unfolded in the medium of bodily form. This revelation of the Ideal through the beauty of art imposes rigorous demands on the artists who must labour to perfect the materials of their art, ridding them of all the deficiencies of the finite” and elevating them to harmony with the sphere of universality:

Only flawless externality from which every trait of weakness and externality has been obliterated and every tiny spot of capricious particularity extinguished, corresponds to the spiritual inwardness which is to immerse itself in it and therein attain an embodiment.⁷²

Hegel’s analysis showed that concealed within the classical Ideal is the impulse to expunge all the evidence of the flaws in “capricious particularity” and thus to present the appearance of flawless externality. The classical Ideal is problematic because, as an account of the unity of Spirit, it requires the strict subordination of particularity to universality in order to maintain the appearance of a perfectly harmonious unity. Despite the meticulousness of the classical ideal, there was no genuine reconciliation of universality and particularity in the classical Greek world. Classical artwork appears to succeed in uniting Nature with the Ideal but closer analysis reveals it to be anything but natural given that unity is produced using a process that demands the rigorous suppression of Nature together with the element of finitude. Beneath the superficial harmony of this world stirs an opposition in an immediacy, an

⁷² Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 483.

opposition that cannot be brought to rest because the ceaseless conflict of universality and particularity has been partially reconciled in the classical Ideal of unity. Sophocles dramatized the tragedy of the beautiful ethical individual whose actions preserve unity but at the expense of particular individuality.

The study of Beautiful Individuality is highly relevant to the present thesis because beautiful individuality, as the mode of consciousness typical of the ancient ethical world, is a dominant influence on Hegel's accounts of ancient and modern feminine consciousness. By rights, beautiful individuality ought to have been superseded in the dialectical progress but it was restored instead in a more limited sense within the account of modern ethical life where it appears in the guise of feminine consciousness. It is beyond dispute that the latter has preserved aspects reminiscent of the character of the beautiful individual. These aspects were not sublated in the modern principle of the free and infinite personality and because of this they fall on the margins of modern life. The reason for the anomalous presence of obsolete aspects of consciousness conjoint with modern subjectivity has to do with the conflict at the core of ethical Greek life. This conflict was not resolved adequately in progress to the next stage of the dialectic, a stage identical with the Roman world and the principle of abstract universality. While a full resolution is available only in modern religion, if that full resolution were to have been realized in modern life then there would be no need to carry forward the fragments of the classical ideal in the consciousness of women. The moment of Greek Spirit fully sublated would be available both to men and women at the level of rational self-consciousness. However, in the case of women, the Greek moment has not undergone sublation nor has it been raised to rational self-consciousness. It instead remains in the form of piety and is the unconscious disposition of women.

Greek Spirit appropriated and perfected the materials of Nature as artwork, but this appearance of perfection was accomplished only through the negation of finitude, and it constituted a withdrawal of Spirit into itself and away from external existence. Classical Greek Spirit did not pass over into universality, but remained centred in actuality in the figure of a concrete individuality that is the beautiful ethical individual. The classical Ideal as individuality is seen as the Beautiful Individual who must subordinate the particular content of individuality in order to manifest the Ideal. The finite content of individuality belongs in the realm of the natural, and this requirement to *negate* the finite content of individuality is decisive for the long-term outcome for feminine consciousness. The action of the Beautiful Individual is to negate the claims of individuality in the interests of inclusion with the substantial freedom found in the unity of Spirit and individuality. This sacrifice of self will be recognized as the fate of Antigone. It would have been more consistent with the logic of sublation as the *methodology* of dialectical progression if the principle of substantive freedom were to have undergone negation while also being preserved and given legitimate expression as a moment in the life of modern Spirit.

Hegel's Treatment of Women: Logical and Historical Consistency

The peripheral status of feminine consciousness in modern ethical life has been well recognized as one of the significant issues in contemporary Hegel studies and has been given much attention. The discussion in Chapter Three will bring forward numerous points of contention that remain to be resolved⁷³ in the scholarly debate about Hegel, his Antigone story

⁷³ See: *The Owl of Minerva: Journal of the Hegel Society of America*, 33, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2002). Issued under the theme: "Feminism and Hegel's Antigone Revisited", this volume expands the original debate with new contributions from Philip Kain, Nadine Changfoot, Patricia Mills, Heidi Ravven and Patricia Huntington.

and the place of women in his complete system of philosophy. The path to a clarification of the position of feminine consciousness in Hegel inexorably leads through a study of his systematic and historical account of objective Spirit, and must itself be systematic and grow out of the inherent nature of Spirit. This study will focus on the logical structure and movement of historical Spirit in the determinations of the Greek and Roman worlds. These worlds will be examined accompanied by references to the relevant passages of logic and this will establish whether Hegel's position on feminine consciousness is consistent with the methodology of his philosophy. The element of logical consistency is one that has been largely unexplored in the literature of contemporary feminist philosophy and in this respect the reading of Hegel in this thesis distinguishes itself from previous treatments of the problem.

Based on the theory that a correspondence exists between the logical and historical dimensions of Spirit, scientific logic and the principles of the philosophy of history will be brought together to construct a framework for the discussion of Hegel's treatment of women. Within this logical and historical frame of reference there is a focus on Sophocles' *Antigone* as it is analysed in *Phenomenology of Spirit* and on the theory of modern ethical life in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel's reading of *Antigone* brilliantly discloses the fundamental ethical conflict at the heart of ancient Greek life, and his exposition of the conflict and appraisal of its decisive bearing on the collapse and demise of the ancient world is for many readers still the analytical key to unlocking the meaning of the ancient world. The exposition of *Antigone* is also the most sustained account of women found in Hegel's philosophy; taken together with the section on the family and modern ethical life found in the *Philosophy of Right* it completes his explicit treatment of feminine consciousness. That said, the study would not be complete until the explicit treatment has been set in the broader context of the system of philosophy,

accompanied by references to relevant portions of his other works.

Hegel intended his exegesis of Sophocles' *Antigone* to support his analysis of the ethical Greek world as a process of Human and Divine Law. The account of feminine consciousness is secondary to the other purposes that he held in mind for this exegesis of ethical substance. This has to be borne in mind when settling upon what approach should be taken to the Antigone story, and when setting the expectations for what the story reasonably has to contribute to the aim of a reconciliation of women with modern subjectivity. The *Antigone* story has borne a weighty load of expectations in this regard and Hegel's critics have focused on it to the neglect of other components of his philosophy as if a careful reading of the Antigone story would suffice to bring clarity to the issue of the treatment of feminine consciousness. This expectation is not realistic because, important as it is, the Antigone story does not stand apart from Hegel's complete system of philosophy. To supplement the Antigone story and thus to bring greater clarity to the sources of the problems in the treatment of feminine consciousness, this thesis will draw upon the ample resources available in the Hegelian system and demonstrate the advantages in bringing them to bear on the problem.

The thesis will focus on an analysis of the correspondence between the key episodes in the historical account of consciousness as Spirit and the counterparts to these episodes in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Once these have been established there are points that will become clear. The execution of the logic at the particularly crucial stage of transition from the Greek to the Roman worlds is not consistent with the methodology of the system of logic. Related to this, the principle of modern times that unfolds through the stages of world-historical Spirit is not completely realized in the theory of modern ethical life as it should be, in keeping with the claims on behalf of modern subjectivity. There is an analysis of the logical content of Spirit in

the shape of Greek and Roman antiquity and this analysis will be conducted at the level of Spirit where Spirit is individualized as men and women; this will expose the logical structure of feminine consciousness. The logical structure is an aspect of the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel that has not been well explored in the literature. The results of the analysis will show that the presentation of feminine consciousness in Hegel was not developed beyond its predecessor at the stage of ethical substance. Certainly, this is not a new finding. The description of modern feminine consciousness in the *Philosophy of Right* contradicts the principle of modern Spirit that subjectivity has a relation with Spirit and has received the substance of Truth in itself.⁷⁴ A better understanding of the logical structure of feminine consciousness is necessary to determine whether Hegel's presentation may be reinterpreted or reworked to achieve compatibility with his conception of modern subjectivity. If the logic of modern feminine consciousness in Hegel is different from the logic of masculine consciousness then it will not be sufficient simply to assume that the reconciliation of the former with the modern principle is somehow implied in his philosophy and that there is no requirement for further explication. It will not be possible to conflate feminine consciousness with modern individuality without an explanation as to how these disparate logical structures might be reconciled. As an outcome, acknowledgement must be given to the need for further development of modern subjectivity and in light of this, a reconsideration of the ideal of modern subjectivity is also in order.

⁷⁴ See Section III "The Modern Time" to Part IV "The German World" of Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*. Writing about the important contributions of Luther to the principle of modern Spirit, Hegel said, "He [Luther] maintained that the Spirit of Christ really fills the human heart – that Christ therefore is not to be regarded as merely a historical person, but that man sustains *an immediate relation to him in Spirit*." 416.

Spirit and The Science of Logic

Logic is the science of the Idea as the structure of self-conscious Spirit. It has dual aspects. First, the origin and evolution of thought is given *inwardly* as the systematic science of logic, and second it is given *outwardly* from a historical perspective as Spirit. The presence of these inward and outward aspects of the Idea - inwardly logical, outwardly historical - substantiates the methodological requirement to examine historical developments and also to analyze their logical truth in order to locate and uncover the nature of the obstacles that have blocked access for women to rational self-consciousness. The logical phases should coincide with historical phases, although it is consistent with the freedom of the dialectic for there to be deviations. Historical world-views may be interpreted as stages of a series that over time will unfold the logical Idea of self-consciousness. The study of the logical and historical dimensions of self-conscious Spirit is an essential enterprise because the concrete philosophical sciences are real forms of the logical Idea. This is so even though it is acknowledged by many that Hegel's lecture notes on philosophy of world history are works of lesser rigor.

The System of Objective and Subjective Logic

Hegel's *Science of Logic* has to be considered from the standpoint that the whole Concept is both the *in-itself* and the *for-itself*. The Concept is both in the form of abstract thought and in the form of content. *Science of Logic* is divided into the Concept as Being, the *in-itself*, and the Concept as the *in and for-itself*, meaning the unity of Being and Essence or reflection. The former corresponds to the system of objective logic and the latter to the system of subjective logic.

The objective logic is concerned with the origins of the Concept and its developmental process in the dialectical movements of the moments of substance known as the categories of Being and Essence. The unity of Being or the *in-itself* and Essence or the *for-itself* results in the totality that is the Notion. However, this unity is at first only an abstract result.

The system of subjective logic begins from the position of the abstract or theoretical idea of unity which has been demonstrated in the system of objective logic and shows that the Concept is not merely abstract but has concrete existence as the logical Idea that is *in and for itself*, the unity of Being and Essence.

Ancient Spirit is classified as objective Spirit because it elucidates the logical Idea from the standpoint of substantiality or objectivity. As Spirit, it includes the two moments of substance and subject but these moments undergo development only on the side of substantiality. The complete dialectical process of ancient Spirit produced a sequence of historical configurations associated with the Oriental, Greek and Roman civilizations and each of these was distinguished from the others by its own internal core of logic that emerges to become a world-historical principle and then is sublated in the ongoing progress of the dialectic. The distinctive content of each historical worldview of ancient Spirit receives a logical exposition in the system of objective logic. It is useful to review the evolution of these principles in the process of ancient Spirit so as to better appreciate its standpoint and its contributions with respect to the overall development of the Concept.

The historical configurations of ancient Spirit are grounded in the system of objective logic. For this reason, it will be useful to summarize the key concepts and ideas taken from the system and to declare their relevance for this thesis. The ancient world is grounded in the process of substantiality through which the principle of the substantial develops from the stage

of immediacy or Being *in-itself* to that of knowledge or Being *for-itself*, and finally, to abstract universality or the Being that is *in and for itself* and is the Concept in outline. The complete process of substantiality is treated exclusively in the system of objective logic, which is the portion of *Science of Logic* applicable to the ancient world. It is essential to apprehend the ancient world as a historical configuration of logic which is transparent to reason and while its tensions and contradictions do contain elements of the contingent, its major features are not all contingent, and in fact have a coherent logical basis and are subject to dialectical change and development. The emphasis on the logical character of the ancient world is put on matters here with the aim of establishing whether and on what terms feminine consciousness – in many ways, a proxy for the logic of ancient Spirit – may be included in the dialectic of Spirit and whether it too is subject to change and development or whether it is outside this realm. If there is a logical exposition to the ancient world and if the feminine shares that logic then the latter must be included in the dialectic of Spirit and subject to change and development, in which case the account given by Hegel must be incomplete. It is reasonable to conclude that possibilities for reconciliation are inherent in the dialectic.

The Concept or Notion

The doctrines of *Begriff*, *Sein* and *Wesen* constitute the three parts of the *Science of Logic*. *Der Begriff* is translated as Notion by A.V. Miller. However, the thesis will adopt the more recent translation by T.F. Geraets *et al* as Concept. There is a requirement to understand the ethical Greek world together with feminine consciousness (which is, in many respects, the heir of the former) in terms of the exposition of the Concept, and for this an appreciation of the Concept is necessary. Only by locating feminine consciousness within the exposition of the

Concept is it possible to assess accurately the distance ahead that will have to be covered in order to follow this consciousness' advance to the freedom of the Concept.

The Concept is the truth of Substance and it has been described variously as that which is truly free, "the principle of all life." It is universality but also what is genuinely concrete, and finally, it is the singularity of the "I." The truth that was implied in Substance becomes explicit in the Concept through a dialectical movement that may be described briefly beginning with Being and Essence, the two moments of Substance. The relation of these two moments of substance will, in the course of their dialectical movement through the relations of causality and reciprocity, come to be seen as a unity, and as such, their relation is an outline of the Concept. However, their unity is only an outline of the Concept and not adequate because it is constituted as necessity and not as freedom.

The Concept is the truth of substance and it is the unity of the categories of substance that are Being and Essence. The Concept is constituted from the unity of Being or the immediate and *in-itself* and Essence or reflection, positedness, the *for-itself*. The unity of these is the Concept, the *in-and-for-itself*.

The progressive determination of substance necessitated by its own nature is the *positing* of what is *in and for itself*. Now the Notion is that absolute unity of being and reflection in which being is *in and for itself* only in so far as it is no less *reflection* or *positedness* and *positedness* is no less being that is *in and for itself*.⁷⁵

The constitution of the Concept as this unity supplies the rationale for how the logic must be

⁷⁵ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 578.

documented in the form of a systematic science. First, the Concept in the form of Being, or the Concept that is *in itself* will be treated, followed by the Concept as Essence or the *for itself*.

The complete exposition of the Concept divides into the systems of objective and subjective logic based on precisely this distinction between Being and Essence, the *in itself* and the *for itself*.

The Concept is a totality that results from the unity of Being (the *in-itself*) and Essence (the *for-itself*) but this is only an abstract result. The system of subjective logic begins from this abstract idea of unity and proceeds to demonstrate that the unity of Being and Essence is not only abstract, but also has concrete existence. The subjective logic concludes with the unity of Being and Essence that is the logical Idea.

Becoming

As an historical study, the dialectic of Substance and its moments of Being and Essence are captured in the treatment of the Greek and Roman civilizations. The dialectic of Substance was seen to progress through the immediate unity of beautiful ethical individuality and the Greek world to the more complex differentiation of the Roman era, where the unity of the legal person with the abstract universality of the state was present not as the freedom of the Concept, but in a form constituted from strictest necessity. Here, the state exacts from its subjects service under the harshest conditions but then rewards them with the status of legal personhood which is “the freedom of abstract negation,” including the requirement for self-renunciation. What emerges out of this unconditional regime is a “transfiguration of necessity into freedom” in which the identity of the two dialectical terms is seen to be a self-relation and no longer based on necessity. With this insight the dialectic of substance sublates necessity and

advances to the freedom of the Concept. This brings with it the realization that the truth of necessity is freedom. The authentic freedom of the Concept is the concrete and positive freedom of individuals able to be at home with themselves in the world, whose arrangements are experienced no longer as sources of alienation or indifference but as potential enablers of individual actualisation.

Substance

“Substance” denotes the objective side of Spirit and is defined in *Philosophy of History* as the originator and the infinite material underlying all material and spiritual life, and as such, all reality has its being and existence through substance. Substance develops into concrete existence, and is manifested in history as self-conscious Spirit in the realm of the social order and the ethical world. The philosophy of history would argue that the principle of an age is its substance, and, given certain conditions, substance may be identical with the state order, provided the state is able to satisfy the criteria for recognition as a moral whole. Substance united with subjective Spirit or with the will of the people is described as ethical substance or *Sittlichkeit*.⁷⁶ The ancient Greek world of Golden Age Athens was an example of this rare development.

The general concept of world history is, “the idea that reason governs the world, and that world history is therefore a rational process.” This is what it means to say that a philosophy of world history is possible. Reason is defined as substance and infinite power.

...It is itself the infinite material of all natural and spiritual life and the infinite form that activates this material content. It is substance i.e. that through which and in which

⁷⁶ In a later movement of the dialectic, the unity of substance is detached from its foundations in the will of the people and transferred to the order of the state. This coincides with the demise of *Sittlichkeit* when the character of the ethical subject, once the cornerstone of unity, is supplanted by abstract right.

all reality has its being and subsistence; it is infinite power, for reason is sufficiently powerful to be able to create something more than just an ideal...and it is the infinite content, the essence and truth of everything, itself constituting the material on which it operates through its own activity⁷⁷.

Substance is an element of the definition of reason but it also means the standpoint of reason at a particular stage in the course of its development towards the end of self-disclosure as the principle guiding the process of world history.

While Substance is a necessary stage in the evolution of the idea that reason governs the world, it is not that Idea, but a standpoint towards the Idea. "Substance is an essential stage in the process of the development of the Idea, but it is not the Idea itself; it is not the absolute Idea, but only the Idea in the still restricted form of necessity..."⁷⁸ Substance is the unity of Being and Essence constituted as necessity and the unity of the moments of Substance undergoes development through the relations of causality and then reciprocal action, and substance is elevated to the level of the Concept when the truth of necessity is revealed as freedom. Substance is presupposed in the Concept but the standpoint of Substance alone is not adequate to the truth of the Concept. In Hegel, the Concept is self-consciousness writ large or the "I" and the individual personality of the "I" has to be understood in terms of the Concept. On these terms, truth has to be grasped not only as Substance but as subject.

Ancient Greece contains the principle of knowledge on the part of substantiality embodied in the figure of the beautiful ethical individual. The account of feminine consciousness was written from this standpoint. But that individual is missing the infinity of thought reflected into itself and is not the individual personality of the "I"; the reality of the I is nowhere to be found in the ancient world. This is to be borne in mind as the point of

⁷⁷ Hegel, *Lectures*, 27.

departure for proposed modifications that I shall make in order to reconcile women with the conception of modern subjectivity, for, in establishing the point of departure, it becomes clear what further development is required.

In his remarks on the general division of the science of logic, Hegel says that the Concept is to be considered first of all in the form of its appearance as Being or the *in-itself* and later, it is to be considered in the form of its appearance as the Concept or the *for-itself*. Standing midway between Being and the Concept is Essence, which is the inwardness of Being and is therefore included in the objective logic. This general division of logic is important because Hegel claims that a strong relation exists between history and logic. The historical sequence of appearance of logical concepts is not random:

The thinking or figurate conception must be referred back to the previously-mentioned beginning of the science made by Parmenides who purified and elevated his own figurate conception and so, too, that of posterity to *pure thought*, to being as such ... What is the *first* in the *science* had of necessity to show itself *historically* as the first. And we must regard the Eleatic *one* or *being* as the first step in the knowledge of thought.⁷⁹

The Parmenidean concept of Being must come first in the historical sequence of logical concepts. The ancient Greek polis as the first appearance of Spirit must be the historical setting for the logic of Being. The recent collection of essays by de Laurentiis⁸⁰ investigates the claim that the *Realphilosophie* of Hegel cannot be understood without an accompanying analysis of logical categories. These categories are indispensable for thinking about philosophical problems. This connection of concrete philosophy and logic is important because it allows for a study of the stages of Spirit as world-history in conjunction with the appearance of the

⁷⁸ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, 226.

⁷⁹ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 88.

⁸⁰ de Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World: On Hegel's Theory of Subjectivity*

logical concepts in their proper sequence.

Essence

The system of objective logic concludes with Essence, which is the second of the three subdivisions of the science of logic. The passage reproduced below locates the movement of Essence in the dialectical progression of Spirit to the Concept. This passage also touches upon the issue at hand, which is whether Essence includes finitude in a way that is adequate to the logic of the Idea as a unity of Spirit and Nature:

Essence stands between being and Notion; it constitutes their mean, and its movement is the transition from being into the Notion. Essence is being-in-and-for-itself but in the determination of being-in-itself; for the general determination of essence is to have proceeded from being, or to be the *first negation of being*. Its movement consists in positing within itself the negation or determination, thereby giving itself *determinate being* and becoming as infinite being-for-self what it is in itself. It thus gives itself its *determinate being* that is equal to its being-in-itself and becomes *Notion*. For the Notion is the absolute that in its determinate being is absolute, or is in and for itself. But the determinate being which essence gives itself is not yet determinate being as in and for itself, but as *given* by essence to itself, or as *posited*, and is consequently still distinct from the determinate Being of the Notion.⁸¹

In Hegel, Essence issues from out of the sublation of Being and it is the first negation of Being. Essence comes about when Immediacy or Being is abstracted through the negative activity of reflection and then once again is reinstated as the ground of determinate Being or *Dasein*, which is existence. The development of Essence proceeds through the same sequence of determinations encountered in the doctrine of Being, with the difference that, because they occur through the activity of reflection, they now acquire the significance of a positive or a negative, rather than Being or Nothing. Essence first passes through the stage of identity

⁸¹ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 391.

where it recognizes that the truth of the finite is what is essential, and what is essential in finitude is identical to Essence. At the stage of identity, Being is separate from Essence and reduced to the result of the negative activity of Essence, to a shining. As in Becoming, the dialectic proves that it is not possible to think about Essence without the aid of a third determination containing both *identity* and *distinction* as its moments. This third determination is known as the ground, and out of this ground there emerges existence or determinate Being. In existence, the immediacy and Being that were abstracted by reflection should be reinstated. Essence is a unity of Being and Reflection, and as such, it is a configuration of the Concept, but Essence lacks determinations because the unity which it possesses has been obtained in an external manner. This means the determinate content of Being was nullified through the negativity of reflection in order to arrive at Essence. The determinate content of Essence is not Being that is *in and for itself*; it is instead, posited Being. The deficiency of the standpoint of Essence is just that determinate content still falls outside the unity and is unreconciled with the Concept.

The logical Idea is most perfectly revealed in the realm of pure thought, which is synonymous with the realm of logic where thought is free and for itself. Mediation is present here. *Phenomenology of Mind* is an exposition of the science of consciousness in which the work of Spirit is the precondition for the revelation of the logical Idea in the realm of pure thought. Spirit is no mere abstraction; it is the logical Idea in the form of an active and living consciousness that participates in concrete reality. The nature of Spirit is to be *in itself* consciousness and also to have itself as its own object, to be *for itself* in making itself into its own object. Spirit seeks knowledge of itself and continually produces shapes and forms of itself.

There are logical imperatives to be found in Hegel's system of philosophy. Their existence provides the mandate for a resolution to the contradiction between the philosophical account of the free and infinite modern subject, and the limitations placed on feminine consciousness by its restriction to a stage of ethical life directly descended from the Divine Law of the Greek world. What counts is that these logical imperatives have consequences, because the purpose of the historical and phenomenological accounts of Spirit is to demonstrate the necessity of the logical standpoint; the concrete philosophy is the presupposition of the logic. In Hegel, logic instils the system of philosophy with an internal developmental drive without which there would be not a philosophical system but only a series of interesting, if unconnected, philosophical studies. This internal developmental drive is directed towards the reconciliation of the tensions and contradictions that impede the progress of Spirit towards realization of the logical Idea. The treatment of feminine consciousness in the history and phenomenology of Spirit and in the theory of modern right is among those contradictions that must be resolved and the resolution has to be included within the full and complex reconciliation of modern rationality if the claim is to be defended that the Idea of freedom has been realized objectively. Otherwise, Hegel's deepest intentions will not have been fully realized.

This thesis is guided by the principle that logic is mirrored in specific world-historical realms and there are correspondences between the determinations of logic and the historical shapes and forms of Spirit. There is a particular need to clarify the logical content of ancient subjectivity because it has been found to have parallels with Hegel's philosophical account of modern feminine consciousness. The similarities between the two accounts are evident in the previous observations of his remarks about the ethical disposition of women and the law of piety. To understand his account of female consciousness, it is helpful to appropriately

reference the logic and to carefully distinguish between ancient and modern subjectivity. This distinction is basic to the disparity in modern outcomes for masculine and feminine consciousness. Equipped with a logical and historical model of masculine and feminine consciousness, it becomes possible to comprehend sexual difference in logical and historical terms and to foresee what must be accomplished if the work of reconciliation that is central to Hegel's theory of modern state and society is to be completed. Logic and history have prepared the one sex for rational self-consciousness while limiting the other to a form of consciousness that is analogous to the ethical Greek world.

Correspondences in Logic and History of Spirit

The following brief outline of the correspondences between the logical and historical dimensions of Spirit is intended as background information for the discussion about the distinction between ancient and modern subjectivity, which is a discussion that weighs heavily on the issue of the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel. A good place to begin is with the first logical category of Being, which is the Concept only *in-itself* and the moment of the logical Idea where the Idea lacks all determination and is immediate. Determinations are absent from Being because their presence would require there to be a one, and at least one other, but in the beginning there is neither one nor other, nor are there any perceptions or representations, there is just the I = I.

The historical content structured according to the logical category of Being and its determinations would encompass all the phases of antiquity from its origins in the civilization of the Orient continuing on through the rise of Greece and Rome and ending with the collapse of the ancient world and the emergence of Christianity. In Hegel, the ultimate objective of all historical change and development is the fully developed state, and he conducted his historical analysis of the phases of antiquity from the standpoint of individuals in relation to universal

spiritual life that unfolds in the realm of the state. Of note, the distinction between ancient and modern subjectivity is formulated on the basis of a question about the lives of individuals in relation to the state:

Among all the phenomena of history our true object is the *state*. As the state is the universal Idea and universal spiritual life to which individuals react from birth with trust and habit, in which they have their being and reality, their knowledge and volition, and through which they acquire and preserve their worth, two basic determinations are involved. Firstly, there is the universal substance of the state, the one inherently valuable spirit, the absolute power, the independent spirit of the nation; and secondly, there is individuality as such, the realm of subjective freedom. The question is whether the real life of individuals is one of unreflecting habit and custom in relation to the basic unity, or whether these individuals are reflecting personalities and subjects who exist for themselves. In this connection we must distinguish between substantial freedom and subjective freedom.⁸²

Spirit in the first stage of antiquity is immersed in the natural element. This early stage of civilization as the realm of substantial Spirit constitutes a *substantial* form of reason, meaning it contains the determinations of reason and all that is necessary for the Idea. But the two essential moments of Spirit, the moments of subject and substance, are not present in such a way that their antithesis is adequately stated and surmounted. The position of Oriental civilization would correspond to the logic of the category of Being and to the first moment of Being as an immediacy that has not developed determinations. As an example of this lack of determination, a peculiar feature of early civilisations is the absence of any distinction between, on the one hand, Absolute Being or the Universal Principle signified by the ruler, and, on the other, subjective Spirit as human subject. The complete absence of the distinctions between the one and the other in the early stage of the substantial world reflects the undeveloped structure of the logical Idea configured in the first category of Being.

⁸² Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 197.

Paradoxically, while there is no other in the substantial world, it is equally true that substance and subject remain completely distinct from one another because the principle of the subject has not been integrated with substantiality but only suppressed. The ancient oriental world is spirituality that exists independently and autonomously for itself, while the subject has no role in spiritual life other than the role of making an obedient response.

The world of substantial freedom is an immediate unity that contrasts sharply with the unity of the Concept, which has been mediated by a deep understanding of distinctions. The picture of undisturbed unity of the world of substantial Spirit is a deception that involves concealment from ancient subjects of the presence of distinctions and the truth of their otherness. The world of substantial freedom presents the harmony of substance and subject in an untrue form that does not grasp the content and structure of unity. This untruth generates the contradiction. The moment of Being is developed on the side of substance and the objective order while, from the side of subject, the principle of subjectivity has been ruthlessly suppressed in the interests of maintaining the undifferentiated unity of individuals with family and country. The efforts of thought to bring to light the structural differentiation of this world, instead, precipitates a rupture followed by higher development.

The second phase of antiquity unfolds in the ancient Greek world considered to be the “homeland of Spirit.” The Greek achievement was to assimilate into the organization of their social and political life the principle of the distinction of Nature and Spirit, a distinction that had eluded the Oriental world, and in the absence of tribal or geographic unity, they found in the polis a spiritual focus for unity that served as the beginning for the formation of individuality.

The transition from the Oriental to the ancient Greek world occurred on the grounds of

a new understanding of Nature whose key idea may be expressed in the concept of signification, meaning “the Natural, as explained by man.”⁸³ The activity characteristic of this new understanding consisted in appropriating the materials of Nature and instilling them with spirituality, thus transforming Nature to beautiful works of art that give expression to the truth of Spirit. “The Natural, as *explained* by human beings – i.e. its internal essential element as interpreted and explained by human beings - this is, as a universal principle, the beginning of the Divine.”⁸⁴ This new relationship with Nature is central to the organizing principle of Greek Spirit. The natural stimulus remains indispensable for spiritual activity but Greek Spirit essentially is free because it is no longer subjugated by the powers of Nature. Instead, it has transformed Nature into a product of Spirit and knows itself to be free in its aesthetic productions. The transformational artistry of the Greeks marks a new and aesthetically-conditioned phase of individuality in which the abstract principle of Spirit expresses itself concretely through artworks. Greek Spirit is not yet free and self-determining because it still needs natural materials to express the concept of Spirit - this limitation is captured in the phrase “mere Naturalness formed to Spiritual individuality.” The reconciliation of Nature and Spirit in Greek Spirit is partial - Spirit is bent on *subduing* the Natural. The impulse to subdue the natural to the spiritual when carried to its limits in the dialectic becomes the extinction of the natural.

During the short-lived Golden Age of ancient Greek life (*circa* 492-431 B.C.E.), the principles of substantial and subjective Spirit co-existed in an aesthetic unity made externally visible in the production of cultural, political and objective works of art. Among the

⁸³ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 235.

⁸⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 237.

extraordinary cultural achievements of this second stage of antiquity, Hegel gave specific mention to Sophocles' *Antigone* and to the grand funeral oration attributed by Thucydides to Pericles, because from his viewpoint, these works captured the essence of Greek *Sittlichkeit*. Spirit could not remain at the naive standpoint of the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom and already the contradictions compelling it towards comprehension of its own infinity were present in these singular works and in the world of the polis. The unity of substantial and subjective Spirit captured in the classical Ideal of the beauty of art broke apart when subjective Spirit asserted its capacity for reflective thought, and thus, the moment of the antithesis was introduced in the person of Socrates. Spirit then begins to move away from the ethical Greek world of laws and customs towards an alternative vision of a world whose legitimacy is founded on the universal nature of thought itself rather than on the prevailing authorities of law and custom.

Hegel credited the Greeks for having broadened the basis of principle of freedom and eliminating its capricious character. But the principle of freedom still fell well short of the standard of universality. The Greeks were the first to grasp that not only *one* but *some* are free, but it was not understood that *all* human beings as such are free. The freedom of the Greeks remained the prerogative of the few who were able to fulfil the prerequisites for full membership in the polis, related to Greek birth and ethnicity, sex, age and property ownership. These conditions excluded slaves and foreigners from citizenship and the participation of women was restricted by varying degrees. The Greek understanding of freedom was inadequate to the Idea of the unity of substance and subject because it aspired to the unity of the individual with the ethical world but did not recognize the general truth of human nature outlined in the institutions and arrangements of the polis. It failed to recognize the implicit

universality of human freedom. Ancient Greece is “merely the realm of beautiful freedom” in which the unity of the principles of ethical substance and subjectivity was held in the unreflected form of an immediacy, but not yet grasped from the standpoint of rational autonomy.

Spirit emerges from the dissolution of the Greek world in the new form of reflective thought and inaugurates the third and final stage of antiquity known as the stage of abstract universality and identified with the world of ancient Rome.

The universal and inherently infinite principle of reflective thought appeared initially in the ethical Greek world in an *inward* form, the form of subjective reflection, and in such form it could not be viewed as anything other than a corruption of the unity of ethical substance. Now, the principle of reflective thought is *outwardly* developed in the external world, in the shape of the abstract and universal Roman state. The abstraction and universality of the Roman state were characteristics not found in the previous world-historical setting of the polis. With the appearance on the scene of both the inward and outward principles of reflective thought, the world of antiquity reaches its end in the Roman era, but it reaches its end without having adequately resolved the opposition between objective universality and subjective freedom. In the absence of a complete resolution to this opposition, it is settled for a time on terms favourable to the power and authority of the state but much less favourable to the individual. The resolution in favour of the state reflects the ground for the distinction between ancient and modern subjectivity:

Everything depends on the unity of the universal and particular within the state. In the states of antiquity, the subjective end was entirely identical with the will of the state; in modern times however, we expect to have our own views, our own volition, and our own conscience. The ancients had none of these in the present sense; for them, the

ultimate factor was the will of the state.⁸⁵

The Roman era is the third world-historical phase of Spirit, the phase of abstract universality. The self-knowledge of freedom on part of Greek Spirit gained through its aesthetic productions now has been liberated from dependence on natural materials and comes before the individual in the form of the abstract universality of the state. The lives of individuals were devoted to service of the abstract ends of the state, in exchange for which they received recognition of themselves as legal persons. But the distinct attributes of individuality and its particular content have been lost in this unequal exchange between state and individual.

The fourth world-historical phase of Spirit is convened in the world of early Christianity, which is the world where the truth of self-consciousness at last is grasped as inherently infinite and universal. The German people occupy a special role as in the aftermath of the collapse of the Roman Empire; they are the heirs of the Christian principle. During the Protestant Reformation the German people developed the understanding that the unity of substance and subject is not constituted exclusively from the side of the state nor is it found outwardly in religion, but instead it is embodied in subjective consciousness. Luther arrived at the principle of free and infinite subjectivity that authorizes the moral autonomy of the individual and grants to everyone the potential to become a free and self-determining person.

In Hegel, the distinction between ancient and modern forms of subjectivity arose in the teaching of Christian religion that subjectivity has infinite worth and must retain its right, so that even in death, the individual does not die but is preserved forever. The Christian idea of

⁸⁵ Hegel, PR, *Addition* (H) to § 261.

reconciliation unites the universality and infinity of the Divine with limited and finite human nature and through this union, subjectivity is raised to the level of freedom and infinity. The principle of modern times represents the development of this Christian standpoint in the secular sphere, and because this standpoint includes men and women explicitly, it follows that women should be included fully within the principle of the free and infinite modern personality. The account of Hegel does not extend this originally Christian principle of the modern personality explicitly to its logical conclusion, which would be that both men and women are persons possessed of infinite and universal subjectivity. Instead, Hegel has given an account of feminine consciousness that has its origins in the pre-Christian world, and as such, it does not conform to the principle at the basis of his conception of modern subjectivity. The structure and logic of modern feminine consciousness as it has been explicated in Hegel is inconsistent with the Christian principle that all humans must be respected in virtue of their infinitude and universality, because the explication belongs clearly to an earlier understanding of human nature.

There is a requirement for a deepened comprehension of the rationale to Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness and in turn, this deepened comprehension will update the contemporary understanding by exposing the sources in logic and history of tensions and contradictions in his conception of modern subjectivity. What is at stake in Hegel's treatment is the issue whether he was able to execute successfully the progression of the historical and logical dimensions of the dialectic, leading to a satisfactory resolution of its oppositions within the complex reconciliation of modern ethical life. A satisfactory resolution would involve a change to an ethical life no longer immediate and natural as it was in the ancient world, but instead, spiritual – "raised to the shape of universality." Hegel was unable to resolve the

tensions carried forward from an earlier stage of the dialectic, the stage of Nature and Spirit, in a way that would demonstrate convincingly Nature is a legitimate moment in the life of Spirit and not simply a resource to be extinguished in the process of transformation to spirituality, leaving Spirit with no trace of the natural element. In principle, such a resolution is present in his work, especially in the theological writings, but it does not receive a full exposition in the political theory of modern ethical life.

Other studies have drawn the connection between the incomplete treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel on one hand, and on the other hand, the unfinished dialectic of Nature and Spirit originating in ancient Greece. But the literature has not generated a systematic and internally-driven critique of the adequacy with which the dialectic of Nature and Spirit is executed in logic and in the historical narrative and has not identified key passages of the logical and historical accounts that may be relevant for a better understanding of feminine consciousness – these would include passages in the lectures on the philosophy of religion, the portions of *Aesthetics* that give treatment to Beautiful Individuality and also the doctrines of Being and Essence in *Logic*.

A good place to begin this more systematic critique of the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel would be with the incoherencies identified already in the execution of the dialectic at the stage corresponding to Greek and Roman antiquity. A good start towards extracting the significance of these incoherencies may be made with Hegel's argument that the rise of abstract individuality in the Roman world constituted a severe setback for women and the family. His observations in this respect support the contention that finitude and natural individuality somehow have been abstracted from the principle of Roman times and the definition of human nature given as the abstract and legal person. It is interesting to read in

The Philosophy of History his observations on the subject of Greek and Roman family life and how they compare with one another:

In the life of the Greeks, although it did not any more than that of the Romans originate in the patriarchal relation, *Family* love and the Family tie appeared at its very commencement, and the peaceful aim of their social existence had for its necessary condition the extirpation of freebooters both by sea and land. The founders of Rome, on the contrary – Romulus and Remus – are, according to the tradition, themselves freebooters – represented as from their earliest days thrust out from the Family, and as having grown up in a state of isolation from family affection. In like manner, the first Romans are said to have got their wives, not by free courtship and reciprocated inclination, but by force. This commencement of the Roman life in savage rudeness excluding the sensibilities of natural morality, brings with it one characteristic element – harshness in respect to the family relation; a selfish harshness, which constituted the fundamental condition of Roman manners and laws; as we observe them in the sequel. We thus find family relations among the Romans not as a beautiful, free relation of love and feeling; the place of confidence is usurped by the principle of severity, dependence, and subordination. Marriage, in its strict and formal shape, bore quite the aspect of a mere contract, the wife was part of the husband's property (*in manum conventio*), and the marriage ceremony was based on a *coemptio*, in a form such as might have been adopted on the occasion of any other purchase.⁸⁶

The issue of the historical validity of his claims about Roman society should be set-aside for the moment. What matters is acquiring an understanding of why Hegel sees this particular stage as a *setback* for women and the family and how this setback is connected with the debasement of Nature. This will do a great deal to illuminate the rationale to his treatment of feminine consciousness in the contemporary world. From a logical standpoint, it has been found that the moment of immediacy may have been abstracted inappropriately in the course of the transition from Becoming to the higher stage of determinate Being coincident with the historical setting of Rome. Critics have charged this abstraction of immediacy, which then is disposed of as "*caput mortuum*" or by-product, represents a problem in the logic. The point which is emphasised is that this is not only a problem in the logic of Hegel, it is a problem

⁸⁶ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 286.

posed by the Roman world and by the modern social world as well, because the modern social world is still the heir to the legacy of Greece and Rome. This abstraction is a necessary transitory moment in the change from the realm of Being to Essence and from Greek to Roman antiquity and thence to modern times. The question is whether in the subsequent movement of the dialectic the immediacy has been fully restored. There is a view that it has not been restored. If that were to be the case, then this would constitute a weakness in the logic. The weakness also provides some logical insight into the developmental path of Spirit as consciousness and into its anti-natural orientation revealed in the treatment of modern feminine consciousness. The dialectic of Greek Spirit has not been resolved in a way that the impulse to conquest and subjugation of Nature original to Greek Spirit has been surmounted. This is clear in the logic and in the historical narrative of ancient Rome – if anything, the conflict is increasingly polarized because the ideal unity of Nature and Spirit available to the ethical world as beautiful freedom is no longer available in the Roman realm. The abstract and universal realm of Spirit is no longer dependent on natural materials to manifest itself.

The relinquishing of this dependency on natural material is negative for the status of women and the natural family community.⁸⁷ In Roman antiquity, the natural world is no longer held to be a source of spiritual significance as it was for the Greeks. Nature is no longer respected as a repository of information about natural limits and constraints on the will, and as a consequence, Nature is less able to compel an ethical response from human beings. The debasement of Being and Nature is a repudiation of the principle that held sway over family and religious spheres in the Greek world. But these spheres were the locus of experience for

⁸⁷ On the general character of the Romans and the harshness of Roman family life, see “The Elements of the Roman Spirit” in Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 288.

the majority of women in the Roman world and for this reason women too, were implicated in the debasement of Nature. In this way, feminine consciousness in late antiquity came to be disadvantaged relative to its masculine counterpart and nothing less than the redemption of Nature would be required in order for this disadvantage to be alleviated. The redemption of Nature is a principle that does not belong to Greek or Roman antiquity because it is a Christian doctrine that is upheld by Hegel in his writings on philosophy of religion. But it has no clear path of development in his conception of the modern social world - hence Hegel's resolution to the ancient conflict of Nature and Spirit is unsatisfactory. Without a more developed account of the relation of modern Spirit with the natural world, modern social world or *Sittlichkeit* is not a place where women may find themselves to be at home.

The purpose of this chapter has been to give exposure to the sources of the problem in the treatment of feminine consciousness and to do so through an overview of the history of consciousness. There has been a focus on the Greek and Roman worlds and this focus will be developed in later chapters. To complete the overview of the history of consciousness, recognition must be given to another dimension of the thesis problem that has been overlooked in the literature. This would be Christian doctrine, which is essential for the theme of reconciliation of feminine consciousness with modern subjectivity. Christian doctrine must be brought into the discussion because in Hegel, the logical problem of antiquity is resolved in Christian doctrine.

Hegel understood from Christian teaching that Nature and Spirit are equally revelations of God. This understanding together with the Christian teaching about the inherent spiritual equality of all people forms the basis for a full reconciliation of the opposition of Nature and Spirit that takes place in the course of progressive Spirit. This would include the

reconciliation of feminine consciousness with the dialectic because in Hegel, the principle of modern times is a development out of the idea of Christian spiritual freedom of both men and women. The exposition of how the universal principle of Christian spiritual freedom is developed in the secular realm to where it has become the consciousness of the modern individual is an incomplete conception because it did not include women. The claims to have fully surmounted the internal conflict of Greek Spirit cannot be substantiated in the theory of modern ethical life. The overview shows in the history of consciousness the distinction between antiquity and modernity hinges on the dialectic of Nature and Spirit that is fully resolved in the realm of religion, but that resolution was not captured in Hegel's conception of the modern social world. There are vestiges of a Hellenistic understanding about the human community as a dualism of natural and spiritual realms - the family is in the natural realm and according to this model, the natural realm is not the realm that gives rise to reason and history. Not all women find the family to be the locus of their experience but the pragmatic reality is that for most women in Hegel's times, and almost all women in the ancient world, the locus of their experience was the family. According to this conception, their consciousness remained in a sphere outside reason and history. This is the origin of the problem as determined from the standpoint of historical consciousness.

The logical science of the idea has the flexibility inherent in the dialectic to revisit content that was negated or excluded at an earlier stage and reconstitute it through further dialectical development. A model of authentic development for feminine consciousness will reveal that the modern state and modern individuals cannot exist autonomously of their foundations in the natural dimension of human existence. The natural dimension has to be recognized as included in the sphere that gives rise to history and reason, to complete the idea

of Christian reconciliation – how this is to be done is a difficult question, obviously. The ideal found in Hegel requires individuals to divest themselves of the natural element of finitude in order to attain truth - in the contemporary setting, this ideal is responsible for preventing a deeper appreciation of the natural world and related concerns because it focuses narrowly on the state and intersubjective relations while neglecting the urgent matter of the relation of the human and natural worlds. When considered from the standpoint of his conception of consciousness as historical, Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness exposes problems within his account and also within the western tradition of political theory that have their sources in antiquity and in the conception of the history of consciousness as a conflict of Nature and Spirit.

3. HEGEL AND THE *ANTIGONE* OF SOPHOCLES

Chapter Three will review the highlights of the ongoing discussion of Hegel and feminine consciousness in the literature and will examine a representative selection of interpretations and criticisms. Out of these, specific aspects will be identified for further study. A review of the literature allows the thesis to specify its points of departure from the discussion thus far of Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness. These points will be elaborated in later chapters on aesthetics, logic, and the philosophies of history and religion. This thesis examines these aspects of the problem that have not been discussed.

Statement of the Problem

Hegel may be said to have excluded feminine consciousness from his philosophical conception of modern subjectivity because he did not develop women beyond the limits of the community of ethical substance, and he did not extend the principle of personality and right of subjective freedom to include them explicitly. This assertion is confirmed through a reading of two texts containing Hegel's philosophical treatment of women. The first is found in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*⁸⁸ in the section devoted to the ethical order of the Greek polis, and includes the exegesis of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Here, Hegel treats feminine consciousness in the context of the ethical Greek world, but his treatment does not go beyond the historical events of the collapse of the polis; it ends with the disappearance of the ancient community of ethical substance. The subsequent chapter gives treatment to the accession of the world-historical principle of Spirit as the Roman world, but from the standpoint of phenomenology

⁸⁸ See Part Three of Section 1, "The Family," in: Hegel, PR §158-181.

nothing more is said of feminine consciousness.

The second passage of text that includes significant treatment of women is found in the section on the family in modern ethical life the *Philosophy of Right*.⁸⁹ This passage does no more than reprise the themes given in *Phenomenology*. A comparison of the treatment of feminine consciousness in the aforementioned references supports the conclusion that during the period of time that elapsed from the demise of the ancient polis to the rise of the modern rational state, there is no evidence to be found for any integral development of the principle of subjective freedom in feminine consciousness. The account in *Phenomenology* assigns women in the ethical Greek world to the role of “director of the home and the preserver of divine law”⁹⁰. The account in the *Philosophy of Right* depicts modern women with the likeness of their ancient counterparts as they are assigned the ethical disposition consisting in family piety that was presented to sublime effect in Sophocles’ *Antigone*⁹¹. Thus, it is apparent that in Hegel the principle of feminine consciousness somehow escaped the imperatives of dialectical change and development in historical time. In §166 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel articulates his views on woman’s ethical disposition but he does not differentiate between ancient and modern forms of feminine subjectivity. This is understandable given that, from his viewpoint, the principle of modern subjectivity has not emerged in the consciousness of women. This observation is especially striking given that until now he has placed importance upon the distinction between antiquity and modernity in the formulation of his theory of the modern state. Unless this distinction is drawn and its implications integrated with the account of modern subjectivity, the advance from antiquity to modernity cannot be

⁸⁹ See Part Three of Section I, “The Family”, in: Hegel, PR, §158-§181.

⁹⁰ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 478.

said to have occurred, and subsequently did not occur in feminine consciousness.

In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, feminine consciousness is declared to be ruled by the law of the natural ethical community of the family representing ethical life at the stage of immediate being or ethical immediacy. A thorough definition of ethical immediacy is given by Heidi Ravven:

Hegel's purpose in describing classical Athens at this point in the *Phenomenology* is to explicate a state of consciousness which Jacob Loewenberg terms 'the ingenuous society.' Hegel describes a society at the level of what he calls 'ethical immediacy.' It is a society in which the individual's ethical personality is completely identified with membership in the social whole. No legitimate differentiation or conflict between the individual and the group has yet developed because no rationally developed individuation of personality and activity are yet possible. The individual lives within the society in the peace and harmony of Eden. The individual feels fully at home as him - or herself in the institutions of society - political and familial. He or she adopts no critical posture regarding them...Hegel calls this stage 'the beauty of ethical life.'⁹²

Hegel remarks that the ancient family is "the *unconscious*, still inner Notion [of the ethical order]⁹³", meaning the family is the truth of ethical life as a unity of universality and particularity, but it is unconscious of that truth. Likewise, feminine consciousness is also unconscious of the truth and finds both universal substance and individual particularity in the realm of Divine Law. Feminine consciousness is able to realise the completion of ethical life but, never having experienced the distinction of substance and subject, it does not become explicitly conscious of the unity of universality and particularity. The truth of ethical life for the feminine element remains at the level of feeling and Divine Law. On this level it is

⁹¹ Hegel, PR, §166.

⁹² Heidi Ravven, "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" in Mills, ed. *Feminist Interpretations of Hegel*, 227.

⁹³ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller with analysis of the text and foreword by J.N. Findlay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 268.

exempted from actuality, and this exemption gives rise to the peculiar ahistorical quality of feminine consciousness in Hegel, a reading that proceeds almost as if the subject matter were unchanged through the ages. Hegel does not allow the feminine element to become conscious of the nature of ethical life as a unity of universality and particularity. By contrast, masculine consciousness is said to leave behind the natural ethical life of the family and pass over to Human Law and the life of the community where it finds consciousness of universality.⁹⁴

Hegel clearly distinguished the ethical content of masculine and feminine consciousness in the ancient Greek world. However, it may be argued that notwithstanding the assignment of distinct social roles for men and women, the ancient ethical order was not without a measure of sexual equality. This observation requires explanation. The ancient Greek polis was an ethical substance, and as such, it was an immediate unity of universality and particular consciousness where individuals are joined in seamless unity with the whole and where the universal element gets a natural self from men and women. It is clear from the passage below that both men and women share in the condition of ethical immediacy:

In this way both the sexes overcome their merely natural being, and become ethically significant, as diverse forms dividing between them the different aspects which the ethical substance assumes. Both these universal factors of the ethical world have their specific individuality in naturally distinct self-consciousnesses, for the reason that the spirit at work in the ethical order is the immediate unity of the substance [of ethical life] with self-consciousness –an immediacy which thus appears as the existence of a natural difference, at once as regards the aspect of reality and of difference.⁹⁵

The form of immediate individuality was characteristic of the ethical world and was

⁹⁴This is inconsistent with readings in the *Philosophy of History* about the nature of Greek Spirit in which the qualities of Beautiful Individuality are held to be that it had *no conscience*, it held by the existing order of things and was unacquainted with the consideration of the state in the abstract. On these terms it would be impossible for ancient masculine consciousness to do what Hegel said, and find consciousness of universality or find self-conscious reality in the community.

applicable to both men and women. The moments of substance and self-consciousness were present as an immediate unity on both sides of Divine and Human Law. The presence of these two moments is the ground for the idea that a substantive equality of men and women existed in the ethical world of the polis. This challenges the conventional view that Greek women were silent, invisible figures whose lives were confined largely to doing the work of the household under conditions of segregation. However this view may have been an oversimplification and it is undergoing reassessment in the wake of new developments in scholarly thinking.

One such area of development lies in the sphere of Greek ritual and religious practice, and is where Jean Breton Connelly⁹⁶ recently presented detailed evidence gleaned from archaeological records, that in the sphere of religious worship and office, examples exist where men and women assumed roles of equal and comparable importance. Hegel's conception of ancient subjectivity in the aesthetic form of the Beautiful Individual is not incompatible with this reassessment; although he gave examples embodied in masculine form, such as the example of Pericles, there is an exception to this because the Beautiful Individual was embodied also in the feminine figure of Antigone. There is evidence to support the claim that for Hegel, Antigone held the status of a Beautiful Individual, and this evidence may be found in the passage below taken from *Philosophy of Right*. In this passage, Hegel is describing and distinguishing the modern spirituality of the sexes:

The one [sex] is therefore spirituality which divides itself up into personal self-sufficiency with being *for itself* and the knowledge and volition of *free universality* i.e. into the self-consciousness of conceptual thought and the

⁹⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 478.

⁹⁶ Jean Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

volition of the objective and ultimate end. And the *other* is spirituality which maintains itself in unity as knowledge and volition of the substantial in the form of concrete *individuality* [*Einzelheit*] and feeling [*Empfindung*].⁹⁷

The principle of feminine spirituality is defined in the text as a knowledge and volition of the substantial that has the form of concrete individuality and feeling. Although it is true this principle is not adequate for modern individuality, the point is to establish that the ethical disposition of ancient and modern women is at least consistent with the principle underlying the conception of the subject as Beautiful Individual. This principle is described in the following passage from *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, where Hegel wrote about beautiful ethical individuality:

...the kingdom of freedom--not that of unrestrained and natural freedom but of ethical freedom--is now realised. Its end is not arbitrary or particular but universal, for it takes the universal end of the nation as the object of its will and its knowledge...It is the union of the ethical with the subjective will, in which the Idea is united with a plastic form: it does not exist abstractly for itself, but is immediately bound up with the real, just as the sensuous bears the stamp and expression of the spiritual in a beautiful work of art. It is not yet morality, but merely unreflecting ethical existence; for the individual will of the subject intuitively adopts the customs and habits laid down by justice and the laws.⁹⁸

Antigone, therefore, must have been a Beautiful Individual as was Pericles, “the Zeus of the human pantheon of Athens”, whose example is cited as the summit of achievement for this form of consciousness.⁹⁹ This is important because it means that from within the confines of the family sphere to which she and all ancient women are assigned by Hegel, she—and all ancient women—also participated in the spiritual order of ethical substance. This means that the life of women and the family in the ancient polis may have had its foundations

⁹⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §166.

⁹⁸ Hegel *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 202.

⁹⁹ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 261.

in natural existence as Hegel said, but the distinction between the natural existence of the family and the spiritual existence of the community does not need to be interpreted as if it were an absolute distinction or as if it precluded any continuity between these two spheres. Hegel may have exaggerated the distinction between the family and the polis because he intended for the institutional sphere to reflect the relentless conflict of Nature and Spirit, which from his viewpoint, is the logical problem of the ethical world. In fact, it would be inconsistent with the principles of his philosophy to maintain that the family is identical wholly with Nature or the polis wholly with Spirit because both institutions of family and polis contain the elements of contingency and unmediated Nature. The beautiful freedom of ethical substance presents itself in the two forms of Human and Divine Law.

The importance of Antigone does not stem from any assertion of self-consciousness on her part, nor does it stem from a subversion of the ethical order by the principle of reflection, but it stems simply from the fulfilment of her role as the Beautiful Individual. She was not the exception, but rather the exemplar for the highest attainments of ancient subjectivity. The role of the Beautiful Individual is to sacrifice the independence of self in order to unite particular individuality with ethical substance and thus realize completely the nature of ethical life. This statement is as good as any a resume of the life and death of Antigone, who sacrificed herself nobly to uphold the unity of ethical life, from the standpoint of Divine Law. While the above passage from *Philosophy of Right* purports to be a description of the spirituality of modern men and women, it seems strange that in the accompanying note, once again, the *Antigone* of Sophocles is cited as one of the most sublime expressions of the law of familial piety and feminine spirituality ancient or modern. The transposition of the figure of Antigone from the ancient polis to the modern rational state implies the qualities of feminine consciousness may

have been placed by Hegel beyond the vicissitudes of historical change and the dialectic of Spirit. These qualities are identical with the law of piety. This transposition is an unusual movement, because the original significance of Antigone was derived from an ethical dualism of Human and Divine Law. This dualism was relevant to the ethical Greek world, but its relevance to the theory of modern life remains obscure in Hegel. Masculine consciousness does not make any parallel reconnection with its historical antecedents in the figures of Creon or Polyneices, and it does not attempt to return to the ethical immediacy of the polis. Many scholars consider feminine consciousness in Hegel to have been arrested at the stage of Divine Law and they regard this arrest as tantamount to an exclusion from the realm of history and Spirit, one that contradicts the principle of the phenomenology of Spirit as a science. The arrested development of feminine consciousness, and its exclusion from the conception of modern subjectivity, is the problem which must be comprehended, but comprehended in a way that is consistent with and not alien to the principles of Hegel's philosophy. Only by doing so will it become possible to resolve the problem on terms consistent with his thought. The existing conception of the feminine resembles Beautiful Individuality, and by definition, it is unable to support the construct of modern individuality as free and infinite subjectivity. The treatment of women in Hegel is an incomplete treatment of their consciousness because it does not explain an avenue of development that would allow them to become fully modern individuals. It cannot continue to be the *status quo* for feminine consciousness in Hegel, because it is inconsistent with his loftiest principles and genuine intentions for the realization of human freedom.

The theory of modern *Sittlichkeit* has not realized the universalism inherent in the claims of Hegelian philosophy that the unity of the divine and human nature is the complete

truth of human being, and the treatment of feminine consciousness is the single most important contributing factor to this shortcoming. It is important to make note of these universalist claims, because they support the argument that logical imperatives in the philosophy of Hegel compel a resolution to this contradiction. These universalist claims recur throughout his work, but for the purpose of this thesis, it may be useful to refer to the statement given in the lecture manuscript for the series of lectures given in 1821 on the philosophy of religion. Here, the universalist claims are most clearly expressed by using imperative language to convey that all subjects *should* bring themselves into conformity with the spiritual realm, they *should* know or intuit the possibility of an infinite value within themselves, and finally, they *should* give themselves that value:

By consciousness of the unity of the divine and human nature we mean that humanity implicitly bears within itself the *divine idea*, ...as its own substantial nature (as its own vocation or the unique possibility of such a vocation: this infinite possibility is its subjectivity.) In this consciousness humanity knows (the divine idea) the universal and [knows] itself to be determined for the universal, i.e., elevated above all locality, nationality, condition, life-situation, etc. Human beings [are] equal; slavery [is] intolerable; [there is] worth and absolute validity only in this perspective. (β) Humanity's vocation [is] in the spiritual [realm], its goal is a universal goal, it is in itself utterly fulfilled, and all that matters here is that the subject should bring itself into conformity with it, i.e., that the subject should know or intuit that it has the possibility of an infinite value within itself and that (β) it should actually give itself this value; [but it is not] its *merit* to produce the good, the divine idea...¹⁰⁰

It is clear from this passage the Hegelian conception of the universality and infinity of the principle of personhood undeniably includes all people, male and female. It is an *inclusive*

¹⁰⁰ The quotation is from Hegel's own lecture manuscript composed for the 1821 lecture series, in G.W.F. Hegel, *The Consummate Religion*, Vol. III of *Lectures on the Philosophy of 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, 1998), 109.

conception, one whose *inclusiveness* is clearly rendered on the level of religious philosophy, but falls into obscurity when he articulates the ethical, political and social arrangements of modern life in *Philosophy of Right*. The *reason* may be that in this regard, Hegel continues to be strongly influenced by Greek and Roman examples, even though modern ethical life and the principle of subjective freedom is very much indebted to Christian religion. The *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* will be consulted as a source to correct this incomplete presentation of the complete truth of modern subjectivity. His conception contains the logical imperative to extend to women the opportunity to advance beyond the immediacy of ancient *Sittlichkeit*, where the union of particular individuality and universal substance was realised in an unselfconscious way, to modern ethical life in the rational state where they may realise their vocation for freedom in the realm of self-conscious Spirit. It would be quite impossible to read the above passage, or any similar passages, and yet continue to argue from a vein of logical consistency that the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel is anything other than contradictory to the principles of his system of philosophy.

The foregoing paragraphs have summarized briefly the points that establish the incompatibility of the philosophical treatment of women and the conception of modern subjectivity. Modern feminine consciousness bears a strong resemblance to the beautiful individuality of ancient Greece, so much so, that in light of what is known about the principles of modern *Sittlichkeit*, this unexpected resemblance to a past shape of Spirit cannot help but strike the observer as an oddity, or an anachronism. It is one that in the past has been judged unworthy of further investigation, perhaps because it was believed such anachronisms in philosophy would wither away with the passage of time as more and more women developed themselves to higher levels of rational self-consciousness. However, a deeper analysis shows

this seeming anachronism merits attention, for it is hardly accidental to the theory of modern ethical life. It is symptomatic of problems in the conception of modern subjectivity.

The beautiful individuality of ethical immediacy was constituted from an immediate unity of substantiality and subjective freedom, but without mediation, it proved to be an unstable and short-lived unity, and was superseded in the progress of the dialectic. Logically, the conflicted unity of ethical substance should have been sublated in the subsequent developments of Spirit. Following this sequence of logic, the next movement would have been the transition to the realm of abstract right. On the other hand, particular individuality has not been reconciled with universality in a way that adequately includes it in the definition of reason together with its attendant dimension of finitude and naturalness. Ethical immediacy has not been fully transcended. This is important because the sublation of ethical immediacy is a critical movement that constitutes the beginnings of the rights-bearing rational person. This is discussed in the chapter on the logic of the Greco-Roman world. The sublation of ethical immediacy simply did not happen in feminine consciousness, according to Hegel, or if it did, it is not acknowledged. Later chapters will explore the reasons why this movement from Greek to Roman antiquity poses specific difficulties for feminine consciousness, and why these difficulties were not subsequently overcome in the dialectic. An overcoming of ethical immediacy is a prerequisite for reconciliation of feminine consciousness. For so long as the former is defined by the ideals of the ethical Greek world of beautiful freedom then it cannot be squared with the principle of the self-sufficient and inherently infinite modern subject, and will retain a status that is incompatible with the conception of modern subjectivity.

A better understanding of feminine consciousness in Hegel is helpful for updating our understanding of modern subjectivity, allowing for a complex resolution of the tensions and

contradictions inherited from earlier forms of historical Spirit, in particular the shape of Spirit as ethical substance. This insight points towards directions that might be taken in the future development of modern subjectivity, leading to a position where the principles of Hegel's theory of modern ethical life can be fully realized. This treatment of feminine consciousness will prepare the way for a more encompassing Hegelian approach to the contemporary issue of Nature and its involvement in the life of Spirit.

There is a need for a more systematic account of how and why the development of feminine consciousness in Hegel stalled and failed to develop beyond the ancient Greek world of Antigone. Two distinct possibilities come to mind in choosing the best approach the problem and they will be evaluated in the chapter conclusion. One possibility to consider is that Hegel's interpretation of Antigone is inadequate and he stalled the advance of feminine consciousness by imposing constraints on her capacity for self-conscious and political action. Her ethical disposition, governed by the law of piety, is said to consist in the emotional *intuition* of unity that comes through the ethical life of the family. Within Hegel's framework of thought, there is no route from the piety of family life to rational self-consciousness. Thus, when Antigone's quest on behalf of the family led her to cross over from the assigned sphere of the family to the polis, the significance of her actions in advancing her towards self-consciousness has to be suppressed. Feminine consciousness is brought to an impasse that has not been surmounted since. That is why Antigone remains the paradigm of ethical virtue for ancient and modern women. This possibility will be considered in conjunction with the review of liberal feminist responses to Hegel.

A second possibility is that Hegel is not responsible for the impasse of feminine consciousness. It might be said in defence of Hegel that his task as a philosopher is to

apprehend and expose the logical limitations of his own times in thought. His presentations on the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans have withstood the test of time to a degree that will surprise those who have not taken him seriously as a philosopher of history. His analysis of the rationality of the modern world does not have to be read as a prescription for how the world ought to be. H.S. Harris argues that while Hegel appropriately depicted the role of bourgeois women in 19th century Germany, that is not where matters end because his theory has implications for a different future:

We cannot deny – and certainly Plato did not deny – that sex was the “original determination of nature” that lay at the foundation of the customary ethics of his own immediately given spiritual community, the community of the Hellenes. But equally, Hegel cannot deny that rational nature, which is “originally determined” as gender in the immediate ethical order becomes quite indeterminate and freely plastic in the world of universal Reason...Hegel’s idealized picture of woman’s role was appropriate for his own time. But the implication of his theory for us is that women should enjoy rational freedom of self-expression in the universal community just as much as men.¹⁰¹

To represent matters otherwise would be to ignore the volume of historical facts. The challenge is not to refute Hegel’s representation of Antigone but to determine whether his system of philosophy has resources yet to be tapped that if introduced to the discussion, would permit the dialectic of feminine consciousness to resume. A model of modern self-consciousness could be developed that by its inclusionary nature, would be more consistent with Hegel’s genuine and inclusive intentions, than the versions presented in the *Philosophy of Right* and *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

There are numerous readings on the theme of Hegel and women, with many contributions from the perspective of feminist philosophy and political theory. Although

¹⁰¹ H.S. Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder: A Commentary on Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* v.2. “The Odyssey of Spirit” (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1997), 191.

many of Hegel's respondents begin by focusing on the Antigone story, recently, there has been an increased interest in tapping into other resources internal to the system of philosophy. This chapter will review the Antigone story and highlight the critical readings of a limited selection of authors with the aim of identifying specific aspects of the discussion that merit further study. The intent is not to conduct an exhaustive literature review, but to determine what has been accomplished thus far, and what remains to be done to resolve the issues with feminine consciousness, on terms consistent with Hegel's political theory. This will establish what the thesis will contribute to the discussion. The review is intended to be not the mainstay of the paper but a supplement to the insights gathered from studies of aesthetics, logic, history and the philosophy of religion that will be examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters. Prior to this, a synopsis of the *Antigone* story¹⁰² will be helpful, after which it will be necessary to create a context by reconstructing the key elements of the ethical world of the Greek polis.

The Ancient Ethical World

An analysis of the ancient ethical world found in *Phenomenology of Mind* uncovers two forms of order in community life. These were the divinely sanctioned law of the family and the human law of the polis. Human and Divine Law were the two moments of objective substance that governed the spheres of family and polis. The ethical order has a divinely sanctioned side, which is rooted in the mysterious "law of the ancient gods and the chthonic realm", and in concrete terms, this divinely-sanctioned side is the natural ethical community of the family. Opposite this, the human side of ethical order is found in the community of human

¹⁰² The thesis will use the translation Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. and commentary David Franklin and

law, whose validity is “open to the light of day” and exists in the form of publicly promulgated customs and laws. The subjectivity of ethical substance is present as *consciousness of substance*, and its internal distinction has the significance of the natural difference of maleness and femaleness. This distinction produced conflicts in the lives of individuals requiring reconciliation through action. Sophocles’ *Antigone* gives a dramatic account of the importance for ethical life of the elements that are signified by natural sexual difference. He depicted the ensuing ethical conflict with its consequences.

Divine Law rules the family and feminine consciousness:

The feminine element, therefore, in the form of the sister, premonizes and foreshadows most completely the nature of ethical life (*Sittliches Wesen*). She does not become conscious of it, and does not actualize it, because the law of the family is her inherent implicit inward nature, which does not lie open to the daylight of consciousness, but remains inner feeling and the divine element exempt from actuality.¹⁰³

Human Law rules the polis and on reaching maturity, masculine consciousness passes over from the unconscious realm of the family and Divine Law to consciousness of universality in the community of the polis:

The brother leaves this immediate, rudimentary, and therefore, strictly speaking, negative ethical life of the family, in order to acquire and produce the concrete ethical order which is conscious of itself...He passes from the divine law, within whose realm he lived, over to the human law. The sister, however, becomes, or the wife remains, director of the home and the preserver of the divine law. In this way both the sexes overcome their merely natural being, and become ethically significant, as diverse forms dividing between them the different aspects which the ethical substance assumes.¹⁰⁴

Human Law is Spirit embodied in the form of an actual and concrete community, and is

John Harrison, *Cambridge Translations from Greek Drama*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

¹⁰³ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 476.

realized in the form of laws and customs familiar in the everyday life of the subject. Divine law is Spirit in the “inner notion or general possibility of the ethical sphere” found in the family. This “inner notion” of the ethical order is union of substance and subject, but in an unconscious form and unable to develop its truth in concrete actuality. Both Human and Divine Law contain the element of consciousness, and both develop within themselves the distinction between substance and consciousness of substance. Their mutual exchange is the basis for the process of ethical life, which is a process centered on the relations of men and women:

The union of man with woman constitutes the operative mediating agency for the whole, and constitutes the element which, while separated in to the extremes of human and divine law, is, at the same time, their immediate union. This union, again, turns both those first mediate connexions (*Schlusse*) into one and the same synthesis, and unites into one process the twofold movement in opposite directions – one from reality to unreality, the downward movement of human law, organized into independent members to the danger and trial of death, - the other, from unreality to reality, the upward movement of the law of the nether world [Divine Law] to the daylight of conscious existence. Of these movements the former falls to man, he latter to woman.¹⁰⁵

The mutual antagonism of ties of kinship and the state is a central theme to Sophocles’ *Antigone* and this is the reason why the tragedy assumes such importance for Hegel in his exegesis of the process of ancient ethical life. The *Antigone* is set in Thebes at the time of the death of Oedipus, whose two sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, become locked in a fratricidal struggle for the kingship. When they have killed one another, Creon becomes king, whereupon he immediately decrees the corpse of Eteocles shall receive the customary honours while that of Polyneices, who had attacked the city, must remain unburied on the battlefield, as carrion

¹⁰⁴ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 478.

¹⁰⁵ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 482.

for the vultures and wild dogs. Anyone who defies the decree will face death by public stoning. Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, believes she is required to defy Creon and honour her brother Polyneices even at the cost of her own life. She would rather die than neglect the performance of duties to the corpse, thereby dishonouring the dead, as well as offending the gods of the underworld and their laws. She clearly perceives an opposition between the human laws of the city and the unwritten eternal divine laws, and chooses the wrath of man over the punishment of the gods:

Yes, for it was not Zeus who made this proclamation to me, nor did Justice who dwells with the gods below lay down these laws for mankind. Nor did I think that your human proclamation had sufficient power to override the unwritten, unassailable laws of the gods. They live not just yesterday and today, but forever, and no one knows when they first came to light. I was not going to incur punishment from the gods, not in fear of the will of any man.¹⁰⁶

Antigone performs her duty to her deceased brother through motivation grounded in blood relation and the attached obligations. When her actions are considered from this aspect, it becomes even more improbable that she would be cast as a role model for women in modern family life, not only because she is unmarried, but because her sacrifice made in the context of the brother-sister relationship seems to be irrelevant to a discussion of married life. This discrepancy has been noted in the literature:

Given Hegel's original interpretation of Antigone as the paradigm of ethical family life precisely because she represents the relationship between man and woman not as wife but as *sister*, this new appropriation of the play within the context of a discussion of marriage in the modern world seems quite untenable. Since Antigone represents "holy sisterly love" and never marries it is hard to see how she can serve as a model for wifely piety in the modern world. Hegel's attempt to use the play to reinforce his assumption that modern woman must stay within the family lacks the historical and conceptual analysis that would justify such a case.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Sophocles, *Antigone*, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, *Woman Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987),

Modern family life is based not on blood relation but on the spiritual bonds of ethical love. This is one of the important differences between the ancient and modern family. Despite this difference, Hegel preserved the memory of Antigone and her sublime ethical sacrifice within the modern family; specifically he preserved it in his account of the gender-based division of labour in the modern family. While the husband goes forth each day to seek self-conscious reality in the universal life of the community, it falls upon the wife to maintain a harmonious sphere to which he may return each evening and experience the satisfaction of his particular individuality:

Man therefore has his actual substantial life in the state, in learning, [*Wissenschaft*], etc., and otherwise in work and struggle with the external world and with himself, so that it is only through his division that he fights his way to self-sufficient unity with himself. In the family, he has a peaceful intuition of this unity, and an emotive [*empfindend*] and subjective ethical life.¹⁰⁸

The wife restores the abstract universal dimension of her husband to unity with his particular individuality and gives him an intuition of wholeness at the level of feeling. In this respect, which has been overlooked in the criticism of Mills, the modern wife commemorates the ethical act of Antigone. For Antigone, the claims of Divine Law are fulfilled at the expense of her own claims to live a self-conscious universal life, and she is sentenced to living in entombment for defying the decree of Creon. An uncannily similar sacrifice is exacted from modern women in Hegel's account, because with the exception of the death penalty, they too, have to relinquish their claim to self-conscious universal life because it cannot be reconciled with the limitations inherent in the ethical disposition of family piety. The

¹⁰⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §166.

challenge is understanding why there is any necessity at all for modern women to commemorate Antigone in this fashion. The logical and historical bounds of the Greek world were dissolved long ago, and the conflict of ethical laws referenced in Antigone's speech was supposedly resolved in the principle of modern times that humanity by nature is destined for freedom. The sacrifice of Antigone is explicable within the framework of the ethical Greek world, but outside of that framework, there is no longer any coherent explanation for why modern feminine consciousness should be required to sacrifice its claim to self-consciousness in order to preserve modern ethical life as a unity of substance and subject. The challenge for Hegel's respondents is to engage with this problem.

Feminist Responses to Hegel's *Antigone* Story

A good entry into the discussion of Hegel and the treatment of feminist consciousness from the standpoint of feminist philosophy is found in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, edited by Patricia Jagentowicz Mills¹⁰⁹, and first published in 1996. A reading of the divergent viewpoints of the contributors to this volume establishes that while there may be no single feminist standpoint on Hegel, it is possible to broadly distinguish separate lines of critical inquiry and interpretation. These distinctions will be noted here to situate the thesis in the context of what has taken place in the discussion thus far, and to establish directions for future work. Among the contributors, there seems to be agreement only on the principle that gender and sexual difference are important issues in politics and philosophy. For the present purposes, the different readings of Hegel and his treatment of women will be classified

¹⁰⁹ Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, Re-Reading the Canon Series (Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

beneath the headings of five very broadly-defined schools of thought.

The first will be described broadly as the school of universal and abstract equality, and it is based solidly on the Enlightenment tradition of a universal conception of humanity that transcends differences. This school includes a variety of liberal feminist thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, and the philosopher H.S. Harris.

The next group of thinkers is located within a philosophical school that arises from Hegel and the science of dialectics -- the Frankfurt School of critical theory. Patricia Jagentowicz Mills and Judith Butler will serve as a feminist spokespersons for this second school whose proponents include post-Marxists and postmodernist social critics influenced by French philosophy and Foucault. In *Woman, Nature and Psyche*,¹¹⁰ Mills, who is well-known for her analysis of the relations between the dominations of nature and women, showed that Hegel contradicted the universal claims of his philosophy of modern subjectivity by restricting women to the sphere of the family. The feminist philosopher Judith Butler, a second spokesperson for this group, is best known for her critique of ideas about gender and sexuality. Hegel is among her philosophical mentors. She is the author of *Antigone's Claim Kinship Between Life and Death*.¹¹¹ The chapter will take up her argument that Antigone represents the principle of kinship as a condition for the social and political world.

The third school combines elements of the Romantic movement such as naturalism and essentialism, with contemporary themes taken from psychoanalysis, linguistics, postmodern and poststructural theory. It draws its inspiration from the Romantic tradition that human

¹¹⁰ See: "Hegel: Recognition, Intersubjectivity and Desire" in Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-49.

¹¹¹ Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

beings are naturally good and as much as possible, should uncover and remain faithful to their original nature in order to be free. *Ergo*, the natural feminine difference that has been suppressed or depicted negatively in Hegel as unconscious feeling must be retrieved in order for women to express an authentic individual identity free from the oppressive influence of the masculine ideal of human nature. Although she is an interdisciplinary thinker who does not fit easily into any one philosophical school, the French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray serves this group as a feminist spokesperson whose theories of sexual difference and possible intersubjectivity between men and women are influenced by Hegel's dialectics.

A fourth response is provided from the expanding field of environmental philosophy¹¹². The general approach of environmental philosophy is to propose an alternate framework for political theory that recognizes the inter-relatedness of the human and non-human worlds and it has been proven to lend itself well to addressing feminist concerns. Environmental and ecofeminist philosophers contribute to this discussion a critique of the deleterious aspects to the association of women and Nature that differs from liberal, post-Marxist and post-Modern readings by not rejecting this association as oppressive, in itself. They claim the logic of western culture is at the root of the devaluation of women and Nature. Spokespersons for this group include the Australian environmental philosopher Val Plumwood [1939-2008] who leaves a legacy of work to advance a conception of rationality compatible with the natural world,¹¹³ and Alison Stone¹¹⁴ a feminist and environmentalist philosopher

¹¹² For a good introduction to this area of inquiry see: Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley, eds., *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006). This volume of essays examines the impact of environmentalism on the major western political tradition and includes new contributions by Robyn Eckersley and the noted ecofeminist philosopher, Val Plumwood.

¹¹³ See especially: Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (UK: Routledge, 1993) *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (UK: Routledge, 2002).

¹¹⁴ Alison Stone, *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 2004).

who finds Hegel's philosophy of nature to be relevant with respect to environmental issues and feminist concerns.

A fifth, more recent school of thought includes not only a small group of self-identified Hegelian feminists such as Kimberly Hutchings, but more broadly, it includes all those others such as Antoinette M. Stafford¹¹⁵ who may not subscribe to positions taken by Hegel, but find that his treatment of feminine consciousness and more generally, his philosophy, merits attention because it opens opportunities otherwise unavailable within the mainstream of political and philosophical thought for addressing many urgent contemporary issues.

The foregoing is a general division of thinkers, and these will be presented in the following section together with a representative sampling of the thinkers who espouse each of these major positions and have engaged themselves with the subject of feminine consciousness in Hegel.

The diverse lines of inquiry discussed in the following section, draw together the contributions of thinkers whose critical writings have directly challenged the adequacy of the treatment of feminine consciousness and its exclusion from the conception of modern subjectivity in Hegel. These views will be discussed with the aim of determining what has been accomplished in the analysis thus far and what remains to be done. Afterwards, there are citations of readings that do not engage with this subject directly but have been consulted as relevant sources for critical reflection. The reading of Hegel from the standpoint of Christian theology is especially important because it defines the problem of the finite world of Nature in Hegel. While the implications for women may not have been spelled out explicitly, they do

¹¹⁵ See: Antoinette M. Stafford, "The Feminist Critique of Hegel on Women and the Family," *Animus* 2 (1997). Internet. www.mun.ca/animus/1997vol2/stafford.htm.

surface upon analysis. Hegel's interpretation of Christian theology is partially complete because it does not perform its expected function which is to close the crisis of the ancient world and inaugurate the developments leading directly to modern times. Thus, there is reference to the critique of Michael Theunisson¹¹⁶, who argued that Hegel reinstated substantiality in his theory of the modern objective Spirit and repressed intersubjectivity from the theory of modern ethical life. This supports the argument that gaps and inconsistencies appear in the conception of modern subjectivity. The treatment of feminine consciousness is one example. These gaps are symptomatic of ongoing tensions between antiquity and modernity left unresolved as a consequence of Hegel's weak philosophical interpretation of the theme of reconciliation in Christian theology.

Antigone as a Rational and Self-Conscious Individual

This first school of thought is affiliated with the Enlightenment-based position that universal and abstract conception of human nature is the foundation for freedom, and equality of persons and this conception transcends considerations of race, class, sex and other differences. Mary Wollstonecraft is recognized as one of the first feminist thinkers to argue, from the standpoint of liberal philosophy, that women are fully free and rational human beings. It is characteristic of Wollstonecraft and subsequent generations of liberal feminist thinkers, such as Simone de Beauvoir, to regard sexual difference as accidental to the humanity of men and women and to focus on a conception of human nature common to both. H.S. Harris is a contemporary Hegelian philosopher who also accepts this Enlightenment-based view that the conception of human beings as free and rational individuals is essentially *gender-neutral*

¹¹⁶. See: Michael Theunisson, "The Repressed Intersubjectivity in Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in

Nadine Changfoot The viewpoint of these scholars presupposes that the principle of abstract rational personhood together with the ability to overcome natural limits is the universal destiny of human beings. Without meaning to minimize the significant differences among these philosophers, it may be said they share a common interest in reconciling feminine consciousness with the Hegelian conception of modern individuality as rational freedom, but they do not sufficiently challenge the adequacy of that conception. True to the position of universal and abstract rationalism, they regard sexual differences as incidental to the goal for men and women, which is to attain rational individuality. Their approach is to minimize sexual difference or, better yet, abolish it altogether in politics and philosophy. This school gives to the *Antigone* story a reading in which she is interpreted as a rational, and in many ways, modern individual. The strategy has been to interpret the impasse of feminine consciousness in Hegel, as a problem whose solution requires a demonstration that feminine consciousness is in actuality, a rational self-consciousness. By minimizing any contradiction between the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel and modern subjectivity, and by giving a modern reading to the *Antigone* story; the contradiction is made to disappear.

Despite their divergent approaches to the issue of feminine consciousness in Hegel, this diverse group of scholars shares a common interest in the reinterpretation of Antigone as a rational self-conscious individual. By revising her in the light of rational individuality, they aspire to show that indeed, feminine consciousness may be reconciled with the philosophy of Hegel without the need for any modifications to his conception of modern subjectivity. The difficulty with this approach is that it does not do full justice to the identity of Antigone as a subject of the ancient world, and as a Beautiful Individual, rather than a rational individual. By

neglecting to distinguish adequately between the forms of ancient and modern subjectivity, this position based on universal and abstract conceptions of human nature, neglects to consider the distinct logical and structural underpinnings of ancient and modern ethical life. Here is where a comparative account of the logical structures of ancient and modern subjectivity would be useful for building an appreciation of the *necessity* of ancient subjectivity in the system of philosophy. This would prevent the conflation of Antigone with the modern individual. H.S. Harris, as an example, finds in Antigone, the ideal figure of the woman who became the first, rational individual by *politically* asserting her right to a life outside the political sphere.¹¹⁷ Harris rightly points out that Antigone must not be conflated with the interests of the family, because in the ancient and modern worlds, these interests are relevant to both masculine and feminine consciousness. He makes a distinction between feminine subjectivity and the law of piety, which is more difficult to defend on Hegelian grounds. Again, the older order of Divine Law and the ethical disposition of piety in the ancient world may have ruled the ethical disposition of women, but it is perhaps true this was not exclusive to women, because men, too, participated in cult worship and ritual. However, it is difficult to see what would remain of feminine subjectivity if it were to be separated from its ethical disposition of Divine Law – for in the absence of the principle of personality, nothing remains of subjectivity except for character, and it is clear in Hegel, that ancient character is a reflection of objective Spirit and its ethical laws. If Hegel's account of antiquity is to be upheld, then ancient ethical life must not be interpreted as if it included the conditions for rational individuality. It must be given its unique space and then be permitted to pass away to

¹¹⁷ H.S. Harris, "Hegel and Adam's Rib," *The European Legacy*, Vol.2, No. 3, 567-573, 1997.

allow for the emergence of higher stages of Spirit. To insist on the rationality of Antigone is to minimize the distinction between antiquity and modernity. But in Hegel, the emergence of precisely this distinction is an essential condition for modern subjective freedom and so to conflate Antigone with rational individuality is self-defeating of the aim to include women in rational individuality.

Readings that conflate Antigone with existing norms and standards for self-consciousness do not solve the problem that is integral to the suppression of feminine consciousness. They do not solve problem of Nature and the natural element of finitude, and its status within the conception of free and infinite personhood.

The modern approach to the reconciliation of feminine consciousness has to be rejected because it is inconsistent with the principle of Hegelian philosophy that forms of consciousness are particular to each phase of world history. Only after the collapse of the ethical Greek world does rational individuality appear on the scene. Hegel's famous description of Antigone as "the eternal irony of the community"¹¹⁸ should not be interpreted as a reference to the possibility that she played a Socratic role in the dissolution of Beautiful Individuality. Like Socrates, Antigone willfully adopted a course of action culminating in death, however the significance of her actions lies in the subordination of self-interest to the higher cause of unity with the ethical community. Such action belongs to the character of the Beautiful Individual and not to the rational individual. Her excruciating dilemma is posed by a conflict of ethical laws that had to be surmounted in order for rational individuality to emerge.

¹¹⁸ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §475, 288.

Unlike the Socratic irony of simulated ignorance, the ironic content of Antigone is *tragic* irony. The dictionary definition of irony as, “the use of language have an inner meaning for a privileged audience and an outer meaning for the persons addressed or concerned (occas. including speaker, cf. TRAGIC *irony*);”,¹¹⁹ is relevant. The Beautiful Individual suppresses natural individuality in the cause of achieving a higher unity with the ethical community. The natural is used to express the truth of Spirit, and then it is destroyed. This is the *outer* meaning of Antigone’s actions. However, the suppression of the natural also has the *inner* meaning of the ultimate destruction of the community, which is dependent on the natural for power and self-preservation.

Antigone is not the womanhood of family values. When Hegel said the ethical disposition of woman consists in family piety, he is speaking about piety as presented in Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Hegel is remiss in failing to acknowledge any distinctions between forms of piety in the ancient and modern worlds. In the *Philosophy of Right*, piety belongs to feminine nature and it is restricted to the private sphere of family life. It could be argued that in the ancient Greek world, piety or more properly, Divine Law permeated community life and was not exclusive to the family. In Hegel, the disposition of piety has shrunk to the dimensions of the 19th century bourgeois nuclear family.

A later chapter on the logical foundations of ancient subjectivity will argue the modern reading of Antigone as a rational person is flawed, because it circumvents the sequence of logical movements necessary for the development of the distinction and subsequent reconciliation of the principles of ancient and modern subjectivity. The proposal put forward by H.S. Harris and other scholars to revise Antigone in light of rational

¹¹⁹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7th ed., s.v. “irony.”

individuality does not offer a systematic response to the question of why, if she is a rational individual, do not all of her successors also become rational individuals. It is clear from the account given in *Philosophy of Right* that feminine consciousness post-Antigone is not synonymous with the rational self-consciousness of modern individuality. If anything, the disparity between masculine and feminine consciousness is even wider and more pronounced in *Philosophy of Right* than in the account of the ethical world in *Phenomenology of Mind*. The thesis adopts the standpoint that in Hegel, the sublation of the principle of ethical substantiality is an incomplete movement and its features persist in the character of feminine consciousness. This is the origin of a contradiction within the conception of modern individuality, because one half of humanity remains unaware of the true nature of subjectivity as universality and infinity.

The viewpoint that Antigone was a precursor to the principle of reflective reason is inconsistent with the historical process of Spirit and to present her in that light is to neglect to engage fully with the underlying logic of the movement of the process of Spirit. The reading of Hegel's treatment of women from the standpoint of universal and abstract rationalism must therefore, be rejected. Antigone represents the epitome of the beautiful ethical way of life that has been superseded in the advance to progressively more adequate historical shapes and forms of Spirit. The challenge is to understand why her reappearance in modernity is necessary for the functioning of modern ethical life and why it cannot be dismissed as a contingency nor suppressed by revising her profile in light of rational and self-conscious individuality.

Critical Theory and Post-Marxism

Patricia Jagentowicz Mills and Judith Butler will serve as spokespersons for a second school of thinkers including critical theorists, post-Marxists and postmodernist social critics in the tradition of French philosophy and Foucault. Mills is acclaimed for setting the standard of feminist critique of Hegel. Her critical essay, Hegel's *Antigone* is included in, *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*.¹²⁰ She follows the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and uses the "negative dialectics" of Theodore Adorno as a resource for her critique. She is well-known for her analysis of the relations between the dominations of nature and women. In *Woman, Nature and Psyche*,¹²¹ Mills' analysis of Hegel's *Antigone* showed that Hegel contradicted the universal claims of his philosophy of modern subjectivity by restricting women to the sphere of the family

According to Mills, the conception of modern ethical life as a reconciliation of tensions and oppositions is only an abstract negation, and within this reconciliation sexual difference has not been reconciled with the Idea:

My analysis of Hegel's *Antigone*, done through a doubled feminist vision, reveals that Hegel's attempt to include dialectically all oppositional "moments" presents us with an abstract negation in which women, defined as an ontological principle of otherness, represents the "difference" that cannot be comprehended in the logical Idea. Hegel's dialectical theory becomes a closed system, a system that is the quintessential form of identity logic in which difference is ultimately dominated and denied rather than reconciled. Hegel's concept of reconciliation – the idea that latent in contradictions is an ultimate unity or identity-in-difference of subject and object, mind and matter, universal and particular, history and nature, man and woman – has always meant domination: of the subject over the object, mind over matter, universal over particular, history over nature, man over woman.¹²²

¹²⁰See Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, "Hegel's *Antigone*" in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. Patricia Jagentowicz Mills (Pennsylvania: The Penn State University Press, 1996), 60-88.

¹²¹See: "Hegel: Recognition, Intersubjectivity and Desire" in Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3-49.

¹²²Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, "Hegel's *Antigone*" in Mills, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 84.

Mills does find in Hegel much of potential value for the feminist project. She credits Hegel for having recognised, although he was unable to resolve, the problem of the relation of identity and difference. Sexual difference, however, cannot be reconciled on terms consistent with the philosophy of Hegel which places Nature in subordinate standing to Spirit. The key to advancing the interests of human freedom is not to *reconcile* but to *overcome* sexual difference altogether. Following Adorno, Mills proposes this from the critical standpoint of a *negative* dialectic, one that does not pursue reconciliation but instead, maintains a “non-identity of Nature and history, subject and object, particular and universal. This vision of human emancipation assumes both the requirement to transcend natural existence, and also that such transcendence is realistically possible.

Another spokesperson for this group is the feminist philosopher Judith Butler who is well-known for her critique of ideas about gender. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*¹²³ Butler seeks to “de-naturalize” gender, sexual identity and sexuality by arguing these categories are socially constructed through the repetition of performances that are made to appear normal but are socially coerced. Although this may seem radically different to his thought, Hegel is one of her most important philosophical mentors and she is the author of *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*¹²⁴. For Butler, Antigone is not a political figure as she has been represented by liberal and post-Marxist feminists; she is a representative of the *prepolitical* principle of kinship. Kinship is a *condition* of the social and

¹²³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender Series (Routledge, 1990).

¹²⁴ Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (Columbia University Press, 2000).

political world. There is no state without the support and mediation of the family. However this also works in reverse because the character of kinship is mutable and contingent on social norms. Hegel presented the heterosexual family as a norm. Antigone is interesting to Butler because with her family history of incestuous relationships, she subverts his presentation by representing non-normative forms of kinship that were shocking in her time, and ours. Hegel has shown that kinship is the condition for the social and political world. It follows that recognition of diverse forms of kinship, including gay and lesbian marriage, should open new social and political possibilities.

Butler finds in Hegel's *Antigone* emancipatory possibilities of contemporary importance. However, the social constructionist theory of gender and sex is today passé and cannot be reconciled with Hegel. As an aside, Butler cannot explain why individuals would *willingly choose* to accept the dire social consequences of living outside the mainstream as gay, lesbian or bisexual individuals unless it is because these sexual identities - although they do supply material for construction - are also profoundly natural expressions of personal authenticity. The disintegration of Nature cannot resolve the predicament of Antigone.

Mills and the critical theorists begin by issuing a challenge to the Enlightenment project for having set into motion processes of rationalization leading to the domination of the human and natural world through the application of instrumental reason. Ironically, they end in the attempt to perfect that same project by seeking to overcome any natural and social constraints on the rational autonomy of the individual. The emancipation of human relations is theorized in a way that does not acknowledge any dependence on the relationship of the human and natural world. This only enforces the discontinuity of Nature and Spirit, thereby deepening the contradiction that lies within the Enlightenment tradition. This position bears

resemblance to that of liberal feminist thinkers who, in the grand tradition of Enlightenment thought, hold to an ideal of modern subjectivity that is universally accessible to human beings but whose foundations in Nature are concealed.

Mills, Adorno, Butler, and the descendents of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School do not have an approach to the treatment of women that would realize the true intentions of Hegel. They are unable to resolve the contradiction of Nature and Spirit, which in Hegel, is the pre-eminent logical problem of the ancient world and the original source of Antigone's ethical dilemma.

Luce Irigaray and "Difference" Feminism

The French philosopher and feminist Luce Irigaray will serve as representative for a third group of scholars whose reading of the treatment of women in Hegel is influenced by historical elements of naturalism and essentialism as well as contemporary themes in psychoanalysis, linguistics and postmodern thought. In her best-known work, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*¹²⁵ Irigaray critiques the dualisms of the western philosophical tradition (e.g. Nature/Spirit, mind/body, subject/object) and argued these are dependent on an unacknowledged Other who is Woman. Sexual difference is thus a major philosophical issue and has an ethical significance which must not be ignored in ethics, politics and philosophy, from her viewpoint. The Enlightenment ideal of an abstract and universal model of human nature is a masculine ideal embedded with biases that relegate the genuine differences of women to the status of mere contingencies. Authentic feminine attributes are rejected as if they were obstacles to free and concrete personhood. True sexual difference is absent in western

¹²⁵ Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (USA: Cornell

culture because women can only become subjects by assimilating to the male model of subjectivity. Irigaray's project is to construct a theory of sexual difference that does not reduce either men or women to the status of objects.

For a thorough introductory account of her analysis of Hegel's *Antigone*, see the essay, "The Eternal Irony of the Community"¹²⁶ in the collection edited by Mills. Irigaray accepts Hegel's dualist account of ethical substance and understands the dualism of Human and Divine Law in terms of its underlying dialectic of Nature and Spirit. Modern feminine consciousness is aligned with those elements of natural substance that were consumed in the production of the order of Human Law, but the feminine itself does not acquire any of the attributes of individual autonomy in Hegel's account, and does not fully participate in the progress of Spirit as world history. Irigaray claims in Hegel's account the pivotal moment arrived when Antigone, who stands for living natural substance, was sacrificed in the interests of empty universality. Creon emerges as the sovereign representative of universal and abstract determinate being. By sentencing Antigone to death, he demonstrates his contempt for the obligations of Divine Law rooted in nature and the family. These obligations are set aside in favour of the concept of persons as universal and abstract beings that is a precursor to the Enlightenment Ideal. To Irigaray, the blood shed as a consequence of the decrees of Creon represents natural substance and the content of individuality which has been taken away from from women *and* men.

Irigaray sees the historical transition from the Greek to the Roman world as an episode

University Press, 1993).

¹²⁶ Luce Irigaray, "The Eternal Irony of the Community" trans. Gillian C. Gill in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, 46-57.

of crisis for feminine consciousness. The rise of the Roman world is achieved at the expense of the suppression of the more natural self found in the Greek polis. Antigone stands for the natural substance of self that will be sacrificed in the interests of creating the universal and abstract legal person of ancient Rome. This is the true meaning of her death. Irigaray finds in Antigone a unity of Spirit with natural individuality that is much closer to the true soul of humankind than the abstract and universal conception of human nature that is the precursor to the modern individual.¹²⁷

The death of Antigone is really synonymous with two themes both abhorrent to Irigaray, namely, the conquest of Nature and sacrifice of the natural self. Irigaray draws inspiration from Hegel for her book, *I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*¹²⁸ but does not plumb the depths of his philosophy sufficiently to find the resources that would absolve humanity of the need to sacrifice Nature in order to acquire reason. This shortcoming is evident in particular passage where she laments the theme of sacrifice which is pervasive throughout western philosophical tradition. It is worth reproducing here because it illustrates her grasp of the possibilities in Hegel was exceptional but not without limits:

From this perspective, it is strange that the philosopher, like the devout man, should have imagined for centuries that thinking or praying have to be sacrifices. It is also significant that in our cultures man thinks or prays by estranging himself from his body, and that thinking or praying do not assist him in becoming incarnate, becoming flesh. Yet if thinking means becoming aware of one's natural immediacy, that does not mean it has to be sacrificed. Rather, sacrifice is a sign of a lack of contemplation and thought. It is but a fairly blind act (acting out, the psychoanalyst would say) speech or gesture addressed to an often absent or abstract addressee, a presupposition at the entrance to the world of consciousness. But this is mistaken. Take this as an example:

¹²⁷ The difficulty with this position will be brought to light in a subsequent chapter on the aesthetics of Greek Spirit. However beautiful, the freedom of Greek Spirit offered only a partial and short-lived reconciliation of the opposition of Nature and Spirit.

¹²⁸ Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History* trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996).

do we have to fell a tree before cultivating it? If that were the case, what would we cultivate? An idea of the tree, but not the tree itself.

There are some similarities between our philosophy and this error.¹²⁹

The position of Hegel is that the dualism of Nature and Spirit was fully reconciled in a movement that was unavailable to the ancient world and arose first in the sphere of religion with Christian teaching: “Our religion says that nature, no less than the spiritual world, is a revelation of God...”.¹³⁰ The doctrine of Incarnation means that God has become flesh in the world and there is no longer any need to sacrifice the body for reason. By appropriating this doctrine as the centrepiece for his system philosophy, Hegel’s intention is to move beyond the philosophical error that Irigaray critiques. Irigaray, for all her sympathies with Hegel, seems unfamiliar with this movement. The *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* is not a primary source for her reading. Another difficulty is, that Hegel’s interpretation of the Christian theme of reconciliation is not entirely coherent (see Chapter Eight) and with it are deficiencies giving rise to the impression that instead of surmounting the error, he relapses to the ancient position, reinstating the requirement to sacrifice the natural self for reason. Even he does not seem to be aware of all the implications of the Incarnation. Irigaray is unacquainted with all the resources in Hegel that would contribute to resolving her feminist issues with the western tradition of philosophy.

Hegel explored the theme of the Nature/Spirit opposition at length in *Philosophy of History* and in *Aesthetics*, in the context of a study of the rise of the Greek pantheon of deities. The Conquest is intended to be a transitional moment in the progress of Spirit and not a permanent and ontologically-fixed element of his thought. Hegel understood the conquest of

¹²⁹ Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 40.

Nature as a necessary, if troubling, moment for the emergence of Spirit out of immersion in Nature. There is evidence in Hegel of deep misgivings about the degradation of Nature in relation to Spirit¹³¹ together with the conviction that the theme of conquest would give way ultimately to a more adequate expression of the truth of Nature as a moment fully grounded in the life of Spirit. The position that Nature and Spirit are mutually exclusive dialectical terms and that no reconciliation is possible, is the *essentialist* position, but it is not a position occupied by Hegel:

The distinction between Nature and Spirit has been interpreted quite correctly as meaning that we must trace nature back to “reality” as its basic determination and spirit to “ideality”. But nature is not just something fixed and complete on its own account, which could therefore subsist without spirit; rather, it is only in spirit that nature attains to its goal and its truth. Similarly, spirit, for its part, is not just an abstract world beyond nature; on the contrary, it only genuinely *is*, and proves to be spirit, insofar as it contains nature sublated within it.¹³²

Hegel is not an essentialist because the distinction of Nature and Spirit is not absolutized in the structure of self-conscious Spirit. Instead, the dialectical methodology of his philosophy anticipates a full resolution to that original antagonism. Ultimately, these two realms are inseparable for the purpose of his theory of the modern ethical life.

Irigaray argued it is impossible for men and women to enjoy equal social, legal and political status within a universal that is truly respectful of sexual difference because such a universal simply does not and never will exist.

The natural is at least two: male and female. All the speculation about overcoming the natural in the universal forgets that nature is not *one*. In order to go beyond – assuming this is necessary – we should make reality the point of departure: it is *two*, (a *two* containing in turn secondary differences: smaller/larger, younger/older, for instance).

¹³⁰ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, 211.

¹³¹ See *The Philosophy of History*.

¹³² Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, 153.

The universal has been thought as *one*, thought on the basis of *one*. But this *one* does not exist.¹³³

She chooses to focus on sexual difference rather than on the pursuit of egalitarian notions of individuality. Her idea is a good one that sexual difference has possibilities beyond mastery and victimization. She rejects Hegel's conception of free and self-determining modern subjectivity, yet finds in him support for her project to construct a philosophy and ethics of sexual difference that does not reduce men or women to the status of objects. Her proposal for a new alliance of men and women is indebted to Hegel's conception of love as *the labour of the negative* – where the negative represents Otherness and hence, limits on maleness and femaleness.¹³⁴ No man or women can declare, "I am the whole". Wholeness requires not that men and women should be brought back to the universal, but that they should form an alliance based on true reciprocity.

Irigaray is proposing nothing short of revolutionary changes to the development of subjectivity, however if these changes are to have any hopes of coming to fruition, then they will demand robust support in civil and political society. Otherwise, her proposals will not develop far beyond the stage of psychoanalytical theory. Sexual difference, to be meaningful, has to be expressed in a context that also includes the arrangements and institutions of state and civil society – an area of theoretical weakness in her philosophy. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and *The Philosophy of History* lend themselves well to rounding out her feminist project and facilitating its completion. They contribute a methodology for expressing human differences and potentially overcoming Irigaray's theoretical weakness by means of strategies of Spirit that combine the concerns of particularity and universality without sacrificing one to

¹³³ Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 35.

the other.

Environmental and Ecofeminist Philosophy

The approach of environmental philosophy is to propose an alternate framework for political theory that recognizes the inter-relatedness of the human and non-human worlds. This approach has proven to lend itself well to addressing feminist concerns. Environmental and ecofeminist philosophers make up a fourth group of respondents. They give a critique of the deleterious aspects to the association of women and Nature that differs from liberal, post-Marxist and post-Modern readings because it does not reject this association as oppressive, in itself. They claim the logic of western culture is at the root of the devaluation of women and Nature. A spokesperson is the late Australian environmental philosopher Val Plumwood [1939-2008] who leaves as legacy her work to advance a conception of rationality compatible with the fact that it is sustained by the natural world.¹³⁵ In *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*¹³⁶ she argued that the Platonic dualism of reason and nature has not been resolved in the modern conception of rationality and subjectivity. She is critical of the separation of humanity and Nature that is involved with the theme of conquest of Nature. She rejects both the essentialist position based on respect for irreducible differences and also the perspective of deep ecology that sees a merger of selfhood and the natural world. Her contribution to this discussion primarily comes through her critique of the view of liberal and post-Marxist feminists that the association of woman and Nature is a relic of past oppression and should be set aside. Plumwood accepts that the association with Nature poses dilemmas for women,

¹³⁴ Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 19.

¹³⁵ See: Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹³⁶ Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

however she contests the counterview that there is a universal and abstract model of humanity into which men and women will be assimilated. Such a model is highly problematic, based as it is on sets of outdated assumptions about a hierarchy of Nature and Spirit that conceal old dualisms. Her philosophically-informed critique of the generic model of humanity into which some feminists would escape, underlines how important it is not to reconcile feminine consciousness with Hegel's conception of modern subjectivity without critically testing that conception for biases and assumptions that may be problematic for the inclusion of women.

Alison Stone¹³⁷ is a feminist and environmentalist philosopher who finds Hegel's philosophy of nature to be relevant with respect to environmental issues and feminist concerns. She represents the potential within the environmental philosophical inquiry to significantly alter the feminist response to Hegel, by challenging to the conventional view that his philosophy is pervaded by the theme of subjugation of Nature to Spirit.

Possibilities for Feminism in Hegel

Yet a third assessment of Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness comes from a collection of feminist philosophers who shall be grouped together beneath the heading of contemporary Hegelian scholars. This group includes the critical voices of those who while they may not subscribe to all the positions taken by Hegel nor readily identify themselves as Hegelians, nonetheless find that his philosophy continues to merit our attention because it opens opportunities unavailable elsewhere to address a range of contemporary concerns including ethics, equality and sexual difference, and environmental philosophy. These thinkers do not fit easily into any one school of thought and they have avoided the extremes of

¹³⁷ Alison Stone, *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 2004).

a discussion that has been polarized by the conflicting approaches of abstract rationalism and natural essentialism. They have shifted attention away from Hegel's explicit writings about women. They use resources in his philosophy to clarify philosophic arguments that, from the standpoint of many feminist philosophers, have not been resolved within the limitations of the mainstream philosophic tradition. They find that by confining women to the family sphere, Hegel contradicted his idea that subjective freedom is the indisputable principle of the modern world and requires involvement in civil society.

The issue is whether Hegelian thought offers better possibilities for understanding the historical and conceptual origins of positions taken within the mainstream philosophical tradition that dismiss the capacity of women to live lives as full and concrete rational persons. This is the claim put forward in the Introduction to Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy* :

At the heart of my argument is the claim that Hegel is battling with the same conceptual conundrum which is constitutive of feminist philosophy within the Western tradition. This is the conundrum of how to escape the conceptual binary oppositions (between culture and nature, reason and emotion, autonomy and heteronomy, universal and particular, ideal and real) which have associated women with the denigrated term and prescribed the exclusion of women from the practices of both philosophy and politics...I argue that Hegel prefigures the reductive pattern of internal philosophical debates within feminism in his account of the temptations of modern thought to lapse in to one-sidedness and exclusivity in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*. In addition, I argue that Hegel provides a resource for resisting the temptations of modernist transcendence, through his insistence on the inseparability of being from truth and his historicization of both being and truth.¹³⁸

Hegel's philosophy offers a standpoint for feminist scholars and critics to appreciate the limitations of the western philosophical tradition, while engaging the problem of binary

¹³⁸ Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 2-3.

thinking which they see as a contributor to the tradition of misogyny in philosophy and politics.

Hutchings is a self-identified Hegelian feminist who appreciates the need to explore the dialectic of Nature and Spirit underpinning Hegel's *Antigone* story because it defines the other sets of oppositions enfolded within the narrative of Spirit (substance and subject, man and woman, immediacy and self-consciousness, etc.). Hutchings' position is that Hegel's treatment of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit has been disadvantageous to women; nevertheless this treatment should not be received solely as evidence of biases in his philosophy, because it reflects an accurate comprehension of the operation of objective and historical processes. The important thing is, the dialectical nature of Spirit as self-movement resists the absolutization of oppositions and holds out future possibilities for a more complex reconciliation of oppositions within a definition of reason that would include feminine consciousness.

Hutchings distinguishes herself from the positions of feminist critics such as Irigaray, Mills and Butler. The Irigaray reading of sexual difference in Hegel has essentialist leanings and does not go beyond these to a reconciliation of differences and diversity of people with the need for justice and equality of civil and political rights. Mills aspires to surmount the problem of sexual difference through recourse to negative dialectics of Adorno, with an accentuation of the separation of Nature and Spirit. But Mills and Butler do not account for the significance of the natural dimension of human existence. The fact that all people are sexed is a condition of natural difference and granted, it is not a *changeless* condition but is never suppressed altogether and must be explicitly accounted in any realistic theory of modern political and social life. Hutchings' alternative reading of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit in

Greek ethical life is inspired by a vision of a mutually self-determining relation of natural and spiritual existence, in which Nature and Spirit are always implicated together in the social world. This concept of the mutual relationship of Nature and Spirit serves as a foundation for her advocacy of a uniquely Hegelian feminism that would hold sexual difference to be important while soundly denying that it has an essentialist base.

Hutchings' position puts forward a legitimate modification of the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel. She uses resources internal to Hegel's system to resolve the intractable pairs of binary oppositions that excluded women from his conception of modern subjectivity. She relies on an understanding of self-moving Spirit to counter the tendency found in feminist criticism to assume that Nature and Spirit are mutually exclusive, fixed categories in Hegel. She finds in Hegel the possible ways to formulate the truth of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit without simply reinstating old hierarchies. Hutchings does reject his account of modern feminine consciousness because it is authorized by reference to a *transhistorical* female essence. She proposes in its place a Hegelian feminism that is pragmatic and political and emphasises the historical dimension of truth claims. Her argument is that Hegel's account of the feminine has validity as an historical account for the subordination of women, but it must undergo change and development for it to be consistent with the principles of his system. This is a reasonable argument and it is consistent with the position taken by the thesis, but it could stand some clarification of the logical content of the treatment of the feminine. Hutchings does not believe that progress can be guaranteed, but the process is emancipation where Spirit is actualised in the form of a social world in which everyone is destined to the status of a free and autonomous individual.

There are genuine theoretical difficulties in Hegel's exposition of the dialectic of

Nature and Spirit that will not be resolved within the parameters of this project, but his account of the emergence of Spirit from Nature does not claim these categories are mutually exclusive. Kimberly Hutchings put forward an alternative view that the exposition of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit in Greek ethical life points to a “mutually self-determining relation of Natural and Spiritual existence”¹³⁹ where both Nature and Spirit are implicated in both Human and Divine Law. This is the position taken in the thesis and it reconnects the feminine element with possibilities for change and dialectical development. Natural sexual differences will remain an aspect of consciousness with an ethical significance that is not static and whose implications must be considered in relation to the conditioning factors of time and place. A contemporary Hegelian position on sexual difference might be one that holds both men and women as ethically responsible to take up a position towards the natural dimension of their existence, putting to rest the dichotomy of the natural feminine versus the spiritual masculine.

Nadine Changfoot is a feminist philosopher whose interests include investigation of feminist criticism of Hegel and analyses of the depiction of women in his texts.¹⁴⁰ In her view, a feminist dismissal of Hegel would have to be justified by one of two reasons: either there has been a failure of the dialectic, or aspects of his thought found in those works that have not been the focus of the feminist critique (*Logic*, *The Philosophy of History*) are hostile to the feminine. The problem in the *Philosophy of Right* lies not with Hegel’s dialectic of self, rather it lies with a depiction of women that *does not do justice* to Hegel’s dialectic of the self:

¹³⁹ Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, 94-102.

¹⁴⁰ Nadine Changfoot, “Hegel and Feminist Thought: A Dialectical Investigation”, Ph.D. diss., York University, 2001, Canadian Theses Series (Ottawa: National Library of Canada = Bibliothèque nationale du

It is possible to sidestep his sexism, because Hegel's sexism is not essential to his idea of the knowing self. The knowing self is not premised on the necessary *a priori* subjugation of women because self-understanding is fundamentally historical. The foundation of the Hegelian self is the expression of self-understanding or self-consciousness. One's gender will affect this self-understanding, but it will not narrowly determine it.¹⁴¹

Changfoot approaches the study of Human and Divine law using a gender perspective.

However she argues these laws are universal moral principles and not reducible to sexual biology. They were equally essential to the life of the community and both were upheld. Her reading of the *Antigone* story shows the operation of Human and Divine Law was a fine balance that did not *in itself* require sexual inequality. Men and women, including the family, participated in the ethical life of the polis where equal importance was attached to the claims of Human and Divine Law. Her analysis of ethical Greek life in Hegel's *Phenomenology* demonstrates against any *inevitability* to the conclusion that Antigone and women were not self-conscious ethical agents.

The problem is how to extend this analysis towards an explanation for the seemingly-retrograde course of events that took place after the collapse of the polis. Changfoot argues that Antigone's actions contributed to moving Spirit beyond the polis to the Roman World. However, Hegel has not developed women beyond the ethical order of the Greek polis and for this reason she does not examine the Roman World.¹⁴² It is true there is no significant development of feminine consciousness beyond the polis. This adds urgency to the requirement for an explanation that will clearly spell out the reasons why women are *unable* to successfully navigate the crucial transition to the Roman world. If indeed, this transition

Canada, 2003).

¹⁴¹ Changfoot, "Hegel and Feminist Thought: A Dialectical Investigation", 241.

¹⁴² Nadine Changfoot, "Hegel's Antigone: A Response to the Feminist Critique". *The Owl of Minerva*:

excludes women from subsequent movements of Spirit - and to judge from the consensus among feminist scholars, it would seem to do just that - then it ought to become a focal point for continued investigation into Hegel's treatment for women.

Although Hegel does not *explicitly* treat the subject of women in the Roman world, it is quite possible to garner the negative implications for women, based on his key observations in *The Philosophy of History*.¹⁴³ He observed that in the Roman world, the subjugation of Nature is intensified as Spirit withdraws from involvement with the natural world into abstraction. The degradation of marriage and family life, a logical counterpart to this movement, certainly would be disadvantageous for women. He observed a perversion of ethical relations took place in the Roman state that was reflected in the family, where the characteristic element was no longer the reciprocal obligations of the Greek world, but *force*. The significance for women of this change merits discussion. In the Sibree translation, Hegel is depicted as outspokenly critical of the laws permitting Roman men to treat their wives and children as property, and equally scathing in his comments about the immorality of the severity practiced by male heads of household towards family members and slaves. He is not insensitive to the negative impact on women and the family from this transition to a higher stage of historical Spirit. Overall, the comparison of customs and practices of Greek and Roman family life in *Philosophy of History* ends in nostalgia for the former. Still, Hegel maintained the principle of Roman Spirit represented a dialectical advance over the limitations of the Greek ethic, and it was necessary for Spirit to undergo this most strenuous phase of

Journal of the Hegel Society of America, 33 (Spring/Summer 2002):

¹⁴³ See "Chapter 1. - The Elements of Roman Spirit" in Section I to Part III - *The Roman World* in Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 283-296.

development. A better understanding is needed of the status of feminine consciousness in relation to the principle of Roman Spirit.

There is another reason why the response to Hegel's *Antigone* must extend the analysis beyond the limits of the polis. The "perfect bloom" of Greek civilization may have lasted barely sixty years, while the *minimum* duration of Roman history from monarchy to the Empire well exceeds a millennium. Nowhere does the labour of the negative reveal itself to be more protracted and difficult than it does throughout the development of the principle of Roman Spirit. Even if a re-reading of Hegel's *Antigone* story were to disclose her as a self-conscious ethical actor, that would only deepen the mystery. If that is who she is, the lack of significant progress of feminine consciousness during the next, lengthy stage of historical Spirit is even more inexplicable.

There is a need to investigate why feminine consciousness was arrested at the stage of Roman Spirit. A good place to begin the explanation is with the principle of the Roman world that excludes the natural morality of family *piety* and therefore by association, excludes women.¹⁴⁴ Rome is described as the *manhood* of history:

This phase can be regarded as the manhood of history. For manhood follows neither the arbitrary will of a master, nor its own aesthetic arbitrariness; its life is one of arduous labour and service, not of the free and happy pursuit of its own ends. But although the end to which man must dedicate himself is universal, it is also an inflexible one. A state, laws, and constitutions are ends, and it is these which the individual must serve: the individual is immersed in them and achieves his own end only in the universal one.¹⁴⁵

The ethical Greek polis is *dependent* on character and on the ethical disposition of men and

¹⁴⁴ On the general character of the Romans, see Chapter I to Part III – "The Roman World" in Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 283-295.

¹⁴⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 203.

women, *vulnerable* to “the mutability of men’s inner life and individual subjectivity”. The Roman principle is separate from all these.

To read Antigone as a rational and self-conscious actor, is to risk obscuring the significance of the conflict of Nature and Spirit that is fundamental to her dilemma and to the operation of Human and Divine Law. The ethical Greek world has the marks of natural ethical life, it is not the true ethical life. Rational self-conscious action *does not exist* in this world for men or women. Thus, the thesis has sought to expand the analysis beyond Hegel’s *Antigone* story, drawing upon other resources in his system of philosophy that until now, have not been included in discussion.

It is a good question whether a feminist dismissal of Hegel is justified on the grounds of a failure of the dialectic, or on the grounds that evidence of hostility to women is found in the *oeuvre* in sources other than the main passages in *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right*. This project has cited evidence for the argument that indeed, there was a shortcoming in the logic at the crucial stage of the transition from ancient Greece to Rome. Yet when the problems in logic are compared with the relevant historical material a striking consistency emerges. Structural problems that appear in the *Logic* appear also in the *Philosophy of History*. The relation of *The Philosophy of History* to the *Logic* has long been a troublesome one for Hegelian scholars and cannot be resolved within the limitations of this project.

One could argue that Hegel used logic to work out rationally *why* events were the way they were, and *how* the manifold shapes of Spirit necessitated one another. By this argument, the logic reflects history and the issue with the feminine is not, therefore, strictly a *logical* issue but also *historical* issue.

An alternative would be to begin from the position that the *Logic* is theorized using

pure reason. This position may be subdivided into two viewpoints. One would be that the *Logic* has no bearing on *The Philosophy of History*. A second viewpoint, *The Philosophy of History* was written to include only empirical data that supports the *Logic*. In the case of these two viewpoints, Hegel becomes responsible for stalling feminine consciousness, and the argument for a feminist dismissal is stronger.

The structural similarities in the logical and historical accounts of the transitional period of Spirit from Greece to Rome, are much too striking to ignore. If indeed, Hegel has comprehended the *logical* structure to the *historical* suppression of feminine consciousness, then this would argue against any position that he stalled the development of women because of sexism. The project has shown the suppression of the feminine does constitute a logical problem. However, the fact of a logical problem does not change the inclusive implication of Hegel's theory for women and modern subjectivity. Hegel tried to interpret the rational structure of the ancient world. Certainly, he drew its limitations. A better *structural* understanding of the suppression of feminine consciousness is needed in order for political philosophers to rethink the conception of modern subjectivity in a way that includes women. Armed with a proper *structural* and *historical* understanding, it then becomes possible to find in Hegel's philosophy the resources necessary to resolve the logical and structural problems that he was unable to resolve in his time. The thesis prefers an approach that pursues a better logical, historical and structural understanding of the problem using systemic resources, rather than one that seeks to *actualize* women in Hegel as fully equal to men, through revisionist readings that set aside his historical account. The actualization of equality in Hegel has a subjective side but also requires a set of objective and explicit arrangements to be put in place in the world. It is difficult to argue these arrangements are fully in place. The methodology of

the dialectic leaves open the possibility for future developments leading to a fully rational solution to the conflict of Nature and Spirit. It would be impossible to say exactly how resolution to the logical and structural problems of feminine consciousness would appear because these are ongoing developments.

Related Criticism

When the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel is subjected to analysis, the results further undermine the claims that the contradictions internal to ancient Spirit have been fully surmounted in Hegel's conception of modern subjectivity. These results invite a reconsideration of our understanding of modern subjectivity. The idea that the deficiencies of ancient Spirit have not been surmounted and that currents of tension between antiquity and modernity continue to run through Hegel's work is not original to feminist criticism. Michael Theunissen, in his critical writings, is an influential proponent of this idea. It will not be possible within the parameters of this thesis to develop an adequate response to Theunissen's criticism, but it will be helpful to situate the thesis in relation to his critique because Theunissen is supportive of the argument that ethical substantiality was not entirely overcome in Hegel. This is significant because acceptance of this argument is a condition for the related argument that the arrested development of feminine consciousness in Hegel is, in fact, symptomatic of the same difficulty in surmounting ethical substance that was identified in Theunissen.

Theunissen searches for a concept of freedom in Hegel that will provide an alternative to either the substantiality of the ancient ethical order or the atomism of rational individualism.

The theory of ethical life, according to Theunissen,¹⁴⁶ is founded on conditions of freedom that initially are found in the original ethical community of the family, which is a natural phenomenon of communal unity and freedom that is open to the intersubjective approach to the concept of freedom. Theunissen claims the intersubjective dimension was repressed in Hegel's theory of modern ethical life through his understanding of objective Spirit as substance. Hegel understood relations of persons as analogous to relations of substance to accidents and he thus accidentalized persons. But a theory of ethical life based on communal freedom of members is not compatible with this idea of objective Spirit. Theunissen argues that the repression of intersubjectivity originates in problems with the approach to ethical life from individuality. In Hegel, individuality assumes a variety of different meanings, one of which is the immediate individuality found in the ancient world. It must be distinguished from the individuality of the concept which results when the individual mediates its particularity with universality. But the logical distinction between these two forms of individuality is incoherent, so much that to attempt to fathom it "only leads deeper into the labyrinth. It counts as one of Hegel's most peculiar and darkest thoughts." Theunissen's criticism is significant because it identified the problem that immediate individuality together with the ethical relations of the family was repressed from out of the theory of ethical life. Assume that feminine consciousness is included with the repressed content, on the basis of what is said in Hegel about social roles and arrangements in the ethical world. Immediate individuality developed in the context of immediate ethical existence characteristic of the Greek realm and was implicated with Nature and the natural element of finitude. The

¹⁴⁶ Michael Theunissen, "The Repressed Intersubjectivity in Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in *Hegel and Legal Theory*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld and David Carlson, (New York and London: Routledge,

repression happened at the stage of transition from the ethical world to abstract right, coinciding with the historical setting for the *Antigone* story. Theunissen did not address these other implications. Logically, women who exercised a role in the natural ethical community of the family and participated in immediate individuality would be penalized because the limitations of their assigned role did not furnish options to develop a higher form of individuality.

Conclusion

The philosophical treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel has been shown to be incompatible with his conception of modern subjectivity, as previously discussed at the outset of this chapter. This incompatibility came to light in the decades of the nineteen-eighties and nineteen-nineties through studies of Hegel's *Antigone* story. Many of these came from the perspective of feminist philosophy and criticism. Since then, there has been limited progress in exploring the theme from vantage points offered by his other works, especially *Aesthetics* and *Science of Logic*.

The position of universal and abstract rational individualism and its variations has dominated the discussion of Hegel and women. This position features an Enlightenment-based conception of human nature based on the principle of a universal and abstract rational personhood that transcends natural limits. In this regard, natural limits include natural human differences. This approach proposes to resolve the incompatibility in Hegel's treatment of women by changing the image of Antigone, and portraying her as a rational person, thereby placing her on equal footing with her masculine counterparts. The formal equality espoused

by abstract rationalism does not take into account the concrete reality of particular individuality.

Setting aside for a moment Hegel's principle of historical consciousness, the abstract rationalist reading of the *Antigone* story is rejected because it neglects the identity of Antigone as an ancient subject. The formal equality espoused by abstract rationalism does not take into account the concrete reality of particular individuality. Likewise, it does not account for the necessity of ancient subjectivity as a moment in the dialectical development of the Concept. An alteration to Antigone that obscures our view of the ancient subject would deny modern people access to a portion of the collected wealth of the historical Spirit; it would, in effect, contribute to the impoverishment of modern subjectivity. This is a point that will be pursued in subsequent chapters on Greek Spirit.

Next, this chapter offered a second reading of Hegel and the *Antigone* story that drew on the philosophies of naturalism, essentialism and Romanticism in order to vindicate the significance of human differences (including sexual difference) as an irreducible dimension of existence. In this reading, Hegel is regarded critically as an Enlightenment figure whose conception of modern subjectivity advocated the autonomy of the sovereign subject by way of transcendence of the natural dimension of human existence. This reading is sceptical of the Enlightenment notion of a common human nature that transcends natural limits and differences; it sees these differences as valuable. However, this treatment of Hegel finds the Enlightenment notion of the transcendent subject dismissive of differences as if they were incidental to human worth. The essentialist reading claims that in valuing the natural dimension it does not promote a return to a traditional ethos, but despite this claim the reading does not get beyond the pre-modern spiritual stage of unreflected harmony with Nature. The

essentialist reading is unable to advance the discussion of how to recover the natural dimension of human existence as an expression of individuality in a form that is compatible with rational self-consciousness.

Ironically, the positions of universal and abstract rationalism and natural essentialism oppose one another but the shortcoming common to both is that neither has sufficiently engaged the dialectic of Nature and Spirit nor its foundational importance for the history of self-conscious Spirit. By putting stress on free and rational transcendence, the school of universal and abstract rationalism extracts Nature and natural human differences, from the progress of the dialectic. Abstract universalism does not satisfy the definition for the reconciliation of self-consciousness with actuality given in the *Preface*¹⁴⁷ to *Philosophy of Right* for it does not contain the rational insight that finitude is present in the realm of universality, not as contingency but as being in and for itself. Meanwhile, the naturalist and essentialist reading of Hegel cannot move beyond the fact of difference to a place where it can be resolved through construction of a common ethical life with equality and justice for all members. Neither of these positions has access to a fuller resolution of the classical conflict of Nature and Spirit, and neither is able to resolve the incompatibility in Hegel between feminine consciousness and modern subjectivity. It is necessary to look beyond the limitations of these positions.

The chapter has considered a collection of readings of Hegel from across a spectrum of possible positions. These were presented in order to identify the points where the thesis takes its departure from the discussion thus far in the literature. These points will be considered in

¹⁴⁷ See the *Preface* to Hegel, *Elements*, 22.

subsequent chapters. The study of Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity will expose the contradictions inherent in the classical ideal of unreflected harmony of Nature and Spirit, and in doing so, will expose limitations in both naturalist and essentialist elements of feminist thought. The harmony is an unstable “opposition in immediacy”. The concept of individualism based on universal and abstract rational individualism does not account for the rich diversity of particular individuality. A strong case in point would be the example of its application to the *Antigone* story where Antigone is revised in the likeness of a rational individual, but at the expense of her identity as an ancient subject. Abstract rationalism does not allow for the manifestation of reason in history as a series of shapes and forms of the world where unfolding is necessary to the Idea.

The relation of Nature and Spirit must be elucidated for there to be clarity on the subject of feminine consciousness in Hegel. The *Science of Logic*, the *Aesthetics* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* all are useful for this purpose. The readings from the standpoint of Christian philosophy seem to offer the best opportunity to see beyond the limited vision of creation as a dualism of Nature and Spirit, to the vision of an alliance of the human and natural worlds. This would include women without imposing on them a requirement to adopt the principles of abstract and formal equality, principles that some critics have argued amount to a denial of the natural distinctions and capabilities essential for a full human life. In the thesis, the reappearance of Antigone will be interpreted as symptomatic of gaps and inconsistencies in the theory of modern individuality that reflect contradictions in the contemporary model of the modern self. She emerges in response to a need to place limits and constraints on the ideal of the self-sufficient and particular individual and to restore this ideal to a closer relationship with other, older dimensions of full and concrete personhood. The appearance of Antigone in the

treatment of modern feminine consciousness is interpreted as a need to preserve a space for the value of ethical substantiality while upholding the gains wrought by the modern principle of subjective freedom. For Hegel, the sphere of ethical substantiality seems to have been unduly restricted in modern life to the sphere of women and family but this is a restriction that may be overcome through careful reinterpretation of his account. An authentic expression of ethical substantiality would encompass the relation of self-conscious Spirit with Nature and would not seek to shrink this relationship or confine it within the domestic sphere. Later chapters will explore this understanding of Antigone and will examine how it may update our understanding of modern subjectivity.

Hegel wished to preserve a sphere for ethical substantiality within modern life. He chose the family to be this sphere and within it he confined women as the guardians of the divine law of piety. When it is allowed that all spiritual existence has a natural element, then there no longer will be any reason to confine women to the family because involvement with substantive ends will be understood and accepted as a dimension of modern life that is ubiquitous and one that does not need to be confined within the family to ensure its preservation. The role assigned to women in the Hegelian scheme of modern life is inconsistent with a modern subjectivity founded on the principle of subjective freedom and must be rejected because it is oppressive for individuals. The intention to preserve ethical substantiality alongside subjective freedom is of interest. His approach to realization of these intentions is flawed because it required confining women to the family sphere and because it disallowed dialectical development of the family. But it may be argued this approach is inessential to the logic of the otherwise valid insight that the spiritual existence of modern

individuals cannot be maintained without the contributions given by Nature and the element of finitude an element that cannot be separated from the happiness and satisfaction belonging to particular individuality

4. GREEK SPIRIT AS AN AESTHETIC SPIRITUAL UNITY

Hegel's logic sets forth the science of the Idea by systematically unfolding its content to prove that its logical and historical distinctions are absolute necessities to the freedom of the whole. The intention is to highlight the contribution of Greek Spirit to the foundational Idea of modern times. The presentation of modern feminine consciousness in *Philosophy of Right* recapitulates the ethical freedom of the ancient Greek world with no innovations leading towards an eventual reconciliation with the principle of modern times. As a result, Hegel's presentation is inconsistent with the conception of modern subjectivity. More than an oversight on Hegel's part, this discrepancy is an outcome of the execution of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit in Greek and Roman antiquity. Hegel is unable to consistently demonstrate throughout the texts that Nature is a moment grounded in the life of Spirit, although it is clear from his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* he was committed to that principle.¹⁴⁸

This chapter examines feminine consciousness from the standpoint of the phenomenology of Spirit as the ethical order of the Greek polis. References to ideas and insights are taken from the *Aesthetics*; Greek Spirit represents an aesthetic conception of the unity of Nature and Spirit. The unity is unstable and short-lived, because Greek Spirit is able only to partially reconcile the conflict of these terms. The ill reconciled opposition of Nature and Spirit brings about the downfall and dissolution of the ancient world. From the side of subjectivity, ethical substance presents itself in the mode of Beautiful Individuality. By looking at Beautiful Individuality, the chapter builds perspective from the standpoint of

¹⁴⁸ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 109-110.

subjectivity. It seeks an answer as to why this reconciliation of Nature and Spirit is no more than a partial reconciliation, and explores the inevitably tragic character of Beautiful Individuality. Antigone represents the character of Beautiful Individuality which is doomed to tragedy, because it can do no more than partially reconcile the natural and spiritual dimension of human existence. A full reconciliation is available in modernity, and there should be no need to revive the figure of Antigone for the treatment of modern feminine consciousness, as she has discharged her role in the ancient world. The challenge is understanding the rationale for the appearance of feminine consciousness with the profile of Antigone who, as a Beautiful Individual, is a motif for a model of dialectical conflict and unity that collapsed in the ancient world. The full reconciliation of humanity with Spirit is given in the principle of modern times, and that Divine Spirit is individualized in a human being. Hegel articulated his ethical, political and social theory in a way that does not make available to everyone the reconciliation offered in his conception of modern subjectivity. The treatment of women especially does not incorporate the full reconciliation available in modernity. An examination of Hegel's modern feminine consciousness from the standpoint of Spirit as ethical substance—that is to say, from the standpoint of *Aesthetics*—will disclose the source of the difficulty in resolving the conflict of Nature and Spirit. This unresolved conflict is key to Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness, and in this chapter it will be analysed with reference to the aesthetics of Greek Spirit. Later chapters will demonstrate that Hegel's ethical, political and social theory does not fully capture the potential for reconciliation available in modernity. He continues to use the conflicted, Hellenistic model for the unity of Nature and Spirit, in which the appearance of harmonious unity is a concealment for ongoing opposition. The model discussed in this chapter poses hindrances unique to women in the pursuit of

rational self-consciousness.

The chapter will introduce the logical Idea in its configuration as the aesthetic spiritual unity of the ancient Greek world. The chapter will begin by exploring the definition of unity from the standpoint of the Greek world as an ethical substance and proceed to a study of how the principle of individuality is addressed at this stage of Spirit. The concept of the Greek world as an ethical substance and the meaning of *substantive order* is given a further explanation in the following remarks:

Substantial freedom is the implicit rationality of the will which is subsequently developed in the state. But in this determination of reason individual insight and volition are not yet present; in other words, subjective freedom, which can only determine itself in the individual and which constitutes the reflection of the individual in his own conscience, has not yet come into being. Where there is merely substantial freedom, commandments and laws are regarded as established in and for themselves, and the individual subject adopts an attitude of complete subservience towards them.¹⁴⁹

A social and political order is based on substance, that is to say, it is a *substantial* order when its legitimacy is understood as having originated in sources external to the subjective will. The substantive order is thus a development of rationality, but a development purely from the side of objective Spirit, because the rationality of the will has been located in the state and not in the individual. In ancient Greece, the individual continues to be immersed in unity with the universal substance of the state, but what has changed from the Oriental world is that the principle of individuality and subjective freedom are now present to the extent that the ethical character of substance is associated directly with the actions of the individual. Rationality of individual will is an implicit moment in the ethical world of the Greek polis, but only implicitly, because the existence of the subject remains an unconscious existence, while the unity of subjective freedom and substance is based on unreflected adherence to custom

and law. Rationality is said to be realized from the side of objective Spirit. The Greek polis is the first example of an historical setting where the principle of the substantial order, as defined by a coalescence of the state order and individuality, is concretely realized. This coalescence of state and individual determines the ethical nature of the Greek polis. In this Hegelian analysis, the ethical substance of the polis becomes the place where humanity can fulfill its highest spiritual destiny in the concrete and actual order of ethical life. Hegel maintains the Greek citizenry did not need to look to religion for knowledge and satisfaction of its highest ends.¹⁵⁰ The substantive order accomplished the realisation of universal ends in a *concrete setting* of the ethical order of the state. Greek Spirit constitutes an adumbration of the logical Idea as a living concrete unity of a subject and an object. This historically unprecedented harmony of state and individuality was conditional on the suppression of the subjective will. The suppression of the subjective will produced what became recognised as the definitive feature of ethical substance, an immediate coalescence of individuality and the order of the state reaching its height in the flourishing period of Athens during the Golden Age of Pericles. In the Hegelian account, this coalescence of individuality and the state gave rise to the character of the Beautiful Individual, which is discussed both below and in Chapter Five.

The ancient Greek Spirit assumed the shape of an ethical substance, meaning it was a universal substance formed on the principle of the identification of the individual subject with the substantive order of the polis. To lay special emphasis on the meaning of ethical substance

¹⁴⁹ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 197.

¹⁵⁰ The view point since has been disputed that political life in the Greek polis was emancipated from religious content to anywhere near the extent that Hegel believed. Not only was religion the constituent principle of the ancient family, so too, the ancient city was above all a religious abode of gods and men. The classic of French historical work in this area is Fustel De Coulanges (1830-1889), *The Ancient City; A Study on the Religion, Laws and Institutions of Ancient Rome and Greece*, 1864.

as an aesthetic spiritual unity, this chapter sets forth the logical content of this type of unity and afterwards situates it in its proper historical and logical position in the progression of Spirit. The attention to the contextual setting will clarify that Spirit at the stage of an ethical substance, a substance that is also an aesthetic spiritual unity, is a necessary moment to the Idea as freedom of the whole. For the necessity of this moment of ethical substance to be rendered transparent, it should also be noted that ethical substance as a moment in the dialectic of Spirit may be historically distant, but it has not altogether vanished.

Each determinate form which the Spirit assumes does not simply fade away naturally with the passage of time, but is preserved in the self-determining self-conscious activity of the self-consciousness. Since this preservation is an activity of thought it is both conservation and a transfiguration. Thus while spirit on the one hand preserves the reality and continuity of its own nature, it is at the same time enriched by the essence, the thought, the universal aspect of what was formerly its mere existence.¹⁵¹

It would be consistent with the imperatives of the logic for the moment of Spirit as ethical substance to undergo sublation and subsequently to be preserved as a resource for modern *Sittlichkeit*, not only in an anachronistic version such as feminine, but also in a version compatible with the contemporary dialectic. Ethical substance must suffer negation, but in the movement of sublation a negation does not constitute annulment, and it would be preserved for the dialectic. In the historical and logical accounts by Hegel the moment of immediacy and the elements of natural consciousness and finitude have fallen outside of the dialectic. A modification is required to recover the moment of immediacy and reconcile it with the dialectic of Spirit, so that its necessity in the life of Spirit may become transparent to reason.

Greek Spirit is the logical Idea configured as an aesthetic spiritual unity of universal

substance with subjective will. Viewed from the side of objective Spirit, this aesthetic spiritual unity has the meaning of an ethical substance, which is rendered in German language as *Sittlichkeit*. Viewed from the side of subjective will, the unity appears in the figure of the Beautiful Individual, who is the characterization of objective Spirit.

A complete account of the Hegelian concept of Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity requires an examination of texts from the concrete philosophical sciences, including lecture notes on the philosophy of world history and lectures on classical aesthetics and phenomenology of Spirit. A complete exposition of the logical and historical dimensions of Spirit requires these texts to be related to the appropriate passages in *Science of Logic*. Because the chapter subject is Greek Spirit as a configuration of the logical Idea, it may be useful to give an explanation of the logical Idea, beginning with the definition of logic given in the Introduction to *Science of Logic*:

...Logic was defined as the science of pure thought, the principal of which is our knowing, the unity which is not abstract, but a living concrete unity in virtue of the fact that in it, the opposition in consciousness between a self-determined entity, a subject, and a second such entity, an object, is known to be overcome; Being is known to be the pure Notion in its own self, and the pure Notion to be true Being.¹⁵²

The unusual feature of Hegel's exposition of ancient Spirit is that it refrains from treating ancient history as an exotic interest, and instead, focuses on its demonstration of the ancient world as a rational and determinate shape of the logical Idea. The originality of this approach is that it apprehends the ancient world as if that world were grounded in the substantive principle, while appreciating it as a moment necessary to the freedom of the

¹⁵¹ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 61.

¹⁵² Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 60.

whole. The value is realized when the presentation of modern feminine consciousness in the likeness of its ancient counterpart is demonstrated, but the necessity of this moment is incompletely expressed because the demonstration is incompatible with the principle of modern times. The problem, however, is expressing natural immediacy within the dialectic of progressive Spirit. The intention is not to reject outright the treatment of the feminine because it is grounded in falsity. The intention is to develop the criticism that the universal aspect of this mode of consciousness needs to be appropriately preserved in such a way that its principle is no longer its immediate content. Hegel's treatment is incomplete because it fails to develop the immediate content of this mode of consciousness in the disposition of women. However the persistence of this immediate content is an anachronism that is not consistent with what was said above about the movement and progress of Spirit.

This chapter will also explain the Hegelian idea of Greek Spirit as an aesthetically conditioned mode of Spirit. This has necessitated references to a selection of concepts specific to the philosophy of Hegel that describe aspects of ancient existence as modes of Greek Spirit. There needs to be clarification of Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual union, *Sittlichkeit* or ethical substance, the principle of character, and the Beautiful Individual. The Olympic pantheon of divinities should be discussed because it offers a particularly vivid illustration of the meaning of the principle of Spirit as an aesthetic unity. Underlying all these modalities is the dialectic of Nature and Spirit which gives rise to the principle that natural transforms to spiritual, and this is the essence of ancient Greek Spirit. The dialectic of Nature and Spirit is incompletely executed at this stage, and every mode of Greek Spirit is pervaded by the requirement to renounce the worth and independence of Nature to preserve the aesthetic and spiritual definition of unity. The problem of Greek Spirit as definition of the unity of Nature and Spirit

is that it does not apprehend Nature as a moment grounded in the life of Spirit. The implications of this deficiency are felt in the presentation of modern feminine consciousness insofar as it continues to model a theory of immediate individuality specific to the ancient Greek world. However, this theory is thoroughly inconsistent with the conception of modern subjectivity.

Ancient Spirit as an Aesthetic Spiritual Unity

The Hegelian idea of Greek Spirit takes for its point of departure the Aristotelian dictum that philosophy proceeds from wonder at the natural, and combines this with the conviction that human beings are not merely immersed in or subjected to its physical powers, but have a *relation* with Nature that affords them access to the truth of its significance.

The Philosophy of History discusses at length the Greek passion for discovering the hidden meaning of the natural world. The Greeks created a new conception of Nature and formed collections of aesthetic productions that manifested Spirit to consciousness in a visible way. Hegel classified these collections using the categories of the subjective, objective, and political works of art. The originality of the Hegelian analysis of the prolific output of aesthetics by the Greeks is contained in his recognition throughout these collections of the workings of a common principle that expressed the true significance of Nature. He captured this recognition vividly in his metaphor of Greek Spirit as plastic artist. The discovery in Nature of a universal standard of reason capable of guaranteeing order and regularity was yet to come, but the issue of consciousness and its standpoint towards Nature became sharply significant.

Greek Spirit adopted a standpoint centred on the requirement for Nature to undergo a

transformation that would disclose Spirit as the true content of Nature. The harmonization of Nature and Spirit is sustained through activities that fused the natural with subjective elements, thus forming a new conception of Nature by appropriating and shaping natural materials into aesthetic objects. Consciousness knows itself to be free through the aesthetic experience of contemplating these objects. This knowledge of freedom as an *aesthetic* experience remains *subjectively inward* and unconscious because the contemplative subject does not yet recognize in itself the source of the unity and attributes it to the Divine. Therefore, it is described as knowledge on the part of substantiality

Aesthetic production became the definitive activity of Greek Spirit because the knowledge of freedom was available to the Greeks only through aesthetic experience. It was the genius of Greek Spirit as the plastic artist to have introduced the subjective element into the natural and to have transformed natural materials into suitable objects that signified the existence of Spirit. This transformation of the natural to the spiritual through the agency of subjective Spirit was most readily accessible to the subject in the form of the productions representing the Olympian deities in stone and metal. However, aesthetic production was not limited solely to the field of external objects. The human form is likewise appropriated as a natural material, and through the exertions of the will it is developed in conformity with the standards of the ethical community and it becomes ethical character. This ethical development of natural character illustrates the meaning of substantive freedom as an unreflected identity with substance; substance knows itself as free through the activities of its subjects and the rational will is thus present, but only on the side of substance. Greek Spirit is said to be aesthetically conditioned because it relied on natural materials together with the transformative work of subjective agency, to produce objects signifying the existence of Spirit. In Hegel,

freedom defined as an aesthetic spiritual unity is not yet a genuinely free and self-subsisting freedom, for if the element of the natural were removed there would no longer be any means of representing for consciousness the Idea:

In summing up the constituents of the *Greek Spirit*, we find its fundamental characteristics to be, 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 alien existence; but it is free because it transforms and virtually reproduces the stimulus by its own operation...The Greek Spirit...begins with Nature, but transforms it into a mere form of its (Spirit's) own existence; Spirituality is therefore not yet absolutely free; not yet absolutely *self-produced* – is not self-stimulation.¹⁵³

These remarks are given in anticipation of the contrast that will be developed later between Greek Spirit and the free, self-determining Spirit of modern times. Modern Spirit is conscious of itself as free because it wills the rational, and in this way it is the *in and for itself* or the universal. Modern Spirit is not empty universality because it also has content and it contains determinateness as particularity and individuality. Theoretically, when modern Spirit encounters Nature it is not in the presence of its Other, for the Other of Nature is in fact, an immanent moment of Spirit. Hegel does not give a complete account of how Spirit, having subordinated the natural at the stage of ethical substance, and later, abstracted it in the transition to determinate Being, then recovered the natural as one of its immanent moments. The recovery of Nature and finitude as a valid moment in the process of Spirit is a logical imperative in Hegel's philosophy, and it is the development of Christianity which he declared the religion of modern times. But alongside this imperative, the much older standpoint towards Nature colourfully expressed in Greek mythology seems to have survived in the presentation of feminine consciousness. From this standpoint, Nature is transitory and finite and therefore incompatible with the principle of modern freedom.

Sittlichkeit

The German word *Sittlichkeit* refers to the set of conditions in which universal substance first realised itself as actuality and thus outlined the totality of the Idea as the unity of universality and particularity in the shape of a concrete individuality:

It is *spirit* living and present as a world, and only thus does the substance of spirit begin to exist as spirit.¹⁵⁴

Sittlichkeit in Hegel is translated to mean ethical substance, a development from the side of objective Spirit. The historical event of substance actualised as ethical substance, or *Sittlichkeit*, took place in the sphere of the state as objective Spirit. The sphere of individuality and independent self-consciousness has not undergone development, because the developmental movements of *Sittlichkeit* take place from the side of the objective. The individual subject appears in a position of harmony with the universality and substantiality of that order, only because the subjective will is suppressed. The difficulty is the untroubled harmony of substance and subject is only sustained through individual ethical actions and, inescapably, action divides Spirit into ethical substance on one side, and ethical substance as subjective will on the other. This division of the ethical world reflects the presence in community life of a dual order of law, a permanent substantial order of Divine Law whose origins are unknown, and a temporal order of Human Law. Inevitably, this dualism generates conflict as individuals confront possibilities for different responses to ethical authorities in the life of the community.

Ancient Greek *Sittlichkeit* has a connection with the school of Eleatic philosophy, for the Eleatic philosophers were the first to define the Absolute as Being. However, the Eleatic

¹⁵³ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 238.

position could not be final because thought could not remain satisfied with the empty abstract universality, which is all that is offered by this definition of the Absolute. The principle of *Sittlichkeit* contains the idea that Spirit progresses towards a deeper and more concrete meaning of the Absolute than was given in the Eleatic definition of the Absolute as Being, and this meaning realizes itself through activities of Spirit in the social order of the community. The ethical world of the Greek polis is the historical setting for the original appearance of Spirit in this way, as an ethical order. Hegel considered Greece the homeland of Spirit and the original site where universal substance realised itself in concrete and actual shape.

From the standpoint of objective Spirit, the element of universality in the substantive community, is united with particularity in the subjective consciousness of the individual where it appears as custom and habitual behaviour. Nevertheless, from the opposite standpoint of the subject, *Sittlichkeit* is associated with an unreflecting individual consciousness that is unaware of its independence and finds its complete existence in the actuality of the objective social order. Individual consciousness in the community of ethical substance did not belong exclusively to the subject, but was shared with the whole. Ancient subjectivity appeared in the form of an immediate or shared individuality of a community, and while the subjective consciousness of the individual is not completely absent from ethical substance, the actions of ethical beings were in conformity with the general laws and customs, and were uninformed by an independent subjective awareness. *Sittlichkeit* does not develop the necessary conditions to legitimise the concept of an independent self-consciousness.

Ancient subjects had not yet discovered the universal principle of reason as a source of freedom and self-determination. They subsisted in the unity and universality of ethical

¹⁵⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, (§151) 195.

substance without an understanding that the source of unity is inherent in the nature of subjectivity, and without awareness of themselves as the creators of unity in the fulfilment of assigned roles in the social and political order. *Sittlichkeit* upholds the principle of immediate individuality and stands for the one-sided union of substance and subject that is distinctive of the beautiful individuality of its subjects. The Greek idea of Beauty unites Spirit with the sensuous appearance of Spirit in the way of objective, subjective and political works of art. Thought is not yet present, but the ethical actions of the Beautiful Individuals implicitly occupy the role of the mediating term of the syllogism that represents self-consciousness. Ethical action conveys substance to subject by carrying out the purposes of the former through the latter, and conversely it raises the subject to unity with substance by training the actions of subjects in conformity with custom and law. Thus, it unites substance and subject although it is unaware of the independence of thought or of itself as the source of this unity.

In *The Philosophy of History*, Antigone and Pericles are held up to be exemplary models of the ancient principle of individuality as an immediate unity with substance conditioned by custom and law. Ethical action precipitates conflict of contradictory powers in the community, whose process leads inevitably to the demise of ethical substance, and its replacement by independent and universal self-consciousness. This foreshadows the teaching of Socrates regarding the independence of thought and the necessity of determining the truth, not on the strength of customary morality, but on the strength of reflection.

The Pantheon

The mythology of the Greek pantheon of divinities illustrates the essential principle of Greek Spirit that Nature transforms to spirituality. Remarkably, the gods of Mount Olympus

retain the natural element in their exterior appearance while giving a demonstration of these natural elements in transition to self-consciousness. The mythology of the pantheon presents the medium for an exploration of the deep meaning of Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity that will yield insight into its deficiencies, and demonstrate how these prompted the yearning for an adequate understanding of the unity of Spirit, a yearning that foreshadowed its demise. A study of mythology will expose the dialectic of Nature and Spirit that underlies the character and limits of ancient subjects in their roles as beautiful individuals. Mythology is relevant to the thesis because the Greek gods were original models for the character type of the Beautiful Individual. "The gods are personalities, concrete individualities: an allegorical being has no qualities, but is itself one quality and no more."¹⁵⁵ This has a bearing on the presentation of feminine consciousness. To study the pantheon is to observe the genesis within Greek Spirit of a standpoint towards Nature that begins with the conquest of the old nature gods and culminates in the renunciation of Nature and finitude, an injustice to the logical imperatives of Hegelian philosophy. Spirit rids itself of the moment of immediacy but is unable thereafter to recover and preserve it as a moment grounded in the life of Spirit.

This Hegelian analysis of Greek religion points to the idea of *the human as spiritual*, as the element of truth in Greek mythology. This idea of the human as spiritual has two elements. First, in Greek mythology the idea of the divine is more properly represented as a spiritual form, rather than in the shape of personifications of Nature. The Greek deities were not personifications of Nature. This entails recognition of a spiritual order higher than the natural and marks an advance to a higher grade of truth. The second element of the human as

¹⁵⁵ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 246.

spiritual is the conception of Spirit, not in abstract but in the concrete form of both divine and human individualities. This new awareness of the dignity of humans inspired conceptions of the spiritual realized in the form of concrete individualities that are beautiful in a recognizably human way.

The complete exposition of the Hegelian general philosophy of art and specific exposition of the ideal of the classical form of art is available in *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. The classical idea of the beautiful is discussed at greater length later in the thesis, but for the purpose of this section it is useful to remark briefly about the specific meaning given to the ideal of beauty in the Greek world.¹⁵⁶ To the Greeks, beauty is the idea that the true exists, “therefore the beautiful is characterized as the pure appearance of the Idea to sense”. A fundamental principle of the classical Greek form is that art unites Spirit with concrete existence in external shapes and forms, and this unity constitutes the totality, meaning a free and self-determining whole. This totality, which lends the classical idea its universality, assumes the shape of the human, for only the human form is able to adequately disclose the spiritual in a physical way and to present the ideal in particularity. The human shape and form is considered the fitting form of the Ideal. Finally, the human form is not used symbolically or as a personification of natural forces because Spirit fully identified with the human form has been given the full content of the human and hence, individualized.

The idea of the human as spiritual is a beautiful idea, however it has limitations and ultimately it is inadequate to the logical idea. When Spirit is manifested to the human subject in an objective form of the human, but not in the form of universal thought, it is visible

¹⁵⁶ See: Part B, Section 2, Chapter 2, “The Ideal of the Classical Form of Art” in Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 476-502.

exclusively through the media of concrete and objectively beautiful individualities with discrete existence—such as the existence of the gods or heroes. The conception of Spirit as the inherently infinite and universal unity of divine and human nature, and the knowledge of this unity as the truth of human being is hidden from Greek Spirit. The idea of the beautiful in Greek art contains an imperative to annul Nature and finitude.

The mythology of the Olympian pantheon opens an account of how the Olympians attained supremacy by overthrowing an older order of divinities based on non-spiritual physical forces of nature. These older divinities were the Titans, who personified purely physical natural forces. For Hegel, the triumph of the Greek pantheon over the Titans decisively signified the transition from the Oriental to the Greek realm of world history and the beginnings of the notion of Spirit. With this conviction in mind, he studied the Greek deities with the intent of discovering a coherent basis for what previously had been dismissed as a collection of folklore and mythic tales, lacking any apparent organizational principle. Applying the principles of dialectical reasoning, he concluded that the early Greek religion occupied the position of a middle term in the dialectic:

This phase of Spirit is the medium between the loss of individuality on the part of man (such as we observe in the Asiatic principle, in which the Spiritual and Divine exist only under the Natural form) and Infinite Subjectivity as pure certainty of itself - the position that the Ego is the ground of all that can lay claim to substantial existence. The Greek Spirit as the medium between these two, begins with Nature, but transforms it into a mere objective form of its (Spirit's) own existence.¹⁵⁷

The Olympic deities continued an involvement with Nature as did their Titanic forbearers, but Nature is reduced in status and these new deities were depicted as belonging to

¹⁵⁷ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 238.

a spiritual rather than a natural order.

In the Idea of the Greek Spirit we found the two elements, Nature and Spirit, in such a relation to each other, that nature forms merely the point of departure. **This degradation of nature is in Greek mythology the turning point of the whole** – expressed as the War of the Gods, the overthrow of the Titans by the race of Zeus. The transition from the Oriental to the Occidental Spirit is therein represented, for the Titans are the merely Physical – natural existences, from whose grasp sovereignty is wrested. It is true that they continue to be venerated, but not as governing powers; for they are relegated to the verge [the limbus] of the world. The Titans are powers of Nature, Uranus, Gæa, Oceanus, Selene, Helios, etc. Chronos expresses the dominion of abstract Time, which devours its children. The unlimited power of reproduction is restrained, and Zeus appears as the head of the new divinities, who embody a spiritual import, and are themselves Spirit. It is not possible to express this transition more distinctly and naively than in this myth; the new dynasty of divinities proclaim their peculiar nature to be of a Spiritual order [emphasis added].¹⁵⁸

For Hegel, the mythical triumph of the Olympic pantheon over the original order of nature-based deities signalled the movement of Spirit to the next higher plane of development.

Greek Spirit is clearly revealed through mythology to be a transitional movement midway between the two poles of Nature and Spirit. The Olympic pantheon maintains extensive involvement with the natural element but also represented change to a new spiritual order no longer based exclusively on natural powers. This new order pointed towards a higher spiritual realm. Zeus, as an example, is the figure for this transition to a new order, and he captures this transitional movement at the core of Greek Spirit. Zeus is depicted with lightning bolts and thunderclouds suggesting his powers and, like those of his Titanic forbears, are grounded in the physical forces of nature with the difference that he is also identified as the god of politics and morals, and is thus a transitional figure.

Over time, human beings found themselves less able to find their needs satisfied in the

¹⁵⁸ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 244.

Olympic gods, and the gap between the divine and human re-opened, while supplicants found in the scandalous behaviour of the gods scant evidence for any lasting concern about the injustices wracking the daily lives of human beings. The gods were too preoccupied to hear pleas for justice. Hegel attributes the decline of the pantheon to the development of Spirit to a stage where the same aspects of the gods that drew people to identify with them are now seen to oppose themselves to divine absoluteness. The gods became more fallible as they became more human.

The definition of the Idea as an aesthetic spiritual unity evinces a harmony of universal substance and subject:

The beautiful feeling, the sentiment and spirit, of this happy harmony pervades all productions in which Greek freedom has become conscious of itself and portrayed its essence to itself.¹⁵⁹

Beneath the tranquil surface, this definition of the Idea is troubled by the unresolved internal conflict between Nature and Spirit. In mythology it appears as a divergence between the spirituality of the gods on one side, and on the other their sensuous existence as determinate individuals. The classical art form entailed portrayal of the gods in increasingly individualistic human forms, and as individuality is given freedom to develop it acquires aspects of contingency, including the limitations and restrictions of finitude. This divergence of spirituality and determinate individuality suggests that the reconciliation to unity in universality will not be revealed in art, and instead, it has to take place in a higher sphere. That higher sphere is religion. Christianity introduces the idea of unity in the form of a natural human existence. This form is lacking in the aesthetic spiritual unity of the Greek polis where the subjective element succeeds in emerging in the form of individuality, only to fall outside of

substantiality into the realm of contingency and unworthiness.

Greek Spirit contains an internal dialectical contradiction between spirituality and the particular individuality that pervaded virtually every mode of ethical life and that is usefully diagnosed in Hegel's analysis of early Greek religion and the Olympic pantheon. The gods served as the first objective and beautiful individuals in history, and they were the first models for the "happy harmony" of the beautiful freedom of the Greeks, which stands at the summit of the achievements of the ethical world. An analysis of mythology is especially relevant to this project because the presentation of feminine consciousness by Hegel features the elements of beautiful individuality. An evaluation of the status of feminine consciousness in Hegel requires an understanding of the foundations of beautiful freedom in religion, mythology and the classical art form.

The presentation on the mythology of the Greek pantheon is central to Hegel's study of the Ideal of classical Greek art and central to his account of the ethical Greek world whose highest principles are revealed in art forms of mythology. The outcome of the battle of the old and new gods, the Titans and Olympians, was decisive in shaping the classical Ideal of art:

c) *The Conquest of the Old Gods*

The opposition between nature and spirit is necessary absolutely. For the Concept of the spirit, as a genuine totality, is, as we saw earlier...implicitly only this, namely to divide itself as object in itself and subject in itself in order through this opposition to arise out of nature and then, as its conqueror and as the power over it, to be free and serene in contrast with it....Looked at historically or in reality this transition is the progressive transformation of man in a state of nature into a system of established rights, i.e. to property, laws, constitution, political life; looked at *sub specie deorum et aeternitatis* this is the idea of the conquest of the natural powers by the spiritually individual Gods.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Hegel. *Aesthetics*, 437.

¹⁶⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 466.

The violent clash of the old and new gods leads to a disastrous defeat of the natural powers by the new order of ‘spiritually individual Gods’. As an outcome, the element of the natural is retained in the spiritual individuality of the new gods. This gives rise to a conflicted impulse characteristic of Greek Spirit, the impulse to retain as well as to disparage the natural. Henceforth, the driving aim of Greek Spirit will be to advance from nature to the higher spiritual realm that is the truth of the human. The natural is not, after all, the spiritual. The texts abound with references of Hegel wryly acknowledging the disparagement of Nature, and is a consequence of the downfall of the old gods:

In the Idea of the Greek Spirit we found the two elements, Nature and Spirit, in such a relation to each other, that nature forms merely the point of departure. This degradation of Nature is in the Greek mythology the turning point of the whole – expressed as the War of the Gods, the overthrow of the Titans by the race of Zeus.¹⁶¹

The mythology of the pantheon is pertinent to the thesis, because the concept of beautiful freedom is closely linked to the presentation of feminine consciousness. Beautiful freedom describes a form of individuality that developed in the context of the immediate ethical existence of ancient *Sittlichkeit*, and it stood for the unreflecting unity of the subjective will with the substantiality of community life in accordance with laws and custom. The subject labours for the universal ends of the community and produces the unity of substance and subject but at the expense of its own individuality. The subject who realizes these universal ends through actions then enjoys the reward of recognizing itself in unity with the universality of the substantial order. This is what is meant as beautiful freedom. The downside is that in effect, the subject has now disappeared because it is evident beautiful freedom is only another mode of existence of the Concept, and the subject, far from acquiring the freedom and

¹⁶¹ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 244.

infinity of self-determining Spirit, only subsists in the unity and substantiality of the community. What distinguishes the Hegelian conception of the free and infinite modern person from this earlier form of beautiful individuality is that it claims to have superseded the imperative for self-sacrifice. Modern subjects attain objectivity in their own right through the discovery of the truth of subjectivity in the self-dependent and universal principle of reflection. They do not need to immerse themselves in substantiality to participate in universality; they do not need to sacrifice themselves.

The key observation here is that the war of the gods inaugurated a new order of *spiritual* individuality. This order of spiritual individuality adopted a contradictory standpoint towards Nature because it contains a conception of individuality that both degraded and retained natural elements. This unresolved contradiction spells the eventual ruin of classical art:

But the more that seriousness and spiritual freedom appear in the shapes of the gods, so much the more we can feel a contrast between (a) this loftiness and (b) determinacy and bodily form. We read in their faces the fate that awaits them, and its development, as the actual emergence of the contradiction between loftiness and particularity, between spirituality and sensuous existence, drags classical art itself to its ruin.¹⁶²

This contradictory standpoint towards sensuous existence led to the dissolution of the Greek idea of spiritual individuality. The human is accepted as spiritual, but concomitant with this spiritual individuality there is finitude along with the element of the natural, and these are inseparable from humanity. This dualism of Spirit and Nature presented the Greeks with an irresolvable contradiction issued in the form of an imperative to transform the natural to the higher order of the spiritual. Most revealing of all, the ethical regime of ancient Greece was itself a dualism of powers that reflected the differences between the old and new gods and

between their powers and spheres of influence:

More interesting still, although entirely transferred into human feeling and action, the same clash appears in the *Antigone*, one of the most sublime and in every respect most excellent works of art of all time. Everything in this tragedy is logical; the public law of the state is set in conflict over against inner family love and duty to a brother; ...Creon, the ruler, in a publicly proclaimed law threatened with death anyone who gave this enemy of the city the honour of burial. But this command, which concerned only the public weal, Antigone could not accept; as sister, in the piety of her love for her brother, she fulfils the holy duty of burial. In doing so she appeals to the law of the gods; but the gods whom she worships are the underworld gods of Hades (Sophocles; *Antigone*, 451, ...), the inner gods of feeling, love and kinship, not the daylight gods of free self-conscious national and political life.¹⁶³

Antigone occupies the standpoint of the Beautiful Individual seen from the aspect of Divine Law, and her gods are the gods of the older order of natural powers and the Titans because such was the meaning of Divine Law; however, the gods of Creon her counterpart belong to the new order of laws, constitutions and political life. The ethical Greek world was the transitional moment in the progression from one ethical order to the other. The demise of Antigone and the downfall of the ethical order result from an inability to resolve this contradictory standpoint without destroying the natural dimension of humanity. The lasting resolution to this conflict is given in the religious sphere as Christianity but, Hegel was not able to effectively translate Christian teaching from the religious to the secular realm, and as a result feminine consciousness has fallen outside of the dialectic of Spirit. The Hegelian interpretation of the idea of reconciliation found in Christianity has features continuous with the standpoint of Beautiful Individuality; in particular, it continues the pre-Christian idea that Nature is unspiritual:

¹⁶² Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 485.

¹⁶³ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 464.

Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed – that the unity of Man with God is posited in Christian Religion.... Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: for the Natural is the Unspiritual. In this Idea of God, then, is to be found also the *Reconciliation* that heals the pain and inward suffering of man.¹⁶⁴

The shortcoming of this passage is that it does not do justice to the idea that reconciliation found in the Idea of God restores the natural being as a constituent moment of the Divine Idea. The theology of redemption is presented without the natural element of finitude essential to authentic human existence.

In principle, Greek Spirit means, *the natural element transforming to spirituality*, but the natural is taken only as a point of departure for the spiritual realm. As such, it is not admitted to the life of Spirit and therefore falls outside the unity. The mythology of the Olympic pantheon is offered as an example of how this principle works. The *natural* element appears in the form of the plurality and individual differences of the gods, but these are not granted significance, and the natural element then falls outside the definition of unity into the realm of mere contingency. Ultimately, the natural element is not reconciled in Greek Spirit with the Idea. The *spiritual* element of this transition appears with the notion that the human is spiritual, but again, the appearance of human spirituality is fleeting because it is accompanied by a dependency on natural materials to represent Spirit visibly for consciousness, and this dependency cannot be overcome. This dependency cannot be reconciled with the Idea without further dialectical development, and it appears as an inadequacy, leading to the death and dissolution of the pantheon.

¹⁶⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 324.

It is an interesting and relevant question whether the logical model of the transition would fully support the interpretation of the mythical battle of the Titans and Olympians as a narrative of conquest in which the spiritual Greeks emerge victorious after the defeat of the older order of natural powers. The logical model emphasizes the equality of the opposing terms of a transition, and the conquest of one term by the other is not the predetermined outcome of the movement. Greek mythology appears as an example where the logical and historical dimensions of this stage of Spirit deviate from one another; logically, the terms of a transition are equal, but in the historical content, spiritual progress requires one term to subdue the other. Hegel's logic does not predetermine the dialectic in such a way that it has no other alternative than to resolve itself into a hierarchy of Nature and Spirit with the resultant injustice to Nature. From the beginning, there is the potential freedom for an outcome to emerge that is different from the outcome recorded in *The Philosophy of History*. It is not inconsistent with the freedom of the dialectic and the freedom of the human subject, for there to be a deviation between the logical and the historical dimensions of Spirit. The transformation of Nature to Spirit represents a step outside of immediate unity with Nature, and it is the original transgression of humanity that ultimately has to be reconciled. This is the foundation for the Mosaic myth of the Fall¹⁶⁵, and ultimately must be reconciled for Spirit to return to unity with itself.

The logical content to the transition of Nature and Spirit is found in the exposition of Being, the moments of (coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be) and the sublation of Becoming:

Being, pure being, without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself. ...it would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it or by which it could be

¹⁶⁵ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic* 61-62.

distinguished from an other. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness...Being, the indeterminate immediate, is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than *nothing*....

Nothing, pure nothing: it is simple equality with itself, complete emptiness, in itself...Nothing is, therefore, the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as pure *being*....

Pure being and pure nothing are, therefore, the same. What is truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being - does not pass over but has passed over - into nothing and nothing into being. Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one into the other: becoming, a movement in which both are distinguished but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself. [Emphasis added.]¹⁶⁶

A determinate Being (*Dasein*) only becomes so by being *in relation* to another determinate being. But determinacy is completely absent from Being and Nothing. The movement of Being and Nothing in Becoming is clearly the logical antecedent to determinate Being. The latter includes relation which is a movement of the dialectic that belongs to the sphere of Essence and was not found in the ethical world. In the ethical world, Being and Nothing vanish in Becoming. This is the world of transition where the opposing terms vanish into one another but have no *relation* because they lack determinacy. The transition of Being and Nothing concludes with the sublation of both terms in the more developed determination of determinate Being, where they are no longer present as Being and Nothing because they acquire the new significance of the positive and negative:

...The same must be said of being and nothing, as was said above about immediacy and mediation (which latter contains a reference to an other, and hence to *negation*), that nowhere in heaven or on earth is there anything which does not contain within itself both being and nothing. Of course, since we are speaking here of a particular actual something, those determinations are no longer present in it in the complete untruth in which they are as being and nothing; they are in a more developed determination, and are grasped, for example, as positive and negative, the former being posited, reflected being, the latter posited, reflected nothing; the positive contains as its

¹⁶⁶ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 105-6.

abstract basis being, and the negative, nothing...¹⁶⁷

The account of the transition of Being and Nothing suggests these terms are evolving towards a state of equilibrium:

Becoming is in this way in a double determination. In one of them, *nothing* is immediate, that is, the determination starts from nothing which relates itself to being or in other words changes into it; in the other, *being* is immediate that is, the determination starts from being which changes into nothing: the former is coming-to-be and the latter is ceasing-to-be...

Both are the same, *becoming*, and although they differ so in direction they interpenetrate and paralyse each other. The one is *ceasing-to-be*: being passes over into nothing, but nothing is equally the opposite of itself, transition into being, *coming-to-be*. This coming-to-be is the other direction: nothing passes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather transition into nothing, is ceasing-to-be. They are not reciprocally sublated - the one does not sublate the other externally - but each sublates itself in itself and is in its own self the opposite of itself.¹⁶⁸

The text emphasizes the equality and the sameness of the opposing terms. Becoming is an equilibrium of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, but it is an unstable equilibrium in Hegel's words, "Becoming is an unstable unrest which settles into a stable result."¹⁶⁹ Being and Nothing collapse into one another and vanish. Becoming itself vanishes, but what remains is the more stable unity of Being and Nothing as determinate Being or *Dasein*. The terms, Being and Nothing, acquire the new significance of positivity and negativity. There are problems with the execution of this portion of the logic, but what has transpired does not seem to have been construed in logic as a conquest of one term by the other. Another explanation must be sought for the connotations of defeat and conquest of Nature that occur in the mythical and religious accounts, because they do not seem to originate in logic.

¹⁶⁷ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 84-85.

¹⁶⁸ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 106.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 106.

Greek Spirit and the Role of the Artist as Agent of Transformation

This section develops the conception of ancient Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity. It includes a review of the Hegelian theme of Greek Spirit as the plastic artist who forms the natural to the spiritual, and in so doing reveals that unity and universality of Spirit is the truth of Nature.

The vocation of Greek Spirit is found in the sphere of art where Being is displayed as the true. Art upholds the principle that appearances are adequate to Spirit; from the standpoint of art, finitude is a revelation of Spirit. This section will focus on the metaphor of the plastic artist as a transformative agent of Spirit, whose crowning achievement was the production of the ideal subjectivity of the Beautiful Individual. A good introduction to the subject is given in Chapters I-III of Section II to Part II, "The Greek World," in *The Philosophy of History*.¹⁷⁰ The treatment of aesthetics in Hegel is introduced in the section to deepen the understanding of why the aesthetic idea of Spirit was inadequate as an account of the free and self-determining creativity of Spirit. The aesthetic spiritual unity of Greek Spirit is doomed to ultimate dissolution because of inadequacies that are demonstrated through an examination of the plastic artist as metaphor for the creative process of Greek Spirit. The nature of this creative process discloses the truth that beneath the harmony of ethical substance, there stirs a conflicted dualism of ethical powers of Human and Divine Law. This ethical conflict defined the ancient world and produced different repercussions for men and women altering their prospects for attaining rational self-consciousness.

Spirit, in the mode of *Sittlichkeit*, creates itself through assimilation of natural living

¹⁷⁰Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 241-274. The aesthetic conditioning of individuality is discussed in the three phases of subjective, objective and political art.

beings into an order of ethical life. Individuality appears at the stage of immediacy where awareness of conflict between individual well-being and the interests of the social order would be unknown. Ethical substance appears as an untroubled harmony of substance and subject, while beneath the surface dialectical conflict is present as an opposition of Nature and Spirit. Ethical substance is neither a purely natural or purely spiritual phenomenon and instead it is the middle or transitional term of the syllogism that is situated midway between the loss of individuality and the emergence of subjectivity.

Through aesthetic productions, the outline of Spirit as unity and interpenetration of substance and subject first became visible for consciousness. Spirit is cast in the role of the plastic artist whose creativity provides the impetus for the transition from the natural order to the higher order of the spiritual. Aesthetic creativity expresses itself through the appropriation and transformation of natural materials into works of art. The principle which overarches classical Greek art is that the natural transforms to the spiritual; “this transformation of the Natural to the Spiritual is the Greek Spirit itself.”¹⁷¹ Natural materials formed to works of art point beyond to the spiritual realm, and in doing so they cease to be purely natural because they evince the unity of Nature and Spirit. This vision of an aesthetic spiritual unity is the unifying principle that brings coherence to all aspects of Greek Spirit, and it is the base for the classification of Greek based on the moments of the logical Idea as universality, particularity and individuality. The temples, statues, and public buildings express unity on the side of universality and the substantive order. The cultivation of the human form to the limits of perfection through gymnastics and athletic contests is subjective art. The city-state

¹⁷¹ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 246.

constitutions, the laws and customs that uphold unity in the social order of the polis reconcile the opposition of the objective and subjective determinations and they are political works of art.

An exploration of the creative process of plastic creativity exposes the truth of ethical substance and the causes of its downfall. The standpoint of objective art serves as the starting point for a summary of Hegel's analysis of the creative process. The truth of the ethical world is the principle of substantiality, meaning a permanent and absolute order of lawfulness that emerges from out of the nature of the universe itself and rules the lives of individuals. Substantiality has being *in and for itself*, and is associated with eternal laws of unknown origin that are believed to be divine, and with the gods. It is the Divine Law. The gods, in the words of J.B. Baillie, are "the guardians of the city, hearth and home."¹⁷² The social order of the polis is sanctioned by the Divine Law as will be clear from the proliferation of temples, oracles and monuments erected to the civic religion. But the divinely-sanctioned social order also had to be communicable to human beings, meaning it had to be articulated in the form of laws and customs; in other words, it had to appear as a Human Law for otherwise, it would neither be upheld nor become actual and would remain an indefinable abstraction. Hence, the requirement exists for an intermediary to cross the boundary separating the spheres of substance and subject and to translate Divine to Human Law.

The political arts were invented to bridge the gap between the substantive order of Divine Law and the natural community of Human Law. They unite diverse natural communities of tribes and extended families into a single community embodying the existence

¹⁷² See the note by J.B. Baillie to "Ethical World" Law Human and Divine: Man and Woman" in Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 464.

of Spirit as the divinely-sanctioned substance of the order of the polis. Individual participation in the political life of the community is exchanged for the reward of inclusion within the objective order of the ethical world and elevation to universal and objective existence. The political arts elevate individuals to the freedom and universality of objective existence, and they accomplish the feat of transitioning natural to spiritual individuality. Hegel recognized this to be the working of the plastic artistry of the Greek Spirit.

The harmonious unity of Nature and Spirit in Greek Spirit receives its highest expression in the classical Ideal of the beauty of art but the adequacy of physical existence to the truth of Spirit is a phenomenon that is not found in Nature. It must be produced by the artist. Only the human form is capable of revealing sensuous existence in unity with Spirit

...This shape is essentially the human form because the external human form is alone capable of revealing the spiritual in a sensuous way. The human expression in face, eyes, posture and air is material and in these is not what spirit is; but within this corporeality itself the human exterior is not only living and natural, as the animal is, but is the bodily presence which in itself mirrors the spirit... the human body in its whole demeanour evinces itself as the dwelling-place of spirit and indeed as the sole possible existence of spirit in nature.¹⁷³

Not even the human form is immediately adequate to the truth of Spirit. The artist's job is to mould it into a shape capable of revealing its spiritual content. Greek Spirit in its capacity as the plastic artist, produced the Ideal of Beauty by shaping and moulding natural materials and by purifying the finished appearance of anything that does not correspond to the truth of Spirit [Concept]. But plastic artistry contains an internal contradiction, because the artist has to purify the material to elevate it to harmony with Spirit:

Now here it is the task of the work of art to grasp the object in its universality and to let go, in its external appearance, everything that would remain purely external and indifferent for the expression of the content. The artist therefore does not adopt

¹⁷³ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 433-434.

everything in the forms or modes of expression which he finds outside him in the external world and because he finds it there; on the contrary...he grasps only those characteristics which are right and appropriate to the essence of the matter at hand. If he takes, as a model, nature and its productions, everything just presented to him, it is not because nature has made it so and so, but because it has made it *right*; but this 'rightness' means something higher than just being *there*.¹⁷⁴

The Ideal has descended to embodiment in the determinacy of classical art, but its appearance continues to distance itself from the imperfections of the element of finitude. Hidden in the creative process is an impulse to "extinguish the accidental and inappropriate" elements in natural materials in order for these to adequately reveal the spiritual content of the human. The Greek principle that Nature is transformed to Spirit realizes itself in the classical form of art, but is unable to overcome the divergence between Spirit and the natural and physical world. The overcoming is at best an appearance that has to be produced by the artist and is available only in the realm of aesthetics. The creative output of Greek Spirit as artist is distinguished by the presence of the idea of universality. The artist forms natural elements into artefacts of spiritual significance by means of a technique that impresses them with the idea of universality, signifying the core spiritual meaning which is resident in Nature. The beauty of classical Greek art lies in the conveyance to the beholder of an aesthetic vision of the freedom and universality of the Idea, in the determinate form of the Ideal of art.

From an observer's standpoint, the Ideal of the beauty of art shares in the freedom and universality of Spirit, but as an expression of unity, the Ideal has a deficiency and this may be stated as follows: The appearance is always produced from the outside by art without this infinity's being grounded in the things themselves. The appearance of freedom and infinity in the classical form of art is externally produced by the artist and is not grounded in the natural

¹⁷⁴ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 164.

element. It is a good question, what becomes of the natural element. The standpoint of the classical form of art is that the natural element does not follow from the principle of the substantive and therefore, the natural element is a contingency. The making and fashioning of art follows a strict process that is illustrative of this standpoint and it involves the forcible suppression of the natural element:

...But classical beauty carries spiritual individuality right into the midst of what is at the same time its natural existence and unfolds the inner only in the medium of external appearance.

(yy) On this account, however, the external shape, like the spirit which fashions an existence for itself there, must be freed from every accident of external determinacy from every dependence on nature and from morbidity; **it must be withdrawn from all finitude, everything transient, all preoccupation with what is purely sensuous**, its determinacy closely allied with the determinate spiritual character of the god, **must be purified and elevated in to a free harmony with the universal form of the human shape**. [emphasis added] ¹⁷⁵

In conclusion, when the metaphor for Greek Spirit as the plastic artist is unfolded it becomes clear that the transformation of Nature to Spirit is an incomplete transformation, because the two terms of the dialectic remain apart in the aesthetic vision of unity and their mutual tension brings the vision to its destruction.

This section has commented on the Hegelian metaphor of Spirit as the artistically-creative agent for the principle, the natural transforms to the spiritual. Spirit as the plastic artist has reached the aesthetic stage of development where it is conceived as the beauty of art, meaning the Idea encountered in the determinate form of the aesthetic Ideal.

The Ideal appears in the forms of objective, subjective and political aesthetic productions. The aesthetic vision of unity of Nature and Spirit receives highest expression in

¹⁷⁵ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 483.

the Beautiful Individual, who reconciles Nature and Spirit to unity in the human form. The trouble is that in Beautiful Individuality the terms of the dialectic are distanced because the natural element is not reconciled but only repressed. In this regard, the focus turns now to Sophocles' Antigone, because she represents beautiful ethical individuality at the summit of perfection.

The study of Antigone is useful for uncovering the strengths and inadequacies of the aesthetic standpoint towards the idea of unity. By logical extension, such a study defines the inadequacies of modern feminine consciousness as presented in Hegel, influenced by the principle of immediate individuality and the ethical dualism of the polis. The beautiful freedom of ethical substance is recreated for modern *Sittlichkeit* as the ethical disposition of the feminine, which is the disposition of Divine Law. This recreation of an obsolete shape and form of consciousness in modern feminine consciousness came about because the underlying dialectic of Nature and Spirit was insufficiently resolved to permit the inclusion of the natural element as a moment in the life of Spirit. It is as if the internal conflict of ethical substance had reappeared, but this time, it lies on the margins of modern life. The rationale for the reappearance of the ethical disposition of Antigone is thus borne out through the study of the idea of Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity. The conflict of Nature and Spirit defines the ancient aesthetic standpoint, and presumably, the reappearance of the aesthetic standpoint in the arrangements of modern ethical life signals it has not been resolved.

The principle underlying Greek Spirit is that naturalness is in transition to spirituality. On closer examination, the workings of this principle throughout the different aesthetic modes of Spirit, including mythology, art and politics, brought to light that the aesthetic vision of

unity requires a double movement composed of the renunciation of the natural element, and conversely, the descent of the spiritual to the natural. This double movement is the meaning of the reference in *The Philosophy of History* to the Palingenesis of Spirit. But the double movement is not fully completed in the ancient world. Nature remains in a subordinate position, although in principle, the existence of Nature is adequate to Spirit. Ancient life is defined by an unresolved conflict between the spiritual and natural realms of existence that reverberates throughout every mode of spiritual existence including the objective, subjective and political arts.

Ethical Process of Human and Divine Law

The section links the logical transition of Becoming and the historical world of ancient Greece, with reference to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* and *The Philosophy of History*.

The logic of the dialectical movement of transition is the basis for Hegel's account of the ethical world. This begins with the movement within ethical substance to distinguish within the two moments of substance and subject; at this stage, the subject has the meaning of consciousness of substance. Each of these two moments of substance and consciousness of substance then repeats this movement and distinguishes internally a pair of opposing terms. These opposing terms contain the dynamic of the transitional movement. The side of substance distinguishes within itself the dual elements of Human Law and Divine Law whose process constitutes the transition that becomes definitive of ethical life. From its side, subject which is actually consciousness of substance likewise distinguishes within itself its internal elements but does so on a natural basis. The fundamental basis for distinctions in the natural order is the

original distinction of sex, and subjects are assigned to the one or the other ethical powers of Human and Divine Law on this natural basis. Subjects are assigned to ethical powers on the basis of the natural distinction of sex, and in this way, the ethical order is realized in the medium of the natural. In this process, what Nature supplies must be appropriated but then subordinated beneath the sway of the spiritual. Thus, the principle that rules ethical subjects, both male and female, requires them to live in unity with the community of ethical substance without further reflection or analysis. The natural element is still the point of departure for Spirit, but it has not been recognized as itself a valid moment in the life of Spirit, and the idea of the singular worth of individuals is unknown. The development of the ethical order takes the form of universally-based order of institutions, customs and laws.

Human and Divine Law

The section examines the exposition of the ethical world as a dual order of the law of universality or Divine Law and the law of individuality or Human Law. The aim is to explicate ethical life as a process of these dual orders of law and then to examine the implications of ethical dualism on the institutional composition of the family and the polis, and on male and female consciousness. The thesis adopts the position that Hegel's exposition of the Greek world as a process of dual ethical laws is not intended to be read as a complete philosophical doctrine, but rather it is a schematic, or in other words, it is an organization of concepts and is eligible for revision with the acquisition of new knowledge. This is because the original analysis is presented as if it were founded on historical fact, and it would not be inconsistent with Hegel's intentions if the introduction of new facts necessitated revisions. The section is guided by the principle that the diagnosis of conflicting ethical imperatives in

ancient life is fundamentally sound, but difficulties arise owing to a tendency to absolutize this distinction, and then to uncompromisingly apply it to the spheres of social and political institutions and individual actions. The application of ethical dualism inappropriately presumes a complex differentiation of ancient ethical life.

An effective summary of the ethical Greek realm is provided in §356 of *The Philosophy of Right*.¹⁷⁶ The selection is brief enough that it has been reproduced below in its entirety:

§356

2. The Greek Realm

In this realm, the substantial unity of the finite and the infinite is present, but only as a mysterious substratum, banished as a dim recollection into the recesses [*Höhlen*] and images of tradition. Reborn from the self-differentiating spirit into individual spirituality and the daylight of knowledge, this substratum is modified and transfigured to become beauty and a free and serene ethical life. Within this determination, the principle of personal individuality accordingly emerges, though it is not yet engrossed in itself [*in sich selbst befangen*] but still retains its ideal unity. Consequently, the whole splits up into a series of particular national spirits [*Volksgeister*] and on the one hand, the ultimate decision of the will is not yet assigned to the subjectivity of self-consciousness which has being for itself, but to a power which stands above and outside it (see Remarks to §279), while on the other, the particularity associated with needs has not yet become part of [the realm of] freedom but is confined to the class of slaves [*Sklassenstand*].¹⁷⁷

Spirit as the ethical world is a concrete and actual order of individuals who are objectively embodied in unity, in the form known as the substantial community; it is as a substantial community that the ethical world has the meaning of the unity of finite and infinite.

The dialectic of Spirit as the objective reality of the substantial community begins with

¹⁷⁶ For further recommended reading, see also the *Remarks* to § 279 and see Section VI A “Objective Spirit: The Ethical Order” in Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 462-506.

¹⁷⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 378-379.

the movement of Spirit to distinguish within itself the opposite moments of substance and consciousness of substance. Each of these two moments is ethical substance in its entirety, and as a complete ethical substance each is internally divided and distinguishes within itself its internal elements. On one side, the moment of objective substance distinguishes within itself the ethical powers of Human and Divine Law while on the other side consciousness of substance distinguishes its internal elements on the basis of natural differences.

The two moments of objective substance, Human and Divine Law, exercise influence over spheres corresponding with the institutional boundaries of the family and the polis. The side of the ethical order whose validity is rooted in the mysterious “law of the ancient gods and the chthonic realm” is the natural ethical community of the family. The other side of ethical order is the community of human law whose validity is “open to the light of day” and exists in the form of publicly promulgated customs and laws. The subjectivity of substance is present as consciousness of substance and its internal distinction has the significance of the natural difference of maleness and femaleness.

Divine Law rules the family and feminine consciousness:

The feminine element, therefore, in the form of the sister, premonizes and foreshadows most completely the nature of ethical life (*sittliches Wesen*). She does not become conscious of it, and does not actualise it, because the law of the family is her inherent implicit inward nature, which does not lie open to the daylight of consciousness, but remains inner feeling and the divine element exempt from actuality.¹⁷⁸

On reaching maturity, masculine consciousness passes over from the unconscious realm of the family and Divine Law to consciousness of universality in the community of

Human Law:

The brother is the member of the family in whom its spirit becomes individualized, and

¹⁷⁸ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 476.

enables thereby to turn towards another sphere, towards what is other than and external to itself, and pass over into consciousness of universality...

He passes from the divine law, within whose realm he lived, over to the human law. The sister, however, becomes, or the wife remains, director of the home and the preserver of the divine law.¹⁷⁹

The alignment of institutional and ethical boundaries creates a perception in the mind of the reader that the family and polis may have been pure and ethically distinct entities, but this impression would be mistaken and in fact, the sharp differentiation of the family and polis for which the analysis of the ethical world is notable, logically would be a premature development. It has been argued the logical structure to this stage of Spirit is the transition, and as demonstrated in *Science of Logic* a transition is composed of two abstract and indeterminate opposing terms that pass over into one another, collapse into sameness, and vanish. The differentiation of the family and the polis cannot be sustained under these unstable circumstances because the mediation necessary to support differentiation has not developed. This is the reason for the collapse and dissolution of the ethical world. From the standpoint of logic, the complex edifice of ethical, institutional, and gender differentiation constructed by Hegel for his vision of the ancient world is not compatible with the absence of differentiation at this level of development. That is why the separation of the family and polis proves to be a difficult challenge. Family life in the *oikos* was regulated strictly by the customs and conventions of Human Law, while the polis itself was founded on the basis of religious authority. It may be true the ancient city was ruled by a regime of dual ethical imperatives of Human and Divine Law, but it seems unlikely the distinction of family and the polis attained the degree of clarity found in the account of Hegel. More likely, this was a period of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 477.

overlapping institutional roles and boundaries. A more flexible view of the process of ethical life is needed to respect the historical context, which has undergone extensive research and development since Hegel's time, and a more flexible view would abstain from constructing the barriers that prevented women from participating in the dialectic. This would be consistent with Hegel's authentic intentions.

Ancient subjectivity constitutes a consciousness of substance, and this is an ethical consciousness. Consciousness of substance distinguishes itself internally based on natural difference, and thus ethical consciousness will always be one-sided and will always suffer from unawareness of its one-sidedness. Each of the two sides of ethical consciousness will commit the fundamental error of mistaking its ethical imperative for the entirety of the ethical realm, and will undergo a course of rigorous experience leading to the painful recognition that the truth of the ethical world does not, after all, lie in its appearance of harmonious unity. In actuality, the ethical world is composed of dual contradictory imperatives whose resolution requires the power of reflection. The tragedy of ethical consciousness lies in its inability to grasp the conclusion that genuine ethical action must abandon one-sidedness and respect both imperatives. This resolution of the contradiction is impossible because it would require the mediation of reflection, and this would overstep the limitations inherent in natural character. When ethical consciousness comes to an awareness of the inherent dualism of the order, it has contradicted its own one-sidedness and self-destructs. The dualism of ethical substance is resolved into a unity using the principle of reflection that advances ethical consciousness beyond ethical being, to a higher stage of concrete self-consciousness.

Spirit as Human Law is a community of individual consciousness; it is the concrete actual order, realised in the form of laws and customs familiar in the everyday life of subjects.

Human Law as state power reinforces the authority of customs and laws and as entire substance, is Spirit embodied in the concrete form of the community. Human Law internally distinguishes moments of universality and particularity: as universality, it is politics and government, while as particularity, it is the course of individual action based on the certainty of what is appropriate in a situation within individual ethical conduct. Divine Law appears in opposition to the secular order of Human Law and represents the ethical power of Spirit in the mode of simple and immediate Being. This Divine Law is the inner notion or general possibility of the ethical sphere, as opposed to the actuality of an ethical order posed by Human Law as the community. Divine Law is Spirit in the shape of consciousness; immediately aware of itself as united with substance but also immediately aware as a concrete individual. It finds this dual awareness, unity with substance and concrete individuality, in an other, however this other is not another individual but a *natural* ethical community that, according to Hegel, is the Family. Divine Law contains substance in its entirety, and distinguishes within itself the moments of universality and particularity. Universality appears as the family, particularity as the family members. The inner notion of ethical order, the union of substance and subject found in the family, is in an unconscious form and unable to develop its truth into concrete actuality. It will emerge in opposition to the self-conscious existence of the community or Nation.

Hegel presents the ancient world as a process of ethical powers in connection and transitions from one to another side of ethical substance, from *substance* to *consciousness of substance*, and return. The process core is constituted from two forms of order that are associated with the relations of men and women:

The family and the community stand in opposition to one another. The family,

as the inner indwelling principle of sociality operating in an unconscious way, stands opposed to its own actuality when explicitly conscious; as the basis of the actuality of a nation, it stands in contrast to the nation itself; as the *immediate* ethical existence, it stands over against the ethical order which shapes and preserves itself by work for universal ends; the Penates of the family stand in contrast to universal spirit.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion

The Greek realm occupies the standpoint of an aesthetic spiritual unity in which Spirit has become visible for consciousness in the sensuous form of aesthetic productions. This point is integral to the thesis, for the principle that informs aesthetic Greek Spirit is the same principle encountered in Hegel's presentation of feminine consciousness in *The Philosophy of Right*. In this presentation, one of Antigone's proclamations is used to illustrate definitive remarks regarding ethical substantiality. This usage shows how closely Hegel identified ethical substantiality with the woman who is also a figurehead for feminine virtue, confirming again that feminine consciousness and Greek Spirit share a common standpoint. Yet, in this instance, her proclamation amplifies the preceding statement which is a statement about ethical man:

If we consider ethical life from the objective point of view we may say that *ethical man is unconscious of himself*. In this sense, Antigone proclaims that no one knows where the laws come from: they are eternal.¹⁸¹

In this case—speaking about ethical life from the objective viewpoint of substance—it is noteworthy that Hegel illustrates his statement about *ethical man* using the example of a woman, Antigone. This supports the argument that for Hegel, both men and women participated in ancient ethical life and shared in common the consciousness of

¹⁸⁰ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 468.

the Beautiful Individual.

Although this may be true, the aesthetic model of unity is found wanting in several respects and its limitations should be noted here. These limitations have some application to feminine consciousness by virtue of its affinity for Greek Spirit. First of all, aesthetic Spirit has not fully emancipated itself from Nature and remains dependent on natural materials to be visible for consciousness. Second, its ethical principles are immediate, and they find confirmation in custom and law. The demand has not taken hold that what is right should find validation in the conscience of the subject. The infinity of reflection is not comprehended:

Self-comprehension on the part of Thought is wanting—illimitable Self-consciousness—demanding, that what is regarded by me as Right and Morality should have its confirmation in myself – from the testimony of my own Spirit; that the Beautiful (the Idea as manifested in sensuous contemplation or conception) may also become the True – an inner, supersensuous world.¹⁸²

Spirit succeeds in emancipating itself from Nature when it moves beyond the standpoint of aesthetic spiritual unity and develops itself further in the subjective element. The limitations of aesthetic Spirit showed themselves in the conception of the Greek polis as an ethical order. This ethical order is in truth, a conflicted dualism and its conflicted nature has its source in the subjugation of the older order of natural powers and the rise of a new spiritual order of laws and political life. The Greek world is a brief transitional moment in the progression from the older natural order to the higher, spiritual ethical order. On one hand, Greek Spirit is unable to reconcile the conflicting aims of preserving the natural dimension of humanity, while on the other hand, developing Spirit in the element of subjectivity. In the

¹⁸¹ See the Addition (H) to §144 in Hegel, *Elements*, 189.

¹⁸² Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 264.

absence of reconciliation, it holds to a conception of unity that debases Nature and ultimately removes it from the sphere of reason and history. This movement has negative consequences for feminine consciousness. This happened in the historical process, although the logical model did not require the transition of opposite terms to produce an outcome where one term is conquered by the other.

The issue of Greek aesthetics becomes one of attaining a conception of Nature adequate for developing a comprehension of subjectivity and the truth of human nature. Within the framework of Hegel's philosophy, the return of Spirit to unity with itself in Nature will give rise to this mature conception; this return will also dissolve the obstacles that lie on the path of feminine consciousness to modern subjectivity. Although the emancipation of women does seem to be linked, in Hegelian thought, to the recovery of the moment of Nature in Spirit, it cannot be taken for granted that because there is this link, Hegel is an essentialist who identified women with Nature. The standpoint of human beings toward Nature originates in natural determinations, and it is difficult to dispute that these natural determinations, including the biological life experiences of men and women, differ in key respects that reflect as differences in their response to Nature.

These differences were vital to the ethical dualism of the ancient Greek world, and different responses have undergone interpretation in other historical settings. However, consciousness does not remain forever at the standpoint of natural determination, because it is subject to change and development and is shaped by the principle of reflection. To make feminine consciousness an exception to this rule would be to contradict the principles of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel was mistaken to suppose that feminine consciousness is excluded from change and development, but not mistaken to allow for differences in the ethical

responses of men and women to Nature. What is of interest is that the difference in feminine consciousness—difference which comes across to modern readers as a deficiency—in fact may be viewed not as difference to be eliminated but as a phenomenon whose study will lead to a better understanding of modern subjectivity. When studied in retrospect, it appears that beneath the surface of Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness there is another problem. If Hegel's philosophy is able to provide the comprehensive understanding of the modern world it claims to offer, then it must include a fully adequate understanding of how free and infinite self-consciousness relates to Nature, even though that understanding is not fully developed in the philosophy of modern life. It contains tensions and contradictions that originate in the aesthetic standpoint of Greek Spirit. Feminine consciousness represents an ethical standpoint of human beings to the natural world, one that has to change, develop, and integrate with a revised conception of modern subjectivity.

5. GREEK SPIRIT: BEAUTIFUL INDIVIDUALITY AND NATURE

In Hegel, the word “Ideal” is used to mean the logical Idea manifested in the determinate form of an aesthetic production. Ancient subjectivity is said to be *Ideal* because it holds the Idea, but in the form of determinate subjectivity as opposed to the free and infinite subjectivity of the modern person. Self-knowing subjectivity alone is a form of actuality adequate to the definition of the Idea. According to Hegel, only concrete individuality is true and actual; abstract universality and particularity are not. This self-knowing, this subjectivity, is therefore what we must adhere to as essential.¹⁸³

In Hegel, the Idea first appears in Nature as life, and furthermore life as the unity of body and soul is an anticipation of the Concept. The unity of the universality of the soul and the particularity of the body is present in life at the level of feeling. A living organism’s capacity for feeling presupposes a focal point of consciousness, otherwise there would be nowhere to register feeling. However, the Idea at the level of feeling does not become explicit to itself as subjective identity, and for this reason does not appear in Nature as the Ideal.

The distinction between the beauty of Nature and the beauty of classical art is integral to this thesis because in Hegel’s work there is an issue of whether the Ideal appears in feminine consciousness. The unity of universality and particularity is present for women at the level of feeling and piety, yet women do not possess the Ideal. The Idea is present in Nature at the level of feeling, but it does not go beyond the level of feeling to become explicit, and so it is never actualised in Nature. Moreover, the beauty of Nature is deficient because it does not actualise the Ideal, and this deficiency is connected with the theory of the ethical disposition of

¹⁸³ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 144.

women and the Divine Law:

In one of the most sublime presentations of piety - the *Antigone* of Sophocles – this quality is therefore declared to be primarily the law of women, and it is presented as the law of emotive [*empfindend*] and subjective substantiality, of inwardness which has not yet been fully actualised, as the law of the ancient gods and the chthonic realm [*Unterirdischen*] as an eternal law of which no one knows whence it came ...¹⁸⁴

Nature is beautiful; however, the Idea does not appear as the Ideal in natural beauty—only in artistic beauty. One oft-quoted passage states that the Ideal does not appear in feminine consciousness¹⁸⁵:

Women may well be educated, but they are not made for the higher sciences, for philosophy and certain artistic productions which require a universal element. Women may have insights [*Einfälle*] taste and delicacy, **but they do not possess the Ideal.** [emphasis added]¹⁸⁶

Nature is deficient because it contains the element of finitude, which is at odds with the infinity and freedom of the Concept. The things of Nature are finite and transitory, and while it's possible to give them the appearance of infinity and freedom, that appearance must be externally produced by the artist. The freedom and infinity of art, therefore, is grounded in something other than in natural materials, for these do not acquire the appearance of freedom and infinity without the intervention of the artist; the artist overcomes the deficiencies of Nature by transforming the natural and infusing it with the richer meaning of Spirit.

The beauty of art is distinguishable from the beauty of Nature by its ability to manifest the infinity and freedom that belong only to the Idea. But the Idea as the beauty of art is not truly the Idea unless and until it becomes an actual unity, and it only does this as concrete

¹⁸⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §166, 206.

¹⁸⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Addition (H, G) to §166.

¹⁸⁶ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Addition (H, G) to §166, 206.

individuality. Here again, the difference between the beauty of Nature and art is significant because it is the foundation for the distinction between two forms of immediate individuality; the natural and the spiritual. It is necessary to determine if, in Hegel's works, women belong to one or the other of these two forms of individuality that occur in antiquity. Immediate individual existence is bound up with finitude and the realm of unfreedom. It is found in both the natural and spiritual worlds. Animal species, as an example, live an immediate physical existence dependent on the powers of external Nature, and the human body is similarly dependent. But the full breadth and scope of human life is disclosed on the level of immediate spiritual existence. Individuals in the world of immediate existence begin to experience the division between physical aims and the loftier aims of Spirit and find themselves compelled into a series of dependencies where they are determined by others. In these circumstances, the Idea appears as the external necessity of law, whereas fully spiritual individuals are a totality in themselves. Individuality in antiquity is not in the form of a totality. In Hegel, Greek Spirit as the artist possesses the ability to mould individuals to the appearance of a totality, but the totality is present only in aesthetic experience.

Feminine consciousness was lodged in a sphere of existence which belonged to the natural order and whose boundaries did not extend far beyond the natural family community. It belonged with the natural order and did not possess the Ideal. The Ideal could not be found in Nature, although it did appear in aesthetic productions. Hence, Hegel's statement that women do not possess the Ideal bears major implications, the first that ancient women could not have been artists because they did not have the Ideal, thus excluding them from the creative activity of Greek Spirit. The second implication is that Hegel must have excluded the ancient family from the sphere of aesthetic Spirit, because it belongs instead with the natural

order. His remark should not be uncritically accepted without consideration for its consistency within the complete system of philosophy. It would help to return to the distinction between the natural and spiritual dimensions of immediate existence in antiquity. It makes little sense to suggest that women lived under the dominion of Nature in the same way as did stones, animals and plants.

Yet another possibility is that both men and women live an immediate existence in the spiritual world of the human. In this realm of the beauty of art, the human is moulded to the appearance of totality. The Ideal subjectivity modelled by the Beautiful Individuals is based on the principle that spirituality is able to express itself fully in the natural human form, meaning that Spirit is not only universal and infinite, but also human and particular. Nothing in the logic of the aesthetics suggests only the male human form is capable of this expression. The ethical disposition of women is said to be ruled by the “law of feeling” belonging to the older order of natural gods who are implicated with finitude and the transitory. The woman Antigone, however, is presented as characteristic of the Beautiful Individuals, especially in regards to the performance of ethical actions in conformity with custom and law. The beauty of the Beautiful Individual is the Ideal, and thus to accept Antigone as a Beautiful Individual is to contradict the above remark that women cannot possess the Ideal. This internal contradiction with Hegel’s presentation of feminine consciousness is a source of difficulty for the analysis for feminine consciousness in his work.

Antigone is a Beautiful Individual, yet women do not possess the Ideal. The family is a natural community, but also a spiritual fact. The demarcation between the natural and spiritual worlds is unclear, and instead there is unexpected continuity from the natural world of

animal existence to the spiritual world of the human continuity, which challenges later claims to independence from Nature on the part of free and infinite modern individuality. The problem of feminine consciousness proves difficult when surmounting the conventions of western philosophical tradition for thinking about the distinct categories of Nature and Spirit.

The Definition of the Concept

The philosophical Concept of the Beautiful is an essential prerequisite for comprehending the Ideal subjectivity and Beautiful Individuality of the ancient subject. The point of departure will be the definition of the Concept, not an abstract universality or generality resulting from the filtration of all particularity, but as a concrete totality and a collection of specific differences contained in an Ideal unity that constitutes universality.

The Concept contains within itself the determinations of the universal, particularly the individual, and holds these together in an *ideal* unity, meaning the determinations are abstract and not actual. The Concept is itself the universal:

The more precise determinations which belong to the Concept in virtue of its own nature are the universal, the particular and the individual. Each of its determinations, taken by itself, is a purely one-sided abstraction. But they are not present in the Concept in this one-sidedness because it is their Ideal *unity*. Consequently, the Concept is the *universal*, which on the one hand negates itself by its own activity into particularization and determinacy, but on the other hand once again cancels this particularity which is the negative of the universal.

For the universal does not meet in the *particular* with something absolutely *other*, the particulars are only particular aspects of the universal itself and therefore the universal restores in the particular its unity with itself as a universal. In this returning into itself the Concept is infinite negativity; not a negation of something other than itself but self-determination in which it remains purely and simply a self-relating affirmative unity. Thus it is true *individuality* as universality closing only with itself in its particularity.¹⁸⁷

It is necessary to begin with an understanding of the Concept and then proceed to the

philosophical Concept of the Beautiful, as this will lay the foundation for a philosophical understanding of what is meant by the terms *Ideal Subjectivity* and the *Beautiful Individual*.

The philosophical Concept of the beautiful, to indicate its true nature in at least a preliminary way, must contain, reconciled within itself, both the extremes which have been mentioned because it unites metaphysical universality with the precision of real particularity. Only so is it grasped absolutely in its truth: ...in accordance with its own Concept, it has to develop into a totality of specifications, and it itself, like its exposition, contains the necessity of its particularizations and of their progress and transition into one another; on the other hand, the particularizations, to which a transition has been made, carry in themselves the universality and essentiality of the Concept, as the proper particularizations whereof they appear.¹⁸⁸

As for process, specific differences acquire the status of a Concept when they are brought together in a way that comprises various aspects of a unity. This collection of differences into unity involves the *conceptualization* of differences, and is illustrated by the example of gold, which has been taken from the text¹⁸⁹; notice even the tiniest particles of gold have the power to sustain an indissoluble unity of weight, colour, density, hardness, *et cetera*. Gold is a unity of differences that are conceptualized as they become aspects of unity. While it might be theoretically possible to consider each quality of gold in isolation, it is impossible to separate the specifications without endangering the unity. Gold would cease to exist if its specifications were dissolved for individual consideration.

Similarly, the Concept embraces its specific differences in the form of an *Ideal* unity that is also an absolute unity; the specifications of the Concept are not at liberty to secede and pursue an individual course of development. The inhabitants of the ancient Greek polis serve as a concrete example of what is meant by the *Ideal* unity of the Concept. Much as its

¹⁸⁷ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 109.

¹⁸⁸ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 22.

¹⁸⁹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 108.

specifications and properties must be united to form the pure element of gold, so too ancient Greeks were compressed into the *Ideal* unity of the polis where they were denied the freedom to pursue an independent course of self-development. Any inclination to do so was ruthlessly suppressed because it posed a threat to the unity of the social whole.

The Concept is said to be the *Ideal* unity of its determinations because these determinations remain abstract; like the specifications of gold in the example above, the determinations of the Concept retain meaning only as aspects of a unity, but these determinations do not *in themselves* enter the realm of particularity anymore than do the characteristics of gold such as density, hardness, or colour. The inhabitants of the polis do not become free and self-sufficient individuals in themselves, and like the specifications of gold metal, they have meaning only as aspects of the community of ethical substance. The Concept as the *Ideal* unity of its determinations possesses infinity as follows: it negates itself into the realm of particularity, but finds particularity to be its own aspect; it cancels this difference and reunites with itself as universality. Throughout all of its movements, it relates only to itself and is not conditioned by something other. The Concept endures as an Ideal, absolute unity of determinations, and this ability to maintain itself over and against objective existence constitutes its free and self-determining subjectivity. Taken together, these factors of ideal unity, freedom and infinity, and self-determining subjectivity comprise the totality of the Concept. Although the Concept is implicitly a totality, it is not yet the Idea; the determinacy that exists in the Concept does not acquire an objective existence and remains abstraction, caught in the unity and universality which is the Concept's element. The defect of the Concept is its one-sidedness:

But that being so, the Concept remains one-sided and it is afflicted with

the defect that, although itself implicitly totality, it allows only to the side of unity and universality the right of free development. But, because this one-sidedness is incommensurate with the Concept's own essence, the Concept cancels it in accordance with its own Concept. It negates itself as this ideal unity and universality and now releases to real independent objectivity what this unity shut within itself as ideal subjectivity. By its own activity the Concept posits itself as objectivity.¹⁹⁰

The passage above summarizes the logically formulated processes of historical Spirit from the classical period of the fifth and fourth centuries in ancient Greece, through the era of Imperial Rome. It is useful as an abstract of the processes operating in the historical setting. The development of the Concept begins on the side of objective Spirit and manifests itself in the historical realm as the ceaseless conflict that bifurcates ancient Greek Spirit. This one-sided development proves essentially incompatible with the Concept. As a result, the Ideal unity and universality of the Concept must undergo negation and release its determinations to independence and objectivity. The historical background of the moment of negation corresponds to the downfall of the Greek polis followed by the rise of the Roman world. The reference to a release to "real independent objectivity of what this unity shut within itself as ideal subjectivity" is interpreted as a reference to the rise of the reflective principle. This release signals the break-up of the polis and the supersession of the Greek notion of citizenship by the Roman conception of the abstract legal person. The dissolution of Greek Spirit marks the end of Ideal subjectivity.

A complete treatment of the philosophy of the Concept as an *Ideal* unity and its meaning for ancient subjectivity is given in the *Aesthetics* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*,

¹⁹⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 109-110.

supplemented by *The Encyclopaedia Logic* ¹⁹¹ the *Additions* to the entries in the latter are especially useful as they contain historical references that are very helpful in connecting the logic with historical content. It is important to clarify what is meant by the totality of the Idea. Earlier, the inhabitants of the Greek polis were likened to the determinations of metal in that they were held within the *Ideal* unity of the polis just as the determinations of weight, hardness, colour, etc. are held within the Concept of gold. When the polis dissolved, its subjects, who were the Beautiful Individuals, were released from the ideal unity of ethical substance into the realm of objectivity, where their individuality was acknowledged to have the reality of the legal person. The Concept has negated itself and released its determinations into reality where they continue to disperse along independent pathways as the Concept is dissolved into an infinity of particularisations. The Concept passed over from the inwardness of Greek Spirit to its opposite of objective reality and preserves itself from dissolution by restoring its determinations to the *Ideal* unity of Imperial Rome. The Roman world represents a higher form of the unity of substance and subject than the community of ethical substance for not only does it have objective Spirit in the abstract universal state but unlike the polis, but it also possesses individual subjectivity. That which was enclosed within the Ideal subjectivity of the substantial community has acquired the status of legal personhood and independence. Rome is an outline of the totality of the Ideal. ¹⁹²

The Concept of the Beauty of Art and the Ideal

Ideal subjectivity and the consciousness of the Beautiful Individual are concepts whose

¹⁹¹ Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Logic*, in a new translation from the German by Klaus Brinkmann with Daniel O. Dahlstrom, is forthcoming (Cambridge University Press).

¹⁹² Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 110.

foundations are given in the Idea of the Beautiful. Hegel would argue a philosophical treatment of the Idea of the Beautiful would include its historical development beginning from the abstraction of the Platonic Idea, followed by the concrete presentation in the beauty of classical Greek art. The acquisition of a concretely-based understanding of the Idea of the Beautiful is possible only through conceptual thought, and this section of the discussion demands a grasp of Hegel's Concept.

It is worth underlining why Hegel regarded the Beautiful as an appropriate subject matter for conceptual thought and why he found it relevant to the treatment of ancient Spirit. "Now if in fact the beautiful is to be understood in its essence and its concept, this is possible only through the conceptual thinking whereby the logico-metaphysical nature of the *Idea in general* as well as of the particular *Idea of the beautiful* enters conscious reflection."¹⁹³ Hegel demonstrated the activity of thinking about the beautiful requires universality and particularity to enter into conscious reflection. The thinking that involves these attributes will be recognized as the beginnings of the true Concept.

The philosophical position of Hegel on the Idea of the Beautiful together with his analysis of the deficiencies of this Idea will establish the context in which to explore Ideal subjectivity and the Beautiful Individuals, in relation to his presentation on feminine consciousness. The theme of Ideal subjectivity is integral to the arguments in support of the thesis that the Hegelian account may be modified to allow for the reconciliation of women with his conception of modern subjectivity. The relevance of Ideal subjectivity for the thesis is supported by Hegel's account of modern ethical life given in *The Philosophy of Right* where the consciousness of modern women is depicted remarkably as if it were unchanged from its

ancient counterpart. Feminine consciousness in modern ethical life occupies a position that is inconsistent with the principle of the free and infinite modern subject, largely because it continues to be governed by the Ideal subjectivity of the Beautiful Individual. This Ideal subjectivity does not contain freedom and infinity within itself. Modern women are Ideal subjects in the sense the truth of their soul is manifested in the aesthetic production of Beautiful Individuality – the natural side of existence has to be suppressed, in order to emphasize the universal character of the subject. The Ideal subject is elevated to freedom and independence, but is not consciously aware that in honouring the Divine, it honours itself.¹⁹⁴ The study of Ideal subjectivity given in the *Aesthetics*¹⁹⁵ shows that by definition, Ideal subjects are unable to comprehend the depths of the “inherently infinite and true subjectivity” of the modern person. The presentation of feminine consciousness in Hegel is replete with features that will easily be recognized as the outmoded trappings of a pre-modern mode of consciousness that ought to have been overtaken by dialectical progress. This then, is the difficulty with his presentation but it has also had the unintentional positive effect of drawing attention to the concept of Beautiful Freedom and its standing in modern *Sittlichkeit*. This issue of the potential requirement for a modern version of Beautiful Freedom is one that should be addressed in conjunction with any modifications to the Hegelian account for the reconciliation of women with the principle of modern times. This issue about beautiful freedom should be addressed in conjunction with any strategies for modification and as part of a broader program to fully realize the potential for universal and infinite justice inherent in modernity.

¹⁹³ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 21-22.

¹⁹⁴ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 153-160.

¹⁹⁵ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, See especially Part A, “The Ideal as Such” to Chapter III, “The Beauty of Art or the Ideal,” 153-174, also the “Introduction” to Section II, “The Classical Form of Art,” 427-442.

The foundation of Ideal subjectivity in the Idea of the Beautiful does not remain at the stage of a Concept but strives to enter into existence and realize itself in a specific form adequate to the freedom and infinity of the Concept. The Idea as the classical Ideal both realises itself in human form and raises the human form to the level of a work of art. Subjectivity is *Ideal* when it manifests the Idea in the determinacy of the human form and it acquires the appearance of totality by joining universality with particularity. The manifestation of the Idea as the classical Ideal always takes the form of a work of art because the appearance of the Ideal involves the recreation of natural material into a form adequate to Spirit and this is a function of artistic creativity. It is important to note the renunciation of the natural element is integral to the creative process of making and shaping the Ideal:

But in this formal ideality of art it is not the subject-matter which principally makes a claim on us but the satisfaction which comes from what the *spirit* has produced. The artistic presentation must appear here as natural, yet it is not the natural there as such but that making, ***precisely the extinction of the sensuous material and external conditions***, which is the poetic and the ideal in a formal sense [emphasis added].¹⁹⁶

The creative artistry that produces the Ideal of the classical form of art does not apprehend Nature as a moment in the process of dialectical Spirit grounded in Spirit itself. The creative process registers this nonapprehension as the renunciation of the natural element. The Idea of unity of Nature and Spirit is available only as an aesthetic experience and cannot be grasped in the positive existence of an individual human being that has freedom and infinity on its own account. This is the deficiency that distinguishes Ideal subjectivity from the subjectivity of the free and infinite modern person.

Ideal subjectivity is produced through the union of Nature and Spirit in the figure of the Beautiful Individual. The unity of Nature and Spirit invests the classical Ideal with its

universal character. This unity acquires particularity when it is expressed in the determinacy of the human form. The Beautiful Individuals maintain themselves in the unity and universality of a higher totality of the community of ethical substance and through their ethical actions they preserve a seamless identity of subjective inner life with the objective order of Spirit and they manifest the Ideal. The vision of Truth as an aesthetic spiritual unity of Nature and Spirit does not constitute the Concept *as such* in its universality and infinity but it does constitute the stage where the Concept in unity with individual appearance is the Ideal of the Beautiful but at the same time, Greek Spirit has reached the limits of its ability to realise the Concept in an adequate form.

It will be useful to begin with a quotation from Chapter 1 of *Aesthetics*:

We called the beautiful the Idea of the beautiful. This means that the beautiful itself must be grasped as Idea, in particular as Idea in a determinate form as Ideal. Now the Idea as such is nothing but the Concept, the real existence of the Concept and the unity of the two. For the Concept as such is not yet the idea, although "Concept" and "Idea" are often used without being distinguished.¹⁹⁷

To say that the Beautiful must be grasped as Idea, is problematic. When Hegel wrote that the beautiful is 'the pure appearance of the idea to sense', it seems to have been his intention to convey the thought that beauty is Idea, and therefore, beauty must be true. That is not quite what the text means:

Now we said that beauty is Idea, so beauty and truth are in one way the same. Beauty, namely, must be true in itself. But, looked at more closely, the true is nevertheless distinct from the beautiful.¹⁹⁸

The original identity of beauty and the Idea in the Ideal of classical art came as an

¹⁹⁶ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 163-164.

¹⁹⁷ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 106.

insight, and subsequently, that insight was shattered by reflection. The beautiful, after all, is not synonymous with the Idea, although the Idea may be beautiful, provided the right conditions prevail and the Idea has an outward existence in immediate unity and harmony with the Concept. What is true is not the beautiful appearance of the outwardly existing Idea but rather the Idea that is manifested in this outward existence. The Idea in the beauty of art has an outward existence that is beautiful and true only because the production of artistic beauty involves the sacrifice of the independence of immediate existence. This independence is given over to sustain the objective existence of the Concept which otherwise would remain at the level of an abstraction.

For the sensuous and objective as such preserve in beauty no independence in themselves; they have to sacrifice the immediacy of their being, since this being is only the existence and objectivity of the Concept; and it is posited as a reality which presents the Concept as in unity with its objectivity and thus also presents the Idea itself in this objective existent which has worth only as the pure appearance of the Concept.¹⁹⁹

The renunciation of the independence and worth of immediate being is a prerequisite for the Idea of the beautiful to possess truth and beauty. Nothing less than the renunciation of finitude will serve to reconcile the opposition that exists between the *universality* of Spirit and the individuality of finite things as they are found in Nature:

What exists in nature is just a single thing, individualized indeed in all its parts and aspects. On the other hand, 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.²⁰⁰

Renunciation reinforces the opposition in the direction of a collapse of Beautiful Individuality

¹⁹⁸ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 111.

¹⁹⁹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 111.

²⁰⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 164.

and its dissolution into the more complex and developed form of individuality found in the Roman world. The immediate individuality of ethical substance was not dissolved wholly because of problems in the underlying dialectic of Nature and Spirit.

The Eleatic school of philosophy grasped the truth of the Idea in terms of its universal principle, but the rise of the ethical world of the polis has changed this and now the Idea has an external and objective existence that corresponds to the Concept. The Idea in existence has beauty because it is a "pure appearance of the Idea to sense" and it has truth, although only in the objective sense, meaning the sensuous element of its reality or immediate being has no independent claim to legitimacy, other than as an articulation of the Concept. Reality is true because it accords with the Concept.

This has been a short sketch of the Concept of the beauty of art and the Ideal. The Idea of the Beautiful acquires the appearance of freedom and infinity from the sacrifice of independent claims on part of immediate being²⁰¹. This will become clear from the following passage where Hegel vividly describes how classical artists reveal the truth of humanity to itself through their productions:

The Greek artists evince themselves as genuinely creative poets. All the varied foreign ingredients they have brought into the melting-pot, yet they have not made a brew out of them like what comes from a witches' cauldron; **on the contrary, in the pure fire of the deeper spirit they have consumed everything murky, natural, impure, foreign, and extravagant; they have burnt all this together and made the shape appear purified, with only faint traces of the material out of which it was formed....**Here for the first time it is the human shape and the form of human actions and events (no longer used as mere personification) which, as we saw, enters necessarily as the one adequate reality. These forms too the artist finds in the real world, **but nevertheless he has to extinguish the accidental and inappropriate element in them before they can be proved adequate to the spiritual content of man** which, seized in its essence, comes to serve as the representation of the eternal

²⁰¹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 111-115.

powers and gods. This is the free, spiritual, and not merely arbitrary production of the artist [emphasis added].²⁰²

Classical art presents the Concept as a blend of the Idea with finite and transitory immediate being. The presence of the Concept is ubiquitous throughout its reality in classical art and every aspect of the content is required to conform to the Concept by forfeiting independence or to be annihilated. The content of classical art is purified of any defects and contingent elements that do not contribute straightway to the appearance of the Concept in harmony with its objective existence. Only when the content has been so rigorously purified of all the elements of contingency that the Concept is no longer opposed to the real differences of its determinations will it find itself free and at home in its reality. The Concept has infinity because on entrance to existence, it is inescapably implicated with restrictedness, but its reality does not itself appear restricted. Its beautiful reality communicates only the harmony of the Concept and in doing so, exchanges finitude for infinity. The Concept also possesses freedom because in finding itself at home with itself in objectivity it is free and undetermined by externality.

Hegel was drawn to the study of aesthetics because it is the realm where the Idea first entered into a determinate form as the Ideal of the beauty of art. Hegel concluded in the ancient world, the Idea of the Beautiful was grasped not as the Idea but as the Ideal or the Idea in determinate form.

The subjective element is the power that brought together and then preserved in unity the subjectively-held concept of the Beautiful together with its objective existence in the form of the ethical Greek world. This bond is sustained through the labour of Greek Spirit as the

plastic artist who appropriates resources from the natural order and shapes them into the spiritual order thus facilitating the transition from Nature to Spirit while disclosing that Spirit is the truth of Nature. The subjectivity of the classical Greek artist enables the Concept to assume reality through aesthetic productions whose function is to appropriate external existence and display it as a truthful existence of the Idea, for nothing is true that is not an existence of the Idea. The ancient subjects did not look upon their aesthetic productions as mere collections of finite and unfree objects, instead they apprehended in them the Ideal of the Beautiful meaning Spirit embodied adequately in an external existence. The concept of the Beautiful transported Greek Spirit from out of the realm of unfreedom and finitude of immediate existence into the freedom and infinity of spirituality.

Greek Spirit as the plastic artist was unaware all the while of the true nature of its work in preserving ethical substance as a unity and did not recognize its own subjectivity as the bond uniting the Concept and external existence. "The honour of human invention in subjugating Nature is ascribed to the gods."²⁰³ Aesthetic productions are revered as if they sprang from a divine source. From the standpoint of objective Spirit, the truth of the unity of the human and divine was recognized through the contemplation of the Ideal of the beauty of art and those who recognize that unity knew themselves to be free. This knowledge which constituted the freedom of the beautiful self actually counts as knowledge on part of substantiality and not on part of the individual who as yet is unable to comprehend the freedom and infinite truth of subjectivity.

Hegel upheld Pericles as the most noble example of the Beautiful Individual. Pericles'

²⁰² Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 479.

²⁰³ See Section II, "Phases of Individuality Aesthetically Conditioned" of Part II, *The Greek World* in

Funeral Oration for the warriors fallen in the Peloponnesian War is praised as a distillation of the essence of Athenian life. For Hegel, that essence is a combination of freedom attained through the pursuit of the realization of the beautiful, a cultivated consciousness, and a capacity for bold and energetic action:

We love the beautiful but without ostentation or extravagance; we philosophize without being seduced thereby into effeminacy and inactivity (for when men given themselves up to Thought they get further and further from the Practical - from activity for the public for the common weal). We are bold and daring but this courageous energy in action does not prevent us from giving ourselves an account of what we undertake ...²⁰⁴

The Limitations of Beautiful Freedom.

Greek Spirit is free and beautiful but it lacked the principle of reflection and does not attain to a full comprehension of the meaning of universal and infinite subjectivity. The chapter aim has been to appreciate the reasons why Hegel admired Beautiful Freedom while understanding the substance of his critique together with the imperative for the beautiful self as a one-sided and deficient configuration of the logical Idea, to be superseded.

Hegel admired Greek Spirit because it offered a resolution to the contradiction of universality and particularity through a conception of the Beautiful as the Ideal present in the determinacy of artistic form. This presence gives the logical Idea an external existence. Although this conception of the Ideal of the Beautiful was insufficient to the truth of the freedom and infinity of Spirit, the classical Ideal remains a singular instance of the unity of Spirit and Nature whose likes have not been seen either before or since. Not even in modern

Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 241.

²⁰⁴ The excerpt is taken from Pericles' Funeral oration attributed to Pericles by the historian Thucydides in the *Peloponnesian War* (Book 2.24-46) and quoted in Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (The Colonial Press, 1899, reprint with a new introduction by C.J. Friedrich, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 261.

subjectivity does the reconciliation of Nature and Spirit lay hold of the physical and natural world with quite the same immediacy as it did for the Greeks. The recovery of the beautiful freedom of Greek Spirit remains an urgent problem, one whose solution is not well-articulated, although it is implicit, in the principled basis of the philosophy of modern life.

The Ideal subjectivity of Beautiful Individuality developed Spirit on the side of unity and universality and suppressed development from the side of particularity. The Concept is present in Ideal subjectivity as a unity of differences that has freedom and universality. The ethical world of the Greek polis is given as an example of an Ideal unity whose individual determinations are the beautiful individuals. These Beautiful Individuals, as determinations of the Ideal unity of the polis, cannot become real unless they first attain to an independent objective existence but this is impossible because in the ancient world, the independent existence of individuals would threaten the unity of the Concept. For this reason, the moment of real difference cannot be articulated and where it asserts itself as in the example of Socrates it must be suppressed. The Beautiful Individuals, therefore, were not real and in logical terms, they did not enter into reality and existence. The lesson to be drawn from this is that feminine consciousness, because it emulated this mode of Spirit logically, also encountered obstacles in accomplishing the transition from beautiful individuality to reality and existence at the stage of determinate Being (*Dasein*).

The Ideal in the classical form was a beautiful but short-lived development in the life of Spirit. The artistic Ideal suffered from the limitation that external appearance is restricted in its ability to fully manifest the freedom and infinity of Spirit. The study of Beautiful

Individuality²⁰⁵ in *Aesthetics* showed how the Ideal preserved itself by gathering together its subjects in the unity and universality of ethical substance. But any assertion of the independence of subjectivity and its right on part of these subjects was rigorously suppressed. This inability to circumvent the requirement to repress individuality in order to sustain unity, is the tragedy of Antigone and the ethical Greek world. The aesthetic Ideal has entered into external existence in the classical Greek world, but in an accompanying countermovement, the determinacy of the Ideal has retreated from external existence in order to preserve the spiritual content of the Ideal from dissipation. A good example of what is meant by the withdrawal of determinacy from external existence is given in the activity of the artist who makes materials into the shape of free and infinite Spirit by ruthlessly purifying them of all “accidental and inappropriate elements” for these materials would not be adequate to the manifestation of the Ideal had they not been purified of the element of contingency belonging to Nature and finitude. When purification is completed almost nothing remains of the original natural materials because they have been transformed. The plastic artistry of Greek Spirit begs the question what becomes of Nature and the element of finitude.

The beautiful freedom of the ethical world gave rise to a mode of consciousness that immersed itself in the world of particularity and concrete existence. It holds to the conviction that the concrete world of individual existence exists in an immediate unity with universal Spirit and this conviction underlies the extraordinary degree of obsession with particular details of existence that is characteristic of this world where the idea of the state and social order in the abstract is nonexistent. This is a world where matters of religious observances,

²⁰⁵ See Section I, *Beautiful Individuality* in Chapter III of Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 153-60.

familial obligations and genealogy, and civic duties are chronicled in the most precise and exquisite detail. "...*this actual* Athens, this Sparta, these Temples, these Altars, this form of social life, this union of fellow-citizens, these manners and customs, ..." ²⁰⁶ and we may add, *these* household deities, *this* husband or wife, *these* children....and so on and so forth. Any deviation will be judged in the most unsparing terms. Fustel de Coulanges touched upon this in writing about the ritual and practice of Graeco-Roman religion:

But the formula was not enough; there were exterior acts whose details were minute and unchangeable. The slightest gesture of the one who performed the sacrifice, and the smallest parts of his costume, were governed by strict rules. In addressing one god, it was necessary to have the head veiled; in addressing another, the head was uncovered; for a third, the skirt of the toga was thrown over the shoulder....if one of the innumerable rites of the sacrifice was neglected, the sacrifice was without effect; **the least failure made of the sacred act an act of impiety** [emphasis added]. The slightest alteration disturbed and confused the religion of a country, and changed the protecting gods in to so many cruel enemies. ²⁰⁷

All these features are characteristic of the disingenuous mode of consciousness that finds truth in what lies at hand and assumes without reflection the ends of the ethical world are in unity with the ends of universal Spirit.

An unexpected twist of fate lay waiting in store for the ethical world of the Greek polis and it comes in the way of the discovery that their world, which grasped itself in the most concrete terms, was not a truly concrete world, after all. The true content of both this world and consciousness at the stage of sense certainty is not particularity after all, but the universal. Counter-intuitive as it may seem, the ancient Greek world was fundamentally wrong in its self-understanding as a truly concrete world. This was proven in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The statement by Hegel that the truth of sense-certainty is the universal, is suitable as the

²⁰⁶ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 253.

²⁰⁷ Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, trans. Willard Small (1864), (New York:

epitaph for the ancient world. For despite its obsessive fixation with detail and particularity, this one-sided world grasped truth exclusively from the side of universal substance in the shape of an the objective order. It is unable to lay hold of particularity. From the side of the individual, the assertion of the universal principle of reflection in the subjective element has to be repressed, lest it bring about the dissolution of the community of ethical substance.

What is relevant for the thesis, is the issue of what is the standpoint of feminine consciousness towards this principle of Greek Spirit and its accompanying form of consciousness, the Ideal subjectivity of the Beautiful Individual. To begin with, Hegel expressed doubts in a well-known passage from the *Philosophy of Right* about whether women possess the Ideal, thus raising the issue of whether feminine consciousness participates in Beautiful Individuality. His powerful exegesis of *Antigone* supports the argument that his genuine intentions were to include women among the Beautiful Individuals of the ethical world. To reject the inclusive nature of the deeper intentions of Hegel by denying that women participated in the beautiful individuality of Greek Spirit, is to accept uncritically, as some critics have done, that Hegel intended consciously to exclude women from reason and world history – without considering the issue from the standpoint of the overall consistency of the system of philosophy, not to mention the logical imperative of inclusion. If ancient feminine consciousness were to fall outside of the category of Beautiful Individuality altogether, that would be tantamount to falling outside of world-historical Spirit in the Greek realm, in effect, feminine consciousness would remain in the natural and ahistorical world of eternally recurrent cycles. This claim would be inconsistent with the philosophy of Hegel. The texts illustrate that his deepest and most genuine intentions for humanity were inclusionary, but the

difficulty with Hegel's writings, is that sometimes they are contradictory. Passages of text, especially those pertaining to the analysis of the family and polis and to the distinction between the natural and spiritual orders would, if pursued to their logical conclusion, lend themselves to an interpretation that would consign women and the family to a natural and by definition, non-spiritual realm. There is a problematic tendency in Hegel to distinguish the *oikos* and polis almost as if they were independent entities and then reduce the *oikos* and its inhabitants to the lower status of the natural order. This analysis of the ethical world is deeply flawed in this respect but it does have an effective counterweight in the Antigone story. It then becomes necessary to exercise powers of discernment to separate the true intentions of Hegel from these shortcomings. It will not be possible within the limitations of the thesis to explore all the tensions and contradictions within the analysis of the ethical world but the conclusion most consistent with the principles of Hegelian philosophy would be one that recognizes the participation of both sexes in Beautiful Individuality.

The thesis interprets the intentions of Hegel to include masculine and feminine aspects in beautiful individuality and this interpretation is supported by the logic. The exposition of the logical transition of Being and Nothing to Becoming indicated in previous chapters and analysed more closely in Chapter Seven uncovered no logical reason why masculine and feminine consciousness should not have representation in consciousness at the stage of the Beautiful Individual. On the contrary, the appropriate logic to this stage of historical Spirit represents the opposing dialectical terms as an equilibrium described as an opposition within an immediacy. The conclusion to be drawn from the study of the logic would seem to be that the ethical world was a dialectical process whose masculine and feminine agents coexisted within an equilibrium of ethical powers of Human and Divine Law.

An analysis of Beautiful Individuality raises issues about what became of Nature and the element of finitude, given that Greek Spirit does not comprehend these moments as grounded in the nature of Spirit itself and does not include them in its idea of unity. The evidence that this question has not been resolved completely is furnished by the presentation of modern feminine consciousness in the *Philosophy of Right*. This presentation borrows elements from the Ideal subjectivity of Beautiful Individuality, subjectivity which is defined by the conflict of Nature and Spirit. This is one problem. The second problem is that consciousness in the form of Beautiful Individuality is dialectical, and it resolves the internal opposition of Nature and Spirit by suppressing Nature and the element of finitude, in order for the Ideal to be manifested. This suppression of Nature is an inadequate resolution to the dialectic of Nature and Spirit, because the philosophy of Hegel gives recognition to Nature and finitude as a moment in the life of Spirit that is grounded in Spirit's own nature.

Undeniably, the requirement to repress Nature and the element of finitude places a greater burden on the feminine aspect of Spirit than on the masculine. The explanation for this is not that Hegel was an essentialist who equated the feminine with Nature, the masculine with Spirit. This charge is one that has to be set aside. The fact is, that few people today would dispute the historical record that women in the ancient Greek world exercised their primary role in the sphere of natural human existence, which is associated with the family and with the older, nature-based order of Divine Law. What has changed is that this fact no longer entitles us to assume that ancient Greek women were invisible members of society, whose lives were passed in the secluded confines of the household. New evidence has been brought forward by

Jean Connelly²⁰⁸ that women participated in cult practice and sacred life and sometimes, they even held sacred offices having a prominent public dimension. The attitude that the sphere of Divine Law, including family and sacred life, was less worthy or secondary to the main enterprise of the polis does not reflect the complex realities of ancient life. The suggestion that by acknowledging the historical affiliation of women with the older, natural order of Divine Law, one occupies an essentialist position, is a suggestion that relies for its force on an outmoded construct of the ancient world as a binary world divided cleanly between Nature and Spirit, and between the spheres of family and polis, sacred and secular life. But this construct has outlived its usefulness. If it is neither appropriate nor possible to make hard and fast distinctions between sacred and secular life in ancient Greece, then the historical record may be accepted, without lapsing to the conclusion that feminine consciousness, because of its affiliation with Divine Law, thereby was unfit for full participation in the life of the polis. Hegel does lapse to that judgement. The point is, that he did not have to do so. It does seem to have been the case that ancient women exercised their role within the natural order of Divine Law, including the spheres of family and sacred life, but in the emerging view is, this order was not subordinate by definition to the broader purposes of the order of Human Law and the community, and from within this order, it was not impossible to engage with the business of the polis. This is not to deny the traditional history of subordination of women in the Greek polis. Women, after all, were not citizens with full political rights and although they shared in the life of the community, they did not participate in the democratic life of the Athenian state. Beautiful freedom at least presents the *possibility* for a resolution of the quandary of Nature

²⁰⁸ Jean Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

and Spirit, together with its associated spheres of Human and Divine Law. The new evidence supports the argument that Beautiful Freedom presented the possibility that a resolution was possible that did not entail the subordination of one term to the other. Examples exist in select areas of ancient Greek life where a harmonious resolution seems to have been achieved. Connelly argued that Greek women enjoyed a measure of equality with men in the sphere of sacred ritual and religious life.

Feminine consciousness is directly disadvantaged by the dialectical movement of Greek Spirit because in transforming the natural to the spiritual, this movement degraded Nature to a position of subordination to Spirit. The suppression of Nature and finitude does not similarly impeded the advance of masculine consciousness to a higher stage, because self-consciousness as it was understood by Hegel, is attained in the *spiritual* and by definition, *unnatural* realm of objective Spirit.

The ethical dualism of the Greek world prescribes that men abandon the natural ethical community of the family, departing the natural realm for the pursuit of self-consciousness in the spiritual community:

The brother leaves this immediate, rudimentary, and therefore, strictly speaking, negative ethical life of the family, in order to acquire and produce the concrete ethical order which is conscious of itself.

He passes from the divine law, within whose realm he lived, over to the human law. The sister, however, becomes, or the wife remains, director of the home and the preserver of the divine law.²⁰⁹

If the historical development of the consciousness of ancient Greek women indeed was arrested, as Hegel said it was, it would be because the option to leave the *oikos* was unavailable to them in their historical context. There is no need to explain their

underdevelopment by reference to any essentialist content of nature, when historical factors will suffice. The study of Beautiful Individuality produces the conclusion that it would be simplistic to propose an alteration to this outcome, by suggesting that both men and women should leave the family and enter civil society. This would not resolve the contradiction of Nature and Spirit. It does not make sense to discuss the abandonment or abolition of the family as a potential strategy for the emancipation of modern women because to do so is to presume an ongoing conflict of Nature and Spirit - one that is supposed to have been resolved in the teachings of Christianity, according to Hegel. If the opposition of Nature and Spirit truly has been overcome in the modern principle, as Hegel maintained, then there is no longer any reason to hold that participation in the traditional sphere of the family is an obstacle to claims of feminine consciousness to modern individuality - in which case, the remarks at Section 166 of *Elements* will need to be reconsidered.

However, there is a discrepancy lying between the exposition of spiritual individuality given in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and its realisation in the writings on social and political philosophy. There is an inconsistency between the inclusive tone of the theological writings, and the theory of modern ethical life. The inconsistency may be seen to have theological origins. Hegel held that the manifestation of God in the flesh was a temporary event that passed away, after which time the annulment of Nature and finitude may be presumed to resume its course.

It must further be observed, that *in* this truth, the relation of man to this truth is also posited. For Spirit makes itself its own [polar] opposite – and is the return from this opposite into itself. Comprehended in pure ideality, that antithetic form of Spirit is the Son of God; reduced to limited and particular conceptions, it is the World-Nature and Finite Spirit: **Finite Spirit itself therefore is posited as a constituent element**

²⁰⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 438.

[Moment] in the Divine Being [emphasis added]. Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed – that the unity of Man with God is posited in the Christian religion...

The crucial turn of thought comes with the next sentence:

But this unity must not be superficially conceived, as if God were only Man, and Man, without further condition, were God. Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: **for the Natural is the Unspiritual** [emphasis added].

The unity of God and humanity has to appear for sensuous consciousness but sensuous existence is considered to be only a transitional phase of Spirit:

Moreover the sensuous existence in which Spirit is embodied is only a transitional phase. Christ dies; only as dead, is he exalted to heaven and sits at the right hand of God; only thus is he Spirit.²¹⁰

In Christian doctrine, the manifestation of Spirit in sensuous existence is held to be an eternal truth and not a temporary phase of Spirit. The teaching that Christ was resurrected as a human being and ascended bodily to heaven runs counter to the argument that manifestation is only a transitional phase. The problem of the unity of divine and human nature is distorted in Hegel by the influence of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit encountered in Greek Spirit. His interpretation of Christian theology is incomplete and does not reflect how this conflict would have been fully overcome in the principle of modern times, and this incompleteness is the basis for the survival of Beautiful Individuality.

The conception of modern subjectivity as understood by Hegel inherited from the ancient world the impulse to suppress Nature and finitude. This impulse has survived because

²¹⁰ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 324-5.

the underlying conflict of Nature and Spirit which was definitive of ethical substance has not been resolved satisfactorily in the theory of modern ethical life. This unsatisfactory resolution is explicit in the exposition by Hegel of the unity of divine and human nature in Christian religion. Once again, there is a relapse to the earlier position of antiquity that the human being becomes spiritual only by annulling “the merely Natural and Limited”. This position is reminiscent of the standpoint of consciousness as Beautiful Individuality. The implication is, that the model of free and infinite subjectivity is insufficiently developed to where it constitutes a genuine totality and explicitly includes the unity of Spirit and Nature.

The phenomenal survival of Beautiful Individuality is manifested in the presentation of modern feminine consciousness in the *Philosophy of Right*. It signifies there has been an inadequate resolution of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit. This inadequacy has specific implications for men as well as for women, for reasons that will be seen in the next chapter. These implications require careful evaluation, beginning with a review of the origins of this inadequacy in the sphere of abstract universality and the historical setting of the ancient Roman world. The prospects of women for rational self-consciousness were negatively influenced by the facts of their historical circumstances, including their roles exercised in the sphere associated with finitude and the natural dimension of existence. The transition from the Greek to the Roman world was a development which reinforced the anti-natural movement in the dialectical logic of antiquity, as will be discussed next. The logic and philosophy of history and religion in Hegel contain imperatives for the reconciliation of Nature and Spirit whose completion would actualise the inclusive character of modern subjectivity. But these were not rendered explicitly in his theoretical exposition of the arrangements for modern ethical life. Opportunities for the development of feminine consciousness were restricted

within the limits set by the ethical Greek world. Beautiful Individuality will not become obsolete until Nature and finitude have been recognized as moments fully grounded in the life of Spirit. The dissolution of the opposition of Nature and Spirit and reconciliation has the potential to bring about a version of beautiful freedom in which normative responses to the claims of the natural dimension are properly recognized in compatibility with the principle of modern times.

6. GREEK SPIRIT AND LOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FEMININE CONSCIOUSNESS

Chapter Six continues the internally-generated critique of the presentation of feminine consciousness in Hegel, and will develop this critique further by making references to appropriate selections of texts in *Science of Logic*. The previous chapters expounded on the problem that feminine consciousness as presented in *Philosophy of Right* has the archaic form of consciousness described by Hegel as Beautiful Individuality. Feminine consciousness retained the ethical disposition of family piety, modelled to sublime effect by Sophocles' *Antigone*. The example of Antigone as the paragon of feminine ethical virtue poses a difficulty because she has the consciousness of Beautiful Individuality, an obsolete mode of consciousness that has no place in modern ethical life. Beautiful Individuality is incompatible with the subjectivity of the modern individual. If feminine consciousness is to be reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity, then there has to be a systematic analysis of the logical and historical narrative of events that culminated in the impasse, beyond which its potential for rational freedom is not developed. This systematic approach is in keeping with the Hegelian principle that comprehension of the history of consciousness is a necessary condition for change and development, a principle that was abbreviated in the famous remark that the owl of Minerva flies only at dusk.

This chapter examines the problem of Hegel's underdevelopment of feminine consciousness by analysing the appropriate segments of logic in *The Science of Logic*. In particular, it highlights apparent deficiencies in the execution of a key logical movement that corresponds to the historical setting of the dissolution of the ethical Greek polis and its

supercession by the Roman world. The argument is that the junction of Greece and Rome is a critical turning point, and it is here that feminine consciousness begins to fall outside the dialectic of Spirit. The task of consciousness at this stage is to supersede ethical substance and Beautiful Individuality, and then to progress to the next higher stage of development, which is the stage determinate Being. Feminine consciousness fails rather spectacularly at this task. A better understanding is needed of the obstacles that constitute this developmental impasse.

According to Hegel, the logical problem of the Greek world is the conflict of Nature and Spirit. This conflict gave rise to the mythology of the violent conquest of natural forces by the Olympian spiritual deities, a theme given extensive treatment in *Aesthetics* and *The Philosophy of History*. Hegel intended to give a demonstration for how this conflict was resolved in his logical exposition of the transition from the Greek polis to the Roman world, leading up to the appearance of Christianity. But the thesis has shown the conflict of natural and spiritual powers was not resolved, either in logic or in the complementary historical narrative. Instead, the standpoint of Greek Spirit that Nature is unspiritual has survived in the Hegelian philosophy of modern times. The outcome of this position is that the natural element of finitude, and by implication, feminine consciousness and the natural community of the family, have not been included in the conception of modern freedom. The conflict of Spirit and Nature has not arrived at a successful resolution in the philosophy of modern ethical life, and it remains the outstanding logical problem of modern times. It must be resolved if Hegel's claims, advanced on behalf of his conception of modern subjectivity that humanity has been reconciled with the idea of freedom, are to be realized.

Hegel conceived of creation as a dualism of natural and spiritual provinces:

After the creation of the natural universe, man appears on the scene as the antithesis of

nature; he is the being who raises himself up into a second world. The general consciousness of man contains two distinct provinces, that of nature and that of spirit.²¹¹

Nature, including feminine consciousness and the family, falls outside the sphere that gives rise to the developments of history and reason. Yet logic provides insights that challenge this conception of creation, and it is these insights that must be fully exploited for the perspective of women to be included in the philosophy of modern life. A good beginning is revisiting the movement known as a transition, because this movement is the logical foundation of both Greek Spirit and modern feminine consciousness. In logic, the transition equates to the movement of two equal terms that do not result in a hierarchy of subordination; instead, the result is a mutual collapse followed by the rise of a third, which is neither one nor the other, but preserves both as its moments. In Hegel, the fall of the polis and the mutual destruction of its ethical principles of Divine and Human Law brought about a situation where Nature and Divine Law were abstracted from the dialectic. Thereafter, he was not able to recover the natural moment. In the long term, the lapse that occurred in the logical movement from ancient Greece to the Roman world had ramifications for feminine consciousness. However, this lapse is inconsistent with the perspectives given in the philosophy of religion on Nature and freedom, and the inclusive character of human destiny. The lectures on the philosophy of religion state that in the Christian idea of reconciliation, the natural moment is first renounced, but then it is destined to be redeemed and restored as a legitimate moment in the life of Spirit.²¹² It would be reasonable to expect to find a parallel account of the redemption and recovery of Nature in the concrete philosophy of history and right, but that is

²¹¹ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 44.

²¹² See Section B, "Concrete Representation" of Part III, *The Consummate Religion* in Hegel, *Lectures*

not the case. Hegel articulates the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in a way that requires humanity to renounce the natural element to find unity with God; in other words, his position is more Hellenistic than Christian because it does not go beyond the transitory moment of renunciation to redemption. Hegel does not embrace a doctrine of Christian reconciliation that includes the redemption of natural creation and its reinstatement in the life of Spirit. He does not clearly show how the original condition of natural humanity, which is a condition of immediate unity, is overcome, not by turning away and separating from Nature, but by comprehending the unity of Nature and Spirit. This lapse in logic reflects an understanding of the theology of Christianity that continues the influence of the Hellenistic imagination, but it is inconsistent with the dialectical methodology of the logic.

This chapter explores the logical foundations of feminine consciousness, and by way of introduction into the subject, will review those sections that constitute the excerpts of logic appropriate for the ethical Greek world. Those excerpts include the introductory passages in *Science of Logic* that give treatment to the logical doctrine of Being, which includes the following: the determinations of Being and Nothing, the transition of Being and Nothing to Becoming, the emergence of Determinate Being or *Dasein* and finally, the transition from Being to the sphere of Essence. The historical setting for this sequence of passages includes the dissolution of the ethical Greek polis, the rise of the Roman world, and the appearance of Christianity. This historical change is considered a critical turning point, where the logical development of feminine consciousness is arrested at the stage of ethical substance. The difference between masculinity and femininity does not acquire substantive character until after the collapse of the ethical Greek polis. The substantive content of the disparity emerges

into view with the rise of the abstract and universal Roman state. The chapter aims to grasp the logical foundations of feminine consciousness as given in Greek Spirit logic, and then explore the implications that fall out of the presentation of the feminine in *Philosophy of Right*, a presentation in a mode that is clearly incompatible with the conception of modern subjectivity.

The issues at stake in Hegel's presentation of modern feminine consciousness pertain to the aftermath of the dissolution of the ethical Greek world, and to the reasons why only masculine consciousness is able to transcend immediate Being and progress beyond the polis towards higher levels of consciousness in the Roman world and thereafter to subjective freedom. In *Philosophy of Right*, the ethical disposition of Antigone is presented as if this stage were exhaustive of the potential for feminine consciousness. The purpose of this chapter is to uncover the basis for the unequal development of male and female consciousness, and to determine whether this basis is valid and consistent with Hegel's logical imperatives and deeper for modern individuality. The inquiry begins from the standpoint of the logic with a focus on the logical movement from the determination of Becoming (Being and Nothing) to the determination of determinate Being or *Dasein*. This focus reflects the principle that this is the excerpt of the logic which is appropriate to the historical setting of the ethical Greek world, and is the decisive excerpt for the explanation of disparities in the developmental achievements of masculine and feminine consciousness. Looking ahead, the difficulty with the reconciliation of feminine consciousness to modern subjectivity seems to have originated in shortcomings in the execution of the logical movement from immediate Being to determinate Being, and all else that happens afterwards proceeds from this original deficiency. An explication of the appropriate logic for this movement that also gives consideration to the

historical narrative of Spirit will shed maximum light on this issue. The Sibree translation of *Philosophy of History* records remarks by Hegel conveying the idea that the status of Nature, women, and the family underwent degradation in the Roman world:

In the life of the Greeks, although it did not any more than that of the Romans originate in the patriarchal relation, *Family* love and the Family tie appeared at its very commencement, and the peaceful aim of their social existence had for its necessary condition the extirpation of freebooters both by sea and land. The founders of Rome, on the contrary – Romulus and Remus – are, according to the tradition, themselves freebooters - represented as from their earliest days thrust out from the Family, and as having grown up in a state of isolation from family affection. . This commencement of the Roman life in savage rudeness excluding the sensibilities of natural morality brings with it one characteristic element – harshness in respect to the family relation...²¹³

Ostensibly, this comparative account of Greek and Roman family life is based on historical fact, in which case, it is impossible to revise the account of the Roman world to better align it with the logical imperatives. Any revisions would require historical justification; the historical record must be accepted for what it is. The shortcoming in the logic and in the concrete philosophical studies lies partly in Hegel's incomplete knowledge of the Roman world, and it stands to reason his knowledge would not exceed the classical scholarship of his times. That is one source of shortcomings which is, for the philosopher of history, inescapable. Another source lies in the fact that the logic and the historical narrative do not register comprehension of the breadth and depth of Christian theology and in particular, the idea of reconciliation. The philosophy of religion is anything but marginal or peripheral to the theory of modern ethical life, for the principle of modern times itself is a manifestation of religion in the secular world.

States and Laws are nothing else than Religion manifesting itself in the relations of the

actual world.²¹⁴ The redemption of Nature and creation is a movement that should be included in the account of the developmental process of reason and history. There is evidence that this is a shortcoming; the feminine aspect of human nature is excluded from full participation in modern ethical life because it falls within the sphere of Nature which is outside of history and reason:

The Spirit of the Family – the Penates – form one substantial being, as much as the Spirit of a People in a State; and morality in both cases consists in a feeling, a consciousness, and a will, not limited to individual personality and interest, but embracing the common interests of members generally. But this unity is in the case of the family essentially one of *feeling*; not advancing beyond the limits of the merely *natural*.²¹⁵

Natural and at the same time religious morality, is the piety of the family. In this social relation, morality consists in the members behaving towards each other not as individuals – possessing an independent will; not as persons. The Family, therefore, is excluded from that process of development in which History takes its rise.²¹⁶

The ethical disposition of modern women was declared that of piety and religious feeling, and in Hegel, this disposition belongs with Nature. This ethical disposition would, therefore, count as a serious obstacle to inclusion in freedom and history; clearly this is the heart of the problem, and is demonstrated in these and other similar passages of text. The exclusion of Nature, family, and women become a permanent state of affairs in his political theory, but this outcome is incompatible with the complete truth of human nature, which was, according to his own principles, given first in the Christian doctrine of reconciliation, and later extended into the secular world for development. The conception of modern subjectivity, as understood by Hegel, needs reconsideration in light of the features that are inconsistent with his principles and inconsistent as well with his deeper intentions for humanity to realize its

²¹³ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 286.

²¹⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 417.

²¹⁵ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 42.

subjective freedom in modern ethical life.

The presentation of ancient feminine consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology* began in the ethical Greek world and ends when that world is sublated in the sphere of abstract universality and the condition of right [Imperial Rome]. The account of feminine consciousness in modern ethical life given in *Elements* is remarkable because it exhibits no evidence of growth or development to distinguish it from its counterpart in the ancient Greek polis.²¹⁷ While there is no confirmed explanation for the developmental disparities in male and female consciousness, if there is any significance to the fact that women, who remain behind in the sphere of immediate Being, preserve the character of the Beautiful Individual²¹⁸, then the issue is worth exploring. In doing so, women may be performing a function whose purpose becomes visible only in the retrospective reflection of historians. The quandary of women and rational self-consciousness suggests that while Hegel may not have been able to develop Beautiful Freedom to a level of compatibility with modern individuality such that could be included with freedom and history, he was interested in the idea that freedom of the beautiful individual may have a role in modern life. This prospective role is not articulated in theory, but it does appear in shadowy form on the margins of modern life through the noble examples of those whose vocation for Divine Law is lived at the expense of their own claims

²¹⁶ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 59.

²¹⁷ Heidi M. Raven is one of several scholars to comment that what Hegel said about women seemed to be valid for him regardless of its placement in the historical context. See Heidi Raven "Has Hegel Anything to Say to Feminists?" in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. Patricia J. Mills, (Pennsylvania: The Penn State University Press, 1996). Jean Hippolyte also observed that Hegel's dialectic of the family seemed to retain validity independent of the historical epoch. See: *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1974), 364.

²¹⁸ Modern feminine consciousness is not alone in its attachment to the ethical disposition of Antigone. Self-sacrifice for the community is not only the highest duty of the Beautiful Individual but also the ethos of the warrior class. The idea that women and warriors are estranged from modern individuality because of their ethical disposition is developed in Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, Incorporated, Publishers, 1987).

to self-consciousness.

The position that men and women in the ethical Greek world were substantive equals may be argued both logically and historically. Beyond dispute, the ethical Greek world accorded unequal status to men and women from birth. Classical scholarship has shown that women in ancient Greece experienced strict limitations on their freedom of personal movement and had little discretion over the conduct of their lives. As discussed previously, there nevertheless is no logical basis for the claim that these differences had any substantive as opposed to contingent content. The key to determining the lack of a logical basis is given in the theory of Beautiful Individuality, a consciousness whose logical structure is not differentiated by sex. Hegel's reading of the *Antigone* story is an account of feminine consciousness that is grounded in Beautiful Individuality. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that Beautiful Individuality included male and female subjects, because the texts mention Antigone and Pericles as examples of this specific virtue of the Greek world. The support for the idea of substantive equality of the sexes in the ethical Greek world may be found in the doctrine of Being in *Science of Logic* and in the account of ethical substance in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From the logical standpoint, the argument is simple. Ethical substance has the logical structure of a transition of opposing terms or "opposition in an immediacy," and as such, the absence of substantive differences between its terms is by definition a structural requirement. The terms of a transition have to be equal to one another because where mediation is absent, difference cannot be supported. Therefore, it is correct to state that there cannot have been any substantive difference between men and women in the ethical world, provided the logical structure for ethical substance has been appropriately identified as the transition of Becoming. There do not seem to have been *substantive*

differences in the logic and structure of masculine and feminine consciousness as they appeared in ancient Greece. The logic of transition does not preclude distinctions, but the discussion of Human and Divine Law shows them to be more closely connected than has previously been considered. Still, women did not progress to rational self-consciousness in step with their masculine counterparts. This outcome is unequal and inconsistent with the logical imperative for the principle of modern freedom to unfold in the concrete actuality of modern ethical life.

The explanation for sex-based disparities in consciousness requires a closer study of the logical structure of ethical substance, with the focus on progressive dialectical movement from the transition of Being and Nothing in Becoming to determinate Being. This segment of logic corresponds to the historical setting of the Greek world as ethical substance, followed by the Roman world of universal and abstract right. In the course of this movement substantive differences emerge between masculine and feminine consciousness, and these lead to unequal capacities for participation in modern life. It is useful, therefore, to begin by briefly summarizing the essential elements of Becoming and determinate Being.²¹⁹

Being originates in a state of self-subsisting immediacy, and because it has neither determinacy nor differentiation it is abstract *Being-in-Itself* with no relation to an otherness. Being is not static, it is dialectical and it is a movement consisting in repeated transitions of the moment of Being to its opposite moment of Nothing, followed by the return to Being. The moments of Being and Nothing are abstract and indeterminate, and their difference is unsubstantiated and contentless. The moment of otherness emerges briefly in the course of the

²¹⁹ See: Chapters 1 and 2 of “Book One: The Doctrine of Being in Hegel,” in Hegel, *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, 82-154.

transition of one to the other and immediately the difference is sublated in sameness. Being and Nothing cannot sustain any difference and collapse into one another. They are the same and do not contain the moment of difference, which is deemed to be the negative, and thus they do not yet contain the negative.²²⁰ They pass over into one another and, in the absence of difference, do not enter into mutual relation. The limited connection of two such terms is defined in the vocabulary of the science of logic as a transition.²²¹

The ethical world is constituted from a process that emulates the structure and movement of the logical transition described above. This is the logical model for the structure of the Greek world, as argued in Chapter One. In summary, the characteristics of the terms of a transition include the following: equality and sameness, abstractness, absence of otherness, determinacy, differentiation and the moment of difference, and absence of the negative—these are characteristics that define the terms [Being and Nothing] of the determination of Becoming.

The next step is grasping the ethical world as a dualism of Divine and Human Law whose process emulates the logical movement of transition. This grasp connects the logical and historical dimensions. Underlying this ethical process of laws is a logic that individualized itself in the natural shape of men and women. The dual ethical powers distinguished themselves on the basis of natural difference. As the most universal natural difference is the natural difference of sex this becomes the basis for the distinction within ethical substance.

²²⁰ This refutes the argument that feminine consciousness does not pass over to determinacy because it lacks the negative. Logically, both consciousnesses would in the condition of immediacy, lack the negative. The problem is to explain in logical terms how one but not the other acquires the negative - it is my view that it cannot be done.

²²¹ The abstract unity of Being and Nothing is first identified as a movement and then as a *transition* in Remark 2 to Chapter 1, "Being," in Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 92.

The characteristics of a logical transition have a bearing on masculine and feminine consciousness in the ethical world because the transition is the model for the structure and logic of ancient subjectivity.

Hegel observed the degradation of Nature and finitude as a phenomenon of the birth of Greek Spirit, and he discusses this connection in his exposition of the mythology of the Olympic pantheon. The conflict of Nature and Spirit should have undergone sublation, for this would be consistent with the methodology of the dialectic and the definition of sublation in the *Logic*. Furthermore, this would dissolve the impasse that blocks the development of feminine consciousness. Instead, feminine consciousness in Hegel retains characteristics of Beautiful Individuality, and has been described in the *Philosophy of Right* as having the ethical disposition of family piety. The retention of an obsolete shape of consciousness as a structural fixture of modern individuality is a feature of modern ethical life that cannot help but undermine the full realization of the claims made on behalf of modern ethical life.

Consciousness as Beautiful Individuality has characteristics that are incompatible with modern ethical life. To begin with, the logical determination of *relation* is absent from the stage of immediate Being and ethical substance, and it does not appear until the sphere of Essence. Consciousness cannot logically remain both at the stage of ethical substance and also participate in modern relationships. One of the controversial points about the beautiful freedom of the ethical Greek world of Periclean Athens and Antigone is that it is not built on interpersonal relationships. This much is clear from the remarks about the ethical existence of the family:

In the first place, because the ethical element is the intrinsically universal element, the *ethical* relation between the members of the family is not that of sentiment or the relationship of love. The ethical element in this case seems bound to be placed in

the relation of the individual member of the family to the entire family as the real substance... The content of the ethical act must be substantial in character or must be entire and universal; hence it can only stand in relation to the entire individual, to the individual *qua universal*.²²²

Ancient subjects in their various capacities as citizens, family members, or husbands and wives, did not attach primary importance to intersubjective relations because their conduct towards one another was motivated by a need for conformity with socially-assigned roles, laws and customs, as opposed to a need for recognition or intimacy with others. Ethical duties and responsibilities stood well ahead of intersubjective relationships in terms of priority of importance. Ancient subjects did not pursue relationships with the aim of knowing each other as individuals, because their conduct was oriented primarily not towards individuals *qua* individuals, but to unity with the universality of the ethical world. Personal fulfilment consisted of sacrificing themselves for the good of the community in exchange for which they received assurance of participation in objective existence of the community of ethical substance. The attainment of a universal standpoint at the expense of particular individuality would be consistent with the principle given in the phenomenology, that the truth of sense-certainty consciousness is not particularity, but universality. Scholars have criticized Hegel's view that ancient subjects privileged socially-assigned ethical roles over intersubjective relations. Michael Theunissen²²³ and Jürgen Habermas²²⁴ argued that Hegel did not properly include intersubjective relations in his construction of the foundations of modern ethical life.

The conclusion that feminine consciousness in some way has retained vestiges of

²²² Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 468-469.

²²³ See Michael Theunissen, "The Repressed Intersubjectivity in Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in *Hegel and Legal Theory*, 3-63.

²²⁴ See, "Labor and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's *Jena Philosophy of Mind*" in Jürgen Habermas,

consciousness at the stage of immediate Being follows from the science of consciousness itself. When the presentation of modern feminine consciousness in *Elements* is studied for its logical content, it becomes clear that Hegel writes about the consciousness of Beautiful Individuality. This produces contradictions within his account, for example, the presentation of modern feminine consciousness contradicts his stated intentions for the modern institution of marriage, because he clearly expressed an intent for there to be a genuine relationship between men and women based on the idea of marriage as a free and ethical act of the mutual surrender of personalities. Marriage is distinguished from immediate natural existence²²⁵ in that a true union or love relationship requires two beings equal in power and presumably with similarly-developed levels of consciousness.²²⁶ But the philosophical account of feminine consciousness in the *Philosophy of Right* does not show how women would be able to develop the disposition of their consciousness from ethical piety to where they would be able to commit to a model relationship based on equality and compatible with modern subjectivity. The example of the marriage relationship illustrates the importance of assessing the presentation of modern feminine consciousness for consistency with the conception of modern subjectivity, and with reference to the scientific logic. Otherwise, the exact nature of the inconsistency does not emerge fully into view.

The problem is that individuality is constituted from naturally-derived elements and these are not included in the life of Spirit. When the natural is taken only as a point of departure for the transition to Spirit, the individuality of the Beautiful Individual falls outside

Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel, (London: Heinemann, 1974), 143-169.

²²⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §168.

²²⁶ See: the Fragment on "Love", in Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T.M. Knox and Richard Kroner, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 304.

of the unity of Greek Spirit and is relegated to the level of contingency. Nature and the element of finitude present in both masculine and feminine aspects of consciousness are not grounded in Beautiful Individuality, and they fall outside this conception of unity as the merely inessential by-product. The problem becomes how to reconcile the element of natural individuality with the element of universality without *renouncing* natural individuality—this reconciliation is not accomplished in Greece or Rome.

Beautiful Individuality passed away with the collapse of the ethical Greek world. Its passing has the logical significance of the dialectical movement from immediate Being to the greater complexity of determinate Being. The analysis of the distinction between immediate and determinate Being is important, because it brings to light the disparities in masculine and feminine consciousness, fully in evidence in the theory of modern life, put down logical roots at the close of the ancient Greek world. Consciousness at the stage of immediate Being takes the standpoint of Ideality, while at the stage of determinate Being it takes that of Reality. Ideality consists in the proposition that finitude has no genuine Being, a proposition held true for the Ideal ethical world. As shown in previous chapters, the aesthetic form of the unity of Spirit and Nature characteristic of ancient Greek Spirit was constituted from the suppression of Nature and the element of finitude, because finitude was not taken to possess genuine Being and fell outside the definition of Ideal unity. By contrast, determinate Being gives an outline of the unity of the infinite and the finite; it also marks the point where the principle of personality comes into view and individuals first arrive at a consciousness of themselves as an abstract “I”. Determinate Being is defined as the simple and immediate unity of Being and Nothing that comes into existence when immediate Being sublates the difference with its opposite moment of non-Being or Nothing and acquires negation. This sublation of difference with

Non-Being or Nothing logically equates the negation of the negative, and in logic, this negation of the negative yields a positive. When Being acquires negation and determinacy through sublation of difference, it is drawn from Ideal unity into reality and existence. Reality is defined as Being that contains and is modified by the element of negation or *limit*.

Determinate Being is a unity of Being and Nothing, but not yet a self-determining unity, because it continues to be conditioned by external limits or qualities. However, qualities are not proper to things in themselves, they are an external measure used for maintaining distinctions and because qualities are limits, they are also negations. Furthermore, determinate Being identifies itself on the strength of its qualities or limitations, and in doing so it establishes an identity with negation. In logic, the identity of determinacy and negation constitutes infinity, and infinity is a positive. This positivity of determinate Being is significant because, up until now, reason as subjective judgement has been seen as a corruptive, and therefore negative, influence in the ancient world. But in determinate Being, reason has found its positivity. Determinate Being as the positivity of the subjective element marks the boundary between the lost ideality of the ethical Greek world, and the reality of the absolute power and authority of Imperial Rome.

The logical transition from immediate to determinate Being gives rise to a new mode of consciousness, appearing as the development from the Ideal subjectivity of the Beautiful Individual to the abstract legal personhood of the Roman citizen. Bound by community customs and laws, the Ideal subject of the ethical Greek world as an individual being lacked significance independent of membership in the community of ethical substance. This was because the natural element of finitude that is inseparable from individuality of human beings, was highly problematic for the ethical Greek world and was excluded from its definition of

spiritual life as the beautiful freedom of the ancient polis.

The conflict of Ideal subjectivity and individuality is mirrored in the ethical disposition of modern feminine consciousness because of its resemblance to the profile of ancient subjectivity. The Beautiful Individual did not recognize the element of universality in human individuality and cannot understand itself as included *qua* individual rather than *qua* citizen in the definition of spiritual life. It cannot become a person or develop a personality because the logical structure of its consciousness cannot support the principle of personality and its integral idea of unity for the finite and the infinite.

Hegel intended that Nature and its categories and distinctions, such as the element of finitude, would be reinstated in the dialectic in a development unfolding from the Christian religion through its central teaching about the reconciliation of God and the world. This reconciliation of God and the world appears against the historical background of the ancient Roman world in the event of the Incarnation. The excerpt of logic appropriate to the historical setting of early Christianity begins at determinate Being followed by the development of the realm of Essence. The content of subsequent history is the development of this principle, which distinguishes the ancient and modern worlds, but criticism has been levelled against Hegel that his exposition in logic of the Incarnation is flawed and contains incoherencies. The criticism is that the logic does not show that the natural element of finitude was recovered and reconciled with Spirit. The loss of the natural element of finitude began with its suppression in the aesthetic model of spiritual unity, until at the stage of Essence it seems to have fallen outside of the definition of Spirit altogether. The inability to fully come to terms with Nature and the element of finitude is a deficiency that shows itself at this stage, which happens to also be the stage which is on the threshold of modern consciousness. It imposes special penalties

on feminine consciousness, not because women are identical with Nature, but because historically women have exercised their assigned roles in closer proximity to the natural sphere. These historical roles are not compatible with the masculine ideal of personhood as transcendence of natural humanity and elevation to the spiritual realm. As a consequence, the development of feminine consciousness in Hegel is arrested. In Hegel's account the legitimacy of the claim that the truth of human nature given in the Christian idea of reconciliation is realized in the theory of modern ethical life.

Further, in order to comprehend the objective processes that have led to the present impasse one must understand the foundations of feminine consciousness in the logic of Greek Spirit. A study of the ancient world shows the individuality of ancient subjects was deficient, because it was "in general, an individuality determined by nature and therefore limited...." The unity of substance and subject that is the content of the Concept was present for Ideal subjects only as the subjectively-inward experience of knowing themselves to be free through contemplation of aesthetic works that visibly presented the idea of freedom. The freedom of the Beautiful Individual was dependent on individual ethical character and to a great extent, on the physical strength of the warrior. These dependencies introduce elements of contingency to freedom. They also introduce the risks associated with contingency:

It is now physical strength and what seems like the chance of fortune, that decide as to the existence of ethical life and spiritual necessity. Because the existence of the ethical life thus rests on physical strength and the chances of fortune, it is *eo ipso* settled that its overthrow has come.²²⁷

On account of this 'naturalness', this ethical nature is, in general, an individuality determined by nature, and therefore limited, and thus finds its dissolution in, and gives

²²⁷ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 277.

place to, another individuality.²²⁸

To sum up, modern feminine consciousness is depicted as preserving characteristics of a form of individuality determined by nature. The characteristics above must apply to our understanding of the logic and structure of modern feminine consciousness in Hegel. The ramifications of using Beautiful Individuality as a model for feminine consciousness include the suppositions that the individuality of modern women will be determined by Nature, that it will be limited as opposed to infinite, and that it is destined to be overtaken by a higher form of individuality. Modern women cannot become full persons, because their consciousness has its logical foundations in Greek Spirit, in which the principle of personality was not given its right. Finally, they cannot be said to have entered fully into existence, and reality as this condition belongs to the sphere of Essence. Men are able to become modern subjects because unlike women, they were successful in completing the transition from the ethical Greek polis to the Roman world; they were able to accomplish the feat of personality which is the origins of subjective freedom. The ancient Roman world was organized around the theme of Spirit advancing from the subjective inwardness of the ethical Greek world to the objective outwardness of the abstract universal state. The role of Rome as a world-historical civilization was to draw forth Being from the state of abstract indeterminacy and into the realm of abstract determinate existence and reality. The role of ancient Rome was to give reason a *positive* existence. The uniform solidarity of the ethical Greek community has dissolved into a “plurality of separate points”:

The substance comes forth and stands apart as a formal universality of all the component individuals, and no longer dwells within them as a living spirit; instead, the

²²⁸ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 277.

uniform solidarity of their individuality has burst into a plurality of separate points.²²⁹

This “plurality of separate points” acquires the status of a personhood whose authoritative base is vested in the realm of universality and is no longer dependent on the natural element of ethical character. The aspect of contingency characteristic of the presence of the natural element in ethical life is gone. Individuality no longer is determined by Nature. The authority of the state has conferred universality on the individual subject who has the status of legal person, but the legal person is exclusively a male because females retain aspects of the subjectivity of the Beautiful Individual, a subjectivity whose logical and structural features do not support personhood.

Critical studies of the execution of the logical movement from immediate to determinate Being have concluded that technical problems in the logic, as well as philosophical issues, contributed to the disparity in outcomes for the consciousness of modern men and women. It is helpful to revisit the logical sequence of moves. Immediate Being is a transition of Being and Nothing in Becoming that collapses into a simple unity, resulting in determinate Being or Being with negation. Determinate Being is a unity that sublates both moments of Being and Nothing. The sublation of Being and Nothing does not yield anything. The yield is a *nothing* which includes *being* within itself, and equally a *being* which includes *nothing*. Being has acquired negativity and determinacy through the sublation of both moments of Being and Nothing. Neither moment has gained ascendancy over the other. There is no reason why both should not acquire negation and determinacy, the prerequisites for existence and reality. The terms do not emulate the pattern seen in the phenomenological and

²²⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 277.

historical accounts where the transition of Nature and Spirit held the significance of the conquest of Nature by Spirit. Determinate Being is a Nothing that includes Being, and it is a Being that includes Nothing. If Becoming is a logical model for the process of the ethical world, then men and women as the natural agents for that dual process should emulate the logical model of Becoming in their enactment of their ethical obligations. Much like its two terms Being and Nothing, they should be equally well-positioned to accomplish the transition to the next higher level of consciousness. In the logic, determinate Being sublates the transition of Being and Nothing and includes its two terms within itself - - that is to say, it included Being and Nothing. The historical form of abstract personhood (corresponding to determinate Being) should include men and women within itself because men and women have the significance of two terms sublated within it, but instead, abstract personhood deviates from the methodology of the logic by including only the male. This is an example where the historical comprehension deviates from the unfolding of the pure logical Idea. The fault lies not only in Hegel's imperfect philosophical comprehension of events, but also in objective historical processes that did not always correspond with logic. He acknowledged these discrepancies:

It must be left to the history of philosophy to show more precisely the extent to which the unfolding of its content coincides with the dialectical unfolding of the pure logical Idea on the one hand, and deviates from it on the other; but we must at least point out here that the starting point of the Logic is the same as the starting point of the history of philosophy in the proper sense of the word.²³⁰

The logical movement from immediacy to determinate Being did not have to resolve in unequal outcomes for men and women. It is interesting to explore the premise that a logical

²³⁰ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, 138.

correspondence exists between these two sets of terms--masculinity and femininity on one hand, and on the other, the opposing terms Being and Nothing. While the correspondence of maleness and femaleness with Human and Divine Law is given in the texts, there is no similar statement of correspondence between maleness and femaleness and the moments of Being and Nothing. The texts do not confirm whether the Divine or Human Law is affiliated with either Being or Nothing, but it does not matter if there is no affiliation. The terms of a transition are equal to one another and furthermore, a transition is a determination of logic that lacks the requisite level of development to support the moment of difference--this absence of difference is the logical foundation for the thesis claim that substantive equality existed between men and women in the ethical world. It is pointless to attempt to establish, as so many have done, a substantive difference in Hegel between men and women on the basis of his remarks about the distinction between Human and Divine Law. Human and Divine Law were moments of a transition and like the moments of Being and Nothing, they could not support difference; inevitably they collapsed into one another, into sameness. This leads to the conclusion that ethical substance did not have the conditions to support the claim that the terms Being and Nothing were either masculine or feminine. If it were possible in Hegel to furnish proof that the ethical disposition of masculinity corresponds to the moment of Nothing, then certainly this would be a significant find. Nothing, as the negation of Being, is negativity--and if masculinity were identified with negativity, then this would suggest that masculinity possesses the negativity associated with reason, while femininity (the moment of Being) lacks negativity. It could be concluded that feminine consciousness is incapable of reason because it lacks negativity. Instead, the finding is that logic does not support the argument that reason is present in masculine consciousness while absent in the feminine.

Being and Nothing are independent and self-supporting states of immediate Being that do not possess either positivity or negativity and must be thought of separately. They do not have any *relation* to one another because the notion of *relation* has yet to appear at this stage of logic. Positivity or negativity are terms of the logical movement of relation that does not appear until later in the sphere of Essence. Neither Being nor Nothing possesses the negativity of reason because negativity does not come into the possession of either term without the presence of relation. When the transition of Becoming collapses, its terms Being and Nothing are sublated into the unity of determinate Being and the dialectic of Human and Divine Law is resolved. Maleness and femaleness lose their significance as terms of an opposition because that opposition has been resolved. The conclusion is, therefore, that no correspondence exists between maleness and femaleness and the new determinations of positivity or negativity that arrive on the scene with the emergence of determinate Being. Although Hegel believed women to be less capable than men of exercising reason, it would be inconsistent with the principles of his logic to speak about reason as an attribute of masculine or feminine consciousness as this cannot be supported in logic: "In becoming, being, as one with nothing, and nothing, as one with being, are only vanishing [terms], because of its contradiction becoming collapses inwardly, into the unity within which both are sublated; in this way its result is *being-there*." ²³¹

The logic of immediate Being does not impose the assignment of reason exclusively to either masculine or feminine consciousness. Neither is more favourably positioned with respect to achievement of the requisite tasks for self-consciousness, including the surmounting

²³¹ Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, §89.

of immediate Being. However, the presentation given in *Philosophy of Right* of the ethical disposition of maleness and femaleness records a disparity in outcomes. This suggests there is an inconsistency between the unfolding of the logical idea on one hand, and on the other hand, the concrete philosophy of history and phenomenology.

Granted, history deviates from logic, but the problem of feminine consciousness also has sources in the logic itself. Immediate Being has the logical structure of a transition of opposing terms. This structure is not biased against feminine consciousness, but there is a problem in the execution of logical movement from immediate to determinate Being. Immediate Being is negated in the course of this movement to a higher form of Spirit. No clear exposition is given for the reinstatement of the moment of immediacy in a later phase, although the methodology of the logic clearly requires the recovery of immediacy. This lack of a clear exposition constitutes an incoherency. It is relevant here to clarify the connection of Nature with immediate Being. Nature is the Idea posited in the immediate form of the *in-itself*. Nature as immediate Being is the world of the finite and temporal, and it includes the natural community of the family for which reason it has special relevance for women.

The reinstatement of Nature and finitude to the dialectic is not coherent in the logical exposition of the move from immediate to determinate Being. Its absence is a deficiency that will produce negative consequences for both sexes. However, women are especially disadvantaged because historically they have exercised a role in the natural ethical community of the family, which is within the sphere of particularity and contingency, where the potential for rational self-consciousness is not recognized.

The logical function of determinate Being is to develop the antithesis between the universal on one hand and the abstract state on the other. The antithesis culminates in the

transition of Being to Essence in preparation for the fuller reconciliation of state and individual that will be developed in the worldly and spiritual spheres. There does seem to be a connection between the reduction in the status of women and the family Hegel perceived to have happened in ancient Rome, and the logical structure of Essence. In the sphere of Being, the terms Being and Nothing could be thought by themselves because they were independent and self-supporting. But in the sphere of Essence, Being and Nothing acquire *relation* and has the new significance of positivity and negativity. The positive term implies the negative; the negative term implies the positive. When thought passes over from the one to the other, from positive to the negative, the one does not disappear as it did in immediate Being, because relationality is a determination of Being. In Being, the moment of difference is an external quantitative determination (quantity, quality, measure) in other words, difference was negativity. In Essence, the negative has been negated inwards, and it has become the *relation* of the something to its other. This negation of the negative is Essence and it is itself a determination of Being. Difficulty arises because the negativity of Essence tends to be apprehended only as an abstraction from determinacy, in which case the determinate content, which has been abstracted, necessarily falls outside. Hegel describes this determinate content as the “*caput mortuum*”²³² and it should be of concern here. *Caput mortuum* is a Latin term of alchemy signifying a worthless residual substance that remains after material extraction through an alchemical procedure such as distillation or sublimation. The association of the term *caput mortuum* with decline and entropy speaks to Hegel’s insight regarding the implications for Being of the negativity of Essence; namely, that immediate Being together

²³² Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. with Introduction and notes by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis:

with the world of Nature and finitude has fallen outside the dialectic.

The logical stage of determinate Being in the historical setting of the Roman world was characterized by the degradation of immediate Being to “something merely negative, to a *shine* [or *semblance*].”²³³ The degradation of immediate Being is related to the development of the abstract legal person, and to the acquisition by Roman citizens of the right to a private identity as persons. Increasingly they chose to exercise this right in the private sphere of the family, apart from the public sphere of the state. Women who exercised an historical role in the natural community of the family were displaced from the realm of freedom and objective Spirit in the state and restricted to the relative unfreedom of the private sphere. Here, life assumed an increasingly arbitrary nature. Social and family roles were no longer ruled by ethical principles of the community but by the new principle of *patria potestas*, by force. The Roman *paterfamilias* exercised an authority over family members not unlike that of the state over its subjects and often as ruthless. *Philosophy of History* contains references to the harshness of Roman family life and relations.²³⁴ Hegel concluded Roman family life had undergone a moral decay. He interpreted this as a symptom of the dialectical movement from immediate to determinate Being in which the natural element is reduced to the status of an inessential by-product of abstract reflection. He was unable thereafter to sufficiently demonstrate that the conflict of Nature and Spirit was resolved in a way that reconciled the

Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), note 45 (§ 44)

²³³ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, §112, 175.

²³⁴ See: Chapter One “Elements of Roman Spirit” of Section 1, “Rome to the Time of the Second Punic War” in Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 283-295. Not all elements of the story are false but it is dubious history. According to Roman historian Richard Saller, the evolution of the Roman family brought greater freedom and independence for women including limited property rights, along with increasing divorce, sexual promiscuity and adultery. See: Richard Saller, “Family Values in Ancient Rome” [article on-line] (Chicago: The University of Chicago Digital Collections - accessed 15 August 2006), available from <http://www.fathom.lib.uchicago.edu> , Internet.

natural element with Spirit.

In the systematic *Logic*, the source for the exclusion of feminine consciousness from the conception of modern subjectivity lies in an incoherent execution of the notion of *sublation* in the movement from immediate to determinate Being. Hegel negated, but did not adequately preserve, the moment of immediacy. The resolution of the dialectic at the later stage of Essence was inconclusive due to incoherencies in the previous account of how renunciation was followed by restoration of the moment of immediacy. The analysis of this phase of the dialectic is complicated by inconsistencies in the way the dialectical conflict is identified in the references; for example, it is sometimes addressed in terms of the *transition* of Nature to Spirit while at other times it is spoken of as the *transformation* of Nature to Spirit and then again, it reads as the *departure* from Nature for Spirit, while in the treatment of the mythology of Greek religion, the dialectic is presented beneath the theme of *a conquest* of Nature by Spirit. These variations make it difficult to determine the precise significance of the dialectical conflict and they lead to a confusion of possibilities and interpretations. It is not always clear whether Nature is undergoing a transition to the spiritual realm in which it is included, or whether Spirit is conquering Nature or detaching itself from Nature altogether. These expressions of the conflict have different ramifications. Incoherencies in the dialectic of Nature and Spirit gives rise to inconsistencies in concrete philosophy, and these become stumbling blocks along the path to realization of Hegel's intentions for the fulfilment of the human vocation for freedom.

According to Hegel, the complete reconciliation of the dialectic of Nature and Spirit is implicit in the Christian idea of reconciliation, but Christian doctrine was corrupted long before it could be realised in the secular world. Hegel understood that the mission of Spirit in

the post-Reformation would be the realisation of the principle of freedom inherent in Christian religion, and he understood this realization would be the basis of the secular state and not on the basis of the church. The Christian idea of reconciliation is the all-pervasive structure of the theory of modern ethical life in *Philosophy of Right*.

The presentation of feminine consciousness in Hegel cannot support the requirements for reconciliation with Spirit in the form of reconciliation that is given in the theory of modern ethical life in *Philosophy of Right*. The logical structure of the feminine is not sufficiently developed beyond the stage of consciousness as ethical substance. This presentation should be reconsidered to render the explicit development of feminine consciousness beyond the ethical disposition of Beautiful Individuality, and then to the stage of participation in the idea of spiritual reconciliation that is central to modern ethical life. Modern feminine consciousness in Hegel's presentation is equipped with a logical structure unsuitable for participation in the universal vocation of humanity for rational freedom that is actualised in the state.²³⁵ This is an outcome that follows logically and predictably from his reliance on Hellenistic attitudes about the conflict of Nature and Spirit, but is not in keeping with his deepest intentions for humanity.

²³⁵ The political disposition of the modern individual is based on trust that develops into the educational insight that freedom lies in the knowledge that individual interests and ends are preserved in the ends of the state and in its relation to individuals. A rational consciousness is a requirement for freedom. See Hegel, *Elements*, (§ 268), 288-289.

7. THE TRANSITION FROM THE GREEK TO THE ROMAN WORLD

The difference between masculine and feminine consciousness acquired its logical dimension in the course of the transition of world-historical Spirit from the Greek to the Roman world. This transition may be understood in multiple ways and on different levels; it may be understood by way of a comparison of the principles of *character* and *personality*, or by way of a comparison of Beautiful Individuality and abstract legal personhood. In logic, it has been understood in terms of the comparison of immediate Being with determinate Being and Essence. Feminine consciousness is identified with the principle of character, with Beautiful Individuality and immediate Being, while masculinity is identified with the principle of personality, with determinate Being and with abstract legal personhood. This chapter explores both how and why the transition from the Greek to the Roman world-historical realms was integral to the development of logical distinctions and also considers the disparities between masculine and feminine consciousness.

Greek Spirit is a development of the dialectic that takes place from the side of objective Spirit and as such, it is a one-sided development. However, it is inherent in the nature of Spirit for both moments of objectivity and subjectivity to be present in this development, and Greek Spirit, therefore, must be understood from both standpoints of objectivity and subjectivity. From the standpoint of objectivity, Greek Spirit appears as the ethical order of the polis, and from subjectivity, it appears as the beautiful ethical individuality of the ancient subject. The crux of the matter is, Greek Spirit as a development from the side of objectivity does not recognize the validity of the principle of individuality in its own right. Instead, the ancient Greek subject has to assume the character of objective Spirit in order to participate in the unity

of ethical substance. The legitimacy for the subject has its source not in any of its own merits, but in its ability as an ethical being to assume the character of objective Spirit, known as Beautiful Individuality, through fidelity to customs and law.

Ancient subjectivity reflects Greek Spirit through the principle of character. The term *character* is used in the sense of its meaning in the setting of the ancient world, where it may be defined as ethical substance appearing in the external mode of an individual being. Individual ethical beings, male or female, acquired significance as the living form of ethical substance, and not in their own right as individuals. Spirit as ethical substance is dependent for its existence on individuals whose actions in conformity with its laws and customs continually reproduce and sustain Spirit as the ethical order of the Greek polis. These individuals embody the character of objective Spirit which is described by Hegel as a beautiful ethical individuality. This character manifests the Ideal by uniting substance and subject in the living form of the individual human being. While the character of ethical substance is dependent for its preservation on individual ethical actions, ethical actions in turn are dependent on Nature, because Nature endows individuals with the qualities as well as the limitations that determine their capacity for ethical action. Character is, therefore, not autonomous of the natural element of humanity.

Ethical substance represents the unity of substance and subject defined as immediacy. This definition reached the summit of perfection in the figure of the Beautiful Individual and dissolved afterwards amidst the collapse followed by the subjugation of the Greek world to the forces of Roman Empire. Spirit as beautiful ethical individuality of the Greek polis was broken apart when the element of reflection begins to assert itself. It was overtaken by the principle of abstract universality that invested its subjects with the universal significance of

legal persons who have substance of their own. This higher stage of formal and abstract individuality coincides with the historical setting of ancient Rome and corresponds to the determination of *Dasein* or determinate Being. 236

The Ethical Order of the Polis

From the standpoint of objectivity, Greek Spirit appears as the ethical order of the polis and is constructed on the basis of ethical distinctions reflected in social and institutional arrangements and practices. Hegel diagnosed within the community of the polis a conflict of opposing impulses. On one hand, there is Human Law and the sphere of self-conscious action in the community and, on the other, Divine Law, the sphere of 'immediate or directly-existent substance' and the unconscious substance of the family. It is a relevant question whether Hegel may have carried this distinction too far and even absolutized it, unnecessarily. From the logical standpoint, the family and the polis represent only the abstract *indeterminate* terms of a transition and between them the moment of difference fails to stabilize because it cannot be supported without the presence of the element of determinacy and the moment of reciprocity, which are not present at the stage of Being. One has to avoid thinking about

²³⁶ The logical structure of Determinate Being, although not explicitly identified as such, surely belongs to the world of ancient Rome. When Hegel wrote his first major work, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), he already had in mind the central ideas that would be developed later in the *Logic* (1812-14) and it is reasonable to draw correspondences between the shapes of historical Spirit and logical forms. A good case study for these correspondences may be found in Chapter Six "Spirit" of *Phenomenology* (Baillie) at the conclusion of the section, "Guilt and Destiny." Hegel's concluding remarks pertain to the dissolution of the ethical nation of ancient Greece followed by the passage to the condition of right and legal status in Rome. There are striking parallels with the discussion in Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Logic* about the transition of Being and Nothing and its collapse into the stable unity of determinate Being. In *Phenomenology*, Determinateness is said to have been given a *positive* existence in the new form of Roman individuality. This existence is described as a limitation, "...but at the same time is the negative element in general and the self of individuality." (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 498-499.) In Section A of Chapter 2 of the *Logic* (Miller, 109), determinate Being is described similarly as *negatively* determined against an other but also reflected in to itself and posited as *something*. The new individuality that he is speaking about in *Phenomenology* seems to have the logical structure of determinate Being.

ethical laws and institutions as if they were determinate forms, in Hegel's sense. Neither the family nor the polis has achieved actuality and, at this stage, they are equally indeterminate terms of a transition. Clarity of ethical and institutional distinction between the family and the polis would be a condition for any movement to exclude Divine Law and the family from actuality. Once that distinction becomes unclear - as it must, given the logical content of the family and polis is undeveloped at the stage of a transition - it becomes impossible to construct an ethical process on the foundations of a theory of coincidence of ethical powers with institutional boundaries. The distinction between ethical powers is not sufficiently well - developed to support the succinctly-defined institutional boundaries of family and polis that he proposes in his analysis of ethical substance. Hegel cannot establish that Human Law is any more actual than is Divine Law and he cannot absolutize the difference between the two laws without violating the precepts of his own system of logic as they pertain to the mechanics of the transitional movement - but he did try to do this.

In fact, Divine Law permeated every aspect of the family and polis while the family or more properly, the *oikos* was in every aspect defined and regulated by Human Law.²³⁷ It is difficult to imagine the polis as a cleavage of ethical powers. A synopsis of the life of the Athenian citizen by the classicist W.K. Lacey illustrates there was a blending of institutional roles and loyalties characteristic of every stage of life:

Throughout his life an Athenian was essentially a part of his *oikos*; as a baby his birth had to be accepted by the *kyrios* of his *oikos* (his father) and registered by the *phrateres* of the phratry to which his *oikos* belonged - the city was not

²³⁷See: W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece: Aspects of Greek and Roman Life*, ed. H.H. Scullard (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1984). This is the first coherent study of the neglected subject of women and the family in Greek history. The family in the archaic and classical ages of Greece enjoyed a unique relationship of closeness and complexity the likes of which have not been seen since. The polis was, "no more and no less than the sum total of its families". The study of this period in the history of the Greek family represents an opportunity to review the origins of the distinction of family and political life, one that has had negative implications for women.

interested in him directly until he was ready to be trained to serve it in war; as a man he married usually at an age at which his father was ready to retire from responsibility for the *oikos*, and his *phrateres* took note of his marriage, so that his son in turn would be accepted as a member of the *oikos*; when he retired in his turn his *oikos* continued to support him under its new *kyrios*, his son. An Athenian woman was equally a part of her *oikos* until she married, at which time she removed into her husband's *oikos* taking with her a portion out of the possessions of her own *oikos*. . . . All the Athenian law was framed with this membership of the *oikos* in view; a man's *oikos* provided both his place in the citizen body and what measure of social security there was, and this helps to account for that passionate determination to defend the *oikoi* alike against foreigners and against grasping individual Athenians which is characteristic of the democratic period.²³⁸

The résumé of Athenian life given by W.K. Lacey is one example among the contemporary accounts that cannot be reconciled with the construction of ancient Greek life, based on an absolutization of ethical distinctions. This tendency in Hegel to overstate the distinction is brought to the foreground in his analysis of the ancient Greek family, with this sentence about the brother-sister relationship. The institutional bounds of family and community are presented as if they coincide with the ethical bounds of Human and Divine Law:

The brother leaves this immediate, rudimentary, and therefore, strictly speaking, negative ethical life of the family, in order to acquire and produce the concrete ethical order which is conscious of itself...He passes from the divine law, within whose realm he lived, over to the human law.²³⁹

Beyond dispute, the presence of conflicting imperatives of Human and Divine Law is an authentic insight into the nature of ancient life. The diagnosis of this conflict is one of the most illuminating insights to be found in the lectures on Greek Spirit in *The Philosophy of History*. But it seems unlikely the Athenian citizens experienced the passage from Divine to

²³⁸ Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece*, 118.

²³⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 479.

Human Law in quite the linear fashion suggested in this passage, because these two ethical imperatives were confounded in almost every aspect of ancient life. Hegel disregarded that men and not women were the uncontested masters of the *oikos* and they must have lived a portion of their adult lives preoccupied with matters belonging to the realm of Divine Law while men also had special obligations to perform service to the state, including the primary obligation of military service. Hegel depicted the ethical world as if pervaded throughout by an ethical dualism of the pure realms of Human and Divine Law. The opposed realms of Divine Law and Human Law are compelled to coincide with institutional boundaries and gender roles; women and the family align with the Divine Law while men and the political institutions of the polis with the Human Law. Modern accounts have modified this depiction somewhat as it would seem the dualism did not so much bifurcate the ethical world into spheres as it cross-cut every area of ancient life. It is quite possible to reconceive the structure of the ethical world in such a way that both the family and the polis are included in the progress of Spirit – without undermining the integrity of Hegel’s fundamental insight into the conflicting impulses operating in the lives of ancient subjects. A structural reconceptualisation of the ancient world is needed to avoid the consequences that followed from the absolutization of ethical distinctions and their realms in ancient Greece and that led to the exclusion of the family and women from reason and history. This was noted in the introductory remarks to *Philosophy of History*:

The only consistent and worthy method which philosophical investigation can adopt, is to take up History where Rationality begins to manifest itself in the actual conduct of the World’s affairs (not where it is merely an undeveloped potentiality) – where a condition of things is present in which it realizes itself in consciousness, will and action. ..The Family therefore, is excluded from that process of development in which

History takes its rise.²⁴⁰

The episode of world-historical Spirit which is most influential for the standing of women within modern subjectivity would be the episode of transition from the Greek city-state to the Roman Empire. Feminine consciousness does not make the crucial transition from Becoming to Determinate Being and falls outside the definition of the unity of substance and dialectic given at this stage of the dialectic. In her book, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, Hutchings commented about Hegel's treatment of the Antigone story and about the critical role of the transition to Rome in removing women from reason and history:

Hegel's argument raises issues for feminist readers both because of its identification of women with family duties and because the transition to Rome which follows this passage appears to be one in which women's work is obliterated or historically transcended. (Hegel, 1977: 289-294). As with the master/slave dialectic it appears that women lack historical agency on Hegel's account.²⁴¹

It is important to understand the doctrine of Being and how its movements culminate in *Dasein*. The Greek world is the historical setting for the logic of Becoming which is a determination of Being. The last lines in the passage below anticipate the finding that Becoming appears on the surface to be a harmonious accord, it is inherently conflicted:

Accordingly this kingdom is truly harmonious; like a lovely but ephemeral and quickly passing flower the Greek world is a most serene but inherently unstable structure in that it is destined to forfeit its purity under the influence of reflection, and since the unity between its two principles is merely an immediate one it constitutes the greatest of contradictions within itself...The ethical life of Greece will therefore be an unstable one which works towards its own dissolution; and the reflection of its extremes within themselves must bring about the downfall of the entire realm.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 59.

²⁴¹ Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, 47.

²⁴² See Appendix 2, "The Phases of World History" in Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 202.

For comparison, the text of Hegel's 1822/23 lectures reads in German as follows:

Reich und Staat sind hier verschieden; denn das griechische Wesen war im Anfang nicht ein Staat; sondern die Menge der Staaten ist hier das Charakteristische. Die ist das Reich der schönen Freiheit. Das Prinzip dieser Gestalt ist die unbefangene sittliche Einheit, aber als individuelle Persönlichkeit. Der einzelne fühlt sich frei als individuelle Einheit mit der allgemeinen Substanz. Es ist so das Reich der Schönheit, das heiterste, anmutigste Reich, aber darum auch das schlechthin vergängliche, die schnell hinsinkende Blüte, die in sich unruhigste Gestalt, in dem sie selbst durch die Reflexion ihre Gediegenheit verkehren muß. Denn die entgegengesetzten Prinzipien sind vereinigt in der Schönheit, und das Prinzip der individuellen Freiheit ist gerade der Gegensatz gegen die unbefangene Sittlichkeit. Daher ist hier die stete Unruhe. Die Reflexion der Persönlichkeit muß durch die Macht, welche die Subjektivität gegen die unbefangene Allgemeinheit ausübt, die Unmittelbarkeit zum Gedachten, zur Allgemeinheit erheben.²⁴³

In these passages, the description of the beautiful freedom of the Greek polis evokes all the elements of the logical determination of Being as Becoming - there is harmony alongside inherent conflict and instability, there is ephemerality, the absence of reflection, and lastly, there is dissolution. The similarity of the Greek polis and Becoming is not only coincidental because in Hegel, there is a synchronicity in the appearance of logical determinations and world-historical spiritual principles. Becoming is the logical underlay to the ethical Greek world and like the ancient polis, equally short-lived. Hegel remarked on the Golden Age of the Greek polis as an ephemeral phenomenon that in his estimation, lasted a bare sixty years from the Median to the Peloponnesian Wars (B.C.E. 492- 431).²⁴⁴ The logical movement of Becoming is similarly transient. In the Greek polis, the immediate unity of substance and subject in the beautiful self is as one-sided as the unity of Being and Nothing in Becoming, while it is the inherent instability of both unities which explains the transient

²⁴³ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte Berlin 1822/23*, Nachschriften von v. Griesheim, Hotho und v. Kehler, hrsg. von Ilting, Brehmer und Seelman, *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte* Band 12 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996), 115.

nature of their logical and historical features. The phenomenology of ethical substance as an immediate unity of Human and Divine Law solidifies this linkage of the logic of Becoming and the historical Greek world.

Hegel's *Science of Logic* aspires to arrive at a Concept of the true universal and infinite. The fully-developed science of logic realises the Concept which is truly universal and infinite, defined as that which finds itself at home with itself in its antithesis. The Concept begins its development with the union of Being and Nothing, which pervades all living things and is the truth of all that exists. It is not difficult to demonstrate this unity of being and nothing in every example, in *every* actual thing or thought.

Since the unity of being and nothing as the primary truth now forms once and for all the basis and element of all that follows, besides becoming itself, all further logical determinations: determinate being, quality, and generally all philosophical Notions, are examples of this unity.²⁴⁵

The objective logic is an exposition of the development of this unity to where it is no longer grasped in terms of Being and Nothing, but in terms of the more complex determinations: Being and Essence [the subjective logic], Being and Otherness, and positive and negative. This marks the transition to the subjective logic of the Concept.

The movement of the Greek world is an attempt to unite universal substance with individuality in the form of an ethical substance giving rise to subjectivity in the form of the Beautiful Individual, who lives life untroubled by the experience of estrangement or opposition between the self and the social order. The Beautiful Individual reflects the character of objective Spirit and enjoys the freedom of life, which for all outward appearances,

²⁴⁴ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 265. By comparison, the principle of Roman Spirit

²⁴⁵ Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, 84.

was lived in seamless unity with the community of ethical substance. The superficiality of this harmony comes to light through a continuation of the analogy of historical material and logical content. Becoming is only viable as a determination if it preserves the difference between its dual moments of Being and Nothing, but it was unable to support the expression of difference; Being and Nothing were folded into sameness and together with Becoming, they vanished. Likewise, the principle of difference could not find expression in the ancient Greek polis and was not tolerated. Historically, difference is represented as individuality, and just as the moment of difference vanished into the sameness of Being and Nothing in Becoming, so too the principle of individuality appears fleetingly in the polis, only to be reabsorbed into the social whole. The reconciliation of individuality to unity with the whole in the medium of rational consciousness is unknown at this stage of historical Spirit. Thus, difference is abhorred because it is seen to threaten the harmonious order with destruction. The ethical world depended on the ability of the character of the Beautiful Individual for its survival; the Beautiful Individual is charged with sustaining the oppositions and distinctions of the ancient polis in unity through ethical actions. However, in the absence of the principle of mediation, the Beautiful Individual is destroyed by the conflicts pervasive in the ancient world, resulting in the downfall and disappearance of the ethical order. Antigone did not discover the rational principle needed to mediate the dualism of Human and Divine Law within herself, and she was destroyed.

Becoming is destroyed by the opposition of the double determinations Being-in-nothing and Nothing-in-Being. Once again, its destruction does not end in nothingness, but generates a new category that takes up its predecessor's contradictions and resolves these into the more complex and developed form of the unity of Being and Nothing. This new

determination is determinate Being or *Dasein*.

This is a summary of the doctrine of Being and its movements culminating in determinate Being or *Dasein*. The development of determinate Being is as follows: abstract Being inevitably transitions to its opposite of non-Being or Nothing. The moment of otherness appears fleetingly in the course of the transition and is then sublated in the sameness of Being and Nothing.

The exposition of the logic of the transition is significant to the thesis for two purposes. To begin with, the absence of *relation* is significant. The terms of a transition pass one another by but have no relation with one another, because in the precise vocabulary of the logic, the term *relation* describes a methodology of dialectical movement not found until the higher stage of Spirit in the Roman era. In the Greek world, the actions of the beautiful ethical individual aim towards unity with the community of ethical substance rather than to relations with other individuals. As an example, the account of the ethical life of the ancient family in *Phenomenology of Mind* takes into account that the actions of the ancient Greek wife were not oriented towards a relationship with the husband as a particular individual, but to the perfection of her assigned ethical role:

In a household of the ethical kind, a woman's relationships are not based on a reference to this particular husband, this particular child, but to a husband, to children *in general*, - not to feeling, but to the universal.²⁴⁶

The point is that the beautiful ethical individuals remain at the level of abstract moments in a transition of ethical powers. They have no determinate content because they do not yet possess the negativity of reason, which is an essential condition for subjective reflection. The

²⁴⁶ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 476.

Beautiful Individuals were not determinate Beings, because they had not acquired the element of determinacy; they did not have genuine relations with one another and instead, their actions were oriented to the practise of a customary morality that sustained them in unity with the substantial community. Such was the form of individuality that appeared in the historical setting of the Greek polis. The study of its appropriate logical content in the chapter has shown that such a form of individuality cannot be reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity without change and development; otherwise, there would be a logical inconsistency. This finding confirms the thesis that the conception of modern subjectivity in Hegel must be reconceived in a way to permit development of the feminine to the stage of free and self-determining Spirit. The way to begin this is to recognize that for Hegel, the feminine is not a transhistorical phenomenon, nor does it exist outside the imperatives of the system of philosophy. Instead, the thesis has shown that the feminine has definite logical and historical attributes and these belong to a form of individuality that appeared in the ancient world. Now that we understand the logical structure, we can think in more specific terms about the precise nature of the contradiction of the feminine with modernity, for it is only when we have understood this contradiction, we will be able to think what might be the process for reconciliation with modern subjectivity. When the problem has been resolved in this logical and systematic way, we will recover the sense of the feminine as that which has been integral all the while, and indeed, necessary, to the system of Hegelian philosophy.

The logical movement of transition also has significance to the thesis, because it contains the logic underlying the principle of the substantive equality of the sexes, a substantive equality that was overturned after the collapse of the polis. Furthermore, the process of Greek Spirit is constituted from the transitional movement. Thus far, there is no

adequate exposition in the literature of how the logical and historical processes may have advantaged one sex in making the advance from the condition of immediate individuality to the higher stage of determinate Being. This chapter has shown beyond dispute that the logical structure underlying the presentation of feminine consciousness is compatible with the principle of ethical substance but not with more highly developed stages of individuality. The rule of the ethical Greek world was to assign masculinity and femininity to the power of Human and Divine Law, respectively. Thereafter, subjects of the ethical world were like moments in the transition of ethical powers that was the process of Greek Spirit. Ethical opposition created conflicts in the lives of individuals in the community, however reconciliation remained elusive. Each side holds steadfastly to the standpoint of its ethical law, and “sees right only on its own side and wrong on the other” while viewing the conflict as an “unfortunate collision of duty with reality”. Each resorts to force to try and subdue the reality opposed to its law. Neither side possesses the negativity of reason, nor has acquired the reflective capacity to resolve the opposition of ethical powers by any means other than force. The ethical process of Human and Divine Law is as unstable a transition as Becoming, and its inevitable collapse is followed by the mutual destruction of its opposing terms. The analysis of this excerpt of the logic of Spirit results in the key finding that the logic does not support the turn of events given in the *Phenomenology*, where one side of the process of ethical powers acquires the negativity of reason and advances beyond the stage of immediate individuality to become a determinate Being.

Essence and the Roman World

When the inherently unstable immediate unity of Being and Nothing in Becoming

collapses, it prepares the ground for dialectical progress to the stage of Essence and determinate Being. However, Spirit in the previous stage of an immediate unity is not lost entirely in the collapse of Becoming, because dialectical methodology requires the reinstatement of its moments through the movement of sublation. Therefore, what is recuperated in sublation is not the original moment of immediate unity that appears as beautiful freedom of the ethical world, but immediacy taken up in reflection.

Essence, the second of three subdivisions of the *Logic*, comes about when Immediacy or Being is abstracted through the negative activity of reflection, and then is once again reinstated as the ground of determinate Being (*Dasein*) and existence. The ancient Roman world is the historical setting for the realm of Essence. The movement of Essence is to negate Being and then give itself its determinate Being. Essence passes through a stage where it is able to separate finitude from the essence of finitude, from the truth of finitude. While this occurs,, Being is separated from Essence and reduced in status, *resulting* in the negative activity of Essence—to a shine:

Being has not vanished; but, in the first place, essence as simple relation to itself is being ; while on the other hand, being, according to its one-sided determination of being *something-immediate*, is *degraded* to something merely negative, to a *shine* [or *semblance*]. - As a result, essence is being as *shining* within itself.²⁴⁷

This reduction in status seems to equate the *degradation* of Being identified by Hegel as the underlay to the debasement of Nature and family life in the Roman world. Essence unites reflection with the essential content of Being, in other words the *truth* of Being, and in this way Essence is a configuration of the Concept. In contrast, the determinate content of Essence is not Being that is *in and for itself*. Instead, it is Being that is posited, because the

²⁴⁷ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, 175.

unity is obtained in an external manner where the determinate content of Being was nullified through the negativity of reflection. The definition of the Concept as Essence carries certain risks.

But when the Absolute is determined as essence, the negativity is often taken only in the sense of an abstraction from all determinate predicates. In that case the negative activity, the abstracting, falls outside essence, and consequently essence is taken only as a result, *without this premise that belongs to it*; it is the *caput mortuum* of abstraction.²⁴⁸

Essence is a higher definition of the Concept, but as a definition it carries the potential to be taken in a way that does an injustice to its determinate predicates. This seems to be what actually happened in the historical dimension, and it seems to be the logical rationale for Hegel's remarks regarding the debasement of family life and ethical relations in ancient Rome.

The logic of Essence began when the moment of immediate unity was abstracted from the dialectic, lost immediacy, and was then preserved as a result of mediation. Scholarly criticism has concluded that the moment of immediacy has not been recovered and properly reinstated and has fallen outside of the dialectic. The temptation is to apprehend Essence apart from its determinate predicates, including the element of finitude and natural consciousness. As is clear from the passage above, these determinate predicates are premises that belong to Essence, but when Essence is taken as a result, its premises are permitted to fall outside - this is what has happened here. The burden of consequences falls disproportionately on the feminine aspect of Spirit. Historically, feminine consciousness has exercised a role in the sphere supportive of the determinate predicates of personhood, including finitude and the natural life cycle of humanity, and it was disadvantaged when these elements become marginal to the abstract universal principle of Spirit in the Roman era.

The execution of this particular excerpt from the science of logic has been recognized in the literature as problematic, notably, from the standpoint of Christian theology.²⁴⁹ From the standpoint of methodology, the logic does not seem to be consistent, but it does seem to capture something authentic about the processes at work in historical content. The rise of abstract universality and the condition of right and legal personhood accompanies a debasement of the determining predicates of Essence, and these predicates include the natural dimension of existence and the elements of finitude and mortality. The vitality of individual difference which is given by the natural element of humanity is absorbed into the abstract and universal concept of personality and lost from view. This definition of Spirit as Essence or the posited Concept relegates feminine consciousness to a position of marginal relevance, because its historical experience is involved with those same determinate predicates, including the natural element of humanity and the family, that were overshadowed by the negative activity of abstraction.

Christianity and the Reconciliation of the World

The resolution to the logical problem of the ancient world was given in Christian doctrine and is available elsewhere in Hegel's writings in a general way:

This is because all differentiation, all finitude, though it is a transitory moment, is a moment of the process of the divine nature, which it develops, and hence it [is] grounded within the divine nature itself.²⁵⁰

In the systematic presentation of the problem and its solution, he does not seem able to translate those deeper intentions for humanity into the logic and the social and political theory

²⁴⁸ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, 175.

²⁴⁹ See Chapter Four "Incarnational Immediacy of Trinitarian Reconciliation" in Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim*

²⁵⁰ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol III, *The Consummate Religion*, Peter Hodgson,

of modern ethical life in a way that includes men and women.

The purpose of the Roman world was to complete the transition from the immediate individuality of the ethical Greek world to a more complex spiritual individuality, conditional on the understanding that Spirit has entered into a fully natural and finite human existence. This transition was neither revealed adequately in the aesthetic imagination of Greek Spirit nor in the universal sphere of the Roman state and abstract person, but it was revealed in the religion of Christianity, specifically in the doctrine of Incarnation. One accomplishment of the Roman world was bringing the Christian principle of the unity of divine and human natures into view, which has since become the principle of modern times. The opposition of nature and Spirit has been resolved in the sphere of modern religion. However, a discrepancy lies between the exposition of modern spirituality given in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, and the realization of modern spiritual individuality in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel interprets the Christian revelation through the lens of Hellenism, and his course of thought on the subject may be discerned from the following passage:

It must further be observed, that *in* this truth, the relation of man to this truth is also posited. For Spirit makes itself its own [polar] opposite – and is the return from this opposite into itself. Comprehended in pure ideality, that antithetic form of Spirit is the Son of God; reduced to limited and particular conceptions, it is the World-Nature and Finite Spirit: **Finite Spirit itself therefore is posited as a constituent element [Moment] in the Divine Being** [emphasis added]. Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed – that the unity of Man with God is posited in the Christian religion...

The crucial turn of thought comes with the next sentence:

But this unity must not be superficially conceived, as if God were only Man, and Man, without further condition, was God. Man, on the contrary, is God only in so far as he annuls the merely natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he

himself is a constituent [Moment] of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: for the Natural is the Unspiritual. In this Idea of God, then, is to be found the *Reconciliation* that heals the pain and inward suffering of man.²⁵¹

In this passage, Hegel seems to interpret the theme of a reconciliation of the divine and human nature in a way that requires the *annulment* of natural being. If indeed this is correct, then this interpretation is more reminiscent of the Hellenistic ideal of the Beautiful Individual than Christian Trinitarian doctrine. As such, it runs counters to the main dialectical movement that is directed to *sublating* the contradiction of Nature and Spirit in Greek Spirit. The question of whether this sublation is successful is important in relation to feminine consciousness. To ensure the correct interpretation, the German text has been consulted and it is reproduced below for comparison:

...Weiter ist nun zu bemerken, daß in dieser Wahrheit die Beziehung des Menschen auf diese Wahrheit selbst gesetzt ist. Denn der Geist stellt sich als sein Anderes sich gegenüber und ist aus diesem Unterschiede Rückkehr in sich selbst. Das Andere in der reinen Idee aufgefaßt ist der Sohn Gottes, aber dies Andere in seiner Besonderung ist die Welt, die Natur und der endliche Geist ist somit selbst als ein Moment Gottes gesetzt. So ist der Mensch also selbst in dem begriffe Gottes enthalten, und dies Enthaltensein kann so ausgedrückt werden, daß die Einheit des menschen und Gottes in der christlichen Religion gesetzt sei. Diese Einheit darf nicht flach aufgefaßt werden, als ob Gott nur mensch und der Mensch ebenso Gott sei, sondern der Mensch ist nur insofern Gott, als er die Natürlichkeit und Endlichkeit seines Geistes aufhebt und sich zu Gott erhebt. Für den Menschen nämlich, der der Wahrheit teilhaftig ist und das Weiß, daß er selbst Moment der göttlichen Idee ist, ist zugleich das Aufgeben seiner Natürlichkeit gesetzt, denn das Natürliche ist das Unfreie und Ungeistige. In dieser Idee Gottes liegt nun auch die *Versöhnung* des Schmerzes und des Unglücks des Menschen in sich.²⁵²

Hegel holds that the manifestation of God in the flesh was a temporary event, an event that passed away, and after its passage the annulment of nature and finitude may be presumed to resume its

²⁵¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 324.

²⁵² Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, hrsg. von Eva Moldhauer und Karl Markus

course. The unity of God and humanity has to appear for sensuous consciousness, yet sensuous existence is only a transitional phase of Spirit:

Moreover the sensuous existence in which Spirit is embodied is only a transitional phase. Christ dies; only as dead, is he exalted to heaven and sits at the right hand of God; only thus is he Spirit.²⁵³

Christian doctrine holds that Spirit is manifested in sensuous existence and that this manifestation is an eternal truth and not only a temporary phase of Spirit. Therefore, the interpretation in which this manifestation is only a transitional phase is contradictory to the teaching that Christ was resurrected as a human being and bodily ascended to heaven. The theology of the Incarnation as a unity of both divine and human natures receives an interpretation in Hegel in which distortions are present; these reflect the conflicted standpoint of the Greek world towards the dialectic of Nature and Spirit in which unity is achieved only when Nature undergoes a process of transformation from the natural to the spiritual, in the course of which the natural element is extinguished. That interpretation is not an adequate basis for a subsequent exposition of how the conflict of Nature and Spirit would be fully overcome in the principle of modern times.

The conception of modern subjectivity, as understood by Hegel, has inherited the impulse to suppress Nature and finitude from the ancient world. This impulse survives because the underlying conflict of Nature and Spirit, definitive of Spirit at the stage of ethical substance, has not been satisfactorily resolved in the logic of the Roman world. The logic of Rome has been described as “broken.” This brokenness is explicit in Hegel’s exposition of the unity of Divine and human nature in Christian religion. Once again, there is a lapse to the

Michel. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 392.

earlier pre-Christian view that the human being becomes spiritual only by annulling “the merely Natural and Limited.” This position towards natural being is reminiscent of that taken by consciousness at the stage of Beautiful Individuality. This implies that the model of free and infinite subjectivity was developed on the strength of an incomplete *philosophical* understanding of the *theological* basis for the principle of modern times, and as a consequence, that model may not be sufficiently developed to constitute a genuine totality that includes the unity of Spirit and Nature.

Conclusion

A free and self-determining modern subjectivity is able to *think* the unity of Nature and Spirit in a way that no longer needs the unity to be visible as an aesthetic production. It is a distortion when such freedom is taken to mean the natural has been dispensed with, because justice has not been served to the natural as an immanent moment of Spirit. This distortion is characteristic of the Roman world. In the course of the transition to the Roman world, the contributions of feminine consciousness seem to either have been obliterated or historically transcended. This is explained by deficiencies in the relevant logic, yet Hegel may have gotten it right that objective historical processes, in particular the distorted account of abstract freedom that took hold in Rome, undermined the historical agency of women.

²⁵³ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 325.

8. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD AND THEME OF RECONCILIATION

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we will show the following. Hegel was unable to incorporate feminine consciousness within his deepest, most genuine intentions for humanity to live a life of universal and concrete personhood. In Hegel's work there is an unresolved tension. On one hand, he expressed inclusive intentions for humanity, while on the other, the development of feminine consciousness is arrested. The chapter argues this tension can be resolved using resources in Hegel's dialectic. The solution is to reinterpret feminine consciousness with reference to Hegel's philosophy of Christian religion. This will facilitate reconciliation with the conception of modern subjectivity. The theme of reconciliation that frames this chapter is central to the principle of modern times. Hegel's project is designed to reconcile individuals with the modern social world. Reconciliation is completed only for men, not for women. To find out why, the chapter will explore the philosophical conception of reconciliation and its origins in Christian religion. In his philosophy of religion, Hegel interpreted the Christian concept in an inclusive sense. He often -- although not always -- expressed universal intentions for humanity. Hegel's interpretation of Christian reconciliation contains flaws that draw him towards a conclusion at odds with his original intentions. The full reconciliation of Spirit and humanity that is available in Christianity is suppressed, and Hegel relapsed to the position of Greek antiquity that Spirit is produced only through the subjugation of Nature. As a consequence, women who are associated with Nature in Hegel, are not fully reconciled with modern subjectivity. The imperatives are present for this to take place.

From the discussion in previous chapters, it comes to light there is an unresolved tension in Hegel's philosophy. He claimed that every human subject shares in the universal and infinite human vocation for unity with Spirit, however he was unable to fully integrate feminine consciousness within these claims.

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel expressed an intention that all human beings should live a universal life of free and concrete personhood.²⁵⁴ Expressions of inclusive intentions for humanity similar to those found in the *Philosophy of Right* are given in many places throughout the oeuvre. One of the clearest statements of intention may be found in *Aesthetics*, in the section titled *The Redemptive History of Christ* and it is useful to reproduce it here to emphasize that Hegel's philosophical conception of reconciliation is indeed founded on Christian theology:

The reconciliation of the spirit with itself, the absolute history, the process of the truth, is brought to our view and conviction by the appearance of God in the world. The simple heart of this reconciliation is the coalescence of absolute essentiality with the individual human subject; an individual man is God, and God an individual man. **This implies that the human spirit, in its Concept and essence, is implicitly true spirit, and every individual subject, therefore, as man, has the infinite vocation and importance of being one of God's purposes and being in unity with God. [emphasis added].**²⁵⁵

The philosophical conception of reconciliation at the heart of Hegel's modern political thought developed from the Christian teaching that the full reconciliation of God and humanity is accomplished with the appearance of God in a human shape as Jesus Christ. An examination of the philosophical merits of this doctrine lies outside the thesis terms of reference. What matters is Hegel's deep conviction that reconciliation is the essential content

²⁵⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 276.

²⁵⁵ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 534.

of the principle of modern times, and that a *philosophical* conception of reconciliation would be impossible without the Christian God who is Triune. It is worth exploring whether his exposition of this teaching adopts a particular slant that might explain why he makes declarations for the inclusive nature of Christian reconciliation but is unable to translate this inclusivity into his modern political thought. Beyond dispute, feminine consciousness in Hegel's modern political and social thought contradicts these intentions expressed in the quotation above and elsewhere, because its development is arrested on the threshold of modernity. This treatment of women does not allow them to realize the universal and infinite human vocation of unity with Spirit. Women in Hegel's contemporary social and political thought are confined within the family as the sphere of participation in ethical life. Their ethical character is analogous to Antigone and she is exemplary of the summit achievement of pre-Christian ethical life. As a result of the influence of the Greek ideal, they cannot be fully included within a conception reconciliation whose truth is, "the coalescence of absolute essentiality with the individual human subject."

If one accepts the intentions expressed in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere as Hegel's deepest, most genuine intentions for humanity, then it follows there has to be a continuation of dialectical development of Nature and Spirit. Without continued development, Hegel's intentions for the realization of the universal human vocation will fail to come to fruition within his modern political thought. Specifically, continued development is needed for feminine consciousness to be fully reconciled with the conception of modern subjectivity in the sense that women are able to realize themselves as individuals and not only as members of the natural sphere of ethical life in the family. If the contention is rejected that women must be included within this reconciliation of spirit with itself, then the alternative position would

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be to deny that the intentions expressed in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere, reflect Hegel's genuine intentions because his construction of the human spirit is inevitably masculine. This is an entirely legitimate position for argument, however it will not be given consideration in a thesis whose aim is not to deconstruct Hegel, but only to determine whether his treatment of women is consistent with the principles of his philosophy. Any findings of inconsistency would raise the question whether the *oeuvre* contains imperatives to resolve the inconsistencies through continuation of dialectical development. The argument under development is that it is possible to prove that all humanity must be included within the philosophical conception of reconciliation, but only by consulting the philosophy of religion. If, at its very source, reconciliation *in principle* includes all humanity, then it is valid to conclude that any secular development has to do likewise, or it is inconsistent with its own grounds.

Hegel was unable to translate his deepest intentions for humanity into his modern social and political theory in a manner adequate to include men and women equally. This must be recognized as a serious shortcoming in his modern political thought, one that threatens to defeat his declarations about the universal and infinite vocation of humanity. The tension between Hegel's original inclusive intentions and their unintended, unequal outcomes may be resolved, using resources in the dialectic that support the inclusion of feminine consciousness beyond its manifestation as the Beautiful Individual of the ethical Greek world.

The problem at hand is to accomplish Hegel's genuine intentions using means consistent with the principles and methodology of the dialectic. The solution is to reinterpret feminine consciousness with reference to his philosophy of the Christian religion. This will advance the conception of modern subjectivity. Hegel was emphatic on the point that the

principle of modern times first appeared in Christianity, *the religion of modern times*. This is crucial to the claim that resources in Christianity support the continued development of the inclusive character modern subjectivity. The conception of the free and infinite modern subject is grounded in these resources. His philosophical conception of reconciliation developed from Christian theology is essential to the principle of modern times. Since Hegel's project is designed to reconcile individuals with the modern social world²⁵⁶ the close relation of his reconciliation with his philosophy of religion is significant because precisely the *absence* of reconciliation is at issue in the treatment of feminine consciousness. The grounding in Christianity of his project has a bearing on the discussion of how to complete the secular development of reconciliation consistent with his own principles. This is why feminine consciousness has to be interpreted with reference to the philosophy of religion. This reference will give clarity to the philosophical grasp of its condition and illuminate possibilities for reconciliation that have not been brought into the discussion.

One way to approach the philosophical conception of reconciliation is to begin with the principle in the *Philosophy of Right* that consciousness in ancient and modern people is strikingly different. Their difference emerges through the historical development of the conception of reconciliation from religious origins to secular manifestation. It is essential to understand this difference if the inequality of men and women in the modern world is to be understood philosophically, as it must be, if it is to have any meaningful relation to the Hegelian *oeuvre*. Otherwise this inequality is a curious but incongruous feature. People in the ancient social world did not have to fully realize themselves as individuals in order to find a

²⁵⁶ For a detailed exploration of the conception of reconciliation and its centrality to Hegel's social and political thought, see: Michael Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*, Modern

home in the ancient social world because they were not individuals in any sense relevant to the modern understanding of the term. Hegel's views about ancient people were discussed in detail, in previous chapters. The modern world presents an entirely different case. Hegel claimed that modern people unlike their ancient predecessors, are able to realize themselves both as individuals and members of the ethical world. This claim encapsulates the marked distinction between ancient and modern people. The distinction is dependent on Hegel's interpretation in his philosophical conception of reconciliation of the teaching of Christian religion that in Christ, God and humanity have reconciled:

The right of the subject's *particularity* to find satisfaction – or, to put it differently - the right of *subjective freedom*, is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern* age. This right, in its infinity, is expressed in Christianity, and it has become the universal and actual principle of a new form of the world.²⁵⁷

This quotation is followed by text that enumerates many specific shapes of this modern principle:

....its specific shapes include love, the romantic, the eternal salvation of the individual as an end, etc., then there are morality and conscience, followed by the other forms, some of which will come into prominence below as the principle of civil society and as moments of the political constitution, while others appear within history at large, particularly in the history of art, the sciences, and philosophy.²⁵⁸

The distinction of ancient and modern people is relevant to the difference between modern men and women because women are not manifested beyond the Beautiful Individuality of the ancient Greeks. Men become modern subjects, while the destiny of women is made ambiguous by their strange resemblance to their ancient Greek forbears, especially Antigone.

The quotation above declares the principle of the modern world first emerged in

European Philosophy Series, (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁵⁷ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 124.

²⁵⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 124.

Christianity. Only by examining Hegel's interpretation of the key Christian doctrine of the triune God, will it be possible to clarify how he arrived at a position where women could not be fully integrated within the modern principle, this despite his own claims the modern principle lays hold on the universal truth of humanity.

The aim of the chapter is to organize a general presentation on Hegel's exposition of Christian religion and its implications for feminine consciousness, based on an overall reading of relevant passages of text with a focus on the theme of reconciliation. Texts consulted include the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, and also *The Philosophy of History*, the *Philosophy of Right*, and *Aesthetics*. The thesis argues that problems arose in Hegel's interpretation of the Christian conception of reconciliation and these complicated the development of feminine consciousness. The problem recurs throughout the many shapes assumed by the modern principle. The different shapes of this principle are explored in different texts. Each shape contributes to our understanding of how the religious conception of reconciliation developed philosophically and then was translated into modern political thought in a way that produced dramatically different consequences for men and women.

One place to begin the organization of the presentation is in *The Philosophy of History* and its argument that the modern world is a secular development of the conception of reconciliation that appeared in the representational form of Christian religion. The Sibree translation expresses this in Chapter II of Section III, *The Roman World*:

God is thus recognized as *Spirit*, only when known as the Triune. This new principle is the axis on which the History of the World turns. This is *the goal* and the *starting point* of History.²⁵⁹

In the *Philosophy of Right*, the representational form of unity of God and humanity has

undergone further development to the stage of a philosophical conception of reconciliation and supports the argument that modern individuals must be understood in terms of *how the right of subjective particularity* distinguishes them from their ancient counterparts. This right originates in the idea familiar to readers from *Lectures* that every individual subject has the vocation to be in unity with Spirit. This is the idea of the modern principle and it is discussed explicitly in the texts as an implication of Trinitarian doctrine. Ultimately, the question becomes why the logically inclusive implications of his exposition of the Trinitarian God were not extended equally to men and women.

In summary, the chapter thus far has raised two observations about Hegel's philosophy of Christian religion and its relevance for the status of feminine consciousness in his modern political thought. First, the texts cited above supply ample evidence for the contention that Hegel's deepest, most genuine intentions are that every individual subject should realize its vocation for unity with Spirit. The truth of humanity is the unity of the divine-human natures and this comes about only through reconciliation of infinite Spirit with finite individuality that is the content of Christian religion. However, in the *Philosophy of Right*, it is plain the treatment of women does not accord with claims about the universality of the human vocation. The second observation concerns the question whether the dialectic contains resources for a resolution of the modern disparity of male and female consciousness. The response is that resources are present in the conception of reconciliation as it appeared historically in the Christian religion. The theme of reconciliation is of central interest because the absence of adequate reconciliation is precisely what is at issue in Hegel's treatment of women. The idea of reconciliation of Spirit and humanity originates in religion hence the need for the

²⁵⁹ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 319.

philosophy of religion to be brought into the discussion in the literature.

Plainly, Hegel's treatment of feminine consciousness contradicts his intentions for humanity as expressed in the texts cited above. The internally-divided character of ancient Greek Beautiful Individuality was surmounted and the conflict of Nature and Spirit healed with the historical appearance of the idea of unity of the divine –human nature. The appearance of God in the human form of Christ is an event that irrevocably divides the standpoints of antiquity and modernity, eliminating any need for women and men to follow in the footsteps of Antigone and the Greeks. With this in mind, it is remarkable the treatment accorded modern women in Hegel should reflect the continuing influence of the ancient Greek ideal. This influence has power, and it lies at the base of gender inequity in Hegel, imposing strict limitations on the dialectical development of consciousness in women that are not shared by men. Within the Greek Ideal, it is equally the case for men and women that the natural dimension of humanity presents itself as an obstacle to reconciliation with Spirit. This is the standpoint that takes Nature to be unspiritual. This standpoint is superseded by the teaching that God has reconciled with the world, for there is no imagining any world without the natural. If then, God truly is reconciled with the world, then there are no obstacles to the inclusion of women within the religious conception of reconciliation, or within the philosophical conception of reconciliation realized in modern subjectivity. It is fair to conclude that Hegel, by imposing limitations on the development of feminine consciousness, has not made full use of the resources available in his own philosophy courtesy of the Christian religion, that would support the reconciliation of women with the modern conception of subjectivity.

In this section we examine the idea of unity of Spirit and humanity posited in Christian

religion.

Hegel claimed that the destiny of all humanity is to share in the universal and infinite vocation to be in unity with God and be recognized as one of God's purposes. This claim serves as the basis for the principle that individuals have a right to their particularity, a right that is the cornerstone of Hegel's conception of modern subjectivity. If it were not true that God has freely given the gift of this vocation to all human beings, then Hegel's conception of the distinction between antiquity and modernity would not have any support, for there would no longer be a meaningful distinction between ancient and modern subjects. Hegel's claim does not mean that every human subject has to realize this vocation on equal terms with every other human subject. Vocations do go unfulfilled, for any number of reasons. The universal and infinite human vocation is recognized within the modern conception of subjectivity and passages of key texts support the conclusion that Hegel understood this to be the destiny of all free and self-determining modern subjects. There is no inkling of an idea that groups of people are excluded from the spiritual vocation of human beings. That said, the principle of the right of individuals to their subjective freedom does not fully emerge in the consciousness of women, although it ought to, if Hegel's claims are to be upheld. The influence of the Greek ideal on women is thoroughly incompatible with the modern principle and the two cannot co-exist. However, Christian doctrine contains imperatives for the continued development of the dialectic that would advance feminine consciousness by resolving the opposition in ancient subjectivity. The universality and infinity of the human vocation is an implication of the Christian conception of reconciliation and by returning to this source for Hegel's claims, these imperatives may be found.

Hegel interpreted the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation in a way that

suppressed its powers to liberate consciousness from the standpoint of antiquity, that Spirit is produced only through the subjugation of Nature. He drew a sharp distinction between antiquity and modernity and clearly meant for the ancient standpoint to be superseded by the appearance of the modern idea. He is unable to express this in his modern political thought. His conception of God as Triune ought to dissolve the undercurrents of hostility towards Nature encountered in pre-Christian mythology but succeeds only partially in so doing. This is a serious shortcoming. The important project of reconciling God and the world requires a satisfactory conclusion to the conflict of Nature and Spirit but the enduring influence of the Greek ideal on women suggests this conflict has only been suppressed. The consequences of this unfinished philosophical quest weigh disproportionately on women who suffer disadvantage because of their historical role as stewards of natural ethical life. Humanity cannot realize its universal and infinite vocation, outside of Nature. Human beings have bodies that connect them with the larger order of creation in ways that are not given due consideration in Hegel. The inattention to Nature is the obstacle that must be removed or else there is no path to modernity for women, except the path leading to assimilation with a conception of subjectivity that reflects only the experience of masculine consciousness.

This final section will explore the reasons why Hegel's conception of God is developed in a way that does not resolve the Nature-Spirit conflict. His exposition of the Christian religion and the Triune God generates an outcome to the Nature-Spirit conflict that is at best inconclusive, and at worst, highly unfavourable to Nature. This lack of a dialectically transparent outcome to the Nature-Spirit conflict has troubling implications for women who have exercised an historical role as stewards of Nature and seriously undermines the credibility of his claims that all humanity shares in the vocation for unity with Spirit. The human destiny

to be in unity with Spirit is inconceivable without the reconciliation of Spirit and Nature because human nature cannot be separated from the natural order if it is to remain human. The status of the natural order in relation to Spirit must be made abundantly clear or Hegel's vocational claims will not find justification and acceptance. Hegel has not shown convincingly how it is possible to elevate the human *qua* human to the spiritual realm.

Hegel's philosophical conception of the unity of divine-human nature suffers from internal contradictions that originated within his exposition of the Christian doctrine of reconciliation of God with the world and humanity. His account of the unity of God and humanity fails to confirm that Nature represents anything more than a fleeting appearance and in fact, is a legitimate moment in the life of the divine. The following text illustrates the internal contradiction:

This consciousness *consummates religion as the cognition of God as spirit*, for God is spirit in the process of differentiation <and return> which we [have] seen in the eternal idea. This means that the unity of divine and human nature has a significance not only for the definition of human nature but just as much for that of the divine. This is because all differentiation, all finitude, though it is a transitory moment, is a moment of the process of the divine nature, which it develops, and hence it [is] grounded within the divine nature itself.²⁶⁰

The difficulty becomes apparent in the final sentence. According to his own system of scientific logic, it would be impossible for Nature simultaneously to be a transitory moment *and* a moment grounded in divine nature. This is because the logic defines the transitions as an unstable movement of two opposing moments. The work of the third moment of the dialectic is to ground the opposition of these moments, whereupon what was ephemeral achieves stability. It is contradictory and illogical to suppose that finitude is both a transitory moment and also a moment grounded within the divine nature

Hegel's own lecture manuscript of 1821²⁶¹ divides the exposition of Christian religion into three categories:

1. *Abstract Concept*,
2. *Concrete Representation*, and
3. *Community*.

Each of these three categories requires a brief introduction. However, it is the second category that should command the greatest interest because this sphere contains the creation and preservation of the natural world. The execution of dialectical movement at the stage of concrete representation is crucial to the development of Hegel's conception of God and will determine the ultimate success or failure of his project to resolve the Nature-Spirit conflict and reconcile God with the finite world of nature and humanity.

In the first category, God as abstract concept is "the idea in and for itself" and "the absolute content for the concept". The abstract concept is the *totality* of the concept only because God is defined as the unity of concept and reality. This definition of God as the unity of concept and reality leads to the second category of *concrete representation* where God is defined as the unity of concept and reality that gives determinateness to itself:

The *second sphere* for concrete representation is the *creation and preservation of the world as nature* – a finite world, spiritual and physical nature, the inauguration of a quite different region, the world of finitude.²⁶²

This second category is the foundation for the argument advanced throughout the lectures on

²⁶⁰ Hegel, *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion*, 110.

²⁶¹ The reference is to Hegel's own lecture manuscript delivered in 1821. Hegel delivered his lectures on the philosophy of religion in 1821, 1824, 1827 and 1831. The lectures differ in significant ways and for this reason they are published as independent units in Vol III of Hegel's *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson.

the philosophy of religion and elsewhere that God is essentially the concrete *unity* of concept and reality. The idea of unity of concept and reality life is a *dialectical* idea, and therefore it is only possible to think about God as a Triune God. The second category contains three spheres or moments ²⁶³:

1. The Idea In and For Itself: The Triune God,
2. The Idea in Diremption: Creation and Preservation of the Natural World,
3. The Appearance of the Idea [in finite Spirit, the history of redemption and reconciliation].

The logic of Hegel requires God to be a Triune God. The mature conception of the Triune God is fully-developed only in Christianity. The developmental moments of God correspond to the elements of the Christian Trinity, God the Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and Spirit.

Henceforth, the challenge will be to understand the idea of the Triune God as presented in Hegel in sufficient depth to support defensible conclusions about the natural world and its ultimate destiny in the dialectic of divine life. The history of the ancient world treated at length in *The Philosophy of History* was guided by the principle that Nature is excluded from the dialectic of Spirit. The advent of Christianity signals the denouement of antiquity. The historical events surrounding its appearance imply a reconciliation of the Nature-Spirit conflict in the story of the Christ who embodies the idea of unity in a single human being. Christianity is first and foremost, about reconciliation of God with the world and humanity.

[The Christian religion is] (γ) the religion of *reconciliation* – of the world with God.

²⁶² Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 86.

²⁶³ These are the titles of the three spheres of the divine idea, trans. by P.C. Hodgson.

God, it is said [2 Cor. 5: 8-19] has reconciled the world with himself.²⁶⁴

The treatment of the feminine is a good gauge of Hegel's success or failure in explicating Christianity as the religion of reconciliation. An adequately-developed conception of the reconciliation of God with the finite world and humanity would reinstate the finite in spiritual life thereby overcoming the ancient principle that Nature is unspiritual. The spiritualization of Nature is a development indispensable for the dialectic of feminine consciousness to advance beyond the limitations of the ancient world. When this development is completed, there will no longer be any need for Antigone to stand as a role model for feminine piety. She characterized the specific historical logic of the Nature-Spirit conflict and her significance is confined to the ethical Greek world. The reappearance of Antigone in *Philosophy of Right* requires explanation. Hegel's exposition of Christianity as a religion of reconciliation either is flawed or incompletely developed. The principles of ethical Greek life [Antigone] and Christian reconciliation [the Triune God] are mutually incompatible with one another and cannot coexist in modern consciousness of men or women or at least, not without evidence of further dialectical development to clarify the relevance of Greek Spirit for contemporary life - that Greek Spirit is relevant to contemporary life is of interest, but its relevance is not explicitly developed in Hegel.

Beyond dispute, Hegel's exposition of Christian religion in the categories of Abstract Concept, Concrete Representation and Spirit concludes with the exaltation of human nature to realm of Spirit:

Spirit is Spirit only as the negation of the negative, which thus contains the negative within itself. God [is envisaged] as reconciled, as love; this [involves] the exaltation <of human nature> to heaven, where the Son of Man sits at the right hand of the

²⁶⁴ Hegel, *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion*, 65.

Father, and the identity and the glory of divine and human nature appear to the spiritual eye in the highest possible way.²⁶⁵

Hegel does not give an explicit account of what becomes of the finite world, once humanity has attained consciousness that its true essence is unity with Spirit. In the following passage, the statement that God is reconciled with finite humanity, when analyzed according to the logic of the dialectic, should yield the preservation of the finite as a conclusion because the conflict of God and the finite has been sublated and resolved:

Set against God there are finite human beings; humanity, the finite, is posited in death itself as a moment of God, and death is what reconciles. Death is love itself; in it absolute love is envisaged. The identity of the divine and the human means that God is at home with himself in humanity, in the finite, and in [its] death this finitude is itself a determination of God. Through death God has reconciled the world and reconciles "himself" eternally with himself. This coming back again is his return to himself, and through it he is *spirit*. So this third moment is that Christ is risen. Negation is overcome, and the negation of negation is thus a moment of the divine nature.²⁶⁶

In a subsequent passage, the dialectic is explicated in a fashion that raises serious doubts whether Hegel succeeded in including the finite world with the spiritualization of human nature. The finite world passes over to the spiritual element. This *passing away* of the finite is represented as the Son of the Father who is resurrected from death and revealed as a determination of the nature of God. This revelation of truth appears in the sensible mode of a single individual, however Hegel does not confirm any subsequent requirement for any sensory verification. The sensible mode reaches its destiny in this single individual whereupon it simply *disappears*. Humanity does not need the sensible mode for humanity to hold fast to the idea of its own unity with the Divine. This account of the Son of the Father fails to surmount the principle of Greek Spirit which is that spiritual truth is produced through the

²⁶⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 132.

subjection of Nature to Spirit. Nature is taken to be an objective form of the existence of Spirit and must be destroyed so that Spirit will no longer be estranged from itself in an alien existence:

The appearance of God in the flesh occurs in a specific time in this single individual. Since it is an appearance of this kind, of itself it passes by and becomes past history. This sensible mode must disappear and rise again in the sphere of representation. The formation of the community has just this content – that the sensible form passes over into a spiritual element. The manner of this purification of immediate being preserves the sensible element precisely by letting it pass away; this is negation in the way that it is posited and appears in the sensible individual as such. Only in regard to that single individual is this intuition given; it is not capable of being inherited or renewed. This cannot happen because as “this” event, a sensible appearance is by its very nature momentary, and its destiny is to be spiritualized. It is therefore essentially something that has been, and it will be raised up into the sphere of representation in general.²⁶⁷

Hegel failed to supersede Greek Spirit. Hegel takes as his point of departure the Greek position that Nature is only a *stimulus* to the production of spiritual truth and from here, he moves to a subsequent position whose affinity with the principle of the Roman World discussed in Philosophy of History, will be recognized immediately. From this position, any dependence on Nature is incompatible with the existence of free spirit. Therefore, naturalness has to be destroyed.

It is important to note the precise stage of the dialectic where Hegel located the historical events of the appearance of God in the sensible mode that we know as human being. Hegel located the advent of Christianity at a stage in the dialectic where the sensible mode does not given evidence of development beyond the initial stage where it is a transitory moment. The incarnation of God in the finite world of Nature and humanity is an event that cannot be explicated using the logic peculiar to the ancient world because that sequence of

²⁶⁶ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 219-220.

²⁶⁷ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 221-222.

logic - the logic of ancient Greece and Rome – begins by subjugating the finite world [Greek Spirit] and then allows it to disappear altogether [the abstract person of the Roman World]. These phenomena are incompatible with the idea that God is reconciled with the finite world and humanity. The argument that the sensible *passes away* only to rise again in the community will not suffice to prove that the finite world of Nature has been preserved. Hegel is unable to view the historical events giving rise of the principle of modern times from any perspective other than one that involves the *sacrifice* of the world. This contradicts his intentions to preserve the finite world of Nature as a legitimate moment in divine life. The exposition of the appearance of God in the sensible mode of a human being requires more complex developments in logic to account for the reconciliation of God with the finite world and humanity.

The deeper problem lies in Hegel's concept of God as reconciliation. A passage of text is cited above where Hegel identifies Christian religion as the religion of reconciliation.

[The Christian religion is] (γ) the religion of *reconciliation* – of the world with God. God, it is said [2 Cor. 5: 8-19] has reconciled the world with himself.²⁶⁸

The text reads, God *it is said* has reconciled the world with himself. The words *it is said* are followed by a biblical reference in parentheses. This is an important reference because it opens a discussion on the extent to which Hegel's views on reconciliation, with their particular slant, were influenced by his reading of the Apostle Paul. It deserves to be read in full:

We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight – we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord... From now onward, therefore, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh. Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh, that is not how we know him now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old

²⁶⁸ Hegel, *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion*, 65.

creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation.²⁶⁹

It is true that God once appeared in the sensible mode of an individual divine-human being who was Jesus Christ. However we no longer know God as we knew him when he appeared in the flesh as Jesus Christ. This is because the appearance of God in the sensible mode has passed away and it is no longer important to know God in that way.

The unity of divine-human nature received sensory verification in the historical life of Jesus Christ. Hegel takes the position that once the divine-human unity has been revealed, there no longer is any need for external attestations. It is not necessary to know Christ in the flesh. The finite world of Nature is not necessary to apprehend the truth of unity of divine-human. Hegel has reconciled God and the world in such a way that if the world has not disappeared altogether, then no longer is an essential ingredient for the existence of Spirit.

Hegel placed great importance on recognition of the profound differences between Christianity and the religions of the ancient world. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God reconciles Spirit and Nature in a way that was unavailable to the ancient Greeks and Romans other than as an object of deep longing. The Christian doctrine of reconciliation is thus the essential model within which to understand Hegel's philosophical system. The apotheosis of his modern political thought – the conception of free and self-determining modern subjectivity – is a secular development of Christian reconciliation, reason enough for his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* to be regarded as the definitive works for his philosophical system. The inquiry into the *adequacy* of Hegel's philosophical

²⁶⁹ 2 Cor. 5: 6-19 The Jerusalem Bible (Reader's Edition) . For ease of comprehension, the quotation begins at v. 6 rather than v. 8 that is indicated in Hegel.

conceptualization of religion continues to be of importance for resolving many outstanding issues in his philosophy.

Hegel's philosophical conceptualization of religion gives an inadequate account of the reconciliation of God with the finite world of Nature and humanity. Hegel gives a solid social account of reconciliation in and through the spiritual life of the community. He does not demonstrate convincingly how the finite world of Nature is treated differently here than it was treated in the Greek Spirit and the Roman World.

The Christian doctrine of reconciliation is about the appearance of God in Nature. The appearance of God in Nature happens in not one, but *two* different ways:

<God is the creator of nature and its wise preserver. The appearance of God in nature [occurs as]: (α) nature, (β) the Son of Man - but the latter [appearance is] for faith, [i.e., for] the Spirit of God, [for] certainty, the knowledge of the divine.>²⁷⁰

His conception of modern subjectivity strongly *implies* the inclusion of Nature within free and self-determining modern Spirit, but fails to render this in a way that is explicit for consciousness. Logically, whatever is not included, cannot be said to have been reconciled with Spirit. If Nature is not included in modern Spirit, then the *naturalness* of humanity cannot be said to have been reconciled with Spirit. Instead, the *naturalness* of humanity is *excluded* from modern Spirit. The conclusion is that the conception of modern subjectivity does suppress Nature and by implication, it also suppresses the feminine.

The Christian doctrine of reconciliation is about the Incarnation of God in Nature and humanity. Hegel shows no awareness of any discontinuity between the idea that God is reconciled with the finite world of Nature, and the suppression of that same Nature in his philosophy. This lack of awareness is a reflection of the strict limitations on his appreciation of

the history of redemption. The idea of the absolute unity of the divine and human nature is recognized as the meaning of Christ's mission on earth, his life and death, resurrection and ascension to the spiritual realm. Sensory verification of this meaning came to the early disciples through the temporal presence of God in human form. They knew Christ in the flesh. However, there is no longer any need to know Christ in the flesh because the idea of divine-human unity does not need to be encountered in the sensible mode to be grasped as philosophical truth. In the modern world, *Spirit* verifies the meaning of Christ. The history of redemption concludes with the "festive assumption of humanity in the divine idea". Then the question remains, what has become of the *naturalness* of Christ, and does the Idea have any sensible presence in the modern world? If the *naturalness* of Christ is no longer an essential ingredient to the truth of his mission, then it is equally inessential to humanity. *Naturalness* is *not* an essential ingredient for philosophical truth. Christ does not have to be known in the flesh. Thus, finite naturalness has been reduced to the status of *caput mortuum*, a valueless residue left behind in the aftermath of the spiritualization of humanity. Hegel did not complete the work of explicitly rendering his intentions to include Nature in the life of Spirit. The exclusion of Nature from modern Spirit is a shortcoming that originated in an inadequate philosophical conceptualization of religion and has negative implications for feminine consciousness.

One approach to resolving the problem of Nature and Spirit might be to think about Hegel's philosophical conception of reconciliation as an ongoing historical process that works towards the recognition of the complete truth of humanity in all its dimensions - historical, social and cultural, political and economic, and finally, ecological (male and female). The

²⁷⁰ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 77.

theme of reconciliation grounded in a fully adequate conceptualization of religion would be a resource to facilitate further dialectical development leading to equal inclusion of men and women in modern subjectivity.

9. FEMININE CONSCIOUSNESS AND MODERN SUBJECTIVITY

The purpose of Chapter Nine will be to demonstrate the validity of the criticisms set down in previous chapters that modern feminine consciousness is given a presentation in Hegel which is contradictory to his conception of modern subjectivity, and a deeper understanding is required of this contradictory state of affairs. This thesis has argued that the unreconciled status of feminine consciousness in Hegel is evidence that the contradictions between the principles of antiquity and modernity have not been fully sublated and resolved in the complex rationality of modern life, as they should be to be consistent with the methodology of the progressive dialectic. These contradictions originate in historically distinct conceptions of the relation of Spirit and Nature, rational self-consciousness and the natural dimension of existence. The principles of antiquity and modernity distinguish themselves from one another in ways that reflect different standpoints towards the dialectic of Nature and Spirit. Feminine consciousness in Hegel has retained features that resemble more the beautiful individuality of Greek antiquity than the free and infinite subjectivity of the modern individual. Feminine consciousness will need to be reconciled with the principle of the self-sufficient and inherently infinite modern personality in order to realize the claims in Hegel's philosophy that consciousness has found reconciliation with actuality in modern ethical life.

The problem is, the qualities of beautiful freedom that Hegel sees in Antigone and in feminine consciousness in general are qualities not compatible with modern life, and their presence in *Philosophy of Right* contradicts its principles. The ideal of unconditional self-identification with the social order is different to the modern conception of freedom as the

right of subjects to their satisfaction. Greek *Sittlichkeit* was beautiful but has been irretrievably lost. Modern life is inherently rational and has elevated the beautiful freedom of the Greeks from immediacy to a level of universality and rational understanding. Although Hegel accepted the loss of Greek *Sittlichkeit* as irretrievable, it is noteworthy, according to his biographer Terry Pinkard, that he came to reconsider his views on *Sittlichkeit* and eventually reached the conclusion that a modern *Sittlichkeit* is not only possible, but may be necessary.²⁷¹ H.S. Harris expressed similar views in *Hegel's Ladder*.²⁷²

This idea about the necessity for recovery of *Sittlichkeit* in a form compatible with modern life is important because it opens new possibilities for the reconciliation of feminine consciousness with the principle of modern times. Such reconciliation is not simply an issue of the modernization of gender roles, but in a larger sense it is an issue about the meaning of being human. A reconciliation with modernity on terms consistent with Hegelian philosophy requires thinking about consciousness in a way that would establish a relationship with the natural dimension of existence not as if this natural dimension were an aspect of contingency, but as if it were a moment of “what has being in and for itself.” This recovery of the natural belongs to the full reconciliation with actuality that philosophy, according to the *Preface* of *The Philosophy of Right*, grants those who seek comprehension. This full reconciliation of the natural dimension with actuality is not in place for feminine consciousness, or at least not in the modern political theory, because the treatment given to it in the *Philosophy of Right* has retained elements of the standpoint of antiquity and the beautiful individuality of the Greek

²⁷¹ See: *From Nuremberg to Berlin: The Recovery of “Ethical Life”* in Chapter Eleven of Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 469-494.

²⁷² H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*. Vol II, “The Odyssey of Spirit.” (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1997).

world. The problem is with the standpoint of feminine consciousness towards the natural dimension. From this standpoint, which closely resembles that of Greek antiquity, Nature is united with Spirit but in such a way that it still carries the aspect of contingency; hence, the unity is constituted from a reconciliation of Nature and Spirit that is no more than *partial*. Women have not been fully reconciled with actuality. The political theory is not able to reconcile feminine consciousness with actuality because it cannot establish a relation to the natural dimension of existence. This is important because women exercise a stewardship over the natural dimension by virtue of their role in supporting the particular individuality of family members. Elsewhere in the system of Hegelian philosophy, the reconciliation of all humanity is a logical imperative in light of which modern social and institutional arrangements and the conception of modern subjectivity will need reconsideration.

To demonstrate the validity of the previous criticism, a good place to begin is with *The Philosophy of Right*. It will be helpful to highlight the essential differences between ancient and modern *Sittlichkeit* which come to light when it is viewed through the lens of social and institutional life. The *oikos* and polis are the social and institutional forms of ancient *Sittlichkeit*, while the exposition of modern ethical life encompasses the family, civil society and the constitutional state.

The principle of Greek antiquity is that Nature transforms to Spirit. Ethical life in the ancient world is constituted from natural and spiritual imperatives that manifest themselves in the institutions of the polis and the family, and these are individualized as man and woman. Hegel discussed these imperatives in terms of Human and Divine Law.

The *oikos* is a natural organization that finds its external limits in the natural world and, most visibly, through activities related to human reproduction and production of

resources for consumption by the members of the *oikos*. The natural element is important for the *oikos*, as illustrated by the requirement for Greek citizens to marry in order to procreate and produce heirs to sustain the *oikos* and to carry on family-based religious obligations. These requirements reinforce the primacy of the natural element of marriage and family over spiritual bonds among members of the *oikos*. The family and *oikos* express the ethical order in the element of immediacy and Being. The family does have the ethical element of universality, but it is not the work of self-consciousness, and in the family, the condition of universality is reached by the individual only in death; the polis has self-consciousness, but only in general, and not yet the self-consciousness of an individual subject. The polis expresses the ethical order as Spirit in its immediate truth:

Government is concrete actual spirit reflected into itself, the self pure and simple of the entire ethical substance.²⁷³

The principle that Nature transforms to Spirit does not seem to operate in the *oikos* in quite the same way as it does in the polis, and as a result, the family is excluded from reason and history:

The Family therefore, is excluded from that process of development in which History takes its rise.²⁷⁴

The exclusion of the family from reason and history is one of the unresolved issues in the account of ancient *Sittlichkeit*, and it has profound consequences for feminine consciousness in terms of how it influences prospects for change and development to the next higher stage of rationality. The issue is whether the family is or is not capable of change and development and if so, to what extent. The family is said to be excluded from reason and

²⁷³ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 473.

²⁷⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 59.

history. However, it is quite clear that in the course of the transition from antiquity to modernity, the family must have undergone a key change in logical structure because in the historical setting of Rome, the family came to be recognized as an abstract person. This significant change in the logic of the family from the *oikos* of Greek antiquity to the Roman family shows that, contrary to what was said in *The Philosophy of History*, the family is not altogether exempt from change and development.

The ethical disposition of the ancient family and, for that matter, the ancient Greek world is the disposition of immediate substantiality. This also happens to be the disposition of ancient and modern feminine consciousness. In an ethical substantiality, the self-will of the individual has disappeared because the individual has sacrificed his or her particular individuality for unity with the universal end of ethical substantiality. The problem with this disposition is that it is susceptible to contingency and arbitrariness—susceptible because particular individuality has been suppressed, but it has not taken on the form of universality. The right of the individual to particular individuality is fulfilled not as an independent being but as a member of a unity, and in this case that unity is the family and the community of ethical substance. The point is reached in the progress of Spirit as world history, where the determining principles of individuals have to be their own ends, i.e., their own particularities and not the universal end of ethical substance. In order to attain the right of subjective freedom which, in Hegel, is the “focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern age*,” the individual has to be removed from the disposition of immediate substantiality with its aspects of contingency and arbitrariness. The particularity of the individual cannot take on the form of universality in the ethical substantiality of the Greek world, either in the family or the polis.

The historical form of the transition from ethical substantiality appears as the fall of the ethical Greek world. The demise of the polis represented the dissolution of immediate substantiality and following this, the principle of personality arose and took hold in the realm of ancient Rome. Now the right of the individual assumed the legal and abstract form of determinate personhood. This same transition—from ethical substantiality to right and the legal realm of the person—takes place in the modern ethical life of individuals. Children come of age and are recognized as determinate beings, and the family of origin dissolves as children begin their own families and parents pass away.

The principle of modern subjectivity is the right of subjective particularity to its freedom:

The right of the subject's *particularity* to find satisfaction, or—to put it differently—the right of subjective freedom, is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern age*. This right, in its infinity, is expressed in Christianity, and it has become the universal and actual principle of a new form of the world.²⁷⁵

Modern Family

Outwardly, the principle of ethical substance has been superseded in the modern world and preserved in a limited sense, in the sphere of the modern family. Inwardly, the supercession of ethical substance is only partially complete. Feminine consciousness has retained the disposition of ethical substance. The modern family is defined as immediate or natural ethical Spirit and, much like its ancient counterpart, it stands for the natural form of ethical life. However, there is an important difference, because unlike the extended family of the Greek *oikos*, the modern family is based on ethical love and not on natural blood relations

²⁷⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §124.

and ties of kinship. The modern family is instead constituted through marriage, which is accepted as an ethical relationship, and to an extent, the modern family has transcended its natural origins.²⁷⁶ The modern nuclear family composed of a husband, wife and children has replaced the extended family of the *oikos*, which in addition to the foregoing might include slaves, animals, close relatives in need of support, and *xenoi* or visitors, who were treated as members of the *oikos*. By comparison, the modern family is a much smaller unit. The dimensions of the modern family include marriage, property and children.

Hegel's theory of the family and its status in modern ethical life suggests that to his mind, the legacy of the Greek world in modernity has yet to be settled and remains at issue. Hegel does not acknowledge any development in the ethical principle of the family over the period of time elapsed from the *oikos* to modern Europe. He makes sweeping claims for both the ancient and modern family. The substantial unity of the family remains at the level of *feeling*. The ethical principle of the family is piety based on *natural* morality. This is the ethical disposition of women. Family members do not recognize one another as individuals or persons. In conclusion, the family is excluded from history. In *The Philosophy of History* Hegel argues the ethical principle of the Greek family -- the piety of the family -- was obliterated in the course of transition to the Roman world. The Roman family is entirely *different* to the *oikos*. This observation alone suggests the ancient family *cannot have been* excluded from history, for there is no way to explain its dramatically changed condition,

²⁷⁶ Siegfried Blasche argues the family has undergone significant transformations from antiquity to the modern world that are not acknowledged in Hegel. Hegel sees the family as an autonomous sphere of ethical life however he does not see how social development changes ethical relations in the family. He also does not discuss the significance of the loss of the traditional economic functions of the family. See: Siegfried Blasche, "Natural Ethical life and Civil Society: Hegel's Construction of the Family" in *Hegel on Ethics and Politics*, ed. Robert B. Pippin and Otfried Höffe (Cambridge University Press: 2004), 183-207.

without invoking processes of historical change. If the family *truly* were excluded from history then it ought to remain the same yesterday and today. Clearly, the case is otherwise, for Roman family life is described to reflect the principle of *Roman* -- not *Greek* -- Spirit. This leaves unanswered questions. First, if the ethical principle of Greek family piety underwent destruction in the course of its traumatic transition to the Roman world - how does it suddenly *reappear* on the modern scene to be *reinstated* as the ethical relation of the (modern) family and the ethical disposition of women? It is difficult to understand the justification for placing the principle of family piety into hibernation following the collapse of the Greek polis, only to reintroduce it for the benefit of the 19th century. If the principle of family piety is destroyed or at very least, *suppressed* throughout the development of the Roman world – what were the implications for women? From a philosophy of history standpoint, the implication would seem to be not that Hegel stalled the development of feminine consciousness because he is a sexist philosopher; instead, there would seem to be something in the *very nature* of the principle of Roman Spirit that unavoidably suppressed the Hellenistic ideal of women and the family in order to advance the cause of reason and freedom. Hegel by no means intended a compliment when he likens the Roman world to the *manhood* of history²⁷⁷, nor can he be said to have found much gratification in the glorious spectacle that was ancient Rome. However, the Roman shape of Spirit was from his standpoint, necessary. It does not come as any surprise that during the Roman age of *manhood*, *womanhood* should recede into the background. Women do not conform to the principle of Roman Spirit because Hegel does not allow their ethical disposition – closely resembling the Hellenistic ideal - to be altogether subsumed

²⁷⁷ See Appendix 2, “The Phases of World History” in Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 203.

within that principle. This does not mean the Roman world does not represent an advance over the Greek polis, only that Hegel has not fully worked out how to preserve the earlier shape of Spirit within the ongoing dialectic. The Roman world did not offer a fully rational solution to the conflict of Nature and Spirit until the advent of Christianity. Hegel did not absorb the implications of Christianity in his philosophy of religion. The problem of Hegel's theory of the modern family relates to his own misgivings about how to manage the legacy of the classical Greek world, within modernity.

This unsettled Greek legacy assumed the form of the impulse to conquer Nature and extinguish the natural element of finitude, familiar from the previous discussion of Greek mythology, aesthetics and beautiful individuality. It would be consistent with the methodology of the dialectic for the conflict of Nature and Spirit to have been sublated in the complex rationality of modern life. Unexpectedly, its shadow reappears in the context of a discussion about the modern marriage relation:

The ethical aspect of marriage consists in the consciousness of this union as a substantial end, and hence in love, trust, and the sharing of the whole of individual existence [*Existenz*]. When this disposition and actuality are present, the natural drive is reduced to the modality of a moment of nature which is destined to be extinguished in its very satisfaction, while the *spiritual bond* asserts its rights as the substantial factor and thereby stands out as indissoluble *in itself* and exalted above the contingency of the passions and of particular transient caprice.²⁷⁸

The problem of Nature and Spirit persists within the modern family and in the marriage relationship where the assertion of spirituality comes at the cost of the extinction of the natural moment. This idea of marriage and the family falls short of what H.S. Harris once described as, a “fully rational relation between Spirit and Nature” and does not include the logical truth

²⁷⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (§163), 202.

comprehended in the philosophical conception of Christian religion. It is an idealization of ancient family piety that in keeping with the principles of Hegel's own philosophy of history, did not survive the demise of the classical Greek world of Antigone.

Civil Society

The transition from the family to civil society is a movement unique to the modern world, and in this movement all determinations of the Idea are allowed, for the first time in history, to attain their rights. Civil society is governed by the principles that concrete and particular persons are their own ends, and that the particular ends of persons are satisfied in relation to others and it is through these relations that these ends assume the form of universality. Individuals must leave the immediate life of the family and enter civil society in order to become particular persons and pursue particular ends in civil society. They have the freedom to develop their particularity and, having done so, they pass over into unity with universality.

Women constitute the notable exception to these two principles because they do not cross over from the immediate life of the family to civil society. As they do not participate in civil society, the conclusion is inevitably reached that in accordance with the process of modern ethical life as it is articulated in the *Philosophy of Right*, women do not become concrete and particular persons. They do not exercise the right to subjective freedom or attain their rights as particular persons. Their developmental profile resembles that of subjects in the community of ethical substance. The requirement of the contemporary reader is to understand the account of the movement from antiquity to modernity in a way that will permit maximum possibility for men and women to become equally concrete and particular persons, consistent

with the principles of Hegelian philosophy. How this may be done raises difficult questions.

The exclusion of women from civil society is a feature of modern life that brings forward what might be taken as one very obvious solution to the underdevelopment of feminine consciousness; this solution would entail the movement of women *en masse* from the immediate life of the family to civil society where they would become concrete and particular persons. The family would largely cease to exist. This strategy for reconciliation is flawed because its persuasive power relies on the concealment of the basic fact that the family is a necessary condition for civil society, and without the family, civil society would not exist. Among other reasons, men would not be able to complete the crossover to civil society without the family, because they would not have available any means for accomplishing even the limited and imperfect restoration to wholeness with their particular individuality that is available only in the family. This restoration is available exclusively in the family and without it, the individual is left in a condition of internal disunity. An exodus of women from the family into civil society would produce a situation where both men and women would struggle, perhaps in vain, to regain the wholeness that comes from the experience of reunion with particular individuality. It is difficult to see this result as an emancipation.

The principle of subjective particularity is a right insofar as one is free, and this right is fulfilled through belonging to ethical actuality:

The *right of individuals* to their *subjective determination to freedom* is fulfilled insofar as they belong to ethical actuality; for their *certainty* of their own freedom has its *truth* in such objectivity, and it is in the ethical realm that they *actually* possess their own essence and their *inner* universality (see §147).²⁷⁹

It is important to understand the meaning of ethical actuality in the modern world:

²⁷⁹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §153.

Ethical life is accordingly the concept of freedom which has become the existing [vorhandenen] world and the nature of self-consciousness.²⁸⁰

The ethical substantiality of modern life divides itself internally and, just as was the case in the ancient world, its internal division acquires the natural significance of sexual difference. This difference is natural in the beginning, but also rational, and it has ethical and intellectual meaning which is further elaborated in the *Philosophy of Right*, §166. In this section, the ethical disposition of modern women is given a remarkable presentation which is almost unchanged from the one given its ancient Greek counterpart in *Phenomenology of Mind*. Because §166 is the single most concise statement on the distinction between the ethical dispositions of modern masculine and feminine consciousness it will be worthwhile to reproduce it here in its entirety, with the exception of the *Addition*:

The *one* [sex] is therefore spirituality which divides itself up into personal self-sufficiency with being *for itself* and the knowledge and volition of *free universality*, i.e. into the self-consciousness of conceptual thought and the volition of the objective and ultimate end. And the *other* is spirituality which maintains itself in unity as knowledge and volition of the substantial in the form of concrete *individuality* [Einzelheit] and *feeling* [Empfindung]. In its external relations, the former is powerful and active, the latter passive and subjective. Man therefore has his actual substantial life in the state, in learning [Wissenschaft, etc., and otherwise in work and struggle with the external world and with himself, so that it is only through his division that he fights his way to self-sufficient unity with himself. In the family, he has a peaceful intuition of this unity, and an emotive [empfindend] and subjective ethical life. Woman, however, has her substantial vocation [Bestimmung] in the family, and her ethical disposition consists in this [family] *piety*.

In one of the most sublime presentations of piety—the *Antigone* of Sophocles—this quality is therefore declared to be primarily the law of woman, and it is presented as the law of emotive [empfindend] and subjective substantiality, of inwardness which has not yet been fully actualized, as the law of the ancient gods and of the chthonic realm [des Unterirdischen] as an eternal law of which no one knows whence it came, and in opposition to the public law, the law of the state—an opposition of the highest order in ethics and therefore in tragedy, and one which is individualized in femininity and

²⁸⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §142.

masculinity in the same play; cf. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 383ff. and 417ff.²⁸¹

Hegel's intentions for setting the ethical significance of natural sexual difference in relation to modern subjectivity are best understood in the context of the complete system of modern ethical life and its three forms of family, civil society and the state. To this end, these three forms are sketched briefly in the following paragraphs. Afterwards, there will be a summary of comparative features in the ancient world based on the account given in *Phenomenology of Mind*. The juxtaposition of features of the ancient and modern ethical worlds will assist in identifying the features of the former that continue to be influential for modern life. Their influence suggests that the legacy of the Greek world is unsettled. If it were fully settled, the contradiction between the feminine and modern individuality would have been resolved. It is due to this unsettled legacy that the theory of modern ethical life is articulated in a way that does not include everyone in the conception of modern subjectivity. The inclusion of all humanity is, in principle, indisputably an imperative within the system of Hegelian philosophy.

The family is a legal person and, as such, requires resources and possesses property. The solidly patriarchal modern family is headed by the husband who is also the breadwinner. "In addition, he is primarily responsible for external acquisition and for caring for the family's needs as well as for the control and administration of the family's resources."²⁸² The primary purpose of the family is to raise children from natural immediacy to the condition of free and self-sufficient personhood in an atmosphere of love and trust, and thus the family's dissolution comes about when children are released to civil society or when the parents die.

²⁸¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §166.

²⁸² Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §171.

The moment of individual self-consciousness is present in the immediate ethical life of the family however the moment does not belong to independent being but is present as the membership of a unity. Likewise, the particular needs of individuals are present in the family as property and resources, but these are converted from selfishness to acquisition for communal ends. This is significant because in immediate ethical life, subjective particularity is mixed with arbitrariness and contingency and must be removed from immediacy in order to attain its right. That is why the right of subjective particularity to find satisfaction is found not in the family but in the uniquely modern phenomenon of civil society, the *universal* family. However, on these terms, women do not attain their rights as particular persons. The requirement is to modify the account to allow women to become concrete particular persons but not necessarily on the same terms and conditions as men. Supposing Hegel had abandoned the family unit and moved women *en masse* into civil society, the effect would be to increase the numbers of internally disunited persons while depriving them of even the limited means available in the family for restoration to wholeness with particular individuality - this would not amount to emancipation.

State

Individuals become particular persons in civil society, but only as members of the state do they complete the process of ethical life to become genuine individuals:

If the state is confused with civil society and its determination is equated with the security and protection of property and personal freedom, the interest of individuals [*der Einzelnen*] as such becomes the ultimate end for which they are united; it also follows from this that membership in the state is an optional matter. But the relationship of the state to the individual [*Individuum*] is of quite a different kind. Since the state is objective Spirit it is only through being a member of the state that the individual [*Individuum*] himself has objectivity, truth and ethical life. Union as such is

itself the true content and end and the destiny [*Bestimmung*] of individuals [*Individuen*] is to lead a universal life . . .²⁸³

As particular persons, subjects have the freedom to develop their individuality and interests, but concrete freedom requires that these interests be restored to unity with the interest of the universal and that individuals pursue the universal interest as their own end:

§260

The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But concrete freedom requires that personal individuality [*Einzelheit*] and its particular interests should reach their full development and gain recognition of their right for itself (within the system of the family and civil society) and also that they should, on the one hand, *pass over* of their own accord into the interest of the universal, and on the other, knowingly and willingly acknowledge this universal interest even as their own *substantial spirit* and *actively pursue* it as their *ultimate end*.²⁸⁴

The destiny of human beings is to lead a universal life “in accordance with the concept of the will, i.e. in accordance with its universality and divinity.”²⁸⁵ The true meaning of modern individuality is given in this statement, which may also be taken as the overarching imperative of Hegelian philosophy. To become a modern individual, the subject must belong to one of the Estates, because only through the Estates does the right of subjective freedom come into relation with the state. This relation with the state is essential and empowers subjects to fully participate in objectivity, truth and modern ethical life. The difficulty in Hegel is that women do not complete the transition to civil society because their substantial vocation remains with the family. The train of consequences attendant on this fact is lengthy, and all of them lead to the conclusion that feminine consciousness cannot be reconciled with modern subjectivity for so long as the vocation of women is set within the narrow limits of the family. The ethical

²⁸³ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §258.

²⁸⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §260.

disposition of family piety does not allow women the opportunity to participate in civil society and exercise their right of subjective freedom, for which reason their personal individuality and interests do not reach full development. As they do not become members of the Estates, they cannot come into relation with the state or pass over into the interests of the universal. For these reasons, they cannot be considered as modern subjects because they do not fulfill the human destiny of leading a universal life in accordance with the concept of the universal and divine will. All these limitations follow as consequences from the account of the ethical disposition of women in §166 of *Philosophy of Right* which, because of its antiquarian features, does not equip them to participate as individuals in the system of modern ethical life.

Any comparison of ancient and modern ethical life must contend with the thorny issue of why Hegel did not allow the principle movements of Spirit to apply to the family and why he effectively excluded the family from history by disregarding its spiritual dimension. The exclusion of the family from history and Spirit is a fact that came to light in the earlier discussion of Greek Spirit as Nature transforming to spirituality through the artistic activity of shaping natural materials to aesthetic works. In *The Philosophy of History*, there is an analysis of the aesthetic productions of Greek Spirit catalogued as *objective*, *subjective*, and, finally, *political* works of art. The family, unlike the polis, is conspicuous for its pointed exclusion from the catalogue of aesthetic works of Greek Spirit. The exclusion of the family from the collection of aesthetic works suggests that the family does not belong with the second order of Spirit. Evidently, Hegel did not think the principle of Greek Spirit, Nature transforming to Spirit, was operative in the *oikos*. The problem then becomes how to account for the evolution of the family to a form adequate to modern life when, in fact, from the beginning the family

²⁸⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Addition to §260.

was not included in the dialectic of historical Spirit.

The modern family is recognized as an abstract person capable of property ownership. From a logical standpoint, the assignment of personhood to the family should mean its natural immediacy has been sublated in the transition to abstract universality and *Dasein*. This is a key change in the logical structure of the family and is preparatory for the transition to modernity. Historically, this movement would be associated with the dissolution of the ethical Greek world and its merger with the Roman Empire. However, Hegel is inconsistent on the issue of whether or not and to what extent the family is capable of change and development. The husband, as head of the household, becomes a legal person, but not the wife. Husband and wife do not share the same logic of consciousness. Their mutually contradictory forms of subjectivity reflect the tension between antiquity and modernity unresolved in the theory of modern life.

The subjugation of Nature to Spirit is a theme encountered earlier in the study of the aesthetics of Greek Spirit and it surfaces again in the discussion of the modern family—more evidence that the legacy of the Greek world in modernity is unsettled. A good example is given in the discussion of the marriage relation:

The ethical aspect of marriage consists in the consciousness of this union as a substantial end, and hence in love, trust, and the sharing of the whole individual existence [*Existenz*]. When this disposition and actuality are present, the natural drive is reduced to the modality of a moment of nature which is destined to be extinguished in its very satisfaction, while the spiritual bond asserts *its rights* as the substantial factor and thereby stands out as indissoluble *in itself* and exalted above the contingency of the passions and of particular transient caprice.²⁸⁶

This passage strikingly emphasizes the annulment of the natural element in the key ethical relationship of modern life. In Hegel, the natural is unspiritual and humanity has to

sacrifice natural being in order to know itself as a constituent element of divine Spirit. But this standpoint is deficient in its appreciation of the Christian theological underpinnings of the principle of modern times because it does not account for the reinstatement of the natural dimension as a legitimate moment of divine Being, a movement implicit in the theology of Trinitarian reconciliation. Nature is confined to the family, and here its properties are blunted. The modern family has surrendered economic self-sufficiency in exchange for work in the *universal* family of civil society and has lost the opportunity to encounter its external limits in the natural world. To the extent that the encounter with external and natural limits does take place in civil society, it is driven by instrumentalist concerns fixated on the pursuit of individual ends. But individual desires and ends do not have any external limits in Nature because they are in themselves boundless, and their nature is to extend themselves to a false infinity. The classical understanding that human life has its external limits in the natural order no longer applies in the theory of civil society. The account of the modern family, civil society and the state continues the theme of the debasement of the natural element that originated with the idea of Greek Spirit as a conquest of nature by a higher spiritual order. The underlying logic has the same deficiency encountered earlier in the discussion of Becoming and the transition to determinate Being (*Dasein*).

The principle of modern subjectivity is the right of individuals to their subjective determination to freedom. This right, first expressed in Christianity, has become “the universal and actual principle of a new form of the world.” In Hegel, the presentation of modern feminine consciousness does not fit comfortably within the framework of this principle. Feminine consciousness has a vocation in the family and an ethical disposition in the

²⁸⁶ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §163.

tradition of family piety. The example of Antigone is held up to be the law of woman: “the law of emotive [*empfindend*] and subjective substantiality, of inwardness which has not yet been fully actualized.” Her sacrifice was meaningful in the context of a world where forms of ethical order conflicted with one another because provisions did not yet exist to mediate their opposition in the rational self-awareness of the subject. To state the case in another way, Antigone belonged to the Kingdom of Beautiful Freedom, but the modern individual belongs to the Kingdom of the Will, and Hegel has not maintained this essential distinction in his account of the forms of modern ethical life:

It [the Greek world] is the realm of beautiful freedom and it is in the context of immediate ethical existence that individuality develops within it. The principle of individuality, of subjective freedom, has its origin here, although it is still embedded in the substantial unity. As in Asia, morality is a principle, but it is also associated with individuality, so that it is identical with the free will of individuals. The two extremes of the Oriental world—subjective freedom and substantiality - are now combined; the kingdom of freedom—not that of unrestrained and natural freedom but of ethical freedom—is now realized. Its end is not arbitrary or particular but universal, for it takes the universal end of the nation as the object of its will and its knowledge. But it is merely the realm of beautiful freedom, and its union with the substantial end is natural and unreflecting. It is the union of the ethical with the subjective will, in which the Idea is united with a plastic form: it does not exist abstractly for itself, but is immediately bound up with the real, just as the sensuous bears the stamp and expression of the spiritual in a beautiful work of art.²⁸⁷

By contrast, the Kingdom of the Will means the following:

Secular life is the positive and definite embodiment of the Spiritual Kingdom—the Kingdom of the Will manifesting itself in outward existence. . . . The Will is Free only when it does not will anything alien, extrinsic, foreign to itself (for as long as it does so, it is dependent), but wills itself alone—wills the Will. This is absolute Will—the volition to be free. Will making itself its own object is the basis of all Right and Obligation—consequently of all statutory determinations of Right, categorical imperatives, and enjoined obligations. The Freedom of the Will *per se*, is the principle and substantial basis of all Right—is itself absolute, inherently eternal Right, and the

²⁸⁷ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, “Introduction: Reason in History, trans. from the German edition of Johannes Hoffmeister by H.B. Nisbet with an introduction by Duncan Forbes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, reprint, 1984), 202.

supreme Right in comparison with other specific Right; nay, it is even that by which Man becomes Man, and is therefore the fundamental principle of Spirit.²⁸⁸

Modern feminine consciousness commemorates the sacrifice of Antigone by restoring the universal aspect of masculine consciousness to unity with its particular individuality in the family sphere—an intuition of wholeness at the level of feeling. This sacrifice does not make sense in the context of a world where the reconciliation of universal and divine Spirit with particular individuality is understood to be the very essence of God and the complete truth of human nature. For women, the forfeiture of the claim to self-consciousness would be tantamount to a disavowal of this truth. For men, the idea that particular individuality has to be sacrificed to do the work of the universal is equally obsolete. There is a requirement to rethink the meaning of particular individuality and to challenge the reasons why its validity is not recognized in Hegel outside of the subordinate sphere of the family. When the complete truth of human nature given in the principle of modern times has been developed into a system of institutions capable of ethically regulating society, there will be no need for modern women to commemorate the ethical sacrifice of Antigone on penalty of estrangement from modern subjectivity.

Conclusion

The philosophical treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel has been shown to be incompatible with his conception of modern subjectivity for reasons that were summarized in the statement of the problem at the outset to this chapter. This incompatibility first came to light in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s through studies in the literature of Hegel's *Antigone* story. Many of these came from the perspective of feminist philosophy and criticism.

²⁸⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 442.

Since then, there has been limited progress in exploring the theme from vantage points offered by his other works, especially *Aesthetics* and *Science of Logic*. In Hegel, a full reconciliation of the Nature-Spirit dialectic is realized in Christianity, which he declared to be the religion of modern times. The principle of modern times is a secular development of the Christian teaching that Spirit is reconciled with humanity and natural creation. Hegel cited imperatives for the full inclusion of all people in the Christian idea of reconciliation and held that reconciliation would be realized in the secular realm in the form of modern ethical life. These imperatives are incompletely translated into his political theory of modern ethical life, and where there appear to be inconsistencies as with the treatment of feminine consciousness, there is much to be gained from approaching these with the idea they may be ramifications of the continuation of the ancient conflict of Nature and Spirit.

The theologian Dale Schlitt argued that Hegel did not do justice to finitude in his construction of the logical progression of Spirit through the stages of immediacy to abstract right. The failure to reinstate finitude at the appropriate moment in the dialectic held disastrous consequences for women, who have enacted an historical role in sphere of family life, which falls within the province of natural existence. The passage below will make clear that Nature and the Family are excluded from history and that women, confined to the Family, are left behind in the dialectic as a consequence:

Natural, and at the same time *religious* morality is the piety of the *family*. In this social relation morality consists in the members behaving towards each other *not as individuals* –possessing an independent will; not as persons. The Family therefore, is excluded from that process of development in which History takes its rise.²⁸⁹

The readings of Hegel from the standpoint of his own philosophy of religion offer an

²⁸⁹ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 59.

opportunity to see beyond the limited vision of creation as a dualism of Nature and Spirit, and to imagine a different alliance of the human and natural worlds. This would afford opportunities for women to be included without imposing on them any requirement to adopt the principles of abstract and formal equality of human beings, principles that some critics have argued amount to a denial of the natural distinctions and capabilities essential for a full human life.

CONCLUSION

In Hegel, the principle of the modern subject that underlies his conception of modern subjectivity is recognized to be “the *self-sufficient and inherently infinite personality* of the individual [*des Einzelnen*], the principle of subjective freedom.”²⁹⁰ Modern individuality has the form of the principle of rationality and its content is the unity and interpenetration of universality and particularity. Individuals have a self with all the contingencies of motives and desires belonging to the self, however in contrast with their ancient counterparts, they also have an awareness of their own subjectivity. Particularity is present to them as freedom rather than as corruption, and in addition, universality is present in their awareness of unbounded subjectivity. The presence of these two moments of particularity and universality constitutes the freedom and infinity of the modern subject. This conception of modern subjectivity as the unity and interpenetration of universality and particularity is inherently an inclusive conception. The genuine intentions of Hegel are that all human beings should lead a universal life of full and concrete personhood in accordance with the definition itself of human nature as a concrete unity of objective and subjective Spirit.

For Hegel, the presentation of both ancient and modern feminine consciousness is founded on his reading of the *Antigone* of Sophocles. This reading, located within his account of the ethical Greek world in *Phenomenology*, is discussed at length in Chapter Three, together with a selection of critical scholarly reviews. For Hegel, a special relationship exists between feminine consciousness and Greek Spirit. The thesis investigated the different perspectives on

Greek Spirit in the *Realphilosophie*, including the philosophy of history, aesthetics, logic, and the philosophy of religion. To build these perspectives, it has been necessary to go beyond the *Antigone* story, and to examine other works in the system of philosophy including the *Logic* and the *Realphilosophie* better to understand the sources of the problem that have not been well-explored in the literature.

The presentation of modern feminine consciousness in Hegel cannot be reconciled with the principle of the freedom and infinity of the modern personality, because it does not develop women to the stage of full and concrete personhood and it depicts their consciousness has retaining features more characteristic of ancient subjects than modern persons. It is important to clarify the proper use of the terms, “subject” and “person”, because they may not be used interchangeably in the narrative of historical Spirit:

The person is essentially different from the subject, for the subject is only the possibility of personality, since any living thing whatever is a subject. A person is therefore a subject which is aware of this subjectivity, for as a person, I am completely for myself: the person is the individuality of freedom in pure being-for-itself. As this person, I know myself as free in myself, and I can abstract from everything, since nothing confronts me but pure personality. And yet as *this* person I am something wholly determinate: I am of such an age, of such a height, in this room, and whatever other particular things [*Particularitäten*] I happen to be. Personality is thus at the same time the sublime and the wholly ordinary; it contains this unity of the infinite and the utterly finite, of the determinate boundary, and the completely unbounded.²⁹¹

Ancient subjects represent the consciousness of substantiality or *character* expressed through their actions according to their ethical disposition. *Character* in ancient Greece refers to the native endowment of specific capacities that enabled individuals to “take their own ground” and it marks the beginning of the development of self-sufficient individuality. The legitimacy of self-sufficient individuality is a principle that was not recognized in the ancient

²⁹⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 223.

Greek world. Unlike personality, the quality of character is natural, and was not incorporated within substantiality. Thus, the character of the ancient subject fell outside the unity of Greek Spirit. Ancient subjects possessed character; however, they had not yet become substantial, *in themselves*. This distinction between subject and personality is significant for women because it leads them to this dilemma: so long as they retain the characteristics of Antigone who is a subject, they cannot become full and concrete persons. Nor can they support the construct of modern personality without undergoing additional change and development. To suggest otherwise is to disregard the rules of logical developmental sequence. The mode of ancient subject is, by its very nature, inconsistent with the conception of modern subjectivity.

Only modern individuals attain complete awareness of their subjectivity and become full and concrete persons. Modern persons have a personality, meaning that they are determined in all the respects wherein a finite being is determined, and in addition to these determinations they also have an awareness of themselves in their finitude as “*infinite, universal and free*”:

In the personality, therefore, there is knowledge of the *self* as an *object* [*Gegenstand*] but as an object raised by thought to simple infinity and hence purely identical with itself. In so far as they have not arrived at this pure thought and knowledge of themselves, individuals and peoples do not yet have a personality.²⁹²

The ethical disposition of Antigone did not possess this, “unity of the infinite and utterly finite, of the determinate boundary and the completely unbounded”,²⁹³ and could not support the construct of personality. The disposition of the ancient subject has the ethical character of Beautiful Individuality and grows out of natural distinctions. Personality,

²⁹¹ See *Addition(H)* to §35 in Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*.

²⁹² Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §35.

²⁹³ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §35.

however, is a construct, which is not found in Nature.

When the description of feminine consciousness given in *The Philosophy of Right* is considered in the context of the overview of historical consciousness given in Chapter One, it reveals itself to be more typical of Greek antiquity than the modern world. For Hegel, feminine consciousness manifests aspects of a historical shape of Spirit specific to the ethical Greek world. The study of the logical structure of this historical form of Spirit exposed the incompatibility of the feminine with modern subjectivity is based on the grounds of the conflicting principles of antiquity and modernity. An understanding of the distinction between the principles of antiquity and modernity is essential to understanding the mutual incompatibility of feminine consciousness and modern subjectivity.

Modern subjectivity claims to sublate the contradiction of antiquity and modernity and to resolve it within the modern principle of subjective freedom. This principle is later than Greek philosophy and arose “in an inward form in the *Christian* religion and in an external form (which was therefore linked with abstract universality) in the *Roman* world.” If, therefore, modern feminine consciousness retains features of ancient subjectivity, then it cannot be assumed to have incorporated the developments that belong to Christian and Roman world. In fact, the study of the logical and historical dimensions of Graeco-Roman Spirit showed feminine consciousness reached a developmental impasse, precisely at the critical juncture where the ethical Greek world collapses and merges with the Roman world.

The Transition from Greece to Rome

Chapter Four showed feminine consciousness to be a manifestation of Greek Spirit as an aesthetic spiritual unity within which the opposition of Nature and Spirit was only partially

resolved to unity in the consciousness of the Beautiful Individual. Hegel identified this opposition of Nature and Spirit as the logical problem of the ethical Greek world. The essence of Greek Spirit is the principle that Nature transforms to Spirit. However, in the course of this transformation, the worth and independence of Nature is compromised to preserve the aesthetic and spiritual definition of unity. This deficient definition of unity of Spirit and Nature has to be surmounted in order to realize the full reconciliation available in the principle of modern freedom.

The idea for a reconciliation of the opposition of Nature and Spirit originated in the historical setting of the Roman world where it first appeared in the historical Christian religion. From a logical standpoint, there took place in the Roman world a transition from the sphere of Being and its stages to the sphere of Essence, from the immediacy of Beautiful Individuality, to the determinate Being of abstract personhood. In Rome, subjectivity developed to a stage where it was able to support an early, abstract form of personhood. This should not to be confused with the free and infinite modern personhood because it was not yet self-constituted. It was constituted by, and dependent on the state for recognition. However, it did represent for Hegel the inauguration of the principle of the modern world. Rome represents the dialectical movement that extends the finite subject to infinity and dignity and gives recognition to the dignity and worth of the particular subject as an abstract *individuum*. The recognition that finitude is the form of appearance of universal and infinite Spirit is the converse movement that appears in Christianity.

The emergence of individuality in the form of the universal and abstract person prepared humanity for cognition of the unity of divine and human nature. This unity of opposites is the reconciliation central to historical Christianity. Certainly, the writings of

Hegel would encourage the view that in his analysis of the Roman world and its connection with Christian religion, Hegel did an injustice to the naturalness of Spirit. Rome is the birthplace for the new principle that God is Spirit in all its universality and infinity. However, the Hegelian exegesis of the idea of Christian reconciliation remained wedded to the classical idea that the Natural is Unspiritual:

Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God, and this comprehension may be thus expressed - that the unity of Man with God is posited in the Christian religion. But this unity must not be superficially conceived, as if God were only Man, and Man, without further condition, were God. Man, on the contrary is God only in so far as he annuls the merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit and elevates himself to God. That is to say, it is obligatory on him who is a partaker of the truth, and knows that he himself is a constituent moment of the Divine Idea, to give up his merely natural being: for the Natural is the Unspiritual.²⁹⁴

This theme of the extirpation of the natural element of finitude recurs throughout the treatment of the idea of reconciliation developed in all the stages of historical Spirit. Elsewhere, Hegel spoke about the necessity for humanity to give up “merely natural being” and annul the “merely Natural and Limited in his Spirit” in order to elevate itself to God. The conviction is, “the sensuous existence in which Spirit is embodied is only a transitional phase.” Finitude is denied its rightful place as a constituent Moment of the Divine Idea.

The *Realphilosophie* explains at length why the idea of Christian reconciliation is the basis for the principle of modern freedom. Nature and the element of finitude do not seem to have been given their rightful place as a constituent moment in the idea of divine-human unity.

There is a requirement for individuals to annul natural being to become like God. Yet, in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel said the cognition of unity of divine and human nature only comes to humanity as a gift -- it is not a reward that is given in exchange for

sacrifice of the self. It is different to the unity with ethical substance given as a reward in exchange for the self-sacrifice of Antigone. This cognition comes as a gift to immediate consciousness, the gift of an “immediate certainty of divine presence.”

The problem is that when the time is ripe to develop the idea of Christian reconciliation in the secular realm of the modern world, once again Nature and the element of finitude are not brought within the Concept as it is defined in terms of the logic of social and political organization. The evidence for this statement lies in the fact that women and the family have not been brought within the sphere that gives rise to history, reason and Spirit. Given their exclusion was justified previously on the basis of a conception of creation as divided between natural and spiritual provinces, it would follow that if women and the family have not been included in the realm of modern Spirit, then the conflict of Nature and Spirit cannot have been fully resolved. This contradicts the claims on behalf of modern freedom that the ancient conflict has been given a more complex and adequate resolution which is reflected in the arrangements of modern life articulated in the *Philosophy of Right*.

The cognition of the unity of divine-human nature in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* is not described in a way that would require the renunciation of natural element of existence. The resolution of universality and particularity in determinate Being has been shown to be constructed inadequately for reasons that might be disclosed in his remarks about the development of the idea of Christianity:

It has already been remarked that only after the death of Christ could the Spirit come upon his friends; that only then were they able to conceive the true idea of God, viz., that in Christ man is redeemed and reconciled; for in him the idea of eternal truth is recognized, the essence of man acknowledged to be Spirit, and the fact proclaimed that only by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering

²⁹⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 324.

himself to pure self-consciousness, does he attain the truth.²⁹⁵

The political and social theory of Hegel is inconsistent with the humanitarian and egalitarian goals for humanity stated elsewhere in the texts and especially in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Feminine consciousness in the *Philosophy of Right* does not achieve full cognition of the idea of the unity of Divine and human nature and of the significance of the idea of the truth of human nature as *in-and-for-itself*. Feminine consciousness does not achieve the vocation of humanity as set forth in *Philosophy of Religion* and for this reason, has not been included fully in the conception of modern subjectivity.

The contradiction between the modern political and social theory and the logical imperatives in the system of Hegelian philosophy originates in the account of Nature and Spirit. The treatment of feminine consciousness needs to be evaluated with reference to that account. The principle of Greek antiquity is that Nature transforms to Spirit, however it does not transform itself in a natural manner. Instead it is conquered by force and afterwards, held subordinate to Spirit. This is a deficient definition of the unity of Nature and Spirit in which the underlying conflict is not resolved but only repressed.

The conflict internal to the ancient world is resolved through the dissolution of antiquity and the emergence of the Christian idea that the divine and human nature have been reconciled in an individual being. The Hegelian interpretation of Christian reconciliation is distorted by the influence of Hellenistic attitudes towards Nature.

²⁹⁵ Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 328.

Hegel abstracted the natural moment of immediacy from the dialectic of historical Spirit, in midst of the transition from the Greek to the Roman world. He does not give a coherent account of the reinstatement of the natural element as a constituent moment in the life of Spirit, although such is required by logic and theology.

The critique of the treatment of feminine consciousness is the beginning of a reconsideration of the conception of modern subjectivity. The *Logic* and *Philosophy of Religion* are important sources for this critique and they have been overlooked in the literature. Modern subjectivity will be more inclusive of feminine consciousness when it has been placed in context of a more complex understanding of the relation of the human and natural world, and it will give a more complete understanding of the truth of human nature.

Feminist Philosophy and the Thesis Findings

Lastly, consideration shall be given to how the thesis findings relate to feminist philosophers and their responses to the treatment of feminine consciousness in Hegel. The question to be decided is whether the findings confirm that the directions taken by feminist philosophy potentially will lead to modifications that enable the realization of Hegel's deepest and most genuine intentions. By no means are the four major currents of feminist thought surveyed in the thesis exhaustive of contemporary feminist discourse or even the variety of feminist responses to Hegel; however these philosophers were selected from the diverse field of feminist philosophy because they are representative of four of its key positions that have been claimed in the literature and they are: Enlightenment-based liberal feminism, post-Marxist critical theory, "difference" feminism, and eco-feminist and environmental philosophy. This section

will relate the thesis findings to the contributions of each of these currents of feminist thought.

Enlightenment-based liberal feminism supports its argument for the rational freedom and equality of women with references to transcendent ideals of universal reason said to be gender-neutral and equally available to all human beings. Liberal feminists conceive of the emancipation of women in terms of an escape from the constraints of Nature that are perceived to underlie the traditional sex and gender-based roles and patterns of family life such as those described in *Philosophy of Right*. Liberal feminists vehemently oppose any effort to preserve feminine difference on a natural basis because they view sexual difference as largely incidental to the common human nature of men and women. They are uncomfortable with the position taken in Hegel that sexual difference has ethical significance and they equate this position with biological essentialism. The main liberal feminist response to Hegel has been to discredit his characterization of Antigone as a passive being whose ethical life was limited to piety and emotions. They seek, instead, to portray her as a rational and self-conscious actor who transgressed the bounds of the family sphere in order to engage actively with the external world.

The liberal feminist response raises concerns that it does not sufficiently respect the integrity of the Hegelian project because it assumes the capacity for agency and rational self-consciousness in place at the very outset of the journey of historical Spirit, in ancient Greece. That assumption is inconsistent with the ideas in Hegel that true rational self-consciousness does not arrive on the scene until much later in *Phenomenology*, and that the long process of historical Spirit is needed to justify the standpoint of the absolute freedom of the Concept.

Based as it is on reference to abstract and universal principles of reason and freedom

associated with the Enlightenment, the liberal feminist approach to the equality of men and women fails to give an account of the *historicity* of its ideals and is challenged to explain the persistent inequality of men and women throughout history, apart from misogyny and the constraints of Nature. The feminist response to Hegel from the standpoint of Enlightenment-based liberalism has not succeeded in proposing systematic modifications that would realize Hegel's intentions *on the terms of his system* because it does not engage with the science of the dialectic and with the key Hegelian idea of the Concept, the logical idea of the unity of substance and subject. A better way would be to work from the premise that the Concept unfolds itself in history through a series of ever more highly-evolved rational shapes and forms of Spirit – from this standpoint, it is possible to understand feminine consciousness in a logically systematic way. By making reference to the *Science of Logic* and the *realphilosophie*, the thesis was able to show that all along, feminine consciousness has been integral to the unfolding dialectic and, rather than being “the ghost destined forever to haunt the margins of Hegel's supposedly complete speculative system”,²⁹⁶ its reconciliation is a necessary development for the fulfilment of Hegel's intentions and realization of potential of the modern principle to reconcile substance and subject on terms compatible with freedom and reason.

The school of feminist philosophy influenced by post-Marxist critical theory offers an alternative to liberal feminism albeit one that shares the liberal commitment to the ideal of universal and rational human nature. Its distinctive offering to the feminist discourse is an analysis of the dependency of Enlightenment-based ideals on patterns of domination and exploitation, in particular, the domination of nature and women by men. Patricia Jagentowicz

²⁹⁶ Antoinette M. Stafford, *The Feminist Critique of Hegel on Women and the Family*, <http://www.mun.ca/animus/1997vol2/staford1.htm>, 6.

Mills²⁹⁷ cogently argued the ideal of universal and rational equality among people that is found in Enlightenment theory and in Hegel, in fact is not a truly *universal* ideal because it does not include the experience of women which is judged to be inferior. She links the exclusion of women with Hegel's imperfect resolution of the fundamental problem of Nature and Spirit. This accords with the thesis findings. However, her project is not to explore the potential for a reconciliation of this opposition using resources internal to the Hegelian system because from the standpoint of critical theory, the opposition of Nature and Spirit cannot be reconciled on terms other than domination and exploitation and instead, must be transcended. Thus, her project is to emancipate women from misogyny and the constraints of Nature and the family that prevent them from becoming fully rational human beings, and she would propose to do this by dissolving women's connection with "first nature" and enlarging the scope of the masculine "second nature" to include women and facilitate their full participation in civil society and the state. Post-Marxist and critical theorists take the standpoint that Nature and Spirit are non-identical and they do not envision a solution to the core Hegelian problem of adequately defining the *unity* of substance and subject. With respect to the thesis findings the concern is that any requirement for men or women to *transcend* natural limits is completely unrealistic, as there is *no* human being whose limitations do not begin and end in the natural world. Critical theory does bring forward serious and credible concerns about whether Hegel's theory of modernity continues the same dependency on the domination of Nature and women that in his own analysis, originated in antiquity and ought to have been resolved in the Christian teaching of the unity of divine and human nature. However, the post-Marxist

²⁹⁷ See: "Hegel's Antigone in the Modern World," in Mills, *Woman, Nature and Psyche*, 44-49.

response to Hegel's treatment of women is, like its liberal counterpart, unable to advance the critique in the direction of building a responsible relationship towards the natural world or envisioning how this could be done in a way that does not threaten human freedom. The post-Marxist feminist discourse does not provide a path towards modifications that would realize Hegel's intentions because it does not conceive of a route around the impasse of Nature and Spirit that blocked the development of feminine consciousness in Hegel.

The discourse of "difference" feminism rejects the liberal Enlightenment ideal of universal humanity as an abstraction that too often has served as a screen for masculine privilege and in place of this it claims the difference between men and women is essential and irreducible. "Difference" feminism has contributed to understanding the treatment of the feminine in Hegel by challenging his position that the natural element of ethical life must be sacrificed in the interests of universal and abstract reason. By doing this, "difference" feminism opens further possibilities for restoring the original intentions of Hegel, which were to elucidate the unity of substance and subject -- the logical idea -- *freely* and *rationally* and *without* the element of repression. From the standpoint of this feminist discourse, the antipathy towards the natural element of humanity that undeniably occurs in Hegel, actually is inconsistent with the logical imperatives of a system that seeks to freely and rationally resolve the conflict of Nature and Spirit. "Difference" feminism is on one level, compatible with Hegel because it places value on sexual difference as a fundamental expression of the natural element of individuality. By seeking to reinstate the natural element of individuality as the ineliminable foundation of the human condition, this discourse carries the potential to complete the development that Hegel was unable to complete in his conception of the modern subject. The position that differences do not have to be transcended to realize full humanity is

one that is not incompatible with the key idea of the Concept as a totality that allows the right of free development on *both* the side of universality and particularity.

Among the representatives of the discourse of eco-feminist and environmental philosophy are those, such as Alison Stone, who think that despite his shortcomings, Hegel may be relevant to their line of inquiry. Although Hegel does not provide any clear alternative to the position that the natural element has to be sacrificed for people to realize their full humanity as free and rational subjects, he does not wholly champion the view that people are able to separate from Nature and assimilate to an identity based on transcendent standards of freedom and reason. He does preserve a sphere for the natural ethical community of the family and although women undeniably are penalized by this imperfect solution to the Nature/Spirit conflict, the preservation of ethical substantiality may be an acknowledgement that the principle of subjective freedom is not a sufficient foundation for modern ethical life and something more is needed to revive the universal moment of modern subjectivity. His critical attitude towards the potential for an excessively individualistic modern subject opens space for expression of some of the concerns specific to eco-feminism and environmental philosophy, especially as they relate to the fact of natural limitations on the development of particularity. This discourse raises the intriguing possibility that Hegel's philosophy of objective Spirit is open to the interpretation that modern ethical substance is not entirely inter-subjective in origins and has an element of the extra-subjective that could be the natural world. It would be worthwhile to investigate the possibilities in the doctrine of objective Spirit for modifications that would bridge the gap between the social account of reason, and the natural world.

Hegel reconciled the conflict of Nature and Spirit in a *social* account of reason appearing in the form of a community that permits its members the full development of their

individuality and particular interests and then integrates these with the universal ends of the state. His theory of modern ethical life describes the institutions (family, civil society, and the state) and arrangements necessary for people to be free in accordance with the modern principle of the right of subjective freedom. The dilemma for feminist thought is that, notwithstanding the primacy of the modern principle of subjective freedom and the Christian egalitarian principles that underlie secular state and society, Hegel asserts that men and women fill different and complementary ethical roles. His rationale for confining women to the family sphere and preserving their consciousness at the dialectical stage of the ancient Greek subject appears to be based on the need to preserve the distinction between the ethical spheres of substantiality (the family) and subjective freedom (civil society and the state). There are differing assessments of *why* or even *if* this distinction would be necessary to complete his project. The thesis took the approach of studying the contradictions inherent in Hegel's treatment of women in the larger context of his efforts to systematically resolve the conflict of Nature and Spirit in unity, without compromising the gains of modern freedom. The thesis argued the situation for modern women has its intellectual roots in this effort that Hegel does not bring to completion in the theory of modern ethical life. He does not expand the social account of reason beyond the limits of the community to include a responsible relationship with the natural world. The thesis conclusion is that in a context where this relationship has not been developed, the experience of women in their historical role as stewards of natural ethical life cannot be seen as anything other than a limitation on the capacity to assume the identity of the free and rational modern subject. A continuation of the theory of modern ethical life leading to development of this relationship is necessary to realize Hegel's intentions for women and for humanity. Some strands of feminist philosophical

discourse, notably “difference” feminism and feminist environmental philosophy, have been more successful than others in advancing the discussion in the direction of modifications that could fulfil Hegel’s intentions. That is because the issue of how to recognize people as free, equal and rational subjects increasingly is surrounded by debates. What is needed is an acknowledgement of the centrality to the conception of modern subjectivity of the ideals of individual freedom and autonomy, followed by a discussion of the limitations of these ideal and their connection with other elements of the human condition.

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