A STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION:
HEGEL'S ANTIGONE AND ETHICAL LIFE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

SİNEM ÖNEM

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

SEPTEMBER 2012

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

A STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION:
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September 2012, 72 pages

This thesis focuses on Sophocles' *Antigone* in the context of Hegel's reference to it in describing the ancient Greek ethical life in the chapter on "Spirit" of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. While evaluating the ancient Greek ethical life as a moment on the way to Spirit's self-knowledge which dissolves through its own dialectics, Hegel describes the inherent contradictions of ancient Greek ethical life which cause its dissolution through *Antigone*. Antigone's act of mourning has a central position in the context of the supersession of these contradictions. The aim of this thesis is to understand the ancient Greek ethical life as Hegel describes it and to specify Antigone's position in this description.

Keywords: Hegel, Antigone, Ethical Life, Law, Mourning.

ÖZ

UZLAŞMAYA DOĞRU BİR ADIM:
HEGEL'İN ANTİGONE'Sİ VE ETİK YAŞAM

Önem, Sinem

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Elif Çırakman

Eylül 2012, 72 sayfa

Bu tez, Tinin Fenomenolojisi'nin Tin Bölümü'nde Hegel'in, Antik Yunan etik yaşamını tasvir ederken kullandığı bağlamda Sofokles'in *Antigone*'sine odaklanmaktadır. Hegel, Antik Yunan etik yaşamını Tin'in kendi bilgisine ulaşma yolunda kendi diyalektik hareketiyle çözülen bir uğrak olarak değerlendirirken, bu çözülmenin sebebi olan içsel çelişkileri *Antigone* aracılığıyla tasvir eder. Bu çelişkilerin aşılması bağlamında Antigone'nin yas tutma edimi merkezî konumdadır. Bu tezin amacı, Hegel'in betimlediği şekliyle Antik Yunan etik yaşamını anlamak ve Antigone'nin bu betimlemede durduğu yeri belirginleştirmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hegel, Antigone, Etik Yaşam, Yasa, Yas.

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To My Parents and Rafet

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman for her guidance and support throughout the development of this study. I also want to thank the jury members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Çetin Türkyılmaz and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan for their valuable comments and criticisms.

I am particularly grateful to my family for their unconditional support. I express my "indebtedness" to Rafet Uçkan for his unfailing support, love and encouragement.

I would also like to thank TÜBİTAK for the financial support during my master's degree studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HPS   A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, Quentin Lauer.

HSP   Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation, Michael O. Hardimon.

HTT   Hegel or the Tragedy of Thinking, Miguel de Beistegui.

MT   Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, Jean-Pierre Vernant & Pierre Vidal- Naquet.

OGOG   On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life, Dennis J. Schmidt.

PS   Phenomenology of Spirit, G.W. F. Hegel.

RFH   Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other, Robert R. Williams.

TA   Tragic Ambiguity: Anthropology, Philosophy and Sophocles' Antigone, Th. C. W. Oudemans & A. P. M. H. Lardinois.

TS   Tragedies of Spirit: Tracing the Finitude in Hegel's Phenomenology, Theodore D. George.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When defining the "malaises" of our age, Charles Taylor argues that the rise of individualism narrows down our lives and makes us less concerned with others and society, with whom and within which we live.[1] This causes a certain kind of dichotomy between us and the broader horizon we belong, a dichotomy, which is taken for granted more and more. As Beistegui says, years before, in his early writings, Hegel was also criticizing his age by arguing that modern individuals live separated from the State, from God, and from other citizens.[2] For Hegel, this separation within the heart of modern life leads to the question of the place of individuals within a larger whole which they belong, and refers to the loss of the sense of "at-homeness" in the world.

In one of his essays Hegel argues that the need of/for philosophy arises when dichotomies are taken as given and thought as fixed oppositions.[3] Being that of between individual and the state/others/God, if these dichotomies are taken as fixed, philosophy must come to the scene to show that they are only vanishing moments in the life of the whole. So, the need for philosophy arises from "homesickness"[4]. In this respect, Hegel's philosophy, as a project of reconciliation, guides us to find our

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[1] C. Taylor. (1991). The Malaise of Modernity: The House of Anansi, 4.

[2] M. Beistegui. (2000). Hegel: or the Tragedy of Thinking. In M. Beistegui & S. Sparks (Eds.), *Philosophy and Tragedy*. London: Routledge, 12. Hereafter: HTT.

[3] G.W.F. Hegel. (1977). *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (H. S. Harris & W. Cerf, Trans.). New York: State University of New York Press, 89.

[4] In his lectures on "Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit", Jay M. Bernstein emphasizes this point. J. Lacey. & T. Kesselman (Producers). (1994). J. M. Bernstein's Lecture on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. Retrieved from http://bernsteintapes.com/hegellist.html

place in the world, to which we belong, but which we ignore.[5] It is not a coincidence that this philosophy is mingled with ancient Greek tragedy, which summons us to "an experience of that which is greater than us yet to which we belong"[6].

Hegel sometimes turns to the resources of Greek tragedy in his works and *Phenomenology* is not an exception. Being a story of homecoming and a ladder to philosophical standpoint, it shows on the one hand that individuality should not be understood as atomism, and on the other hand the reason of the oppositions is the one-sidedness of the consciousness. In this way, it aims to reconcile the individual with the social world s/he lives. Within the narrative of the *Phenomenology*, Antigone has an important role. She appears at the beginning of the chapter on Spirit, in which Hegel describes the Spirit in its immediacy, which is the ancient Greek ethical life.

At the beginnings of his career, the idea of ancient Greek life has governed Hegel's thought as a model for unity and harmony in opposition to the separation of modernity.[7] In his mature thought, which is assumed to begin with his *Phenomenology*,[8] the ancient Greek life appears as a moment on the way to "absolute knowing", which has to be left behind because of its inner collisions which hide behind its seeming harmony. The unity of ancient Greek ethical life is a unity at the expense of suppressing difference, and this is proved by Antigone. Through her act, the ancient Greek ethical life dissolves and the way to reconciliation is opened up, which does not end in sacrificing the difference and individuality in the whole, but preserves them within.

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[5] See Michael O. Hardimon Hardimon. (1994). *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Hereafter: HSP.

[6] Dennis J. Schmidt. (2001). *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 8. Hereafter: OGOG.

[7] HTT, 12.

[8] Robert Stern. (2002). *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit*. London: Routledge, 4.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze Hegel's interpretation of *Antigone* as it appears in the section on the "ethical order" of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The motivation behind the choice of this topic is that both *Antigone* and Hegel's philosophy are the resources which philosophers of our day return for gaining insights for the current debates concerning ethical and political issues. *Antigone,* on the one hand, provides a ground for the discussions concerning mourning, gender, the relation between state and individual, citizenship, family, civil society, sovereignty, law, etc. because these are the themes it employs as a work of literature. Hegel's philosophy, on the other hand, is still a living resource for thinking today, although there is a dispute concerning in what sense it is a living resource.[9] In this respect, a study which combines these topics can help us in accessing contemporary thought, which problematizes our relation with society.

For understanding Hegel's description of the ethical order and the role of Antigone's action, I shall divide my thesis into three parts. In the second chapter, I shall explain Hegel's project by defining it as a search for overcoming alienation. The place of *Phenomenology of Spirit* in this project is to provide natural consciousness to get rid of its one-sided way of thinking, and in this way to be able to see that the modern world is rational. In this respect *Phenomenology of Spirit* is written for educating natural consciousness, and justifying the standpoint of science, and Antigone's world is only a moment on the way to absolute knowing.

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[9] For instance, Emil Fackenheim argues that, if Hegel lived after Auschwitz he would not be a Hegelian, because as a realist thinker he would not argue that such a fragmentation in reality can be captured in thought. See B. Pollock. (April 2007). Thought Going to the School with Life? Fackenheim's Last Philosophical Testament. *AJS Review*, 31(1), 133-159. And, Charles Taylor, when tracing Hegelianism in the 20th century, argues that Hegel's central thesis which is the synthesis of rational autonomy with the romantic and unitary view of the world, is dead in the contemporary world. See C. Taylor. (1977). *Hegel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 537-572. On the other hand, H.S. Harris argues that Hegel's idea of philosophy as the apprehension of its own time is accepted by those who think that Hegel's central thesis is dead, but they cannot see that this idea of philosophy refers to the transcendence of time, which means that there is a common structure in all times. If they could see this, he says, they would agree with him in arguing that it is possible to be a Hegelian today. H. S. Harris. (2007). Would Hegel be a 'Hegelian' Today? *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, 3(2-3).

In the third chapter, first of all, I shall explain Sophocles' *Antigone*, its mythic origin and Hegel's choice of this tragedy in displaying the inner collisions of ethical life. Then, I shall explain the interpretations of Sophocles' *Antigone* which can be divided into two: The orthodox view and the Hegelian view. Finally, I shall explain Hegel's description of the ethical order and Antigone's place in it.

In the fourth chapter, I shall try to discuss the inner collisions of ethical life by focusing on the role of death; then, I shall focus on the relationship of law, mourning and community as it appears in the ethical order and finally, I shall discuss the meaning of Antigone's action within the *Phenomenology*.

In the conclusion I will raise the possibility of thinking her action not as an act of transgression but as an act of supersession, which plays an important role in the *Phenomenology*.

CHAPTER II

FROM A DEMAND TO ITS REALIZATION: THE ROLE OF
PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT

In the 19th century German thought there arouse an interest in ancient Greek tragedy. The reason for this interest is interpreted differently by scholars. On the one hand, Miguel de Beistegui and Simon Sparks argue that tragedy is offered as a solution to a problem rooted in Kant's philosophy. Kant separates the sphere of knowledge into practical and theoretical, the realms of which are morality/freedom and nature respectively. These two realms are tried to be linked in the third critique for the unity of philosophy. Since, as they argue, he fails to provide a transition from one to the other, the order of freedom and order of nature remain separated. Exactly for this reason, tragic turning took place. They think that tragedy can solve the Kantian problem "because the tragedy would be nothing other than the presentation, the exposition, precisely, of the conflict between immutable orders co-existing in man: the order of nature or of necessity, on the one hand, and the order of freedom, on the other, the order of sensible finitude, and the order of practical infinity".[10] Schmidt, on the other hand, argues that, the tragic turning in philosophy since Kant and Hegel, including contemporary thought can be understood as a return to Aristotle's claim that impulse to make art is native to human beings, so for a project of self-understanding, art is a resource which, we can return.[11] Besides, Schmidt says that, tragic art nourishes an ethical sensibility and for this reason for a formulation of ethics and politics responsive to contemporary life, philosophers turn

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[10] For the detailed analysis of the Kantian problem and the proposed solution see S. Sparks & M. Beistegui. (Eds.). (2000). *Philosophy and Tragedy*. London: Routledge, 1-7.

[11] OGOG, 2-3.

to tragedy.[12] Therefore, we can say that emergence of a need for such a formulation causes a tendency to turn back to tragedy. He also says that, Hegel gives importance to the educative role of tragedy: tragedy educates us as citizens of a world that is bigger than the world we define.[13] No matter how this interest in tragedy or in the tragic is interpreted, German philosophers of the 19th century found in the tragic poetry a resource for their thinking. And Hegel was no exception.

Hegel's relation to the tragedy was twofold. On the one hand, he was interested in the idea of the tragic and conceived it as the idea at the core of the dialectical movement. As Simon Critchley claims, the essence of tragedy is the two-sided collision of opposed powers, and in this regard, one-sidedness in any form of thinking has to be avoided. This is to say that we have to understand that there are always two sides in a collision. For Critchley, the essence of tragedy becomes the exemplar of how we come to think and in this regard we can claim that dialectical thinking is inevitably tragic.[14] On the other hand, Hegel was also interested in tragedy as a literary genre. In the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, following Aristotle's argument in the *Poetics*[15], Hegel argues that tragedy awakens the feelings of pity, fear and reconciliation in the spectator.[16] Here, we see the idea of "reconciliation"

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[12] OGOG, 3.

[13] For further discussion see OGOG, 2-3.

[14] EGS (Producer). (2011). Simon Critchley. Hegel: The Philosopher of Tragedy. Retrieved from http://www.egs.edu/faculty/simon-critchley/videos/hegel-the-philosopher-of-tragedy/ A similar idea is proposed by Jay M. Bernstein. He argues that although the prevailing idea is to read *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a *Divine Comedy*, the actual model is Greek tragedy. For the lectures given by him see the link on footnote 4.

[15] Aristotle argues that as a mimesis of an action, tragedy awakens the feelings of pity and fear and through this way it purifies the soul. This is what he means by "catharsis". He says that, "A tragedy, then is a *mimesis* of an action –that is, it is [morally] serious and purposeful, having magnitude; uttered in heightened language and [using] each of its resources [i.e. dialogue and song] separately in the various sections [of the play], [the action presented] by people acting rather than by narration; <bringing about through [a process of] pity and fear [in the events enacted] the purification of those destructive or painful acts.>". J. Baxter & B. Atherton. (Eds.). (1997). *Aristotle's Poetics*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 67-69.

[16] He says that "[a]bove mere fear and tragic sympathy there therefore stands that sense of reconciliation which the tragedy affords by the glimpse of eternal justice." G.W.F. Hegel. (1975).

as the key concept which connects his twofold interest in tragedy, i.e. as both disclosing the idea of tragic and as a literary genre awakening human sensibility. For Hegel, reconciliation is not only a feeling awakened by the tragedies, but also the fundamental demand of thought which necessarily develops in a dialectical fashion. Although tragedies refer to this demand by exposing the idea of reconciliation in a sensible manner, only philosophy can satisfy it by comprehending its actuality in the modern world.

In order not just to give the feeling of it but to provide a real reconciliation, philosophy has to show that the world is rational and therefore can be a home for rational beings. It has to be noted that the mentioned world is the modern world, in which reconciliation is a real possibility. Unless we see that the world is rational, and conceive ourselves as rational beings belonging to a rational world, we will feel alienated.

Hardimon distinguishes three kinds of alienation: subjective alienation, objective alienation and complete alienation.[17] Objective alienation is being alienated in a world in which no reconciliation can take place, because of its structure. Generally, objective alienation is accompanied by the feeling of alienation because, whether they realize or not people suffer from not finding a place for self-realization. On the other hand, subjective alienation is being alienated in a world which does or does not accommodate the possibility of reconciliation. If it is a home in which reconciliation can take place subjective alienation means failing to grasp this fact, if it is not a home, subjective alienation means ability to grasp this fact.[18] Complete alienation is being both subjectively and objectively alienated.[19] For Hegel this is

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Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts (T. M. Knox, Trans. Vol. II). London: Oxford University Press, 1198.

[17] HSP, 120.

[18] HSP, 121.

[19] HSP, 121.

the fact in the Roman world or in medieval Europe. Hardimon notes that, for Hegel his contemporaries are suffering from pure subjective alienation.[20] This means that they cannot see that the world is a home. That is why he attempts to develop a reconciliation theory.

Above all, reconciliation means overcoming alienation and being at home in the world which along with its institutions is the place where individuals can freely realize themselves. We can enlist two conditions for overcoming alienation and reconciling ourselves with the world:

a) The world must be a home which allows individuals to actualize themselves both socially and individually by taking part in its institutions.
b) We must get rid of our one-sided way of looking at the world and be in a position to see that it is rational.

For Hegel, the first condition is satisfied in the modern world, but not in the others. However, if we are still alienated in the modern world, which is a home, the problem resides in our way of looking at the world. Since our way of looking at things is one-sided and wrong, we encounter with conflict and alienation. It is important to note that, this does not mean that what exists in the modern world is rational[21], and when we change our look everything will be perfect. Rather it is to say that the modern world could accommodate the conditions for enhancing, developing, and realizing reason since "we" are capable of understanding ourselves as self-determining, free beings, and all our modernity consists in this self-reflective, self-determining character of our being. For this reason, Hegel conceives

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[20] HSP, 121.

[21] Even if we look at the world from the perspective that Hegel wants us to achieve, we may see that what is real in the world may not be rational. The point is not rationalization of everything happens, which is to say that Hegel is a conservative thinker and a defender of status quo. Hegel was saying that by changing our view, we can achieve to a position from where irrational things in the world can be judged and fostered to progress and correspond to their concepts, the situation in which they become rational. For further information see W. Dudley. (2003-2004). Impure Reason: Hegel on the Irrationality of the Rational. *The Owl of Minerva*, 35(1-2), 25-48.

conflicts and alienation as a matter of misrecognition of ourselves, others and our place in this world. Hardimon notes that

> Hegel's conception of reconciliation is thus one that understands itself as preserving conflict at one level and overcoming it at another. Both elements are attractive. The fact that it seeks to preserve conflict is attractive because the idea of a perfect harmony is both utopian and dangerous: utopian because unrealizable, dangerous because invidiously anti-individualistic. The fact that Hegel is willing to embrace conflict makes his thought quite appealing. … He does not regard the existence of conflict as something to be celebrated in its own right. It is important that Hegel argues that, at the most fundamental level, conflicts are overcome because, in so doing, he secures the status of his conception as a conception of reconciliation.[22]

Therefore, what Hegel aims at is not a conflict-free world. The idea of reconciliation does not promise such a world. Rather this idea discloses the true nature of conflicts, contradictions, and untruth, as only apparent, transitory. Reconciliation is a matter of reconciling ourselves as the member of the whole, and re-cognizing the conflicts in their new setting in a more holistic manner. As Stern claims,

> …Hegel takes it that we are responsible for creating the kind of intellectual and social environments that lead us to find the world intellectually and socially alien, as the world itself is and should be a 'home' to us. But given this, how does Hegel thinks these alienating conceptions come about? Hegel claims that such mistaken conceptions arise because we are inclined to think in a 'one-sided' or oppositional way: we believe that something is *either* finite *or* infinite, one *or* many, free *or* necessitated, human *or* divine, autonomous *or* part of a community, and so on. The difficulty is, Hegel argues, that if we take things in this way, then reason will find it hard to make sense of things, as it will then look at reality in a way that abstracts from the complex interrelation of these 'moments', when in fact to see itself in the world, reason must grasp that there is no genuine dichotomy here.[23]

For Hegel, the philosophical point of view, which is the point of view of absolute knowing, is a way of overcoming this one-sidedness, and the role of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to provide this. By elevating natural consciousness to the point of science through education, *Phenomenology* provides natural consciousness to change its one-sided way of thinking. Natural consciousness is the

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[22] HSP, 94.

[23] R. Stern. (2002). *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit.* London: Routledge,13.

term Hegel uses in pointing out the way of thinking embedded in its time. As Werner Marx points out, the term natural does not stand for bodily existence or organic nature, rather it means

> [a]ll the circumstances in the total situation which consciousness inhabits and which determine it. The natural consciousness "exists" essentially in immediate unity with the total situation which at any given time dominates and determines it; it belongs thereto, although the situation may rank for it as a sphere of objecthood standing opposed to it.[24]

In the following section, I will refer to the Preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in order to trace the ways in which Hegel approaches to this demand for reconciliation and its satisfaction through philosophy.

2.1. Reading the Preface: The Way to Science

The demand of reconciliation arising out of a state of alienation is expressed in the "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in a technical manner. In the "Preface", Hegel says that Spirit[25] has lost its essential being, and is in demand of recovery, but what it looks for satisfying this demand is edification rather than philosophy[26]. Hegel thinks that edification cannot bring reconciliation; rather what it can do is to

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[24] W. Marx. (1975). *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Commentary Based on the Preface and Introduction* (P. Heath, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 3.

[25] *Geist* (Spirit) is defined in the *Phenomenology* as the unity of self-consciousnesses in their opposition (p.110). This unity is the "we" which comes to know itself as "we" in the process of history. Therefore, we can say that spirit is what Hegel means by absolute which exists in space and in time.

[26] In the *Phenomenology* Hegel says that, "Spirit has not only lost its essential life; it is also conscious of this loss, and of the finitude that is its own content. Turning away from the empty husks, and confessing that it lies in wickedness, it reviles itself for so doing, and now demands from philosophy, not so much knowledge of what it is, as the recovery through its agency of that lost sense of solid and substantial being. Philosophy is to meet this need, not by opening up the fast-locked nature of substance, and raising this to self-consciousness, not by bringing consciousness out of its chaos back to an order based on thought, nor the simplicity of the Notion, but rather by running together what thought has put asunder, by suppressing the differentiations of the Notion and restoring the feeling of essential being: in short, by providing edification rather than insight." G. W. F. Hegel. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit* (A. V. Miller, Trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4-5. Hereafter: PS. Hegel criticizes the previous attempts for fulfilling the aim of being at home in the world. One attempt is to answer this demand with edification which Hegel curses for being pre-scientific/pre-critical and archaic.

suppress the feeling of alienation along with the demand for reconciliation. What brings reconciliation can only be philosophy as Science, through which truth can be captured in its true shape. Therefore, philosophy can make us reconciled with the world by comprehending the truth.

We have seen that the very demand for reconciliation arising from our human condition turns out to be the demand for truth which turns out to be the demand for scientific philosophy. Hegel explicitly stated his aim in the "Preface" to the *Phenomenology*. He says that,

> [t]he true shape in which the truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth. To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title '*love* of knowing' and be *actual* knowing –that is what I have set myself to do. The inner necessity that knowing should be Science lies in its nature, and only the systematic exposition of philosophy itself provides it.[27]

Hegel thinks that besides inner necessity according to which only as Science, philosophy can reach the truth, there is also an external necessity which refers to the time in which that philosophy is produced. He thinks that, out of history a new world has emerged, and now the time is ripe for scientific philosophy[28], so the only thing that is left is to find a way for doing it, and he shoulders this task for himself.

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[27] PS, 3.

[28] Hegel defines his time with the words "*geburt*" (birth) and "*übergang*" (transition). It is interesting that 23 years before, Kant has used a similar word for describing enlightenment: "*ausgang*" (way out, exit). For Kant, *Aufklarung* is a way out from immaturity. Since the time is ripe for going out, for people who have forgot to use their reasons without help, critiques were the handbooks. From *ausgang* to *übergang*, a period of romanticism has passed. A brief look at this passage with the help of Beiser, will help us to understand Hegel's problem. Beiser describes the early romantic period as such: Early romantic thinkers were strong defenders of enlightenment ideals and because they push it to its limits, in being defenders of radical criticism they have faced with several problems. For them, radical criticism leads to skepticism because it shows all beliefs about moral, religious and political beliefs to be mere prejudices (p. 323). It leads to alienation from nature because since criticism is directed to nature, nature loses its mystery and beauty, and began to seem as an obstacle in the moral progress, then the possibility of being at home in the world is disappeared (p. 324). It also leads to a loss of the sense of community and belonging to a group and all forms of social and political life seem to be a form of irrational authority and a threat to individual autonomy (p. 324). Because of these reasons, early romantic thinkers tried to find a way for filling the vacuum enlightenment caused. Their solution was art. For them, only art can restore the feelings of being at home in the world, belonging to community, i.e. unity with nature and society, and only it can re-create the lost mystery and beauty of nature, moral and religious belief, by the creation of a new

We have stated Hegel's aim, and try to explain what this aim is and from where it has arisen. However Hegel explicitly states that,

> …the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather result together with the process through which it came about. The aim by itself is a lifeless universal, just as the guiding tendency is a mere drive that as yet lacks an actual existence; and the bare result is the corpse which has left the guiding tendency behind it.[29]

Therefore, not only the aim but the process of realizing this aim is important, and Science is not only the result of a process but also the process itself. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, then, we will witness the process of the realization of the aim, which is also the determination of it.

The aim of attaining the knowledge of the truth, the whole or the absolute requires the supersession of the gap between the knower or the subject and the known or the object; a gap whose origin can be traced back to Descartes' mind-body dualism, and the birth of epistemology as the representational theory of knowledge. Thus in Hegel's thought, true, being the subject-matter of philosophy is the whole, and whole, just because it is a whole encloses both subject and the object. The problem is to show that how knowledge is possible if they are identical, because knowledge requires a split between them. Concerning this problem within the framework of *Phenomenology*, Hegel says that only through a process of alienation and reconciliation knowledge of the whole can be attained. So the split between the subject and the object is a necessary moment in the process that goes to the reconciliation and truth. Therefore Hegel's path is somewhat determined: his aim is the knowledge of the whole/absolute. For reaching to this knowledge, there must be

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mythology (p. 325). Hegel shares their problems, but he proposes not art but Science as a solution. For a detailed description of early romantic period see: F. Beiser. (1996). Early Romanticism and the Aufklärung. In J. Schmidt (Ed.), *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Tweintieth-Century Questions* (pp. 317-329). California: University of California Press. For Kant's article: I. Kant. (1996). An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment? (J. Schmidt, Trans.). In J. Schmidt (Ed.), *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions* (pp. 58-64). California: California University Press.

[29] PS, 2-3.

a split within it. Through a process, this split is going to be closed, and absolute or whole is attained in a reflective, articulated manner. This process from aim to result which begins and ends with absolute is a process of self-determination and self-articulation of the absolute. Concerning this process Hegel says that,

> The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is; and precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself. Though it may seem contradictory that the Absolute should be conceived essentially as a result, it needs little pondering to set this show a contradiction in its true light. The beginning, the principle, or the Absolute, as at first immediately enunciated, is only the universal. Just as when I say '*all* animals', this expression cannot pass for a zoology, so it is equally plain that the words, 'the Divine', 'the Absolute', 'the Eternal', etc. do not express what is contained in them; and only such words, in fact, do express the intuition as something immediate. Whatever is more than such a word, even the transition to a mere proposition, contains becoming-other that has to be taken back, or is a mediation.[30]

What Hegel states is the necessity of mediation, or self-othering on the way to knowledge. The aim of attaining the whole or the absolute is realized through this process which is nothing other than the articulation of the aim by itself. As being abstract and merely universal, it gains a content and meaning through it. Lacking process and mediation leads to the presupposition of absolute which remains only as a bare universal. In it, as a bare universal, there will not be differentiation, no place for particulars, and the relation of the absolute with the finite things would remain as a problem.[31] Therefore, mediation is necessary.

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[30] PS, 11.

[31] These are Hegel's criticisms of Schelling's idea of the absolute, but what Schelling means by the absolute? Beiser in his article clearly describes Schelling's view and its relation to Hegel's thought. He says that, "According to Schelling, the absolute is that which does not depend upon anything else in order to exist or be conceived. Both in its existence and essence, the absolute is independent of, or unconditioned by, all other things. In other words, the absolute is *causa sui*, that whose essence necessarily involves existence" (p.4.). According Schelling, substance does not refer to any supernatural thing; rather it is the entire universe which includes everything. Beiser says that, Schelling later developed a conception of the absolute as the subject-object identity, and also understood substance in vitalistic terms (p.5). Although Hegel had doubts about the subject-object identity, he followed Schelling's ideas concerning the vitality of the substance and he thought it as an organic unity. What Hegel criticizes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is Schelling's definition of the absolute as the subject-object identity. "If we conceive of the absolute as only subject-object

In accomplishing the task of forming a scientific system of truth which does not accommodate the above mentioned problems, Hegel says that, "[i]n my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*".[32] More or less the idea is that the absolute is capable of self-articulation. It is not only substance, which encloses everything within itself, it is also capable of knowing itself as absolute –through a process- because what is necessary for knowledge is within it, it has also the power of negativity, the power of subject. It is both substance and subject. Hegel says that,

> the living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This Substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity*, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this self-*restoring* sameness, or this reflection in otherness within itself –not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such– is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as

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identity apart from the apparent dualism between subject and object in our ordinary experience – if we see it as only the infinite substance without its finite modes – then we seem to exclude the realm of the finite and appearance from it"(p.7). This is the reason why Hegel calls Schelling's conception of the absolute "the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black". Fichte was also arguing that the absolute is the subject-object identity, which for him, can be found in self-knowledge. He understood the self as the absolute ego, the knowledge of which is not attainable. For both Schelling and Hegel, this is the problem in Fichte's thought. In solving this problem Schelling argues that the identity of subject and object, which he identifies with the absolute, is not absolute ego but the organic unity of the entire universe. He further argues that through intellectual intuition absolute can be known. What Hegel criticizes is his argument concerning the way of knowing the absolute. For Hegel, Schelling's idea of a intellectual intuition is problematic because of some reasons; first, we cannot justify this standpoint to ordinary consciousness because even if philosopher can grasp its identity with the whole universe, an ordinary consciousness always thinks it as its antithesis, second, which is linked with the first problem, philosophical construction is esoteric but philosophy should be accessible to everyone, and third, Schelling's idea of the absolute, at the end does not give place to particulars and end up with formal identity because according to his method we abstract the properties which makes something a particular (p.18). Because of these reasons, Hegel criticized Schelling's position. He thinks that the method of intellectual intuition is not suitable for science which should be exoteric and which does justice to particulars. For the details see: F. Beiser. (1993). Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics. In F. Beiser (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[32] PS, 10.

its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.[33]

The idea is better understood if absolute is understood as Spirit. The absolute, as the aim articulates itself through a process, comes to know itself as absolute, because it has negativity within itself. That is why Hegel says that it is both substance and subject. The process can also be expressed by saying that the self-articulation of the absolute is the process of spirit which gains its self-knowledge. Hegel says that, "[t]hat the True is actual only as system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit –the most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion."[34] Therefore, what is expressed in the *Phenomenology* is the process of Spirit which comes to know itself as Spirit.

On the way to the self-knowledge spirit distinguishes itself from itself, and setting a self-opposition. Since spirit becomes other to itself, it is alienated, and this alienation is overcome in self-knowledge or reconciliation of the opposite sides. Alienation, within the *Phenomenology* is a necessary moment for the self-knowledge of spirit. Hegel says that "[t]he Spirit that, so developed, knows itself as Spirit, is *Science*; Science is its actuality and the realm which it builds for itself in its own element."[35] Therefore, science is the process of knowing the truth and the knowledge of truth is the process in which spirit comes to know itself.

We have said that, *Phenomenology of Spirit* was written for justifying the standpoint of science to the natural consciousness which used to think with oppositions, i.e. it puts the object over against itself. Therefore, Hegel's idea of the knowledge of the absolute which can be attained from within the object cannot be easily comprehended from its standpoint. It cannot think itself in unity with its

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[33] PS, 10.

[34] PS, 14.

[35] PS, 14.

object. Hegel uses a unique method, and provides the natural consciousness to see the truth by itself. In the next section, we will deal with the method of the *Phenomenology of Spirit.*

2.2. The Method of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

In the "Introduction" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel says that the "natural" assumption in philosophy is that "before we start to deal with its proper subject-matter, viz. the actual cognition of what truly is, one must first of all come to an understanding about cognition, which is regarded either as the instrument to get hold of the Absolute, or as the medium through which one discovers it."[36] This idea is constructed on the more fundamental idea that the cognition and the Absolute are distinct, so for cognition to reach what is outside it without changing it, we must know what it carries with itself in knowing. Therefore, for avoiding error, philosophers thought that they must know beforehand, what knowledge itself is. So, it is not a coincidence that epistemology becomes the first philosophy. Philosophers, in search of epistemological securities, searched for a measure or a criterion of knowing the truth. Application of a certain particular standard or measure would inevitably result with the attainment of a certain particular result. They thought that if the truth is attained by the instrument or knowledge, when they eliminate the instrument, they are able to attain absolute as it is in itself. What they did not see is that, if instrument is eliminated, nothing left. Same idea is also valid if we think knowledge as a medium. If we eliminate the medium of the truth from it, truth disappears along with the medium. In Hegel's words;

> [i]t would seem, to be sure, that this evil could be remedied through an acquaintance with the way in which the *instrument* works; for this would enable us to eliminate from the representation of the Absolute which we have gained through it whatever due to the instrument, and thus get the truth in its purity. But this 'improvement' would in fact only bring us back to where we were before. If we remove from a reshaped thing what the instrument has done to it, then the thing –here the Absolute– becomes for us exactly what it was before this [accordingly] superfluous effort…. Or, if by testing cognition, which we conceive of as *medium*, we get to know the law

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[36] PS, 46.

of its refraction, it is again useless to subtract this from the end result. For it not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself whereby truth reaches us, that is cognition; and if this were removed, all that would be a pure direction or a blank space.[37]

For Hegel, the reason for trying to determine knowledge before coming to know is meant to avoid error, but in this way, philosophers totally lose their possibility of knowing the absolute. Because Absolute, being as it is, cannot accommodate something outside it, so it also has the cognition within. Therefore, since, "the Absolute alone is true, or the truth alone is absolute", they lose their possibility to know the truth, so their fear of error turns out to be the fear of truth.[38] Thence the attempt of securing knowledge through investigating the powers of cognition before beginning to know is proved to be a vain attempt. This way of thinking proves every attempt of reaching the absolute wrong, because the presupposed distinction between the subject and the object is deepened rather than closed.

Since the idea that absolute is something outside the subject is proved to be wrong, there arises another idea that absolute is already here, i.e. subject and the object are identical.[39] In a sense this must be true, if the absolute is not outside of or different from the subject, it must be inside, or identical with the subject. In following this necessity, some philosophers assume this identity at the beginning, but for Hegel this way of putting the issue is also wrong, because if this identity is truth, it must be proved, because without such a proof although it is right to claim their identity, such a claim cannot resist criticism, or if it cannot be proved it cannot escape being a claim among many others. Hegel thinks that, such an identity or the knowledge of the absolute can only be showed through Science which shows itself in its true shape only after a process of articulation, and the whole is both this process and the result. Therefore, Hegel thinks that neither the distinction between the subject and the object, nor their identity is to be presupposed. Without such a presupposition he

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[37] PS, 46-47.

[38] PS, 47.

[39] This idea can be found in Fichte and Schelling. See footnote 31.

aims at the knowledge of the absolute, which is not only mere identity of the subject and the object, but a unity in their difference. Now, if neither the identity, nor the difference of them is presupposed how the process to the absolute knowing begins? His answer is to begin with Science in its non-articulated form.

Hegel thinks that Science, when it first comes to the scene is phenomenal knowledge, and it has to develop to be a science in its truth.[40] He says that, "[i]n this connection it makes no difference whether we think of Science as the appearance because it comes on the scene alongside other mode of knowledge, or whether we call that other untrue knowledge its manifestation."[41] Therefore, the distinction between Science when it first comes on the scene and untrue knowledge cannot be made. The only thing we can do is to begin with phenomenal knowledge and see what is going to happen. Hegel says that,

> Now, because it has only phenomenal knowledge for its object, this exposition seems not to be Science, free and self-moving in its own peculiar shape; yet from this standpoint it can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge; or as the way of the Soul which journeys through the series of its own configurations as though they were the stations appointed for it by its own nature, so that it may purify itself for the life of the Spirit, and achieve finally through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself.[42]

Phenomenal knowledge is natural consciousness' way of knowing, but this does not mean they are identical. What is the phenomenal knowledge? Since we have said that the *Phenomenology* is written to justify the standpoint of science to natural consciousness, at first it may seem that phenomenal knowledge is the natural consciousness engaged in experience, but the issue is not that simple.

It is true that, justification of the system consists in its presentation, so it does not arrange pros and cons of its standpoint; rather it shows the intelligibility of the Absolute to the natural consciousness. This means that, it educates natural

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[40] PS, 48.

[41] PS, 48.

[42] PS, 49.

consciousness for changing its standpoint. When doing this, it shows to the natural consciousness, what it cannot see by itself. What natural consciousness cannot see is not merely a failure on its own part but a necessary moment in its progress towards truth. Hegel says that, "[n]atural consciousness will show itself to be only the Notion of knowledge, or in other words, not to be real knowledge. But since it directly takes itself to be real knowledge, this path has a negative significance for it, and what is in fact the realization of the Notion, counts for it rather as the loss of its own self; for it does lose its truth on this path"[43]. Since natural consciousness claims to know the absolute, its failure brings the negation of its claim. For evolving into genuine knowing, this negation must be a determinate negation, a negation that causes the birth of a new shape of consciousness. What natural consciousness does not see is this birth of new object. It loses itself in the process, and does not see its necessary evolvement into new shape.

> The necessary progression and interconnection of the forms of the unreal consciousness will by itself bring to pass the *completion* of the series. To make this more intelligible, it may be remarked, in a preliminary and general way, that the exposition of the untrue consciousness in its untruth is not merely a *negative* procedure. The natural consciousness itself normally takes this one-sided view of it; and a knowledge which makes this one-sidedness its very essence is itself one of the patterns of incomplete consciousness which occurs on the road itself, and will manifest itself in due course. This is just the skepticism which only ever sees pure nothingness in its result and abstracts from the fact that this nothingness is specifically the nothingness of that *from which it results*. For it is only when it is taken as the result of that from which it emerges, that it is, in fact, the true result; in that case it is itself a *determinate* nothingness, one which has a *content*. The skepticism that ends up with the bare abstraction of nothingness or emptiness cannot get any further from there, but must wait to see whether something new comes along and what it is, in order to throw it too into the same empty abyss. But when, on the other hand, the result is conceived as it is in truth, namely, as a *determinate* negation, a new form has thereby immediately arisen, and in the negation the transition is made through which the progress through the complete series of forms comes about itself.[44]

What Hegel shows in the *Phenomenology* at first is that knowledge of natural consciousness is a phenomenal knowledge or a relative knowledge that is "short of

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[43] PS, 49.

[44] PS, 50-51.

science".[45] Then he shows the necessary evolvement of the phenomenal knowledge. This necessity also brings the completeness of the series, say of different shapes of consciousness that ends in the absolute knowing.

Being short of science, each shape aims at absolute knowing and for attaining their goals, i.e., the knowledge of the absolute, each shape puts a criterion for knowing. What is shown in the *Phenomenology* is that consciousness' criteria of knowing do not overlap with their knowledge of the criteria, until consciousnesses arrive at scientific consciousness and therefore until the process is completed they cannot attain what they claim. In this process, Hegel does not interfere in the movement of consciousness; rather he only describes the process. As Dove states, Hegel's method in the phenomenology is not dialectical, rather it is descriptive.[46] What he describes is the dialectical movement of the consciousness. It is generally thought that Hegel's dialectic is a tripartite movement in which two contradictory moments are synthesized, by remaining what they are, in a third moment. This is certainly not the issue for Hegel. Mueller states that, this idea is rather a legend, ""[d]ialectic does not for Hegel mean "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis." Dialectic means that any "ism" –which has a polar opposite, or a special viewpoint leaving "the rest" to itself– must be criticized by the logic of philosophical thought, whose problem is reality as such, the "World-itself""[47].

By determinate negation, consciousness moves to the point of science by itself. Since Hegel's method is only descriptive, he does not put a criterion for the truth of knowledge. Consciousness criticizes itself by putting criterion to its knowledge and testing this criterion. This is what immanent criticism is. Hegel refrains "from

[45] Q. Lauer. (1993). *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.* New York: Fordham University Press, 27. Hereafter: HPS.

[46] Kenley R. Dove. (June 1970). Hegel's Phenomenological Method. *Review of Metaphysics*, 23(3), 615-641.

[47] Gustav E. Mueller. (June 1958). The Hegel Legend of "Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis". *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19(3), 411-414.

comparing the claims of ordinary consciousness with the world as philosophy comprehends it, and confining himself instead to studying the relation between consciousness and what consciousness itself takes its object to be."[48] He says that,

> Now, if we inquire into the truth of knowledge, it seems that we are asking what knowledge is *in itself*. Yet in this inquiry knowledge is our object, something that exists *for us*; and the *in-itself* that would supposedly result from it would rather be the being of knowledge *for us*. What we asserted to be its essence would be not so much its truth but rather just our knowledge of it. The essence of criterion would lie within ourselves, and that which was to be compared with it and about which a decision would be reached through this comparison would not necessarily have to recognize the validity of such standard. But the dissociation, or this semblance of dissociation and presupposition, is overcome by the nature of the object we are investigating. Consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself; for the distinction made above falls within it.[49]

Since we take consciousness as our object, and consciousness is that which makes the distinction between knowledge or Notion, and truth or object, it is not necessary to put a criterion from outside. Both Notion and the object or the criterion falls within consciousness, and the comparison between them is the comparison of consciousness with itself.

This comparison of consciousness with itself works because although it is consciousness which distinguishes the object as it is in itself, and objects as known, it does not know that the distinction belongs to it. It naturally assumes that there is such a distinction.[50] So it does not know that the object as it is in itself is *for* consciousness. For it, in the process of knowing there are the moments of in itself and for consciousness of this in itself. In fact, the comparison is between, in itself which is in fact for consciousness and its knowledge. Since they do not correspond, consciousness changes its knowledge, again without knowing that if it changes its

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[48] S. Houlgate. (2005). *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth, History* (2nd ed.). Malden: Blackwell, 52.

[49] PS, 53.

[50] PS, 54.

knowledge, object is also changes.[51] Since the object belongs to knowledge and changes with it, the criterion also changes, because the criterion is the object. This shows that consciousness is capable of testing its criterion too.

Hegel says that, "*[i]nasmuch as the new true object issues from it,* this *dialectical* movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called *experience.*"[52] New object, or the new in itself is what becomes the in itself for consciousness of the preceding process. This happens by chance for the experiencing consciousness but by necessity *for us*. What Hegel presents in the *Phenomenology* as the "for us" is the point of view of the philosopher, who already passes the path to absolute knowing, and observes the experiencing consciousness. Necessity is only observable from the end, and, "for us" is what makes the experience of consciousness seems to have a scientific progression.[53] The *Phenomenology*, at the end, justifies the natural consciousness, the point of view of the philosopher; by showing that if consciousness is to criticize itself by itself, its criticism will take it to the science, where consciousness gets rid of the dogmas. When natural consciousness in this way gets rid of its one-sided way of thinking, it can see itself and the world in harmony.

2.3. Tragedy, Dialectics, and Reconciliation

We have defined the aim of Hegelian enterprise as to overcome alienation and reach reconciliation. For reconciliation in the modern world, what is necessary is to overcome conflict and alienation through getting rid of one-sidedness, which is natural consciousness' way of looking at the world. The role of *Phenomenology* then is determined as to educate natural consciousness and provide it to reach

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[51] PS, 54.

[52] PS, 55.

[53] PS, 55.

philosophical standpoint in which one-sidedness is left behind. After defining the problem, we have then discussed how this problem is dealt with in the *Phenomenology*. How *Phenomenology* educate the natural consciousness? In the second section we have tried to explain the method of *Phenomenology* for answering this question. Natural consciousness can get rid of its one-sidedness in seeing that it cannot prove its claim of knowing the truth. By failing in its every attempt, it revises its claim along with itself, so we face with several shapes of consciousnesses, all of which are natural consciousnesses, on the way to scientific standpoint. We have said that, in showing that it fails to prove its claim Hegel only describes the process of consciousness, and in this sense his method is descriptive. Since he does not interfere in the movement of consciousness, consciousness itself is capable of this movement. Hegel says that consciousness is capable of both putting the criteria of knowledge and testing these criteria. Therefore, by putting and testing its criteria, consciousness moves to the standpoint of science. This movement is dialectical.

We have said that for some interpreters this dialectical movement of consciousness is tragic, because in the movement, consciousness' claim of knowledge and the truth of this claim appear as opposites which cannot be reconciled. The reconciliation occurs in the ensuing shape of consciousness, the claim of which collides with the truth of this claim again. Therefore, until absolute knowing, tragic collisions are at work in the *Phenomenology*. In the absolute knowing, in which reconciliation comes on the scene, collisions no more appear as tragic, but resolvable. This means that, collisions will continue to exist, but will seem as transitory. As we have described above, Hegel does not aim at a conflict free world. The point is, from philosophical standpoint, these collisions only seem as vanishing moments and not as fixed and given oppositions. To be capable of seeing the tragic oppositions as vanishing moments is to be able to reconcile with the world. This is also to say that reconciliation with the world is to accept these collisions and oppositions as necessary in the life of the absolute. The way to absolute knowing shows that these oppositions along with their supersession are necessary. Through

comprehending this, individuals and world be in a harmony, and this is possible in the modern world.

The harmony of the world and the individual can also be found in ancient Greece, which is the first moment of the Spirit. Alienation is not a problem and reconciliation is not a demand in that world. It is the place where spirit is at home. The problem is that it lacks self-knowledge. We have said that for the self-knowledge of spirit, alienation is a necessary moment, and in the next chapter our question is from which necessity this moment arises. What is the problem in ancient Greece where individuals are in unity with their world? For answering this question, we will try to understand Hegel's exposition of the ancient Greek ethical life. This is a phase in the process of science to its full articulation. Hegel, for describing the problems inherent in it, uses Sophocles' *Antigone* as a means. Hence through focusing on *Antigone*, we will try to make sense of Hegel's understanding of the ethical life of ancient Greeks, and the problems within it.

CHAPTER III

FROM SOPHOCLES TO HEGEL: ANTIGONE IN ANCIENT GREECE

3.1. Introduction

Hegel's interest in Ancient Greek drama has begun in his youth. We know that he translated Sophocles' *Antigone*. This interest has continued in the following years as well, and he used *Antigone* as a model while he was writing *Phenomenology of Spirit*. At the beginning of the chapter on Spirit, *Antigone* appears to show the limits and resolution of the Greek ethical life, which refers to the first stage of Spirit. My aim in this chapter is to examine this usage. For this aim, I will give some information about *Antigone*, and then I will pass to Hegel's views on Greek ethical life, but before going into details it would be useful to remind some points.

First of all, it is clear that the Greek ethical life as it appears in the *Phenomenology* refers to a stage in the development of consciousness. To use Lauer's expression, this stage is "short of Science", that is, to what Hegel aims to reach at the end of the development. So, the chapter on ethical life is not Hegel's standpoint but rather his description of some other standpoint. Therefore, our aim in explaining Hegel's description of this stage, and its inherent development, is not to pass judgment on Hegel's philosophy, it is rather to get an insight from his understanding of a standpoint.

Secondly, in the foregoing chapter we have indicated that for spirit to know itself, alienation is required, but before alienation has emerged spirit is also at home without self-knowledge. This phase corresponds to the Ancient Greece. We know that, for Hegel alienation has begun to show itself with the development of individuality, therefore we cannot talk about individuality in Ancient Greece, at

least in the modern sense of the term[54]. So in the description of the ancient Greek people we will see individuals identify with their roles in the society without reflecting on and questioning them. For Hegel, since this identification does not accommodate reflection, it has to be overcome, that is, this immediate unity of individuals and their world must necessarily dissolve. In our analysis of the chapter on "ethical life", we will particularly pay attention to understand why such a form of life in which individuals identify themselves with their roles in the society cannot succeed as the truth of our social being.

There are two sections in the following, named "Sophocles' *Antigone*" and "Hegel's *Antigone*". In the first section, we will give information about Sophocles' *Antigone*, and the views of some classicist. In the second section, we will analyze the chapter on "ethical life" closely.

3. 2. Sophocles' *Antigone*

Jean-Pierre Vernant notes that, "Greek tragedy appears as a historical turning point precisely limited and detailed. It is born, flourishes, and degenerates in Athens, and all almost within the space of a hundred years."[55] For Vernant, there are reasons of this. Firstly, by mentioning the work of Louis Gernet he says that, tragedy as a literary movement emerges when legal thought tried to be constituted in the city-state.[56] So, poets, by making use of legal vocabulary, reveal the ambiguities in its terms.[57] Secondly, tragedy leans on mythic narratives and compares archaic modes of thought with new modes of thought which are developing. Vernant says that,

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[54] For a discussion of strong (modern) individuality and weak individuality see HSP, 146-153.

[55] Jean-Pierre Vernant & Pierre Vidal-Naquet. (1990). *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (J. Lloyd, Trans.). New York: Zone Books, 25. Hereafter: MT.

[56] MT, 25.

[57] MT, 25.

> [t]he tragic turning point thus occurs when a gap develops at the heart of the social experience. It is wide enough for the oppositions between legal and political thought on the one hand and the mythical and heroic traditions on the other to stand out quite clearly. Yet it is narrow enough for the conflict in values still to be a painful one and for the clash to continue to take place.[58]

Therefore, tragedy is the moment between the developing legal thought and archaic heroic values, which disappears with the rise of philosophy. In this historical moment, certainly, Sophocles, throughout his life which lasts almost a century, contributed to the life of tragedy. He lived in Athens between 496-406 BC, and was one of the most famous tragedy writers along with Euripides and Aeschylus. It is worrying that we have only seven tragedies –and fragments of a satire- of him today. One of these seven tragedies is *Antigone*, which is written earlier but in terms of the narrative, is the last play of the Oedipus trilogy. *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*, the first and the last play of the trilogy are the most known plays, due to the interest of philosophers and psychoanalysts.[59] Like other tragedies, this trilogy also has a mythic origin. Mythic narrative begins with the foundation of Thebes by Cadmus.[60] According to the story the city is established by Cadmus and "the sown

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[58] MT, 27.

[59] Besides, the plays also took attention of writers. From it has written by Sophoches on, *Antigone* has been adapted several times. It is not wrong to say that these versions arouse different effects depending on the periods they are adapted. For instance, Latacz says that the version of Jean Anouilh which was written in 1942, has been recepted as a call for resistance when it is played in 1944 in Paris. Brecht's version, named *Sophocles' Antigone*, which was written in 1948, refers to Hitler, who is going to be destroyed like Creon. In Turkey, there is a version written by Kemal Demirel in 1966, according to which Antigone is located as a fighter for rights and freedom. Besides several adaptations, there are also several interpretations of Antigone. For the comments on adaptations, see J. Latacz. (2006). *Antik Yunan Tragedyaları* (Y. Onay, Trans.). İstanbul: Mitos Boyut Yayınları, 188.

[60] Cadmus, who is the son of Phonecian King, is trying to find his sister Europa who is carried off by Zeus. He goes to the oracle of Delphi for consultation. Oracle tells that he should follow a cow with lunar signs, and should go with it until it lies down somewhere. When the cow lies down he should make sacrifices and establish a city there. Cadmus follows the cow until it lies down in Boeotia. He kills Ares' dragon which is guarding the fountain, for satisfying the need for water. By the advice of Athena, he sows its teeth into the earth from which the army of Ares grows. While they are planning to attack Cadmus, he throws a stone into the warriors, making them to think they were attacking each other. By this way they kill each other until five of them remains. Along with these five warriors who are known as Spartoi, Cadmus found Thebes. He then marries Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. Cadmus and Harmonia have two daughters: Semele and Agave. Semele is the mother of Dionysus and Agave is the mother of Pentheus. Dionysus' father is Zeus who burned Semele while Dionysus is in her womb, because he shows himself as he is, not in the shape of some other

men" who grows from the earth and this city hosts various tragedies including *Antigone.* So, Antigone is not a member of Athenian people, rather she is from Thebes, the city where Hegel takes us to in his description of the experience of Greek ethical life. Of course this is a deliberate choice, but the question inevitably arises: Why Hegel takes us to Thebes in order to show the inherent problems of Ancient Greek ethical life? Before answering the question, it is better to know Thebes more closely. At this point, we will call help from a classicist, Froma I. Zeitlin.

In her influential article "Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama"*,* Zeitlin argues that, Athens and Thebes are opposed places in the sense of their views on tradition, history, change and time.[61] Besides, she proposes that in the theater, Thebes functions as anti-Athens in which the crucial questions concerning the *polis* is acted out.[62] As being the other of Athens, the problems in polis are reflected into Thebes in the theater scene, and

> Thebes, the other, provides Athens, the self, with a place where it can play with and discharge both terror of and attraction to the irreconcilable, the inexpiable, and the unredeemable, where it can experiment with the dangerous heights of self-assertion that transgression of fixed boundaries inevitably entails, where the city's political claims to primacy may be exposed and held up to question.[63]

We have said that the theme of the tragedy had some relation to the constitution of the legal thought, and the ambiguity in its language. Therefore, the problem of the

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person or animal. Zeus takes Dionysus out, makes a womb in his thigh and puts the embryo in. When Semele dies, the palace of Cadmus and Harmonia burns. They travel to another place and their son Polydorus becomes the king of Thebes. Polydorus is the father of Labdacus, who is the father of Laius. As we know Laius is the father of Oedipus. For the detailed narration of the myth see: J. P. Vernant. (2001). *The Universe, The Gods, and Men: Ancient Greek* Myths (L. Asher, Trans.). New York: Harper Collins, 135-153.

[61] Froma I. Zeitlin. (1992). Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama. In J. J. W. F. Zeitlin (Ed.), *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context.* Princeton: Princeton University Press,132.

[62] Ibid, 144.

[63] Ibid, 145.

legal thought in Athens is reflected on to Thebes which appears in the theater scene, and it is questioned through the actions of the tragic hero/ines. At the origin of the city of Thebes there are several myths: the myth of autochthony, incest within the house of Laios and the re-birth of Dionysos from the thigh of Zeus. So, Zeitlin says that,

> The troubles in Thebes started at the very beginning, it seems, both for the stability of the city and for that of the self, where autochthony, Dionysos, and, ultimately, Oidipous rule. Harmonia, as her name indicates, is the logical outcome of a union between the two antithetical principles of Ares and Aphrodite and might serve as the idealized emblem of marriage which conjoins the opposite sexes. But in Thebes, Harmonia is only a euphemizing and finally illusory hope.[64]

She further asks: "How can it be otherwise in a place where both War (Ares) and Love (Aphrodite) operate as illegal factors in both the city and the family, leading not to domestic or political tranquility but to internal strife[65] and incestuous origins?" The myths at the origin of the city of Thebes are always in operation within the narratives of Theban plays. For instance, the myth of the sown men refers to the internal strife among the rulers of the city, and this theme recurs almost in every play. The conflict between Polyneices and Eteocles concerning the issue of kingship is an example. Another recurrent theme of the tragedies leans on the myth of incest. These two myths also recur in *Antigone*. The city of Thebes is founded by the sown men who grow from the earth without any sexual intercourse. This is the myth of autochthony. So, the collectivity at the foundation of the city does not lean on kinship and blood relation but some other relation which can be called citizenship. Besides, the myth of incest can be found at the lineage of Polyneices who appears as the figure that breaks down this solidarity among the citizens of the city. These myths at the origin create a tension in the play. As Zeitlin shows in the article, "Autochthony, as the political myth of collective solidarity, and incest in the domestic domain might suggest a fundamental cleavage between city and the

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[64] Ibid, 141.

[65] The recurrent theme of internal strife leans on the myth of the sown men. Sown men attack each other. See footnote 60.

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family."[66] Zeitlin's argument concerning the mythic origin of the Theben plays enlightens Hegel's choice of this city in describing the internal collision of ethical life. By not referring back to the mythic origin, he uses *Antigone* for describing the collision of the city and the family in the ancient Greek ethical life as we will see in the ensuing section.

Zeitlin further says that, Thebes "represents the paradigm of the closed system that vigorously protects its psychological, social, and political boundaries, even as its towering walls and circular ramparts close off and protect its physical space"[67] and in Thebes there is no access to a future time.[68] In every generation, the myths at the origin shows themselves and "the linear advance of the narrative events turns out in the end to be circular, as closed back upon itself as the circular walls that are the city's most distinctive architectural feature in space."[69] So in every generation we find the same patterns of events. If Thebes always hosts the same pattern of collision, the problem is about its structure. Therefore, it has to be ruined and transform to something else for the tragedy has an opening into the future time and another place where reconciliation among the contradictory powers is possible. Hegel thinks that the situation is the same for the ancient Greek ethical life. There is a problem in its structure, and because of this, the collisions takes the form of tragic, irreconcilable collisions. For the reconciliation, ancient Greek ethical life, like Thebes, has to be ruined, and open into another world. Perhaps this is the reason for his choice of Antigone. As her name indicates, which means "anti-generation", she represents the end of the doomed generation of Thebes and the recurrence of the same pattern of conflicts.

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[66] Ibid, 148.

[67] Ibid, 148.

[68] Ibid, 152.

[69] Ibid, 153.

As we have said, although it is written before the other two, in terms of the narrative, *Antigone* is the last play of the Sophocles' Oedipus trilogy. Beginning with the *Oedipus the King*, narrative continues with *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*, throughout which the curse of the Labdacus family is transferred via blood from Oedipus to his children and devastates the family whose kinship relations are ambiguous and complex.

The play begins one day after the events narrated in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. It opens with a talk between Antigone and Ismene. During the talk, audience is informed about the war which ended the day before. We learn that, Polyneices and Eteocles killed each other, and Creon became the king of Thebes after the end of the war. Antigone informs her sister about Creon's edict concerning the burial of Polyneices, who attacked Thebes. Decree forbids the burial of Polyneices. His body will become prey to animals. Antigone calls for help to bury their brother but Ismene refrains from helping her. Besides, she tries to dissuade her. Antigone does not give up. She declares that she will bury Polyneices even if her act requires transgressing Creon's edict. After they leave the scene, Creon comes to announce his edict. He charges guards for being sure that his edict will not be transgressed. Despite there are guardians for observing the body, Antigone buries her brother. Nevertheless, the act of burial remains unsolved for some time, because the guardians overlooked the doer. The soil on the body is cleaned and it remains unburied again. One of the guards comes to inform Creon about what has happened. Creon commands that s/he who violates the law should be found. When Antigone buries her brother second time guards catch her and one of them takes her to Creon. Antigone appropriates that the act belongs to her. Creon declares that she will be punished to death. Haemon, Creon's son and Antigone's fiancée, tries to convince his father for forgiving Antigone, but he could not succeed. Creon entombs Antigone alive to a cave for punishment. Antigone commits suicide. Creon, by seeing the consequences of his inflexible attitude concerning the issue of burial and towards the act of transgression with the help of Teiresias, acknowledges his fault. For escaping the things predicted, he goes to bury Polyneices, and to take

out Antigone. He buries the body, but he cannot catch up Antigone alive. In the cave, he finds his son crying after her. Haemon at first tries to kill his father with his sword, but when he cannot reach him, he kills himself. Creon is ruined by witnessing his suicide. A messenger turns into the palace for informing people about what has happened in the cave. Eurydike, Creon's wife and Haemon's mother, commits suicide after learning that his son has died. When Creon turns to the palace, with the body of his son, he learns that his wife too commits suicide. He has desperately ruined at the end of the play.

It seems that, after reading the play, the first question that comes to mind is "who is right?" In respect of this question, we can distinguish the interpretations of the play into two: The interpreters, who think that Antigone is right and Creon is wrong, and those who think that both are partially right. The distinction we roughly made corresponds to the distinction Oudemans and Lardinois make in their work *Tragic Ambiguity: Anthropology, Philosophy and Sophocles' Antigone*. They claim that, the interpretations of Antigone follow two main paths. These are the "Orthodox view" and the "Hegelian view". Hegelian or the harmonizing point of view suggests that both Antigone and Creon represent ethical powers that are of equal strength and justice.[70] We will discuss this view at length in the next section, but I would like to add that, Hegelian interpretation of the play is among the most famous views, forasmuch as Leonard Moss tells us, being aware or not many classicists, even who are against it, are affected by it.[71] In addition, for philosophers who deal with the play, Hegel's interpretation is a reference point.

The orthodox view takes the play as a moral tragedy. According to this view, the main theme of the play is justice, and in terms of their attitudes, characters are strongly separated: one as a representative of justice (Antigone), the other baseness

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[70] Th. C. W. Oudemans & A. P. M. H. Lardinois. (1987). *Tragic Ambiguity: Anthropology, Philosophy and Sophocles' Antigone*. Leiden: Brill, 110. Hereafter: TA.

[71] L. Moss. (Autumn 1969). The Unrecognized Influence of Hegel's Theory of Tragedy. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 28(1), 91-97.

(Creon).[72] Besides, according to this view, the criterion for determining the protagonist of the tragedy is the uniformity of the character. Since Antigone's character does not change during the tragedy, only she is the protagonist of the play. As a proponent of the "orthodox view" Bernhard Zimmerman say that Antigone is right and Creon is wrong, chorus is pro-Antigone and Antigone is the only protagonist of the play because she has a uniform character. He says that, "Creon comes to realize, after great suffering, that he acted wrongly. Whereas his character undergoes change, that of Antigone is static from the outset."[73]

I think the strong part of this interpretation is the emphasis on Antigone's uniform character. Because, as Houlgate also says, even if Hegel translates the words of Antigone as she has realized that she acts wrongly, in the play there is not a trace of regret in her.[74] But the weak part of the interpretation is that this means nothing. Although it is true that Antigone has a uniform character, this does not mean that she is the only protagonist of the play. Jean-Pierre Vernant convincingly shows that uniformity of character cannot be a criterion for determining the protagonist of the ancient Greek tragedy. Giving his example from the *Seven Against Thebes* he says that,

> Such a debate [debate concerning the uniformity of character] would only make sense given a drama of the *modern type* [my italics] constructed around the psychological unity of its protagonists. But Aeschylus' tragedy is not centered upon one particular character, in all the complexity of his inner life. The real protagonist of the *Seven* is the city, that is to say the values, modes of thought, and attitudes that it commands[75]

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[72] TA, 107.

[73] B. Zimmermann. (1991). *Greek Tragedy: An Introduction* (T. Marier, Trans.). London: John Hopkins University Press, 67.

[74] S. Houlgate. (2007). Hegel's Theory of Tragedy. In S. Houlgate (Ed.), *Hegel and the Arts*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 155.

[75] MT, 35.

He also says that, "[i]t has nothing to do with unity or discontinuity in the personality, in the sense that we use such expressions today"[76]. This argument is also valid for Sophocles' plays. Therefore, claiming that Antigone is the only protagonist because she has a static character is not appropriate.

Again, contrary to what Zimmermann proposes to show that Antigone is right, Vernant shows that chorus does not support Antigone unconditionally. He says that,

> It is significant… that the only deities referred to by chorus are Dionysus and Eros. As mysterious nocturnal gods that elude human comprehension and are close to women and foreign to politics, they condemn first and foremost the pseudo religion of Creon, the Head of the State who reduces the divine to the dimensions of his poor common sense so as to saddle it with his own personal hatred and ambitions. But the two deities also turn *against* [my italics] Antigone, enclosed within her family *philia* and of her own free will sworn to Hades, for even through their link with death, Dionysus and Eros express the powers of life and renewal. Antigone has been deaf to the call to detach herself from "her kin" and from family *philia* in order to embrace another *philia*, to accept Eros and, in her union with a stranger, to become in her own turn a transmitter of life.[77]

In addition to Vernant, another classicist Joachim Latacz points out the words Sophocles uses for describing Antigone through chorus: *auto-nomos* (self-ruled or maker of her own law), *auto-gnotos* (self-willed), *auto-kheir* (by one's own hand) which can be seen another proof from the text for arguing that Antigone is not completely right and she is criticized by chorus as being one-sided.[78] Therefore, contrary to the proof Zimmermann offers and what the orthodox view suggests, there is proof from the text that Antigone may not be right completely; rather she is one-sided and wrong as Creon. Therefore, what Hegel says concerning Antigone in the *Phenomenology* takes its support from the text, and this proof can be raised against some critics who, in trying to show inconsistencies in Hegel's thought concerning ethical order, appeals to the text.

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[76] MT, 36.

[77] MT, 41-42.

[78] J. Latacz. (2006). *Antik Yunan Tragedyaları* (Y. Onay, Trans.). İstanbul: Mitos Boyut Yayınları, 194.

3. 3. Hegel's "Antigone"

Antigone initially appears at the beginning of the chapter on "Spirit" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In this section, Hegel first describes the harmony of Greek ethical life, which is proposed by his romantic contemporaries as an alternative for the modern world which is defined negatively as a loss of harmony.[79] Then, he describes the inherent problems of the Greek ethical life through *Antigone,* and shows that it cannot be an option for modern community. In this way he criticizes his contemporaries who see the Greek community as an object of nostalgia.

Until the chapter on Spirit, Hegel describes the development of individual consciousness through its own dialectics. On the way to spirit, consciousness on the one hand learns that it is capable of self-legislation, and on the other the laws it lays down is universally binding. "The mistake that the individual thus makes, however, is to think that the laws in question derive from his own reasoning, not from the universal moral nature of man."[80] So, as a self-legislating being, individual thinks himself/herself as isolated from the "ground of morality"[81] through which law can be universally binding. This ground for Hegel is Spirit.[82] Spirit in its most general definition, is the unity of individual and the social world s/he lives. This unity, when it first comes to the scene is an immediate unity, and therefore a unity which has to be overcome by the emergence of individualism and alienation. For Hegel, this immediate unity is the ancient Greek ethical life. He terms the ancient Greek ethical life as "substance", because it is self-sufficient and independent. This means

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[79] Jay M. Bernstein in his lectures, Theodore D. George in his book emphasizes this point. The lectures can be listened through internet. The link can be found in footnote 4. For George's argument see, T. D. George. (2006). *Tragedies of Spirit: Tracing the Finitude in Hegel's Phenomenology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 76. Hereafer: TS.

[80] HPS, 204.

[81] HPS, 204.

[82] PS, 264.

that, people of ethical life act according to the traditions and customs of their society and by this way they preserve and keep alive these traditions which are named by Hegel as ethical substance. That is why Hegel says that,

> Spirit, being the substance and the universal, self-identical, and abiding essence, is the unmoved solid *ground* and *starting point* of the action of all, and it is their purpose and goal, the in-itself of every self-consciousness expressed in thought. This substance is equally the universal *work* produced by the action of all and each as their unity and identity, for it is the *being-for-self*, the self, action.[83]

What Hegel means by the ethical substance, i.e. traditions and customs of the ancient Greek life, are the duties to be fulfilled in the action of the individuals. Through this way, they are produced again and again as the work of all individuals. Theodore D. George says that,

> Hegel envisions of ancient societies as self-sustaining creations, though, of course, this is not to say that he sees them as the handiwork of some divine craftsman or demiurge. Rather, he believes that the polis unfolds under the auspices of a sort of self sufficient life, which persists of its own efforts in its chronic revival of its traditions.[84]

In this picture, the role of the individual is nothing other than to fulfill the laws of ethical life in order to keep it alive. From the perspective of the society, individuals are the means for sustaining it, and from the perspective of the individual, they are identical with their roles in the society. That is why; there is a harmony in the ancient Greek ethical life. For Hegel, this harmony corresponds to the "immediate truth" of Spirit, which has to be cancelled for Spirit to attain its self-knowledge through passing a series of shapes.[85]

For Hegel, what cancels this immediacy is the action. "Action divides it [Spirit] into substance, and consciousness of the substance"[86] and this substance is also divided

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[83] PS, 264.

[84] TS, 78.

[85] PS, 265.

[86] PS, 266.

into two laws which regulate different spheres. These laws are divine law and human law, which are the laws of the family and the state respectively. In this division, the consciousness confronting the substance assigns one of these laws to itself according to its nature.[87] This means that each law belongs to a different sex: men follow human law and women follow divine law. The issue of gender and the division of sexes is one of the important themes of Hegel's description of ethical life. The others are subjects such as rational agency, guilt, crime, action, law, mourning, death etc. This is why there is a huge amount of literature on this section which focuses on one or more of these themes. For instance, Theodore D. George reads this section around the theme of "rational agency"[88] by discussing the meaning of guilt and crime in the ethical world, Robert R. Williams traces the concept of recognition in the section[89], Dennis J. Schmidt focuses on the intersection and collision of laws around the issue of death[90], Patricia J. Mills deals with the role of women[91] and criticizes Hegel's position regarding the place of women in the *Phenomenology*.

The aforesaid subjects such as guilt, crime, law, and others are discussed on a ground which can be defined as the main problem of this section. Hegel, before anything else, tries to show a deficient form of community in which such issues becomes problematic. Deficiency lies in immediacy: Individuals directly identify with their social roles which are given through the community.

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[87] PS, 266.

[88] TS, 73-97.

[89] Robert R. Williams. (1992). *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 201-205. Hereafter: RFH.

[90] OGOG, 94-104.

[91] Patricia. J. Mills. (1998). Hegel's Antigone. In J. Stewart (Ed.), *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader: Critical and Interpretive Essays* (pp. 243-272). Albany: State University of New York Press.

3.3.1. Two Realms, Two Laws, Two Sexes

Ethical substance is divided into two realms which are the family and the community. Family is the natural unit in which its members are bound together with blood tie. From out of the family, citizens grow and enter into socio-political life of the polis. Citizens in the ancient Greek world are men. In raising male children, family serves for the community and in this sense family is "the possibility of the ethical sphere"[92].

The community is the larger sphere of the political and the social issues. Its possibility resides in the family, so it comes out of it, but subsumes it under. Concerning the community Hegel says that, "As *actual substance*, it is a nation, as *actual consciousness*, it is the citizens of that nation."[93] This means that in being citizens of the Greek polis, men aim at the nation. In fulfilling their duties, which can be "administrative, warrior or political"[94], citizens work for it. Lauer says that, within the realm of the community "consciousness of the individual citizen is identified with the consciousness of the people as a guide to action."[95]

Human law is the law of the community. So, its role is to protect the community, and provide the "sameness and equality of all individuals"[96]. It regulates the life of all individuals in the community and it is universally binding. Theodore D. George says that "Hegel identifies the human law primarily as a sort of self-conscious, higher order law that commands us to respect all other laws of our society as law; or, put another way, the human law universally compels every individual to submit,

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[92] PS, 268.

[93] PS, 267.

[94] HTT, 22.

[95] HPS, 207.

[96] OGOG, 99.

or, to recognize, the universal scope and binding force of the legal code itself."[97] Government, being the "authority which is openly accepted and manifest to all"[98] is responsible for the implementation of the human law the aim of which is to protect the unity of the whole.

Community as the larger whole encloses the family which is its ground of existence. In knowing that it arises out of the family, it recognizes the family, but also subdues it under its law. Beistegui says that,

> Human or properly political law fully recognizes the private and immediate moment whilst also affirming itself as that which frees itself from this initial moment. The political moment incorporates into itself the family and its economy but at the same time detaches itself from it and subsumes it under the universality of its own law.[99]

In this sense, family and community are related. Political sphere emerges out of the family, and encloses it in its universality, but as Beistegui claims, "this relation is not entirely satisfactory. Even though there is immediate perception of one power by the other and the resolute acceptance of the latter by the former, such an inorganic relation cannot account for the unity of Greek ethicality."[100] Now, we will see how an organic unity between them is going to be constructed.

For Hegel, family is not only the possibility of the larger sphere of community; it is also a "natural ethical community"[101] by itself. In this sense, it also has a duty of its own, which is given through the divine law. So family also has a work, through which it becomes self-conscious. What is the end of the ethical action of the family? Hegel says that, the end of this action is the dead citizen: "The deed no longer

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[97] TS, 83.

[98] PS, 268.

[99] HTT, 22.

[100] HTT, 22.

[101] PS, 268.

concerns the living but the dead."[102] Why? The ethical sphere in the ancient Greece is the community. Family is its ground of existence, but in this sense it is only a natural ground not an ethical being by itself. It must enter into this sphere through its member who is also a citizen, for elevating itself from naturality to spirituality, and be an ethical community by itself. The problem is, in being a citizen individual does not belong to the family.[103] Only if he is dead, in being a corpse, he belongs to nature and family. Therefore, if family is an ethical entity by itself, it can only be through the dead citizen. But how? Hegel says that although death is the work citizen shoulders for serving the community, it comes by nature not by the result of an act consciously done.[104] So, when a citizen dies, something "other" kills him, not his action; so the work of death cannot be attached to the citizen, but rather his death seems to be the same as the death of an animal. The work of family then is to attach the work to the citizen through burial and mourning. Through the work of mourning family elevates itself to spirituality on the one hand, and makes the dead a member of community again on the other.[105] Hegel says that this duty of burial constitutes the divine law.[106] Within the borders of the family, this duty falls the share of the sister. For Hegel, among the possible relationships within the family, the only ethical relationship is the brother-sister relationship and regarding it Hegel says that, "moment of individual self, recognizing and being recognized, can here assert its right, because it is linked to the equilibrium of the blood and is a relation devoid of desire." [107] For Hegel, this relationship has also another importance. After

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[102] PS, 270.

[103] PS, 269.

[104] PS, 270.

[105] PS, 271.

[106] PS, 271.

[107] PS, 275. Among the classicits and philosophers who deal with the play, there are people who argue that Antigone's debauchedness to her brother is an incestuous tendency which is already at work in her heritage. For instance, Butler argues that Antigone cannot be the representative of the kinship bonds as Hegel claims, rather she has already departed from it because of her incestuous love to her brother. J. Butler. (2000). *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*. New York:

growing up in the family, brother enters into the political realm and becomes a citizen. In this way family opens up into the ethico-political sphere. When he leaves the family sister becomes "the head of the household and the guardian of the divine law".[108]

The division of realms, the laws and the sexes has been explained so far. Now, Hegel argues that these two sides have a real organic relation which will turn out to be an opposition. These two sides, family and polis, divine law and human law, man and woman are related around the issue of burial and death. How this relation comes about? First of all, we have said that human law is the superior law and family is subsumed under it. Family, when it enters the sphere of the human law through burial, human law asserts its right on it, because burial on the one hand provides the family to elevate itself to spirituality and on the other hand dead citizen is brought back to the community through it. For the human law, whose aim is to protect the unity burial has an importance in this sense. Theodore D. George says that, "one of Hegel's chief claims about burial is that the customary performance of last rites is a spiritual effort to achieve political and social unity and cohesion through the memorialization of the dead."[109] In this sense burial is not only a private issue but has a relation for providing the unity of the community. So it has to be recognized. This is one side of the issue. Hegel says that, the content and power of the human law is the nation, and the content and power of the divine law is the individual who is dead.[110] The power of the dead individual is for him is death[111],

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Columbia University Press. Jean Pierre Vernant argues that, with Freud's interpretation of Oedipus there arises a tendency to interpret tragedies through the way Freud does. He calls this "oedipalizing" the legendary themes. In this way, the very legitimate family attachments for the ancient Greeks are identified with incestuous desires. Antigone's interpretation in this way is also an example of oedipalizing. Antigone's love to her brother is termed as philia which refers to family attachment and it is totally different from eros or sexual desire. MT, 100-102.

[108] PS, 275.

[109] TS, 82.

[110] PS, 271.

[111] PS, 272.

which is used by the government for providing the unity of community. Government recognizes the family and allows individuals to enjoy independence to a certain extent, but if they tend to isolate themselves from the whole, government sends them to war and through the power of death reminds these isolated individuals that they are parts of a whole.[112] In this sense, death is the ground on which the relation of these two sides comes to light. Dennis J. Schmidt says that,

> While the essential task of the family is to preserve the integrity and real singularity of the individual, the essential task of the government is the negative of this, namely, to preserve the equality and sameness of all individuals. The final equalizer, which is at the same time the final singularizer, is death, the moment in which the universal essence of the individual as such is achieved.[113]

Death is used by government for providing the unity of community, and dead is reintegrated into the community by the family and divine law through burial. Therefore, the two sides complement each other. In their complementarity they provide the life of the ethical community, but as Hegel shows this complementarity of laws/sexes/spheres will turn out to be an opposition. The reason is that community recognizes the burial of individual insofar as he is a citizen. Family on the other hand, makes it its duty to bury its member, because he is a family member. These two categories; citizenship and family membership do not necessarily overlap and Antigone is an example for their being different. For Dennis J Schmidt, through Antigone "Hegel's intention is to ask two sets of intersecting questions: first, to ask about the reach of the law and, second, to ask about the reach of natural life."[114] Around the issue of death these questions will show us the inherent problems of the Greek community.

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[112] PS, 272-273.

[113] OGOG, 99.

[114] OGOG, p. 96.

3.3.2. Action and Collision

The two spheres, the confronting laws and the confronting sexes are essentially related, but the problem is the consciousnesses confronting the laws which belong to different sexes are ignorant of this division and also of this relation. They are in this sense "false consciousnesses"[115]. This division on the side of the ethical substance and ignorance on the side of the ethical consciousness are "historical conditions which make for a tragic realization of ethical substance"[116], and this tragic realization is described through Sophocles' *Antigone*.

As we have said the human law aims at the unity of the community, and for providing this unity it has to suppress the tendency of isolation of its parts. So, government sends individuals to war and death. Citizen in working for providing the unity of the community sacrifices his life and death is the work of citizen, which is attached to him as his work through burial. Family, in burying its member attaches his work to himself and through mourning after and memorizing the death incorporates his memory in the community which also provides the unity of the community. The question is what if one who is dead is not a citizen but a family member, i.e. individual who is outside of the realm of political authority but within the realm of natural affinity? We know the story from the plot of the tragedy. Human law prohibits the burial of the traitor because the memorial of the traitor harms the unity of the community, and divine law insists on its rights of burial because the dead must be buried. The laws embodied in Creon and Antigone, enter into collision over the issue of burial which is the ground of their relation. Both are right in their claims from the perspective of each, but there is a problem indeed, because both are wrong also. Why?

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[115] RFH, p. 202.

[116] RFH, p. 202.

At the core of the collision of laws there is sexual difference.[117] "Gender becomes the principal axis along which this ethical crisis will spin."[118] This natural difference is overlooked by the ethical consciousness which identifies itself with the universal not by subduing natural difference but by overlooking it. So, both Antigone and Creon have the same consciousness in their attitude to law. Hegel says that, ethical consciousness has an "undivided attitude to the law"[119] but the ethical substance or the law is divided.

The problem inherent in ethical life is seen from the perspective of ethical consciousness as a collision of "duty with reality"[120] which arises through ethical action. Since, ethical consciousness has an undivided attitude towards the law of ethical life; the law with which it identifies with is the only law for it. So, in taking it on as a duty to be fulfilled through action, what it expects is nothing other than the realization of it. By acting according to the law it has assigned to itself it sees that what it expects to do is different from what it does, because the law it has assigned to itself is in fact is only one of the doubled laws which are essentially related and indeed opposite. So, ethical consciousness with its action in following one law transgresses the other. Therefore, for Hegel action in the Greek world is attached with guilt and crime.[121]

Antigone and Creon are ethical consciousnesses and in identifying with divine and human laws, they think that they are identifying with "the law". So, when they

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[117] This point is emphasized by Dennis J. Schmidt, but totally overlooked by Quentin Lauer. Lauer says that, "[t]hat of the conflict should present itself under the rubric of the contrasting roles of two sexes is due to Hegel's choice of an illustrative example, the *Antigone* of Sophocles." HPS, 211. What we argue is the opposite. Hegel's choice of Antigone lies in the fact that the collision appears in the form of a collision of two sexes which are identified with two laws.

[118] OGOG, 96.

[119] PS, 281.

[120] PS, 280.

[121] PS, 282.

confront with each other over the issue of Polyneices' burial, they take opposite roles concerning it without regarding the other as an equally essential power. Hegel says that, "that consciousness which belongs to the divine law sees in the other side only the violence of human caprice, while that which holds to human law sees in the other only the self-will and disobedience of the individual who insists on being his own authority."[122] So, each insists on their position. Creon prohibits and Antigone buries. The point is, since divine law is the expression of a specific command, which is burial, for Antigone the collision is not among its law and its realization. So, she is capable of seeing the wrongness of her position. What she thinks in transgressing Creon's edict is that she is doing the right thing. However suffering from her transgressive act shows that she is indeed wrong, so she acknowledges her error in being identified with one law.[123] This acknowledgement, for Hegel, causes her ruin, because her character consists in this identification and acknowledgement requires surrendering it.[124] Her acknowledgement of the essentiality of the other law shows that both laws are related. So, Creon is also wrong in following only one. Therefore, both sides are ruined together.

Antigone and Creon and their mutual downfall show the problem of the ethical life from the side of the ethical consciousness which is not aware of the division of ethical substance into two laws, but there is another side of the issue which can be evaluated from the side of the Greek community. Hegel describes the issue from the other side again by using *Antigone*, this time by appealing to the collision between Eteocles and Polyneices. He says that, after growing up, Antigone's brothers leave the family for participating in the political sphere. In the political sphere, all individuals are regarded as same and equal, i.e. they are same and equal before the human law. So, when Oedipus leaves the kingship, both of these brothers have the equal rights for ruling the community. So, they fall into dispute and Polyneices is

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[122] PS, 280.

[123] PS, 284.

[124] PS, 284.

expelled from the community and citizenship. The point Hegel emphasizes is that their duality is a contingent and natural event that takes place in the family. Hegel says that

> He still belongs to the Nature from which he wrenched himself free is evidenced by the fact that he emerges in the contingent form of two brothers, each of whom with equal right takes the possession of the community; the inequality of the earlier and later birth, an inequality which is a natural difference, has no importance for them when they enter the ethical life of the community.[125]

Greek community has no room for natural difference and particularity. So, community suppresses it along with the realm it appears, namely the family. When Polyneices is expelled from the citizenship, and dies in the frontiers of the community from which he is expelled, he is deprived of the burial by the community. Community has a power to do this because as the power on earth, it has instruments to enforce its law, and by this way, is able to suppress the voice of the family. In comparison to the human law, divine law has no power.

The collision of Antigone and Creon is constructed upon this pattern. Since they are wrong in immediately indentifying with the laws of the community, the structure of the community is also deficient in having no room for individuals in their particular existence. The issue is reciprocal, and only comes to light with Antigone's transgression.

For Hegel, Spirit in its immediate form takes the shape of ancient Greek world in which individuality does not have a place. So, its dissolution is necessary and inescapable. In describing this necessity and showing the inescapability of its ruin, Hegel makes emphasis on a dilemma at the heart of it: the city requires the family out of which it grows, so family is the condition of it, but it must also suppress the family for providing the unity of it. However, in suppressing the family it has created an enemy within itself; womankind turns out to be the everlasting irony of

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[125] PS, 285.

the community.[126] Family and therefore its representatives, i.e. women, are suppressed by the community in order to protect its unity, but women in their relation with youth, creates a tendency in them for asserting "the spirit of individualism"[127]. He says that, "[t]he community, however, can only maintain itself by suppressing this spirit of individualism, and, because it is an essential moment, all the same creates it and, moreover, creates it by its repressive attitude towards it as a hostile principle."[128] The ruin of the community is inescapable because it can only maintain itself by channeling the power of youth to the other communities in a situation of war. This means that such a community can only continue to exist if this power of youth is strong enough to win.

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[126] PS, 288.

[127] PS, 288.

[128] PS, 288.

CHAPTER IV

**DEATH, MOURNING, LAW, COMMUNITY AND ACTION: CONCEPTS
REVISITED**

4.1. Introduction

In the second chapter we have outlined the aim and the method of the
Phenomenology of Spirit and Hegel's ideas on tragedy by focusing on the concept
of reconciliation. The search for reconciliation turned out to be the search for truth
within the framework of *Phenomenology*, in which Hegel describes the shapes of
consciousnesses which transform to each other in being more articulated until
where truth shows itself in a true way, i.e. absolute knowing. The way to absolute
knowing is the way on which beginning from its immediate truth Spirit moves
towards its self-knowledge. The truth of Spirit corresponds to ancient Greek ethical
life, and this is described in the section on the ethical order. In the third chapter, by
focusing on the ethical order, we have analyzed Hegel's reference to Sophocles'
Antigone by describing the necessary dissolution of the ancient Greek ethical life
because of its inherent contradiction. What Antigone uncovers is this dialectic at the
root of the *polis*: The family –representative of which is Antigone- as the condition
of the ethical life must be suppressed for the continuity of the community –
representative of which is Creon. Family, being the realm of particularity is the
unity where community emerges, but particularity threatens the continuity of the
community. Therefore, community suppresses it for preserving itself. In order to
suppress the particularity, community uses the trump of war. War means the threat
of death, and this threat binds individuals within the community and causes them to
sacrifice their particularity. In this way, community preserves itself, but its
dissolution is inevitable because it continues to exist until a war has lost, or as long

as the power of youth wins. In this way, *Antigone* shows the fragility of the socio-political organization of the *polis*.

In this chapter one of my aims is to explain the place of death in the ethical order. For this aim I will try to construct a link with the chapter on self-consciousness, because as it is known, death is one of the prevailing issues in it. I have to note that, such a link between the two sections is also proposed by different interpreters in different ways. For instance, Philip J. Kain, in his article named "Hegel, Antigone, and Women" argues that Antigone is like the Hegelian slave, and Creon is like the master, because in the ethical order women are suppressed by men like the slave's suppression by the master.[129] He further claims that, she subverts the community like the slave subverts the master.[130] I think that there are certain problems with this interpretation. The collision between Antigone and Creon is like the life-and-death struggle which is logically prior to the overcoming of the struggle through determination. Antigone is not the slave; rather with her claim to universality she is one of the self-consciousnesses who enter into the collision.

Secondly, I will focus on the issue of mourning. In the ethical order, the divine law and the human law enter into a collision over the issue of mourning. Being the content of two laws which are essentially related, mourning has a place in the operation of the ethical order. It shows itself as the condition for the unity of the community which is required for the application of the human law. On the other hand, it also is the issue which causes the dissolution of the community. So, I think, the relation between law, mourning and community within the framework of ancient Greek ethical life is worth to be considered.

Thirdly and finally, by focusing on Hegel's Antigone, I will try to answer a question concerning Antigone's action. When we look through the secondary literature, we

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[129] Philip J. Kain. (Spring/Summer 2002). Hegel, Antigone and Women. *The Owl of Minerva*, 33(2), 169.

[130] Ibid, 169.

see that some commentators, including Miguel de Beistegui[131] and Robert Stern[132] argue that in transgressing Creon's edict Antigone does not make a choice, rather she is compelled to follow the divine law, and others including Dennis J. Schmidt[133] and Patricia J. Mills[134] argue that she makes a choice to follow the divine law. What does Hegel mean when he says Antigone knowingly commits the crime? Is this a choice or not? Is Antigone free to make a choice? Does she know her intent before her transgressive action or not? In the third part, I want to deal with these questions.

4.2. Death in the Ethical Order

In Hegel's description of the ethical life, for suppressing the spirit of individualism, government sends individuals to war with other communities. Through this way, it both canalizes the power of individualism towards other communities and provides its unity, and makes individuals to break loose from their particularity and becomes self-conscious. Antigone in this sense discovers that "*Sittlichkeit* is at bottom a warrior ethic. The polis, being one among many, must fight for its identity."[135] So, Greek community provides its identity by entering into a life-and-death struggle with other communities.

As it is known, the life-and-death struggle emerges when self-consciousness understands that it cannot prove its identity in the form of desire and by destructing the object. So, by duplicating itself it enters into a world of self-consciousnesses which in its articulated form refers the unity of them that is established through the

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[131] HTT, 24.

[132] R. Stern. (2002). *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit.* London: Routledge, 143.

[133] OGOG, 90.

[134] Patricia. J. Mills. (1998). Hegel's Antigone. In J. Stewart (Ed.), *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader: Critical and Interpretive Essays* (pp. 243-272). Albany: State University of New York Press, 254.

[135] Martin Donougho. (Fall 1989). The Woman in White: On the Reception of Hegel's Antigone. *The Owl of Minerva*, 21(1), 85.

mutual recognition. But, the initial confrontation of one self-consciousness with another self-consciousness is experienced as a life-and-death struggle, because each self-consciousness sees the other only as a particular which is submerged "in the being of Life"[136], and itself as the universal. The point is if self-consciousness sees the other as particular, the other may also see self-consciousness as particular. Therefore for self-consciousness is to prove its claim of universality, it has to make the other to think that it is universal. So, self-consciousness risks its life for showing that it is not a particular but a universal, and attempts to kill the other. Hegel says that,

> The presentation of itself, however, as the pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific *existence*, not to the individuality common to existence as such, that is not attached to life. This presentation is a twofold action: action on the part of the other, and action on its own part. In so far as it is the action of the *other*, each seeks the death of the other. But in doing so, the second kind of action, action on its own part, is also involved; for the former involves the staking of its own life. Thus the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death-struggle.[137]

Each knows that only if the other recognizes the universality of the self, they can prove their claim, so for seeking recognition from the other without giving recognition in turn, they try to provide self-identity.

The same pattern of movement can also be observed at the level of Greek ethical community. By subsuming the family under itself, Greek community claims its universality, because only through enclosing it, it can be universal. Nevertheless, woman as the everlasting irony of the community emerges from within the borders of the family by asserting the spirit of individualism through young males. Community has to suppress this spirit of individualism which is embodied in the young males for proving its claim of universality, but it sees in due course that it cannot succeed in doing this because whenever it is suppressed it emerges with

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[136] PS, 113.

[137] PS, 113-114.

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more hatred.[138] So its claim to universality cannot be proved in this way. Only if the "spirit of individualism" negates itself, the unity can be protected, and we know that only the fear of death can provide this. Fear of death transforms the power of the young males to the power of the community as a whole. So, for proving its claim of universality and provides its unity, community enter into war with other communities. In this way, the spirit of individualism is directed towards others. That is to say, community becomes a unified whole towards other communities. Robert R. Williams says that,

> Although the state depends on and respects the family as an institution, it is also the power which seeks to animate and unify the whole. As such, it seeks to counteract factionalism and tendencies towards individualism; lest the communal spirit atrophy and evaporate, the government shakes matters up by resorting to war as a means of restoring unity. In so doing, the state, like the master in the life and death struggle, invokes and imposes death, or the fear of death –the absolute master- on members of the community, i.e., upon individuals and their families.[139]

In entering into a life-and-death struggle with other communities, the community proves its claim of universality to the isolated individuals within, and the determination of the lord and bondsman can be observed from this side. When community enters into war, spirit of individualism within the families dissolves. Fear of death provides individuals to work for the community, by setting aside their lives. In this way the law of the community is interiorized by the individuals.

Citizens of the Greek *polis* are identified with the law of the community, which is human law. As the representative of the community, Creon is also identified with it. As we see, the identification is possible through the fear of death which provides the "melting-away" of particularity, and the spirit of individualism which emerges from it. In this identification, self-consciousness is ethical consciousness which has an undivided attitude towards the law. Since, this law aims at the unity of the community; it is not unexpected that it does not allow the burial of Polyneices. The

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[138] PS, 288.

[139] RFH, 202.

point is, although ethical consciousness has an undivided attitude towards law, there are in fact two laws in the ethical order. The other law finds expression in the ethical consciousness of women, so of Antigone. In identifying with the divine law, Antigone's duty is to bury Polyneices. That is why over the issue of his burial Antigone and Creon collide, and this collision is experienced again as a life-and-death struggle.

Ethical consciousness is universal, so as ethical consciousnesses both Antigone and Creon have a claim to universality. For Antigone, Creon's prohibition is a "human caprice", and for Creon, Antigone's insistence on burial rights is "self-will and disobedience of the individual".[140] This is why in their claims of universality each sees the other as inessential. The point is if one sees the other as inessential, this can also mean that the other sees the former as inessential. So, for proving the claim to universality Antigone must gain recognition from Creon, and show that she is the universal and Creon must gain recognition from Antigone, and show that he is the universal. Again, in this confrontation death is the key for proving the claim of universality. So their confrontation is experienced in the same manner as the initial confrontation of self-consciousnesses. As Dennis J. Schmidt points out, "death is …the ultimate struggle for consciousness, and as such it defines all of the struggles of consciousness. In the final analysis, it is the struggle animating every other struggle. This struggle for the formation of an independent ethical consciousness is no exception."[141] The point is, although in the life and death struggle of two self-consciousnesses, each risks its life and threatens the other in turn; here Antigone risks her life without threatening the other's, because she does not have a power to do this, and Creon threatens Antigone without risking his life, because as the representative of the state power he has means for enforcing his claim to universality. So the collision of them leads to the death of Antigone rather than making her a slave, and ruin of Creon rather than making him a master.

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[140] PS, 280.

[141] OGOG, 98.

Philip J. Kain argues that Antigone –and the women of ethical life- is dominated by men like the slave is dominated by the master. He says that there are three parallel steps between two sections:

> (1) From the start, family and community, Divine Law and Human Law, are taken to be mutually dependent and equally essential. Then, (2) a conflict arises between Divine Law and Human Law, and the community (which was always more powerful) comes to dominate the family and suppresses women. The fact that the community and the family are in themselves equally essential is not incompatible with one coming to dominate the other –certainly not for one to take itself to be authority over the other in certain types of cases. Finally, (3) Antigone as representative of the family subverts the authority of the community. The parallel to "Lordship and Bondage" is near perfect. (1) There too we start with two self-consciousnesses that are mutually dependent and equally essential. Each exists, Hegel says, only in being recognized by the other, and one is no more important than the other, indeed, they are virtually identical. Certainly, one does not dominate the other at this stage. Then, (2) the two engage in a conflict that ends up with a master dominating a slave. Then, (3) the slave subverts the master. Thus in both cases we start with mutual dependence and equal essentiality, then there develops the domination of one over the other, and then the dominated subverts the dominator.[142]

I have certain problems with Kain's account, with the way in which he constructs the resemblance. First of all, the movement in the ethical life is more tangled and complex than it is summarized by Kain. As I have tried to show above, the Greek *polis* tries to prove its identity through entering into war with other communities, because the fear of death makes the isolated individuals come together in a unity. It is true that the realm of these isolated individuals, or as Hegel calls them "immature"[143] males of the community, is the family and community suppresses the family like the master suppresses the slave, but it is exaggerated to deduce directly that a conflict arises between two laws and since the community is more powerful it suppresses family and therefore *women*. The point is rather that, by the fear of death, the community makes the individuals of the community to identify with their social roles as a citizen, and women are not citizens. Citizenship, as a category of the polis is a construction, and identification with it is possible only through

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[142] Philip J. Kain. (Spring/Summer 2002). Hegel, Antigone and Women. *The Owl of Minerva*, 33(2), 69.

[143] PS, 288.

mediation provided with the war with other communities. Kain says that, there are two essential laws and a conflict arises between them, and then family is suppressed by the community. First of all how this conflict arises? We know that in normal conditions two laws of the ethical realm are in a harmony, and they enter into a collision over the issue of Polyneices' burial, not in any other. Secondly, let's assume that somehow a conflict arises between two laws and one is suppressed by the other, in what sense Antigone's case is different to claim that she subverts the authority of the community? Kain says that Antigone is the slave and Creon is the master, and Antigone subverts Creon. First of all, we already know from the movement of self-consciousness that the determination of the master and slave turned out to be stoic consciousness through the interiorization of the master by the slave. There is no subversion of the master. What we learn through the dialectics of lordship and bondsman is rather that, master cannot prove its self-consciousness because it does not recognize the slave. Secondly, if we interpret the dialectic within the ethical order by saying that men suppress women 1) we overlook the fact that men are also suppressed by the community 2) we cannot give account for Hegel's choice of Antigone in describing the dissolution of the ethical order. In Kain's interpretation all women are slaves, so as Antigone, so any woman can undertake his role in the *Phenomenology*.

The conflict between divine law and human law arises when human law prohibits the burial of Polyneices who is not a citizen but a family member, and this conflict reveals the deficiency of the organization of the *polis*, which suppresses its individuals. Antigone and Creon, being the representatives of two essential powers, enter into a collision over the issue of burial with their claims of being the absolute powers. So their struggle in some sense resembles the life-and-death struggle of self-consciousnesses which have claims to universality. Their claim to universality is proved to be wrong by her acknowledgement. Since human law's universality is wrong as she shows, ethical order which suppresses its individuals through the power of death for proving its universality, is also ruined.

4.3. Law and Mourning: Towards an Idea of Community

As being the law which regulates the life of the community, human law is valid for everyone who lives in the community. Everyone is equal before it, independent of their differences which are given through nature. In this sense, human law is blind to particularity, whose realm is the family. It is formal law, which is human-made and whose main concern is the unity of the community, the boundaries of which are drawn by it. Since the aim is the unity of the community, in regulating the ethical life, it evaluates the conditions according to its content. So, when the issue of mourning becomes its content, the manner this issue is dealt with is related with its main concern: the burial honors are recognized if the very recognition serves for the unity of a people. "From the standpoint of the human law, traditional burial rituals are preeminently a legal and societal matter, aimed to incorporate our memory into the life of the polis, and our entitlement to last rites rests ultimately on our status as subjects of law."[144]

Divine law which is the law of the family concerns with the dead citizen who belongs to the family. Its content is burial. Through burial, dead citizen brought back to the community, and its memory lives within its boundaries. As a "law of individuality", the concern of the divine law is the particular who by his death leaves the domain of the human law. The dead body enters into this domain only through the mediation of the family. Theodore D. George says that, " [f]rom the standpoint of the divine law, not only does the sister's duty to perform burial rites extend beyond the purview of the human law, but also the corpse itself forms a singularity that stands outside of the human law's jurisdiction."[145] In bringing back the particular into the community and the human law by elevating it to universality, divine law affirms the universality of human law.

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[144] TS, 83.

[145] TS, 86.

Death is the supreme work of the citizen. In case of war, citizen dies for preserving what he identifies himself with, which is the community, but death is unique in the sense that it cannot allow one to see one's self in his work. So, citizen cannot raise himself to self-consciousness by himself. Therefore, although citizen's aim is to die for the nation, death cannot be an action "consciously done". So, without proper mourning and burial, the citizen seems to die for no reason. From the perspective of the family, this is the reason for taking vengeance from the political organization which sends the citizen/its member to war to protect its unity. Hegel says that, the means of vengeance are the other communities.[146] What does this mean?

If community does not recognize family's right to burial, it suppresses it by forbidding it. Suppression of family is the suppression of particularity which is essential to it. If community does not recognize particularity, it is doomed to ruin, because suppression only brings its emergence: community creates its enemy from within itself. Such an organization only contingently preserves its unity, i.e., until it confronts with another community which is stronger than it. So, if community does not recognize the particulars, or if it is not a community which allows the reconciliation of the particular and the universal it cannot continue to be. Therefore, for preserving its unity it must recognize family's right to bury its member. So burial appears as the condition of the unity of the community.

There is a crucial point in this narrative which makes Hegel's choice of *Antigone* for the description of the crisis meaningful. Although every citizen belongs to a family, every family member is not a citizen. Williams states this point by saying that "[t]he intimate blood relation between family members is not part of the concept of citizen. Hence, the state treats individuals as means to the preservation of the whole, the individual, insofar as he is more than a citizen, i.e., as belonging to a family, is only a unreal featureless shadow."[147] Women who stay within the family

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[146] PS, 287.

[147] RFH, 202.

borders are not citizens. Besides, although both family membership and citizenship are given in the sense that one just born into a family and a community, latter proves itself to be a construction in expelling Polyneices from it. On the contrary, family membership cannot be left out, because it is a natural relationship which is transferred through blood. So, although Polyneices goes out of the community, he stays within the realm of family ties.

When Polyneices is expelled from the community and from the citizenship her dead body becomes a controversial issue. From the perspective of the human law, his memorial harms the unity of the community, so it is prohibited. From the perspective of the divine law his body has to be buried because he is a family member. We know that although it is prohibited, Antigone buries and mourns after her brother. What is the meaning of her mourning? What does mourning do to the community and the law in this case? In normal, non-dramatic condition mourning preserves the unity of the community which is necessary for the human laws' application. Therefore, mourning makes laws' application possible. This is the case if citizenship and family membership intersect, i.e. if one can be one through being the other and vice versa. Greek community does not unite these categories. That is why it confronts with a dramatic situation. In such a situation mourning has another role. If it is prohibited, and not realized, human law cannot function as a universal law, because for it to be universal the dead body must be returned back to the community through burial. If mourning is prohibited yet realized, it makes an exception in the application of the human law and rather than providing the unity of the community, it dissolves the bonds which binds it. The issue of traitor's burial shows that neither when burial realized not it is not, human law loses it operation along with its universality. So, through *Antigone,* Hegel shows that there is something wrong with its universality.

4.4. Antigone's Action

The women of the ethical life identify themselves with the divine law. Their deeds are governed by it and they are the doers of the ethical actions in the name of the

family. They are the representatives of blood-relation, kinship, and therefore nature, and their "work" is to turn the natural into spiritual. By their deeds, what is done "in the course of nature"[148] turned out to be something consciously done. They elevate dead body to something spiritual with burial, mourning, and memorial. They have the awareness of their duties within the family. Therefore, Antigone, as a woman who belongs to ethical life, knows what to do when confronting with the dead body of her brother. She does not decide what to do, she is certain of what she has to do. Since she identifies with the law, she is certain of the law as she is certain of herself. She is the law. When she confronts with the prohibition, she does not think that "not to bury her brother" as an option to be evaluated. She knows that prohibition is to bind everyone and if one is not to respect, s/he is punished. Punishment by the hand of the human law is something she envisages. By accepting what is going to happen, she realizes the law which is the given law. So, her aim and intent is given beforehand, she does not evaluate the situation and form it; on the contrary she finds it. As an ethical consciousness, she thinks that what she knows is the essence, because she is not aware that ethical essence has divided itself into two laws.

Thinking on the issue through the collision of ethical consciousness with what is unconscious; her identification can be better understood. As we have pointed out in the foregoing chapter, confronting the laws of the ethical order, there is ethical consciousness which is an "undivided attitude towards law"[149], which belongs to individuals who can be either man or woman, because ethical consciousness is indifferent to natural difference, which is the only difference that can spring up in this phase. For ethical consciousness, what it knows as the law is the universal law. So, a man as the ethical consciousness claims that the law is the human law and a woman on the contrary, as an ethical consciousness claims that divine law is the law. So, ethical consciousness aims at the universal and it thinks that in action it

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[148] PS, 270.

[149] PS. 281.

realizes the law. Therefore, as an ethical consciousness Antigone also expects that what she does is nothing other than the realization of the law. Hegel says that, "[i]ts [ethical consciousness] absolute right is, therefore, that when it acts in accordance with ethical law, it shall find in this actualization nothing else but the fulfillment of this law itself, and the deed shall manifest only ethical action."[150] Hegel exemplifies the situation of ethical consciousness with the story of Oedipus. As ethical consciousness Oedipus follows the law, and expects that what he does is the right thing to do, but he confronts with something alien in the accomplishment of his action, which he cannot deny that his own. There is a disparity between his purpose and the outcome of his action.

Antigone's action is more tangled than the situation of ethical consciousness as it is exemplified through Oedipus. Even if she is aware of Creon's edict, what she thinks is that her law is the ethical law. Besides, there is no disparity between what she does and what she aims to do. Her purpose is burial, and she buries. The point is, application of the ethical law, does not bring justice, because her act is doubled: she not only buries but also transgresses.[151]

When she knows herself as the doer of both, on the contrary of knowing herself as the doer of the divine law, there becomes a disparity between her character and her real self.[152] Antigone acknowledges her guilt when she sees that the other law is also constitutive of the ethicality, and this acknowledgement brings her ruin. What she learns through her action is that she has erred in her certainty. Although this error kills her, we learn from this error what is lacking in the Greek ethical life, because what is lacking has emerged before us: subjectivity. For Hegel, in the ethical order the individuals are characters, because they are identified with laws.

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[150] PS, 281.

[151] Her act is transgressive from the point of the human law, but this same act can be interpreted in a different way. This interpretation can be found in the conclusion.

[152] PS, 284.

As Robert R. Williams says, "[i]n Hegel's view, the classical world had a deficient conception of subjectivity and freedom. This deficiency finds expression in the provincial consciousness of Antigone and Creon, and underlies with their immediate identification with their respective social roles."[153]

Although Antigone has died, her acknowledgement of error is for us the capability of error, which also means capability of making choice. Only retrospectively, her memory shows us that, what is given, the law, is not merely given; there is a part of activity within this givenness. Now, we can see someone who makes a choice, who errs. Therefore, Antigone's transgressive action ruins her but there emerges subjectivity from this ruin, which brings alienation and negativity with it that are necessary for the self-knowledge of spirit.

In the ethical order, since they are directly identified with their roles, individuals have limited self-awareness. Theodore George says that, "Surely, Hegel believes that consciousness, at the stage of ethical life, has not yet achieved complete self-conscious awareness, and, thus, in a sense, remains at this level only incompletely aware of itself and its ends."[154] Since individuals in the ethical order born into an already made world, they identify with it. Their characters are consisted of already existing laws and customs of the ethical life, the loss of which means the loss of their characters. Although they are aware of the laws they identify with, they are not aware that these laws are essentially linked. So, although they have self-certainty, each proves him/herself of being ignorant of themselves totally. The experience of this ignorance is tragic in their situation.

In experiencing her ignorance tragically, Antigone also says something which is, in a sense valid in the contemporary world. First of all, with mourning she makes emphasis on our relationality. We are not atomic individuals; rather others are constitutive of our selves. So, through isolating ourselves from our bonds, we

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[153] RFH, 204.

[154] TS, 80.

cannot be free and autonomous beings because we cannot be who we are. Also, her tragedy shows us that we belong to a larger world than the world we define. Like her, we were born into a world and, without knowing or not, we identify with this world. Although, in Hegelian terms, modern people do not suffer from the lack of subjectivity, they may indeed be in a situation in which they lack self-awareness, because our identification with the spirit of our times may not be reflective. Theodore George says that, "For Hegel, the rational agent is governed neither by abstract rules nor by physical impulses. She is rather an expressive and permeable subject guided by the purposes that originate from a world that is beyond herself and yet her own."[155] So a complete self-awareness requires the awareness of the world we belong. Since we were born into a world which is already made, we carry a baggage full of customs and traditions which come to light in our actions. This may lead to a superficial collision between our purposes and the outcome of our actions. The point is that these are our purposes because whether we are aware or not, we are the products of our time, belong to a larger whole and we carry a baggage which infiltrates into our purposes unconsciously. Therefore, for a complete self awareness, we must know the time we live in. Only as such the immediate unity of ourselves with our world can turn out to be a reflective unity, and so reconciliation can take place. For knowing ourselves, through the apprehension of the time we live in, we need philosophy. That is why in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel says that "philosophy…is its time apprehended in thoughts."[156] Through apprehending our own time, we can be aware of the heritage which infiltrates our life, our decisions and our actions. Only thence, we can be fully aware of ourselves and through embracing or refusing what we inherited from the others; then we can be totally autonomous beings.

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[155] TS, 79.

[156] G. W. F. Hegel. (2001). *Philosophy of Right* (S. W. Dyde, Trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Books, 19.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

At the heart of the collisions within the ethical order, there is the issue of sexual difference. We have already said that the human law is the superior law of the socio-political realm of the ethical order, and subsumes the family under it. In subsuming it under, it transposes the natural affinity of the blood relation into the ethical relation of the city, but we have seen, with the emergence of the crisis, that it could not succeed. The crisis rooted in the realm of nature, which is the realm of kinship and gender, and of sexual difference. Dennis J. Schmidt rightfully says that "[t]he first form of politics centers on the questions of sexuality and tradition."[157] Before the human law, the individuals of the Greek ethical world are same and equal regardless of their sexual difference. It equalizes them through the power of death and under the category of citizenship, and takes them as "individuals as such". The point is, death is not only equalizes but also singularizes, and in the ethical life, there is also a law of singularity. "Death marks the moment which is universal, insofar as it is the end of every individual, and the moment of pure singularity, insofar as it is mine and mine alone."[158] In putting the moments of singularity and universality together, the dead individual simultaneously belongs to two laws[159], so both the divine law and the human law turn onto the dead individual for different reasons. The point is that, the dead body is the content of the divine law directly, but it is the content of the human law only through the mediation of the divine law. On the one hand, the human law aims at the *unity of the community*,

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[157] OGOG, 96.

[158] OGOG, 99.

[159] OGOG, 99.

and allows the family to bury its member; on the other hand the divine law aims at the *unity of the individual* who is separated from his work, and for this reason buries him. The laws are assigned to different individuals according to their sexes. The failure of human law in subduing sexual difference comes in sight when the two laws collide with each other. Antigone, as a woman enters into the socio-political realm of the city as a representative of filial relations, kinship bonds and sexual difference which is the only difference between the individuals at this stage.

In the collision of laws, another point have also be emphasized which is related with the first one. In the tragedy, both Antigone and Creon use the word "*nomos*"[160] for specifying their positions in regard to the issue of burial. In using the same word, what they have in mind is totally different from each other. This fact refers to the ambiguity in the meaning of the word which is circulating in the ethical life of the Greeks. The difference in meaning refers to the difference of sexes, and universality of the human law is unsuccessful to overcome this difficulty too. Human law is universal because it is indifferent to difference and particularity. So it is formal, and this formality is a problem.

When divine law and human law are compared, it can be easily seen that divine law is not formal because the content of the law is the same as its aim: burial. However, human law is formal and its content changes, but its aim is the unity of the community. Since it subsumes the family under, the human law regulates the filial relations by suppressing the particularities belonging to it. So it does not recognize the family unconditionally, rather it recognizes its right insofar as it is transformed into a means for itself, i.e. if the burial serves for the unity. On the other hand, family recognizes the superiority of the human law insofar as it does not intervene in the issue of the realization of burial. This recognition among two spheres proves itself to be an abstract recognition when it is tested, and the litmus paper is Sophocles' *Antigone*.

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[160] Jean-Pierre Vernant makes emphasis on this issue. He says that "[t]he term nomos as used by Antigone means the opposite to what Creon, in all confidence, calls nomos". MT, 42.

This abstract recognition and the succeeding opposition can be observed around the issue of burial. If citizenship and family membership overlap in the dead body, the difference in the meaning of *nomos* does not come to light. Woman, as sister buries her dead brother for *nomos*, and the city allows the burial of citizen for *nomos*. In this situation they seem to be in harmony. On the other hand, in a situation in which family membership and citizenship do not overlap, the difference of what they mean by *nomos* manifests itself. Dispute between Antigone and Creom around a cadaver proves this.

Human law subdues the family under it insofar as it is successful to unite the categories of the family membership and citizenship. Death of Polyneices shows that these two categories are not necessarily together. In this sense, Antigone's work of mourning uncovers a dilemma at the root of the universality of the human law. Human law is universal in the sense that it encloses all individuals by taking them as citizens, but what does it mean to be a human is different from what does it mean to be a citizen. Citizenship is stuck within a boundary, which is literally the walls of the city. Socio-political law of the city constructs this category by suppressing the particularity and contingency which emerge from nature. This is proved by Polyneices' expellee from the community just because of his brother has the kingship on which he has also right. So construction of the category of citizenship has also problems in the Greek ethical world. This does not mean that Polyneices is unconditionally right, or the particularity of the nature should be recognized at all costs, rather it is to say that universality cannot be a real universality if it merely disregards and also suppresses difference.

What Hegel tries to show is not merely the deficiencies in the perception of universality. He also tries to show that the understanding of individuality is also problematic. In the Greek ethical life, the only difference emerge is a natural difference, so what makes individuals unique and singular beings is this. Antigone and Creon as ethical consciousnesses have the same attitude towards law, but what makes them opposed in their particularity is the sexual difference. It is true that

human law cannot prove its universality by suppressing difference among individuals, but the other side of the coin is that if natural difference is not superseded –not suppressed, it is not possible to unite a community under the universality of law. Thence, there is a problem in the ethical life concerning the understanding of particularity. Antigone's mourning not only causes the transformation of the universality, but also particularity which leans on natural difference.

In the ethical order, the work of men is to sacrifice their lives for the community, and the work of women is the burial. These works that fall the shares of man and woman is totally separated. However, Antigone, as a woman, fulfills the duty of woman and buries her dead brother and enters into the political sphere of the Greek polis. In doing this she sacrifices herself and also undertakes the work of man. Her undertaking the role of man is pointed out by Irigaray who interprets this situation by saying that Antigone "has digested the masculine" as Dennis J. Schmidt observes[161]. What I claim is rather different. I think that Antigone does take neither the role of man, nor asserting the role of woman. Rather when her mourning is mingled with the work of man, her act becomes the act of supersession of the given roles of man and woman. It is true that she dies, but she points out to a different conception of the citizenship and of universality, and a different conception of the family membership and of particularity. In her act, particularity enters into the realm of universal law by transformation and universality undergoes a transformation for enclosing this transformed particularity. From this perspective, her act is not transgressive but it is the act of supersession.

Supersession is the key to for taking us to a whole and absolute which does not cancel differences. In this sense Antigone stays at the core of the *Phenomenology*. She refers both to a wrong conception of unity, and the possibility of a new one. So, although the search for a unity in life is a worthful task to be undertaken, the Greek world cannot be a model for this. Therefore, what is not worthful is the nostalgia for

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[161] OGOG, 100.

a community which is lost in the mists of time. Hegel, in showing the necessary emergence of individualism and alienation in the life of a people, was showing this. Modernity is still a development which accommodates the possibility of a more sophisticated version of unity which has room for individuality and difference in it. Hegel was showing this indeed. Although there are doubts concerning the success of his project; perhaps as an aim it can still regulate our way of thinking of ourselves and the world we live in. Perhaps there is still a possibility for us to supersede the collision between ourselves and the broader horizons we break loose, in a more articulated concept of universality and of individuality.

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APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı:...

Adı   :...

Bölümü:...

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce)…………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………..

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. ☐

2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullancılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

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