

7-1975

# Hegel and the Concept of Religion in Greek Tragedy

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## Recommended Citation

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<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.2260>

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Barbara Scot for the Master of Arts in  
History presented July, 1975.

Title: Hegel and the Concept of Religion in Greek Tragedy.

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A parallel can be drawn in intellectual development between ancient Greece and late eighteenth century Europe concerning the secularization of the religious myth. This parallel is illustrated in a literary mode in Greece and in a philosophical mode in Europe. In both historical situations the intellectual development of a society was posited in a delicate balance of a religious mythical interpretation of human existence and in a growing assertiveness of the self-consciousness of the individual. A significant point of analogy is the similarity of the Greek tragedians' attempt to define man in relation to the gods and Hegel's formulation of a philosophy which suspended in a delicate semantic balance the religious terminology of his Christian heritage and the intellectual developments of the preceding century.

To develop and research this analogy required an extensive reading of the Greek tragedies and Hegel's writings on religion. From Aeschylus' works I chose Prometheus Bound and the trilogy of the Orestia to illustrate the seeds of humanism. In Sophocles' Antigone and Oedipus at Colonus heroes have grown to a dignity articulated through suffering that extends the humanistic view. Euripides completes the secularization of religious myth by illustrating in the Bacchae the return to an anthropomorphic representation of mystery religion and the problem this sort of religious myth poses for a society which is based on reason.

In attempting to understand Hegel's religious thought, it was necessary to formulate a linear progression by reading The Positivity of the Christian Religion, The Spirit of Christianity, The Introduction to the Lectures on Religion, and The Phenomenology of Mind. By following this order, I saw an attempt to reconcile the Christian myth to the Age

of Reason, which led to the ultimate statement in the Phenomenology of an integration of philosophy and religion that passes out of any conventional Christianity.

The most important secondary sources for the interpretation of the tragedies were F. M. Cornford, who in his book From Religion to Philosophy traces the evolution of Greek intellectual thought; Werner Jaeger, who in Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, explores the mind of Athens through a thorough discussion of the tragedians; and Eric Voegelin, whose Order and History, Volume two, The World of the Polis provided the model of comparison for re-occurring intellectual cycles following a paradigmatic set.

E. M. Butler's study The Tyranny of Greece Over Germany provided the transition for the analogy I wished to construct by examining the influence which the Romantic concept of ancient Greece had on the development of intellectual thought in Germany. While her study was primarily concerned with literary figures rather than philosophers, it was these figures who were most influential on Hegel's thought. Of these varied literary influences, I dealt briefly with Lessing, Goethe, Schiller and Holderlin.

The most important interpreter of Hegel is Walter Kaufmann, but his biased interpretation of Hegel as a secular thinker must be balanced with G. N. Findlay's portrayal of Hegel as sincere in his religious convictions. The ambiguity in interpretations of Hegel's religious writings demanded extensive reading of Hegel's works and an occasional bravery in individual interpretations.

Jaeger's summary of the factors which expedited the transformation

of myth in ancient Greece provided the basis for an analogy to the development of atheistic humanism in early nineteenth century Germany. Bourgeois ideals, rhetoric and philosophy destroyed religious myth in ancient Greece, and the same three factors influenced and changed the Christian myth in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The dramatic statement of ancient Greece reflected in the tragedians was re-articulated in another literary form by Hegel, the German philosopher who created a secular statement of man's capabilities whose religious semantic framework was no longer able to contain it.

HEGEL AND THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION  
IN GREEK TRAGEDY

by  
Barbara Scot


A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of


MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
HISTORY

Portland State University  
1975

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of  
Barbara Scot presented July, 1975.

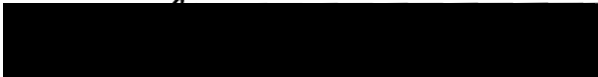
  
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July, 1975

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In the development, flowering, and demise of Greek tragedy, an artistic statement was made which reflected a significant shift in man's self-conscious awareness of his place in the universe. Eric Voegelin concluded that an historical course of events is present "when the order of the soul becomes the ordering force of society."<sup>1</sup> Voegelin saw in the statement of the dramatists, especially Aeschylus, the "historical drama of the soul,"<sup>2</sup> or as he also stated, the "order of the soul in historical evolution."<sup>3</sup> An interesting parallel can be drawn between this position of the soul in its historical evolution in Greek tragedy and the situation which occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in German philosophy. In both historical situations, the intellectual development of a society was posited in a delicate balance of a religious mythical interpretation of human existence and a growing assertiveness of the self-consciousness of the individual. To encompass the entirety of this parallel position, it would be necessary to discuss both the transformation from religion to philosophy in ancient Greece and the secularization of Christian thought to atheistic humanism in modern Europe, a project beyond the scope of this paper. However, interesting and fruitful comparisons can be made by examining individuals within the process. It is my thesis that a significant point of analogy is the similarity of the Greek tragedians' attempt to define man in relation to the gods, and Hegel's formulation of a philosophy which suspended in a delicate semantic balance the religious terminology of his Christian heritage and the intellectual developments of the preceding century.

It is particularly interesting to draw this analogy because of Hegel's own fascination with classical Greece and his preoccupation with the form, content, and statement of Greek tragedy. Although Hegel was reflecting a fascination that was widespread among the intellectual circles in the late eighteenth century, he was intensely personal in his identification with Greek culture, both through his literary associates such as Holderlin, and through his identification as the perpetuator of the Aristotelian tradition in western thought. The major point of my consideration is that the philosophy of Hegel embodies a humanistic statement of man's potentialities which contains the very seeds of destruction to the intellectual viability of the religious concepts around which it was framed, and that this paradoxical situation is analogous to the religious situation presented in Greek tragedy.

The transformation of religious thought that is reflected in Greek tragedy from Aeschylus to Euripides is the central statement of the transformation from myth to philosophy. According to Eric Voegelin, the actual transformation was a process of the myths being absorbed into a growing self-conscious awareness based on man's attempt to construct an order to his experience and existence through the application of reason. It was a process by which "the speculative reason of the thinker asserts its autonomy against the mythopoetic mode of expression."<sup>4</sup> Hegel, a product of the distinctly Germanic version of the Enlightenment, which refused to dismiss the Christian "mythopoetic mode of expression", attempted to trace the process by which the speculative reason, both of the individual and the historically evolving society, could achieve autonomy through the prevailing "mythopoetic mode." His philosophy,

like the dramatic statement of Aeschylus, held faith and reason in a tenuous balance. As the secular dramas of Euripides can be traced to the humanistic concept of man's potentialities in Aeschylus' dramas, so can the atheistic humanism of Feuerbach and Marx find its roots in the Hegelian statement of the dignity and essence of the human condition.

The following discussion will be divided into two major parts with a transition and a conclusion. In the first chapter I will illustrate the significant change of man's conceptualization of himself in relation to his gods which was articulated in Greek tragedy. This will include a discussion of the ambiguity of the statement of Aeschylus, the concept of the suffering tragic hero in Sophocles, and the humanistic position of Euripides. The second chapter will deal with the preoccupation of the German mind with ancient Greece and briefly consider the literary tradition from which Hegel formulated his philosophy. In the third chapter I will examine the development and ambiguity of Hegel's religious position, and review specific writings with a consideration of the different interpretations of various commentators. The conclusion will draw the comparison between the form and content of the statement concerning man and his relationship to the gods made in Greek tragedy and that made by Hegel. I intend to show that a parallel situation occurred in the "historical drama of the soul."<sup>5</sup>

## Chapter I

Werner Jaeger traces the historical progress of the myth in ancient Greece.<sup>6</sup> According to him, the mythical tradition evolved in a variety of forms, poetic, prosaic, and musical. Greece, at the beginning of the age of tragedy, was in a strained period of transition.

Sixth century Greece, shaken by the fall of the old aristocratic regime and of its ancestral religious faith, and disturbed by the rise of strange and hitherto unimagined spiritual forces, yearned for a new moral standard, a new life-pattern. . . . Thus, in an age which seemed to be moving ever further away from heroism, and (as Ionian literature shows) exercised its greatest powers on reflective thinking and heightened emotion perception, there sprang from those roots a new and more deeply felt spirit of heroism, which was closely and fundamentally akin to the myth and to the way of life embodied in the myth.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the age of tragedy, Homer and Hesiod had articulated the gods for Hellenic civilization.<sup>8</sup> They established "in the form of the myth, a highly theorized body of knowledge concerning the position of man in his world that could be used by the philosophers as the starting point for metaphysical analysis and differentiation."<sup>9</sup> There are, however, distinct differences in the ideas of the gods of Homer and Hesiod, and this is emphasized by F. M. Cornford in Religion and Philosophy. In Homer, the gods were fairly limited. "They are indeed exempt from age and death; but they are not eternal. They are younger than the world into which they were born. Nor are they almighty, though man is powerless against them. What limits their power, however . . . is . . . destiny (Moirai) which they did not make and against which they cannot stand."<sup>10</sup>

Hesiod continued the departmental ordering of the world of the gods which Homer had begun. The force of Destiny was still supreme, but it

was increasingly confronted with Justice. In Hesiod's Theogony, "the myth is submitted to a conscious intellectual operation, with the purpose of reshaping its symbols in such a manner that a 'truth' about order with universal validity will emerge."<sup>11</sup> For Hesiod, there were three levels of truth and order which Voegelin says we still recognize in their philosophical transformation. There are the levels of God, the polis and man. Hesiod established the position that the order of nature, which was moral, was capable of being disturbed by the sins of men.<sup>12</sup> This position was continually redefined and examined by the dramatists. The idea of Nature as moral was also accepted by the contemporary philosophers.

To speak of a linear development from tragedy to philosophy is misleading, as the recorded beginnings of Greek philosophy predate that of tragedy with the Milesian school of Thales, Anaximandes, and Anaximenes.<sup>13</sup> Philosophy was intricately related to the development of tragedy as both involved the speculative process in an attempt to define order. Voegelin placed the philosophers' "conscious break with the form of myth at about 500 B.C."<sup>14</sup> "The individual steps taken toward a differentiated experience of the psyche, during the two centuries after Hesiod, had the cumulative result of letting the self-conscious soul emerge as the tentative source of order in competition with the myth, as well as with the aristocratic culture of the archaic polis."<sup>15</sup> Voegelin traces the parallel development of philosophical thought through Xenophanes, Parmenides and Heraclitus and specifically relates Xenophanes to Hesiod's concept of the gods.

Xenophanes attacked the anthropomorphic concept of the gods. What

he was primarily objecting to was the form of the myth, not the myth itself. "The gods, he opines, are endowed with improper attributes because man creates gods in his image."<sup>16</sup> His formulation of the theory that the anthropomorphic manifestation of myth would be constantly superseded in a series of "more appropriate symbols" is a theory that would be rearticulated in the Enlightenment and nineteenth century intellectual thought.

One concept of the gods that was necessary for the development of tragedy, according to Ricoeur, was the "progressive personalization" of an "Ambiguous sort of divinity."<sup>17</sup> For there to be a tragic dimension to the manifestation of myth, the gods must personify both good and evil in the same place. That is, it is not enough to have polarized opposites; the contradiction must be with the internal structure. This is manifested poetically for the first time in Aeschylus. Ricoeur defines the continual interplay of tension between the gods and men, seeing the birth of the tragic inherent in the situation where men strain to liberate their finiteness and the "jealous" gods cannot tolerate any greatness besides their own.<sup>18</sup> "The tragic properly so called does not appear until the theme of predestination to evil--to call it by its name--comes up against the theme of heroic greatness; fate must first feel the resistance of freedom, rebound (so to speak) from the hardness of the hero, and finally crush him, before pre-eminently tragic emotion can be born."<sup>19</sup>

The three levels of truth and order, God, the polis, and man, which were mentioned in relation to Hesiod and were to be continually re-examined by the dramatists, are illustrative of the fact that Greek tragedy was as intricately related to the political environment of the

time as the religious intellectual climate I have just described. Herbert J. Muller explores the cliched hypothesis that democracy was the impetus behind the creation of tragedy. While cautioning against this oversimplification, he points out that it is a fairly well established fact that when Pisistratus, in 535 instituted the popular cult of Dionysus as the state cult, his primary motivation was to weaken the power of the hieratic priesthods which were concentrated in the hand of a conservative aristocracy.<sup>20</sup>

"Power and spirit were linked in history for one golden hour through the inseparable events of the Athenian victory in the Persian War and the Aeschylean creation of the tragedy."<sup>21</sup> The drama of tragedy developed in a political climate of freedom and victory. With the Solonic solidification of the improvements in law and justice, a dignity was given to the Greek citizen of the polis that forced an increased confrontation of Justice with the old religious concept of Destiny. Jaeger says much the same thing, pointing out that by the time of Aeschylus, tragedy was the statement of a "new conception of man and of the universe which had been given by Solon to the Athenian people."<sup>22</sup>

Aeschylus fought at Marathon, and it was for this that he chose to be remembered, having his epitaph attest to his valor in battle. The Athens for which he wrote was at the zenith of her power, and he wrote for a citizenry which was aware of the emerging importance of the polis in relation to the gods. He carried the confrontation of Justice with Destiny to its secular conclusion, stating in The Eumenides that the ability of men to arbitrate and determine justice could supersede the destiny set by the gods.

The heaviest labour of his hands; and I  
 Tamed to the rein and drove in wheeled cars  
 The horse, of sumptuous pride the ornament.  
 And those sea-wanders with the wings of cloth,  
 The shipman's wagons, none but me devised.  
 These manifold inventions for mankind  
 I perfected . . .<sup>26</sup>

What is even more interesting, however, is that Zeus is represented as a god well within the movement of history. "As far as Zeus is concerned, his order is not a divine, eternal order in the Christian sense. It has come into existence and will pass away, being no more than a phase in the life of the cosmos. And Zeus himself is not the God beyond the world, but a god within it."<sup>27</sup> This idea, of an articulation of the gods in a movement through history becomes significant in comparison to Hegel.

Exactly what the resolution concerning the nature of the gods was in the Prometheus trilogy is not known, but it is thought that eventually there was a reconciliation and Zeus allowed Prometheus to be freed, with justice superceding the jealousy and anger of Zeus. In the Oresteia, however, we know there was a definite progression in the power of Justice over Destiny.

At the beginning of Agamemnon, the responsibility for the Trojan War is directly attributed to Zeus, yet even in this statement the complicity of man's (or in this case, woman's) actions is felt.

So drives Zeus the great guest god  
 The Atreidae against Alexander:  
 For one woman's promiscuous sake  
 The struggling masses, legs tired,  
 Knees grinding in dust,  
 Spears broken in the onset.

The end will be destiny,  
 You cannot burn flesh or pour unguents,  
 Nor innocent cool tears,  
 That will soften the god's stiff anger.<sup>28</sup>



Aeschylus explores the premise in this trilogy that the sons will suffer for the sins of the fathers, and at first it definitely seems he will uphold this position. As a member of the house of Atreus, Agamemmon, the son of a man who had incurred the wrath of the gods by serving his unwitting brother his own children to eat, performed the somewhat questionable sacrifice of his own daughter to the gods in order to gain favorable winds to sail for Troy. Clytaemestra's wrath leads her to murder her husband to avenge the daughter's death and complicates the issue of possible justice. She feels that her actions are not only justified but required by the gods. "It is your will," she says in her prayer to Zeus. And the Chorus, even while blaming her for her actions, seems to feel that she is acting out some sort of role required by destiny.

Yet from his father's blood  
Might swarm some fiend to guide you.  
The black ruin that shoulders  
Through the streaming blood of brothers  
Strides at last where he shall win requital  
For the children who were eaten.<sup>29</sup>

Later they say of Agamemmon:

The spoiler is robbed; he killed, he has paid.  
The truth stands ever beside God's throne  
Eternal: he who has wrought shall pay; that is law.<sup>30</sup>

Then the question is posed that will not be answered until the end of The Eumenides. "Then who shall tear the curse from their blood?"<sup>31</sup>

The issue is not resolved in The Libation Bearers. Electra and Orestes vow to kill their mother, but even in Electra's opening prayer the issue is confused. "Between my prayer for good . . . I set/ this prayer for evil;"<sup>32</sup> Orestes, having been directed by Apollo to his task, is less uncertain, but even he seems as much driven by dead men as by the

gods. The Chorus only confuses the problem.

Almighty Destinies, by the will  
of Zeus let these things  
be done, in the turning of Justice.  
For the word of hatred spoken, let hate  
be a word fulfilled. The spirit of Right  
cries out aloud and extracts atonement  
due: blood stroke for the stroke of blood  
shall be paid.<sup>33</sup>

Here Justice and Destiny can obviously not be equated, and to do so only carries the circle one more bloody turn. Orestes plays out his part and Clytaemestra dies leaving Orestes guilty of matricide. His own reactions confuse him. He has avenged his father, "yet/ I grieve for the thing done, the death, and all our race./ I have won; but my victory is soiled, and has no pride."<sup>34</sup> He is overcome with confusion and doubt. "I am a charioteer whose course is wrenched outside/ the track."<sup>35</sup> He leaves, pursued by the Furies, whom only he can see. In confusion, he seeks Apollo to resolve the issue of his guilt.

In The Eumenides the issue is clearly defined and finally resolved in a most unexpected way. Apollo willingly accepts his part in the problem. He commanded Orestes to kill his mother. The Furies, representing the old order of the gods (Destiny), that which insisted that a crime of the blood must be paid in blood, are in direct conflict with Apollo, who in this instance represents a more humanistic justice. Apollo wants Orestes to be acquitted, and the Furies insist that they are only doing their duty. "We hold we are straight and just. If a man/ can spread his hands and show they are clean,/ no wrath of ours shall lurk for him."<sup>36</sup> But if they do not fulfill their duty there is no order to society and they are to blame. The resolution comes in Aeschylus' revolutionary statement that men can order their own society.

In that statement the stage has been set for Euripides.

With the Furies and Apollo at a stand off, they appeal to Athene to arbitrate. Both sides state their case. Orestes insists that "Apollo shares responsibility" in his crime. Athene, when confronted with the issue in its entirety, backs off from the responsibility, saying "the matter is too big" and she selects a jury, not from the gods, but from the city. She establishes a human court to judge human crimes. Here, with the jury obviously representing the Areopagus, Aeschylus declares his faith in the ability of man to govern himself. His statement is somewhat careful, however. When the jury votes, it is a tie and the gods must again intervene. Athene casts her lot on the side of Apollo, (with the dubious reasoning that she is always for the male side), and then sets about to appease the Furies. Two major statements have been made by Aeschylus concerning man and the gods. The first is that Destiny has been replaced by Justice. The second is that Justice is not an external imposition of the gods, but an internal process within the society made capable by man's powers of reason. The trilogy ends with a ringing affirmation of glorious Athens; a faith in the city state as a place where man can realize his full potential as a citizen.

It is in the plays of Sophocles that we find the real development of the tragic hero. Voegelin tells us that in the suffering of the hero, we are already beyond a representative experience for the viewer. "In the full unfolding of tragedy, in the grandiose personalities of Sophocles, one can sense the exceptional character of such suffering; a solitude begins to spread around the hero that makes his suffering unrepresentative for the common man."<sup>37</sup>

While he had been too young to engage directly in the war against the Persians, Sophocles watched Pericles establish a full democracy, and "watched too how the very nature of that democracy made possible the — dominance of a single individual of strong personality and powerful eloquence, so that the theory of the authority of the masses led in practice to one-man rule."<sup>38</sup> Certainly, the interplay of the gods, the polis, and the individual was the dominant tension in his dramas. The gods seem farther away and less volatile than in Aeschylus, and it is primarily their strength that is emphasized, rather than their justice. "The hostile god makes himself felt less by pressure than by his absence, — abandoning man to his own resources. This doubly tragic view bars the way to the solutions sketched by Aeschylus."<sup>39</sup> I will discuss two plays, Antigone and Oedipus at Colonus to illustrate Sophocles' statement in the secularization of myth.

The action of Antigone begins with two brothers dead in a civil struggle for control of Thebes. The sons of Oedipus, Polynices and Eteocles, killed each other while fighting for control, and Creon, their uncle, to whom the rule of the city has passed, decrees that Eteocles, as the defender of the city was to be given an honorable burial, while Polynices, as the attacker, was to be "left unburied, unwept, a feast of flesh/ for keen-eyed carrion birds."<sup>40</sup> Antigone, as the sister of the dead man, cannot allow such a sacrilege to exist. It was absolutely essential for the dead to be buried, even if it involved only a symbolic gesture. Antigone, deliberately resisting the ruler of the state, says that the duty commanded by the gods supersedes that of the state.

Creon: Now tell me, in as few words  
as you can,  
Did you know the order forbidding

such an act?  
 Antigone: I knew it, naturally. It was plain enough.  
 Creon: And yet you dared to contravene it?  
 Antigone: Yes.  
 That order did not come from God. Justice,  
 That dwells with the gods below, knows no such law.  
 I did not think your edicts strong enough  
 To overrule the unwritten unalterable laws  
 Of God and heaven, you being only a man.  
 They are not of yesterday or today, but everlasting,  
 Though where they came from, none of us can tell.<sup>41</sup>

This passage states the complexity of the problem to be found in Sophocles. At first it would seem that he was reversing the position of Aeschylus, that man in society was capable of determining justice, and that the laws of the state were supreme. But seen in the context of the play, a more complex issue is raised. Creon is speaking from the position of a virtual tyrant acting on arbitrary decisions, rather than as a representative of a citizen state, so perhaps it is invalid to take Creon merely as the statement of the position of the city-state. The second problem is that Antigone seems to be a bit of a dramatic masochist, rushing to some self-fulfilling prophecy of destruction. Although she tells us that she acts as she does because of the gods, we do not have the direct kind of divine intervention that we had with Orestes, where Apollo testifies on his behalf.

We do, however, hear from Teiresias, and he testifies to the power of the gods. He seems to unleash the Furies on Creon that Aeschylus harnessed. "The gods themselves/ Cannot undo it. It follows of

necessity/ From what you have done. Even now the avenging Furies,/ The hunters of Hell that follow and destroy,/ Are lying in wait for you, and will have their prey."<sup>42</sup> This passage taken out of context would certainly support the view that Sophocles represents an older and more theological concept of the myth than Aeschylus. Yet when it is seen in relation to the struggle he has articulated in Antigone the statement that is made concerning the dignity of the individual human nature is more powerful than his theological position and contributes to the secularization of the myth in spite of his own sincere belief in the gods. The dignity of the individual that is articulated through suffering, and the struggle of the individual to define himself in relation to his political structure speaks of a humanistic view that extends the human potential beyond either a pawn of the gods or a servant of the state. This statement of man's dignity is carried even farther in Oedipus at Colonus.

Oedipus at Colonus was written at the end of Sophocles' life and is several years removed from the first drama of Oedipus, where the king, as the man who does not know who he is, acts out the tragic prophecy of the gods to kill his father and marry his mother. At the end of the first play we see Oedipus reduced to a blind, pitiful creature, begging for his children. He is later sent away from Thebes for the misfortune his actions have caused the city, banned to perpetual exile, and it is with his daughter Antigone that we find him, at Colonus, close to Athens.

Antigone, pleading for shelter for her father, appeals to the citizens of Colonus saying that "God leads us, and no man living/ Walks any other way/ Than the way God sets before him."<sup>43</sup> Although the

futility of trying to change the way set by the gods will be reiterated by Oedipus, the old king presents several interesting arguments in his own behalf, showing how it is unfair for the society of men to reject him because his sin was not an internal one, but a misfortune externally. — imposed upon him. "Was I the sinner?" he asks. "Repaying wrong for wrong—that was no sin,/ Even were it wittingly done, as it was not./ I did not know the way I went. They knew; They who devised this trap for me, they knew!"<sup>44</sup> His argument is quite convincing. "I tell you, then, I have endured/ Foulest injustice; I have endured Wrong undeserved; God knows/ Nothing was of my choosing."<sup>45</sup> He didn't ask to marry Jocasta. "A gift—it was my city's gift/ A prize for what I did for her!/ Would I had never earned it."<sup>46</sup>

Oedipus is portrayed as a man who transcends his blindness and the horror of his past. When he rejects Creon and his son, their arguments seem weak and shoddy, while he, the blind man in soiled robes seems the stronger, although he must appeal to Theseus for physical help, his argument against Creon attests to his inner strength.

My life was innocent,  
 search as you will, of any guilty secret  
 For which this error could have been the punishment,  
 This sin that damned myself and all my blood.  
 Or tell me: if my father was foredoomed  
 By the voice of heaven to die by his own son's hand,  
 How can you justly cast it against me,  
 Who was still unborn when that decree was spoken?  
 Unborn? Nay, unbegotten, unconceived.<sup>47</sup>

His tone becomes increasingly grieved.

Answer me this one thing: if here and now  
 Someone came up and threatened to take your life,  
 Your innocent life, would you then pause to ask  
 If he were your father—or deal with him out of hand:  
 I'm sure, as you love life, you'd pay the assailant  
 In his own coin, not look for legal warrant.<sup>48</sup>

The play has a very strange ending. Oedipus disappears into the sacred grave and is mysteriously taken by the gods. "Certain it is that he was taken without a pang, without grief or agony--a passing more wonderful than that of any other man."<sup>49</sup> This ending has given commentators and critics no end of trouble. "Sophocles too; in Oedipus at Colonus, hailed the end of the tragic; the old Oedipus, after a long meditation on his misfortunes, is led by Sophocles to the threshold of a non-tragic death; he is removed from the sight of the profane, after having been accompanied by Theseus, the royal sacrificer, to the boundaries of the sacred territory of the city."<sup>50</sup> Ricoeur, however, sees the "death of the aged Oedipus, the glorious death of a hero grown wiser," . . . as . . . "a suspension of the human condition rather than its cure."<sup>51</sup> Jaeger sees the old king as having been magnified and ennobled through suffering, and that "hallowed by pain, he is in some mysterious way brought near to divinity."<sup>52</sup>

A discussion of Euripides should start with the theatrics of Nietzsche.

What did you want, sacriligious Euripides,  
when you sought to compel this dying myth to serve  
you once more? It died under your violent hands . . .  
And just as the myth died on you, the genius of music  
died on you, too. Though with greedy hands you plundered  
all the gardens of music, you still managed only copied  
masked music. And because you had abandoned \_\_\_\_\_  
Dionysus, Apollo abandoned you.<sup>53</sup>

Herbert Muller provides some interesting biographical material on Euripides which serves as a good introduction to some of the controversial qualities of his dramas. He tells us that Euripides was reputedly Anaxagoras' disciple, was a friend of not only Socrates, but of



Protagoras as well. In fact, it is said that it was in Euripides' house that Protagoras read his treatise on the gods which contained the famous statement that "man is the measure of all things."<sup>54</sup> It is not surprising that he was accused of impiety. According to Muller, Euripides was "the first known Greek writer of importance to attack the institution of slavery; the first to take up the cause of women; the first to democratize tragedy by translating it into everyday language and giving common men a dignified role in it."<sup>55</sup>

According to Jaeger, Euripides resumed the tragic conflict between man and god that had been posed by Aeschylus.<sup>56</sup> He places his chapter on "Euripides and his Age" after a discussion of the Sophists, obviously seeing them as important influences on Euripides and central to the intellectual life of the time. He characterizes Euripides as the first psychologist, who "created the pathology of the mind" by his portrayal of the tension between the internal subjective world of man and the rationalist approach.

I will discuss two of Euripides' plays to show the two distinct elements which manifest in his drama to complete the secularization of myth in Greek tragedy. The first is The Trojan Women, where he presents the Athenian victory in the Trojan War in terms of moral degeneracy and man's inhumanity to man, and the second is the Bacchae, in which the return to the new mystery religion severs the tragic tension between the gods and man, and completes what Cornford refers to as the "fatal absurdity of complete anthropomorphism."<sup>57</sup>

In The Trojan Women Euripides presents the sack of Troy from the point of view of the innocent victims of war. These are not heroic

figures on stage, but human beings whose suffering is not transformed into anything but human misery brought about by other men. The Athenian soldiers are presented as cowards, so intoxicated with blood they kill even the children. The fallen queen, Hecuba, summarizes the situation by her suggested epitaph for her grandson: "What will be the verse inscribed on your tomb? 'Within this grave a little child is laid, slain by the Greeks because they were afraid.'"<sup>58</sup>

At the beginning of the play, Athena is so disgusted by what she sees that she literally switches sides and conspires against the victory. Voegelin summarized the play. "The issue of the Troiades is the suicide of the Greek soul in the hour of victory. What began as an heroic adventure, ends in the vulgarity and atrocity of the conquest. The morals of filth and abuse will suck down the Greeks themselves. Athena, the guardian of her people, will switch sides because her temple has been insulted."<sup>59</sup>

The Trojan Women represents Euripides most negative statement concerning the nature of man. He is not blaming man's inhumanity to man on the gods, although Hecuba seeks solace in her fate by saying it is god's will. The essential conflict is between man himself. It is the — passions of man which are the real cause of his suffering.<sup>60</sup>

The Bacchae is a terrifying play. The gods are back in full force, but these are not the gods of Destiny and Justice in Aeschylus. Dionysus, disguised as a man, according to the stage directions, is a beardless, effeminate youth, with long blond curls. He is a cruel god who drives women into mad frenzies. At the opening of the play all the Thebean women are off dancing in the hills. He is determined to win the young

king of Thebes, Pentheus, to his worship. "Like it or not, this city must learn its lesson:/ it lacks initiation in my mysteries; . . . Therefore I shall prove to him/ and every man in Thebes that I am god/ indeed."<sup>61</sup> His victory takes a strange form. He not only seduces the young king, but exhorts the frenzied women to literally shred his flesh from his bones, his mother, in her state of passion, participating in the kill. It is a horrifying statement of the power of passion over reason. "Ultimately, Euripides dramatized the profound contradictions in religion itself. He showed the best and the worst of the religious spirit and how the best becomes the worst."<sup>62</sup>

Myth has become again a superstition, an anthropomorphic representation of the mystery religion. Jaeger says that Euripides has explored religious mass-hypnotism, and the problems it poses for a society which is based on reason. His conclusion to the chapter on Euripides provides a succinct statement of the change that had taken place in Athenian society from the dramatic tragic statement of Aeschylus after the victories with the Persians, to the despair that was beginning to pervade Athens by the time of Euripides. "The new elements which formed his style were to be the cultural forces of succeeding centuries; bourgeois ideals (more in the social than the political sense), rhetoric, and — philosophy. These forces penetrated mythology and destroyed it."<sup>63</sup>

At the beginning of the Periclean age, political, religious, and intellectual strains of thought combined and held for a brief time a tension, that by its very energy could not remain in balance. Soon the strains of thought would be repolarized and redefined, into their separate spheres, but for a brief moment in history, the delicate balance

held and the statement of the tragic was made.

Eric Voegelin summarizes his view of the transformation from myth to philosophy in ancient Greece.

In Hellas, with its more diversified transitions from myth to philosophy, first the old myth was set off as a falsehood from the new truth of the Hesiodian mythical speculation; then both the old myth and the Hesiodian speculation became falsehood in relation to the truth of philosophy, until Plato finally developed the new concept of types of theology by which the degree of truth or untruth in the expressions of man's relation with God was to be measured. The phases of increasing truth, thus, were clearly distinguished in Hellas; and the transition from myth to philosophy was understood, at the latest in Plato's Gordias, as an historical epoch.<sup>64</sup>

This extends the transformation of myth beyond the process which specifically takes place within tragedy, but it is important to emphasize that the statement in tragedy was the time when philosophy and religion were combined in a speculative statement on man and the gods. Through the course of tragedy, this statement was formulated differently, but by the time of Euripides, the proud Olympians Cornford described had been superseded by the mystic element of religion.

Neitzsche says that Greek tragedy died by suicide, and after his attack on Euripides, he blames Socrates, as a representative of science, that which has for its mission "to make existence appear comprehensible and thus justified as the final force behind the death of tragedy." No longer does man look to god for a definition of sin. "Virtue is knowledge; man sins only from ignorance; he who is virtuous is happy. In these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy."<sup>65</sup>

Voegelin sees it somewhat differently. For him, "Tragedy as the representative action of the Athenian people had to die when the reality

of Athens made heroic action incredible and the island of Dike was swallowed up by a sea of disorder."<sup>66</sup> Politically, Athens had reached a time of new definitions. Intellectually philosophy and religion no longer held the delicate balance that gave man the possibility for tragic action. The only gods left were the mystery gods, with which the world of reason could have nothing to do. Intellectual speculation could have no place in a religious world which again literally believed its superstitions. So while the mystery religion continued to be a source of inspiration for the irrational part of man, the rational part responded to philosophy. "As it had been found out that the magnificent traffic of cloud and sunshine, and the daily circling of the heavens, could go on its way without the impertinent aid of magical dances and incantation . . . the time had come for religion to give place to philosophy."<sup>67</sup>

## Chapter II

In this chapter I will discuss the pervasive influence that Greek thought had in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Germany. I will limit my discussion to certain individuals who were influential in a fairly direct way on Hegel's thought. It is necessary, however, to begin with a brief consideration of the German view of Greece. To understand this it is necessary to examine the person and influence of Johann Winckelmann.

According to E. M. Butler, "Winckelmann's Greece was the essential factor in the development of German poetry throughout the latter half of the eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth century."<sup>68</sup> Winckelmann was a strange and rather unpleasant man who was obsessed from early childhood with a romantic vision of the purity and harmony of classical Greece which became an obsession for a generation of German writers. His concepts are important as the idealism with which he viewed the Greeks became the prevailing view in German thought, producing an unrealistic and simplistic version of the superiority of Greek culture over Germany, and an undue reverence for Greek religion.

Butler uses for her primary example of the idealization of Greece by Winckelmann, the Laocoon. Winckelmann, in his Thought on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture and History of Art, described various works of Greek sculpture in which he repeatedly attributed to Greek art a theme of "simplicity, serenity and greatness."<sup>69</sup> In describing the Laocoon, which he had seen only in plaster cast models, Winckelmann chose to ignore the passion and movement of the naturalistic

statue. "Nothing accounts so satisfactorily for Winckelmann's extraordinary blindness as the natural explanation that, dazzled by the flash of a great revelation, he saw the distinctive qualities of Greek arts as he looked at this supposedly genuine specimen. He was in fact in a trance; and like many another clairvoyant, he was uttering truths which did not apply to the object before him, but were associated with it in his mind."<sup>70</sup>

Winckelmann, who never went to Greece, created a picture for his contemporaries of a time in history which seemed the very antithesis of eighteenth-century Germany. His message was that by studying and imitating the Greeks, there was a chance for the attainment of "the combination of the beautiful and the sublime, of the human and the godlike by means of nobility, simplicity, serenity and greatness."<sup>71</sup> His readers were eager to assimilate his message and went on to build even more unrealistic pictures of antiquity.

Lessing begins his work entitled Laocoon with a tribute to Winckelmann and a reference to the "noble simplicity and quiet greatness" of the Greek Masterpieces.<sup>72</sup> Although he accuses Winckelmann of not consulting originals,<sup>73</sup> according to Butler he too was guilty of writing about what he did not see. "Winckelmann had rhapsodized about Greece, but had stubbornly refused to visit it; Lessing theorized intrepidly about art without attempting to look at it."<sup>74</sup> But his concept of the Greek gods was particularly influential for Hegel, especially in How the Ancients Represented Death, and The Education of Mankind.

In How the Ancients Represented Death Lessing stressed in a

peculiar telling way the antithesis between the ugly side of Christian asceticism and pagan joy in life and beauty."<sup>75</sup> Again Lessing uses Winckelmann as his authority in various references. He presents an interest-comparison of the artistic portrayal of death in Greece and that of the Christian religion. Death for the ancients was represented as a natural positive state of repose and harmony with nature in contrast to the view of the Christian whose pictorial image of a skeleton with a sythe or instrument of torture represents death as the wages of sin. He concludes his essay with a statement which is definitely negative toward the Christian religion. "Yet it is certain that that religion which first discovered to man that even natural death was the fruit and the wages of sin, must have infinitely increased the terrors of death. There have been sages who have held life to be a punishment, but to deem death a punishment, could not of itself have occurred to the brain of a man who only used his reason, without revelation."<sup>76</sup> While he ends with a more optimistic note, the use of the word religion is strangely Hegelian. "Only misunderstood religion can estrange us from beauty, and it is a token that religion is true, and rightly understood, if it everywhere leads us back to the beautiful."<sup>77</sup>

According to Walter Kaufmann, Lessing's Education of Mankind was influential in Hegel's development.<sup>78</sup> Kaufmann attributes Hegel's concept of religion operating as an instrument by which man achieved a philosophical perspective to Lessing's articulation of the idea in this essay.

Goethe portrays in Werther the tortured young German who muses on Homer and longs for a world where men have established a harmony with



nature. Young Werther meets a man named V., "a frank open fellow, with most pleasing features," who impresses him with his learning. Two of their mutual accomplishments are that they know Greek and they have read Winckelmann.<sup>79</sup> In the harsh contemporary society of Werther there is no place for the sensitive creative soul, so the unhappy lover takes his own life.

It is Iphigenia in Tauris that Butler sees as the most significant expression of Goethe's Hellenism. "This, 'seeking the land of the Greeks — with his soul', Goethe created in Iphigenia what Winckelmann had seen in Laocoon: noble simplicity and serene greatness in the heroine, and the conquest of pain and suffering by sublimity of the soul."<sup>80</sup> As this play was definitely influential on Hegel, it is worth considering at this point in some detail.

Iphigenia in Tauris is based on Euripides' drama of the same name, although Goethe obviously had no intention of conveying the same picture of either the gods or Iphigenia. In Euripides' version, the gods control the action, and Iphigenia, while not a particularly tragic figure, becomes a representative of Athena's power where the justice of the state supersedes old blood laws of the sacrifice of aliens.<sup>81</sup> Goethe, making the characters more subjective, made Iphigenia epitomize a synthesis of humanitarian concepts.

Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon who was sacrificed to gain fair winds for the voyage to Troy, did not die but was mysteriously and secretly spirited away by the goddess Diana. "She did not want my blood and wrapped me in/ A cloud to rescue me;"<sup>82</sup> She was deposited on the shore of Tauris, an island with the unfriendly custom of sacrificing all

hapless strangers to the goddess Diana. The king, Thoas, took Iphigenia's appearance as a sign from the gods to refrain from bloody sacrifices so temporarily stayed the order for the automatic extermination of strangers, but with the capture of two Greeks, who unknown to him are Orestes and his cousin Pylades, the clamor for sacrifice has been renewed. Thoas, who is lonely after the death of his family, is enamored with Iphigenia and wishes her to marry him. Her refusal, based on a desire to return to her family and homeland, triggers the not quite logical response that he will renew the custom of sacrifice, for which Iphigenia must act as priestess.

Iphigenia, reluctant to participate in the bloody deed, meets Pylades and Orestes. She learns the fate of her family before she knows who Orestes is. With the recognition of her brother, she exhibits a joy beyond the bounds of usual sibling affection.

O hear me! Look at me! See how my heart  
After a long, long time is opening to  
The bliss of kissing the head of the dearest  
Person whom the world can hold for me,  
Of clasping you within my arms, which were  
Outstretched before to empty winds alone!<sup>83</sup>

This love between brother and sister which became a fascination for Hegel as the pinnacle of ethical relationships, was used by Goethe to make a statement concerning a possibility of harmony and transcendence of the cruelty and crassness of human existence. Goethe associated with the Greeks an "ethic of harmony and humanity."<sup>84</sup>

The gods in Goethe's Iphigenia definitely have the benefit of the Enlightenment. They are quite reasonable, as Pylades states: "The gods do not/ avenge the fathers' misdeeds on the son;/ And each man, good or evil, carries off/ His own reward with his own action. We/ are heirs to

parents' blessing, not their curses."<sup>85</sup> The dictum given to Orestes by the gods to seize the statue of Diana is conveniently reinterpreted when Thoas protests the plundering tendencies of the Greeks, and it is to Iphigenia whom the gods wanted to restore the harmony of a family torn by every conceivable familial variation of homicide.

Walter Kaufmann links Goethe's Iphigenia with Sophocles' Antigone.

Goethe's Iphigenia, unlike Euripides' but like Sophocles' Antigone, stands for love and humanity against hate and cruelty. In a tremendous speech . . . she decides to be honest with the king and confides in him, as in a comparable situation Sophocles' Neoptolemus breaks his previous resolve and is honest with Philoctetes. And even as her Humanity has restored her brother's mind earlier in the play, it now prevails over the king's resolve to sacrifice the strangers to the goddess, and over Orestes' eagerness to fight;<sup>86</sup>

Ernst Cassirer, in his essay "Goethe and the Kantian Philosophy", states that "Goethe's classicism rested upon his idea of 'inner form.' This form he found in the works of the ancients, whom he saw in the light of Winckelmann's artistic views. It was for him the expression of an objective necessity."<sup>87</sup> These objective necessities are an aspect of the classicism of both Goethe and Schiller, according to Cassirer, as they held "the principle that only law can give us freedom."<sup>88</sup> Various times Iphigenia appeals to a law that is beyond the immediate secular scope for guidance. The ancient law that all aliens are sacred will transcend the law of Thoas,<sup>89</sup> and there is a law of truth and human decency that is above the doomed house of Atreus.

Thoas: You think the rough  
and barbarous Scythian will hear the voice  
of truth and human decency that Atreus  
The Greek would not hear?  
Iphigenia: All men hear it, born  
Beneath whatever sky they may, and through  
Whose bosoms flows the fountainhead of life  
Pure and unhindered.<sup>90</sup>

Butler makes an interesting comparison between Winckelmann and Goethe. Both, she says, represent Greece from a Roman experience. Neither man even visited Greece, an experience which was the result of great strain for Winckelmann and of no particular tension for Goethe. "One essential difference between Goethe and Winckelmann remained: love of beauty not in its male but in its female aspect. Goethe had represented Winckelmann's spiritual harmony as the achievement of a pure woman in Iphigenia.<sup>91</sup> The gods of Greece also have been changed. "In this sunny pagan world tragedy is not conquered so much as completely eliminated, and the gods whose ghosts fled before Iphigenia have undergone an Ovidian metamorphosis."<sup>92</sup>

Schiller, in the sixth letter of the Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man (footnote attributing this observation to Kaufmann), presents an interesting and thorough comparison of Greek culture and his contemporary German society. His view reflects that of Winckelmann, that Greece was far superior to contemporary Germany.

But if we can bestow some serious attention to the character of our times, we shall be astonished at the contrast between the present and the previous form of humanity, especially that of Greece. We are justified in claiming the reputation of culture and refinement, when contrasted with a purely natural state of society, but not so comparing ourselves with the Grecian nature. For the latter was combined with all the charms of art and with all the dignity of wisdom, without, however, as with us, becoming a victim to these influences. The Greeks have put us to shame not only by their simplicity, which is foreign to our age; they are at the same time our rivals, nay frequently our models, in those very points of superiority from which we seek comfort when regretting the unnatural character of our manners. We see that remarkable people uniting at once fulness of form and fulness of substance, both philosophising and creating, both tender and energetic, uniting a youthful fancy to the virility of reason in a glorious humanity.<sup>93</sup>

Schiller continues in this letter to articulate a position about

the gods of Greece that was very much reflected by Hegel in his early religious writings. The Greek gods represented the whole of human nature. They were, in fact, a glorification of human nature.

"... the Greek mind displaced humanity, and recast it on a magnified scale in the glorious circle of its gods; but it did this not by dissecting human nature, but by giving it fresh combinations, for the whole of human nature was represented in each of the gods."<sup>94</sup> The problem with modern religion was that it had lost its unity with nature by separating man from god. Schiller states this view of the Greek gods even more dramatically in a poem entitled "The Gods of Greece." As he had said in his letters, modern society was definitely inferior to ancient Greece.

Not to that culture gay  
Stern self denial, or sharp penance wan!  
Well might each heart be happy in that day--  
For gods, the happy ones, were kin to man! . . .  
Art thou, fair world, no more?  
Return, thou virgin-bloom on nature's face;  
Ah, only on the minstrel's magic shore  
Can we the footstep of sweet fable trace!  
The meadows mourn for the old hallowing life;  
Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft;  
Where once the warm and living shapes were rife  
Shadows alone are left!<sup>95</sup>

This concept, of modern religion needing to return to a wholeness which included man as an integral part of the infinite, is exceedingly important in terms of Hegel's religious thought, and the seeds of atheistic humanism which were present in his religious statement.

Schiller was important to Hegel's development in other ways as Walter Kaufmann points out in a discussion of the early development and influences on Hegel.<sup>96</sup> He emphasizes Schiller's contrast of the two types of infinity. In terms of an "empty infinity" and a "replete"

infinity, Schiller articulated the idea of freedom within a harmony of laws, a concept which complimented and influenced Hegel's philosophy of the individual within society.<sup>97</sup>

Another idea which Kaufmann attributes to Schiller that is important to Hegel is the idea that "there is a particular sequence through which man has to advance to rationality."<sup>98</sup> Schiller states in Letter Twenty-three that man transcends a physical state for an aesthetic state, and passes from the aesthetic state to a "logical and moral state."<sup>99</sup> This echoes back to Lessing's Education of Mankind, and the concept became very much a working part of Hegel's philosophy. Schiller saw the task of culture "to submit man to form, even in a purely physical life, and to render it aesthetic as far as the domain of the beautiful can be extended, for it is alone in the aesthetic state, and not in the physical state, that the moral state can be developed."<sup>100</sup> Man is both individual and a part of the laws of nature, and his task is to strive toward freedom through cultural forms.

At the beginning of her account about Holderlin, Butler tells a rather charming story of the youth wandering in an obviously disoriented way through an opulent garden adorned with twenty-four statues of Greek gods. She quotes Holderlin, "The beautiful gods of Greece are images of the beautiful thoughts of a whole people."<sup>101</sup> Holderlin was profoundly influenced by reading Winckelmann, and his masters thesis was a summary of Winckelmann's views entitled A History of Art Under the Greeks.<sup>102</sup> Even more dramatic for Holderlin, was the influence of Schiller.

Holderlin confessed an almost slavish imitation of Schiller at times, and the personal relationship seems to have been somewhat painful

and strained, with Holderlin aware of his obsessive fascination with Schiller's ideas which curbed his own creative outlook. He was able to continue creatively only when he successfully broke the spell of his own fascination for Schiller.

Holderlin's progression of thought concerning the relationship of Greek religion to his contemporary society is especially interesting in relation to his extremely close friend Hegel. Holderlin progressed from an almost morbid fascination with a lost age to a feeling that the past must be transcended rather than simply longed after. His grief was intensely personal over the loss of the beauty and harmony of Greece or the modern world.

. . . no longer do  
The prophetic groves of Dodona speak comfort to  
those in need,  
The paths where once, led lightly by his hopes,  
a questioner could climb to the seat of the honest seer. . . .

But, alas, our generation wanders in darkness, it lives  
As in Orcus without God. Men are bound to their own  
tasks

Alone, and in the roaring workshop each can hear  
Only himself. They work like savages, steadily,  
With powerful, restless arms, but always and always,  
The labor of the fools is sterile, like the Furies.  
So it will be until, awakened from anxious dreams,  
The souls of men arise, youthfully glad, and the  
blessed

Breath of love blows in a newer time, as it often did  
For the blossoming children of Hellas, and over freer  
brows

The spirit of nature, the far-wandering, shines for  
us again  
In silent, lingering divinity from golden clouds.<sup>103</sup>

Holderlin himself did not carry his philosophy to any real conclusion in terms of either the intellectual or political possibilities for his contemporary society. He, caught in the stranglehold of severely progressive schizophrenia, renounced the gods of Greece as he

returned to the Christianity of his mother. Yet, even in his insanity he often called out to the gods of his youth. Butler concludes her discussion with this statement.

Holderlin is the latest in the line of writers and poets to whom Winckelmann's Greece was handed as a living tradition through Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller. . . . But this most single-minded of Winckelmann's disciples had no followers of his own. . . .

The direct line of communication broke off with Holderlin, and the Greece of Winckelmann's dreams vanished away with him. He was the consumation of all the longing felt romantically for ancient Greece since Winckelmann had discovered it, the victim to an ideal which not even his faith and love could realize.<sup>104</sup>

Butler states that Holderlin refused to accept the idea that ancient Greece was an unattainable ideal and found more attractive Schiller's idea that there was a hope for a future of re-establishing some Hellenic harmony on a transcendent level. This idea did not die in Germany, in fact, it became an underlying premise on which nineteenth century German philosophy developed. Hegel was the important figure of transition from which the gods of Greece, articulated through the semantic medium of Christianity, provided an enchiridion by which the individual could attain his highest potential of intellectual and spiritual development. He was seeking, in the words of Holderlin, "a newer time" which would re-establish the harmony of Greece in the spirituality of man and the manifested social and political forms. From Hegel, the dream of awakening the savages, with "Powerful, restless arms", became increasingly secularized in the religious atheism of Feuerbach to the stridently political statement of Marx.



### Chapter III

Anne Paolucci, the editor of a small collection of essays entitled Hegel in Comparative Literature, includes in her introduction a description of a medallion which was given to Hegel by his students for his sixtieth birthday.

On one side is a likeness of the philosopher's head in profile and on the other an allegorical representation consisting, on the left side, of a male figure draped in a flowing classical robe, seated, reading a large book, with an owl perched on a column just behind him; on the right stands a woman similarly draped, holding a cross that is larger than herself; and between the two, stands a youthful naked "genius," crowned in splendor, whose arms are extended to touch and thus to join the reader beneath the owl and the cross raised above the woman's head.<sup>105</sup>

The owl, Minerva's symbol of wisdom and the cross represent Hegel's absorption with the Greek ideal of harmony and the attainment of wisdom through the manifested cultural forms. Ms. Paolucci concludes with a quotation from the Philosophy of Right.

History's inescapable lesson, which confirms what the concept teaches, is that it is only when actuality is fully mature that the ideal first appears in opposition to the real, which it then comprehends as its own substance and reshapes into an intellectual realism of its own. When philosophy paints its gray on gray, then has a form of life grown old. Philosophy's gray cannot rejuvenate it, but only make it known. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.<sup>106</sup>

Hegel was apparently very pleased with the gift.

In order to draw a logical analogy between the transformation of religious thought in Greek tragedy and the secularization of the Christian tradition that is inherent in Hegel's philosophy, I will organize my discussion in the following manner. First, I will present a summary of the commentary on Hegel's religious position as Hegel's

statement is somewhat ambiguous and has been subjected to a variety of interpretations. Next I will discuss and explicate some of the major works, and as a conclusion I will demonstrate the definite seeds of atheistic humanism that permeated Hegel's philosophy. The conclusion of the thesis will then relate the major points of the transformation of religious thought in Greek tragedy articulated in the first chapter and the basis and movement in Hegel's religious position that gave rise to atheistic humanism which I have considered in the third chapter.

The two extreme positions in the interpretation of Hegel's religious philosophy are exemplified by Richard Kroner and Walter Kaufmann. Kroner insists not only that Hegel was a religious thinker, but that he saw Christianity as the culmination of man's spiritual endeavors. While admitting that Hegel was fascinated with the Greek concept of the gods in the early part of his career, he strongly supports the position that Hegel's religious ideas change significantly and become increasingly Christian.<sup>107</sup> Walter Kaufmann has no sympathy or tolerance for this view, and insists that "Hegel's treatment of Christianity in his last years has often been misunderstood. Among religions, he considers it supreme insofar as it seems to him to come closest to the truth comprehended ultimately in his philosophy."<sup>108</sup>

These seemingly antithetical views both have their basis and substantiating evidence in Hegel's writings and lectures. In order to understand and accept that both views sustain fairly valid claims, it is necessary to understand the synthesis which Hegel's philosophy embodies. As a philosophy and theory of religious thought, Hegel's philosophy contained a synthesis for the prevailing religious mythology, i.e.

Christianity, and a humanistic concept of man's potentialities that emerged from the Enlightenment faith in man's capabilities for reason, that was held in balance by his own semantic complexity. In order to maintain that synthesis, it is necessary to accept the intellectual and semantic framework with which Hegel dealt, a task that can only be accomplished when dealing with him historically.

Hegel was a Lutheran and he insistently restated this position. "I am a Lutheran and will remain the same."<sup>109</sup> At times the exceedingly traditional terminology he uses would certainly, if taken out of context, support the idea of a conservative Hegel, maintaining the viability of the Christian religion as the ultimate in spiritual and intellectual experience. "Thus God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things."<sup>110</sup> Or consider the following; "But the fact is, no man is so utterly ruined, so lost, and so bad, nor can we regard anyone as being so wretched, that he has no religion whatever in him, even if it were only that he has the fear of it, or some yearning after it, or a feeling of hatred toward it."<sup>111</sup> Yet even this seemingly conservative religious statement contains in its continuation the essence of all that is problematic in an interpretation of Hegel's religious thought. He continues: "As man, religion is essential to him, and is not a feeling foreign to his nature."<sup>112</sup> That which is the essence of what man really is, according to Hegel, is the bifurcated spirit straining toward unity. To call that struggle religion, and the philosophical manifestation of it God, is not at all the same as to articulate a conservative religious statement.

J. N. Findlay, in The Philosophy of Hegel, says that in using a

religious terminology for his philosophical statement Hegel was consciously seeking the approval granted an intellectual who was a defender of religious and political orthodoxy. Although Findlay sees Hegel's view of man as a very humanistic one, he did not, as his later successors, put man in the place of God. He says that Hegel's religion, "like that of Aristotle, consists in straining every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us."<sup>113</sup>

Richard Schacht, a student of Kaufmann's, not too surprisingly shares Kaufmann's view that Hegel's religious thought never changed substantially from the position of his youth where he considered the Greek religion far superior to Christianity, and that he considered religion merely a stepping stone to philosophy. Schacht cites an essay of Hegel's, "Difference of the Fictian and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy," as proof of Hegel's position that "philosophy alone can accomplish that resolution of the discords currently besetting man."<sup>114</sup>

A pertinent statement was made by William Barrett in Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy which reflects the ambiguity of Hegel's position and the problems it engendered.

Hegel . . . still called himself a Christian but believed that philosophy encompassed religion and made the religious truth a mere symbolic approximation to itself. If Hegel had recognized and admitted that he had actually passed out of Christianity, the matter would stand differently, and one could let the whole Hegelian System pass unchallenged as a magnificent jeu d'esprit, an exuberant display of dialectical virtuosity. But Hegelianism threatens Christians more than does any professedly anti-Christian philosophy, because the System can only lead to confusion and misunderstanding as to what Christianity really is, and therefore to self-deception among those who continue to believe they are Christians when in fact they are not.<sup>115</sup>

Hegel was raised in a very religious home, and he entered his

advanced academic career with the assumption that he would take his degree in theology. But at the University of Tübingen, where he registered in 1788, he was more concerned with pursuit of Philosophy than that of religion. He was close friends with Holderlin, and much of his early writing reflects a very definite influence from him in his attitude toward the Greeks as an ideal of civic and religious thought. He became, then, another member of the tradition I traced in the second chapter, who, while looking back to Greece as a time when human potential was embodied in the ultimate of individual freedom within cultural forms, was also looking to the future and asking how the harmony of Greece could be achieved at a transcendent level. Hegel provided a method for the development of human potentialities in the Phenomenology of Mind, which as a religious statement accomplished an end somewhat similar to the statement of religion in Greek tragedy. Man, as an essentially religious being, was both finite and infinite. And in the process of defining man in relation to god, the secularization of the religious myth was accomplished.

In order to present a comprehensive picture of Hegel's treatment of religion, after brief reference to some early essays, I will explicate and discuss in detail the following works of Hegel: The Positivity of the Christian Religion, The Spirit of Christianity, The Introduction to the Lectures on Religion, and The Phenomenology of Mind.

H. S. Harris, in his extensive biography of Hegel (Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight 1770-1801), cites an essay that Hegel wrote in 1787 as extremely important in the formulation of Hegel's concept of the relation of religion to the community as a whole. The

essay, "On the Religion of the Greeks and Romans," contained an idea that was to be often repeated by Hegel, that of religion as a unifying cultural and national force which was to be cultivated as a social ideal as well as a spiritual exercise.<sup>116</sup> It is important to understand the depth of the term "religion" for Hegel. It does not mean simply man's spiritual expression; in fact religion is for Hegel somewhat analogous to what Jane Harrison defines as "Themis".

Themis, for Jane Harrison, which she defines in her study on Greek Religion by that name, is the very beginning of society, the "social imperative." "This social imperative is among a primitive group diffuse, vague, inchoate, yet absolutely binding. Later it crystallized into fixed conventions, regular tribal customs; finally in the polis it takes shape as Law and Justice. Themis was before the particular shapes of the gods;"<sup>117</sup> For Hegel, who had studied Rousseau carefully, the idea of man operating within society was a fascinating one, and it had been a major concern for many eighteenth century minds to define the "social imperative." For Hegel, religion was the essence; man was both it, and an expression of it.

In The Positivity of the Christian Religion Hegel defines the problem in reconciling the Christian religion to German thought of the late eighteenth century. The Christian religion was inherently irreconcilable with Reason. Although Hegel seemed at times to defend the Protestant religion as more amenable to Reason than the Catholic, he reiterated the theme repeatedly in this essay that Christianity is based on authoritarian positivistic principles which limit the possibility for an internalization process by which it is possible for man to achieve a

religious self awareness and unity with the divine that is within him.

Hegel dismissed the miraculous mystery aspect of Christianity as destructive and needlessly complicating. By a comparison to the historical figure of Socrates, Hegel illustrates how much more productive a leader whose intent was to develop his followers' capacity for self-consciousness was than an authoritarian figure such as Jesus who did not encourage individuals to work through the forms of their society to self-fulfillment, but to alienate themselves from accepted mores and values and follow him in slavish imitation.

The disciples of Jesus had sacrificed all their other interests though to be sure these were restricted and their renunciation was not difficult; they had forsaken everything to become followers of Jesus. They had no political interest like that which a citizen of a free republic takes in his native land; their whole interest was confined to the person of Jesus.

From their youth up, the friends of Socrates had developed their power in many directions. They had absorbed that democratic spirit which gives an individual a greater measure of independence and makes it impossible for any tolerably good head to depend wholly and absolutely on one person.<sup>118</sup>

Hegel refers continually to the superiority of the Greek religion. He obviously saw the possibilities for an amalgamation of the intellect and human feeling greater in situations of antiquity than in the contemporary version of Christianity. In fact, Hegel deplored the religious imagery of Germany as being completely alien to the Germanic people. This idea led Hegel to formulate a pattern for what Kaufmann refers to as a "folk religion" in Hegel's Life of Jesus, where Jesus is portrayed as a Kantian teacher whose only authority is reason.<sup>119</sup>

There is a significant change in Hegel's approach to Christianity in The Spirit of Christianity. The change is dramatic enough to cause

Richard Kroner to term it "almost alarming." "A century seems to separate these two essays, which are the work of one man, writing in successive years."<sup>120</sup> While Walter Kaufmann disagrees with Kroner's interpretation of the change and asserts as his premise that "Hegel's conception of Christianity never did change radically,"<sup>121</sup> he does concede a definite difference in the semantic approach.

In the Spirit of Christianity, Hegel is much more sympathetic to the positive aspects of Christianity. He begins with a vitriolic attack on Judaism. He continually denigrates the Jewish religion for being based on an authoritarian structure where man saw himself in a servile position to an external god. This had ramifications in social behavior, he said, citing the rule of a day of rest dedicated to god as an example. This was clearly an idea coming from a slave culture. It represented the alienation of the Jews from their god. "Living men," insisted Hegel, "otherwise free, to keep one day in a complete vacuum, in an inactive unity of spirit, to make the time dedicated to God an empty time, and to let this vacuity return every so often--this could only occur to the legislator of a people for whom the melancholy, unfelt unity is the supreme reality."<sup>122</sup>

This viewpoint of man's religious concept of himself being transmitted to his social and political concept of himself developed out of the enamored with the Greek civic ideal and was used later by both Feuerbach and Marx.<sup>123</sup> Herbert Marcuse, in Reason and Revolution, refers to Hegel's discussion of the ramifications of the loss of unity and freedom in the religious sphere. "This loss of freedom and unity, Hegel says, is patent in the numerous conflicts that abound in human living,



especially in the conflict between man and nature."<sup>124</sup>

Hegel's conclusion is that Judaism deserved the fate of being surpassed by Christianity. His final denunciation is strangely poetic.

The great tragedy of the Jewish people is no Greek tragedy; it can rouse neither terror nor pity, for both of these arise only out of the fate which follows from the inevitable slip of a beautiful character; it can arouse horror alone. The fate of the Jewish people is the fate of Macbeth who stepped out of nature itself, clung to alien Beings, and so in their servitude had to trample and slay everything holy in human nature, had at last to be forsaken by his gods (since these were objects and he their slave) and be dashed to pieces on his faith itself.<sup>125</sup>

The difference, then, in Christianity, was that God was no longer the object to which man was a slave.

However, Hegel's discussion of Christianity is somewhat confusing. He shifts from a vague discussion of an all inclusive urge to religion to a specific discussion of Christianity, especially of Jesus. "The need to unite subject with object, to unite feeling, and feeling's demand for objects, with the intellect, to unite them in something beautiful in a god, by means of fancy, is the supreme need of the human spirit and the urge to religion."<sup>126</sup> Jesus seems to be, in The Spirit of Christianity, then the manifestation of the highest potential of this urge to religion. As both subject and object, master and slave, his very contradiction embodies the suffering that the individual feels in his urge for unification. This does not, however, involve any consideration of an actual historical personage. Specifically, when discussing the resurrection, Hegel says that "To consider the resurrection of Jesus as an event is to adopt the outlook of the historian, and this has nothing to do with religion."<sup>127</sup>

Hegel discusses two of the sacraments of Christianity. These are baptism and communion. About the first, his conclusion is positive, about the second it is negative. Baptism he discusses in terms of immersion, and he gives the act a definite psychological interpretation. He refers to John's ritual of baptism rather than Jesus'.

No feeling is so homogeneous with the desire for the infinite, the longing to merge into the infinite as the desire to immerse one's self in the sea. To plunge into it is to be confronted by an alien element which at once flows round us on every side and which is felt at every point of the body. . . . after immersion a man comes up into the air again, separates himself from the water, is at once free from it and yet it still drips from him everywhere . . .<sup>128</sup>

Hegel describes the baptism of Jesus as a "withdrawal from the entire past, as an inspiring consecration into a new world in which reality floats before the new spirit in a form in which there is no distinction between reality and dream."<sup>129</sup> This very moment of unification of reality and the dream, the past and the present, the subject and the object, were posited for a moment in Jesus. But if we continue Hegel's argument, Jesus chose then, a separation from reality. "This the earthly life of Jesus was the separation from the world and the flight from it into heaven; restoration, in the ideal world, of the life which was becoming dissipated into the void."<sup>130</sup>

The ritual of communion, which Hegel had deplored for the perversion of its original intent in The Positivity of the Christian Religion, is discussed in negative terms in The Spirit of Christianity. The ritual is more than an allegorical statement, it is an attempt to achieve the same kind of unification achieved in the immersion. Yet there is a problem with communion. It is the act by men to seek

unification by the aid of an external element. Rather than unite with the divine within themselves, this ritual requires an infusion of the devine from an objectified source. That makes this communion, according to Hegel, not essentially a religious action.<sup>131</sup> What is the essence of religious action is that the divine is within man.

The culmination of faith, the return to the God-head whence man is born, closes the circle of man's development. Everything lives in the God-head, every living thing is its child, but the child carries the unity, the connection, the concord with the entire harmony, undisturbed though undeveloped, in itself.<sup>132</sup>

In The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate, Hegel concludes on a rather pessimestic note. The attempt to achieve unity through the "man Jesus with the glorified defied Jesus" resulted only in an "endless, unquenchable, and unappeased longing."<sup>133</sup> Patrick Masterson suggests rather that Hegel has sought refuge in "a pantheism of love for achieving some unity for the bifurcated soul."<sup>134</sup>

In the Introduction to the Lectures on Religion, Hegel refers to religion as the ultimate center where man seeks his happiness. God, he says, "is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. As all things proceed from this point, so all return back to it again."<sup>135</sup> In religion, man "rises up to the highest level of consciousness and to the region which is free from relation to what is other than itself, to something which is absolutely self-sufficent, the unconditioned, what is free, and is its own object and end."<sup>136</sup>

Hegel goes on to define the religious feeling as something absolutely intrinsic to man. "As man, religion is essential to him, and not a feeling foreign to his general world outlook, and it is with this that philosophical knowledge connects itself, and upon which it

essentially works."<sup>137</sup>

Hegel considers the contradictions inherent in the situation. Simple faith and rational knowledge are both essential and contradictory elements. "The Christian religion therefore touches the antithesis between feeling and immediate perception on the one hand, and reflection and knowledge on the other."<sup>138</sup>

Because Hegel used terms interchangeably and often did not clarify his meaning at a specific time, it has resulted in a great deal of semantic confusion. One of the debated points is whether Hegel actually used religion and philosophy interchangeably, or whether Hegel is actually saying that philosophy has superseded religion. In the Introduction to the Lectures on Religion, Hegel explains the inter-relationship between philosophy and religion. After defining God as the idea and philosophy as the contemplation of the idea, Hegel states that "Philosophy, therefore, only unfolds itself when it unfolds religion, and in unfolding itself it unfolds religion."<sup>139</sup> "Thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions in order to occupy itself with God. Philosophy is thus identical with religion, but the distinction is that it is so in a peculiar manner, distinct from the manner of looking at things which is commonly called religion as such."<sup>140</sup>

Hegel speaks of the essence of religion being found in a relationship in various ways. For Hegel, the conception of religion involves an essential distinction between subjective consciousness (Ego), and the Object (God). It is, he says the essential relation between the

two that is the real point, and not the "notions which one may have concerning God."

Hegel sees Christianity as a vehicle of movement. It is more than a symbolic statement; it is rather the dynamic exemplification of the realization of self-consciousness.

In the Introduction to the Lectures on Religion, Hegel comes very close to the point where Feuerbach begins. "In religion, I am myself the relation of the two sides as thus determined. I who think, who am that which lifts myself up, the active universal and ego, the immediate subject, are one and the same 'I'."<sup>141</sup> It is Hegel's position that subject and object both exist within man and also the urge for the reunification. He never says that man is god, but the following lengthy quote ties together many of the definitions he gives. It is a humanistic declaration for the divine proportion of man, and really the core of the contribution of Hegel to the development of religious thought in nineteenth century Germany. It was not the relationship of man to God Hegel explored or how man's life was to be lived in relation to religion. It was the God within man, and the religious essence of his very being.

I am, and it is in myself and for myself that this conflict and this conciliation take place. In myself, I as infinite am against or in contrast with myself as finite, and as finite consciousness I stand over against my thought as infinite. I am the feeling, the perception, the idea alike of this unity and this conflict, and am what holds together the conflicting elements, the effort put forth in this act of holding together, and represent the labour of heart and soul to obtain the mastery over this opposition.

I am thus the relation of these two sides, which are not abstract determinations, as "finite and infinite." On the contrary, each is itself totality. Each of the two extremes is itself "I", what relates them; and the holding together, the relating, is itself this which is at once in conflict

with itself and brings itself to unity in the conflict. Or, to put it differently, I am the conflict, for the conflict is just this antagonism, which is not any indifference of the two as different, but is their being bound together. I am not one of those taking part in the strife, but I am both the combatants, and am the strife itself. I am the fire and the water which touch each other, and am the contact and union of what flies apart, and this very contact itself is this double, essentially conflicting relation, as the relation of what is now separated, severed and not reconciled and in unity with itself.<sup>142</sup>

The commentary and explications of Hegel's view of religion in The Phenomenology are prodigious, confusing, contradictory, and boring. I will briefly explicate from Hegel, concentrating only on the religious concerns, then present the views of Kaufmann and Findlay as significant commentators. I will attempt to build on what I have constructed of Hegel's religious concepts to this point.

The Phenomenology is an account of the "educational stages of the general spirit."<sup>143</sup> What this education is is an "acquiring what is thus given to him; he must digest his inorganic nature and take possession of it for himself."<sup>144</sup> This is a long and arduous process and is a cultural as well as an individual experience, whereby man, individually and culturally, internalizes his history to reach a transcendent level.

The Phenomenology is a religious work because that which Hegel aspires to have men reach is what he has defined as God, and it is the religious essence in men which he sees as being articulated in self-consciousness. It is important to remind oneself that Hegel's definition of religion has included both the internal and external, and even an internalization of the external while externalizing that which is internal and intrinsic in man.

Although the entire work is permeated with religious terminology

and is, in a sense, concerned with religion in terms of Hegel's broad and variable interpretation of the term, specifically Hegel divides the discussion of religion into three parts, a discussion of Natural Religion, The Religion of Art, and Absolute or Revealed Religion. These divisions follow religion at the "level of consciousness," religion "at the level of self-consciousness," and "religion at the level of reason and spirit."

The goal of the education process that Hegel is articulating is "The revelation of the depth of spiritual life and this is the Absolute Notion."<sup>145</sup> The spirit, or mind, goes through a process of "wrestling to get itself out into objectivity" with each stage.<sup>146</sup> "The goal, which is Absolute Knowledge or Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, finds its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms."<sup>147</sup>

The process is not smooth. At times it seems it is a linear development, yet the progress is made in "universal moments."<sup>148</sup> When the forms fall apart, the "knots" break and the previously linear series "falls asunder into many lines, which being bound together into a single bundle, combine at the same time symmetrically, so that the similar distinctions, in which each separately took shape within its own sphere, meet together."<sup>149</sup> Hegel's dialectical progression is always posited in terms of opposite concepts, feminine and masculine principles, temporal and spacial factors, and in a sense it is a theory of relativity where you are asked, in terms of the above image, to see the conventionally defined linear aspect of time in a new perspective of parallel bundles.

As society moves forward through a series of cultural forms it breaks through them in the same kind of process by which a bud emerges,

then the blossom, then the fruit.

The bud disappears as the blossom bursts forth, and one could say that the former is refuted by the latter. In the same way, the fruit declares the blossom to be a false existence of the plant, and the fruit supplants the blossom as the truth of the plant. These forms do not only differ, they also displace each other because they are incompatible. Their fluid nature, however, makes them, at the same time, elements of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which one is as necessary as the other; and it is only this equal necessity that constitutes the life of the whole.<sup>150</sup>

This particular passage is important to understand as Hegel discusses the much quoted "God is dead" from Luther's hymn. It is a stage in the process.

The statues set up are now corpses in stone whence the animating soul has flown, while the hymns of praise are words from which all belief had gone. . . . The tables of the gods are bereft of spiritual food and drink, and from his games and festivals man no more receives the joyful sense of his unity with the divine Being.<sup>151</sup>

The actual physical death of the God in the Christian tradition is also discussed. Jesus was god in the particular, and his death was the reunification with the general. It is all, Hegel makes very clear, "a figurative idea."

This figurative idea, which in this manner is still immediate and hence not spiritual, i.e. it knows the human form assumed by the Divine as merely a particular form, not yet as a universal form--becomes spiritual for this consciousness in the process whereby God, who has assumed shape and form, surrenders again His immediate existence, and returns to His essential Being.<sup>152</sup>

When Hegel uses this Christian terminology it is important to remember that he has not the slightest interest in disproving or proving the validity of Christianity. It is simply existing for him as the cultural form of the language he is speaking. While he was convinced



that a unity of cultural form was necessary for an orderly society he was not arguing for any change in the popular concept of religion. Yet it is very easy to continue the progression of the educational method which Hegel has set up and disregard the reality of Christianity as merely the vehicle of language which Hegel has used. Both Kaufmann and Findlay agree that this is the point Hegel has reached by the end of The Phenomenology, although they conceive of the way Hegel has passed out of Christianity in opposite terms.

According to Kaufmann,

The Phenomenology of the Spirit ends with the death of God, with Golgotha; and this time the "speculative Good Friday". . . is not followed by any resurrection. . . . For Hegel, the infinite God is dead: . . . To put it into our own words: there is no supreme being beyond; the spirit is not to be found in another world; the infinite spirit has to be found in the comprehension of this world, in the study of the spirits summoned in the Phenomenology. "History comprehended" must replace theology.<sup>153</sup>

Findlay instead says that "the death of God leads to his Resurrection and Ascension."<sup>154</sup> What Hegel means according to Findlay is that Hegel has rejected an idea of God which is external to man.

Though Hegel has veiled his treatment of Religion in much orthodox-sounding language, its outcome is quite clear. Theism in all its forms is an imaginative distortion of final truth. The God outside of us who saves us by His grace is a misleading pictorial expression for saving forces intrinsic to self-conscious Spirit, wherever this may be present. And the religious approach must be transcended (even if after a fashion preserved) in the final illumination.<sup>155</sup>

I agree with both Findlay and Kaufmann, that Hegel has passed out of any conventional Christianity. By defining a philosophical system which requires a chrysallic metamorphosis of forms in order to progress, Hegel has articulated a position which not only suggests, but almost

requires the statement of atheistic humanism which Feuerbach was to make. Hegel has reached in his philosophy, a cultural position which is very similar to the position for religion in Greek tragedy. The transformation of the religious to philosophy had already taken place.

## Chapter IV

In the German society of the late eighteenth century which did not seek to emulate the political and philosophical excesses of France, fifth century Athens seemed the ultimate in stability and balance. Hegel, at the end of a tradition which glorified the classical age as one of harmony and the highest possible development of man's potential for reason, sought to establish a methodology by which modern man could not only achieve the integration of personality he saw as existing in ancient Greece, but could transcend that level through existing cultural forms to an even higher attainment of integration.

The cultural analogy which Hegel sought to extend in German philosophical thought was ironically caught in the same elements of movement and change which characterized his model. As I have attempted to illustrate, the Age of Tragedy in Greece was not the static harmony Winckelmann created as a model for his contemporaries. Hegel perceived Greece more correctly, as a moment of dialectical balance, yet the Thomistic sort of synthesis he hoped to achieve for his own culture paradoxically accomplished the same secularization of religious myth that had occurred with the Greek tragedians.

In Greek tragedy I have traced the development of a humanistic concept of man's potential and his growing conceptualization of being an active participant in his own fate and development. This perception of man rendered ineffective the gods of Aeschylus. When man as a citizen emerged to a position of dignity and individual respect who participated in his own destiny, the gods could not be sustained. Man became subject

instead of just object.

In examining Hegel's philosophy I have attempted to illustrate the seeds of atheistic humanism which were sown by Hegel's treatment of the religious myth. His position in society was different than that of the Greek tragedians. After the Enlightenment, reason had gained the dominant position in the treatment of religion. Yet, in Germany, where there had been a continual emphasis of incorporation of cultural forms, revolution was accomplished in the Luthern tradition of returning to the original instead of a break with the central concept.

I referred to Jaeger's summary of the transformation of myth earlier in this work (page 20, see footnote 63). He spoke of bourgeois ideals, rhetoric, and philosophy penetrating and destroying the mythology in classical Greece. The same three factors influenced and changed the Christian myth in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. As Neitzsche blamed Socrates for contributing to the death of the myth (see page 21 of this paper), by being a representative of science whose philosophical statement attempted to make existence comprehensible, so could Hegel be blamed for a philosophical system which attempted a scientific structuring of reality.

By articulating a philosophy within a religious semantic framework which taught man how to manifest that essential divinity within himself that Hegel saw as the essence of humanity, Hegel created a secular statement which was not ignored by his followers. Although his thought is essentially religious, it only remains so as long as his definitions, ambiguous as they are, remain the core of the statement. The problem for Christianity was that Hegel's concept of religion was based on a Greek

ideal of harmony instead of the prevailing "mythopoetic mode" of eighteenth century Christianity. Consequently the road was open for the development of a religion of love based on man for Feuerbach, and the social political dimensions of the atheistic humanism of Marx.

# FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Eric Voegelin, The World of the Polis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Voegelin, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup>Voegelin, p. 262.

<sup>4</sup>Voegelin, p. 126.

<sup>5</sup>Voegelin, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup>Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Vol. I., Archaic Greece; The Mind of Athens, trans. Gilbert Highet, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 243.

<sup>7</sup>Jaeger, p. 245.

<sup>8</sup>Voegelin, p. 136.

<sup>9</sup>Voegelin, p. 136.

<sup>10</sup>F. M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Voegelin, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup>Cornford, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Voegelin, p. 167.

<sup>14</sup>Voegelin, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup>Voegelin, p. 175.

<sup>16</sup>Voegelin, p. 175.

<sup>17</sup>Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Beacon Paperback, Harper and Row, 1967), p. 217.

<sup>18</sup>Ricoeur, p. 217.

<sup>19</sup>Ricoeur, p. 217.

<sup>20</sup>Herbert J. Muller, The Spirit of Tragedy (New York: Washington Square Press, 1965), p. 54.

<sup>21</sup>Voegelin, p. 243.

- <sup>22</sup>Jaeger, p. 245.
- <sup>23</sup>Ricoeur, p. 228.
- <sup>24</sup>Ricoeur, p. 225.
- <sup>25</sup>Voegelin, p. 261.
- <sup>26</sup>Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, in The Lyrical Dramas (New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1906), ll. 484-504.
- <sup>27</sup>Voegelin, p. 261.
- <sup>28</sup>Aeschylus, Agamemnon, in Oresteia, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), ll. 60-71.
- <sup>29</sup>Aeschylus, Agamemnon, ll. 1508-1512.
- <sup>30</sup>Aeschylus, Agamemnon, ll. 1562-1564.
- <sup>31</sup>Aeschylus, Agamemnon, l. 1565.
- <sup>32</sup>Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, in Oresteia, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), ll. 114, 145.
- <sup>33</sup>Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, ll. 306-314.
- <sup>34</sup>Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, ll. 1015-1017.
- <sup>35</sup>Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, ll. 1019-1020.
- <sup>36</sup>Aeschylus, The Eumenides, in Oresteia, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), ll. 312-315.
- <sup>37</sup>Voegelin, p. 252.
- <sup>38</sup>John Ferguson, A Companion to Greek Tragedy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 48.
- <sup>39</sup>Ricoeur, p. 228.
- <sup>40</sup>Sophocles, Antigone, in Sophocles: The Theban Plays, ed. E. F. Watling (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1947), ll. 30-31.
- <sup>41</sup>Sophocles, Antigone, ll. 446-457.
- <sup>42</sup>Sophocles, Antigone, ll. 1024-1026.
- <sup>43</sup>Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, in Sophocles: The Theban Plays, ed. E. F. Watling (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1947), ll. 249-251.
- <sup>44</sup>Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 266-270.

- 45 Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 521-524.
- 46 Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 536-539.
- 47 Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 965-973.
- 48 Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 992-997.
- 49 Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, ll. 1659-1661.
- 50 Jaeger, p. 284.
- 51 Ricoeur, p. 229.
- 52 Jaeger, p. 285.
- 53 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 75.
- 54 Muller, p. 109.
- 55 Muller, p. 109.
- 56 Jaeger, p. 342.
- 57 Cornford, p. 39.
- 58 Euripides, The Trojan Women, in Ten Plays, trans. Moses Hadas and John McLean (New York: Bantam, 1960), p. 201.
- 59 Voegelin, p. 265.
- 60 Muller, p. 112.
- 61 Euripides, The Bacchae, in Euripides V, ed. David Greene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, 1959), ll. 39-40, 47-49.
- 62 Muller, p. 124.
- 63 Jaeger, p. 357.
- 64 Voegelin, p. 8.
- 65 Nietzsche, ll. 91, 96.
- 66 Voegelin, p. 264.
- 67 Cornford, p. 122.
- 68 E. M. Butler, The Tyranny of Greece Over Germany (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935), p. 6.



- <sup>69</sup>Butler, p. 46.
- <sup>70</sup>Butler, p. 47.
- <sup>71</sup>Butler, p. 48.
- <sup>72</sup>G. E. Lessing, Laocoon, in Laocoon, Nathan the Wise and Minna Von Barnhelm (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1930), p. 6.
- <sup>73</sup>Lessing, Laocoon, p. 109.
- <sup>74</sup>Butler, p. 59.
- <sup>75</sup>Butler, p. 70.
- <sup>76</sup>G. E. Lessing, How the Ancients Represented Death, in Laocoon, Nathan the Wise and Minna Von Barnhelm (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1930), p. 225.
- <sup>77</sup>Lessing, How the Ancients Represented Death, p. 226.
- <sup>78</sup>Walter Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinterpretation (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 42.
- <sup>79</sup>Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Sorrows of Young Werther, trans. Victor Lange (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949), p. 7.
- <sup>80</sup>Butler, p. 101.
- <sup>81</sup>Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Iphigenia in Tauris, trans. Charles E. Passage (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), p. 14.
- <sup>82</sup>Goethe, Iphigenia, ll. 427-428.
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- <sup>86</sup>Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinterpretation, p. 17.
- <sup>87</sup>Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1961), p. 90.
- <sup>88</sup>Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe, p. 91.
- <sup>89</sup>Goethe, Iphigenia, ll. 1832-1836.
- <sup>90</sup>Goethe, Iphigenia, ll. 1933-1941.

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<sup>92</sup>Butler, p. 117.

<sup>93</sup>Friedrich Schiller, Complete Works of Friedrich Schiller: Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1952), p. 45.

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<sup>101</sup>Butler, p. 204.

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<sup>107</sup>"The Year 1800 in the Development of German Idealism," The Review of Metaphysics, I., 1948, pp. 1-31.

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