

Functionalism and Feminism in Hegel's Political Thought

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Political philosophy, according to Moller Okin in Women in Western Political Thought, consists of 'writings by men, for men, and about men' <1>. Although the frequent references to the generic term 'mankind' by political philosophers might suggest a concern with 'the human race as a whole', she argues that 'we do not need to look far into their writings to realise that such an assumption is unfounded' <2>. Instead a sharp distinction is drawn between men and women with women's destiny being perceived as biologically determined which leads to 'the prescription of a code of morality and conception of rights for women distinctly different from those that have been prescribed for men' <3>. This distinction, she claims, underpins the history of political thought:

Philosophers who, in laying the foundations for their political theories, have asked 'What are men like?' 'What is man's potential?' have frequently, in turning to the female sex, asked 'What are women for?'.

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In answering this question, they have seen biological differences between men and women as 'entailing all the other, conventional and institutional differences in sex role which the family, especially in its most patriarchal forms, has required' <5>.

Hegel's commitment to such a 'functionalist' or reductionist view of the family as a necessary and natural institution, argues Moller Okin, is expressed in his treatment of the male head of the family as its only political representative and the fact that he 'disposed of the female half of the human race' <6>. Women are denied any distinct identity in his political thought and are cut off from public life. Moreover, his view of marriage as resulting from 'the free surrender by both sexes of their personality' is over-optimistic, she notes, since the surrender of the man's personality is 'more symbolic than real' <7>. The significance and pervasiveness of the reductionist view should not be underestimated, she concludes, since 'the continuing oppression of women is ideologically supported by the survival of functionalist modes of thought' <8>.

A similar interpretation of Hegel is offered by Elshtain in Public Man, Private Woman, where she points out that 'like the inhabitants of Orwell's Animal Farm, ... the inhabitants of Hegel's conceptual universe are ethically signifi-

cant but some are more significant than others' <9>. Excluded from the public sphere, women are 'defined by the family: the family is a woman's beginning and her end'. For the man, 'the family is that ethical relationship which serves as the basis of all others including citizenship' <10> and he alone can become a real citizen. For Hegel, women are confined to the level of the household while the public world remains the 'locus of human action':

Although there is no public-private split in Hegel's account in the sense of a radical separation of one sphere from the other, the public and the private are differentiated and ordered as higher and lower.... The reciprocal, if asymmetrical, relationship between spheres requires connecting links or mediations. These are provided by males in their roles as brothers, husbands, fathers and property-owners.

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Hegel's political theory is rooted in teleological assumptions regarding male and female nature, which he distinguishes in terms of 'the analogue of form and matter whereby the male provides the human form during mating and the female serves as a vessel within which the male-created homunculus incubates' <12>. She concedes that 'within the constraints of his presumptions on male and female natures, Hegel positions women as near to the universal as his perspective allows' <13>, but inevitably, given this starting-point, he denies women any intrinsic value or significance within the family, in contrast to the value placed on the lives of men as citizens <14>. Without their slender connection to the universal through males, they would possess no ethical significance. Elshtain is critical of Hegel not simply for excluding women from the universal but also because he is indifferent to 'the realities of economic power and the manner in which a predatory civil society vitiates the possibilities for a just public order' <15>.

Although reductionism undoubtedly persists in patriarchal laws and attitudes, it is questionable whether it may be justifiably attributed to Hegel. While his discussion of marriage and the family in the Philosophy of Right does provide some grounds for such an interpretation, his analysis of tragedy and the master-slave dialectic in the Phenomenology and his anthropological work in the Lectures on

the Philosophy of World History offer a challenge to, rather than an endorsement of, reductionism.

I

Grounds for a feminist interpretation may be found, firstly, in Hegel's understanding of Antigone. Although Hegel sees Antigone as guided by love, this does not mean, for Hegel, that she is governed by subjective emotions, but rather that she rationally analyses the consequences of her actions in relation to ethical principles and acts in full knowledge of those consequences. In doing so, she moves beyond contingency towards the universal. The hallmark of tragedy for Hegel is precisely this quality of self-reflection. It is important that the ethical consciousness recognises its guilt: 'Because of our sufferings we acknowledge we have erred' <16>, says Antigone, and for Hegel this acknowledgement signifies 'the return to the ethical frame of mind, which knows that nothing counts but right' <17>. The only ethical decision Antigone can take is to disobey Creon and bury her brother, but her actions are marked not by subjectivity but by a highly rational appreciation of the effects of her action. Hegel points out that the 'ethical consciousness is more complete, its guilt purer, if it knows beforehand the law and the power which it opposes, if it takes them to be sheer violence and wrong, to be a contingency in the ethical life, and wittingly, like Antigone, commits the crime' <18>. It is significant that when Hegel defines tragedy he focuses on tragic heroines with the capacity and desire for self-reflection. Instead of reducing woman's nature to mere particularism, as the reductionist interpretation suggests, he stresses the way in which she moves beyond contingency. What we find in tragedy 'are self-conscious human beings, who know their own rights and purposes, the power and the will belonging to their specific nature, and who know how to state them' <19>. They do not express merely the external aspects of their lives but 'make the very inner being external, they prove the righteousness of their action, and the "pathos" controlling them is soberly asserted and definitely expressed in its universal individuality, free from all accident of circumstance, and the particular peculiarities of personalities' <20>. Love, as represented by Antigone, is not devalued to subjectivity but rather signifies its opposite for Hegel: love constitutes redemption, redemption from the subjectivity of individualism of the self and of the society. In the Phenomenology he argues that in returning to 'the ethical frame of mind', the agent 'surrenders his character and the reality of his self.... His being lies in belonging to his ethical law, as his substance' <21>. The ethical bonds of love incorporate individuals into the wider unity of the family and destroy their individuality. They also protect the individuals from the contingency and inevitability of death through a network of ethical ties which transcend the particularity of existence. In his discussion of Hegel's work on tragedy, Bradley refers to the 'strange double impression which is produced by the hero's death. He dies, and our hearts die with him; and yet his death matters nothing to us, or we even exult. He is dead; and he has no more to do with death than the power which killed him and with which he is one' <22>. But this is not so strange when we recall that for Hegel the 'blood-relationship ... supplements the abstract natural process by adding to it the process of consciousness, by interrupting the work of nature, and rescuing the blood-relationship from destruction' <23>. He adds:

The family keeps away from the dead this dishonouring of him by the desires of unconscious organic agencies and by abstract elements, puts its own action in place of theirs, and weds the relative to the bosom of the earth, the elemental individuality that passes not away. Thereby the family makes the dead a member of a community which prevails over and holds under control the particular material elements and the lower living creatures, which sought to have their way with

the dead and destroy him.
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This is epitomised for Hegel by Antigone who, in burying her brother, protects him from death and dishonour and rescues him from subjectivity. Hegel finds Antigone particularly compelling as he sees the relationship between brother and sister as the purest ethical relationship, being based on common blood but marked by an absence of sexual desire.

Love is also redemptive in shielding the individual from the positivity of society. In his early theological writings, Hegel had defended Mary Magdalene for refusing to succumb to the expectations of her society but 'through sin' experiencing love and developing consciousness. He poses the question:

Would anyone say it had been better for Mary to have yielded to the fate of the Jewish life, to have passed away as an automaton of her time, righteous and ordinary, without sin and without love? Without sin, because the era of her people was one of those in which the beautiful heart could not live without sin, but in this as in any era, could return through love to the most beautiful consciousness.

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Hegel saw love in his early work, as Lukacs notes, as 'the highest point of existence; it alone can overcome all that is dead and positive in the world' <26>. When analysing Antigone, Hegel can therefore perceive the justification for Creon's desire to maintain the authority of the state, but at the same time he recognises the ethical superiority of Antigone and the way of life she upholds. The tragedy can be understood, as Lukacs says, in terms of a conflict between primitive, tribal society, represented by Antigone, and the emerging forces which would lead to its demise:

What is striking about Hegel's view of the Antigone is the way in which the two poles of the contradiction are maintained in a tense unity: on the one hand, there is the recognition that tribal society stands higher morally and humanly than the class societies that succeed it; and that the collapse of tribal society was brought about by the release of base and evil human impulses. On the other hand, there is the equally powerful conviction that this collapse was inevitable and that it signified a definite historical advance.

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In Hegel's essay on Natural Law, for example, tragedy is analysed in terms of the conflict between man and citizen, 'a collision of spirit with itself' <28>. Hegel recognises that 'the beautiful solution achieved by the civilization of antiquity had to perish' <29> and that this is compensated to some extent by the progressive nature of the gestating new order. But he also realises, as Lukacs points out, that:

... the type of man produced by this material advance in and through capitalism is the practical negation of everything great, significant and sublime that humanity had created in the course of its history up to them. The contradiction of two necessarily connected phenomena, the indissoluble bond between progress and the debasement of mankind, the purchase of progress at the cost of that debasement - that is the heart of the 'tragedy in the realm of the ethical'.

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Consequently, Hegel sees tragedy disappearing with the development of modern society predicated on individualism, being replaced by romantic art concerned with the 'boundless subjectivity' of passion rather than the clash of ethical principles. His sympathy for the protagonists in Antigone had rested on the fact that both Antigone and Creon, in following one ethical principle, brought about the destruction of another, and for Hegel, as Bradley observes, 'the more nearly the contending forces approach each other in goodness, the more tragic is the conflict' <31>.

We can see, then, that while Antigone's choices are governed by love, Hegel does not perceive love as mere

subjectivity but rather sees subjectivity as alien to tragedy. His focus on the ethical bonds of love in Antigone does not suggest a reductionist view of women: drawing attention to the 'feminine' quality of love does not in itself entail a reductionist position provided it is clear that this quality is not biologically based. It is significant that in defying the patriarchal authority of the state, Antigone's actions are determined by an authentic relation of love rather than sexual or economic motives or by blind obedience to authority.

Hegel's perception of love as ethical rather than subjective is also evident in his critique of accounts of the marriage bond which explain marriage in terms of purely physical ties or in contractual terms. In the Phenomenology, for example, he analyses the family in terms of the universality of the ethical bond:

... in order that this relationship may be ethical, neither the individual who does an act nor he to whom the act refers must show any trace of contingency such as obtains in rendering some particular help or service. The content of the ethical act must be substantial in character, or must be entire and universal....

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For Hegel, the value of marriage is precisely that it compels its members to transcend their individuality, in a relation whose ethical aspects constrain the contingency of physical impulse. As he notes, in the Philosophy of Right, in marriage 'the sensuous moment, the one proper to physical life, is put into its ethical place as something only consequential and accidental' <33>. In this way the sexual union is transformed into a union at the level of mind or self-consciousness: in renouncing their individuality, the partners attain self-consciousness. Unlike his predecessors, Hegel is not concerned to drive a wedge between passion and reason but to designate the limits of passion within an objective ethical framework. Contrasting the 'ethico-legal' love, on which he believes marriage should be based, with 'the transient, fickle and purely subjective aspects of love' <34>, he is highly critical of those who focus solely on passion:

But those works of modern art, dramatic and other, in which the love of the sexes is the main interest, are pervaded by a chill despite the heat of passion they portray, for they associate the passion with accident throughout and represent the entire dramatic interest as if it rested solely on the characters as these individuals: what rests on them may indeed be of infinite importance to them, but it is of none whatever in itself.

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This contingency can only be transcended, as he comments in his Philosophy of Mind, when the 'bodily conjunction is a sequel to the moral attachment' <36>.

Hegel also challenges the Kantian view of marriage which sees it as a contract between two individual atoms: 'On this view,' says Hegel, 'the parties are bound by a contract of mutual caprice, and marriage is thus degraded to the level of a contract for reciprocal use' <37>. Although marriage may begin at the level of contract, it moves beyond this for, in a contractual relationship, the parties are related to each other as individual atoms, while in a genuinely ethical bond, this particularity is transcended. Any attempt to subordinate marriage to some other end, whether contract or sexuality, is ruled out by Hegel. He consequently objects to arranged marriages which indicate 'scant respect' for women and marriages based on wealth or political gain. For Hegel, the distinguishing feature of the family is that it lies outside the realm of possessive individualism and thus provides a counter to the fragmenting forces of civil society as it forces individuals to move beyond subjectivity. The family, says Hegel, is 'the first precondition of the state' <38> and it is only within the state that we find 'the self-conscious ethical substance, the unification of the family principle with that of civil society' <39>:

The same unity, which is in the family as a feel-

ing of love, is its essence, receiving however, at the same time, through the second principle of conscious and spontaneously active volition the form of conscious universality.

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What is of value in Hegel's understanding of the family is that it rests on a social theory which supersedes the atomistic models of liberalism.

II

In his analysis of Antigone, Hegel offers a picture of women as rational rather than governed simply by subjective feelings. It is therefore difficult to dismiss him as a reductionist. On the contrary, his work reveals an awareness of the cultural mediation of gender roles which presents a challenge to reductionist theories. In his Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, for example, he identifies a range of patterns of behaviour, including a state of women in the Congo ruled over by a woman who renounced the love of her son, pounding him in a mortar and smearing herself with his blood <41>. The women survived by plundering and eating human flesh. Prisoners of war were used as slaves or husbands, and male offspring were murdered, often together with their fathers. Hegel's aversion to these women, however, seems to be due less to a fear of women in control, than to the lack of respect for humanity which he sees as characteristic of primitive societies. Lying between the full participation of women in public life in the Congo, and the privatisation of Western cultures, is the tribe in Dahomey which Hegel describes as engaging in a communal way of life. Here, he observes, women fight alongside the king and children are brought up communally, distributed among the villages at birth and sold by the king when of marriageable age. Each man has to take the woman he is given and when presenting himself for marriage, the suitor is first given a mother to maintain, and only subsequently, if his behaviour is satisfactory, is he then given a wife. While Hegel's discussion of these examples may rely more on travellers' tales than scientific research, nonetheless his awareness of these variations does highlight the difficulty of attributing to him a reductionist standpoint.

The treatment of women in different cultures and its effects is also considered by Hegel in his historical writings. The repression of women's imagination in the medieval period and its consequences in 'the ghastliness of witchcraft' <42>, for example, is contrasted with the Bacchanalian festivities in which Greek women were able to give full expression to their imagination:

On the one hand witches, on the other maenads; in the one case the object of phantasy is a devilish grimace (Frazze), in the other a beautiful vine-bedecked God; in the one socialised satisfaction of envy, of the desire for revenge and hate, in the other nothing but purposeless pleasure often verging on raging madness; in the one progress from individual attacks of insanity to total and enduring derangement of the mind; in the other withdrawal into ordinary life; in the first case the age did not consider this displaced madness as an illness but a blasphemous outrage which could be atoned only with the funeral pyre, in the second the need of many female phantasies and temperaments was something holy, the outbreak of which gave (occasion for) holidays, something which was sanctioned by the state and thereby given the possibility of being innocuous.

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Hegel also draws attention to the links between particular family types and the forms of the state. Monogamy, for example, he sees as a corollary of Christian states, 'since this is the only form in which both partners can receive their full rights' <44>, although he points out that the relationship between children and parents can include

slavery and allow children free property ownership. The patriarchal family, where the 'head of the family ... is the will of the whole; he acts in the interests of the common purposes, cares for the individuals, directs their activity towards the common end, educates them, and ensures that they remain in harmony with the universal end' <45>, is seen as characteristic of Oriental cultures. Tracing the uneven development of individualism through ancient society, he shows how the state gradually takes on an abstract existence, apart from the head of the family. Attitudes towards sexuality in different cultures are also contrasted <46>. In Jewish culture, for example, he notes that sex is spoken of freely, while in Oriental cultures, women are seen as separate from society. They cannot be likened to objects, so there cannot be a relation of lordship and bondage between men and women but only one of seclusion. Their physical separation embodies this image and consequently it constitutes a dishonour to talk of women. Hegel's historicisation of gender roles is therefore difficult to reconcile with the reductionist interpretation of his work.

III

In seeking to explain and to transcend the subordination of women in advanced industrial societies, we may in fact find in Hegel's work, specifically in his account of the master-slave dialectic, insights into relationships of domination and exploitation. While it has been argued by Lloyd in 'Masters, Slaves and Others' that the application of this dialectic to the position of women by de Beauvoir entails negative consequences for women in devaluing their biological existence, she does nevertheless concede that the limitations of de Beauvoir's approach are largely due to a reliance on the Sartrean interpretation of the master-slave relation <47>. It will therefore be argued here that Hegel's account of the master-slave dialectic sheds light on the power of ideologies by pointing to the extent to which the slave may accept his slavery. Consciousness and labour, as preconditions of the transformation of these social relationships, also play a central role in Hegel's political thought but are equally essential dimensions of feminist political theory.

In his account of lordship and bondage in the Phenomenology, Hegel sees the slave as representing the birth of self-consciousness insofar as he is engaged in purposive activity and his existence is grounded in fear and subordination. It could be argued that an analogy may be drawn here between women and slaves insofar as women, like the slaves of ancient society, constitute a service class, whose function is to provide domestic and other services to the members of the household. Their labour is unpaid and has low status and they live within the households of the dominant group, cut off both physically and politically from full participation in the public life of the society. Even when working outside the home, they are segregated into occupations reflecting their marginal status and service functions. Within the family, they are limited to satisfying the needs and desires of others. On the Hegelian model, however, their position contains a greater possibility of freedom than that of the men who are dependent upon them for recognition. The slave has the possibility of confronting freedom through fear and service, while the master's relation to the world is mediated by, and contained in, the desire for the object, but this satisfaction of desire is seen by Hegel as evanescent. The master remains trapped within his own egotism: experiencing neither fear nor labour, he perceives in the slave only his immediate will and receives from him the formal recognition of an unfree consciousness. But for the slave, the experience of fear according to Hegel is the first moment of freedom. Fear, combined with service or labour, constitutes the necessary precondition for the development of self-consciousness: 'Without the formative activity shaping the thing, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become objective for itself' <48>. In serving the master, the slave loses his 'individual self-will' and goes beyond the immediacy of appetite. His divestment of self and 'fear of the lord' mark, for Hegel, the beginning

of knowledge and the movement to universal self-consciousness. Freedom is attained 'solely by risking life' <49> when consciousness, which has 'tottered and shaken', is combined with struggle. The fear and service of slavery contain, for Hegel, the possibility of freedom beyond subjectivity. Self-consciousness passes through the slave rather than the master, dependent on the slave for recognition and trapped by desires which lack substance and objectivity <50>.

The importance of work for Hegel is that in labour the worker moves beyond immediate instinctual life, flees the darkness of nature and becomes truly human. Hegel does not idealise work but, while acknowledging its endless drudgery, says that in working upon an object the worker externalises his self-consciousness and makes it permanent: 'precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider's mind and ideas involved, the bondsman becomes aware through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a "mind of his own"' <51>. In fashioning the object the worker 'makes himself into a thing' by expressing the objective laws of work as independent of individual desires. By placing labour between his desires and their fulfilment, he moves away from nature towards sociality.

It is precisely this dimension of slavery as potential consciousness which eats away at the heart of the master-slave relation and the system of slavery consequent upon it, ultimately leading to its demise. But in stressing potential rather than actual consciousness, Hegel attributes responsibility for slavery to the slave rather than the master; 'To adhere to man's absolute freedom', he says, 'is eo ipso to condemn slavery. Yet if a man is a slave, his own will is responsible for his slavery, just as it is its will which is responsible if a people is subjugated' <52>. Hegel applies this argument specifically to the history of nations but his account of the responsibility for slavery could also be seen as relevant to the history of women's exploitation. There is no 'absolute injustice' in slaves remaining slaves, argues Hegel, for if they do not risk their lives to gain freedom, their slavery is deserved: 'he who has not the courage to risk his life to win freedom, that man deserves to be a slave' <53>. He points out that slavery as a system of social relationships could not survive unless the slave accepted and was at home in his slavery.

A further justification of slavery for Hegel lies in the fact that slavery may be appropriate to a particular phase of social development and in that sense 'just': 'Slavery and tyranny,' he says, 'are, therefore in the history of nations a necessary stage and hence relatively justified' <54>. Referring to the slaves' hostility to the efforts of English reformers to abolish slavery, he argues that slavery is accepted as natural by the slaves. It is the typical legal relationship of a society in which a low value is placed on human life and this evaluation of human life is internalised by the slaves themselves, even if slavery is seen as an absolute injustice by Western reformers. It is entirely consistent, for Hegel, with the state of nature characteristic of primitive societies. If a man can sell his wife, parents and children into slavery, this demonstrates a contempt for life in general as well as his own and signifies an absence of morality. Taking a broader historical perspective, Hegel sees slavery as part of the transition from the state of nature to a genuinely ethical existence. It arises in a world where 'a wrong is still right' <55>, where wrong has some validity and constitutes a necessary moment in the progression towards a higher stage of development. Only when society reaches maturity may it realise its freedom and eliminate slavery. Where a society is undeveloped we should expect to find slavery, says Hegel. Even in Greece this 'relative injustice' may be found, since in that culture freedom was not based on the idea of a rational self-consciousness <56>. Only when self-consciousness apprehends itself, through thought, as human does it free itself from contingency and move into the realm of morality and ethical life. Rational reflection is what distinguishes the slave's unfreedom from freedom, and thus it was the Greek slaves resisting their slavery, and not the citizens, who grasped this and sought to attain their 'eternal human

rights' <57>.

If we consider the implications of Hegel's analysis of slavery for an understanding of social change, and, specifically, changes in the position of women, his standpoint may seem at first sight to be rather pessimistic. He attributes responsibility for slavery to the slave and seems to suggest that the slave enjoys his slavery. He also treats slavery as appropriate to particular forms of life, as a necessary stage in social development and therefore inevitable. Both arguments may appear to be antithetical to the likelihood of a radical change in women's lives, yet both can be taken to mean the opposite in the following ways. Precisely because Hegel attributes slavery to the will of an individual or people, he opens up the possibility of a dramatic change in social relationships through the power of rational reflection. Recent work within feminism has examined the ways in which women may embrace patriarchal ideas or ideologies of domesticity and resist change <58>. Attention has also been paid to the low self-esteem in which many women hold themselves, placing a low value on their own needs and on their lives generally. Yet in neither case does this preclude the possibility of change which lies at the foundation of the master-slave relation. Secondly, Hegel's account of slavery is an historical account which presupposes the potentiality for changes in relationships of domination and subordination, given certain changes in the way of life in which these relationships are grounded.

Hegel's acknowledgement of the slave's identification with his slavery is combined with an awareness of the tensions inherent in any relation of oppression. The dominance of the master over the slave and the slave's acquiescence are neither stable nor eternal. Rather, the relation is one of constant struggle in which the master's authority, from the beginning, may be negated. This may be illustrated by Hegel's observations on slavery in certain African cultures in his Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. A system of despotism based on force, patriarchal authority and an arbitrary will is inherently weak, says Hegel, for the despot is always in danger of being challenged by his subjects: 'thus even such despotism as this is not completely blind; the peoples of Africa are not just slaves but assert their own will too' <59>. Slavery, as a system of social relations, can never be secure for 'the sword really hangs above the despot's head day and night' and, like his subjects, the despot is vulnerable to the lack of respect for human life <60>.

The movement towards self-consciousness is built into the master-slave relation and incorporates the possibility of freedom for the master as well as the slave. The emancipation of the slave furthers the interest of the master since, as Hegel notes in the Phenomenology, only when the slave realises his freedom does the master move beyond immediacy. This idea is applied specifically to colonial relations in the Philosophy of Right where he points out that 'Colonial independence proves to be of the greatest advantage to the mother country, just as the emancipation of the slaves turns out to be the greatest advantage of the owners' <61>. Hegel's arguments concerning responsibility for slavery and its appropriateness do not therefore entail a static model of the master-slave relation. Rather, he offers a dynamic model which sees that relationship as characterised by a fundamental tension which may ultimately tear it apart. Applying Hegel's analysis to the behaviour of women, we find that the acceptance of patriarchal ideologies is matched by examples of women's resistance to their exploitation <62>. In struggling against their subordination women at the same time precipitate a qualitative improvement in social relations for men who are also constrained by those ideologies.

Furthermore, Hegel is optimistic that when the slaves begin to resist, the system of slavery will perish: 'if a nation does not merely imagine that it wants to be free but actually has the energy to will its freedom,' he says, 'then no human power can hold it back in the servitude of a merely passive obedience to authority' <63>. One can infer from this that the very fact of struggling together is as important for women as the formal freedoms thereby ob-

tained and is inseparable from them, since collective resistance ensures the growth of consciousness. Because freedom constitutes the human essence for Hegel, he emphasises that the slave has an absolute right to free himself and essential to this transition to freedom is rational self-consciousness. While attributing slavery to the will of the slave, Hegel nonetheless envisages a complete reversal of the master-slave relation given the will for change and consciousness of the potential for freedom:

... it is only as thinking intelligence that the will is genuinely a will and free. The slave does not know his essence, his infinity, his freedom; he does not know himself as human in essence; and he lacks this knowledge of himself because he does not think himself. This self-consciousness which apprehends itself through thinking as essentially human, and thereby frees itself from the contingent and the false, is the principle of right, morality and all ethical life.

<64>

He contrasts this reflective self-consciousness with appeals to 'feeling, enthusiasm, the heart and the breast', which are absorbed in 'instinctive desire' and 'particularity' <65>. For freedom to be obtained, the slave has to move beyond his own individuality, as well as that of the master, to grasp 'the absolutely rational in its universality which is independent of the particularity of the subjects' <66>.

Hegel's identification of the freedom of the slave with reflective self-consciousness, and of the need to move beyond feelings to reason, points clearly to the importance of rational reflection for women as a means of transforming their position. For Hegel, the slave is closer to rationality than the master imprisoned by sensation and desire and it could be argued that women, because of their subordination, are forced to move beyond the immediacy of desire into the realm of rational reflection while men, on the other hand, are tied to the sensual world, using the gratification of physical needs and control of reproduction as a means of oppression <67>.

Moreover, while Hegel gives an historical analysis of slavery, this does not commit him to a total relativism which would rule out criticism of particular forms of life. While attracted to the liberal ideals of the French Revolution, for example, Hegel recognised the limitations of the emerging bourgeois society as well as the shortcomings of the liberal theories used to understand and justify the new order. Like Marx and Engels, he was well aware that the progressive aspects of liberal capitalism were accompanied by greed, egotism and self-interest, which would lead to the 'creation of a rabble of paupers' <68>. He notes that 'At the same time, this brings with it, at the other end of the social scale, conditions which greatly facilitate the concentration of disproportionate wealth in a few hands' <69>. Hegel did not allow his acknowledgement of the progressive aspects of liberal capitalism to become an apologia for that society. Instead he saw poverty and class conflict as inevitable features of that mode of production. It is therefore difficult to accept Elshain's argument that Hegel ignores the 'realities of economic power' <70>. While Elshain postulates that individualism 'may arguably be the only means available to the woman to attain an identity other than a thoroughly privatised one' <71>, Hegel draws attention to the pathological effects of a social structure governed by the pursuit of self-interest. Although Hegel did not develop his understanding of the labour-process into a full-blown critique of the division of labour of the kind Marx and Engels subsequently were to elaborate, nonetheless such a critique is implicit in his teleology. The connections he drew between freedom and necessity, consciousness and labour, constituted a significant advance on earlier theories and bequeathed to feminist theory a firm foundation on which to construct an investigation into the development of the division of labour and ways of transcending it.

By showing how slavery is 'natural' or appropriate to particular stages of development, for example, Hegel points to the necessity of a fundamental change in social relation-

ships if slavery is to be eliminated. The implication here for women is that radical improvements in their position will not be achieved by piecemeal changes. What is needed is a transformation of the social structure which generates inequalities and leads to their privatisation. Nor will these inequalities be removed by an appeal to moral principles since their subordination is linked to the needs of capital for a reserve army and its own reproduction. Hegel's comments on the 'relative justification' of slavery anticipated Marx's argument in the Critique of the Gotha Programme that 'Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development conditioned by it' <72>. Marx's observations on justice have led some commentators to argue that the extraction of surplus value cannot be seen as unjust since it is an essential feature of capitalism and the labourer freely exchanges his labour-power for wages <73>. 'Exploitation' is thus a 'natural' feature of capitalist society appropriate to that stage of development and should not be seen in moral terms. It follows from this that it is mistaken to see Marxism as a moral theory aimed at removing injustice: the 'injustices' it analyses are a necessary part of that mode of production

and will not be dissolved by a moral critique but only by a radical change in the economic and social structure. Similarly it could be argued that the subordination of women will be overcome only by a challenge to the division of labour which forms the heart of the system of oppressive social relations and the source of slavery.

Hegel's quasi-relativist view of morality does not preclude the possibility of advancement, however, since he suggests that the move away from slavery towards freedom, although dependent on consciousness, is nevertheless inevitable and reflects the growth of reason in the world. His analysis of slavery consequently provides a rich source of concepts for feminist theory. His political thought is of particular interest insofar as it offers an understanding of freedom and enslavement from a standpoint which transcends individualism. If we take into account his insights into slavery together with his anthropological writings and his study of Antigone, it is difficult to sustain a reductionist interpretation of his work.

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Footnotes

- 1 S. Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought, London, Virago, 1980, p.5.
- 2 Ibid., p. 5.
- 3 Ibid., p. 9.
- 4 Ibid., p. 10.
- 5 Ibid., p. 9.
- 6 Ibid., p. 197.
- 7 Ibid., p. 341.
- 8 Ibid., p. 293.
- 9 J. Bethke Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman, Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981, p. 174.
- 10 Ibid., p. 174.
- 11 Ibid., p. 176.
- 12 Ibid., p. 175.
- 13 Ibid., p. 177.
- 14 Elshtain's dissatisfaction with Hegel's treatment of women extends to the work of Simone de Beauvoir who employs Hegelian concepts in analysing women's oppression. Pointing to similarities between the work of de Beauvoir and Firestone, Elshtain notes that women, for de Beauvoir, can achieve transcendence only by rejecting their female identities. Similarly, Genevieve Lloyd in her critique of de Beauvoir argues that we should 'expect some oddities in any attempt to apply the relations of recognition between Hegelian selves and others to understanding the condition of women. And some of the puzzling features of de Beauvoir's analysis ... do seem to derive from the underlying maleness of the original Hegelian confrontation of consciousness' (G. Lloyd, 'Masters, Slaves and Others', Radical Philosophy 34 (Summer 1983), p. 5).
- 15 Elshtain, op.cit., p. 179.
- 16 Sophocles, Antigone, 926.
- 17 G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, London, Allen and Unwin, 1966, trans. J. Baillie, p. 491 (PG).
- 18 Ibid., p. 491.
- 19 Ibid., p. 737.
- 20 Ibid., p. 737.
- 21 Ibid., p. 491.
- 22 A.C. Bradley, 'Hegel's Theory of Tragedy', appendix to A. and H. Paolucci, Hegel on Tragedy, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, p. 385.
- 23 Hegel, PG, p. 471.
- 24 Ibid., p. 472.
- 25 G.W.F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, Tübingen, 1907, ed. H. Nohl, p. 293.
- 26 G. Lukacs, The Young Hegel, London, Merlin Press, 1975, p. 121.
- 27 Ibid., p. 412.
- 28 Ibid., p. 403.
- 29 Ibid., p. 404.
- 30 Ibid., p. 408.
- 31 A.C. Bradley, op.cit., p. 384.
- 32 Hegel, PG, p. 469.
- 33 G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952, trans. T.M. Knox, 164 (PR).
- 34 Ibid., p. 161 addition.
- 35 Ibid., p. 162.

- 36 G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, trans. W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, 519 (PM). Hegel's attempt to draw together passion and reason lies in marked contrast to de Beauvoir's radical distinction between immanence and transcendence. As both Lloyd and Elshtain have pointed out, transcendence for de Beauvoir and Sartre entails a denial of women's biological lives: 'It is as if the female body is an intrinsic obstacle to transcendence, making woman "a prey of the species"' (Lloyd, op.cit., p.8).
- 37 Hegel, PR, 161 Addition.
- 38 Ibid., p. 201 Addition.
- 39 Hegel, PM, 535.
- 40 Ibid., p. 535.
- 41 G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (introduction), Cambridge University Press, 1975, trans. H.B. Nisbet, appendix on Africa, pp. 173-190 (LPWH).
- 42 G.W.F. Hegel, 'Fragments of Historical Studies', Clio, 1977, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 123.
- 43 Ibid., p. 123.
- 44 Hegel, LPWH, p. 113.
- 45 Ibid., p. 198.
- 46 Hegel, 'Fragments of Historical Studies', pp. 117-18.
- 47 Lloyd, op.cit.,
- 48 Hegel, PG, p. 239.
- 49 Ibid., p. 233.
- 50 Here may be found a further contrast between the Hegelian and the Sartrean model, employed by de Beauvoir, in which, as Lloyd notes, 'the benefits of having staked one's life and lived through the fear of death accrue entirely to the Master', while the slave 'remains immersed in life' (Lloyd, op.cit., p. 6).
- 51 Hegel, PG, p. 239. This externalisation through labour is, as Lloyd correctly points out, missing from the Sartrean understanding of the master-slave dialectic and thus from de Beauvoir's analysis of women's subordination. But in surrendering this dimension of the dialectic, we are arguably losing what is of most value in Hegel's work and also most pertinent to a feminist reading of Hegel.
- 52 Hegel, PR, 57 Addition.
- 53 Hegel, PM, 435 Zusatz.
- 54 Ibid., p. 435 Zusatz.
- 55 Hegel, PR, 57 Addition.
- 56 Hegel, PM, 433 Zusatz.
- 57 Ibid., p. 433 Zusatz.
- 58 See, for example, A. Dworkin, Right-Wing Women, the politics of domesticated females, London, Women's Press, 1983.
- 59 Hegel, LPWH, p. 187.
- 60 Ibid., p. 187.
- 61 Hegel, PR, 248 Addition.
- 62 The tensions inherent in this relationship are expressed in, for example, the film A Question of Silence.
- 63 Hegel, PM, 435 Zusatz.
- 64 Hegel, PR, 21.
- 65 Ibid., p. 21.
- 66 Hegel, PM, 435 Zusatz.
- 67 This point is illustrated by the film The Draughtsman's Contract,

where the male protagonists, governed by sensuality, are drawn into the plot devised by women who, although formally occupying a marginal position in the culture, are able through design to control their actions.

- 68 Hegel, *PR*, 244.
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 244.
- 70 J. Bethke Elshtain, *op.cit.*, p. 179.
- 71 *Ibid.*, p. 181.
- 72 K. Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, London, Pelican, 1963, ed. L.S. Feuer, p. 160.
- 73 See, for example, A. Wood, *Karl Marx* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); M. Cohen, T. Nagel and T. Scanlon (eds.) *Marx, Justice and History* (Princeton, University Press, 1980); S.M. Easton, *Humanist Marxism and Wittgensteinian Social Philosophy* (Manchester, University Press, 1983).

Books Received

- Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophico-Political Profiles*, Heinemann, £16.50 hc
- Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*,

- Vol.I: *Reason and the Rationalisation of Society* (trans. T. McCarthy), Heinemann, no price
- D. Hall, *Eros and Irony - A Prelude to Philosophical Anarchism*, State University of New York (SUNY) Press, £25.15 hc, £8.25 pb
- D. Hamlyn, *Perception Learning and the Self*, RKP, £14.95 hc
- A. Harvey, *A Journey in Ladakh*, Jonathan Cape, £8.50 hc
- J. Hawthorn (ed.), *Criticism and Critical Theory*, Edward Arnold, £6.95 pb
- J. Hawthorn, *Multiple Personality and the Disintegration of Literary Character*, Edward Arnold, £9.95 hc
- S. Hekman, *Max Weber and Contemporary Social Theory*, Martin Robertson, £16.50 hc
- Christoph Hering, *Die Rekonstruktion der Revolution*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, no price
- John Hoffman, *The Gramscian Challenge*, Blackwell, £17.50 hc
- P. Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, Hutchinson, £12 hc, £5.50 pb
- W.D. Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy: Second Edition*, MacMillan, £6.95 pb

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