

Tragedy, Logic, and Action in Hegel's Outlines of the Philosophy of Right



Zeus, who sets mortals on the path to understanding, Zeus, who has established as a fixed law that "wisdom comes by suffering,"
Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 176.

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ABSTRACT

The text examines the interconnection between tragedy, logic, and action in Hegel's works, notably in "Outlines of the Philosophy of Right." Hegel correlates tragedy with negativity and reconciliation, influenced by ancient tragedy and Christian consciousness. Tragedy serves as a means for self-knowledge, where negativity and death are pivotal in unveiling the spirit's truth. Hegel's philosophy is enriched by the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles, depicting the ethical crisis in Athens and the ensuing reconciliation of opposing ethical forces. Hegel identifies tragic elements in Christianity, a religion that perceives death and contradiction not as endpoints but transitional phases in reality. Christian religious consciousness, marked by finitude and sin, seeks reconciliation between the mutable and immutable. Hegel's practical philosophy is grounded in a distinctive ontological logic, with dialectics as a core element, not a function of subjective thinking but the animating essence of matter. The focus of the article is Hegel's stance on the manifestation and reconciliation of freedom, assessing the relationship between individual will and universal practical law. He critiques the limited legal perspective of individual freedom, advocating for a deeper, ethical interpretation of freedom. This view is distanced from common sense and consensus and rooted in speculative understanding developed through scientific and philosophical methods.

Keywords: Hegel, Tragedy, Practical Philosophy, Universal Practical Law, Self-knowledge.

Tragedia, lógica y acción en los esbozos de la filosofía del derecho de Hegel

RESUMEN

El texto analiza la interconexión entre tragedia, lógica y acción en la obra de Hegel, especialmente en „Outlines of the Philosophy of Right“. Hegel asocia la tragedia con la negatividad y la reconciliación, una conexión influenciada por la tragedia antigua y la conciencia cristiana. La tragedia se presenta como un medio para el autoconocimiento, donde la negatividad y la muerte son esenciales para revelar la verdad

del espíritu. La filosofía hegeliana se enriquece con las obras de Aeschylus y Sophocles, ilustrando la crisis ética en Atenas y la subsiguiente reconciliación de fuerzas éticas contrapuestas. Hegel identifica elementos trágicos en el cristianismo, una religión que ve la muerte y la contradicción no como finales, sino como fases transitorias en la realidad. La conciencia religiosa cristiana, marcada por la finitud y el pecado, aspira a una reconciliación entre lo mutable e inmutable. La filosofía práctica de Hegel se fundamenta en una lógica ontológica distintiva, con la dialéctica como elemento central, no como una función del pensamiento subjetivo, sino como la esencia animadora de la materia. El centro del artículo es la postura de Hegel en la que se adentra en la manifestación y reconciliación de la libertad, evaluando la relación entre la voluntad individual y la ley práctica universal. Critica la perspectiva legal limitada de la libertad individual, proponiendo una interpretación más profunda y ética de la libertad, alejada del sentido común y el consenso, y arraigada en un entendimiento especulativo desarrollado a través de métodos científicos y filosóficos.

Palabras clave: Hegel, Tragedy, Filosofía Práctica, Ley práctica universal, Autoconocimiento.

Tragédia, lógica e ação nos esboços da filosofia do direito de Hegel

RESUMO

O texto analisa a interconexão entre tragédia, lógica e ação na obra de Hegel, especialmente em “Linhas Fundamentais da Filosofia do Direito”. Hegel associa a tragédia à negatividade e reconciliação, uma conexão influenciada pela tragédia antiga e a consciência cristã. A tragédia é apresentada como um meio para o autoconhecimento, onde a negatividade e a morte são essenciais para revelar a verdade do espírito. A filosofia hegeliana se enriquece com as obras de Ésquilo e Sófocles, ilustrando a crise ética em Atenas e a subsequente reconciliação de forças éticas opostas. Hegel identifica elementos trágicos no cristianismo, uma religião que vê a morte e a contradição não como finais, mas como fases transitórias na realidade. A consciência religiosa cristã, marcada pela finitude e pelo pecado, aspira a uma reconciliação entre o mutável e o imutável. A filosofia prática de Hegel fundamenta-se em uma lógica ontológica distintiva, com a dialéctica como elemento central, não como uma função do pensamento subjetivo, mas como a essência animadora da matéria. O foco do artigo é a postura de Hegel na qual ele explora a manifestação e reconciliação da liberdade, avaliando a relação entre a vontade individual e a lei prática universal. Ele critica a visão legal limitada da liberdade individual, propondo uma interpretação mais profunda e ética da liberdade, distante do senso comum e do consenso, e enraizada em um entendimento especulativo desenvolvido através de métodos científicos e filosóficos.

Palavras-chave: Hegel, Tragédia, Filosofia Prática, Lei prática universal, Autoconhecimento.

Problem Overview

This text is part of a broader research project on the question of negativity and its role in the philosophical understanding of action in Hegel (1770-1831)'s thought. The main question on the subject is: What is the importance of tragedy for the understanding of human action? Or to say it otherwise: In what sense is it possible a tragic comprehension of action? This topic also implies a relation between dialectics and the becoming self-aware proper to objective spirit. These questions, although related, ought to be considered independently. In our presentation we will investigate the question through tragedy with the aim of exami-

ning its features as a self-conscious process of a dialectic character. For this, we will first set out some elements that will allow us to clarify the meaning of tragedy for Hegel, for which we will refer to the influence of ancient tragedy and Christian religious consciousness in the author; second, we will aim to show how this conception of the tragic parallels the logical moments in the occurrence of freedom. Finally, in a third moment, we will examine how in Abstract Right, Morality, and Civil Society there is a tragic development in play. The basic text for our purpose will be the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821) and we will also rely upon the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*

Negativity, Tragedy and Reconciliation: between the Greeks and Christianity

In all the works where Hegel approaches the problems of practical philosophy, he refers to tragedy. It is, nevertheless, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* where the philosopher depicts it as a moment in the complete path towards Absolute Knowledge, that is, as a figure in the experience of Spirit.¹ To the philosopher contradiction and death are necessary steps in the elevation and the becoming aware of absolute spirit. In this way, death is a radical negative moment, an extreme limit from where consciousness lifts itself to its truth. Tragedy embodies an action through which one consciously traverses death and, keeping, retaining and assuming such negativity, one generates an elevated form of self-aware knowledge. In this way, the anxious situation in which the hero finds himself is a condition of a deep understanding of him as an individual in the universal realm of ethical life. This implies that a comprehension of tragedy allows us to come near the core of dialectics as it is suffered by the spirit. Or as the author says:

“Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength. [...] But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being.” (Hegel, 1807/1977, 19)

Insofar as negativity appears as a moment in the life of spirit which aims towards a complete process of reconciliation, it is worth examining the main aspects of the author's tragic conception, so as to clarify the meaning of his understanding of action.

Although it is not possible in this contribution to make a complete presentation of the number of influences that define the Hegelian interpretation of tragedy, it is nevertheless necessary to point out that Hegel is deeply influenced by the work of Aeschylus and Sophocles. For Hegel ancient tragedy puts in evidence the crisis of ethical life in Athens, since the hero is forced to take on the defense of a justified ethical force in opposition to others. This opposition unleashes a tragic conflict in which the citizen discovers that he has violated the universal law, causing the appearance of guilt. In spite of this negative situation, tragic reversal does not imply the hero's “fall”, but, on the contrary, his elevation, that is, the reconciliation and cleansing of himself in accordance with universal ethicality. In this sense, for the author, ancient tragedy conveys beauty and truth as it reconciles warring ethical forces. Tragic conflict appears as a negative experience that reconciles different forces of ethical life, that is, it renews the universality of ethical substance (Hegel, 1821/2008, §140, fn.). Remembering Aristoteles in this regard, we could say that tragedy makes the spectators go through catharsis and terror to shake them in a spectacle that enables them to recognize

¹ In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) the Sophoclean tragedy is one of the moments in the development of the natural consciousness, particularly in the moment of Spirit (Hegel, 1807/1977, 431).

themselves and unite the ethical forces of their political community (Aristoteles, 1974). In the *Phenomenology*, Antigone's suffering caused by her defense of the shadows' law, of tradition, and of the Penates makes possible Spirit's uplift and reconciliation, all this within the play's complete movement (Hegel 1807/1977).

On the other hand, Hegel saw in Christianity and Romanticism devotees of the endless character of freedom, which constitutes the trait that differentiates the modern world against the ancient (Hegel, 1821/2008, §124, Obs.). In the modern world, in which moral subjectivity has developed itself in fullness, the individual is a free subject that acts therefore to assert its particularity (Hegel, 1807/1977, §124). In this way, in the Christian Lutheran world we find the "moralist's drama" of someone that tries to attain his subjective ends in the objective world, and in so trying discovers the contradiction between duty and the results of his action, not the tragedy of the Athenian hero relentlessly determined by a law imposed upon him by a superior divine force to which he cannot resist.

One can also find a tragic element within Christianity, since this religion assumes death, contradiction, as a necessary but not definitive moment of reality. In the Hegelian understanding of religious self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, we find that it is presented as an unhappy consciousness (*unglückliche*), suffering and hapless, since it sees itself as splintered (*in sich entzweite*), inasmuch as it considers its truth the divine, eternal and immutable life, but at the same time appears to itself as contingent, sinful, and marked by the blemish of finitude. That is why Christian religious consciousness assumes infinitude, that is, an eternal and free being as another, as an absolute master. It is self-conscious in its knowledge of the eternal other, before which it conceives itself as mortal, subservient, limited and sinful (Hegel, 1807/1977, [122]). In this way, this religious self-consciousness implies an immediate reconciliation between a mutable and an immutable consciousness, which appears through a movement in which the singular consciousness offers its master its deeds, its belongings, the principle of its will, and the enjoyment of pleasure (characteristics of the medieval religious experience). This surrender retains in turn the retribution from the immutable consciousness which allows the singular enjoyment, what makes possible a bond or reconciliation with what is immutable.

By doing so, Christian religious consciousness achieves a reconciliation, that is, an encounter that links the two moments of religious self-consciousness, mutable and immutable, but such a reconciliation is immediate, abstract, as it is not projected as an action and as its own and self-conscious knowledge in the world. This is why we are dealing here with a partial reconciliation that is projected as a path, a pilgrimage towards a "beyond" in a promised reconciliation (Hegel, 1807/1977, [161]). In the dialectics of the unhappy consciousness in the *Phenomenology* this moment of universal reconciliation gives way to Reason. In this regard, Greek culture and Christianity share a vision of death, not as a material and biological passing away, but as a necessary path in and through which humans carry their universal being to fulfillment, whereby individuality and universality are reconciled. (Hegel, 1807/1977, [91]). The life of spirit has a universal character that comes to be and has therefore meaning in a communal context, open to the horizon of history, which points as its goal to the complete reconciliation of individual, community, nature and godhead in a rational order. As it was said before, the challenge of the Hegelian mode of philosophical enquiry is to think through contradiction, so as to assume it in a qualitative manner, without trying to evade or dissolve it; to take the opposites and develop them until contradictions arise; to think the "identity between identity and non-identity" as it was formulated in his writings of the Jena period (Hyppolite, 1974, 93).

From this dialectical perspective the contemporary ethical, political and juridical philosophies are illuminated in a particular manner, since it allows us to understand the overcoming of violence in a historical,

political, and communal environment as entailing practices of reconciliation. Thereby the Hegelian interpretation of tragedy, although heir of the Athenian classics, has a stronger Christian character, insofar as it accepts as rational the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation arising from the subjective and moral experience as Félix Duque and Ramón Valls Plana (Duque, 1998, 471; Valls Plana) pointed out. Thus, Christian tragedy assumes negativity as an inherent stage in the life of the community of worshipers, that is oriented towards a reconciliation yet to be done, projected as the ultimate aim to be achieved in history. Therefore, tragedy appears as a “moment” of action, that is, as a necessary negative phase, subject to the dialectical needs of reconciliation. In this way, Hegelian philosophy has a negative character, but only insofar as that contradiction is paired to reconciliation; we are in the presence of a way of thinking of the universal mediated by negation.

Dialectical logic and its scientific justification

The exploration of the relation between action and tragedy implies a need to substantiate the thoroughness or philosophical need which involves the contents of thought and the dialectical discourse that understands it, that is, the clear display of its scientific foundation and its need. All the more reason, when the link between contradiction and reconciliation in action is not evident, or, to say it in more logical terms, it is not immediately clear that the connection between identity and contradiction is rational.

As a modern philosopher Hegel conceives human praxis as the world mover, this activity is expression of the universal will, which will be achieved historically; in it humanity understands and knows itself in its universality; exactly the content encompassed by the concept of Spirit (Hegel, 2008, §377). As stated before, human communities become aware of themselves through social and political institutions, traditions, customs, juridical systems and traditional ancestral practices. This communal context, called by Hegel Ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), is the spiritual fertile ground of each people, since here take place practices governed by reason as an effective principle, that direct the factual life of its members. Therefore, Ethical life is at the root of the individual consciousness, and, at the same time, humans are the individual expression through which a human group acknowledges itself; it is a spiritual knowledge, self-aware. As Ludwig Siep says: “For Hegel the individual is not a clean slate that is present to and confronts a community, it is rather the particularization of a communal being, a variation of the British scholar, the German artisan or the Polish worker” (Siep, 1989, 188).

Hegel stresses this in one of the most famous and beautiful paragraphs of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) as he characterizes it as an activity or practical self-conscious knowledge of a negative character, whereby the different subjects know themselves in others: “They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another”. (Hegel, 1807/1977, 112).

Material and historical manifestations are concrete expressions of the concept of freedom, as it is actualized and made tangible, becoming real. Every one of its manifestations is therefore ideal, that is, realizes, although in a partial and fragile way, freedom’s concept in itself. We are dealing here with the free Will as an active principle that grounds the individual’s moral life, as well as the social struggle and political life of the peoples in the overarching horizon of history; this means that Hegelian practical philosophy rests on assumptions of a peculiar ontological logic, of a first philosophy (Hegel, 2008, §§1-5; Valls-Plana, 2008, fn. 384, 272).

As was pointed out by the author of the Prologue in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821), every work, insofar as it is a scientific understanding of freedom’s concept and its realization, rests on a “logical

spirit” (Hegel, 1821/2008, 4). Hegelian Logic is a “first philosophy or ontology” that presents the necessary path of coming to be intrinsic to reality, insofar as the concept gives way to its negation, its death, where a new movement begins opposite to the first one, which in turn is itself negated. It is a negative and permanent movement through different moments of a strict development. The philosophical method that exhibits this real movement is called by Hegel *Dialectics*. Or in the author own words:

“The concept’s moving principle, which alike engenders and dissolves the particularizations of the universal, I call ‘dialectic’, [...] The higher dialectic of the concept consists not simply in producing the determination as a contrary and a restriction, but in producing and seizing upon the positive content and outcome of the determination, because it is this which makes it solely a development and an immanent progress. Moreover, this dialectic is not an activity of subjective thinking applied to some matter externally, but is rather the matter’s very soul putting forth its branches and fruit organically” (Hegel 1821/2008, §31).

This means that Hegel’s practical philosophy does not proceed from common sense, or an immediate insight, nor a sentiment; neither is it based upon a consensus or the tyranny of the majority. It understands itself speculatively through a strict method, scientific and philosophical, which is coherent with the dialectical content that it apprehends (Hegel, 1821/2010, 12-13). Therefore, the Hegelian philosopher does not foresee the future, or discovers or preaches truths, but comprehends them speculatively. Accordingly, the philosopher fulfills an important social and political function: understanding the ethical life of a people, enlightening and revealing its dialectical rationality, whose connections are veiled to the common sense (Hegel, 1821/2010, 12-13).

With this in mind and to finish our presentation, we will go through the moments of Abstract Right, Morality and Civil Society, in order to point out how tragedy appears in them as moments of ethical action in Hegel.

Abstract Right, Morality and Civil Society: tragedy, logic and action

As we have already said, the purpose of the book *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821) is the scientific or dialectical comprehension of freedom’s realization, that is, as the reconciliation between individual will and universal practical law. This relation is built or achieved in three stages: Abstract Right, Morality and Ethical life. In each of them, in its own way, the three moments of the concept become apparent: the singular (S), the particular (P), and the universal (U).

Hegel achieves in the Abstract Right his speculative comprehension of modern natural law philosophy, which starts from freedom and individual equality as fundamental normative principles of human sociability and political life, developed further in the theory of the state of nature, of the law and natural right, of the social contract and the State.²

For the German author, the simple assertion of freedom is purely negative, that is, it is the practical position according to which, human beings are only as long as they negate the other (Hegel, 1821/2010b, §81). It is the assertion of freedom as indetermination (*Unbestimmtheit*), as the rejection of every given

² The classical and more influential authors in the modern political tradition of natural law are Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who share some categories and assumptions, although they come out with different theories; Hegel criticizes different aspects of their thought, among them the vision of the human individual as the basis for political association, what Hegel calls “atomism”, he also criticizes the assumption of a state of nature prior and independent of ethnicity and historical context, a criticism made from an Aristotelian point of view. He also criticizes the logical weakness present in the assumption of a universal social contract out of an assemblage of external individualities to each other, among many other weaknesses. Nevertheless, Hegel as a dialectical philosopher takes the thought of natural law authors in different parts of his works, to closely examine how in their philosophy there is a partial philosophical understanding of freedom.

material or intellectual content. It has to do with the simple and immediate affirmation of the "I am I" that grants itself certainty through negation (Hegel, 1821/2008, §80). This action leads necessarily to the imposition of the singular will over material objects, things. The legal person expresses herself in material things that become her property, so that it is necessary to establish the legal conditions that regulate legitimate property and its exchange, making thus indispensable the constitution of a theory of contracts, of the law and even of the State. This immediate conception of freedom conduces to a restricted legal vision of individual freedom, that gives citizens security in their legitimate and stable ownership of their lives and property. (Hobbes, 1999, 113-129). In this vision, the law appears as a universal principle external to the singular individual, that regulates the relations among legal persons, so as to prevent violence against alien life or property.

Let's draw our attention to the fact that in *Absolute Right* individual freedom is opposed to the law based and legitimated by the contract (universal will). Moreover, insofar as the individual and universality are opposed, the former seeks to affirm its freedom by using the law in its favor, that is to perpetrate a wrong (*Unrecht*). With this strategy the individual pursues the affirmation of her particular interest above the law, aspiring to make her vision a universal principle. This fallacy becomes a punishable action, one that universality sanctions with a penalty. Here we see how from the immediate and purely desiring affirmation of individuality the crime is unleashed. By doing so and in the face of law's negation, the penalty becomes the negation of the crime, reaching the reconciliation of the individual and the universal law. It is a dialectical process over which reconciliation is reached through negation. The end result of this process is that the individual does not act before an alien law, but incorporates this universal principle within. The wrong or "the unlawful action" and the related penalty, is a negative path whereby reconciliation appears. In this fashion, negativity is a way, as Aeschylus points out in his *Oresteia*, for discovering the fault and for the practical education in freedom. Out of the fault and the conscious suffering endured in the penalty, comes the self-conscious and spiritual learning.

As a result of this negative process, the second moment in the book is *Morality*, in which universal law does not appear anymore as opposite or alien to the individual, but arises as coming from herself, that is, universal law becomes a heritage, a moral wealth from within. Therefore, in *Morality* we do not find a legal person that defends an external material possession, subject to a contractual exchange, but a moral subject that declares her wishes, values and ideals in her effective actions in the world. The moral sage, whose paradigm is Kant, understands the universal law as an inner principle, formal and intellectual, that it takes upon herself to introduce in the world.

Morality develops another perspective of *Right* that shifts the problem of freedom from the material possessions towards subjective and particular interests and wishes, that are now considered "the soul of deeds" (Hegel, 2008, §121). It is the introjection of *Universality* that appears linked to the subject's inner principles, what motivates her free action upon the world. *Morality* is, therefore, defined by the author as the *Right of the subjective will* (Hegel, 1821, 2008, §107).

Nonetheless, for the moral subject her inner and universal knowledge of the law is a certainty that cannot be realized in her deeds, cannot become truth (*Wahrheit*), as long as her individual act is always contingent and therefore limited vis-à-vis a moral law that she strives to make reality. Moral Law is a universal and intimate knowledge as a requirement, an imperative never to be satisfied in the world, as the subject's particularity confronts her instinct's finitude and contingency. Thus, the moral subject is contradictory, tragic, as the paradox of a contingent desire and a universal duty inhabits her.

Hegel states clearly the finitude and limitation, the drama, of this freedom's figure; although consciousness strives to actualize the moral law, that cannot be done in the world. Indeed, no matter how essential and pure consciousness is, it remains in an "ought-to-be" without content, it cannot do justice to its subjective passions and interests that actually move the acting subject; in this way action's strict foundation becomes mere rhetoric. In Hegel's own words:

However essential it is to give prominence to the pure unconditioned self-determination of the will as the root of duty, and to the way in which knowledge of the will, thanks to Kant's philosophy, has won its firm foundation and starting-point for the first time through the thought of its infinite autonomy, still to adhere to the merely moral position, without making the transition to the concept of ethical life, is to reduce this gain to an empty formalism, and the science of morals to the preaching of duty for duty's sake (Hegel, 1821/2008, p.135).

On the other hand, the moral subject's tragedy appears in the confrontation with the changing and contingent conditions, in which the deed must be done. Hegelian philosophy points out that action carries within itself fragility as its fundamental element. Praxis always entails uncertainty, whose origins are the material conditions, concrete and limited of the agent, so as to know what he can and must do, the required means and those at his disposition to reach his ends, the effectiveness of the acts he performs amidst a context that he cannot fully control or foresee and the immediate or future consequences coming out of his acts, and of which, he will always be responsible.

When the author explains the contradictions of moral consciousness he brings up Oedipus. Acting is necessary, but when one acts, one needs to assume that the true law of action is variation, which is open to paradox, contradiction or reconciliation. As Hegel points out: "The development in external existence of the contradiction involved in the necessity of the finite is just the conversion of necessity into contingency and vice versa. From this point of view, therefore, acting means submitting oneself to this law" (Hegel, 1821, 2008, p.118).

This drama leads moral consciousness to radicalize its contradiction by means of passivity, hypocrisy, whose dialectics Hegel presents in his *Phenomenology* (Hegel, 1977, pp.135-140). Therefore, action as an expression of subjective freedom and as a principle thereof, implies elements of inadequacy that will be overcome in the Ethical life (Hegel, 1977, pp.141-142).

The occurrence of Ethical life at the end of the process comes to reconcile the moments of Abstract Right and Morality. In it, the idea of Freedom is attained as "living good", that is, as substance, in which the moments of defense of property, moral freedom and universality are linked. It is a logical, universal, and endless moment that binds the legal person and the moral subject with institutions of the ethical world, in which subjects appear as members of a family, as humans with egoistic interests, that work and consume, that are part of a class or social corporation, or as citizens of a State. Thus, in Ethical life, freedom has been realized through a world of historical and concrete institutions. To put it in Ludwig Siep's words:

"[...] in objective spirit human being experiences freedom by means of his participation in a human world created by itself, formed by right, family, economy, and politics. Only here, in this world of social relations, customs, and institutions, can the will, which wants its own freedom, find a proper content for its will". (Siep, 1989, p. 113).

Even though in the world of ethic institutions prior moments are annulled (*aufgehoben*) and freedom becomes broader and concrete in the abovementioned institutions, contradiction does not disappear. It is

instead pushed into the familiar, social and political realms where the moral dimension of actions does not disappear, but is articulated and framed in the context of an ethical world in which humans struggle for social recognition through their work, but where they can also lose their dignity.

Civil Society, although it represents the space where the infinite value of particular freedom is fully developed, it also implies the loss of dignity and autonomy for the majority of its members. Civil Society is, on one hand the ethical domain of material relations, where human beings work in the class chosen by them according to their values and subjective wealth and where they strive to be recognized and, reciprocally, recognize their others; it is a social space of theoretical and practical education (Hegel, 2008, §197). On the other hand, in Civil Society one finds the exacerbation of selfishness, conducive to opulence, luxury and waste that excludes and marginalizes a majority. For this reason, Hegel speaks about Civil Society as a spectacle of „physical and ethical degeneration“ (Hegel, 2008, §185).

Even though the different institutions of Civil Society aim at overcoming their contradictions, their actions are marked by paradox, since these institutions emerge, ultimately, from the development of moral freedom, whose historical expressions are linked to the system of production and exchange characteristic of the bourgeois system, in other words, are rooted in selfishness. For this reason, even though in those social institutions humans are able to strive towards their recognition and to develop their own projects in solidarity with others, conversely, civil society is also „is the field in which the understanding with its subjective aims and moral opinions vents its discontent and moral frustration“ (Hegel, 2008, §189). Civil Society is the ethical place of the tragedy of a morality that pursues its freedom, but that in its actions ended denying the universal ends and even the individual freedom in misery, exclusion, and thus, the loss of recognition for the majority of its members. It is a sphere of development of a splintered and fragile social self-consciousness.

Final Reflections

We can conclude that for Hegel, action reproduces in itself the dialectical logic of the concept. It is not a formal logic, but a logic that apprehends the totality of reality from a dialectical point of view, insofar as it goes through the negation of the concept, so as to reveal itself as the immanent unfolding of itself as idea. The scientific exposition of the philosophical discourse about human Praxis hangs upon the dynamic and dialectical comprehension of reality.

It is a process of negation and overcoming or reconciliation, which is given as a movement in and through negation. Thus, Hegelian speculative logic is the ontological soul of action.

In this context, tragedy and reconciliation are open moments of action, that is, neither one nor the other impose themselves in order to give a final or definitive meaning and, therefore, abstract or static to reality. The horizon of realization of human freedom always becomes historically dynamic as a negative, since „identity and contradiction“ are „moments“ in constant and mutual mediation.

The tragedy of spirit as it becomes free or as it acts is inevitable: the legal, moral, social, educational or political actions are marked by the duty of action, and, at the same time, by its inevitable fragility. The agent, being conscious of his acting, is a tragic hero, since he accepts to perform the action knowing of its imperfection, its frailty, the possibility of error, but also of the just deed that can happen through it. Hegelian logic results from the wisdom that learns through the path of pain, but it never rejects mutual and solidary reconciliation and the quest for a world of freedom, since the dialectical character of moral truth implies a need to act, where tragedy and reconciliation become interwoven. That is why, and as we

learn from Aeschylus' sentence, pain offers an education that cleanses the philosophical gaze, making it realistic, heroic and skeptic, without relinquishing the hope of moral happiness, of social solidarity and universal reconciliation.

Thus, the agent's tragic heroism does not conduce him to fatalism, passivity, agnosticism or moral pessimism, but to a clear hope, a sound skeptical consciousness and a serene heroic attitude.

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