

A Comparison between Hegelian and Lacanian Ideal Hero in Sophocles' Tragedy of *Antigone*

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Abstract: Hegel, the German philosopher, and Lacan, the French psychoanalyst, have a lot in common when asserting their viewpoints concerning an ideal hero they favor in tragedy. Not all the heroes having dominated the classical tragedies have been able to mesmerize Hegel and Lacan as remarkably as Antigone has. The hero they support is capable of true heroism resulting from intellectuality rather than ephemeral emotions. Indeed, Hegel assures that the real hero create harmony between his internal motives and external elements. Based on Hegel, the real hero always acts and reacts in accordance with the divine pathos having been implanted in his heart. The pathos is substantial in that it has been divinely issued by the gods. The Hegelian hero takes his nobility from the fact that he has merged his individuality with gods' universality in order to have their support. The real tragic hero, Hegel says, should stand firmly loyal to the god he has chosen to obey. Such loyalty is apparently appreciated by Zeus because the tragic heroes have erased their will just to dictate and preserve the equilibrium Zeus desires. In fact, they act consciously and voluntarily in the plays, though they know they may be paid by death. Like Hegel, Lacan admires Stability in action and loyalty to the aim when talking of his favorite tragic hero. To Lacan, the concept of *beautiful soul* can manifest in a hero who knowingly acts and bravely welcomes what he himself has given rise to. Lacanian tragic hero like Hegelian one knows from the beginning the consequences of his behavior; nevertheless, he never loses his heart when confronted with the reactions coming from his opponent forces. Antigone can best glorify the features Lacan and Hegel endeavor to attribute to real tragic hero. Though encountered with physical death and conceptual dissolution better known as *second death*, Antigone stands faithful to the aims she has agitated for.

Keywords: dialectical method, pathos, ethical substantiality of family and state, the thing, sublimation, Derrida's supplementation, the beautiful soul, the second death.

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Introduction:

Hegel has asserted that the essence of a real tragedy should be explored where the heroes are caught up between two choices equally righteous and defensible. He believes that a talented dramatist artfully puts his heroes under sophisticated circumstances where they have to make up their minds between alternatives equally imposing and coherent. The hero situated between equal options, Hegel declares, is more life-like and digestible in contrast to a hero manipulatively placed between black and white options. The playwright Hegel admires arranges his plot in a manner which pressures the heroes involved to meditate, deliberate and hesitate prior to taking any action owing to the fact the alternatives designed interminably resemble and negate each other before heroes' eyes.

Hegel emphasizes that the essence of the whole universe is based firmly on endless dualities which intermittently metamorphose what we adore into what

we abhor and vice versa. Such dualities, Hegel asserts, function contradictorily, and coexist independently from our consciousness and intellect. The alternatives that challenge the heroes' discretion involve contradictions owing to the fact that they originate and rise from each other.

Prior to examining Hegel's notion of tragedy, and the procedure he explores in search of his ideal tragic hero, it would be worth-reading to see how Hegel has been appealing to his dialectical method to get equipped in search of actual heroism. Dialectical method is one of the concepts Hegel has patented; it functions as a key to enter his philosophical system that has outshone all the achievements he has extended to us. Hegel initiates his adventure through reversing in his favor Spinoza's premise of *determination*. "Spinoza proves that determination is negation. He concludes that to determine a category, one must negate that the original category belongs to other surrounding categories (Stace, 2001, p. 42). To

determine that blue is blue, it necessarily must be negated that blue is green, or red, or white. Consequently every determination necessitates a sort of negation. Hegel's reversal of Spinoza's premise of determination eventuates in his own theory of *negation*. He emphatically asserts that "every negation is determination and it is absolutely the reversed path of Spinoza's recitation"(Inwood, 1992, p. 200) Hegel announces that not only is every determination a negation, but also every negation is a determination. The color of blue is not green, or red, or white or any other color known to us; accordingly, through these negations blue is determined to be nothing except blue.

Reversing Spinoza's premise of determination, Hegel then constructs his own hypothesis of *tremendous power of negation* through which "Hegel reminds in view of the fact that every determination is a negation, the positive aspect of every thing is concealed in its negative one"(Stace, 2001, p. 43). To recognize and appreciate a category, we need to have access to the categories which negate our initial one. Hegel in fact makes an attempt to help us realize how shaky and unstable are the borders we draw between opposing forces. Contradicting elements owe a lot to each other beyond our minds having been inclined to observe the universe pessimistically through binary oppositions. Contrasting elements need vitally each other to find existence and meaning. In reality, opposing forces are so intermingled that one hardly can recognize them when viewed in isolation. In the twentieth century, post-modernist approaches take advantages of Hegel's enterprise as Jacques Derrida represents his own *supplementary method* which connotes the instability, and simultaneously the spuriousness imposed upon ostensibly opposing elements.

The theory of negation endorsed, Hegel embarks upon advancing his dialectical method, one of his most fundamental achievements the understating of which equips us in exploring his philosophy. This method of deciphering the universe and the forces it includes shows in practice how fragile are the walls built between the opposing forces, and simultaneously decodes why human's mind gets puzzled when exposed to varied alternatives that make the procedure of decision-making an extremely agonizing task. Hegel believes that we should place our tragic heroes in such situations where they face up to contrasting points which basically originate from one single essence. Two forces equally righteous are put before the heroes who are bound to vindicate just one. Nevertheless, Hegel says only the characters capable of reasoning can make their path amid the seemingly chaotic forces.

The theory of *monism*, promoted by Spinoza, stresses that the whole universe should be deduced from a single, unique, perfect, and self-independent category which never undergoes any change or split in it. Owing to the theory that the initial category of the universe is innately perfect, it does not need anything or anyone to make it get proven or stabilized. However, Hegel believes that Spinoza has come to such results because he has used his *understanding* in deducing the source of the universe. Hegel, instead, advances his own logical procedure which "disturbs that 'freedom' to think for *oneself*. It disturbs our 'freedom' to stand above a topic and think 'about' it as seems rational to us" (Houlgate, 1991, p. 65)

Reasoning is a stage Hegel prescribes instead of understanding. Although Hegel does not reject Spinoza's *understanding*, he insistently believes that compared to understanding, reasoning is far more accurate and reliable. Reasoning is precious to Hegel because it generates his dialectical method that he frequently appeals to in deducing the origin of the universe. The dialectical method reminds that the initial category or origin of the universe, unlike Spinoza's theory, cannot remain endlessly unique and undivided, and it undergoes changes and divisions throughout its development. Hegel's dialectic involves three steps: (1) we take one or more concepts or categories as fixed, sharply defined and distinct from each other. We call it the stage of understanding. (2) When we reflect on such categories, we behold one or more contradictions emerge in them which give rise to dialectic proper or the dialectical or negative REASON. (3) The result we take is a new, higher category that embraces the earlier categories and resolves the contradiction emerged in them. Hegel names it the stage of speculation or positive reason (Inwood, 1992, p. 62).

Hegel's understanding sets the concept of *Being* as the initial category of the whole universe. Being is a source which sheds life on the whole universe and the categories it contains. Based on understanding, Being functions as an immediate category that does not need any pre-defined approvals; it creates and approves the existence of every thing we have in the universe. Then, through reasoning, Hegel extracts the concept of *Non-Being* from the heart of the Being. This stage in Hegel's words delineates the negative reasoning whereby the Non-Being emerges from the Being and contradicts its own creator. Then, Hegel introduces his concept of *Becoming* which resolves in itself the contradictions having occurred between Being and Non-Being.

An example can give a clearer picture of what Hegel means by the triple hierarchy he advises us to follow when pondering on the origin of the universe. Suppose we have an *old bilingual* dictionary. Then,

we begin to reduce the number of specifying features which our dictionary includes. When we ignore the *oldness* of our dictionary, what remains is a *bilingual* dictionary. We can proceed to eliminate the specifying features by erasing the *bilingualism* of the dictionary, and what, at last, remains is the dictionary devoid of color, material, thickness, oldness, and so on. Despite being deprived of any feature, the dictionary exists, and we still can say we have a dictionary. What Hegel strives to prove is the fact that Being is what we never can take from the dictionary. Being, as the origin of the whole universe, incarnates through the whole categories of the universe, and as W. T. Stace remarks "the feature of being is the only joint feature among the entire universal concepts" (ibid, p. 120). If we carry out the same procedure on the whole categories occupying our universe, what at last we encounter is the initial concept of Being.

Nevertheless, such a concept of Being virtually means Non-Being, what Hegel has made us notified of earlier. When something is cleansed of all the features it has previously had, though still keeping its being, it is ultimately invisible, and in practice conceptualizes Hegel's Non-Being. To set us free from such a duality, Hegel announces the third stage of Becoming. It is a sphere which resolves in itself both the Being and Non-Being. The Becoming puts an end to the contradiction and challenge which the Being and the Non-Being have between themselves; it temporarily sets peace and stability. The Becoming indicates a principle whereby apparently stable thoughts reveal their inherent instability, turning into new more complex thoughts, as the thought of being turns first into the thought of nothing, and then into the thought of becoming. This principle Hegel tells us, is the soul of all truly scientific knowledge (Houlgate, 1991). Sedgwick in his book titled *An Introduction to European Philosophy* confirms that "dialectical method is in general the principle of all motion, of all life, and of all activation in the actual world. Equally, it is also the soul of all genuinely scientific cognition. Life itself is so dialectical that all life involves change (p. 62).

The definition Hegel renders of tragedy is closely linked to his dialectical method owing to the fact that the hero is not entrapped between an ultimately wicked position, and an exaggeratedly benevolent option. In practice, the hero is exposed to a power which fosters its own enemy; in other words, what he is bound to choose gives rise to its own contradiction (Hegel, 1999, p. 93). The very relationship covering the concepts of Being and Non-Being dominates the whole categories offered to the tragic heroes; consequently, the hero finds himself enslaved as he feels he is free. The hero gets naturally flabbergasted when he is at the verge of taking steps throughout the

tragedy. Hegel has a deep contempt for the tragedies which offer their heroes unsophisticated conditions where a paragon of humanity is arrayed versus a diabolic antagonist, due to the fact the heroes can easily determine which to vindicate. To Hegel, the essence of true tragedy should be traced where the hero has to make up his mind between two equally righteous and imposing forces which identically lure the heroes to themselves. The battle never takes place between the bad and the good; in fact, two good forces are presented before the hero, and he should choose just one. "The essentially tragic fact is the self-division and intestinal warfare of the ethical substance, not so much the war of good with evil as the war of good with good" (Paulucci, 1975, p. 67). The Greek tragedies can best exemplify the ideal tragedy Hegel desires. Such tragedies represent a setting where opposing forces emerge from each other and then resolve their contrast to support Hegel's triple formula of the universal phenomena. The forces involved put equal pressure upon the heroes who wisely strive to determine which force they should vindicate. One power functions a thesis which gives rise to its enemy incarnated as the antithesis. However; this battle is followed by the synthesis that brings peace, and regulates the chaotic atmosphere the opposing forces create.

The forces presented in Greek tragedies, as well as the heroes summoned into the battlefield are not engaged with mundane issues. The tragic heroes, Hegel says, consciously try to be dealing with universal and divine issues at the price of erasing their own individuality. They act and react in a world immensely different from ours; it is meticulously monitored by the divine gods who seek their shares on the Earth. These gods endlessly quarrel with each other owing to the fact the domains of their affairs confront, and cause them to start fighting to stabilize their favorite orders (Rutherford, 2005, p. 64). One god affirms an issue, immediately another god feels threatened and begins to press back the god initiating the quarrel. The triangle formula of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis drawn by Hegel comes into mind where Zeus, the supreme god, enters to resolve the challenge occurred, and exerts peace and regularity on the sphere he is in charge of. The gods actualize their influences upon the earth through what Hegel names *ethical substantiality* which the heroes undertake to perform. The ethical substantiality highlights the divinity and spirituality which is attributable to the gods the Greeks used to worship. In fact, the heroes starring in the Greek tragedies wisely and knowingly have the inclination to make their personal wills identical to the ethical and divine decrees coming from gods. "The hero makes himself inseparably coalesce with particular aspect of ethical and substantive life,

contently and deliberately commits himself to that” (Paulucci, 1975, p. 47). Indeed, the heroes in tragedies, in accordance with their social and political roles, subordinate themselves to specific territories dominated by different gods.

The tragic heroes assuredly confide their will to the divine gods because such a sacrifice enables them to achieve two important goals. (Charlton, 1988, p. 43). First, the hero hereafter has the ultimate vindication of the god he has chosen to obey. He has realized that acting through his individual will can eventuate in eternal catastrophic curses from which he, and his descendants as well, will not find any escape. Coherently, he aptly concludes that he needs to make a compromise between his personal will and gods' divine orders. The heroes know well that the whole phenomena occurring in the universe find their justifications from the relationships the divine gods develop among themselves. They also know that Zeus himself, above all hands, meticulously observes the issues the gods are involved in, and equalizes the equilibrium of power among them. Adhering to what the gods will to do make possible on the earth the very equilibrium Zeus decrees. Consequently, the gods involved in tragedy have some agents who sustain their wills on the earth, and guarantee the balance among gods (Rutherford, 2005, p. 72). Hegel brings out his concept of *true action* that “consists of two parts: 1, what is in substance good and great, the divine actualized in the world, as the foundation of everything genuine and absolutely eternal in the make-up of an individual's character and aim; 2, self determination and freedom” (di Beistegui & Sparks, 1969, p. 46). Hegel's definition of true action reveals the second aspect of ethical substance which exacerbates the heroes from the probable retributions awaiting them in the nether world. In fact, the heroes “act in accordance with a specific character, a specific pathos. In such a case, there is no lack of decision and no choice (Paulucci, 1975, p. 70). The gods, who in the world after death have the right to judge the heroes' actions, feel responsible for the circumstances the heroes face, and vindicate them against divine punishments. What the Greek spirituality disapproves most is the selfish emphasis that ethical powers put on their rights. In fact, the ethical substances issued from gods as well as the heroes supporting them should succumb to the third powers that function as synthesis to resolve the clashes. Zeus above all observes the affairs among gods, and lastly this is he who says the last word, and reestablishes order throughout the universe.

The family and State in ancient Greek culture were not secular at all; in fact, they were responsible for some clashes recorded in tragedies among the gods. Apparently, they were two domains ultimately of the

gods' interests. Both of them had their own particular supporters among divine gods. The individuals who are in charge of the State and the family are assumed to make a compromise between their own individual wills and the gods' orders. However, the heroes enjoy the compromise made provided that the gods be given the upper hands. As long as the gods fight, their representative heroes on the Earth involve in conflicts. Nevertheless, reconciliation at last will bring the forces under a same sphere where peace and calmness dominate.

Hegel regards Antigone one of the greatest characters ever seen in tragedies because her tragedy fully puts the family and State against each other. “Antigone reverences the ties of blood-relationship, the gods of the nether world. Creon alone recognizes Zeus, the paramount power of public life and common wealth” (Kaufmann, 1992, p. 205). The family, as a thesis, gives life to its anti-thesis which incarnates into the State. Then, death enters synthetically to establish peace between these two clashing forces. In practice they build the society. The family fosters the State by supplying it with the members it has nourished, and in return the State takes the responsibility of defending the family against possible hazards, and provides the facilities the family needs to survive. The borders existing between these two categories are established by Greek divine gods. Zeus makes women supervise the family affairs, and commits the king to sustain the social affairs. Indeed, Hegel highlights that women control the family, and men dominate the State; an agreement that assures the equilibrium between two opposing sexes. The family is regarded as the realm of divinity, for the rules dominating it are self-conscious and generalized. “Ethicality is the divine or feminine law, that of the family as ‘natural ethical immediacy’ whose existence is sheer being substance” (di Beistegui & Sparks, 1969, p. 22). The family is devoid of political laws; it is the realm of Penates and obscure forces. The Family is a natural ethical community working in an unconscious way, and finds its divinity from the nether world. It also helps the pre-birth world incarnate on the Earth.

The State, the masculine world, is of self-conscious reality where human rules take the place of divine laws. Nevertheless; the State is not entirely cleaned of divinity because Zeus vindicates and stabilizes it; he taught mankind how to establish a State to exert laws on his society. Zeus and Apollo, the god of wisdom, do not care about the family-related issues as devotedly as the new gods like Eumenides, Dike, and Nemesis (Grimall, 1990, pp. 78-80). Zeus supports the State, while Eumenides and the gods of the nether world are guardians of emotional affairs in the family. The family and State undergo battles; the State emphasizes its rough and inflexible rules, whereas the

family defends its soft and affectionate affairs. Each of these two spheres challenges to establish its own laws, and tries to keep society's members under its dominance.

The tragedy of *Antigone* written by Sophocles reveals the battle between the family and the State. Creon, the head of the State and the supporter of social affairs, is in charge of the security of the whole kingdom. He has Zeus's and Apollo's support, he has to keep the society safe; he can not allow marginal affairs to jeopardize the society. To Creon, Eteocles is the defender of the State; consequently, he deserves a splendid burial ceremony which can glorify the state of those martyred for their nation. On the contrary; Polyneices has attacked the State, so he should not be buried respectfully. Creon is somehow righteous in his hostility to Polyneices, because he has to vindicate the very State that provides the nation security. If he let him be buried as gracefully as his brother, the insurgents would venture to risk the nation, assured that they will be celebrated as heroes as they die. Coherently, Creon does not let his individual feeling middle in the governmental affairs. On the other hand, Antigone, as a woman, defends the issues cherished in family territory, and preaches the gods of nether world who watch blood-relationships fostered in family. She apparently ignores Creon's governmental decree ordering the unrespectable burial of Polyneices. She is not capable of dividing her brothers into friend or enemy because the family does not basically particularize categories; it mainly generalizes them, so both brothers, regardless to what they have done to the State, deserve equally respectable burials. Such firm unwritten laws cause Antigone to risk her life by burying her brother, Polyneices.

*Antigone: But I bury him; and if I must die
I say that this crime is holy: I shall lie down
With him in death, and I shall be as dear to him as he
to me.
It is the dead.
Not the living, who make the longest demands;
We die forever... (Sophocles I, 55-65)*

Antigone also announces that what she does is not merely her own intention; in fact, the gods of nether world emphasize the rights of the dead and family relationship. She responds Creon's accusation and says:

*It was not God's proclamation. That final justice
That rules the world below makes no such laws.
Your edict, king, was strong,
But all your strength is weakness itself against
The immortal unrecorded laws of God.
They are not merely now: they were, and shall be*

Operative for ever, beyond man utterly. (II, 55-61)

Antigone reminds that the ethical substantiality of the nether world, to her, overweighs the rules of the State. These laws are unrecorded because they have not entered the symbolic and particularized realm of men. However, her sister Ismene is overtaken by the imposing doctrines of the State, and timidly escapes the responsibility she is expected to take for burying Polyneices. Apparently, she proves to lack the sense of obligation Antigone has:

Think how much more terrible than these

*Our own death would be if we should go against
Creon*

And do what he has forbidden! We are only women

We cannot fight with him, Antigone!

The law is strong; we must give in to the laws.

In this doing, and in worse, I beg the dead

To forgive me, but I am helpless: I must yield

*To those in authority. And I think it is dangerous
business*

To be always meddling. (II, 44-52).

Nevertheless; Creon is given the responsibility of maintaining and guarding the laws having been dictated by Zeus and Apollo who wish to see humans' community stable and strong. Creon is equally justified in stressing the laws he carries on. He should give Eteocles a respectable burial ceremony, while he should prevent Polyneices from being buried like a national hero. He is a traitor to the State, so he should be treated as he deserves.

*I have nothing but contempt for the kind of Governor
who is afraid for, whatever reason, to follow the
course that he knows is best for state; and as for the
man who sets private friendship above the public
welfare...and I need hardly remind you that I would
never have any dealings with the enemy of the people.
No one values friendship more highly than I; but we
must remember that friends made at the risk of
wrecking our ship are not real friends at all. (I, 17-
27).*

Apparently, we can trace the formula delineated by Hegel when talking about his dialectical method. The family initially plays its role as thesis; then, it gives birth to its anti-thesis, the State. Both Creon and Antigone are doing their duties designated by the Greek gods. However, the Hegelian triple formula still lacks its third side, the synthesis, which fully manifests through the different relationships family members organize among themselves; the inevitable death that terminates the presence of both the family and state.

To know properly how death functions as synthesis, the ways people within a family relate to each others should be taken into account. Hegel defines three kinds of relationship that people in a common family can generate. First, we have the husband-wife relationship, that Hegel regards purely natural and sensual. Hegel believes that the grave ethical substance that gods put in family cannot come from this relationship, for a man and his wife initially have based their connection on natural and sensual needs. The second relationship seen in a family emerges among the children and the parents. Such relationship to Hegel is still devoid of divinity owing to the fact that they are natural and unconscious. This relationship is contaminated because it has come out of sexual affairs, and it does not have a root in the so-called pre-birth ethical world. The children owe their lives to their parents, and the parents have their parenthoods from their children. The last but not the least significant relationship that Hegel highly values appears between sisters and brothers. Hegel believes that this relationship is ultimately purified, and does not contain any natural or sensual desires. Sisters and brothers do not need each others for their existences; they are independent beings that do not provide each other's sensual and natural needs (Paulucci, 1975, p. 238). Accordingly; the entire substantiality of the family aptly appertains to the connection created between sister and brother. For such substantial role, sisterhood functions as a confident receiver of gods' divine orders, and dislodges motherhood approximately out of substantiality of the family. She leads the army of femininity in its battle against the non-divine masculine world. Though the brother goes into the State's service, sister remains devoted to her brother, and never lets her pure, divine feelings get discolored during this imposed separation. The State strives to keep men aloof from the world of femininity, and to a large part it succeeds to. The affection the sister has to her brother is as strong as before, while being in State's service influences brother's feeling to his sister. Consequently, sisterhood is regarded by the State an everlasting menace plotting to undermine its totality.

Nevertheless, the disputes between the State and family are not everlasting. Death synthetically reconciles these opposing forces, and supplies a moment for subsiding hostilities. The brother's death enables the sister to express fully and publicly her uncontaminated ethical feelings. Mother and wife due to their natural and sensual feelings cannot be confident representatives for offering ethical divinity to the brother. In fact, if it were not for the relation between sister and brother, the whole system of family would remain permanently natural and unethical. The funerary might be regarded as the only moment when the sister is permitted officially to release her suppressed feelings. It is a particular moment that the State must recognize so that the divine ethicality can present itself on the Earth. If prevented, she undoubtedly shakes the bases of both the community and the State. Hegel highlights that if after some coincidences, the sister realizes that she can not bury her brother, and reveal her ethical substance, the femininity in body of sisterhood would destroy the whole organism of community; "the femininity will come to fight the masculinity for such a suppression"(di Beistegui & Sparks, 1969, p. 23). Antigone is prevented from her right to show her ethicality in her brother's funeral ceremony; consequently, she agitates against both the State and community. This anger gets so strong that it finally ruins even the household of Creon. Death reconciles the divine pre-birth world from which we originate and the domain of the State. Death solves both these spheres into itself because it spoils the body, and causes us to return to where we have come from. "Death is the ethical and natural given ground around which the two ethical principles (pre-birth and on-earth lives) commune" (ibid, p. 22). Death above all brings freedom and security for the heroes. In the battle between two equally justified forces, the one that dies, indeed, reconciles its own vindicating god. However, the one that has seemingly won the war cannot meet the god that supports it. The winner has to live on the Earth, and suffer the punishments executed by the Furies who guard the sanctity of all ethical forces on the Earth. Antigone dies while she has fulfilled her duty to the gods when living on the Earth. Creon, however, has to face the agonies exerted by the Furies. He insisted on his right, and totally violated what Antigone cherished. He knows well that his son's and wife's deaths are the outcomes of his spiteful behavior to Antigone.

Is Antigone the criminal, for transgressing 'the laws of the land' (that is, Creon's edict)? Or that Creon is, for going against the 'sworn justice of the gods' (a female's right to mourn her family)? Antigone ends up committing suicide and Creon finishes the play

broken-hearted, his son having joined Antigone in her suicide. Neither side can be said to 'conquer' the threat posed by the other.(Whitmarsh, 2004, p. 81)

Though both Antigone and Creon obey divine gods, Hegel cannot conceal his respect to Antigone. He believes that compared to Creon, Antigone reacts more heroically in facing her difficulties. Indeed, Hegel regards Antigone an ideal hero who aptly represents heroic features. The ideality of Antigone does not exclusively come from her fidelity to the divine orders which Greek gods issue; she bravely welcomes the whole probable outcomes resulting from her behavior. She accepts consciously to be in charge of whatever following her reaction to the State, although her individuality acts in accordance with the divine ethical pathos which is substantive (ibid, p. 84). Antigone heroically lets herself be blamed for whatever coming out of the compromise she has made with the gods; in other words, she takes the responsibility of the processes that the Greek gods in large part have given rise to. Antigone sincerely appreciates the fact that she has been defended by the divine gods, and knows well they have assured her salvation in both the earthly and after-death lives. She does not let duplicity contaminate her morality; she receives unwelcomed results as satisfactorily as sweet ones. She never accuses the gods of the catastrophic scenes occurring in the tragedy. Not only does she accept the conclusion of her actions, but she also opens her arms warmly to the curses her family members have suffered; she approves that her royal prestige accompanies the agonies undoing the house of king Oedipus. Besides, Antigone, as a Hegelian ideal hero, does not observe any difference between what we may consider as conscious or unconscious; she regards herself responsible for everything done, and her moral obligation does not allow her to escape the issues she herself has not directly had hand in. Antigone copies her father in welcoming penalties even though following from unconscious commitments. Oedipus feels he deserves to be cursed for the incestuous affairs he has unknowingly had with his own mother, and lends himself to punishment (Draper, 1980, p. 113).

In Greek tragedies the miseries are handed down from one generation to the next, and the members of a dynasty shares in their honors as well as misfortunes; they do not find themselves exonerated from what their ancestors have committed.

*Antigone: you have touched it at last: that bridled
Their crime infection of all our family!
O Oedipus father and brother!
Your marriage strikes from the grave to murder mine.*

*I have been a stranger here in my own land:
All my life
The blasphemy of my birth has followed me. (IV 37-44).*

Antigone acknowledges the truth of a misery that runs in her family, and confirms she has done her duty to her brother knowingly; she makes no attempt to escape the death proclaimed by Creon.

Antigone: Creon, what more do you want than my death?

Creon: Nothing. That gives me every thing

Antigone: Then I beg you kill me...

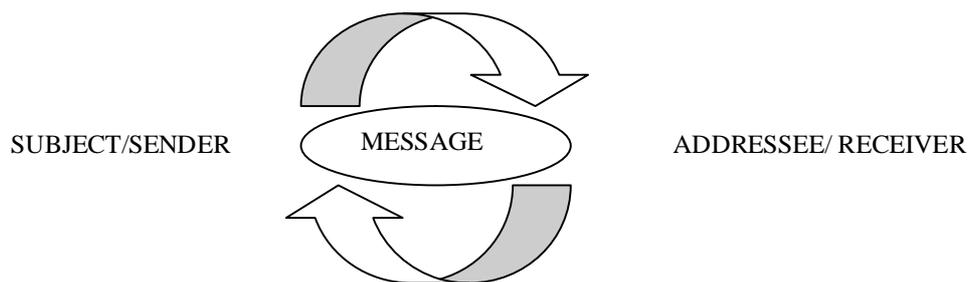
I should have praise and honor for what I have done. (II 91-97).

She publically announces her readiness to death, and declares her death brings honor and everlasting praise. Since faced by Creon's disagreements, she has predicted her death, and even her voluntary moving to death is confessed through the Chorus. However, such brave reaction towards destiny is seen by no means in Creon's personality. In fact, he loses his totality when confronted by the results his irresponsible behavior has generated. From Hegel's notion, he does not deserve to be counted a one-hundred-percent hero though acting based on divine orders of Zeus and Apollo, supporting gods of the State (Grimall, 1990, p. 58).

Passing approximately two centuries, Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst repeats Hegel's definition of an ideal hero; nevertheless, he uses his own technique in search of the ideal hero. Lacanian ideal hero in large part represents the same features Hegel brings out when delineating the ideal hero; both Lacanian and Hegelian ideal heroes succeed heroically to sustain their integrities when they come across to the conclusions their performances have given rise to (Lemaire, 1994, pp. 61-2). Both heroes act consciously, and feel responsible for what they embark on doing.

There are few people in literature history not having been astonished by Antigone's brilliant performance in her tragedy. She knows well her actions do not mean anything but certain death; still, she peruses to fulfill what she thinks to be true, ignoring how others may react to her performance. Slavoj Zizek, the renowned Lacanian psychoanalyst, uses his mentor assumptions to present the public the shining soul that elevates Antigone to the state of an ideal hero. Zizek, in his book titled *enjoy your symptoms*, refers to what Lacan learned from Edgar Allen Poe's 'purloined letter'. He opens his debate by announcing that "a letter always arrives at its destination (Zizek, 1992, p. 12) . By this he means

that whenever a subject sends a letter, its addressee undoubtedly will receive, and answer it. The subject by his letter sends a message to his addressee, and it influences the receiver greatly enough to cause him to react. Zizek also insists that the letter unquestionably completes a circle, where the sender and the receiver organize its diameter (ibid, p. 12)



Lacan's formula

Such a circle is always guaranteed; the communication between the sender and receiver never cuts off. As the letter arrives, the receiver gets stimulated to answer it. The essence of the letter is important, and the sender can easily guess how his addressee might react; consequently, he is fully prepared for what the receiver will send him. However, Jacques Derrida reacts posing some coherent questions concerning the certainty of this alleged form of communication. He believes that this theory is totally illusionary, and it cannot get externalized. He asks: "So why does the letter always arrive at its destination? Why could it not sometimes, at least also fail to reach it? Isn't it always possible for a letter to go astray?" (ibid, p. 13). He truly mentions that we should accept the fact that there are many potential obstacles that prevent the letter from getting its exact address. Derrida's skeptical view regarding what Lacan assumes about the letter theory originates from his views concerning the arbitrary and shakable relationships between any signifier with its alleged signified. He is sure that the purloined letter theory is not an exception; the same chaotic atmosphere that dominates the world of the signifiers and the signifieds is felt in the assumption Lacan has made. To Derrida, the Lacanian letter functions as a signifier that wrongfully strives to ascertain a signified as its own permanent reference. Derrida believes that such a firm relationship is purely illusionary due to the fact that "the signified cannot orient or make permanent the

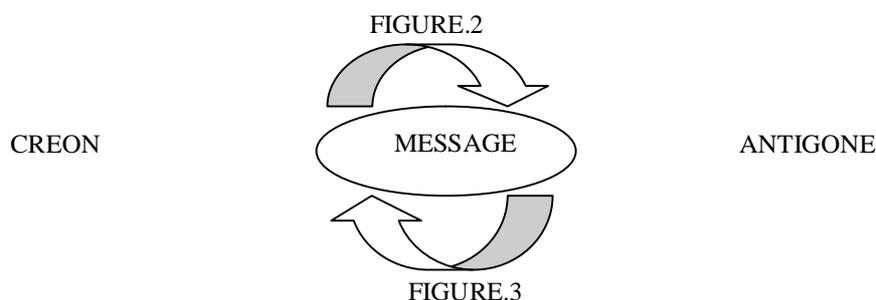
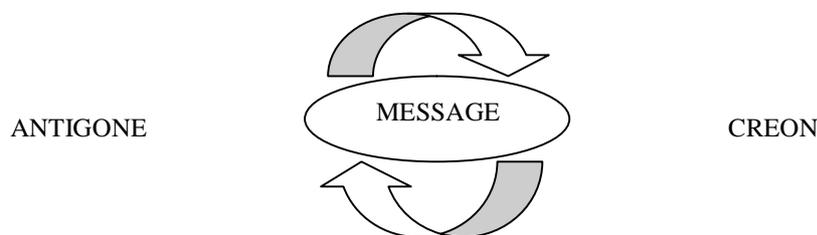
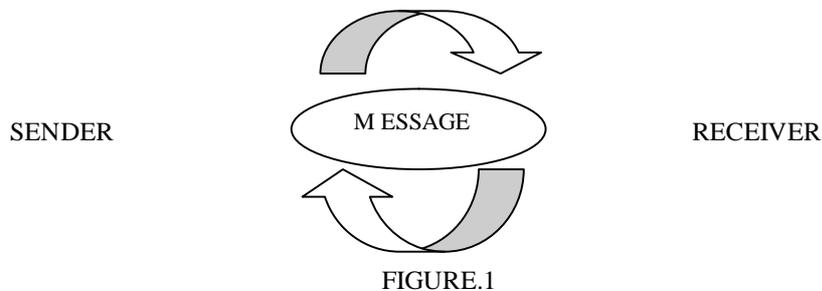
meaning of the signifier because the relationship between the signifier and the signified is both arbitrary and conventional" (Bressler, 2007, p. 119). The way we incline to perceive the relationship between the signifiers and the signifieds cannot be a trustworthy touchstone because what we regard as a firm signified for a signifier can itself be a signifier for something else that might possibly contradict the initial signifier, so we should not rely on these infirm and chaotic relations (Sedgwick, 2001, p. 175)

Despite the coherent objection made by Derrida, Lacan persists that his theory can bypass Derrida's assumption because the letter that in Derrida's words acts as a signifier does not have any pre-determined addressee or signified. Indeed, the letter does not have any clear addressee, and every person who receives it is its addressee. He adds that "a letter always arrives at its destination since its destination is wherever it arrives" (Zizek, 1992, p. 12); consequently everyone who intends to read this *addressless* letter is to be regarded as the receiver of that letter. Lacan surely has in his mind the German experience of *flaschenpost* where a man entrapped in an uninhabitable and remote island puts an SOS message into a bottle, and throws it into the ocean. The doomed man has not ascertained any person as his message receiver; everyone taking the bottle is truly the receiver. Zizek points out the significance of the purloined letter lies in the fact that the sender of a message knows fully the content of his letter; accordingly, he knows well what his receiver

might respond when encoding his message. Zizek confirms that “the sender always receives from the receiver his own message in reverse form, “the repressed always returns,” “the frame itself is always being framed by part of its content” (ibid, p. 12). The message sent causes an answer in the receiver and the answer is exactly the externalized meaning of the message having been sent; the receiver acts as a mirror reflecting the sender’s intention.

Such a discovery gives rise to Lacanian definition of *the beautiful soul*. Similar to Hegelian ideal hero, those who own beautiful souls take the responsibility of the entire consequences of their actions; they consciously know what they do, and bravely wait to face whatever may follow from their actions. They welcome the bad results as warmly as their own great

achievements. To possess the beautiful soul, the subject should not lose his totality when encountered with his action reflection; he has no right to say: “*but I didn’t mean that*”. He must be notified that he is taking what he has paid for. Lacan defines hero as the subject who fully assumes the consequences of his act, that is to say, who does not step aside when the arrow that he shot makes a full circle and flies back at him. Based on the assumptions made, Antigone can show herself as a hero equipped with the beautiful soul whereas Creon is introduced as an anti-hero who disintegrates as confronted with the echoes of his decision.



The figures shown above represent that Antigone knowingly sends her message to Creon, she is fully aware of the outcomes of her performance;

nevertheless, she never undergoes any hesitation when realizing that her behavior has ascertained her death. However, the figure focusing on Creon disgraces him

as an anti-hero who retreats when he comes across to the catastrophic results of his role in the play.

Antigone: You must decide whether you will help me or not.

Ismene: I do not understand you. Help you in what?

Antigone: I am going to bury him.

And some lines later Antigone adds that:

But I will bury him; and if I must die. (Sophocles 27-55)

Antigone assuredly proclaims her message of war though she knows it can mean death. She sends Creon her message and Creon as the receiver answers her back by sentencing her to death; her performance matches the formula Lacan supposes in dealing with the ideal hero.

Antigone: I knew I must die, even without your decree:

I am only mortal. And if I must die

Now, before my time to die,

Surely this is no hardship. (II 63-6).

Attempting to understand why Creon in Lacanian point of view does not deserve appreciation, we put him in trail by considering the figure (3) where he sends his message to Antigone in order to stimulate her to answer him. Unlike Antigone who welcomes all the consequences of her actions, Creon gets remorseful and surprised when he notices how Antigone reacts against his sent messages.

Creon: Polyneices, I say, is to have no burial: no man is to touch him or say the least prayer for him; he shall lie on the plain, unburied; and the birds and the scavenging dogs can do with whatever they like. This is my command... (I 35-7)

Here Creon recites his message one more, and Antigone makes herself the addressee of Creon's message. Creon has insulted the realm and laws of the dead, and Antigone considers her the vindicator of the divine realm of the dead and the family. The message sent by Creon has in itself some threats for the very domain sustained by Antigone. The message sent can be translated into the message of war and death; nevertheless, Antigone bravely rushes to receive the message. She externalizes what is hidden in Creon's message, and lends herself warmly to the jaws of her death. What makes the profound differences between Antigone and Creon is matter of the *beautiful soul*, which Creon lacks. Such a failure to possess the *beautiful soul* causes Creon to become massively fragile when encountered with the subsequences of his deeds.

Choragus: Go quickly: Free Antigone from her vault

And build a tomb for the body Polyneices

Creon: You would have me to do this?

Choragus: Creon, yes!

And it must be done at once: God moves

Swiftly to cancel the folly of stubborn men

Creon: It is hard to deny the heart! But I

Will do it: I will not fight with destiny

Choragus: You must go yourself. You cannot leave

It to Others.

Creon: I will go.

-Bring axes, servants:

Come on with me to the tomb. I bring her, I

Will set her free. (V 96-106).

Realizing the certainty of Teiresias's prediction, Creon changes his mind, and strives to survive Antigone from death. Such a retreat from the inflexible initial position descends Creon to an anti-hero who unwarrantedly tries to propagate him a real hero: a defender of divine laws. Unlike Hegel, Lacan shows no devotion to Creon: indeed, he believes it is unquestionably wrong if, like Hegel, we name Creon a hero who sustains divine laws. To him, the ethical equation delineated by Hegel in his philosophical notion concerning the puzzlement between two equally righteous powers, does not emerge convincing and defensible. Lacan insists that we not bother ourselves in recognizing the right from the wrong when asked about what passes between Antigone and Creon. The results are clear and unwavering: Antigone is double victimized; first her defense of divine laws is humiliated by an anti-hero incarnated in Creon, and second, she is put unjustly in the scale where her rightness is to be deduced when compared to Creon's. Lacan does not feel uncertain when he announces that "the behavior of Creon is marked by hamartia: he makes a mistake in judgment. Still more, he commits stupidity; Creon is an anti-hero, a secondary hero who wrongfully has been favored so far. (Harasym, 1998, p. 111). Indeed, Creon muddles in the affairs which are at the hands of the gods of the nether world.

Despite the dissention that Hegel and Lacan have in their debates on Creon, both glorify the shining beauty that elevates Antigone to a real hero. They use their systematic findings for shading light on the puzzles exposed to the heroes, and monitoring the paths the heroes choose to win their fame and reputation. Neither Hegel nor Lacan approves the dramatic characters who escape the consequences of their deeds. In fact, Antigone's brilliant performance paves the way for quenching the thirst of those who eagerly seek for real heroes. The realm of psychoanalysis in parallel with philosophy reveal how real heroes make their way amid the gloomy milieu they are involved. They rely on the talent of their reasoning to discover

what is true , what is the real essence of humanity, and the spring the causes them to flourish throughout history. Passing excellently the standards designed by Lacan and Hegel, Antigone amounts to the position which serves as a scale for weighing the honesty of every body claiming to have valor and heroism.

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