
Uncovering Gender in Hegel's 'Ethical Order' in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*

Heather Stewart

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was a post-Kantian German Idealist who sought to elaborate a “comprehensive and systematic ontology from a logical starting point” and is perhaps most well known for his “teleological account of history.”¹ In 1807, Hegel published his most important philosophical work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Despite its age, the *Phenomenology* is a text that is still widely read, cited, and discussed. While arguably the greatest attention has been paid to Hegel’s presentation of the master-slave dialectic in the work, there are many other important aspects of the text that should be focused on in a critical light. I argue that Hegel’s gendered conception of family life and civil life in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, as well as how Hegel articulates a gendered division of labor through these concepts, call for careful critical examination. It is important to draw attention to how Hegel conceives of gender difference and the public-private distinction, given the influential role that this text has played in feminist analysis and scholarship.

Heather Stewart is a first year MA student of Bioethics at the University of Louisville. Prior to beginning her MA program, she graduated from the University of Louisville with degrees in Biology and Philosophy. Heather hopes to pursue doctoral study in Philosophy, focusing on her many areas of interest in bioethics, social and political philosophy, critical race theory, feminist philosophy, LGBTQ philosophy, and the philosophy of psychiatry. She is currently working on projects pertaining to epistemic injustice against trans patients in clinical medicine, clinical microaggressions, and responsibility for global justice.

Varying interpretations of the *Phenomenology* have led to divergent feminist readings of the work and different subsequent uses of the text – it has served as both a source of feminist criticism and also as a source of inspiration for more positive applications to feminist works. I contend that Hegel should be interpreted as presenting a stereotypical (and patriarchal) account of gender in his section on “Spirit: The True Spirit, The Ethical Order,” specifically through his analysis of Sophocles’ play *Antigone*, which lends itself productively to feminist critique. However, despite this critical account, I additionally argue that Hegel’s section on Spirit offers a valuable point of analysis for feminist scholars, despite the problematic gender distinctions Hegel presents, and that Hegel’s work can still be beneficial to feminist pursuits.

Hegel begins to formulate gendered divisions of labor and responsibility in the “Ethical Order” subsection of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. In his discussion of Spirit, Hegel describes a community of individuals bound together by law, and how these individuals structure themselves and relate to one another. Here, Hegel is expanding on a conception of “the Ethical Life,” which can be found in several of Hegel’s early lectures and in unpublished manuscripts for *The System of Ethical Life* (1802-3) and *First Philosophy of Spirit* (1803-4).² H.S Harris highlights some of the central aspects of Hegel’s early articulations of the Ethical Nature, including the community as the basis for an ethical life based in relation, and the early distinctions between the natural community, that of the family, and the wider community beyond the family.³

Hegel’s concept of “the Ethical Life” is also expanded in works published after the *Phenomenology*, especially the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1820). In Allen Wood’s introduction to Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, he examines some aspects of what Hegel takes to be “the Ethical Life.” Wood describes Hegel’s development of a concept of a civil society in this latter text, which he differentiates from both the family and the state. In examining the distinction between the civil life and state and family life, Wood describes Hegel’s conception of the state as “a public com-

munity based explicitly in reason and aiming at collective or universal ends” and the family life as the “private society based on love.”⁴ This comprises an early articulation of the gendered division of rationality and emotionality. Wood’s analysis of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* indicates that the gendered division of ethics that I am proposing arises in the *Phenomenology* persisted throughout Hegel’s later works.

According to Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, the realm of Spirit is further divided into two distinct sets of laws: the human law and the divine law. In an analysis of Hegel’s text, Stephen Houlgate (2012) describes Hegel’s “human law” as being the law of universality, which governs the lives of individuals and allows them to live together in a community or state. The “divine law”, on the other hand, manifests in the family, and is the law that binds the family together and structures familial life. He describes this divine law in opposition to human law, in that the divine law is the law of individuality.⁵ While both sets of laws are aspects of the ethical sphere, they are presented as conflicting, dichotomous opposites, which are linked to the two “natural sexes.” The human law is tied to “man” while the divine law is associated with “woman.”

As I will show, the two sets of laws that Hegel articulates are not only in binary opposition, but they are also assigned unequal value. The law of man, the human law, is valued above the family law of women. As such, men seek to “overcome” the family in order to participate in the life of the state. The woman is never able to similarly overcome family life, and as such is permanently tied to the obligations of divine law and caring for the needs of the family. Through this division of the ethical realm into the two categories of the state and the family, each with their own corresponding laws, Hegel is articulating an ethical divide between the genders, ascribing different meanings, roles, and responsibilities to each.

It is important to note the unequal value ascribed to each gender in Hegel’s division of the ethical realm. Men, who are able to participate in the state (human law) must aim to overcome or supersede the family life. This can be observed in para-

graphs 458-9 of the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel describes the Brother's goal to leave the Family. Hegel explains this overcoming of the family by the masculine-gendered brother in the following way:

The brother is the member of the family in whom its Spirit becomes an individuality which turns towards another sphere, and passes over into the consciousness of universality. The brother leaves this immediate, elemental, and therefore negative ethical life of the family, in order to acquire and produce the ethical life that is conscious of itself and actual. He passes from the divine law, within whose sphere he lived, over to the human law.⁶

Hegel uses phrases such as "passes over" to describe the brother's movement beyond the family into something that is more positive and universal, the state. The women, however, are left to attend to the divine law; "But the sister becomes, or the wife remains, the head of the household and the guardian of the divine law."⁷ Note that Hegel describes the divine law as negative and inconsistent with universality. Women, in Hegel's story, cannot abandon family life in the way that men can-- they are tied to the divine law, while the human law is out of their reach.

Also of interest is how Hegel describes men and women's relationship to the ethical life inhabited by the other gender. Hegel describes the two sets of laws as being in conflict, with each wanting to assert itself over the other. Note, however, that women's resistance and desire to exert their law over the law of man is futile, because Hegel's story renders her unable to overcome the domestic sphere. Hegel attributes the conflicting nature of the two sets of law to the idea that, "since it sees right only on one side and wrong on the other, that consciousness which belongs to the divine law sees in the other side only the violence of human caprice, while that which holds to human law sees in the other only the self-will and disobedience of the individual who insists on being his own authority."⁸ Each sees its own law as being the "right" or more important law, notices only the negative qualities of the other, and thus fails to acknowledge the merits of the other's ethical system. Stephen Houlgate's analysis de-

scribes this as follows: "These laws are set against one another because the man and the woman also take their allegiance to their respective laws to be immediate and exclusive. Each acts, therefore, to make his or her own law the whole law and so seeks to subject the other's law to his or her own."⁹ Given this analysis, not only is Hegel setting up a theory of gender difference, in which men and women necessarily occupy different spheres with different governing principles and ethical accounts, but these ways of thinking are also described as being in conflict and seemingly irreconcilable.

These ideas from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* have continued to be adapted and incorporated into more contemporary thought. For example, this distinction between ethical systems (human law and divine law) and their respective attribution to men and women seems to influence the more recent conception of the gendered ethical systems of Ethics of Care and Ethics of Justice. Robert White (2009) describes this distinction, famously articulated by Carol Gilligan, in which women are thought to use different moral reasoning than men, which is grounded in an ethic of care as opposed to an ethic of justice typically employed by men. White further describes the development of this distinction as understood by Nel Noddings, who contrasted the "mother's voice" of care with the "language of the father," which she argues is found in justice.¹⁰ This contemporary notion that men and women have distinct ethical systems grounded in different ways of thinking can be traced back to Hegel.

I take this gendered division of ethical spheres to be problematic, insofar as it reinforces artificial differences in how men and women think and reason morally. The reality is that *all* people are, or at least have the capacity to be, concerned with care and justice, or, in Hegelian terms, to be governed by both divine and human law. In other words, men and women do not adhere to one ethical sphere exclusively; this conception is surely oversimplified. Rather, men and women alike must strive to achieve a balance in navigating both familial obligations and obligations of the state. This aspect of Hegel's understanding of gender

needs to be critically reevaluated, especially in light of more recent developments in gender theory.

The distinction between human law and divine law that Hegel articulates in the *Phenomenology*, is most clearly represented in his analysis of the play *Antigone*. The play tells the story of Antigone, the sister of Eteocles and Polyneices, two brothers who die fighting each other in a civil war in Thebes. The new ruler of Thebes, Creon, determines that Eteocles, whom he regards as the noble brother, but not Polyneices, will be honored with holy burial rites. Despite Creon's orders, Antigone feels that her familial duty as Polyneices' sister compels her to give Polyneices a proper burial. Despite the fact that her sister, Ismene, refuses to help Antigone out of fear of the repercussions of the state, Antigone proceeds to honor her brother. Consequently, Creon sentences her to be punished for disobeying his decree. In the end, Antigone takes her own life.

Hegel views this story as demonstrating the division of the ethical realm that he articulates in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Gallagher Laird quotes Hegel's own description of *Antigone*, which states:

Everything in this tragedy is logical; the public law of the state is set in conflict over against inner family love and duty to a brother; the woman, Antigone has the family interest as her 'pathos,' Creon, the man, has the welfare of the community as his. Polyneices, at war with his native city, has fallen before the gates of Thebes and Creon, the ruler, in a publicly proclaimed law threatened with death anyone who gave the honour of burial. But this command, which concerned only the public weal, Antigone could not accept; as sister, in the piety of her love for her brother, she fulfills the holy duty of burial. In doing so, she appeals to the laws of the gods; but the gods for whom she worships are the underworld gods of Hades, the inner gods of feeling, love, and kinship, not the daylight gods of free self-conscious national and political life.¹¹

For Hegel, the conflict between Creon and Antigone lies in their adherence to two conflicting systems of laws, human and divine law respectively. Creon, as a man and ruler, embodies the human law, being committed to upholding the law and the sanctity of the state. In contrast, Antigone represents divine law, under which obligations to the family take precedence over laws of the state. Antigone's main priority is upholding her familial duty as a sister to bury her brother, even at the risk of undermining the authority of the state.

Hegel presents the conflict as a failure on Antigone and Creon's part to recognize the value in each other's ways of thinking. Creon is unable to see the importance of Antigone's family-centered virtues, or why it is so important for her to uphold her brother's honor. He is unable to see that Antigone has been defined by her role as a woman and sister, and that she can not help but desire to fulfill her obligations to the family sphere. Likewise, Antigone so strongly desires to fulfill her familial duties that she is unable to respect the role that Creon must play in upholding the universal laws of the state (though I am inclined to believe that she is justified in her defiance). Creon is defined by his role in society, and must act to uphold human law, even when it means undermining the importance of familial roles and obligations. For each, they are acting out duties that were defined for them by their respective "spheres," which have become central to their identities. As such, they fail to achieve mutual recognition of the value of each other's ethical systems, and the result is tragedy. Gallagher (2011) quotes Hegel's understanding of this one-sidedness:

'...if the one-sidedness of a 'pathos' is the real ground of the collisions, this can only mean that it is carried out into actually living action, and the one-sided 'pathos' has become the one and only 'pathos' of a specific individual. Now if the one-sidedness is to be cancelled, it is the individual, since he has acted solely as this one 'pathos' who must be got rid of and sacrificed. For the individual is only this one life and, if this is not to prevail

on its own account as this one, the individual must be shattered. This sort of development is most complete when the individuals who are at variance appear each of them in their concrete existence as a totality, so that they are in the power of what they are fighting, and therefore violate what, if they were true to their own nature, they should be honouring. [...] there is immanent in both Creon and Antigone something that in their own way they attack, so that they are gripped and shattered by something intrinsic to their own actual being.¹²

Antigone illustrates how strict, one-sided adherence to a single ethical code can lead to an overwhelming devotion that ultimately ends in tragedy. Hegel's interpretation suggests that Antigone's failure to recognize the value and authority of the state leads to her demise, demonstrating his preference for the masculine ethical system over the one ascribed to women.

Sophocles' play *Antigone* helps to highlight the problems of such rigid and fixed roles, and how they will result in conflicts that can't be overcome unless mutual recognition is somehow achieved. This story, which Hegel is using as an example of this gendered division of responsibilities between the family and the state, actually shows how problematic this very division is. If the story were such that Creon and Antigone represented more of a balance, and both were able to see the value of human and divine laws, it would have been easier for each to understand the commitments of the other, and the tragic ending likely could have been avoided. (Of course, the story was intended to validate social norms of the time, social norms that were adopted by Hegel and are still reproduced today, and Sophocles' likely would not have told the story otherwise. What is important is how Hegel uses the play to illustrate his distinction, and the normative values that he implicitly supports.)

While I argue that Hegel seems to be establishing this system of gender difference and reinforcing it using Sophocles' *Antigone*, other interpretations are also possible, and it is unclear by

reading the Phenomenology of Spirit alone which interpretation is correct. Molly Farneth has a more charitable view of the "Ethical Order" section of the Phenomenology. On her analysis, Hegel is using the story of *Antigone* not to reinforce these gendered distinctions, but to criticize them and show them to be problematic. Her interpretation states that, "Hegel is condemning social arrangements that take the authoritativeness of identities and obligations to be natural or merely given. Hegel criticizes the Greeks' understanding of both the human law and the divine law; in doing so, he provides resources for a critique of essentialist approaches to sex and gender."¹³

There has been a great deal of debate among scholars about how to interpret this section of the Phenomenology. The question raised is whether Hegel aims to promote a society divided by strict gender roles as the ideal, reinforcing the essentialist views of gender, or if Hegel's aim is to show that this gendered view is problematic, and indeed tragic, as Farneth suggests. Other scholars, including Robert Brandom, who also suggests that Hegel is critiquing this story of gender division and essentialism, join Farneth in her defense of Hegel. On the other hand, scholars including Seyla Benhabib, Luce Irigaray, Lynda Lange, Patricia Mills, Carole Pateman, and Judith Butler,¹⁴ argue that Hegel is perpetuating and promoting gender essentialism, celebrating the ancient societies that were structured around this division.¹⁵ Given my engagement with this section within the Phenomenology of Spirit overall, I take Hegel to be enforcing the naturalized gender roles and celebrating the ancient Greek state.

Hegel's project is to show how consciousness can come to find itself at home in the world, and thus Hegel seems to be suggesting that the Greek model of the ethical life is the best system to accomplish this and avoid feelings of alienation. Hegel's discussion of consciousness arrives at a search for connection in the social world, because attempts to find itself in modern individualism (reason) fail up to that point. Consciousness moves onto the social realm, and is now "the individual that is a world."¹⁶ If the goal of consciousness at this point is to avoid feeling alienated, and to find itself at home in the social world, it seems as if

Hegel is suggesting that the ideal social form for this was the ancient Greek state. Hegel viewed the ancient Greek society as harmonious and effective at allowing multiple consciousnesses to feel at home in the world simultaneously. However, he is also suggests that emphasis on reason and individualism prevent this type of state from actualizing in the modern world. Given Hegel's emphasis on a harmonious social order, and his descriptions of gender and family/state life, I am not convinced that Hegel is using this section to critique a natural division of gender. Rather, such a division seems to be exactly what he is describing and endorsing in this section.

In an interesting article on the process of naturalization of race and gender, Susanne Lettow describes how 18th and early 19th century Philosophers contributed to the knowledge base that allowed for these theories of race and gender as "natural." She analyzes the writings of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel to show how their writings contribute to underlying assumptions about "natural" biological differences in race and gender. Lettow argues that for Hegel, as with Schelling, "sexual difference is a core characteristic of organic nature in general."¹⁷ The following is Lettow's articulation of Hegel's conception of sexual difference:

According to Hegel, the organic is characterized by 'the direction of this whole into opposed, self-subsistent sexes; the sublation of the individual and the resultant being of the genus, but of the genus as an individual actual being which initiates the cycle again'. Each organism is thus comprised of a process in which it refers to itself (i.e. the process of formation), a process of assimilation in which it refers to the other as something inorganic, and, finally, the process of the species in which it refers to the other as a living individual. This theory of organic nature is then further developed according to Hegel's model of stages that eventually leads to an overcoming of nature in favour of the spirit. Although 'the truly organic form of life begins merely with

plant nature because it is (in contrast to geological nature) characterized by reproduction, sexual difference, in the proper sense of the word, belongs only to the stage of animal nature. Only here does one find a 'veritable separation of the sides of the opposition in the sex-relation.¹⁸

Further, Lettow points out Hegel's understanding of how gender is tied to sex. She references the anthropological understandings of sex and gender at the time Hegel was writing, stating, "the body became understood as the embodiment of gender, so that every part of it expressed the sexual identity of the individual." She argues that Hegel's own work very closely aligns with this understanding of sex and gender. She gives the example of Hegel's understanding that sex difference is "not only about the reproductive organs" but rather "the entire habit of the individual must be bound up with its sex." Bodily differences, for Hegel, are seen as having an impact on the entire personality and lifestyle of the individual. Again, Lettow quotes Hegel: "Through the male and female natures, there emerges a determination of the entire structure, a different habitus which also extends to the spiritual sphere and becomes a distinct natural feature."

Hegel's own words, as well as the analysis provided by Lettow, suggest that Hegel's view is that of naturalized sex and gender. Hegel took sex to be a product of natural differences with gender differences closely linked to differences in sex. With this articulation of Hegel's understanding of the naturalism and essentialism of sex and gender, Farneth's argument that Hegel is using the story of Antigone to critique gender essentialism¹⁹ seems implausible. While Hegel's text could certainly be used by other scholars to allude to the problems of gender essentialism, specifically as represented by the tragic outcome of Antigone, this does not seem to be the idea that is put forth by Hegel. Given the history of Hegel's own understanding of the naturalism of gender difference, it is more plausible that Hegel is perpetuating gender essentialism in the "Ethical Order" section of the Phenomenology of Spirit than critiquing it. Even if Hegel did not explicitly intend to perpetuate these essentialist views of gender,

his work certainly ends up reading this way, and the result is an implicit perpetuation of naturalized sex differences and subsequent gender differences.

Despite the possibility that Hegel's perpetuation of a theory of gender difference is not intentional, but merely implied by the context of his work, some scholars would argue that his articulation of gender difference is both intentional and explicit, and can be supported by examining Hegel's other works. In her article titled "That which is Different From Difference is Identity' - Hegel on Gender," Laura Werner (2006) provides a comprehensive account of why she takes Hegel to be articulating and endorsing a theory of essential and natural gender difference. She argues that Hegel constructs a theory of gender difference that is apparent in Hegel's natural philosophy, in which Hegel describes differences between male and female bodies, and in his philosophy of social life, in which he describes differentiated spheres of action for men and women. The female body connects the woman to a position in the domestic sphere of action, while the male body positions the man as a citizen and participant in the state. Werner argues that throughout Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he builds this distinction up by "two separate but interconnected 'differences' that function on two separate levels of 'realness' he distinguishes in his thought, *Wirklichkeit* ('actuality') and *Realitat* ('reality')." ²⁰ She explains this by arguing that Hegel constructs gender difference conceptually first by positing "actual" differences between men and women at the level of the absolute spirit. Then, he posits "real" or "concrete" differences at the everyday level of lived experiences, which are based on the more primary "actual" differences. She argues that the "actual" differences are conceptual, based on the self-movement of spirit. The "real" or "concrete" differences are those that Hegel ascribes to men and women in the embodied experiences of everyday social and political life. ²¹

This is to say that Hegel constructs gender difference throughout the *Phenomenology* first through a "conceptual, actual difference, regarding 'difference' itself and self-differentiation, and secondly through concrete differences result-

ing from the first, actual difference."²² He first gives us conceptual categories of "men" and "women" and then gives concrete differences between those categories, such as the gendered spheres of action that we see in the "Ethical Order" section and manifested in the story of Antigone. Werner's essay provides an analysis of Hegel's conception of gender difference that supports my claim that his presentation of the story of Antigone is not an effort to criticize it, but an effort to reinforce gender normative roles as presented in the play.

Another interpretation that supports my claim that Hegel's use of the play Antigone reinforces gender normative understandings of men and women is presented by Kelly Oliver in the article "Antigone's Ghost: Undoing Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit." In the piece, Oliver argues that "woman" gets left behind as the "unconsciousness of the family upon which all subsequent dialectical movements of the conceptualization of Spirit rest; she is never resuscitated or preserved in the later stages of the dialectical movement of consciousness. She is the spirit behind the Spirit, the ghost that haunts Hegel's Phenomenology."²³ She gives an example of this by noting that the individual who is able to move into culture through the operation of the family is always only the male, while the individual doing the necessary work in the family that allows the movement of the other into culture is always the female. In the male's movement into the universality of the state, the feminine virtue of individuality and the family are sublated and left behind. This represents a negation of the feminine in order for the male to move forward into society. She states that,

...unlike the master or slave, the feminine or woman does not contain the dormant seed of its opposite. Rather, the masculine or man comes to conscious articulation against the feminine, which he necessarily leaves behind. Whereas the slave triumphs through his work and preserves the mastery of the master, woman's work leaves her nowhere.... At the level of the ethical order, man triumphs through woman's work. How is it that she who works is left behind?²⁴

Oliver argues that not only is Hegel reifying this difference, but that the masculine is valued above the feminine, whose work in promoting the male into civil life is left behind, and whose importance is never recognized in the way that the centrality of the slave's labor is recognized as vital to the mastery of the master. In the "Ethical Order" section, Hegel not only articulates an account of gender differences and a division of labor into different spheres, but he attributes unequal importance to the work of these spheres, undermining the centrality of the woman's role in the family that allows men to "overcome" the family and enter society.

Despite the fact that there is significant reason to believe that Hegel's text is perpetuating a naturalization of gender difference and a gender essentialist theory of the division of labor and responsibility, the "Ethical Order" passage of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nonetheless useful for feminist interpretation. There is a great deal that can be critiqued in the passage, but also a great deal that can be learned from it. In Oliver's piece, she questions what can be learned from the "Ethical Order" section, and responds that the section can shed light on how we conceive of and construct a sense of "family values." She states, "For Hegel, the personal or domestic sphere is the antithesis of the political sphere; and yet, the political sphere is dependent on the domestic sphere. The domestic nurtures and protects the political."²⁵ Oliver argues that throughout the 1960s and 1970s, this view resurfaced as the "breakdown of the nuclear family" was blamed as the source of increasing problems in the community, such a crime, domestic violence, and poverty. She argues that this one way view of the family's role in nurturing the community, which was presented by Hegel in the "Ethical Order" section of the *Phenomenology*, still holds, such that when the community breaks down, the family unit is blamed.

The problem, Oliver suggests, is that this view is seen as causal in only one direction. Emphasis is put on the centrality of the family's impact on the community- the essentiality of "family values" in keeping the community structure in place. What goes unnoticed is the other direction- the role that the state and com-

munity should have in supporting and nurturing the family. Instead of understanding how this could work in both directions, with the family and the community supporting each other, politicians of the 1960s and 70s, much like Hegel, only saw the family's role in supporting the community. If politicians, following in the tradition Hegel establishes in the *Phenomenology*, are concerned with upholding "family values" that nurture and support the community, Oliver questions why the community/state is not concerned with aiding the family such that the family structure can be supported and those "family values" can be maintained. Oliver suggests that the community could aid the family through welfare services, government childcare services, education, summer programs, health care services, and food services. Oliver argues that the very same politicians who ground their campaigns on "family values," perpetuating the underlying assumption that strong family values will be the most effective way in remedying the problems of the state, fail to see the importance of the state's ability to support the family unit.

Oliver's analysis reflects both how Hegel failed to see the importance of bidirectional support of the family and community, focusing only on the role of the domestic sphere in supporting the public sphere, and also how that mentality continues to manifest today. This demonstrates that Hegel can be analyzed to gain insight into current issues. Hegel's texts can show us how disastrous essentialist views of gender can be, especially when coupled with a lack of the ability to equally appreciate differing ethical systems. Additionally, we may consider the tragedy that results from pitting these gendered ethical systems against each other, and begin to consider the ways in which concern for the community and the family ought to be ethical concerns of men and women alike. Considering the shortcomings of Hegel's gendered view can set the stage for more productive and comprehensive understandings of ethical life.

Throughout the course of this paper, I have argued that despite the disagreement about how to interpret the "Ethical Order" section of Hegel's text, the most convincing interpretation is one that views the section as promoting gender essentialism and

naturalism of gender. This view is supported by Hegel's own descriptions of his understanding of Sophocles' play *Antigone*, as well as some of his other work on natural philosophy and biological difference. Additionally, other scholars have provided convincing arguments why this is the most appropriate reading, given more comprehensive understandings of Hegel's philosophical works other than the *Phenomenology*. Although Hegel's text seems to be perpetuating a theory of gender difference, it is still of use to feminist scholars. In fact, the section provides a great deal of space for criticism and analysis. One particularly useful point of analysis is brought to light by Kelly Oliver, who points out the problem with Hegel's conception of the family unit as a central system of support for the public sphere, but this support is not reciprocated by the latter. Using Hegel's work as a starting point for considering civil gender issues can help bring them to light and provide a basis for new ways of thinking about them, just as Oliver was able to expand Hegel's work and consider how it might be useful to think of the relationship between the family and the state in a new way. However, it is important to note that for this argument to satisfy contemporary understandings of feminist issues, it is first necessary to decouple these ethical spheres from gender, and think about the ways in which men and women alike play a role in *both* the family and the state, and thus have obligations to *both* human and divine law.

Notes

1. Redding, 1997
2. Hegel and Harris, 1979, p.6
3. Ibid. p.21
4. Wood, 2002, xviii
5. Houlgate, 2012, p. 146-7
6. Hegel and Miller, 1977, paragraphs 458-9
7. Ibid. Paragraph 459.
8. Ibid. Paragraph 466
9. Houlgate, 2012, p. 148
10. White, 2009, p. 460.
11. Gallagher, 2011. See page 77.
12. Ibid. Page 78.
13. Farneth, 2013, p. 643.
14. Werner, 2006, p. 184.
15. Farneth, 2013, p. 644.
16. Hegel and Miller, 1977, paragraph 441.
17. Lettow, 2013, p. 125.
18. Ibid. Pages 125-6.
19. Farneth, M, 2013, 643-667.
20. Werner, 2006, p. 185
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Oliver, 1997, p. 70-1.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid. Page 84-5.

References

- Duquette, David. "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. January 1, 2013. Accessed April 24, 2015. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hegelsoc/#H4>.
- Farneth, M. (December 01, 2013). Gender and the ethical given: Human and divine law in Hegel's reading of the Antigone. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 41, 4, 643-667.
- Gallagher, Laird. "Already Dead, Not Yet Living: The Tragedy of Ethics in Hegel's Phenomenology." 2011.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, and Arnold V. Miller. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford [England: Clarendon Press, 1977].
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, Henry Siltou Harris, and T.M. Knox. *System of Ethical Life (1802/3) and First Philosophy of Spirit (part III of the System of Speculative Philosophy 1803/4)*. Albany, N. Y.: State U of New York, 1979. Print.
- Houlgate, Stephen. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit a Reader's Guide*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012.
- Lettow, S. (February 01, 2013). "Modes of naturalization: Race, sex and biology in Kant, Schelling and Hegel." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 39, 2, 117-131.
- Oliver, K. (March 08, 1997). Antigone's Ghost: Undoing Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. *Hypatia: a Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 11, 1, 67-90.
- Redding, Paul. "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel." *Stanford University*. February 13, 1997. Accessed April 24, 2015. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>.
- Werner, L. (November 01, 2006). "That Which is Different From Difference is Identity" – Hegel on Gender. *Nora - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 14, 3, 183-194.
- White, Robert. "Care and Justice." *Ethical Perspectives* 16, no. 4 (2009): 459-83.
- Wood, Allen W., and H. B. Nisbet. *Hegel Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.