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Review

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Die Tragödie im Sittlichen: Zur Dramentheorie Hegels

by Michael Schulte

Review by: Mark W. Roche

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highly influential, A. W. Schlegel. The third, fourth, and sixth chapters, dealing with the theory of Romantic poetry, Novalis, and Romantic theories of language and interpretation, respectively, contain particularly useful and effective discussions of their material.

At the same time, the exposition is not altogether free of difficulties. It is hampered from the outset by an insufficiently sharp delineation of the notions of classicism and neo-classicism in both their specifically German and their broader European forms (including in each case the historical antecedents and subsequent reception of these). Thus it is often difficult to determine what Behler takes the relationship of German Romanticism to either German (i.e., Weimar) or European classicism to be. Indeed, some of the things he says on this score are flatly contradicted by others. Similar problems arise in connection with the question of the extent to which early Romantic thought is informed by a historical consciousness and, if so, of what sort this is. Here, again, not all of Behler's statements are reconcilable with each other.

Another category of problem, superficially different from the first but in fact stemming from the same source, is what might be called the fallacy of misplaced innovation. Space does not permit going into detail, but the more one reads of Behler's often meticulous reconstructions of the arguments and analyses of the early Romantics the more one is struck by the extent to which *exactly* the same ideas are to be found—often in virtually verbatim form—in Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Hamann, Klopstock, and others as well from decades earlier. Behler knows this, too, of course. Yet he still wishes to insist, as the opening sentence of the Introduction states, that “[t]he emergence of the early Romantic theory of literature in Germany towards the end of the eighteenth century constitutes a decisive turning-point in criticism” (1). But it does not. As page after page of his own presentation of the period makes clear, early German Romanticism represents but one chapter—a very important chapter, no doubt, but nonetheless one only—in a larger and essentially continuous story beginning around the middle of the eighteenth century (though the initial impetus was provided earlier still by Leibniz) and culminating with the death of Goethe. It is the story of the formation, chiefly in Germany, of modern conceptions of literature, criticism, and philoso-

phy, a story to which, with few exceptions, everything since has been largely footnote. The same point is contained in the dual recognition that for almost two and a half centuries now Romanticism, writ large, has been the defining cultural paradigm of the West, but that Romanticism, properly understood, coincides with what in *Germanistik* was once regularly called—and should be again—the *Goethezeit*. It is this story that is still in large part waiting to be told by scholars.

MICHAEL MORTON

*Duke University*

**Schulte, Michael.** *Die Tragödie im Sittlichen: Zur Dramentheorie Hegels*. Munich: Fink, 1992. 453 pp. DM 88.

Schulte's study of Hegel's theory of tragedy focuses on Hegel's early concept of the genre, as it is articulated in the essay on natural law and the *Phenomenology*. This is not a philosophical work that evaluates the validity of Hegel's theory but a philological study that seeks to illuminate it. The first part of the book is devoted to Hegel's discussion of tragedy (and comedy) in the essay on natural law (1802/03). The main argument is that Hegel's concept of tragedy, which is here less an aesthetic theory than an analysis of political structures, is asymmetrical: in the *Eumenides*, Hegel's example, the positions of the Eumenides and Orestes are not equally weighted; Athena favors Orestes, who, unlike Clytemnestra, does not succumb. The second part discusses the model of tragedy in the *Phenomenology* (1807). It contains paraphrasing reflections on Hegel's view of the Greek concept of death (and burial), his elevation of the brother-sister relationship, and his concept of harmonic Greek *Sittlichkeit*. Whereas in the essay on natural law death (as sacrifice) already contains a spiritual moment of reconciliation and public recognition, in the *Phenomenology* Hegel argues that true recognition of the dead demands burial and recognition by the family. The third part elaborates paradoxes of moral action as well as enigmas in Hegel's theory of tragedy and their resolution in comedy. In Schulte's analysis Hegel's reading of *Antigone* is ambivalent: on the one hand, Hegel speaks of the equality of positions; on the other hand, he ele-

vates the state. Important for Schulte in this context is Hegel's parallel claim that Socrates should have recognized not just the sovereignty of the state in general but the state's judgment of him in particular. Socrates' elevation of subjectivity points toward comedy. The fourth section deals with Hegel's reading of *Oedipus Rex* as a tragedy of action and a theodicy: Oedipus can either act and be necessarily guilty or not act at all. The section concludes with a discussion of Hegel's reading of *Antigone*, which highlights the idea that justice and reality should coincide, but do not—thus providing a link between Antigone's tragic situation and Hegel's subsequent discussion of the unhappy consciousness.

Among the few strengths of Schulte's account are the detailed attention to the essay on natural law, which has previously been addressed only fleetingly; those paraphrasing comments that highlight moments often overlooked, such as the tragic structure of the confrontation between Eteocles and Polynices (380); the attentiveness to the changing formulations of the tragic in Hegel's writings (Schulte sees, for example, both continuity and difference between the formulations of the natural law essay and the *Phenomenology* [e.g., 103]); aspects of the discussion of *Oedipus Rex*, for example, the practical dilemma of action and the unforeseeability of consequences (194–200); and the attention to specific, complex passages such as Hegel's reading of Antigone's final words.

Some strengths, such as Schulte's exploration of the tension between Hegel declaring that the tragic opponents are equal, even as Hegel stresses the subordination of the individual to the state, may in fact miss the complexities of Hegel's writings: one could solve this paradox by suggesting that Hegel elevates each side at different points in his argument. In some passages, for example, Hegel argues that the world-spirit has rights vis-à-vis the individual state. Nonetheless, the issue is complex, and Schulte offers some insight (e.g., 224–28). Also in the few passages where Schulte seeks to be original, his views sometimes seem misguided; for example, he makes the unusual claim that Oedipus' *hamartia* is not an error of recognition or a transgression of law but the result of piety (Oedipus excludes the possibility that the oracle is a warning, i.e., something that may not be necessary), but it is difficult to rhyme this claim with Oedipus's early attempts to circumvent the oracle.

Despite its isolated strengths, the book's weaknesses outweigh its merits. Most irritating is the style of the book. The text is long, not easy to read, and for all that simply not insightful enough. The lengthy and repetitive sentences (containing parentheses within parentheses) summarize Hegel's positions without significant elaboration or argument and with strings of interspersed quotations. The footnotes in small print frequently cover most of the page. Surely, it would not have damaged the text, had Schulte excised a few of the 1,166 footnotes. By paraphrasing Hegel using Hegelian language, Schulte gains little in terms of clarity, let alone evaluation. As a work of Hegel doxography, it will not help the scholar whose principal interest is tragedy, and only secondarily Hegel, to recognize the value of Hegel's theory of tragedy.

The methodology is uneven in other respects as well. Schulte is interested in the early, not the late, Hegel, but he chooses to quote the later *Aesthetics* selectively whenever it serves his purpose, yet he does so as if his selections were definitive of the later Hegel. The discussion of comedy is especially weak and does not become clearer as a result of Schulte's paraphrasing comments. Moreover, Schulte considers only two of the three types of comedy Hegel defines. The discussion of the transition from tragedy to comedy does not take account of the few critics, primarily early Hegelians such as Ruge, who attempted to elaborate and refine this transition.

The overarching question arises, for whom is this book written? Hegel scholars presumably do not need a lengthy, plodding, and turbid paraphrase, and scholars unfamiliar with Hegel are likely to find Schulte's work especially impenetrable.

MARK W. ROCHE  
*Ohio State University*

**Schacht, Richard, ed.** *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1994. xxi + 479 pp. \$22.

This volume consists of 24 essays varying in length from 8 to 50 pages, 9 of them previously published, most of them instructive. Part I is entitled "Morality and Moral Psychology," Part