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The Sociality of Madness: Hegel on Spirit's Pathology and the Sanity of Ethicality

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Abstract

Despite a profound concern for the epistemological, ontological and ethical conditions for being-at-home-in-the-world, G.W.F. Hegel published very little on a particularly serious threat to being-at-home: mental illness and disorder. The chief exception is found in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830). In this work, Hegel briefly provides an ontology of madness (*Verrücktheit*), wherein madness consists in the inward collapsing of subjectivity and objectivity into the individual's unconscious and primordial feeling soul. While there has been an increasing number of studies on Hegel's conception of madness, I propose that there is another overlooked way to understand madness in Hegel's system: as social pathology. I argue in this article that Hegel offers a compelling social account of madness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), which arises at the elevated, self-reflective and community level of spirit. This sociality of madness, as I call it, occurs when spirit is unable to reconcile two contradictory yet equally essential aspects of its reality, resulting in spirit's structural homelessness. I argue that by examining this overlooked sociality of madness, we may read Hegel's political-philosophical project in a new light: on the one hand, the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) presented in the *Philosophy of Right* (1821) becomes understood as a political therapeutic. On the other hand, if the ethical life fails to live up to the demand of being an adequate spiritual therapeutic, then the traditional reading of the *Philosophy of Right* as a reconciliatory hermeneutic becomes problematized, opening up new avenues for the proliferation of social pathology.

Introduction

Hegel published very little on the topic of madness, or on mental health more broadly.¹ The chief exception is found in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830). In this work, Hegel briefly provides an ontology of madness (*Verrücktheit*) wherein madness is presented as a developmental moment in the



primordial and unconscious ‘feeling soul’ of subjective mind. Madness, here, consists in the inward collapsing of subjectivity and objectivity into the individual’s one-sided feeling, thereby causing a painful disjuncture from actuality (*EG*: §408Z, 131).² The result of this movement is a contradiction within the otherwise rational mind between its free subjectivity and a fixed particularity (i.e. an aspect or phase of its self-feeling) that it fails to ‘idealize’ in the former (*EG*: §408, 123). This contradiction animates the experience of madness: while Hegel asserts that ‘[m]ind [*Geist*] as such is free, and therefore not susceptible of this malady’ (*EG*: §408, 123), mind nevertheless struggles to unfetter itself from this subordinate aspect contained within it. As Daniel Berthold-Bond (1995) notes, one of the central and most fascinating implications of Hegel’s theory of madness is precisely that ‘insanity and rationality are not in fact conceived of as opposites, but in important respects as kindred phenomena, sharing many of the same underlying structures, each illuminating their “other” in significant ways’ (1995: 3). Reason (i.e. the relation that consciousness adopts vis-à-vis its reality, wherein it knows itself as identical to this reality) is not completely negated by madness. Instead, madness—or, at least the conditions or potential for it—is contained *within* the rational mind and, to a large extent, these two aspects of mind coexist. Madness, Hegel claims, ‘is not an abstract loss of reason [...] but only derangement, only a contradiction in a still subsisting reason’ (*EG*: §408, 124).

While there has been an increasing amount of attention paid to Hegel’s philosophy of subjective mind and, by extension, the seemingly paradoxical relationship between madness and rationality,³ I propose that there is another overlooked way we may understand the intimate relationship between madness and rationality in Hegel’s system: as *social pathology*.⁴ In recent years, social pathology as a critical and analytical concept has gained renewed interest.⁵ Nonetheless, the significance of pathology or madness for Hegel’s social thought—and, more specifically, for Hegel’s concept of spirit (*Geist*)—remains undertheorized.⁶ The Hegelian concept of spirit has often been characterized as *reason-giving*—that is, as a common self-understanding that generates the social conditions for rational deliberation and the taking of authoritative claims.⁷ Conversely, this article focuses on the ways in which spirit not only produces reason but, by the very same mechanisms, produces madness. The central claim of this article is that a closer look at Hegel’s sparse, albeit remarkably consistent, use of language of pathology in the earlier *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) reveals an authentically Hegelian ontology of social pathology that is distinct from, though not at odds with, the account of individual pathology in the *Encyclopaedia*. I call this social pathology the *sociality of madness*. This madness can be broadly understood as a particularly radical form of spirit’s self-dividedness, in which spirit is unable to reconcile two equally necessary aspects of its reality. Moreover, I propose that Hegel’s concern for this collective shape of madness and its potential solutions followed him to his later *Philosophy*

of *Right* (1821), and therefore has implications on how we understand social contradiction and its remedies in Hegel's political-philosophical thought.

The argument will be as follows. First (I), I examine the ways in which the *unhappy consciousness* of self-consciousness—a paradigmatic case of Hegelian alienation and despair—both prefigures the structural elements of spirit's madness and demarcates the ontological limits of the alienation paradigm. In the unhappy consciousness, we can observe the shape of self-dividedness that will become radicalized in what Hegel will call spirit's 'madness' (*Verrücktheit*).⁸ In the following section (II) we move to the higher standpoint of reason to examine a preliminary case of such madness in active reason's *law of the heart*. Here, there is a uniquely maddening form of alienation that emerges in which consciousness as reason is unable to reconcile two aspects of its reality—i.e. two *essential ideas* upheld by spirit about itself and its world—that are taken to be both true. While the unhappy consciousness' divided self was also unable to reconcile two aspects of its self-understanding, this contradiction emerges from a self-conscious disavowal of actuality in favour of an other-worldly beyond. Conversely, there is a new dimension to the law of the heart's experience of alienation: the problem of *incomprehensibility*. Next (III), we see this dual problem of self-dividedness and incomprehensibility elevated to the social level of spirit proper in conscience's *beautiful soul*. This madness can be understood not only as an inevitable, necessary or rational response to one's social world, but as *being contained within the rationality of the world itself*. Spirit's madness is thus characterized by a tragic *structural homelessness*, in which every attempt on the part of spirit to be at home is fiercely undermined by its own reality. Finally (IV), I suggest that this account of collective pathology allows us to read Hegel's political philosophy in a new light. As we shall see, in so far as it becomes clear that the problem of spirit's social madness demands a properly social solution, Hegel's account of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) in the *Philosophy of Right* becomes understood as a *political therapeutic*. I conclude by arguing that the sociality of madness nonetheless poses potential threats to the ethical life, whether Hegel's political-philosophical project be read as a model for individual self-realization or as a reconciliatory hermeneutic. This is because the source of the sociality of madness rests not exclusively in a lack of recognition or the inadequacy of one's self-consciousness for which a hermeneutic may serve as a remedy, but in the shape of the political community itself.

I. The despair of self-consciousness: madness or alienation?

It might seem that for Hegel, a systematic thinker often characterized as subsuming all particularity under a rational and totalizing universality,⁹ the problem of madness—a state of being often characterized as the negation of rationality—would

be elusive. Indeed, some have even questioned whether Hegel's dialectics are compatible with his ontology of madness or the existence of madness more generally.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Hegel not only sought to incorporate a rigorous account of madness into his system, but he did so without relegating it exclusively to the domain of irrationality or isolated idiosyncrasy. Unlike Plato, madness for Hegel is neither a problem to be forcefully confined away from the affairs of public life (Plato 2016: 934c–e) nor, in its divine forms, an arbiter for otherwise inaccessible philosophical truths (Plato 2003: 244a). Nor is Hegel committed to some form of radical social constructivism.¹¹ Rather, Hegel asserts that madness has an ontologically substantiated existence that poses a real threat to freedom for which practical solutions must be sought.¹² The primary assertion of this article pertains to the breadth of Hegel's concerns about pathology. I contend that Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* account of the feeling soul's madness describes only one form of freedom-disabling pathology. Hegel curiously employs a variety of terminologies of pathology in the *Phenomenology*, which I propose warrant a closer look. Most notably, Hegel uses the term *Verrücktheit* (translated as 'madness' or 'derangement') for describing certain moments in the development of spirit (*Geist*). The soul, as described in the 'Anthropology' in the *Encyclopaedia*, is the natural presupposition of mind and spirit, preceding both the simple 'I' and consciousness of the external world. Conversely, Hegel's *Phenomenology* begins with an exposition of immediate *consciousness*—the 'standpoint of knowing objective things to be opposed to itself and knowing itself to be opposed to them' (*PbG*: ¶26, 17). The *Phenomenology* thus presupposes the moments of subjective mind that precede consciousness and progressively develops this first moment of consciousness' immediate and natural existence up to the complex and self-reflective social standpoint of spirit proper: the 'I that is *we* and the *we* that is *P*' (*PbG*: ¶177, 108).

The story Hegel tells of the development of consciousness is one of seemingly unrelenting alienation. Spirit's alienation *in general* can be broadly understood as a problem of self-understanding, whereby it fails to adequately grasp itself and its world. The result is a disjuncture between what is essential to spirit at any given moment and its experience of its world, such that the actually existing world fails to live up to the demands of spirit.¹³ The experience of alienation begins from the outset at the level of *sensuous-certainty*, as consciousness fails to grasp the object *in itself* independent of the work of consciousness itself (*PbG*: ¶¶90–110, 60–68). Through its experience of alienation from its object (as *sensuous-certainty*, *perception* and the *understanding*), consciousness turns inward for certainty as *self-consciousness*.

It makes *prima facie* sense to begin our examination of spirit's pathology, as well as the ways it may resemble or differ from alienation, with self-consciousness. It is at this point that consciousness *estranges* itself from the external world, where otherness becomes an intrinsic problem or threat for consciousness. Whereas the true and essential was previously the external object, now 'certainty is, to itself, its

object, and consciousness is, to itself, the true’—i.e. what is essential is now *self-certainty* (PbG: ¶166, 102). Any difference or otherness must, then, be brought into itself; otherness is tolerable only in so far as it is negated and appropriated by self-consciousness. The dialectic of the master and servant emerges once the ‘other’ in question is likewise a self-consciousness (PbG: ¶186, 110). The necessity for self-consciousness to sublimate all otherness and demonstrate its freedom translates into a life and death struggle, as each party ‘must elevate its self-certainty of *existing for itself* to truth’, demonstrating once and for all that it is not restrained by mere being and that ‘there is nothing present in it itself which could not be a vanishing moment for it, that self-consciousness is only pure *being-for-itself*’ (PbG: ¶187, 111). Death, however, destroys the essential moment for both parties: on the one hand, life is the natural precondition for one’s own self-consciousness and on the other hand, self-consciousness needs to prove its being-for-itself through recognition from the other (PbG: ¶188, 112). To cling to his life, the former becomes the servant, whereas the latter agrees to become the master such that he might posit the essentiality of his consciousness over against the inessentiality of the servant’s consciousness (PbG: ¶192, 114). But the essence of the master’s self-understanding turns out to be the opposite of what the master intended: rather than being *independent*, it is wholly *dependent* upon the servile consciousness. Ironically, it is the slave who experiences the first moment of freedom by means of thought’s capacity to transform the external world through labour (PbG: ¶¶195–96, 115–16).

What is revealed to be the truth of the slave’s work—the power of thought—emerges as the essential truth of *stoicism*. For stoicism, consciousness ‘is the thinking essence [wherein] something only has essentiality for consciousness, or is true and good for it, in so far as consciousness conducts itself therein as a thinking being’ (PbG: ¶198, 118). It thereby consciously alienates itself from actuality while nevertheless finding itself implicated in it (e.g. it denounces the senses while nevertheless using them). The stoic, ‘whether on the throne or in fetters, and in maintaining the lifelessness which consistently *withdraws* from the movement of existence, *withdraws* from actual doing as well as from suffering, and *withdraws* into the simple essentiality of thought’ (PbG: ¶199, 118). Alexandre Kojève calls stoicism the first ideology: ‘The Slave tries to persuade himself that he is *actually* free simply by *knowing* that he is free—that is, by having the abstract *idea* of Freedom’ (Kojève 1969: 53). Upon having the first taste of freedom while nevertheless falling short of being able to fully actualize it, stoicism is a way for the slave to interpret and live the inadequacy of reality. In turn, stoicism finds its concept fully realized in *scepticism*, in which ‘thought becomes the thinking that annihilates the being of the *manifoldly determinant* world, and the negativity of free self-consciousness in the heart of these multifarious shapes of life becomes, to itself, real negativity’ (PbG: ¶202, 120). Scepticism ‘avows that it is an entirely *contingent* singularly *individual* consciousness’, but at the same time, it is the ‘*universal self-equal self-consciousness*, for it is the

negativity of all singular individuality and all difference' (*PbG*: ¶205, 122). As the sceptic becomes aware of this internal dividedness—i.e. being at once contingent subjectivity and universal self-consciousness—it becomes the *unhappy consciousness*.

The alienation of self-consciousness appears in each case examined thus far as the failure of what self-consciousness takes to be essential and authoritative—i.e. the means by which it seeks to secure its self-certainty—to live up to its own standards. In this way, the self-understanding posited at each moment is unstable and ultimately self-undermining. In the case of the master and servant, the master's independence was revealed to be rooted in dependency whereas the dependency of the slave, mediated by the object of labour, was revealed to contain the first moment of freedom. The stoic could not successfully gain full independence in thought from the material world and the sceptic fails to reconcile the absolute subjectivity of their standpoint with the universality of their epistemic claims. In each of these cases, some claim to self-certainty and authority is confronted with and ultimately undermined by some aspect of self-consciousness' reality—the antagonism is fundamentally between interiority and exteriority. The unhappy consciousness is the first time we witness the alienation become *internal* to consciousness; consciousness not only becomes alienated from itself, but it despairs over its self-alienation.

Having internalized the contradiction that emerged out of the experience of scepticism, the unhappy consciousness 'is the consciousness of itself as a doubled, only contradictory creature' (*PbG*: ¶206, 123). No longer is some external force *opposed* to self-consciousness but, rather, it 'itself *is* the beholding of a self-consciousness in an other; it itself *is* both of them; and, to itself, the unity of both is also the essence. However, for itself it is, to itself, not yet this essence itself, nor is it yet the unity of both' (*PbG*: ¶207, 123). The unhappy consciousness is the consciousness of itself as a doubled consciousness—i.e. there are two consciousnesses contained within a singular consciousness:

for it, the two are opposed consciousnesses and not the same consciousness, one of them, namely, the simply unchangeable, is, to itself, as the *essence*, the other, however, the manifoldly changeable, as the *inessential*. For it, both are essences that are alien to each other. Because it is the consciousness of this contradiction, it itself takes the side of the changeable consciousness and is, to itself the inessential. However, as consciousness of unchangeableness, or of the simple essence, it must at the same time concern itself with freeing itself from the inessential, which means to free itself from itself. (*PbG*: ¶208, 123–24)

The unhappy consciousness, often regarded as a devoted religious figure, is a torn self. The unchangeable universal is understood broadly as an *other-worldly beyond*, whereas contingent particularity is its corporeal, determinate existence. Its ‘*reality is, to itself, immediately a nullity*’ compared to the eternal, pure, and essential other-worldly universal (*PbG*: ¶225, 131–32). For the unhappy consciousness, it is the other-worldly beyond that is essential and true, not this finite existence. Yet, it finds itself immanently tied to its physical singularity, and thus the contradiction is not simply between two mutually exclusive options but between two consciousnesses that are immanently detrimental to each other; they cannot both be true and yet, for the unhappy consciousness, they must be. It tries to make the ascent—either through the realm of pure thought, religious activity or the priestly mediator (*PbG*: ¶214, 126)—but inevitably fails each time. All that it can do, then, is despair and yearn for an existence it cannot have.

Jean Hyppolite describes this self-divided or doubled ‘element’ of self-consciousness as madness: ‘The essence of man is to be mad, that is, to be himself in the other, to be himself by this very otherness’ (Hyppolite 1971: 64). In doing so, Hyppolite inadvertently¹⁴ points to a key parallel between the madness Hegel describes in the feeling soul and the despair of self-consciousness: the unhappy consciousness resembles the third main form of insanity described by Hegel, in which ‘the maniac himself is aware of the disruption of his consciousness into two mutually contradictory modes, [and] has a vivid feeling of the contradiction between his merely subjective idea and the objective world’ (*EG*: §408Z, 135). Berthold-Bond contends that while there are indeed striking similarities in ‘the formal structures of withdrawal, the doubling of reality, and projection remain similar’, despair and madness remain distinct categories in so far as ‘they circumscribe opposed spheres of life, the life of reason and the life of feeling’ (Berthold-Bond 1995: 54). Similarly, Jon Mills describes the unhappy consciousness as ‘neurotic’ spirit, arguing that the ‘contradiction that ensues is devastating for psychic health: the self views itself as perfect (i.e. rational, eternal, etc.) and also as hopelessly imperfect, deficient, and finite—both saint and sinner’ (Mills 2002: 155). Nonetheless, while Mills contends that the unhappy consciousness’ despair ‘informs the precondition for madness’ (2002: 156), it falls short of madness as it does not manifest within the domain of the unconscious.

But to articulate madness or pathology as being exclusively relegated to the sphere of unconscious feeling, though faithful to Hegel’s theory of the individual’s madness, is to rule out the possibility for an authentically social understanding of pathology in Hegel’s system. As we shall see, however, the nearly pathological unhappy consciousness—neither unconscious nor within the pre-rational domain of feeling—gives us the key for understanding Hegel’s invocations of pathology in his accounts of spirit’s more advanced development. Hyppolite argues that the unhappy consciousness becomes understood as the ‘fundamental theme of the

Phenomenology’ and paradigmatic of spirit’s alienation: ‘Consciousness, as such, is in principle always unhappy consciousness, for it has not yet reached the concrete identity of certainty and truth, and therefore aims at something beyond itself’ (Hyppolite 1974: 190).¹⁵ More specifically, we shall observe a similar structure of *self-division*, in which a social contradiction is not experienced along the lines of interiority and exteriority but as being internal to spirit itself. Beginning with an analysis of the unhappy consciousness, therefore, helps us to distinguish between what could be understood as mere alienation or despair and its radical counterpart which Hegel carefully employs the language of madness to describe.

In order to outline what this madness looks like in more precision I will examine two case studies: reason’s *law of the heart* and conscience’s *beautiful soul*. While the former is a moment of reason’s development and therefore remains a ‘singular individual [...] still distinguished from the substance’ (*PbG*: ¶437, 253), it nonetheless shares with spirit the basic structure of the certainty-of-being-all-of-reality and has its aspect of sociality in the various competing law of the hearts. Ironically, through its very attempt to establish an all-encompassing unity of itself and its world, the madness that afflicts the law of the heart demonstrates that for Hegel, pathology persists to emerge out of reason itself. The elucidation of the madness that confronts conscience—which, as we shall see, ontologically mirrors that of the law of the heart—serves then to demonstrate that the pathologies that afflict reason extend to the social world of spirit. In both cases, Hegel claims that spirit (broadly construed) suffers from a madness that results from its own internal movements, such that it is unable to resolve a contradiction between two essential and necessary aspects of its self-positing reality. Not only is spirit unable to successfully realize its own ends and live in accordance with its essence, but there are two aspects of its reality that it finds inexplicably irreconcilable. The result is a disorienting, alienating and violent madness, in which the essential becomes the inessential and the actual becomes the non-actual.

II. The insanity of self-conceit: reason’s law of the heart

Whereas the stubborn inwardness of self-consciousness often sought to negate or render inessential the external world so as to preserve the purity of its self-certainty, in reason we observe the beginnings of a complex reconciliatory unity. Reason is ‘the certainty [that consciousness has] of being all *reality*’ (*PbG*: ¶235, 139). It is through reason that consciousness attempts to fully comprehend the world—albeit abstractly—with the awareness that consciousness itself plays a foundational role in such comprehension. Self-consciousness as reason has ‘found the thing as itself and itself as a thing’ in so far as ‘it is *in itself* objective actuality’ (*PbG*: ¶347, 203). However, reason must also be *for itself*; it must not only *observe* its reality

and understand such reality as its own, but it must *actualize* itself as this reality so as to find reason concretely reflected in its reality.

The law of the heart is one such example of active reason. As a moment of reason, the law of the heart understands itself as being all of reality and, as such, understands itself in an immediate sense as *universal* being-for-itself, while nevertheless embodying a *singular* individuality (PbG: ¶367, 213). Burdened, albeit proudly, with this sense of universality, this form of consciousness posits the laws it finds within itself universally and demands that the ordering of its reality must align with its own admirable aspirations such that there is no opposition between what it deeply holds to be *true* and *right*, and what concretely *is* (PbG: ¶368, 213). Yet, the idealistic law of the heart finds itself immediately embroiled in contradiction when it is confronted with its actuality:

An actuality confronts this heart, for in the heart, the law is first only *for itself* as the concept. It is not yet actualized and thus at the same time it is something *other* than the concept. As a result, this other determines itself as an actuality which is the opposite of what is to be actualized, and it is thus the *contradiction* between the *law* and *singular individuality*. On the one hand, actuality is thus a law by which singular individuality is oppressed, a violent order of the world which contradicts the law of the heart—and on the other hand, it is humanity suffering under that order, a humanity that does not follow the law of the heart, but which is instead subjected to an alien necessity. (PbG: ¶369, 213)

The law of the heart seeks to remedy its corrupt and oppressive world. It is ‘the seriousness of a high purpose that seeks its pleasure in the exhibition of its own *admirably excellent* essence and in authoring the *welfare of mankind*’ (PbG: ¶370, 214). The free-standing laws of the world, then, are opposed to the law of the heart, and the latter seeks to replace the former with the good laws that reside in its heart. However, in accomplishing this actualization of the law of the heart as a universal order, it ceases to be a law *of* and *by* the heart (PbG: ¶372, 215). The law established by the singular heart becomes alien to the heart in so far as the law is now external to its individual deeds and innermost essence. Furthermore, since the law of the heart’s truth consists precisely in the law being found in one’s own singular heart, it follows that there becomes not only a contradiction between internal and external, particular and universal, in itself and for itself, but within itself.

As the law of the heart experiences its external world as increasingly dissatisfying, unjust, and hostile, it finds itself sinking even deeper in contradiction. Its essence is *its* law, yet this law, actualized, becomes a *universally valid order* which is also its essence: actuality is all wrong, yet it is its own—its *truth* (PbG: ¶375,

216–17). The contradiction is internal to itself; its own essence and actuality become doubled and, moreover, doubly opposed. Madness emerges out of this dizzying and disorienting experience:

While it expresses both this moment of its own self-aware downfall and therein the result of its experience, it shows itself to be this inner inversion of its self, as the *madness of a consciousness for which its essence is immediately a non-essence and its actuality a non-actuality*. (PbG: ¶376, 217, emphasis added)

The law of the heart's passage to madness is essentially a reaction against what is perceived as an unbearable reality, which results in a radical rupture in its consciousness whereby actuality is alienated and perceived as a non-actuality. However, while the law of the heart certainly generates an opposition within itself to its objective reality, this opposition is of a different nature than that of the madness found in the *Encyclopaedia*. Hegel describes:

As a consequence of the experience which has resulted here, consciousness is, however, in its law aware of *itself* as this actuality, and, at the same time, while it is, to itself, just this same essentiality, this same actuality is *alienated*, it is as self-consciousness, as absolute actuality aware of its non-actuality; or, according to their contradictions, both aspects immediately are valid to it as *its essence*, which thus in its *innermost aspects has gone mad*. (PbG: ¶376, 217, some emphasis added)

Whereas the individual's regression to the feeling soul is characterized by a conflation of actuality and subjectivity, often in ways that the individual is unable to entirely cognize, the law of the heart is confronted with a contradiction in its reality where *both sides are upheld as true*. This is precisely the nature of the law of the heart's maddening contradiction: the law of the heart *is* actuality, and yet it acknowledges that its actuality is wrong and *not its own*—as we saw, 'both aspects immediately are valid to it as *its essence*' (PbG: ¶376, 217). The law of the heart's complex contradiction(s) cannot therefore be understood as mere delusion, separation or withdrawal; it is a contradiction *within reason* and thus within the law of the heart's rational actuality itself. The law of the heart's madness—and as we shall see, the sociality of madness more broadly—is produced out of a novel and distinctive way of positing its world: 'it is the heart, or the *singularity of consciousness immediately willing to be universal*, which drives one mad and which is inverted, and its doing is only the production of what makes this contradiction become its consciousness' (PbG: ¶377, 217–18). We then see this madness immediately replicated in the following *way of the world* as it grapples with its simultaneous individuality and universality: 'In the way that it is as the *conscious* relation of an absolutely contradictory actuality,

it is madness, but in the way it exists as an *objective* actuality, it is utter invertedness itself' (*PbG*: ¶382, 220–21).

For the subject occupying the standpoint of the law of the heart, the world is rendered, to a significant degree, *incomprehensible*. As we saw, Hegel articulates the law of the heart's madness as resulting from it positing two equally necessary albeit mutually exclusive aspects of its reality. To actualize one is to denigrate the other, and to actualize neither is nothing less than spiritual death. In madness, the very force which serves to provide a sense of coherence to the world becomes inverted and contradictory. The resulting alienation is therefore not merely one of a simple antagonism between subject and world provoked by a misconception of the latter by the former. The stoic's alienation was produced not by upholding two aspects of its reality as true (i.e. my consciousness and my world are *both true* and yet they *cannot be*) but rather by consciously positing that its world is *untruth* or *inessential* so as to preserve its certainty as self-consciousness. Similarly, the unhappy consciousness' despair emanates from its one-sided contempt for its facticity and actual existence. Once this contradiction becomes integrated into reason's *reality-producing force*, however, the contradiction eludes comprehension.

III. The sociality of madness: conscience and the beautiful soul

The second case study I shall examine appears at the standpoint of *moral* spirit. Spirit, in Hegel's terms, is reason elevated to the truth of being 'conscious of itself as its world and of the world as itself' (*PbG*: ¶437, 253). Spirit is therefore historical, and manifests itself as the development of shapes of the social world, each with their own system of meaning and collective self-understanding. For spirit to be mad, it must therefore manifest not only amongst a multitude of individuals but at the level of *the entire spiritual world*. In other words, the sociality of madness must be contained within the very rationality of a community, such that we are not discussing the madness of a community of individuals *qua* individuals but rather a community of individuals who collectively embody a particular shape of spirit. The stages of morality, which collectively conclude the chapter titled 'Spirit' in the *Phenomenology*, are Hegel's critical accounts of the German philosophical outlooks of his contemporaries, which begins with a critique of Kantian moral philosophy and ends in *conscience*, a critique of Fichte and romanticism. What unites the various stages of morality is that it is spirit 'absolutely free in knowing its freedom, and it is this very knowing of its freedom which is its substance, its purpose, and its sole content' (*PbG*: ¶598, 348). This freedom takes on the form of *moral duty*, which moral spirit understands as its content and absolute essence.

Conscience is the final attempt to preserve the autonomous freedom of the moral worldview. Whereas previous moments of morality attempted (and failed) to

determine the nature of its duty, conscience ‘has within its *certainty of itself* the *content* for the formerly empty duty as well as for the empty law and the empty universal will’ (*PbG*: ¶633, 367). The Kantian emphasis on a universally derived standard by which duty can be evaluated or determined is replaced (or, perhaps more accurately, *completed*) with a concrete, self-legitimizing individuality, wherein one’s duty is to follow one’s innermost truth unbridled by either society or universal reason’s demands. In sum, conscience understands its essence as its duty; its duty is found in itself; it knows that its essence is real when it acts on this duty; it is certain of the legitimacy of this duty in so far as it is immediately certain of itself; and the knowing of this certainty consists in its *conviction*.

At first, conscience is able to achieve what the law of the heart could not in so far as its duty is legitimized by and through its own self-determined action: it simply ‘knows and does what is concretely right’ (*PbG*: ¶635, 368). However, much like the law of the heart, conscience’s self-certainty will begin to wane. The certainty conscience has of itself cannot be found anywhere but in itself. While conscience does concretely act in the world by actualizing its duty through the deed, the determinate action and its consequences are wholly contingent. The deed’s actuality is ‘an absolute plurality of circumstances which infinitely divides itself and spreads backwards into its conditions, sideways into its juxtapositions, and forwards into its consequences’ (*PbG*: ¶642, 371). To avoid this ‘flaw of determination’, conscience can only be given lasting validation through the *conviction* underlying the dutiful deed (*PbG*: ¶653, 377). In this way, conscience can be viewed—somewhat paradoxically given how advanced this stage of spirit is—as being governed by the arbitrary givenness of whatever one subjectively determines to be essential and true. The price for preserving an internally consistent subjective freedom is that conscience is essentially an arbitrary emotivism: as ‘determination and content, this certainty is *natural* consciousness, i.e. the impulses and inclinations’ (*PbG*: ¶643, 372). Nevertheless, the blatant contingency underlying conviction renders it no less authoritative in the romantic community of conscience. Indeed, at least at first, conviction is truth and it ought to thereby be universal (*PbG*: ¶654, 378).

In this manner, conscience, despite its God-like self-certainty as the ‘moral genius’, does not cease to be a *being-for-others* in its spiritual world. Particular consciences, all equally certain in their convictions, do not agree on their subjectively posited duties and therefore do not grant each other the recognition necessary for the vindication of conscience’s spiritual essence. Conscience struggles, then, to reconcile its certainty of itself and its actuality, and in order to preserve the last scraps of its purity it flees from contact with actuality, such that ‘life and all spiritual essentiality have receded into this self and have lost their diversity from the I-self’ (*PbG*: ¶658, 380). Conscience becomes the anxious and self-defeating *beautiful soul* that is too afraid to act:

It lacks the force to relinquish itself, lacks the force to make itself into a thing and to sustain being. It lives with the *anxiety* that it will *stain the splendor of its innerness through action and existence*. Thus, to preserve the purity of its *heart*, it *flees from contact with actuality*, and it steadfastly perseveres in its obstinate powerlessness to renounce its own self, a self which has been tapered to the final point of abstraction. It stably exists in its powerlessness to give itself substantiality, or to transform its thinking into being and to entrust itself to absolute difference. The hollow object which it generates to itself it thus now fills only with the consciousness of emptiness. It is a yearning which only loses itself as it becomes an essenceless object, and as it goes beyond this loss and then falls back on itself, it only finds itself as lost.—In this transparent purity of its moments it becomes an unhappy, so-called *beautiful soul*, and its burning embers gradually die out, and, as they do, the beautiful soul vanishes like a shapeless vapor dissolving into thin air (*PbG*: ¶658, 380–81, emphasis added).

The very self of conscience—which it previously had been so certain of—is called into question, and lacking the ability to reconcile itself and its greater community, it anxiously self-deteriorates. The shared self-understanding of the community of conscience ironically precludes sharing and thus destroys the idea of the community itself. The individual conscience's actuality, in so far as it was intertwined and one with its essence, becomes disorienting, uncertain, and hostile. If the individual conscience does decide to act, it is immediately met with the *judging consciousness* who, proclaiming to defend the universal duty, meticulously picks apart the action, revealing the supposedly self-serving intentions and motives underlying the act. Seeing as the deed follows directly from the innermost conviction, the judging consciousness seeks to reveal this supposed truth of each individual conscience: always already hypocritical, self-interested, guilty, and *evil*. Confronted by the other, every individual deed finds its endless *particularity* at odds with the *universality* of duty (*PbG*: ¶665, 384). Conscience, already anxious and in despair, is finally pushed to the brink of madness:

The beautiful soul, lacking all actuality, caught in the contradiction between its pure self and its necessity to empty itself into being and to turn itself around into actuality, in the *immediacy* of this opposition to which it adheres—in an immediacy which is alone the mediating middle and the reconciliation of an opposition which has been intensively raised to the point of its pure abstraction, and which is itself pure being or empty

nothingness—is thus, as the consciousness of this contradiction in its unreconciled immediacy, shattered into madness and melts into a yearning, tubercular consumption. It thereby in fact gives up its severe adherence to *its being-for-itself* but engenders only the spiritless *unity* of being. (*PbG*: ¶668, 387)

Mirroring the law of the heart, conscience's dilemma is characterized by an incompatibility between two aspects of its reality and self-understanding that are, for it, equally true and essential: its *pure self* (i.e. its conviction) and *actual duty* (i.e. the duty to actualize its conviction in a spiritual community that is structurally inhospitable to the former). This defect refers not merely to the specific way that self-consciousness is deficient but rather a real contradiction within the *objective* structure of spirit which bears consequences for the former. Conversely to the individual consciousness who embodies the law of the heart, conscience represents a self-contained spiritual *community*, whose madness manifests itself within the *rational actuality of an entire social world*. Spirit is a self that is a world (*PbG*: ¶438, 253–54).

The opposition between subject and substance dissolves into a complex dialectical unity, giving spirit its unique standpoint as 'being all of reality'. While this relational unity of self and world is generally understood to grant spirit its reason such that there is an identity between how it understands the world and how the world really is, it also ironically produces the possibility for a genuinely collective pathology in the form of spirit's *structural homelessness*. While the inability for spirit to bring together its subjective and objective parts to form a satisfying unity of self and world may indeed characterize all of spirit's alienations, what we observe here is a dual impossibility: the subject is unable (and, perhaps, unwilling) to live up to the demands of the world and, at the very same time, the world is completely inhospitable to the subject. Moreover, we observe this dual impossibility for a satisfying unity of self and world within, ironically, the very unity of spirit itself in its pathological moment. The tragedy of spirit's madness is that each aspect of its reality that it posits as its own inevitably eludes its grasp due to its own self-understanding. In other words, the conclusion (i.e. madness) follows necessarily from the premise (i.e. what is considered rational and authoritative for spirit at a given point). Hegel therefore seems to be offering an account of social pathology, in which spirit paradoxically produces onto-political tensions that lead to incomprehensible self-understandings that political communities invariably lack the resources to resolve. In other words, what began for Hegel as both the ground and object of reason—i.e. the collective self-understanding and rational way of knowing that is spirit—becomes a site for pathology and irrationality. The result is that what ought to be a home (the world that spirit self-posit) cannot be a home and is instead a site for madness.

Another connection worth noting here which gives credence to the notion that Hegel views the beautiful soul in an authentically pathological light is that Hegel frequently associates romanticism with madness. Recall that Hegel's exposition of conscience and its subsequent madness is a critical account of the romantic—namely, Fichte's—reformulation or continuation of Kantian moral philosophy. Moreover, it is well-known that Hegel's dear friend in his youth, the romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin, suffered from severe, delusional and debilitating mental illness, and while Hegel remained unusually quiet about this, it has been argued that Hegel makes various implicit references to him in his *Encyclopaedia* account of madness.¹⁶ In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel also refers to Shakespeare's Hamlet—undoubtedly a paradigmatic portrayal of madness in the Western canon—as a 'beautiful soul' (*A1*: 584). Similarly, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in describing the German romantic poet and philosopher Novalis' contributions to Fichtean subjectivity, Hegel claims that 'the extravagances of subjectivity constantly pass into madness' (*HP*: 510).

III. Conclusion: the sanity of ethicality

It is clear that what Hegel means by 'madness' at the level of objective spirit cannot be reduced to the pathologies of individuals. The sociality of madness is not determined by the number of individuals suffering from madness within a given social context nor whether these individual pathologies are caused or triggered by variables of a social origin. This is what fundamentally distinguishes the Hegelian approach from a social determinants of health or biopsychosocial approach (Bolton and Gillett 2019). It is also what distinguishes Hegel's sociality of madness, as presented here, from many other theories of social pathology—particularly of a psychoanalytic bent.¹⁷ As we have seen, the 'illness' Hegel identifies is embedded within the very fabric of a social world, such that Hegel is describing the structure of a political community as being either healthy or unhealthy. Hegel locates the birthplace of this ill-health or pathology within the necessary self-dividedness spawned by self-consciousness, which is later reproduced and radicalized at the level of reason and objective spirit. The result, I have argued, is that what spirit takes to be authoritative and essential becomes contradictory to the point of maddening incomprehensibility. Due to spirit's *reality-producing force*—as H.S. Harris (1995) puts it, spirit 'is the unity of our world as we are conscious of it' (1995: 61)—this aspect of incomprehensibility becomes inseparable from the means by which we become conscious of our world and ourselves. In this way, this social pathology implicates individuals, undoubtedly affecting their mental well-being, without locating the source or structure of pathology in the individual's psyche.

I noted above that, arguably much like any other form of madness or pathology, the preeminent *wrong* of the sociality of madness can be understood in terms of its freedom-disabling function. Indeed, the sociality of madness might be best understood not merely as a hindrance to freedom, but as the *structural impossibility of freedom within a given social world*. Following Hegel in understanding social pathology as being both freedom-disabling and a problem of spirit leads us in our pursuit for a solution to the domain of politics rather than individual therapeutics.¹⁸ More specifically, we ought to inquire as to whether Hegel's articulation of the modern ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*)—i.e. Hegel's account of *Idea* of freedom come to its full objective fruition (PR: §142, 189)—might serve as a *political therapeutic* for the sociality of madness. The use of 'therapeutic' here has two closely related meanings: on the one hand, it refers to the therapeutic *process* of spirit superseding its maddening contradictions. We can understand this as the aspect of ethical life's therapy that *negates* the sociality of madness. On the other hand, it refers to the therapeutic *function* it serves for its members in so far as it structurally fosters and preserves the institutional preconditions for freedom.

Hegel describes the ethical life as the '*living good*' (PR: §142, 189, emphasis added). While Hegel was far from alone in employing the concept of *life* to describe social totalities,¹⁹ this usage does imply a concern for the general 'health' of a society wherein the solution to social pathology—a sickness which inflicts the entire life of a people—would take form as a particular shape of the political community which would structurally preclude or mitigate such pathologies. It should come as no surprise, then, that it has not been entirely uncommon to ascribe a therapeutic function—and therefore a degree of health or well-being—to the account of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) presented in the *Philosophy of Right*.²⁰ In particular, Axel Honneth (2010) argues that, for Hegel, social pathology can be understood as a 'suffering from indeterminacy' that occurs when a subordinate shape of freedom—the legalistic *abstract right* or the inwardly self-reflective *morality*—overtakes properly ethical freedom (2010: 30–31). When moral freedom 'is systematically detached from the social context which gives it meaning and treated as a fully independent and originary source of authoritative guidance', a romantic individualism characterized by 'inner emptiness and inactivity' predominates (2010: 41–42). The ethical life, as interpreted by Honneth, is the network of recognitive institutions which facilitate a determinate mode of *self-realization*—the 'process of realizing, without coercion, one's self-chosen life-goals' (1995: 174).²¹

The 'self-realization' interpretation of freedom in the *Philosophy of Right* only partially addresses the ethical concerns posed by the sociality of madness. It is indeed the case that social pathology, as we have understood it here, might give the moral agent's actions a sense of indeterminateness in so far as the agent either ceases to be recognized or is rendered unrecognizable. It is certainly Hegel's hope to give subjectivity an objective (and hence re-cognizable) significance: subjectivity

residing in its one-sided negative moment as ‘*pure indeterminacy* or of the “I”’s pure reflection into itself’ (PR: §5, 37), is unwilling to pass over into ‘*differentiation, determination* and the *positing* of a determinacy as a content and object’ (PR: §6, 39). Ethical life provides an antidote to this problem of indeterminacy through what Hegel calls *habit* or *second nature*:

if it is simply *identical* with the actuality of the individuals, the ethical [*das Sittliche*], as their general mode of behaviour, appears as *custom* [*Sitte*]; and the *habit* of the ethical appears as a *second nature* which takes the place of the original and purely natural will and is the all-pervading soul, significance, and actuality of individual existence [*Dasein*]. It is *spirit* living and present as a world, and only thus does the substance of spirit begin to exist as spirit. (PR: §151, 195)

It is the three ethical institutions—the family, civil society and the state—that help to cultivate the dispositions, attitudes or modes of conduct that the individual must assume for ethical selfhood. In this manner, the habitual fostering and maintenance of an ethical second nature counteracts indeterminacy by pulling the individual outside of themselves and immersing them in the multifarious particularities, determinacies and duties that comprise the actual participation in one or more of the ethical spheres (whether it be the demands of family life, ‘becoming someone’ in civil society, or attending to the affairs of the political community).²² The content of one’s freedom, in this case, is no longer arbitrary or subjectively posited, and the ethical ‘self’ that is cultivated in this second nature satisfies the fundamental human need for recognition. For Honneth, it is dysfunction within these networks of recognitive relations that is the source not only of social conflict but many pathologies and ‘relational disorders’ (1995: 106).

Hegel’s concern for social pathology, I contend, runs far deeper than failures to be adequately recognized within determinate socio-recognitive relations (whether it be of one’s humanity, personality, social identity or otherwise). One benefit of establishing objective spirit as the proper site for social pathology is an understanding of the ways in which our determinate social world radically conditions the shapes of selfhood at our disposal. In other words, we receive, at least in part, the content of the self (along with the various duties and responsibilities which flow from it) from the norms, values and substance of the world. What this means is that if the shapes of selfhood at our disposal are produced and embedded within a spiritual world suffering from madness, it is not merely that one’s subjective capacity for meaningful self-realization is hindered (though, of course, it is) but that this very ethical selfhood being cultivated is rendered incomprehensible and contradictory—whether there is a meaningful attempt at mutual recognition or not. Indeed, the entire social world from which one’s selfhood

must be derived is rendered absolutely unintelligible and irredeemably self-divided. This reading of the nature of social pathology cannot therefore be reduced to purely individual, psychological or (re)cognitive factors.²³ In this respect, the more traditional readings of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* as a reconciliatory hermeneutic,²⁴ whereby reconciliation is achieved through the rational comprehension of what is actual (PR: Preface, 20), come closer to grasping what is at stake in terms of discerning the 'health' of the political community.

The political ambition of the philosophical exposition of the ethical life, Hegel states, is that the 'subject bears *spiritual witness* to them as *its own essence*, in which it has its *self-awareness* [*Selbstgefühl*] and lives as in its element which is not distinct from itself—a relationship which is immediate and closer to identity than even [a relationship of] faith or trust' (PR: §147, 191). However, for such a subjective state of non-alienation to be possible, the subject must not only rise to the standpoint of understanding that the social world is worthy of reconciling with but the social world itself must in fact be worthy of reconciliation.²⁵ While this articulation of freedom as non-alienation might be widely viewed as attractive, Hegel's claim that the major institutions that still largely govern and structure our political communities—the bourgeois nuclear family, civil society (i.e. the market economy), and the bureaucratic state—are essentially conducive to the realization of this freedom is generally met with far more scepticism.²⁶

While there may be good reasons to be sceptical of Hegel's political-philosophical thesis—and, by extension, for the actually existing modern political community to serve as the kind of therapeutic outlined above—social pathology as a madness of spirit arguably poses unique threats relative to other threats to freedom (e.g. injustice). First, if we take seriously the idea that an internalized contradiction (i.e. self-division) elevated to the level of reason and spirit renders the contradiction, to a large degree, incomprehensible to the participants in a spiritual world, then social pathology will likely pose epistemic obstacles in addition to ethical ones. In other words, the difficulty in addressing or resolving social madness is not only a matter of overcoming a structural injustice but of adequately identifying the issue in the first place. It is worth recalling the profound inescapability of immanence for Hegel; no individual or philosophy can 'leap over Rhodes' (PR: Preface, 22). Any attempt to look beyond the madness will invariably be fraught with difficulties. Moreover, the contradiction Hegel labels as spirit's 'madness' cannot be reduced to the inadequacy of self-consciousness. Rather, as we have seen, it is a real contradiction within a social world that radically forecloses possibilities for self-conscious freedom.²⁷ These madness-type contradictions can be contrasted with the typical Hegelian dialectical contradictions which find their resolution at the higher standpoint of recognizing in hindsight that the aforementioned contradiction was mistaken or one-sided (albeit logically necessary).²⁸ The culmination of these two problems manifests in a determinate political community lacking the

conceptual tools and resources for resolving its social pathology—perhaps including *Sittlichkeit*.²⁹

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Notes

¹ Despite this relative absence in Hegel's works, Hegel did purportedly lecture extensively on the topic (Berthold-Bond 1995: 1).

² Abbreviations used:

A = Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox. 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Cited by page number.

EG = Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind. Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, with revisions and commentary by M. J. Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Cited by section (§) and page number. Additional *Zusätze* indicated by Z.

HP = Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 3*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955). Cited by page number.

PbG = Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. T. Pinkard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Cited by paragraph (¶) and page number.

PR = Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Cited by section (§) and page number. Additional *Zusätze* indicated by Z.

³ The most thorough and systematic investigation into Hegel's theory of madness remains Daniel Berthold-Bond's *Hegel's Theory of Madness* (1995). Aside from Berthold-Bond's excellent book, see: Airaksinen (1989), Christensen (1968), Fialko (1930), Güven (2005), McGrath (2012), Mills (2002), Olson (1992: 84–106), Wenning (2013) and Wu (2020). In particular, the existing literature has paid significant attention to the parallels between Hegel's theory of madness and Freud's theory of the unconscious. See: Berthold-Bond (1995), Christensen (1968), Eldridge (2014), McGrath (2012) and Mills (2002).

⁴ In medicine, 'pathology' refers to the causes and effects of physical disease or illness. Conversely, the study of collective or social pathology asks whether a society can be 'sick' and under what conditions the society can be understood to be 'sane'. For the sake of simplicity, I use the terms 'social pathology' and the 'sociality of madness' basically interchangeably in this

article (the latter simply being the more specific name I have given to the Hegelian theory of social pathology presented in this article).

⁵ See Freyenhagen (2019), Harris (2019), Honneth (2010), Laitinen and Särkelä (2019) and Neuhouser (2023).

⁶ Existing literature on Hegel's theory of madness has pointed to the necessity of exploring the social dimensions of madness or pathology that appear to be absent from Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* account but have not fully pursued this line of inquiry (e.g., Berthold-Bond 1995; Wenning 2013). The two major exceptions to this are Honneth's (2010) articulation of Hegelian social pathology in terms of the 'flaw of indeterminacy' and Neuhouser's new book, *Diagnosing Social Pathologies* (2023), which expounds multiple ways that social dysfunction might count as social pathology for Hegel. As we shall see, Honneth's account of pathology as indeterminacy will be one aspect or dimension of the fuller conception of Hegelian social pathology offered here. In contrast with both Neuhouser and Honneth, this article also grounds its discussion in Hegel's own use of language of pathology or, more specifically, 'madness'.

⁷ This interpretation of spirit has been especially commonplace among recent post-Kantian or non-metaphysical commentators, notably Robert Pippin, Terry Pinkard, and Robert Brandom. For instance, in *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, Pinkard defines spirit as a 'form of life that has developed various social practices for reflecting on what it takes to be authoritative for itself in terms of whether these practices live up to their own claims and achieve the aims that they set for themselves' (1996: 8–9). The title and working concept of this article, the 'sociality of madness', is, in part, a reference to, and subversion of, the title of Pinkard's work.

⁸ While there are other moments in the *Phenomenology* where Hegel uses, broadly speaking, language of pathology (e.g., *PbG*: ¶205, ¶589, ¶740), I primarily focus on where Hegel claims spirit succumbs to 'madness' (*Verrücktheit*).

⁹ Adorno, for instance, states 'Hegel concludes in an ever-recurring mode, the particular is nothing. The modern history of the human spirit—and not that alone—has been an apologetic labour of Sisyphus: thinking away the negative side of the universal' (1981: 327).

¹⁰ William Desmond questions whether such a thing as madness—and the grief that Hegel experienced in the face of a loved one's madness—could be incorporated into Hegel's dialectical system (Desmond 1992: 237). Similar to Desmond, Ferit Güven argues that 'with madness we observe that there is a conceptual necessity for the dialectic to come to a halt' (Güven 2005: 33).

¹¹ See, for instance, the radical critiques of psychiatry leveled by Szasz (2010) and Foucault (1965). On the relation between Hegel and this critical tradition, see Berthold-Bond (1995: 200–201).

¹² In the *Encyclopaedia* account of madness, Hegel was highly influenced by the French reformist Philippe Pinel. Not only was Hegel's typology of madness largely influenced by Pinel (Berthold-Bond 1995: 21), but so were Hegel's proposals for a 'cure' (*EG*: §408Z, 136–39). Counter to the dominant punitive approaches of the time, these therapeutics, in essence, sought to appeal to the still-subsisting rationality of the patient so as to reconnect their subjectivity with their objective world.

¹³ For more on the meaning and function of alienation in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, see Rae (2012) and Schacht (1970). Neuhouser provides a definition of social pathology in Hegel's works along these lines of 'inadequate self-conceptions' and 'impoverished conceptions of freedom' (2016: 44–47; 2023: 336–37).

¹⁴ I say 'inadvertently' because Hyppolite does not reference the *Encyclopaedia's* 'Anthropology' account of madness.

¹⁵ See also Wahl (1984).

¹⁶ Alan Olson notes the connection between Hölderlin and the anxious beautiful soul (1992: 90). Moreover, Olson notes that in the *Encyclopaedia's* *Zusätze* where Hegel discusses the frenzy of madness, Hegel makes the (of course scientifically unfounded) claim that 'big muscular men with black hair' are especially susceptible to frenzy, which matches Hölderlin's physical description in his 1802 passport (Olson 1992: 100).

¹⁷ Many psychoanalytic theories articulate social pathology as being characterized by a fundamentally causal relationship between a pathology-inducing society on the one hand and individuals on the other, whether the pathology be understood in terms of repression (Freud 1961), socially patterned defect (Fromm 1955) or narcissism (Lasch 2018).

¹⁸ Another *prima facie* reason we might turn to Hegel's political philosophy here is that Hegel appears to reiterate in the *Philosophy of Right* the distinction between his *Encyclopaedia* conception of madness of the feeling soul and the sociality of madness in his discussion of use and ownership in abstract right: 'This distinction, therefore, as an actual relation, is one of an empty proprietorship which might be called a madness of personality (if the term "madness" were used not just of a direct contradiction within a person between his merely subjective idea [*Vorstellung*] and his actuality), because the term "mine", as applied to a *single* object, would have to mean both my exclusive individual will and another exclusive individual will, with no mediation between them' (PR: §62, 91).

¹⁹ For more on the concept of 'life' in Hegel's social thought, see Neuhouser (2021) and Neuhouser (2023: 281–311).

²⁰ See Giladi (2015), Honneth (2010), Rastko (2014) and Wu (2020).

²¹ Allen Wood (1990) similarly articulates Hegel's ethical thought as a theory of self-actualization, whose 'starting point is the conception of a certain self or identity to be exercised or actualized, to be embodied and expressed in action' (1990: 31). This 'self', albeit grounded in human nature, is a socially and historically situated self (1990: 33). See also Patten (1999) for a 'civic humanist' variation of this model.

²² While it is beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that there is a strong case to be made that this therapeutic function of ethical life may equally extend to those individually suffering from the madness of the feeling soul.

²³ For a summary and critique of Honneth and the emerging 'recognition-cognitive' approach to understanding social pathology, see Harris (2019).

²⁴ See Hardimon (1994), Rawls (2001) and Taylor (1979). It should be noted that this distinction between the self-realization interpretations (which tend to emphasize mutual recognition) and reconciliation interpretations (which tend to emphasize comprehension) of the *Philosophy of*

Right is by no means strict or comprehensive. Often this distinction is but a matter of emphasis; comprehension of the inner necessity of one's world can be seen as a prerequisite for participation within it. Goldstein nicely articulates the relationship in the *Philosophy of Right* between philosophy's task of comprehension and self-actualization in the ethical life: 'In alone demonstrating the necessity of the system of practical relations and roles, philosophy reveals that the fullest experience of the good is present as that actual union of world and human action which Hegel calls modern ethical habit' (2006: 185).

²⁵ For more on the nature of reconciliation for Hegel, what makes institutions worthy of such reconciliation, and the role that reform plays, see Hardimon (1994).

²⁶ There are two aspects of Hegel's account of *Sittlichkeit* that have received special scrutiny. One is Hegel's misogynistic treatment of women and the family. While some have argued that Hegel's philosophy can nonetheless serve as a coherent basis for feminist thought (Gauthier 1997; Hutchings 2003; MacDonald 2008), others point to this as indicative of problems pervasive in Hegel's thought (Barber 1988; Lloyd 1993; Pateman 1988). Others, often within or influenced by the Marxist tradition, have emphasized the rabble created by modern capitalist production as the fatal flaw of Hegel's political philosophy (Avineri 1972; Kain 2014; Wood 1990).

²⁷ Frantz Fanon's sociogenic approach to understanding psychopathology arguably points towards this idea of pathology as i) an inability to be-at-home-in-the-world and ii) reflecting an ultimately rational order. In his 1956 resignation letter for his post at the Psychiatric Hospital of Blida-Joinville, Algeria, Fanon (1967) states: 'Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom. [...] If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of depersonalization. [...] The social structure existing in Algeria was hostile to any attempt to put the individual back where he belonged' (1967: 53). Rather than racial prejudice being a mere 'mental quirk' or 'psychological flaw' (1967: 38), Fanon argues that it 'in fact obeys a flawless logic' and is 'normal' in a society where it is the norm (1967: 40–41).

²⁸ One example of this kind of synthesis is the dialectical mediation of 'subjective selfishness' by the universal through the 'contribution towards the satisfaction of the needs of everyone else' in civil society's system of needs (PR: §199, 233).

²⁹ While he does not use terms such as 'madness', Derrida's *Glas* arguably points to further lines of inquiry into the sociality of madness emerging from *within* ethical life. In particular, Derrida focuses on the paradoxical place of the family in Hegel's system. Derrida claims that the contradiction of love, the 'essential kernel' of the family, is 'unintelligible; its economy surpasses understanding; no formal logic can master or resolve it' (1986: 18). The result is that that which grounds Hegel's rational ethical system lives squarely in the domain of natural affect, and is simultaneously that which the ethical system must repress, despite professing to be one of the modern institutional realms of intrinsic freedom. For more on the peculiar and anachronistic character of the ethical family, see Ravven (1996).

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