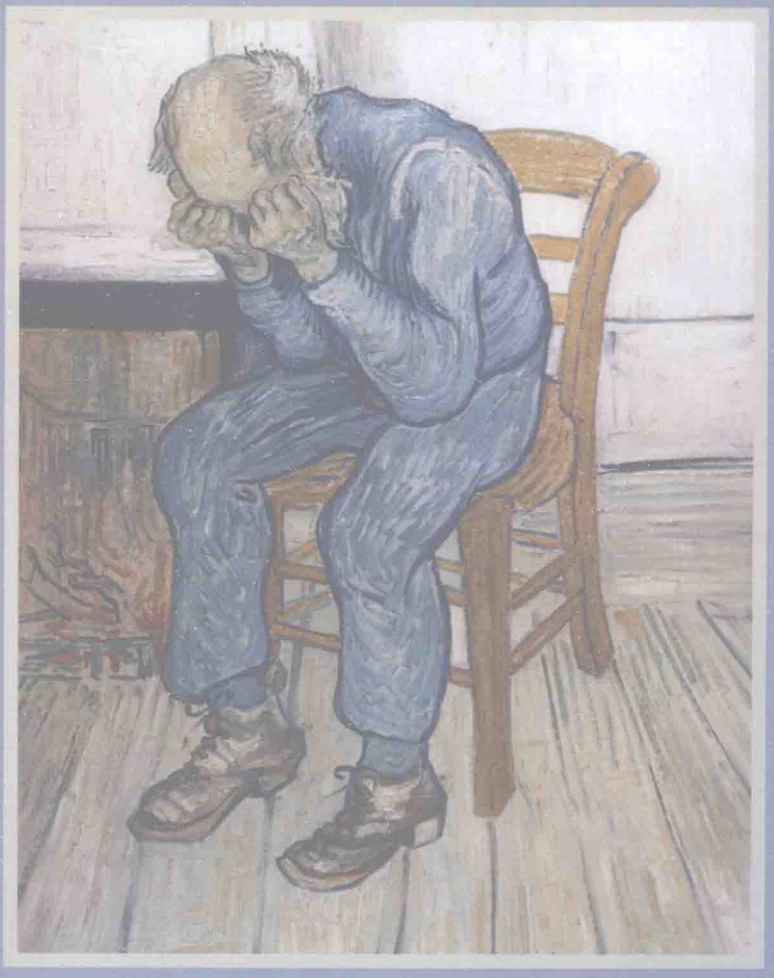
Modern Literature and the Tragic



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Contents

	Acknowledgements	vii
	Introduction	1
1.	Ibsen's *Ghosts* and the Rejection of the Tragic	9
2.	Anti-Tragic Drama after Ibsen	21
3.	Chekhov and the Tragic	51
4.	The Return of the Tragic in Fiction	63
5.	Nietzsche and the Redefining of the Tragic	97
6.	The 'Tragico-Dionysian' and D. H. Lawrence	121
7.	The Theatre of the Absurd and the Tragic	144
8.	The Tragic, Pragmatism and the Postmodern	159
	Index	177

Introduction

This book is concerned with literary responses to the tragic in the modern period. The tragic is, of course, derived from tragedy as a dramatic genre but it tended to have an independent existence almost from the start. Plato – a near contemporary of the major tragic dramatists – discussed tragedy without referring to any specific tragic drama and mentioned writers of tragedies only in passing, so that the tragic became an idea or a concept partially separate from Greek tragedy as a genre. On the surface, Aristotle in his *Poetics* is more objective and literary in his approach as he focuses on the form of tragic drama, and judged Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* to be the exemplary tragedy. It can be argued, however, that like Plato his real interest was in the tragic as an idea and that he valued the dramatic form of *Oedipus* because it could be aligned with his concept of the tragic, the play's plot – for him the most important element in tragedy – 'produce[ing] the distinctively tragic effect of engendering *phobos* and *eleos* [fear and pity]'.[1] Aristotle in effect elevated himself above the writers of tragedy, just as Plato did, suggesting that he understood its nature better than literary practitioners. One consequence of this for later writers of tragedy was to make it difficult to separate tragedy in general from Aristotle's poetics of tragedy, even if the play he had selected as his model tragedy was not necessarily typical of Greek tragedy in general.

A consequence of Aristotle's view that the purpose of form in tragic drama is to engender certain emotions that he identifies with the tragic is that there was scope for creating alternative dramatic forms that could also engender these or related emotions, so that tragedy was thus able to transcend its Greek origins. This made it possible for later writers, notably Shakespeare, to produce works which were called tragedies even if they were significantly different in form from classical tragedy. It has been argued, however, that though Aristotle created a poetics of tragedy that still has powerful influence, it was only with the German

Idealists and post-Idealists that what could properly be called a philosophy of the tragic emerged. Peter Szondi writes: 'Only since Schelling has there been a philosophy of the tragic. Composed as an instruction in writing drama, Aristotle's text strives to determine the elements of tragic art; its object is tragedy, not the idea of tragedy.'[2] Hegel was the most influential writer on tragic theory among German Idealists and post-Idealists, though the theories of contemporaries such as Schelling varied significantly from his. Perhaps a major factor in making writing that aims to be tragic or is related to the tragic different in the modern period from either the classical or early modern periods is that modern writers are not only aware of Aristotle's poetics of tragedy and his claim that it is most fully manifested in Sophocles, but are also conscious of Shakespeare's form of tragedy and philosophies of the tragic grounded in Hegelian dialectical thinking. Szondi argues that even though 'the dialectic as such is almost never considered to be tragic', it 'is valid as a criterion for the definition of the tragic'.[3]

A collision between opposed ethical principles which can both be justified in their own terms is central to Hegel's philosophy of the tragic and this had a particularly powerful influence in the nineteenth century, as is apparent, for example, in George Eliot's and A. C. Bradley's discussions of tragedy. Eliot saw Sophocles' *Antigone* very much in Hegelian dialectical terms as embodying a 'dramatic collision' – *Antigone* being for Hegel the model tragedy – since 'two principles, both having their validity, are at war with each other'.[4] Schelling shared Hegel's view of tragedy as collision but saw it in different terms: 'The essence of *tragedy* is . . . a real conflict between freedom in the subject and objective necessity. This conflict does not end with the defeat of one or the other, but rather with both of them simultaneously appearing as conquerors and conquered in perfect indifference.'[5] But whether the 'dramatic collision' was between ethical principles or between subject and object, I shall suggest that in considering the tragic in relation to modern literature Hegelian theory plays a significant role, since both elements or forces in any tragic conflict, even if not granted equal validity, at the very least need to be accorded respect, and that if that does not apply then something different from the tragic has emerged.

Hegel's theory has, however, been persuasively criticised for seeing tragedy as 'ultimately purposive' and emphasising 'harmony, resolution, and reconciliation':

> Hegel's view of what constitutes a right works for some tragedies better than others. He is not eager to acknowledge the value of forces that serve morally dubious ends. These too can be rights in the sense on which tragedy insists . . . *Hippolytus* and *Bacchae* could never be Hegel's favourite plays.[6]

Yet it is not difficult to revise a dialectical theory of the tragic so that it can be applied to such plays or to Shakespearean tragedies such as *King Lear* and *Othello*. No one could be more 'morally dubious' than Iago yet Othello contemplates the otherness of Iago, after his villainy is revealed, almost with wonder. Iago represents some fundamental force in the world which is irreconcilable with Othello's love for Desdemona and seeks to destroy it. Mere moral disapproval of Iago would be ridiculously inadequate. And of course that force is also a potential in Othello himself, since it was able to gain control over him, precipitating the tragedy, though one could argue that his final suicide represents a counter-force of mental resistance to the alien and destructive other that has destroyed his and Desdemona's love in a material sense. What makes it possible to reconcile these plays with a theory of the tragic founded on a collision between opposed forces is that the alien or destructive 'other' embodied in Iago or Medea or Goneril and Regan should command the respect of the audience even in the face of moral disapproval or revulsion; intense hate or jealousy or lust are forces of nature and always a potential threat to civilisation and morality, that is, to human concepts of order and value that aim to transcend nature.

Szondi spells out the effect of dialectics on the concept of the tragic in 'the post-Idealist', or modern, era:

> One can draw no other consequence from this than the one drawn from the crisis to which dialectical conception of the tragic in the post-Idealist era led: There is no such thing as *the* tragic, at least not as an essence. Rather, the tragic is a mode, a particular manner of destruction that is threatening or already completed: the dialectical manner. There is only *one* tragic downfall: the one that results from the unity of opposites, from the sudden change into one's opposite, from self-division. But it is also the case that only the demise of something that should not meet its demise, whose removal does not allow the wound to heal, is tragic. The tragic contradiction may not be sublated in a superordinate sphere, whether immanent or transcendent.[7]

Though William Storm in his book, *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic*, has formulated a post-Hegelian theory of tragedy that argues that fracturing or rending of the self – *sparagmos* – is central to tragedy, this theory retains significant links to dialectics as interpreted by Szondi:

> The [tragic] denotes the inevitability of separation and the irreconcilability of opposing polarities, which produce a corresponding pattern of rifting in depictions of selfhood and action. The term reflects the Dionysian cycle that cannot be completed, that is broken before the event of unification, leaving only fracture. The tragic, in short, is not simply that which is mournful, lamentable, or even catastrophic; it is that which is unmendable.[8]

Another theorist who is very relevant to a consideration of the tragic in the modern period is Jacques Derrida. Though Derrida's philosophy

can be seen as anti-Hegelian in that the deconstruction of oppositions is intrinsic to his thinking, his concept of 'undecidability' has close links with Szondi's revision of Hegel, in which there is dialectical conflict without, as Szondi puts it, sublation – a translation of the Hegelian term, *aufheben*[9] – 'in a superordinate sphere'. Thus the dialectic is not transcended or superseded in any synthesis of oppositions. In Derrida's concept of undecidability oppositions remain in place and can't be transcended or synthesised, and this is integral to an implied 'undecidable' theory of the tragic, the tragic being situated within the experience of the subject rather than between opposed ethical principles or between the subject and some force external to it: 'there would be no decision, in the strong sense of the word, in ethics, in politics, no decision, and thus no responsibility, without the experience of some undecidability . . . I am in front of a problem and I know that the two determined solutions are as justifiable as one another.' Such a predicament he describes as 'tragic':

> At some point, however, for a decision to be made you have to go beyond knowledge . . . That is why the distinction between good and evil doesn't depend on knowledge; that is why we should not know, in terms of knowledge, what is the distinction between good and evil. To have to make such a distinction, which depends precisely on responsibility, is, I confess, both a terrible and tragic situation in which to find oneself.[10]

With the classical tragedies that have been most influential on writers and theorists of tragedy and the tragic, Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*, undecidability is not foregrounded, as the protagonists are shown as fully committed to the decisions they have made: Oedipus chose to act in order to evade the prophecy of the oracle that he will kill his father and marry his mother, and came to believe that the human will was superior to the power of the Gods; and Antigone made the opposite decision in believing that divine law gave her the right to resist a human law. Undecidability, however, may be seen to operate at a more abstract tragic level as one can claim that both sides in the conflict between opposed forces are intended to command the respect of the audience. The decisions the protagonists make inevitably bring these forces into collision with catastrophic consequences. For Derrida, *Hamlet* is a model tragedy for the modern era since undecidability is the primary focus rather than the catastrophic results of the decision Hamlet made. Hamlet, unlike Oedipus and Antigone, experiences undecidability directly yet must make a decision, so that the protagonist's situation of undecidability becomes arguably the most significant aspect in the tragedy:

> In the case of Hamlet, I try to show in *Specters of Marx* that the responsibility in front of his father's call, for it to be a responsibility, demands that choices be made . . . So the son has to make a decision . . . as a finite being he has to select within the heritage and that is again the question of undecidability. Of course, that is the classical interpretation of Hamlet as a victim of undecidability, he doesn't know and he gets paralysed. Nevertheless, if we assume that Hamlet is a figure of paralysis or neurosis because of undecidability, he might be also a paradigm for action: he understands what actions should be and he undergoes the process of undecidability at the beginning.[11]

It might be argued against Derrida that to choose to act against the murderer of your father and a usurper should not create very much undecidability; a son can hardly just walk away from the murder of his father any more than Oedipus could merely accept the inevitability of the Oracle's prophecy and do nothing to resist it. Yet the conflict has shifted in this play from that which is at the centre of Sophocles' two most famous tragedies. The decision Hamlet has to make is whether acting against the moral and political corruption of Denmark, which is centred in Claudius, could be anything but futile since he is aware that such corruption may be intrinsic – Denmark may be a prison but as Rosencrantz points out to Hamlet it is not different in kind from the world[12] – and therefore attempting to destroy it would not only be pointless but may even make things worse; and of course incidents such as the killing of Polonius and especially the catastrophic climax, keep that question in play. For Derrida the lines that encapsulate undecidability and Hamlet's tragic predicament are 'The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,/ That ever I was born to set it right' (I, v).[13] Undecidability in this Derridean sense which locates tragedy within the human experience perhaps allows modern writers opposed generally to any philosophy of the tragic nevertheless to retain a connection with it through the representation of human dilemmas and choices, in which a decision has to be taken without having any secure knowledge that it is the right one: 'No one can ever *know*, no one can ever be sure, in a theoretical and determinative judgment, that a responsible decision was made and that it will have been the best.'[14]

The literary and implied philosophical context of classical and Shakespearean drama needs to be kept in mind in discussing modern writers in relation to the tragic, as their writing incorporates an awareness of that context; and though the philosophy of the tragic, especially post-Hegel, may be of greater importance for considering modern writers, some were very conscious of the form of classical tragedy and created an interplay with it. George Steiner in *The Death of Tragedy* claimed that modern drama failed to achieve the literary and philosophical power of classical tragedy.[15] However, I shall argue that in

considering the tragic in the modern period one needs to take into account the fact that not only formally but philosophically the concept of the tragic becomes problematic even though the human issues it raises remain fundamental, and that this leads to a variety of responses to and confrontations with the tragic in modern literature. Some major writers rejected any philosophy of the tragic or endeavoured to find alternatives to it, often however creating interplay with aspects of Aristotle's poetics of tragedy at the same time as undermining the tragic as a philosophy. After Hegel and German Idealism, tragedy as a dramatic form and the philosophy of the tragic become more radically separate. Such lack of congruency between a poetics of tragedy and a philosophy of the tragic means that discussion of the tragic can't be confined only to drama (or even just to serious drama) but must also consider other types of literature, especially fiction.

Since the main focus in this study is on responses to the tragic among representative modern writers from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century – whose concept of it would have been mainly influenced by Sophocles and Aristotle, Shakespeare, Hegelian dialectical theory, Schopenhauerian or Nietzschean revisionist theories – there is no attempt to produce a new theory of the tragic but to discuss in some detail literary works by such writers that can be seen as engaging with the tragic in these various aspects. It will be clear that the dialogic approach of this book with its detailed analysis of particular texts is very different from that of the most ambitious study in recent years of tragedy and the tragic, Terry Eagleton's *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*, which is essentially a polemical study.[16] In the first two chapters playwrights who produced works that can be seen as anti-tragic are discussed, some – Ibsen in his middle period, Shaw, Brecht – being actively hostile to any philosophy of the tragic but often making use of formal features and devices associated with tragedy, others being anti-tragic without necessarily intending to be. Chekhov is an interesting case since the relation between his writing and the tragic is not easy to determine, and his work is discussed in Chapter 3. In contrast to anti-tragic writing, I suggest that certain writers of fiction took the view that modern intellectual developments – particularly Schopenhauer's philosophy and Darwinian evolutionary theory – created a new basis for the tragic in modern times, and Hardy, Tolstoy and Conrad are discussed in that context in Chapter 4. The major influence on thinking about the tragic after Hegel is Nietzsche who took a revisionist view of Greek tragedy and attempted to create an alternative or Dionysian tragic theory. The fifth and sixth chapters consider writers who were influenced in various ways by Nietzsche's ideas on the tragic,

D. H. Lawrence being, as I argue, the most committed to Nietzsche's revisionist tragic philosophy. The seventh chapter considers the relation between 'The Theatre of the Absurd' and the tragic and argues that though Samuel Beckett's drama can't be pinned down as being either tragic or anti-tragic, Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* has a strong claim to be a major modern tragedy. In the final chapter the focus is on the opposition between the tragic and the postmodern as represented by anti-foundationalist thinking, with Trollope's *The Warden* being discussed as a proto-postmodern work that is both anti-tragic and anti-foundationalist in several respects.

By seeing modern writers as interacting with tragedy and the tragic in various ways, one can create what I hope are interesting connections between works which on the surface might appear to have little in common. Modern writers often appear to write from quite diverse perspectives but by considering their different and implicitly opposed responses to the tragic one sees them in effect entering into debate or dialogue with each other about the fundamental issues the tragic raises in the modern period.

Notes

1. Walter Kaufmann (1969), *Tragedy and Philosophy*, New York: Anchor Books, p. 65.
2. Peter Szondi (2002), *An Essay on the Tragic*, trans. Paul Fleming, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. George Eliot (1992), *Selected Critical Writings*, ed. Rosemary Ashton, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 244. See also A. C. Bradley (1909), 'Hegel's Theory of Tragedy', in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, London: Macmillan, pp. 69–98.
5. Quoted in Szondi, p. 9.
6. Adrian Poole (2005), *Tragedy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 59, 61.
7. Szondi, p. 55.
8. William Storm (1998), *After Dionysis: A Theory of the Tragic*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 80. For a recent study of Greek tragedy that challenges philosophical approaches to tragedy by emphasising the performative, see Olga Taxidou (2004), *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
9. *Aufheben* is what replaces, in Hegelian dialectic, the original thesis and antithesis, both of which, however, remain saved or preserved in some sense in their 'sublation'.
10. Jacques Derrida (1999), 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida', in Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley

(eds), *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, London: Routledge, p. 66.

11. Ibid., pp. 67–8.
12. See exchange between Hamlet and Rosencrantz in *Hamlet*, III, ii.
13. See discussion of *Hamlet* in Chapter 1 of Jacques Derrida (1994), *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, New York: Routledge.
14. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco (2004), *For What Tomorrow . . .: A Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 132. Emphasis in original.
15. See George Steiner (1963), *The Death of Tragedy*, London: Faber and Faber.
16. Terry Eagleton (2003), *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*, Oxford: Blackwell. Eagleton argues for a new idea of the tragic that can accommodate Marxism, humanism and religion. The emphasis is on range of discussion and often scathing critique of alternative ideas of the tragic rather than detailed analysis of texts, and writers whose perspective on or attitude to the tragic Eagleton particularly disagrees with are dismissed in ex-cathedra style.

Chapter 1

Ibsen's *Ghosts* and the Rejection of the Tragic

In his book *The Death of Tragedy* George Steiner famously and controversially argued that Ibsen's middle period social realist plays in prose, and by implication the modern drama on social themes that emerged from them, were irreconcilable with tragedy:

> But these tracts, enduring as they may prove to be by virtue of their theatrical vigour, are not tragedies. In tragedy, there are no temporal remedies. The point cannot be stressed too often. Tragedy speaks not of secular dilemmas which may be resolved by rational innovation, but of the unaltering bias toward inhumanity and destruction in the drift of the world. But in these plays of Ibsen's radical period, such is not the issue. There are specific remedies to the disasters which befall the characters, and it is Ibsen's purpose to make us see these remedies and bring them about. *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* are founded on the belief that society can move toward a sane, adult conception of sexual life and that woman can and must be raised to the dignity of man . . . As Shaw rightly says: 'No more tragedy for the sake of tears.' Indeed, no tragedy at all, but dramatic rhetoric summoning us to action in the conviction that truth of conduct can be defined and that it will liberate society.[1]

By writing plays in which it is suggested that there are social solutions to human problems and in forsaking the heightening of language made possible by verse for dialogue based on ordinary speech, Ibsen, generally regarded as the first modern playwright, had in effect killed off tragedy.

Although one may agree that Steiner is right to see Ibsen's social realist plays as breaking with the tragic, he does not explain why there is nevertheless a fairly obvious interplay between *Ghosts* (1881) and classical tragedy, indeed no mention is made of this fact. Ibsen clearly has classical tragedy in mind in *Ghosts*, particularly Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, held by Aristotle in his *Poetics* to be the exemplary tragedy. Whereas Steiner suggests that Ibsen made an unfortunate literary decision in abandoning tragedy in favour of what he sees as an inferior social

realism in his middle period plays, I shall argue that Ibsen very much realised what was at stake in artistic terms in going beyond traditional tragedy and that a play such as *Ghosts* is the outcome of the conscious adoption of an anti-tragic aesthetic: though inhumanity and destruction are always with us, in the modern era tragedy is no longer an appropriate artistic response to them.

Ibsen, of course, before he turned to social realism, had written plays in verse, and one of the best known of these plays is *Brand*, clearly a tragedy in form and conception though it had been reworked from a poem that was epic in scale into a 'dramatic poem' not intended to be acted on the stage. Though it might appear to belong more to the Romantic idea of tragedy than to the classical, in that there is a clash between an individual of heroic potential and a world that fails to conform with or can't live up to his ideals, the play can also be aligned with a Hegelian theory of the tragic. It has been suggested that Ibsen in his verse period was influenced by Friedrich Hebbel, a tragic dramatist influenced by Hegel's theory, for whom the basis of tragedy lay in the conflict created by the inevitable fact that any assertion on the part of the individual will provoke necessarily a counter-assertion of the world will.[2] The play recognises that Brand's adherence to a philosophy of 'all or nothing', which he believes is demanded if people commit themselves fully to the will of God, is one that virtually no human being or human society can live up to. Nevertheless it is a heroic ideal even if the attempt to apply it is destructive both to Brand himself and to other people. The play does not set up a simple dichotomy between the heroic individual and a corrupt or flawed world as in more conventional Romantic drama: we see the negative consequences of Brand's idealism, and ordinary humanity is not treated with contempt though its limitations are clear. There is both respect for Brand's assertion of 'all or nothing' and respect for the pragmatism and compromise that characterises the resistant world in which the hero lives. Out of that fundamental conflict – which is essentially ahistorical or intrinsic – emerges the tragic. But when Ibsen moved on from verse and the heightened form of drama associated with it to a drama that employed modern prose with character and situation treated in accordance with this new form of dramatic language, a social and historical dimension was introduced that changed the nature of serious drama; in particular the tragic as traditionally conceived was called into question. *Ghosts* suggests that Ibsen was well aware that a move to social realism had major implications for tragedy.[3]

Steiner asserts that the conflicts at the root of classical tragedy are basic and constitutive to the human condition, and the Ibsen who wrote *Brand* may have agreed with him. When Steiner refers to 'the

unaltering bias toward inhumanity and destruction in the drift of the world', the key word is 'unaltering'. Sophoclean tragedy assumes that human beings live in a world in which there are intrinsic conflicts, such as that between a transcendent moral or metaphysical order and natural human desire or an idea of the human good that is not necessarily reconcilable with laws of transcendent or divine origin. Thus Oedipus, when the Oracle foresees that he will kill his father and marry his mother, refuses to accept that fate even though the Oracle is in touch with an order superior to humanity. Of course in seeking to avoid his fate he precipitates it. But he displays hubris, from the gods' point of view, in believing human beings do not need to accept the will of the gods: they can operate as independent agents. Although one can, of course, claim that the gods have set up Oedipus, it is arguable that this is not done lightly or mischievously but to bring home to human beings that the transcendent realm of the gods is ultimately more powerful than and thus superior to the human realm. Human beings need continually to be reminded that they are subject to the authority of a higher power. Yet there is an inescapable and irresolvable conflict of interest between gods and humanity and human beings would not be human if they did not rebel against transcendent power and the laws that sustain it. If Oedipus on hearing that he was fated to kill his father and marry his mother had merely accepted that fate as inevitable he would have compromised his humanity. And as this fate seemed avoidable, the only authentic human choice was to try to avoid it. But from the gods' point of view, if human beings believe they can easily control and shape their lives without taking account of an authority that has a transcendent source then the gods will become redundant and thus there would be no order that transcends human desires and interests.

In Sophoclean tragedy – the situation is more complex if one also considers classical tragedy as a whole, notably Aeschylus and Euripides – the human and the non-human realms are also conceived of as unchangeable: both are defined in essentialist terms. The non-human or transcendent realm is by definition unchanging and human beings have an essence or soul that is not determined by the body or anything material but is also conceived of as being beyond change. Thus the conflict between the two is non-contingent: it will always exist though it may take different forms. It is significant in *Oedipus the King* that when Oedipus learns the truth, he does not blame the gods or the fates: the authority and superiority of the world beyond the human is accepted. He has performed acts that are irreconcilable with laws that emanate from a non-human source and so are unchallengeable. Although he did not know the man he killed was his father or that the woman he married

was his mother he accepts responsibility for his actions. He does not accuse the gods or the Oracle of deceiving him. He believed he could set human interests above the realm of the gods and he must therefore accept punishment for his hubris. When the inevitable conflict between the transcendent world beyond the human with its fixed and unchangeable laws and the world of human beings is irresolvable, tragedy and the tragic come into play.

In Ibsen's social realist drama this conflict between two unchanging and unchangeable forces is no longer tenable. What has changed in the modern era is that both the world external to the human – whether conceived of in terms of a metaphysical or natural order – and human identity are no longer perceived as having an autonomous and independent existence since they cannot be separated from the social; the naked confrontation, characteristic of a tragedy such as *Oedipus*, between the transcendent realm of the gods and an essential humanity disappears because society and by extension history have entered the picture. All conflicts are thus mediated by society – or perhaps better, the sociological – and history, an idea that would have been alien to Sophocles and his pre-modern era. Of course, it would be a caricature of classical or pre-modern tragedy as a whole to claim that society and social issues are absent from representation. However, what makes the modern context in which Ibsen wrote his social realist drama different in a fundamental way from pre-modern eras is that a sociological dimension shapes thinking about the world, human identity and the relation between the two. Even metaphysical ideas in the modern era have to be defended against those who see them as having social, cultural and historical origins. The most influential modern thinkers from various perspectives have argued that human beings do not have essences: human identity is determined – wholly or partially depending on point of view – by socio-historical forces such as class and ideology. There are thus no absolute laws and human acts cannot be judged in absolute terms independent of circumstances. A modern Oedipus who discovers he has inadvertently killed his father and married his mother need not be seen either by himself or his social world – at least in Western society – as having performed acts that are beyond redemption. He could question the absoluteness of the laws that condemn patricide and incest: do these not emanate from a particular socio-cultural matrix and therefore cannot be applied in different eras without further discussion? The modern Oedipus could also claim that his actions cannot be judged separately from his state of mind: the fact that he did not know that his father was his father when he killed him or his mother was his mother when he married her means that he cannot be guilty of patricide and incest in any real sense. He is merely a