

Disentangling Hegel's Endorsement of Colonial Slavery From His System of Philosophy

Hegel's Dialectic, Bad Infinity and the Pedagogy of Colonialism

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Declaration Page

I, Adam Haddour confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

When faced with the issue of Hegel's colonialism, many defenders of Hegel place it on the periphery of his system of philosophy. However, in the process of attempting to disentangle it from his system, this thesis found that his endorsement of colonial slavery lies at the heart of his freedom project. The thesis starts with the question: Does Hegel's system endorse colonial slavery? After rejecting Buck-Morss' claim that the breakdown of the Master-Slave relation in Hegel's Dialectic reflects his opposition to colonial slavery, my thesis proposes that the Dialectic justifies Hegel's claim that slavery is necessary to bring Africa into world history; when read alongside the *Lectures*, the Dialectic explains how, through labour, the slave develops a newfound sense of freedom. For Hegel, Europe needs to enslave Africa to give them a chance of freedom. However, Long Chu argues that, for Africa, freedom will never be realised and that Hegel is perpetuating colonialism. Hardimon outlines Hegel's bio-spiritual account of race that claims that black Africans lack the spiritual characteristics for freedom and are resistant to cultural influence. As per Hegel's account of race, it is unlikely that Africa will ever be brought into world history. This is in direct tension with Hegel's claim that his freedom project will be realised imminently. The *Philosophy of Right* places Hegel's colonial endorsement at the heart of his freedom project when he states that colonialism is logically required by the rational state where freedom is actualised. This text also establishes the colonial process to be of the 'greatest advantage' to the mother state. Hegel disguises his endorsement of colonial slavery as an educational process for Africa's benefit but this reveals that it is, in fact, to liberate Europe.

Impact Statement

My Thesis presents a new way of understanding Hegel's colonialism. It argues that his account of slavery and his account of colonialism come together to form one unified argument for colonial slavery. Recent scholarship on Hegel, such as Hardimon and Long Chu, has started a trend of examining whether Hegel's system is perpetuating colonialism. My account offers a new contribution to this trend: it claims that Hegel places colonial slavery at the very centre of his freedom project. Most of the literature that acknowledges Hegel's colonial endorsement characterises it as being (1) a temporary process and (2) for the benefit of Africa. However, my account argues that *The Philosophy Right* brings into question both of these statements. For Hegel, colonialism is logically required of the rational state where freedom is actualised and is for the greatest advantage of the mother state. I argue that Hegel's system of philosophy uses the same narrative that colonial thought used to legitimise and perpetuate colonialism: it claims that it is for the good of the colonised when, all the while, it has the best interests of the coloniser at heart. It helps contribute to postcolonial studies' initiative to recognise how prominent European thinkers and systems of thought enabled and encouraged colonial behaviour. Understanding Hegel's philosophy, which is still influential, as perpetuating colonialism showcases how easily colonial rhetoric can be imbued into modern social and political thought. This way of understanding can shape how we interact with culture: The Museum of London has made Black History and colonialism a priority of theirs, dedicating a specific collection to the stories of Windrush. It is also currently running a London, Sugar and Slavery Exhibition that explores and recognises London's connection to the transatlantic slave trade. On their Slavery, Culture & Collecting page, they write:

“The wealth generated by slavery was used to create cultural institutions such as museums, universities, art galleries and charities. Advocates of slavery would then use culture in their arguments for the continuing use of enslaved labour, on the grounds that Africans needed the "civilising influence" of Europe.”

It is this rhetoric that is at the heart of Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. This thought that The Museum of London has identified to explain the institution of slavery is Hegelian. Working with The Museum of London, this project can overtly insert philosophy into the influence of culture on slavery. The Victoria and Albert Museum has, also, done work dedicated to African and Black culture, with a Global Africa collection, an African heritage programme and numerous collections on Black history. Both of these institutions recognise the darkness of colonialism—it is by challenging the figures and systems of thought that legitimised this practice that we will ensure that we continue to move further away from it.

Introduction

Too often philosophy wants to have it both ways: when questioned on the significance of Hegel's philosophy, it is not a dead philosophy and should not be left behind in the 1800s but, when confronted with evidence that Hegel expressed racist, colonial, or other sentiments, which now seem offensive or outrageous, it should be kept in the 1800s. One might be able to consistently hold both of these stances if, as some defenders of Hegel state, Hegel's Eurocentrism does not cut that deep into his work and, therefore, does not affect how we should view his system. They place Hegel's colonialism on the periphery of his system which allows them to gloss over it and focus on the other, 'more central' aspects of his system— to them, the colonialism of Hegel is dispensable to his core philosophy. However, considering just how imbued colonial views are into the Hegelian system, they are more difficult to overlook than such scholars suggest. This thesis argues that disentangling Hegel's colonialism from his philosophy is a complicated and intricate process, because it lies at the heart of his freedom project. If there is to be a place for Hegel's philosophy in 21st-century thought, its adopters have to address its colonial problem adequately. And, I think this colonial picture is a lot more troubling for Hegel's philosophy than the likes of Philip J. Kain lead us to believe (Kain 2005, pp. 254-256). This thesis proposes that, when we read Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right* together, Hegel provides a troubling endorsement of colonialism and slavery that places both at the heart of his freedom project.

The common pushback to criticism of racist and colonial views within Hegel's philosophy is that it is unreasonable and unrealistic to hold a 19th-century philosopher to the standards of our time. In the case of Hegel, he was a white, male, European philosopher operating

during Europe's colonial period—many would say any colonial views he espoused were simply the product of the time that he was writing in and that these views are par for the course when looking at philosophers of that period. If this is the case, why should we hold Hegel to the standards of our time?

In the case of Hegel, we can question whether it is right that his philosophy is so imbued with the standards of his time. Hegel's philosophy gives mixed messages on whether his philosophy should be able to stand the test of time. On the one hand, his philosophy is presented as a logic-based approach that is without suppositions and, so, we should be able to expect a presuppositionless philosophy to not suppose racist and false things. But, on the other hand, Hegel also argued that philosophy was a product of its time. In the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states that 'philosophy also is its time apprehended in thoughts'. For Hegel, the period in which a philosophy is written is expected to be a feature of the philosophy. So it seems there is some scope to say that maybe Hegel did not necessarily expect all of his philosophy to age well. In any case, I do not believe it to be a philosophically interesting task to engage with the question of whether Hegel personally was racist or colonialist—that would require a yes or no response which, most certainly, will be followed by the question: so what? Similarly, it is not that philosophically interesting to state that a 19th-century philosophy contains some of the misconceptions of 19th-century thought. Instead, my thesis aims to understand just how imbued those racist and colonial views are into the Hegelian system and whether there is a way to rescue his philosophy from his personal views.

Hegel's philosophy has a lot to say on matters of freedom, alienation, the self and, more generally, 21st-century social and political thought. If we can successfully remove its

colonialism whilst keeping the philosophy intact, it can provide a strong contribution to 21st-century thought. Alison Stone highlights its contributions to decolonising thought:

[...] anti-colonial and decolonizing thought and activism, which, after all, has regularly drawn on Hegel, both directly—e.g., when Frantz Fanon ([1952] 2008) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012) use Hegel to critique colonialism—and indirectly, through Hegel's influence on Marxism and critical theory. Moreover, Hegel's thought may still offer further anti-colonial resources which remain to be mined. (Stone, p. 258)

As Stone puts it, there is good reason for us not 'to dismiss Hegel's thought too summarily' (ibid.). If we can tidily deal with Hegel's colonialism, we may be able to use his philosophy to advance post-colonial and decolonising thought. So the main question of this thesis is: Can Hegel's philosophy be rescued from his colonial endorsement? Let us use the cancer analogy to explain how we might approach this. If we treat Hegel's colonialism as a cancer diagnosis for his philosophy, then his pro-colonial, pro-slavery and racist views are the tumour. We must first understand how deep-rooted it is in his system and whether it can be removed easily without much damage to the system—we must remove it in such a way that the philosophy survives. To do this we must address two questions: (1) to what extent is it in Hegel? and (2) to what extent does Hegel make sense without it?

Colonialism, Slavery and Racism

It is important that the key terms of this thesis not become conflated so let me say something about (1) colonialism, (2) slavery and (3) racism.

First, We must first distinguish between the different types of colonisation. Even within Hegel's texts, he distinguishes between different types of colonialism—In *Philosophy of*

Right, he talks about 'sporadic colonisation' which he contrasts with 'systemic colonisation' referring most likely to Ancient Greek colonies:

Sporadic colonization is found particularly in Germany. The colonists move to America or Russia and retain no links with their home country, to which they are consequently of no service (Hegel PR, §248).

This process (of individuals leaving their home country and moving to a new country) is contrasted with systemic colonisation:

It is initiated by the state, which is aware of the proper way of carrying it out and regulates it accordingly [...] whenever the population grew to a point at which it could become difficult to provide for it, the young people were sent off to a new region, which was either specifically chosen or left to be discovered by chance (ibid.)

Systemic colonisation will be the focus of this project; I am concerned with how Hegel legitimises colonisation that is initiated by the state, namely Europe's colonisation of Africa Proper. There is a tendency in popular discourse to conflate talk of colonialism with Empires and slavery. Whilst there is no arguing that all are bad, it is important not to reduce all talk of colonialism to its popular association with Africa and the slave trade. I believe that there is a connection between Hegel's colonialism and his views on Africa but this is something that needs to be argued for. In the case of Hegel, he was not alive during the 'scramble for Africa' during the 1880s which saw the large European takeover of the continent and, as a result, many will deny that the colonialism of Hegel is the same. But, it is my view that, though it was slightly past his time, Hegel articulates the colonial spirit of

his moment which resulted in the scramble for Africa—although Hegel was not present for the scramble, I believe his work announces it. Moreover, the brutal transatlantic slave trade of Africans was happening during the time and I believe that this is reflected in his works. However, there are so many different types of colonisation that Hegel was aware of and could have been influenced by; so these different types of colonialism need to be disentangled and, if this thesis is going to argue his system to be pro-colonial, it needs to be accompanied with an argument for which type of colonialism underpinned his system of thought and why. Hegel was greatly influenced by the Ancient Greeks. Thus, he may be referring to a more ancient Greek style of colonisation. He was alive during the end of the colonisation of North America and was active as a philosopher during the British colonisation of India. He was, also, an ardent admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte and Buck-Morss believes he was at the very least influenced by the colonisation of Haiti in his writing. The fact is that Hegel could have been influenced by many different forms of colonialism and not all take the form of the colonisation of Africa.

Moreover, slavery and colonialism are two distinct things, though they are often related — slavery need not be accompanied by colonialism and vice versa. The instinct with these things is to keep them very far apart, given they are two different things. Thus, it is important not to immediately conflate slavery with the transatlantic slavery that was a feature of Western colonialism. Similarly to the discussion of colonialism, it is important not to conflate all talk of slavery with the transatlantic slave trade although, again, I do think there is good reason to bring together slavery and Africa in Hegel.

It is important to question whether slavery in Hegel is necessarily race-based. Does Hegel endorsing slavery necessarily commit him to a racist position? The answer to this is no. As we know, Hegel was greatly influenced by the Ancient Greeks who built their society on

slavery that was not race-based. Similarly, the Barbary Slave Trade was not race-based, with most of the slaves being European Christians. Furthermore, Hegel's philosophy should not be able to justify slavery that discriminates against people based on race as he does not allow for natural differences of significance between men. All of this is to say that, for Hegel, discussions of slavery should not necessarily be conflated with race.

Whilst, indeed, colonialism, slavery and racism ought not to be conflated, I think that the three come together when we look at Hegel's views on what he calls 'Africa Proper'. Hegel separates the Mediterranean region of North Africa from sub-Saharan Africa, which Hegel calls 'Africa proper' (Hegel 1975, pp. 152-209). For Hegel, Slavery 'ought not to exist' because its unfreedom is in complete opposition with his philosophy, as this thesis will later explain. However, he makes one exception to this in the case of Africa Proper. Influenced by the racist tropes and stereotypes that Europe had of Africa, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel characterised Africa Proper as 'the land of darkness' with its inhabitants being barbarians and savages. Black Africans are unhistorical and unfree. Slavery cannot violate their freedom because they have none. Slavery can help educate the 'animalistic' Africans and bring them into European civilisation, thus saving and giving them a chance of freedom. Therefore, European enslavement of Africans is emancipatory for them; slavery is necessary for black Africans and Hegel states that they need to be brought into civilisation by 'any means necessary'. But Hegel's claim is also not simply that Black Africans need to be civilised but that Africa Proper needs to be brought into world history and, thus, an argument for colonialism takes shape alongside his argument for slavery. Slavery, alone, cannot be enough to civilise Africa Proper. Let us consider the case of enslaved Africans that were sold and forced to work in North America. Their enslavement, alone, would not civilise Africa Proper but only

these black African slaves that were removed from Africa Proper; they had left Africa so it's not as though, even from Hegel's point of view, the parts of Africa they came from became civilised as a result. Thus, if it is Africa Proper that needs to be civilised, there would need to be the civilising presence of Europe *within* Africa Proper, combined with the civilising process of slavery. Thus, slavery, alone, is not enough to bring Africa Proper into world history—it needs to be understood as a feature of Europe's systemic colonisation of Africa Proper. Hegel is not trying to replicate the ancient Greeks in his calls for slavery but, rather, he is making an exception for Africa.

This thesis will mainly focus on African slavery because it is Hegel's own ignorance of Africa that leads him to call for slavery to be necessary. An endorsement of slavery need not be race-based but Hegel's clearly is, at least to some degree. He states that black Africans were built for labour (Hegel 1975, p. 172) and that they need to be enslaved to be brought out of their animal existence. There are, of course, two different claims that could be made here. Either Hegel had anti-Black racist views about Africans, therefore endorsed their enslavement or Hegel had anti-Black racist views about Africans, and therefore endorsed a race-based account of slavery. Hegel's account of slavery seems closer to the former claim—it is his hierarchical views on race that brought his endorsement of the enslavement of Africans, and in that sense, his account of slavery is based on race. However, it is not necessarily a race-based account because if Hegel concluded that Europe was in the same state that he states Africa is in, his account would call for their enslavement (although I believe that his hierarchical view of race would never allow such a hypothetical to be the case). In any case, Hegel's account of slavery is certainly not distinct from discussions of race.

Reading the Master-Slave Dialectic alongside Hegel's *Lectures* provides us with an understanding of the educational value of slavery in Hegel and, therefore, how slavery can bring black Africans into history. When we add the *Philosophy of Right* to this picture, it can add a colonial dimension to Hegel's slavery endorsement. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel claims that the struggle for liberation between the coloniser and the colony ultimately ends in a liberation process that is good for the mother state (§248). This seems to be a pretty clear endorsement of systemic colonisation but, as previously established, that need not be attached to Hegel's slavery or his views on race. However, when you look at the similarities this has to the Master-Slave Dialectic, it seems that his endorsement of systemic colonisation can provide more depth to the picture of Africa Proper. Africa Proper needs to be brought into European civilisation. For the entire continent to undergo this kind of civilising mission, one would assume that Africa Proper would not be brought into European civilisation without a European presence, although not explicitly stated. Moreover, Hegel believes that systemic colonisation where 'colonies have not been granted the same rights as the inhabitants of the mother country' (ibid.) brings about an ultimate liberation that benefits the mother state. Combining this with our understanding of the Dialectic and the *Lectures* on Africa Proper, we are starting to see an endorsement for the colonial slavery of Africa that will educate black Africans in the way of freedom and aims at their liberation which will ultimately benefit Europe. Black Africans needed to be brought into civilisation by 'any means necessary' — I believe that, if we bring these three works together, Hegel provides us with his idea of how.

Once we understand the civilising role that Hegel believes slavery plays in world history, we understand it as the kind of slavery that we have seen in the transatlantic slave trade; slavery does not exist simply because someone has to do the work, as a common view of slavery in Classical Greece would suggest, but as a process that allows the unfree areas

of the world to develop a conception of freedom. It is true that when Hegel talks about slavery, it is not necessarily colonial but, (a) when we understand the role of slavery as bringing the unhistorical into historical progress and (b) we understand who Hegel deems to be unhistorical, we understand that the type of slavery required is a colonial one.

Premise 1) Slavery is only justifiable as a means for the historical to bring the unhistorical into history.

Premise 2) History moves from the East to the West, with Africa having no history and only Europe being historical.

Conclusion) Europe's colonial enslavement of unhistorical regions (like Africa) is justifiable.

The type of slavery that Hegel's civilising project requires is the kind of colonial slavery that was going on at Hegel's time of writing. Probably influenced by some of the pro-colonial rhetoric at the time, a large part of Hegel's colonial endorsement rests on his racist views on Africa; Hegel's racist views of Africa portray it as a region of barbarism with no conception of freedom and, for that reason, it becomes the most in need of the colonial development process. I believe that if you read Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Lectures* and the *Philosophy of Right* together, each text informs each other to paint a coherent picture of the important process of slavery and colonialism in his freedom project; the Master-Slave Dialectic tells us exactly how slavery is 'necessary' for a transition to a higher stage of development in the *Lectures*. And, if we read both of these texts with the *Philosophy of Right*, we understand the function of colonialism in free society as one of 'liberation'. At times, this thesis may feel like it slides between the terms 'slavery' and 'colonialism' too loosely, but this is not done without thought — it is done because I believe

that it is colonial slavery that Hegel is thinking of when he endorses the necessary slavery of Africa Proper.

This thesis argues that Hegel's belief that slavery is a 'necessary' process should be understood as a central feature of his colonialism. His endorsement of colonial slavery is central to the ultimate goal of his system—the actualisation of freedom in the rational state. It is only when trying to separate colonialism from Hegel's system that it becomes clear just how deeply imbued it is.

Chapter 1 of this thesis asks: **does Hegel's system endorse colonial slavery?** This chapter deals with Susan Buck-Morss' claim that Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* reflects that Hegel is an abolitionist at heart. However, when we look at Hegel's claim in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* that slavery is a 'necessary' process to bring Africa into world history, Buck-Morss' reading becomes implausible and a new reading becomes apparent: the Master-Slave dialectic explains for how slavery can educate the slave and put them on the path of freedom and, thus, can explain Hegel's claim in the *Lectures*. This is the first step in uncovering Hegel's argument for colonial slavery.

In Chapter 2, the question is: **does Hegel's colonial endorsement provide a problem for his freedom project?** This chapter explores Andrea Long-Chu's criticism that the 'necessary' process of colonial slavery is, itself, a bad infinity. I will look at how Hegel may respond to deny that his system contains bad infinity. Though he may be able to respond to avoid bad infinity in his system, as Hardimon outlines, Hegel's bio-spiritual account of race presents black Africa as lacking the necessary spiritual characteristics for freedom. As a result, the colonial enslavement of Africa Proper is justified as a means to an end which

is very far off in the future and may never be realised. Whilst this is not as bad as Long Chu's claim, it still poses an issue for Hegel's freedom project which claims that freedom will be realised immediately. Instead of actualising freedom, Hegel is perpetuating colonialism.

In an attempt to remove this colonial endorsement from Hegel's system, Chapter 3 asks: **Is Hegel's philosophy necessarily pro-colonial?** This chapter explores Alison Stone's attempt to rescue Hegel's philosophy by extracting his basic account of freedom from his Eurocentric account of world history. But, as Stone finds, this is a tough process because Hegel's basic account of freedom promotes European culture. I present a different way that we may be able to remove Hegel's colonial views from his system: by denying Hegel's colonial premise that Africa needs saving. However, the *Philosophy of Right* shows that colonialism is logically required and is a feature of the rational state where freedom is actualised—denying that colonialism is for the good of the colonised does not remove Hegel's colonialism because the liberating process of colonialism is good for the mother state. All of these chapters combined form Hegel's argument for colonial slavery, and show that it is difficult to extricate it from the ultimate goal of his system: freedom.

Chapter 1: Does Hegel's System Endorse Colonial Slavery?¹

1. Introduction to Chapter 1

The strongest possible way that a defender of Hegel's system could respond to the question of colonialism within it would be to claim that there is no colonial issue; if the system does not provide any colonial endorsement, bringing it into the 21st century becomes simple. Many readings deny that Hegel's system necessarily implies colonialism. However, Susan Buck-Morss goes a step further and claims Hegel's system was, in fact, anti-colonial. According to her, Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic was ahead of its time. This work was a revolutionary piece of abolitionist literature inspired by a liberation movement against the coloniser; Hegel was standing up to the standards of the 19th century and taking a stance that modern social and political thought would approve of. With such a reading of Hegel, it is no surprise that Hegel's system might be influential in abolitionist literature.

Buck-Morss argues that Hegel's *Phenomenology* 'brings into [Hegel's] work present political and historical realities' (Buck-Morss 2009, p. 52). In her view, Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic is inspired by the revolution of Haitian slaves against the slave-holding class, an event that challenged the logic of colonialism. By 'collectivising the master' in Hegel's Dialectic, Buck-Morss reads it as a political commentary on the disjunction between the institution of slavery and the 'rational state'. But, this chapter will show such a reading to be implausible for two reasons.

¹ This chapter develops and deepens discussion from my undergraduate dissertation entitled: 'Hegel's *Phenomenology*: Problematizing a Historicist Reading of the Master-Slave Dialectic.'

Firstly, Buck-Morss presents an abolitionist reading on the basis that Hegel's Dialectic is a political piece of philosophy on the relationship between the master and the slave. Even if we give Buck-Morss the benefit of the doubt that the Dialectic is political, there are good reasons to question whether it is even about slavery. Whilst it is commonly referred to as the 'Master-Slave' Dialectic, it is maybe better translated as 'lordship and bondsman'. Rather than using the most common German word for 'slave' (*Sklave*), Hegel opted to use a word that better translates to 'servant' (*Knecht*). Many argue that the Dialectic picks out a more feudal relation of lordship and bondsman. Whilst *Knecht* can occasionally pick out 'slave', this is not how the word is commonly used. The ambiguity here calls into question whether, as Buck-Morss suggests, the object of the Dialectic is to express his political opposition to slavery. If he is trying to express such an important message, why use a term that does not clearly convey his meaning?

Secondly, even if Buck-Morss' claim that the Dialectic is abolitionist was a convincing one, it would be in tension with the necessary role of slavery that Hegel establishes in his system and, consequently, it reads as out of place with the rest of his system. Presenting Hegel as anti-colonial and anti-slavery is completely contradicted by the educational value that Hegel places on slavery, especially in a colonial context. Slavery has a necessary role in civilising the unhistorical parts of the world (Africa Proper). At most, he might be against the idea of slavery but, practically, it is a central part of his system and necessary to any realisation of freedom. In fact, this chapter will not only reject Buck-Morss' abolitionist reading of the Dialectic but will, also, argue that, when read alongside the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* and the *Philosophy of Right*, the Dialectic helps us better understand the central role of slavery to his freedom project. This chapter will primarily show that it is implausible to defend Hegel from the charge of colonialism by claiming that his system is anti-colonial. Hegel's system is definitely not anti-colonial but, given the role

that slavery has in bringing Africa into History, this chapter will show that it may very well be pro-colonial.

Circumstantial textual and historical evidence leads Buck-Morss to the unique conclusion that the Master-Slave Dialectic was a political commentary, inspired by the Haitian Revolution. Drawing on M.A Rafey Habib's and Tishale Tibebu's work, this chapter will challenge Buck-Morss, specifically her inability to reconcile her reading with the biographical and textual facts. I will henceforward deal with the most glaring omission of Buck-Morss' reading: Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Buck-Morss cannot simply disregard this text on the basis that Hegel got 'dumber with age' (Buck-Morss 2009, pp. 65-74); she must be able to account for why Hegel thinks slavery is 'necessary'.

After showing Buck-Morss' argument to be implausible and incongruent with our understanding of Hegel, I will present an alternative reading of the Dialectic that better deals with these issues; I argue that Hegel's Dialectic is better understood alongside Hegel's claim that Africa Proper must 'necessarily' be enslaved. Hegel locates Africa Proper outside of world history and regards black Africans as unfree. For Hegel, the 'animalistic' Africans must be integrated into civilisation 'by any means necessary' and slavery offers the solution. The Dialectic can explain this. In the Dialectic, Hegel outlines how, through labour and acting for the master, the slave develops a newfound sense of freedom. It is this kind of development that Hegel believes justifies his endorsement of colonial slavery. Buck-Morss believes the Dialectic is at odds with Hegel's *Lectures*, I argue that the Dialectic justifies them.

1.1 Self-Consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.²

Hegel sets up the Master-Slave Dialectic with a struggle for life and death. According to Robert Stern (Stern 2013), the life and death struggle functions to gain recognition and distinguish self-consciousness from mere animal life. Hegel regards life as 'the natural location of consciousness' and as self-sufficient (§ 188), death the natural negation of life and the self-sufficiency of it. Through a struggle to the death, we are certain that the self-consciousness risked their life. However, Hegel realises the problem with such a struggle. In a battle to the death, only one self-consciousness remains. But, for Hegel, self-consciousness exists only as a recognised being (§178) and 'sees itself in the other' (§179). Thus, each self-consciousness needs the other to live so that they can be recognised. Once on the brink of death, the would-be 'slave' comes to think that surrender is preferable to death and gives up the struggle. The 'master' also stops aiming at the death of the other so that they can gain the necessary recognition of the other. Instead, the master exerts himself over the slave's body; the slave, henceforward, recognises the master as a subject. In establishing this dynamic, the master can also, through the slave's labour on the world, resolve their estrangement from the world. Hegel states that the master is a being-for-itself and that they are self-sufficient. The slave is a being-for-another and they are non-self-sufficient (§ 189). The master exists as a consciousness existing for itself mediated with himself through another consciousness (the slave). The master is recognised as a subject through the slave. The slave is proven to be non-self-sufficient and only has their self-sufficiency in the shape of 'thinghood' (§ 190).

However, though the master may appear independent and self-sufficient, he relies on the slave to recognise him as a subject. But, the slave is subordinate to the master's will and,

² In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. T. Pinkard (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

so, becomes an instrument of it. What the slave does is, really, the master's doing – 'the servant is not a pure but rather an inessential doing' (§191). But this means that when the slave recognises the master, it is instead the master that is recognising the master. The master cannot see himself as the other sees him, only as he sees himself. As Terry Pinkard explains, in this relationship, the master cannot gain the necessary recognition of the other:

Logically viewed, the master demands a dyadic judgement from the servant, whereas he refuses to take up any such judgement for himself, relating himself only monadically to his own conception of what his order of thoughts requires. He also demands recognition from somebody who on the master's own terms does not have the authority to bestow such recognition (Pinkard 2017, p. 28).

Moreover, whilst the master moves from a position of self-sufficiency to a position of dependency (on both the slave's labour and recognition), the Dialectic flips the relation on its head and, through work, the slave becomes truly conscious of himself. In servicing the master's consumption, the servant is forced to make things and not consume them. Instead, the servant must make these things and, then, allow them to exist. Because of their situation, the servant's impact on the world is lasting, as opposed to the empty regress of desire. Stern outlines Hegel's three necessary conditions for this realisation to occur: fear, service and work on the world (Stern 2013, pp. 98-100). Hegel believes that without the presence of all three, the other conditions won't manifest themselves in such a way that allows this realisation to take place. Thus, in working on the world, the slave no longer sees himself as estranged from the world, gains a newfound consciousness and becomes more self-sufficient. As Hegel puts it, at this point, the Master-Slave relation has 'inwardly fallen into dissolution' (§194)

1.2 Buck-Morss on Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic.³

Whilst there are many different readings of the Dialectic, with some examples being Otto Pöggeler's claim the Dialectic is nothing more than an 'abstract' example or Michael Forster's historicist reading, it is perhaps Susan Buck-Morss' historicist reading that is of the most interest to this thesis; she argues that the break down of Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic reflects his strong opposition to colonial slavery. Her first piece of evidence for this is Hegel's choice of relation in the Dialectic: the Master-Slave example. To understand the controversial nature of the Master-Slave example, we must understand the events that contextualise the *Phenomenology*. Buck-Morss argues that, at the time of writing, slavery was the 'most burning political issue' (p. 59). Moreover, before writing the *Phenomenology*, Hegel used examples of mutual recognition that were less topical, such as the relationship between criminals and society, the relations within the religious community and personal affection (pp. 51-52). It seems that his move to the more controversial Master-Slave relation was a deliberate one. It would be naive to think that Hegel's choice of example was entirely coincidental given the political climate in which he was writing; increasingly, more and more European thinkers were engaging with the topic of slavery within the discourse of freedom. The Dialectic is Hegel's way of engaging with the political discourse surrounding slavery and the movement for its abolition in the 1800s. Hegel's example reflected the surrounding circumstances and 'brings into his work present political and historical realities' (ibid.).

As evidenced by his active engagement with the news, specifically with French abolitionist Abbé Grégoire and the Haitian revolution, colonial slavery must have been at the forefront of Hegel's mind at the time of writing. The Haitian Revolution was a key moment in the

³In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Buck-Morss, Susan, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (University of Pittsburg Press, 2009)

fight for the freedom of slaves in the colonies. At the time, the colony of Saint Domingue (now known as Haiti) was the richest in the world; it was unimaginable that the slave class could overthrow their masters anywhere, let alone in the most-prized colonial island in the world. Yet, fighting with the attitude 'Live Freely or Die', over half a million Haitian slaves carried out a violent revolt against their masters which gained their freedom and Haiti's independence from France (pp. 36-42). This triggered European thinkers to rethink the logic behind enslavement and challenged many of their racist prejudices. Buck-Morss believes that Hegel was one of the many European Enlightenment thinkers influenced by the events in Saint Domingue. She believes that Hegel's use of the controversial Master-Slave example provides a 'commentary on the history of the world' (p. 60).

Given that Hegel was engaged with the news and current affairs whilst writing the *Phenomenology*, Buck-Morss offers two ways to understand Hegel's use of the Master-Slave example. The first is that Hegel is the 'blindest of all blind philosophers of freedom in Enlightenment Europe' (pp. 48-51); Despite Hegel being known to read the very papers that reported on the Haitian revolution, Hegel somehow managed to block out reality when writing the *Phenomenology*. Not only this, but he also coincidentally moved to the Master-Slave example in the *Dialectic* at the exact time that it was happening. It would be uncharitable to portray Hegel, one of the most influential German Idealist philosophers, as being so ignorant of the real world. Buck-Morss believes that once we reject this way of understanding Hegel, we are left with the second option: that Hegel was aware of the successful revolt of the slaves against their masters and, in light of this, deliberately elaborated his Master-Slave Dialectic. This option is the more plausible of the two and begins to seem quite likely. The Haitian revolution was seen as a 'paradigm-breaking example' which announced the universality of freedom. Buck-Morss argues that Hegel's shift to the controversial Master-Slave example was a calculated and deliberate move to

engage with the matter of universal freedom. However, Buck-Morss has, of course, presented us with a false dichotomy, and there are more than two options here. Perhaps Hegel read the news and thought about Haiti, but still, the Master-Slave Dialectic was not a response to it or an illustration of it because it is about something different.

Buck-Morss' historicist reading of the Dialectic sees it as a call for universal freedom (p. 52-56). She states that 'one has to collectivise the figure of the master in order to see the descriptive pertinence of Hegel's analysis'. We must not understand it as a relation between one master and his slave but, rather, as the relation between the slave-holding class and the class of slaves. In doing so, we can read Hegel as saying that the slave-holding class is totally economically and politically dependent on the institution of slavery; they are entirely reliant upon slavery for their financial wealth and position in society. The slave-holders cannot make historical progress as it would require the 'annihilation of their own existence'; to make historical progress, one must make the move to the rational state where everyone is treated equally but, as the slave-holders are reliant upon the institution of slavery, they cannot make this move without undermining their own existence. In this reading, Hegel's Dialectic outlines a clear disjunction between the institution of slavery and the rational state that requires equality of recognition.

Despite Hegel's silence 'at the point of realisation' (pp.54-55), Buck-Morss believes that 'given events that contextualise *Phenomenology*, the inference is clear'; Hegel's failure to provide a comment beyond the point where the Master-Slave relation breaks down is not damaging to her social reading of Hegel. Hegel's work, when read in context, clearly implies his political stance on the topic of slavery: these kinds of relations are unsustainable and the people who maintain them cannot make historical progress. Buck-Morss concludes that 'beyond a doubt, Hegel knew about real slaves and their

revolutionary struggles' and goes on to call the Master-Slave Dialectic 'perhaps the most political expression of his career' (p. 59); Hegel used the events of Haiti to provide a commentary on the history of the world.

1.3 Responding to Buck-Morss.

This thesis asks how deep Hegel's pro-colonialism runs into his system. But, if Buck-Morss' reading of the Dialectic is correct, this would stop the discussion dead in its tracks. We cannot engage with the question of how deep Hegel's pro-colonialism runs if the *Phenomenology* shows Hegel to be anti-colonial. However, ultimately, Buck-Morss' bold reading is an implausible one and, by showing that, I will show that Hegel is pro-colonial and these views are deeply imbued into his system. One issue with understanding the Dialectic as a political statement is that its supposed abolitionist message can only be understood through inference. If Hegel wanted to take a stand against slavery by showing solidarity with the Haitian slaves' pursuit of liberty, then it would be counterproductive to make this message so difficult to extract. The collapse of the Master-Slave relation is not met with any political (or even normative) comment from Hegel. Instead, it just turns into stoicism, which leads to scepticism and so on. One would assume that works aiming to convey a political message would make that message as explicit as possible but Hegel's Dialectic does the opposite—to uncover its political commentary, we must first provide a detailed prologue to the Dialectic and, then, we need to infer its political conclusion.

M. A. Rafey Habib argues another issue with Buck-Morss' account (Habib 2017, pp. 36-40); despite the 'circumstantial and biographical evidence', it is not supported by any textual evidence. Though he finds her reading a 'fascinating attempt to ground the Master-Slave Dialectic in specific historical circumstance', he believes it only succeeds in helping 'bring out the richness of the Dialectic'. He states that her account deliberately omits the

textual evidence in the *Phenomenology* that contextualises Hegel's claim. He highlights her quotation of the 'trial by death' section as evidence. Buck Morss quotes Hegel as saying:

And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained... The individual who has not staked his life may, no doubt, be recognised as a person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. (PM, 233).

However, hidden in her ellipsis are lines that contextualise Hegel's claim — viz. 'only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not mere absorption in the expanse of life' (PM, 233)] — and make it clear that Hegel's statement is the nature of recognition rather than being about slaves risking their life for freedom. For Habib, Buck-Morss' account ignores textual evidence in the *Phenomenology* and, as a result, turns Hegel's point that recognition requires consciousness not to be attached to life into a commentary on slavery.

As Teshale Tibebu asserts (Tibebu 2011, pp. 45-48), it is not just the *Phenomenology* that Buck-Morss' account ignores. In her 'slippery' reading, Buck-Morss ignores the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. Hegel elaborates on his Dialectic in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* yet does not ever acknowledge being influenced by Haiti. In fact, Hegel does acknowledge Haiti in this text but never makes any connection with the Dialectic. Moreover, Hegel's struggle for recognition, supposedly inspired by the Haitian revolution, occurred under radically different conditions to the Haitian revolution. Tibebu asserts that 'Hegel believes the state of nature is the domain for the struggle for recognition' but Haiti was, famously, not in a state of nature. If this 'struggle' was influenced by and meant to reflect the Haitian

revolution, why does the domain of the 'struggle' not reflect the domain of the Haitian revolution?

Tibebu continues to highlight the 'big holes in Buck-Morss' bold assumption'. She portrays Hegel as a revolutionary on the topic of slavery when, in fact, he was a reformist. If he were ever to call for the abolition of slavery, he would not call for a radical revolution like in Haiti— he would call for it to be gradually phased out. The claim that he was revolutionary on the matter of slavery is undermined by the fact he was an 'ardent admirer' of Napoleon Bonaparte, the man who reinstated slavery in 1802 after it had already been abolished. As Tibebu puts it, 'Hegel simply could not have it both ways: admiration for Napoleon and enthusiasm for the success of the enslaved in Haiti'. There is a clear diremption between Buck-Morss' account and Hegel's views on slavery. Habib furthers his point that Buck-Morss conflates the Master-Slave metaphor with Hegel's own comments on historical slavery. Part of the beauty of the Dialectic's allegorical nature is that it is 'widely applicable to a variety of historical situations' (Habib 2017, p. 40). The fact that it can be related to real-world events does not suddenly make it about those real-world events, rather it speaks to the metaphor of the Dialectic.

1.4 Slavery in *Lectures on Philosophy of World History*.

Buck-Morss' account of the Dialectic is accused of ignoring the actual works of Hegel. It omits contextual information in the *Phenomenology* and does not talk about Hegel's elaboration of the Dialectic in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. But it is the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* where Buck-Morss is perhaps the most guilty of this; his views on world history and spirit completely undermine the universal freedom that Buck-Morss suggests he is arguing for. Buck-Morss' belief that Hegel supports the freedom of the Haitian slaves' in their fight against slavery is undermined by Hegel's account of the

'negro' in his discussion of 'Africa Proper' (Hegel 1975, pp. 152-209). Whilst, obviously, the Haitian slaves are not from Africa Proper, Hegel's theory of race (which will be the central focus of Chapter 2) conflates his characterisation of the 'negro' with his characterisation of black Africans. Hegel's views on Africa Proper reflect his view of blackness and so they are important to Buck-Morss' account. Furthermore, if Buck-Morss uses the Haitian revolution to outline Hegel as anti-colonial, it is important to outline his characterisation of Black Africa and the pro-colonial endorsement it leads to.

Hegel states that Africa Proper 'has no historical interest of its own, for we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery in a land which has not furnished them with any integral ingredient of culture' (Ibid., p. 174). He infantilises black Africans by referring to Africa Proper as 'the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night' (ibid.). In what makes for uncomfortable reading, Hegel establishes the inferiority of the black African. Hegel's universal state is supposed to transcend difference but, when it comes to Africa Proper, Hegel becomes contradictory. At this point, he outlines his account of slavery:

Slavery ought not to exist, as it is by definition unjust in and for itself. This 'ought' expresses a subjective attitude, and as such, it has no historical justification. For it is not yet backed up by the substantial ethical life of a rational state. In rational states, slavery no longer exists; but before such states have come into being, the authentic Idea is present in some areas of life as an unfulfilled obligation, in which slavery is still necessary: for it is a moment in the transition towards a higher state of development (Ibid, p. 184).

Despite slavery being morally wrong, Hegel says, it is a historical necessity which is part of the development of the rational state. More specifically, colonial slavery is the tool through which the historical (Europe) can bring the unhistorical (Africa Proper) into world history. At the centre of Hegel's colonial endorsement is his belief in the inferior nature of African peoples. Even though Geist (as Hegel presents it) should not allow for discrimination based on natural fact, especially when it comes to freedom, Hegel does exactly this with black Africans. For Hegel, the black African is built for slavery as his physical build 'enables him to perform arduous labours'. It is their animal-like existence that Europe must use slavery to bring them out of. We cannot plausibly hold that Hegel expressed enthusiasm for the Haitian slave revolution without acknowledging Hegel's subsequent claim that the 'negro' needs to be enslaved for his own good.

Buck-Morss does attempt to pre-emptively address this problem for her account by simply brushing it off as a 'shift' in Hegel's thinking (Buck-Morss 2009, pp. 65-74). After gaining their independence and implementing a system of free labour, Haiti was, reportedly, declining in productivity and living under a brutal regime. According to Buck-Morss, the news of this, whilst Hegel writing the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, caused him to consider Haiti's 'great experiment' a failure. As a result, he rethinks his views on slavery in the *Lectures*. The tension between Buck-Morss' account and Hegel's later views on slavery can, thus, be explained as a shift in his stance. Therefore, Buck-Morss believes the *Lectures* do not undermine her political reading of the Dialectic. But, if the Dialectic no longer reflects Hegel's views then why, as Habib questions, are his changing opinions not reflected in a changed account of the Master-Slave Dialectic? As Habib points out, Hegel maintains his Dialectic:

If the Master-Slave Dialectic in these texts was infused with Hegel's *changing* interpretation of the Haitian revolution, why did Hegel's later distaste for the revolution not result in a *changed* account of that Dialectic in the later text? The later account *continues* to maintain the Master-Slave relation is reversed. This surely is to have one's Dialectical cake and eat it (Habib 2017, p. 39).

Buck-Morss tries to position Hegel's argument for slavery in his political philosophy as entirely irrelevant to the Dialectic. However, given that her account already relies on circumstantial evidence, it is difficult to accept that her political reading of the Dialectic cannot be reconciled with Hegel's political work.

Buck-Morss, also, explains the tension between her account and the *Lectures* by stating that in Hegel's attempt to become more 'erudite' on African study, he actually 'became dumber'. But to attribute the degeneration of Hegel's philosophy to the fact that he was simply 'getting dumber' with age is not a satisfactory response, especially since he died at the age of 61, arguably the prime years of a philosopher. Instead, it is far more likely that Buck-Morss' account did not correctly understand Hegel's philosophy in the first place. The *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* pose a serious problem to her account. Her best response to this problem is that Hegel was not the same philosopher when he wrote his later texts. At best, this presents Hegel's works as being disparate pieces that do not fit together to form a coherent philosophy—the Hegel who wrote his early work should be understood as essentially a different philosopher to the Hegel who wrote his later works. This response appears nothing short of her trying to fit the facts around her argument rather than attempting to present the most plausible reading of the Dialectic. Whilst intriguing, her reading of the Dialectic is not what Hegel intended.

Robert Bernasconi contends that you cannot claim that Hegel's views on other cultures came from a place of ignorance, because he was actively engaged with other cultures.

Even if Hegel's conclusions about China and India can be criticized, they were not made from a standpoint of ignorance. Hegel's Eurocentrism did not take the form a lack of interest in other cultures (p. 174).

According to Bernasconi, understanding Hegel's Eurocentrism is more complicated than people recognise. To do so, we must examine Hegel's account of world history; history moves from East to West—it starts in Asia and its 'absolute end' lies in Europe. Bernasconi believes that the historical hierarchy Hegel establishes, which places Europe at the top and does not even consider Africa as a part of history, is influenced by his views on race. Despite his claims that all humans implicitly share rationality and therefore there is no intrinsically superior race, Hegel states that 'a hierarchy' can be created by (geographical) circumstances. Bernasconi clarifies that 'type and character of every people is formed in a geographical environment in which they are rooted'. Not every people is world-historical; Hegel regards Africans as showing no historical progress. As Bernasconi succinctly puts it, 'the biological component with the world-historical notion of a people remains undergirded not only by the concept of race, but also by contemporary racial prejudice' (Bernasconi 2000, pp. 185-188). From this follows Bernasconi's crowning claim of the paper:

By denying that all peoples are peoples in the full sense of potentially world historical entities and by suggesting that not all races develop into world historical peoples...For all but the caucasians, history has no ultimate end in the shape of progress and development (ibid., p. 189).

Hegel's philosophy cannot coherently conclude that only Europeans transcend race. As a result, he offers Africa Proper a potential pathway into history: they can be integrated into a civilised existence by the more civilised. This civilising mission can be carried out by 'any means necessary'; Hegel gives Europe the 'right to treat other races much as they liked' and believes those less advanced can be treated as barbarians. As Bernasconi states, colonisation offers a solution that will include other races in the 'continuous history of the caucasians'. Hegel's entire theory of actualised freedom, which was premised on rationality, falls victim to the same irrationality that he believes the caste system operates on (ibid, pp. 189-191).

Buck-Morss claims that Hegel's later political works are disjointed from his early revolutionary political commentary in the *Dialectic* and should be discarded as the declining philosophy of an ageing philosopher. Reading Hegel in this way threatens the idea of a unified Hegelian system by presenting his texts as disparate and at odds with each other. I reject Buck-Morss' claim that the Master-Slave Dialectic and *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* are inconsistent and, instead, argue that it is through reading Hegel's *Lectures* alongside the *Dialectic* that we can properly understand Hegel's claim that slavery is a 'necessary' process of historical development.

Alison Stone outlines how slavery, in the *Lectures*, can function as an educational part of the freedom process for the enslaved:

...slavery educates in several ways. (i) Those enslaved are subjected to European culture and ethical standards. (ii) Slavery imposes the discipline of work. In working, one learns to hold one's natural desires in check and thereby see oneself as capable of deliberating about or even rejecting them. (iii) Work also instils an

awareness of one's capacity to mould natural objects—a sense of 'achieving independence through one's own activity' (61). (iv) Ironically, those enslaved thus acquire a sense of private property (61)—partly by learning of European institutions of property and partly by imposing form on objects, thereby forming a sense of 'possessing' them which fosters an appreciation of property. In sum: 'Slavery ... is necessary at those stages where the state [and its people] has not yet arrived at rationality. It is an element in the transition to a higher stage'. (Stone 2017, p.255)

How Hegel believes slavery can educate Africa Proper of its freedom bears striking resemblance to the Dialectic and the way that the slave comes to understand their freedom through labour and a connection with nature; through being enslaved, the slave no longer simply follows their most basic desires and thus comes to understand their own self-consciousness and, consequently, their freedom. Through the Dialectic, we can understand the stages of colonial slavery and how it will bring Africa Proper into world history: (1) colonisation, much like the Dialectic, begins with a struggle for life and death (the initial process of invasion), (2) then the established colony will fall into a stage of enslavement that will consist of labour and carrying out the will of the master (the coloniser) and (3) ultimately there will be an emancipatory process where the slave (the colonised) frees itself from the master after developing a new-found sense of freedom through their enslavement and labour. This picture will also inform how I view colonialism in the *Philosophy of Right*, which I will address in my third chapter.

Rather than presenting the *Lectures* as something which is in opposition to the Dialectic, it is far more plausible that one informs how we should read the other. If Hegel's Dialectic was, as Buck-Morss states, a show of support for the Haitian slave revolution, the only coherent reading we could provide of this, that would make sense with Hegel, would be that Hegel believed that the Haitian slaves had 'completed their colonial process'. Rather

than it being a stance against colonialism, Hegel might simply be celebrating its success. I believe that this is the best way to understand the Hegelian Dialectic. It allows us to accept some of the interesting information that Buck-Morss puts forward about Hegel being influenced by the Haitian revolution without forcing us to read Hegel in a way that is completely incoherent with his later political work on slavery; Hegel may well have been inspired by the Haitian revolution and he may well, as a result, have specifically changed his example to something more controversial. But, if he took inspiration from Haiti, he took inspiration from how, through their enslavement, the Haitian slaves developed their own sense of freedom and gained their liberation— something that colonial slavery made possible. It is their resulting freedom that justifies the colonial slavery that they were subject to.

1.5 Presenting Self-consciousness as essential to our understanding of the Dialectic with Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*.⁴

This argument is supported by the fact that self-consciousness is key to the breakdown of the Master-Slave relation. Hegel's specifies two interacting 'self-consciousnesses' in the Dialectic; ultimately, a Master-Slave relation between two self-conscious beings will collapse. However, Hegel denies Africa Proper self-consciousness and regards their existence as animalistic. In the case of Africa, 'we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery in a land which has not furnished them with any integral ingredient of culture' (p.174). Hegel understands self-consciousness as what distinguishes one from a 'mere animal existence' (Stern 2013) but, in the *Lectures*, he makes it clear that the African's 'Primitive state of nature is in fact a state of animality' (p. 178). He explicitly concludes that

⁴ In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge University Press, 1975)

Africans lack self-consciousness 'for in this state [...] man is as yet unconscious of himself' (ibid.). Hegel's dehumanisation of Africans is made clear:

It is now generally accepted that man, as a human being, is free; but where this is not the case, man has value in only one or other of his particular capacities: for example, partners in marriage, relatives, neighbours, and fellow citizens are of value to one another. Among the negroes, however, even these values are extremely weak, or, to be more precise are altogether deficient (p. 184).

Because of the African's lack of self-consciousness, all the things that we would expect of human existence are 'deficient' in the African man, including the most important one: freedom. To Hegel, the unconscious African is unfree. For Hegel, 'slavery ought not to exist' because it violates the freedom of self-conscious beings. However, for the black African who is unfree and not self-conscious, this does not apply. It is true that slavery logically breaks down when all involved parties are self-conscious but, for the unconscious African, slavery can help them 'transition towards a higher state of development' (p. 184); in the Dialectic, it is only through labour and acting for the master that the slave develops a newfound self-consciousness and sense of freedom.

Thus, my reading of the Dialectic is as follows: at the point that the Master-Slave relation breaks down, slavery has completed its emancipatory project and is no longer necessary. Through being enslaved, the slave develops self-consciousness and, as a result, gains a newfound sense of freedom. Buck-Morss believes that the collapse of the Dialectic must reflect that Hegel, motivated by the success of the Haitian revolution, took a stance against colonial slavery. But I think it shows the opposite. Yes, I believe Hegel was aware of and inspired by the success of the Haitian revolution. However, I believe his enthusiasm comes

from the fact that he sees it as a success story for his account of slavery. For Hegel, slavery is the tool through which the unhistorical can be brought closer to freedom; the horrible colonial treatment of Haiti is vindicated by the resulting freedom and independence. The success of the Haitian revolution did not momentarily turn Hegel into a revolutionary. Instead, it emboldened him to believe that, for Africa Proper to also have a chance at freedom, like Haiti, they need the emancipatory process of colonial slavery. My next chapter will look closely at Andrea Long Chu's claim that, for Africa Proper, the end goal of slavery (freedom) will never be realised and, therefore, Hegelianism is merely perpetuating the enslavement of Africa (Chu 2018, pp. 414-425). If Long Chu is correct in this claim, then slavery not only is central to Hegel's system but is the ultimate fate of Hegelianism. At the very least, slavery is a necessary step in the development towards the rational state and, as a result, Hegel's system supports and rationalises the colonial system in place.

However, as has already been mentioned, there is good reason to question whether the relation in the Dialectic is even slavery. Hegel opted to use a word that better translates to 'servant' (Knecht) rather than using the most common German word for 'slave' (Sklave). The use of this word may suggest closer to a feudal relationship. For Buck-Morss' account, this is an issue; if Hegel was attempting to make an abolitionist stance, he has once again complicated the issue by choosing not to use the common word for slave. It seems unlikely that such a revolutionary piece of work would willingly choose to operate in such an ambiguous manner. However, this ambiguity does not pose a big issue for my reading. Even if the relation in the Dialectic is not slavery, although it is commonly known and recognised as the Master-Slave Dialectic, there are still significant parallels that can be drawn between the Dialectic and Hegel's account of slavery. And, even if the two are about subtly different types of relations, these relations are not completely unrelated—they are

similar in nature; the Dialectic can still inform our understanding of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*—it can explain how the ‘necessary’ process of slavery can transition Africa Proper towards a ‘higher state of development’. It can do this by appealing to a similar (or the same) process in the Dialectic where the ‘slave’ develops a higher level of consciousness and freedom through being subject to the will of the ‘master’. Therefore, we can understand Hegel, in *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, when he says ‘Servitude and tyranny are therefore to some extent justified, since they constitute a necessary stage in the history of peoples’. I agree with Buck-Morss that, given Hegel’s choice of relation, it feels unlikely that the Dialectic is entirely apolitical altogether. If the selected example is to be best understood as the Master-Slave example, then there was clearly a reason for this selection beyond mere coincidence. Moreover, I agree with Buck-Morss that it can help us understand Hegel’s view on slavery. However, unlike Buck-Morss’ claim that it reflects his support for the abolition of slavery, I believe it provides us with the logic underpinning his endorsement of colonial slavery.

This is a radically different reading from Buck-Morss’ suggestion that Hegel was rebelling against colonialism and, yet, a far more coherent one with Hegel’s other texts; Hegel hails the French for their colonisation of Algeria and avidly supports Napoleon Bonaparte. How can Hegel champion the Haitian revolution against slavery and then support colonialism? The answer is that he is not championing the Haitian revolution but, rather, the colonial process that ends in freedom. Hegel’s *Phenomenology* advocates universalism. However, the issue is that the universal state, which is supposed to transcend difference, becomes contradictory the moment the rational state encounters actual differences (geographically based in Asia and Africa). Hegel’s universalism refuses to acknowledge real differences.

Tom C McCaskie condemns Hegel as being 'fixated on hierarchy through concepts of advance and progress' (McCaskie 2018, p. 187). Hegel displays clear Eurocentrism with his 'negligent and slipshod' treatment of Africa. He furthered his agenda on Africa by either selectively picking his scholarly sources or manipulating and distorting texts. McCaskie provides the following indictment of Hegel:

His writing is steeped in beliefs and orthodoxies current in his time about the backwardness of Africa and Africans, and his theorizing barred him from ever admitting that continent and its people to history as he construed it (ibid.).

Hegel's philosophical views are tainted, guided and, ultimately, limited by the racial prejudices that he holds regarding Africa. McCaskie states that there are two ways to deal with the problem of Hegel's Eurocentrism: one can either attempt to abstract the work from 'the thinking from the man who thought it' or one can 'interrogate and reflect upon their [the reader's] illustrious predecessors like Hegel as embedded historical actors' (ibid, p.189). McCaskie believes that Hegel's system functions as 'a philosophical agendum for the unilateral or one way appropriation of the other as an object of knowledge' that is 'an altogether more subtle mechanism than outright racial disdain' (ibid, p. 187). When faced with the matter of colonialism, Hegel supports and rationalises it. My reading focuses on Hegel's characterisations of 'Africa Proper' because he regards them as removed from History. However, he also characterises Asia and 'Moslems' in a similarly negative way, classing them as minimally historical, and this may further help us understand his stance on the global empires that European countries held.

1.6 Chapter 1 Conclusion.

Buck-Morss merges history and politics in, what Habib calls, a 'creative misreading' of the Dialectic (Habib 2017, p. 39). Her revolutionary portrayal of Hegel is not grounded in textual evidence, merely circumstantial. In the same way that McCaskie accuses Hegel of distorting his sources on Africa to fit his narrative, Buck-Morss is guilty of manipulating Hegel's texts to fit her reading. When faced with the colonial reality of one of Hegel's most famous political works, her account crumbles and cannot be resurrected by her claims that Hegel got dumber with age. Ultimately, her reading does not stay true to the facts of Hegel. My account agrees with Buck-Morss' claim that the Dialectic can tell us something about Hegel's political view on slavery. But, instead of placing the Dialectic at odds with Hegel's account of slavery in the *Lectures*, my view argues that it is through the Dialectic that we can understand Hegel's claim that slavery is 'necessary' to bring Africa Proper (peoples that he describes as 'barbarians' and, more importantly, not self-conscious) into world history. The Dialectic outlines how the educating process of slavery can provide the enslaved with a newfound consciousness and, more importantly, a newfound freedom. The Master-Slave relation breaks down when both parties are self-conscious but, in the case of Africa Proper, Hegel denies them self-consciousness and places them at the bottom of his social hierarchy. Colonial slavery offers Africa Proper a pathway out of its unfreedom. Europeans are at the top of the social hierarchy and, as Bernasconi points out, Hegel empowers them to treat other cultures as they wish. Buck-Morss' claim that Hegel was inspired by the events in Haiti does not necessarily commit Hegel to a stance against slavery; he could view colonial slavery as the tool that gave Haiti its freedom. This reading makes sense when placed amongst Hegel's other works. In Chapter 3, I will show that Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* adds to this account of colonial slavery, and places it at the heart of his freedom project. The Master-Slave Dialectic contributes to Hegel's legitimisation of the colonial structure that Hegel claims 'ought not' to exist.

Chapter 2: Does Hegel's Colonial Endorsement Provide a Problem for His Freedom Project?

2. Introduction to Chapter 2

Buck-Morss defends Hegel from his colonialism by denying it. By presenting a famous piece of Hegel's literature as anti-colonial and anti-slavery, she rejects that Hegel's system provides an endorsement of colonialism. But such a reading is inconsistent with his other texts. To present specific parts of Hegel's work as anti-colonial is to turn Hegel's system into disparate pieces of work that are contradictory and at odds with each other. Buck-Morss' defence of Hegel does not work. A viable defence of the system must first acknowledge the colonialism within it before providing an account of how the system can be adapted to overcome it—Andrea Long Chu provides an attack on Hegel's system that suggests this will be a hard task.

Long Chu's attack on Hegel's system places colonialism at the heart of his freedom project. Not only is colonialism entwined with his philosophy, but it is justified as the means to an end that will never be realised—his philosophy ends up perpetuating and legitimising it all whilst claiming it ought not to exist. Now is never quite the right time for the end of colonialism. Long Chu questions whether the *ought* of colonialism resembles the unrealisable *oughts* of Kant and Fichte that Hegel, himself, rejects. If the *ought* of colonialism contains a 'bad infinity', then it poses a significant issue for Hegel; Hegel cannot endorse a system that contains one.

This chapter argues that, whilst Long Chu's criticism is a strong and plausible one, it is an argument that Hegel can at least attempt to refute. To do that, there are two things that Hegel needs to defend himself from. The first is the problem of a bad infinity within his system. In order to defend himself, he only needs to deny Long Chu's claim that Africa will

never be brought into world history, something I believe Hegel can do. The second issue is the realisability of the end of slavery. To ascertain this end, Hegel would have to claim not only that Africa can be brought into history but also that, if we continue down the colonial path, Africa will be brought into history. This is a more complicated task when we look at the works of Michael Hardimon, Daniel James and Franz Knappik. In these works, a bio-spiritual account of race starts to become clear in Hegel's system. In this account, Africans do not possess the important spiritual traits associated with freedom. Because of this, it is unlikely that the end of slavery will be actualised and black Africans will enter into world history. Defenders of Hegel may be able to avoid Long Chu's claim that the ought of slavery is a bad infinity but they will struggle to overcome the claim that slavery aims at an end that may never be realised. Ultimately, even though they can overcome Long Chu's objection, the alternative is not much better: Hegel's system justifies slavery as a means to an end that he does not know will ever be realised. Hegel can deny Long Chu's claim that the end of slavery will never be realised, but is claiming that it may not ever be realised much better? At worst, this puts us in the same position as bad infinity. At best, it puts the point of realisation so far in the future that it undermines Hegel's claim that *the world where freedom is actualised* is in our immediate future. Either way, this poses a significant issue for Hegel's freedom project.

2.1 Bad Infinity.

In *A Hegel Dictionary*, Michael Inwood clearly articulates Hegel's rejection of common conceptions of infinity. Many accounts of infinity understand infinity as what we know it not to be, namely the finite. But, infinity cannot be understood as the negation of the finite for to do that puts a restriction on something that is without restriction in nature (Inwood 2017, p. 140). Instead of finitude, this arrives at, as Long Chu says, 'ever more finitude' (Long Chu 2018). She explains:

[...] each time the infinite transcends the finite, the finite simply moves the goalposts and sets up a new limit to be negated. Hegel calls this, quite beautifully, “the sorrow of finitude.” This sorrow’s result is the bad infinity, a “progress to infinity” in which finite and infinite alternate in eternal tedium. (Long Chu 2018, p. 420)

Rather than arriving at infinity when the finite is negated, instead, you arrive at the ‘infinitely finite’. For Hegel, infinite regression (or infinite progression) is, what he calls, bad or spurious infinity (Inwood 2017, p. 140). Hegel rejects any system that contains bad infinity. Importantly, it is the bad infinity of progress towards infinity that is central to Hegel’s rejection of the ‘mere’ ought. Inwood presents the Kantian ought:

Kant sees the Ought as presenting us with an infinite task, viz. a task that can be completed only at INFINITY. I ought to be perfectly morally good, but however many dutiful actions I perform, I shall never attain this state in a finite period of time. (Inwood 2017, p. 209)

He also presents the Fichtean ought that developed from the Kantian ought:

Fichte took over Kant’s notion of the ought and made it the centre of his system. The pure I* POSITS an external world primarily as an arena for its moral striving (*Streben*). The goal of the finite I, of the I that has a non-I over against it, is to restore itself to the status of the pure I, to become a purely rational being whose will and conduct are exclusively determined by reason and morality. But this is an infinite task that it ought to, but will never in fact, complete. (ibid.)

Ought aims at an end that will not be actualised in a finite time. Thus, it becomes progress towards infinity. The unrealisable nature of ought leads to Hegel’s rejection of it (Inwood 2017, p. 140). For Hegel, the Kantian and Fichtean view of morality attends to what ‘ought to be’ rather than the actual. As a result, what is the case is placed in sharp opposition with

what ought to be the case. Moreover, progress towards the end goal of morality becomes an infinite progression; ought is an infinite regress, much like a line that goes on forever, or a series of steps in an argument which never ends. When the goalposts of morality are infinitely shifting further away, this leads to moral despair: why act morally when those who do remain infinitely far away from the good and as far away as those who do not act morally? If the end of a moral theory is ultimately unrealisable, it raises the question: What is the point of acting morally? Hegel believes that the infinite regress of ought is brought about to postpone the contradiction of moral activity. As Inwood succinctly puts it:

The task must be infinite since moral activity contradictorily *requires* what it attempts to overcome. (Inwood 2017, p. 210)

We can explain Hegel's claim in detail by looking at his *Encyclopedia Logic*:

The good ought to be realized; we have to work at this, to bring it forth, and the will is simply the good that is self-activating. But then if the world were as it ought to be, the result would be that the activity of willing would disappear. Therefore the will itself also requires that its purpose shall not be realized. This correctly expresses the finitude of willing. But we must not stop at this finitude, of course, and it is through the process of willing itself that this finitude is sublated, together with the contradiction that it contains. (§234Z)

If the end goal of the good is achieved, one no longer needs to will. The good ought to be achieved but to do so would be to eliminate the self-activating good that is willing.

Therefore, the good and the will appear in contradiction to each other: it is the nature of the good that it ought to be realised but the finitude of willing requires that the good is not realised. It seems that the Kantian will aims at an end that destroys itself and, thus, its end should not be realised; the purpose of the will is in opposition to the will itself. Hegel believes that Kant hides the very contradiction of the good life infinitely far in the future:

Hegel argues that it is precisely in order to cover up the outlined inconsistency that Kant postulates the immortality of the soul and postpones the full realization of the highest good to 'the dark remoteness of infinity' or to 'a foggy distance in which nothing can any longer be distinguished or comprehended'. (Garcia Mills 2017, p.199)

There might be a way that the Kantian could reconcile that the object of the will can be in opposition to the will in this way by appealing to desire-satisfaction. Let us consider the desire to become the best; it is the nature of this desire that, once one becomes the best, it is eliminated—there is no need for a desire to be the best if you are the best. If the Kantian regards the will as operating in this way, then they could push back on Hegel's objection that the finitude of the will requires that the good is not realised; the will is the thing that drives us towards the good and, once the good is realised, we have no need for it. But it seems that the will is more than simply the thing that makes us strive towards good—it is the good; the will is the good that is self-activating. In fact, Kant outlines in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* that when the will is wholly acting per its duty (the good will), it is the only thing that is intrinsically good and it is good without limitation (Kant 2002, p.9). Moreover, he outlines that it is the only thing that is intrinsically valuable. But for the will to wholly act per its duty, it would have to aim at its own elimination. This places the only intrinsic good in opposition to its purpose; the will is in opposition to the realisation of the good. This provides a problem for the nature of ought—the finitude of the will requires that the ought is never realised.

At this point in the chapter, it might be helpful to set out six different claims about when something might happen, in increasing uncertainty, to try and understand where Hegel's system locates the endpoint of the good (the actualisation of freedom):

Claim 1: It is happening right now.

Claim 2: It is happening really soon.

Claim 3: It is happening inevitably and fairly soon, but not really soon.

Claim 4: It is happening but way off in the future (in a couple of millennia maybe)

Claim 5: We do not know if this will ever happen, but it might.

Claim 6: This will never happen.

Now, part of the interest of Hegel's system is that he presents the actualisation of freedom as much closer to Claim 1 than to Claim 6. Once you get to the end of his system in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel believes that it is very close to the world that we are living in. The system can be actualised, in a way that Kant's and Fichte's cannot, *because* it is close to the actual world. The good, for Hegel, is not merely an idea that is infinitely far away but, instead, the world is, in effect, as it should be (Claim 1) or it is so close to that, that the next (and possibly final) steps are in view (Claim 2). As Inwood outlines, Hegel does not only reject the rational state where freedom is never actualised, he also rejects the rational state where freedom is not actualised imminently:

Hegel rejects any claim that the world, the present state of the world, or the present state of one's own society is radically other than it ought to be, independently of whether the claim generates an infinite regress. (Inwood 2017, p. 209)

This does not leave room for much space between the current state of affairs and the rational state where freedom is actualised and on the spectrum of Claim 1 to Claim 6, the actualisation of freedom must be closer to Claim 1. Claim 6 is bad infinity for Hegel and, so Hegel would dismiss any system of philosophy that locates the good here. Whilst Claim 5 is not bad infinity in the strictest sense, it still aims at an end that may never happen and so, at worst, is as bad. Locating the good here would also be problematic for Hegel and is,

potentially, still open to a realisability objection—you are aiming at an end that may never be realised. Claim 4 is not open to a realisability objection as it will be realised. But, the point at which it will be realised is so far in the future that it goes against Hegel's claim that society today is so close to the actualisation of the good. Moreover, it places a large gap between is and ought, which Hegel would oppose. Hegel may be able, at a push, to accept locating the good in Claim 3 but I would expect that would not do justice to just how imminent he thinks the realisation of freedom is; he believes that the final steps are in view and so placing the actualisation of the good in the medium future does not seem to do Hegel justice. If there is a separation between *the actual world* and *the world where freedom is actualised*, then we would need ought to bridge that gap. However, Hegel's system removes the gap between *the world where freedom is actualised* and *the actual world*. As a result, his philosophy does not need the ought (that he rejects). In order for him to remove that gap, the actualisation of the good needs to occur in Claim 1 or Claim 2. At a push, maybe Hegel could get away with locating it in Claim 3 but this begins to reestablish an is-ought gap. However, Long Chu believes that, in the matter of slavery, not only does Hegel fail to locate the realisation of the good within one of these claims, but he is guilty of bad infinity and locates it in Claim 6. As we know, Hegel rejects systems that contain bad infinity so this would be a fatal objection for him.

2.2 Long Chu's Objection.⁵

For Long Chu, both Bad Infinity and ought cause a realisability problem for Hegel's freedom project that results in a perpetual state of slavery for Africa Proper. Hegel's freedom project has to bridge the gap between the colonial slavery of the 'actual world' and the claim that slavery should not exist in the rational state where freedom is actualised. But to bridge the gap between slavery and the universal state where freedom

⁵ In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Chu, Andrea Long, 'Black Infinity: Slavery and Freedom in Hegel's Africa', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 32.3 (2018), pp. 414-425

is actualised, there exist some oughts — one of which being that ‘slavery ought not to exist’. Now, this ought is riddled with the very same kind of bad infinity that means that the Kantian kingdom of ends cannot be realised. In the rational state, slavery ought not to exist but it is this ought that perpetuates its existence—the ‘necessary’ process of slavery aims at its own elimination. Just as Hegel criticises Fichte and Kant for the bad infinity of their oughts, one of the oughts ‘necessary to’ the actualisation of freedom in the universal state is a bad infinite. The abolition of slavery begins to look like the familiar progress towards infinity because now is never quite the right time. As Long Chu elaborates:

[T]he gulf between now and freedom dilates to forever, thanks to, as I will show below, the perpetual delays of what Hegel calls the bad infinity. This is a freedom that will always remain on the dark side of a middle passage, a freedom to come that never comes, continually postponed or deferred through the dialectical mediation that history itself is. Hence Hegel’s answer to the question of abolition in the 1820s was the same as Lamar’s in 1860: “Not just yet, gentlemen, if you please.” (p. 417)

Slavery is justified by the end of freedom but Long Chu claims that this end is located in Claim 6 and thus Hegel’s emancipatory project is bad infinity. More concerningly, it appears that the only way to overcome this bad infinity would be to sublimate it into the true infinity of slavery:

Slavery equals freedom over time. The Negro will be freed from his unbondedness only through bondage; the only way to loosen the bands of bad infinity will be to tighten them, to cinch them into the true infinity’s perfect circle. (p.422)

Therefore, Hegel’s rational state where freedom is actualised finds itself facing the very realisability problem that Hegel levels at Kant and Fichte; the actual (slavery) is in sharp opposition to what ought to be (freedom). The fact that slavery ought not to exist is the

very reason why slavery exists. The fact that people ought to be free is the very reason why some never will be. To bridge the gap between the 'actual' and the ideal state, Hegel uses ought—the very thing his philosophy discounts.

For in the end, nothing will justify slavery better than the fact that it ought not to exist. (pp. 422-423)

At this point, it seems that Hegel is not successful in avoiding ought claims nor is he successful in avoiding his own realisability objection. Despite Hegel's claims that the *rational state where freedom is actualised* is not that far away from *the world that we live in*, it appears that the opposite is true— it is as far away as the Kantian kingdom of ends or the Fichtean ideal world. Hegel's rejection of ought as 'unrealisable' is the very thing that renders his goal of a rational state where freedom is actualised unrealisable.

The question marks over whether Hegel's freedom project is unrealisable comes with, as Long Chu points out, a concerning colonial implication to Hegel's body of work. If colonial slavery is only justifiable as part of a process that actualises freedom, where does that leave Hegel if this process can never be completed? Hegelian society starts to look like a colonial state. Not only are we a long way from Buck-Morss' portrayal of Hegel as a revolutionary abolitionist, but the process of decolonising Hegel is beginning to look like an open-heart surgery to his system. If Hegel is to be successful in showing that the kind of normative claims that his political philosophy uses are not the unrealisable Kantian oughts, his rational state in the *Philosophy of Right* is going to be key. He needs to present a clear picture of how the rational state is sufficient for free society.

2.3 Hegel's Bio-Spiritual Account of Race.

Long Chu paints the picture that, for Hegel, colonialism ought not to exist but right now it is morally necessary. Hegel may claim that the endpoint for colonialism lies somewhere in the future, but this future will never arise, and Hegel's philosophy will be stuck in a perpetual state of colonialism. Now, for Hegel to overcome the fatal issue of bad infinity within his system, he would only need to argue against Claim 6: that this future will never arise. And, it is unclear why Long Chu believes that this future will never arise. Hegel's standpoint that slavery 'should be abolished but not quite yet' looks a lot like the colonial narrative that legitimised and perpetuated colonialism. However, Hegel takes colonialism to be an educational and civilising process. Alison Stone outlines the emancipatory justification behind colonialism:

Hegel's overall line of thought is that colonialism is not only justified but also necessary, as part of Europe's centuries-long process of realizing freedom. A logical step in this process is to extend freedom to non-European peoples: after all, the European principle is that all are free. This extension can only occur, though, by passing through a stage of subjugating non-European peoples, since they have no native means of acquiring freedom. (Stone 2017, p.256)

It is through colonisation that unhistorical regions can be brought into world history. Therefore, Hegel can plausibly respond to Long Chu by claiming that, after the regions in need of this civilising mission have undergone the civilising process of colonialism, these regions no longer need a civilising mission and colonialism will no longer be necessary. Hegel cannot consistently think that black Africans cannot be civilised because of their race — Hegel's philosophy cannot justify slavery that discriminates people based on race as he does not allow for natural differences of significance between men. In the

Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, he states that 'no colour has any superiority' (Hegel 1978, p.46). There are strong Hegelian reasons to believe that there is nothing about black Africans that can disqualify them from becoming civilised. There is a lot to dislike about his claim that Africa needs colonialism, but it does not seem clear to me that there is an obvious realisability issue. All Hegel has to do to respond to Long Chu would be to claim that if Africa undergoes the civilising mission of colonialism, it will be brought into world history. If he does that, the endpoint of Africa's colonisation is not infinite, there is a pretty clear account of when it is going to end. Whilst this would still provide a very troubling colonial endorsement, it would not be infinite in the way that Long Chu states. In doing this, Hegel would be able to avoid a bad infinity in his system.

However, this rebuttal does not altogether solve Hegel's problem because it does not move him far enough back to Claim 1 or Claim 2: that the endpoint of slavery will be actualised now or in the immediate future. For Hegel to properly overcome the realisability objection of slavery, it is not enough to just deny that its endpoint will never happen. He has to go one step further and assert that it definitely will happen otherwise it is just aiming at an end that *may* never be realised. This is made challenging by the fact that Hegel rules out history for Africa. He writes:

history is in fact out of the question. Life there consists of a succession of contingent happenings and surprises. No aim or state exists whose development could be followed; and there is no subjectivity, but merely a series of subjects who destroy one another (Hegel 1975, p. 176–77).

There are multiple ways to understand his claim that 'history is out of the question'; something could be out of the question *as things stand* or out of the question *forever*. Hegel could simply have meant the former. However, it is cause for concern and its

ambiguity raises the question of whether he believes that history is in the picture for Africa.

His follow-up sounds even more troubling:

The negro is an example of animal man in all his savagery and lawlessness, and if we wish to understand him at all, we must put aside all our European attitudes (ibid.)

It is odd for someone, who is calling for the civilising influence of Europe on Africa, to assert in the same text that Africa cannot be dealt with European attitudes. As troubling as these quotes are, and as much as they may look to strengthen Long Chu's claim, there is not enough in them to rule out Africa Proper from world history entirely and place Hegel in the never category. Hegel states that history is out of the question for Africa, but does not state that it will always be out of the question. Hegel characterises Africa in a disturbing way but he can still claim that the emancipatory process may bring them out of this state. There is nothing yet concrete that makes Hegel guilty of bad infinity. Consequently, Hegel can avoid his system doing the very thing he rejects.

But, in Michael Hardimon's *Where Did Hegel Go Wrong On Race?*, he lays bare how Hegel's bio-spiritual account of race does not grant black Africans the spiritual traits of striving towards autonomy, independence and culture; as a result, it makes it unlikely that black Africans will enter into world history. Even with the civilising mission of Europe, a historical Africa is placed in Claim 5: it may never happen.

Despite his racist portrayal of black Africans as animalistic, most of Hegel's philosophy tells that it should not discriminate based on race. And yet, throughout his philosophy, Hegel establishes a cultural hierarchy between races with his bio-spiritual account of race (*Rasse*) (Hardimon 2024); biological and spiritual traits are differentiated across races, contributing to a racial hierarchy that places black Africans at the bottom.

Hegel's category of race is a biological one in the sense that he held 'that the inner biological constitutions of the different races were very different' (ibid, p. 31). The biological differences between these races predominantly focus on the formation of the skull (and the 19th century belief that this was linked to intelligence—with Black Africans being deemed as less intelligent because of their skull shape). In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel also identifies specific physical characteristics in black Africans that better suit them to physical labour (Hegel 1975, p. 172).

But race is not wholly a biological category—it is a spiritual one. Hardimon succinctly outlines the strong reasons for understanding Hegel's account of race as spiritual:

Its placement in the Philosophy of Spirit (rather than the Philosophy of Nature) indicates that Hegel conceived of race in expressly spiritual (*geistig*) terms. The fact that the word '*Rasse*' appears as (what we might call) a philosophically weight-bearing term in the discussion of spirit suggests that Hegel regarded 'race' as having an essential mental, spiritual or cultural dimension. Moreover, the specific use Hegel made of '*Rasse*' makes it clear that he thought of race as a determination of *Geist* (Hardimon 2024, p. 25)

Spirit is a central part of Hegel's philosophy and, importantly, his freedom project; race and spirit are entwined with each other — this, in turn, places race at the centre of Hegel's philosophy. And, it is not simply that there is a spiritual component to Hegel's account of race but, also, that racial differentiation is essential to the very nature of spirit:

Hegel appears to have been committed to the striking philosophical view that there is no spirit without natural racial differentiation, that spirit is (in this sense) essentially divided into biological or natural races (ibid, p. 26).

Spirit requires racial division and important spiritual traits are differentially distributed across these racial groups. Black Africans are considered spiritually inferior in terms of intellectual ability, moral/ political character and cultural capacity (James and Knappik 2023, pp.104-105). And, importantly, Hegel believes that the African race does not possess the grasp of the universal or the drive for freedom;

if you belong to what he took to be the 'Negro' race, you will in all likelihood be immersed in uninterested and indifferent naiveté. You will be exceedingly unlikely to display an inner impulse to culture. Spirit will most probably be 'entirely dormant' in you. (Hardimon 2024. p.26)

James and Knappik agree with Hardimon that Hegel does not grant black Africans important spiritual traits:

Africans lack cultural development; they are 'still what they have been two thousand years ago' (SG [1827/8, Stolzenberg]: 25.2: 61110f.); they 'have not proceeded to diremption, understanding, thought, science, lawfulness' (SG [1827/8, Stolzenberg]: 25.2: 61112f.). Rather than grasping universal contents, their religions fetishize natural objects (SG [1822, Hotho]: 25.1: 361–3). (James and Knappik 2023, pp.104)

In stark contrast to this, white Europeans are predisposed to strive for freedom and culture:

If, on the other hand, you belong to what he took to be the Caucasian race, it may be possible for you to achieve self-determination and self-development, to produce world-history and enjoy true freedom. (Hardimon 2024, p.26)

White Europeans are placed at the top of Hegel's cultural hierarchy with Asians operating as the midway point between the 'culturally deficient' black Africans. Race shows itself to

be very much a spiritual category — it is necessary for the concept of spirit: spirit is divided into race and race informs how spirit is divided. There is more to Hegel's account of race than biology. Yet, biology informs spirit in Hegel's account:

The reason Negroes had not attained this exalted level of consciousness lies in the limitations imposed by the natural determinations—what we today would call the 'biology' — of their race. (Ibid, p.27)

It is not simply that black Africans just so happen to lack these spiritual traits but, rather, that their biology is such that they are limited to not possessing them — it is in their biology that they are unlikely to achieve freedom. The issue is that Hegel openly does not grant black Africans the spiritual traits that make understanding, developing and achieving freedom likely. And, it is not just that black Africans do not possess the spiritual traits necessary to move towards freedom, but that their biology determines that they are unlikely to.

Hegel places black Africans outside of world history and, then, justifies paternalism, colonialism and slavery as practices that may bring them into world history. But, when faced with the question of 'whether black Africans ever would be introduced into world history', Hegel seems to suggest their biological and spiritual composition make it unlikely — they do not possess an inner impulse towards culture. Whilst it had seemed that Hegel's philosophy would not say there is anything about black Africans that would disqualify them from becoming civilised like Europeans, Hegel's account of race does exactly that. But, if this is the case, then Hegel appears to be justifying the practice of colonial slavery based on an end that may never be realised — whilst this might not be bad infinity in the official sense (ought aims at an ultimately unrealisable end) it is almost as bad appealing to an end that is very likely to be unrealisable — and Hegel's philosophy

ends up in a perpetual state of colonialism. Of course, defenders of Hegel may want to reply to this by claiming that it does not necessarily follow that, despite Hegel's account of race, Africa could not be brought into history with Europe's assistance but I will later deal with an example that shows that biological 'pre-dispositions' cause Africans to resist cultural influence.

One response to this is the common view in response to accusations of racism in Hegel; race is not the spiritually significant factor, geography is. Philosophers like Joseph McCarney defend Hegel from the charge of racism by saying that, even though it appears that Hegel has a racial hierarchy of people, this hierarchy is not based on inherent racial superiority (McCarney 2000). Instead, geography is the relevant spiritual factor. Hardimon acknowledges that geography complicates how we may read Hegel's race claims:

Hegel said that the origin of the physical and spiritual differences between the races can be traced back — somehow — to differences in the geographical regions of the earth the races inhabited (Hardimon 2024, p. 30)

This raises the question:

This linkage of race and geography might lead one to wonder whether Hegel could have thought that the differences in the spiritual characteristics between the races were due solely to differences in the geography of the regions in which the races were found (ibid.)

McCarney would assert that Hegel's supposed racial hierarchy merely reflects geographical circumstances — it is not racial inferiority that has caused the 'cultural inferiority' of black Africans, but rather the mountains, deserts and plateaus of the terrain that they inhabit. They are not racially inferior, for Hegel, they are just the unfortunate victims of environmental determinism. If the spiritual deficiencies are purely a product of

their environment and have nothing to do with their nature, then again it seems that there is nothing inherent about black Africans that disqualifies them from becoming civilised. Maybe, therefore, there is reason to believe that a civilising mission for black Africans could be successful; maybe the detrimental effect of their geography can be solved by the presence of a race that has developed the traits promoted by a better geographical environment (Europeans) and, if that does not work, they can be removed from the terrain that is stifling their development; since culture is decided by nurture instead of nature and there is nothing inherently different about black Africans, surely they would develop the same spiritual traits as Europeans if they had a European education. If this is true, then there is good reason for Hegel to believe that colonialism will bring about a successful civilising mission — the Europeans are the very proof that their education does bring about freedom, so if Africa also benefits from European influence, it will one day become free like Europe is.

But, as we have already established, a ‘nurture over nature’ reading of Hegel’s account of race is not plausible and this is underlined when Hegel explicitly considers a similar case to the one above. In the case that Hegel outlines, even after being exposed to the same European cultures, black Africans and indigenous Americans are inferior and do not develop because of their biological pre-dispositions. James and Knappik outline the case:

An interesting test case is provided by the colonial Americas (cf. Hoffheimer 2001: 38). There, both indigenous Americans and Africans were exposed to European cultures (cf. SG [1825, Griesheim]: 25.1: 232), including education (through evangelization: cf. W [1830/31, Karl Hegel]: 27.4: 1206). Nevertheless, Hegel claims that indigenous Americans ‘could not receive the higher culture [das Höhere] of the Europeans’ (SG [1827/8, Walter]: 25.2: 61124f.); because of their ‘weakness and stupor [Stumpfsinn]’ (W [1826/7, Hube]: 27.3: 8234), the missionaries ‘have not

been able to bring any drives and excitation into them' (W [1830/31, Karl Hegel]: 27.4: 120617f.). (James and Knappik 2023, p. 107)

A Hegel defender responds to this by pointing out that receptivity could be itself historical or subject to change over time. This is not something that is suggested in this quotation but it is also not something that has been ruled out. But, at this point, it seems like we are coming close to defending Hegel at all costs. And, even if it is not, this adds a whole process before the start of the emancipatory process that guarantees it to be a long process that does not have any kind of immediacy and, still, we do not know if we will ever achieve the end:

- 1) Europe needs to enslave Africa until Africa develops the ability to learn from slavery.
- 2) At this point, Europe would then begin the educational process of slavery until Africa is brought into history, which is something we do not know if it will ever happen.

Hegel then makes clear his belief in the biological superiority of Caucasians and the effect this has on their spiritual traits.

By contrast, Hegel thinks that the South American 'creoles' — i.e., 'descendants of Europeans with European blood' (W [1830/31, Heimann]: 27.4: 120629, 'a mixture of European and American or African blood', W [1826/7, Garczyński]: 27.3: 82321) — reach 'the higher feeling of self, the upward-striving to autonomy, independence' (W [1824/5, Kehler]: 27.2: 5108f.). This has even enabled them to create autonomous 'South-American States' (W [1826/7, Garczyński]: 27.3: 82318) where the creoles 'set the tone' (W [1824/5, Kehler]: 27.2: 51010). In other words: indigenous Americans suffer from an innate mental weakness that is not amenable to European education. But as soon as miscegenation with Europeans occurs, modern subjectivity, the consciousness of freedom and State life become possible

also in the geographic conditions of South America, thanks to 'European blood'.

(Ibid.)

In a case where the geographical and cultural factors were the same for multiple races, and the only thing that differed between them was their biology, Hegel still established a racial hierarchy that placed black Africans at the bottom and concluded they were unable to strive towards autonomy and independence. Even with a European cultural education, Hegel regarded black Africans as unable to strive towards freedom. Given this, there is even more reason to believe that the ought of Hegel's slavery aims at an end that likely will never be realised. Hegel, himself, has demonstrated that, even with European cultural influence, he does not believe that black Africans will reach upward-striving autonomy without European biology. If that is the case, then Long Chu's point that, for Hegel, it will never be the right time to end slavery is compelling. As Hardimon puts it well: '[Hegel's concept of race] served to legitimate colonialism' (Hardimon 2024, p. 32).

Moreover, James and Knappik believe that Hegel's hierarchy of races may, in fact, be an essential part of Hegel's metaphysics to understand the Concept:

Hegel often describes the structure of the Concept as a process of self-determination. This process starts from a condition of immediacy (universality) and, from there, goes through a development (particularity and individuality) that aims at explicitness and mediation, unfolding and realizing what was only implicit in universality. (James and Knappik 2023, p.111)

A concept is comprised of three necessary components (universal, particular and individual). But, also, when we look at how Hegel understands nature of life, the superordinate kind (nature) consists of three subordinate kinds (geological organism, plant life and Animal life). Each of these subordinate kinds is at differing degrees of development. From this, a hierarchy of sub-kinds is established—the minimally functioning

sub-kind, the higher functioning sub-kind and the intermediate sub-kind. This is Hegel's high-order essentialism, and these sub-kinds reflect a process. Only with these sub-kinds can we understand the progression from minimally sufficient to the higher sub-kind.

Hegel's high-order essentialism, also, requires that we need a hierarchy of humankind to understand the nature of humankind. Hegel understands humankind using thought so he establishes a hierarchy of thought. There must be 'initial, immediate and therefore non-thinking form of thought, which in the subsequent forms of thought is replaced by more adequate, mediated realizations of thought' (ibid, p.115). Just as, when understanding the nature of life, Hegel needs to establish non-living life (geological organism), Hegel needs a sub-kind of humankind to be a non-thinking form of thought:

We suggest that this notion of non-thinking thought is at the core of Hegel's brutally degrading account of Africans and Americans. The ability for thought that they possess qua human beings seems to be only a minimal capacity for Hegel — a capacity of being taught by others (viz., European colonizers) how to think, akin to the capacity for speech (cf. again Hegel's comment on the Haitian revolution at SG [1822, Hotho]: 25.1: 364f.: 'they are not able themselves to overcome their naturalness', and his notion of Africans as being 'highly educable from without' (von außen sehr bildsam), SG [1822, Hotho]: 25.1: 3526). By contrast, Hegel sees the Asian and Caucasian races as manifestations of humankind that possess increasingly autonomous and developed abilities for thought, culminating in the European variant of the Caucasian race. (ibid.)

In Hegel's hierarchy of thought, Hegel needs a minimally functioning form of thought and he dooms Africa to be that subordinate kind of humankind. The concept of humankind necessitates that there is an inferior, superior and intermediate sub-kind; if the inferior is a necessary part of nature, how can black Africans ever hope to become historical? James and Knappik believe that this hierarchy will only be reinforced:

Hegel argues that the causal interaction of various market mechanisms (PhR: §201, 234) leads to educational inequalities that reinforce innate individual differences, and produce 'inequalities in the resources and skills of individuals' as a 'necessary consequence' (PhR: §200, 233). Hence, the processes of *Bildung* in civil society make inequalities less mutable than they would otherwise be — our station is more fateful than our biology. (Ibid, p. 119)

All of this builds towards the conclusion that, for black Africans, freedom is not guaranteed and, given their biological pre-dispositions, their spiritual traits and the role of racial hierarchy in Hegel's metaphysics, the development of freedom for them seems unlikely (if not impossible). The strong reading of Hegel's theory of race places Africa outside of historical progress. It excludes what he calls 'the land of darkness' from historical enlightenment. For Africa, history is out of the question and, as a result, Hegel cannot reply to Long Chu with the promise of world history for Africa. The civilising mission of Africa ends when Africa has been civilised and has been brought into world history. But Africa has been excluded from world history and, thus, the end of the civilising mission is 'out of the question'. In fact, even though there are strong Hegelian reasons to believe that Hegel cannot discriminate on the basis of race, he states that 'Negroes are to be regarded as a race of children' (Hegel PM, p. 41–42). He goes further when he states 'one can speak of the objective superiority of the colour of the Caucasian race as against that of the Negro' (Hegel PS, 47). Hegel infantilises and dehumanises black Africans; he states that '[t]he negro is an example of animal man in all his savagery and lawlessness' (Hegel 1975, p. 177). Hegel animalises them to the point where states that the civilising influence of Europe would have to set aside its European attitudes to understand Africa. This puts him right back where Long Chu says he is — he is perpetuating colonialism. By excluding Africa from world history, Hegel has made it so that he endorses the colonisation of Africa as a means to an unrealisable end (history) — this is a bad infinity, a real problem for

Hegel. But, as we have established, Hegel cannot accept a system of philosophy that contains a bad infinity so we must avoid this reading at all costs and offer him some benefit of the doubt with a weaker reading. The weaker reading denies Long Chu's claim that there is bad infinity by denying the 'never' of the end of slavery. Reading of Hegel's theory of race in this, more generous, way suggests that, for Africa proper, history may well never be realised and, actually, there is good reason to worry that it will not. Whilst this would not make Hegel guilty of the type of bad infinity he dismisses Kant and Fichte's systems for, it would still not be good for Hegel — he would be justifying colonialism as the means to an end that, most likely, will never be realised. This would place the end of Hegel's 'ought' far from Claim 1 or 2 but closer to Claim 5. Even with a more generous reading of Hegel, we are left with the question of realisability and a Hegelian end which does not have the immediacy that he promises in the *Philosophy of Right*.

2.4 Chapter 2 Conclusion.

Not only is there a colonial issue for Hegel's philosophy, but I have shown that there is, actually, far more of an issue than most of the literature gives credit for. Long Chu identified the potential bad infinity of Hegel's colonialism and, whilst Hegel can respond to avoid the issue of bad infinity, I have shown that the realisability of the end of slavery still poses a big issue for Hegel. He justifies the colonisation of Africa as an emancipatory project but he also states that freedom is out of the question for Africa; Africa's colonisation is justified as a means to an end that Hegel cannot assert will ever be realised. Most of the literature characterises Hegel's colonialism as a necessary evil on the journey towards freedom — it is a finite process that acts as a stepping stone towards something better. But Long Chu objection surfaces a worry that it is something that Hegel's system will continue to perpetuate, a worry that I believe is confirmed by Hardimon, James and Knappik. Hegelianism ends up legitimising colonialism in the same way that colonial

thought did — with the promise of freedom at the end. Whilst they can avoid the bad infinity of it all, the best they can offer is uncertainty — uncertainty that Africa will ever be free of the ‘emancipatory’ process of slavery.

It seems that, given Hegel’s views on Africa proper, his freedom project dooms them to a colonial fate. Moreover, given the way Hegel brings together history and freedom, history being ‘out of the question’ for Africa excludes them from his freedom project. But, if most of this stems from his 19th-century ignorance concerning Africa, then maybe there is a way of modifying Hegel so that it reads against colonialism. If it is only his misconceptions about Africa that lead him to the conclusions that (1) they need the civilising process of slavery and (2) we do not know if they are ever capable of history, then surely correcting Hegel on his outdated, racist view of the world can help a modern account of Hegel avoid also arriving at his colonial endorsement. Therefore, there may be something in Buck-Morss’ approach to rescuing Hegel. Buck-Morss is wrong to claim that Hegel reads against colonialism but her view might be modified to state that, given his freedom project, this is what Hegel’s position should be. For Hegel, Africa is a land of savagery and, so, colonialism is a necessary and infinite process. But, a lot of Hegel’s views on world history seem to be in tension with Hegel’s philosophy; Hegel’s philosophy cannot discriminate against people based on their natural features but Hegel’s view on world history states that black Africans are inferior to white Europeans. If we remove some of Hegel’s ignorant colonial starting points that led him down the colonial path, maybe we can remedy the realisability issue of his freedom project.

Chapter 3: Is Hegel's Philosophy Necessarily Pro-Colonial?

3. Introduction to Chapter 3

In Chapter 2, we uncovered Hegel's concerning account of race. Not only is this account riddled with racism and stereotypes that would not hold up to the standards of our time but it finds itself at the heart of Hegel's endorsement of slavery. It creates a problem beyond the moral one that defenders of Hegel are already faced with (regarding the views of Africa he espouses): if Africans do not possess the important spiritual traits for freedom and are resistant to cultural influence, is there any guarantee that their enslavement will bring them into history? This opens Hegel's freedom project up to a realisability objection: the enslavement of Africa Proper is justified as a means to an end that may never be realised. The questions of the realisability of Hegel's freedom project, also, open up a gap, that Hegel's system does not want to exist, between *the way things are* and *the rational state where freedom is actualised*. It is clear that Hegel's ignorant views have permeated his system in such a way that it is creating a problem for his freedom project. This chapter will explore whether correcting Hegel's colonial ignorance and denying the colonial premises that his argument rests upon, namely his views that Africa is unhistorical, will allow us to remove colonialism from his freedom project.

This chapter will first look at Alison Stone, who deals with two major ways of defending Hegel: (1) Hegel could be coherently reconstructed so that his account of freedom instead reads against colonialism (2) Hegel's philosophy, whilst not telling against colonialism, could be reconstructed in such a way that it is not necessarily pro-colonial. She modifies Hegel's account of world history such that it removes some of his Eurocentrism. But, even after doing so, to plausibly achieve (1) would also require a new account of freedom for Hegel: as his view of freedom favours the kind of freedom that arises from European

culture. Instead, Stone concludes that (2) is a more plausible way of rescuing Hegel. But, even still, a basic account of freedom that favours Europe is problematic. As a result, I conclude that Stone's attempt to rescue Hegel is doomed to fail if Eurocentrism is at the heart of his freedom project. Instead, I put forward a similar but subtly different attempt to rescue Hegel from his own ignorance. Similarly to Stone, I focus on Hegel's portrayal of Africa Proper that leads him to believe that it needs civilising. Instead, I put forward the very simple claim: if it is Africa Proper's lack of self-consciousness that necessitates their enslavement, then, by granting them the very self-consciousness that Hegel denies them, we can make it so their enslavement is no longer necessary. However, much like Stone, I find untangling Hegel's colonialism from his system to be a difficult task; the *Philosophy of Right* outlines that colonialism is not just important as a means to an end, but it is and continues to be logically required of a rational state where freedom is actualised. Moreover, the type of colonialism that is to the 'greatest advantage of the mother state' is one that denies equal rights and causes a struggle for liberation (much like the colonial case of Haiti that Buck-Morss believes motivated Hegel). Despite our best efforts to disentangle colonialism from Hegel, colonialism finds itself entwined with slavery and at the heart of his freedom project.

3.1 Alison Stone's Attempt to Rescue Hegel From His Colonialism.⁶

In *Hegel and Colonialism*, Alison Stone considers the, often overlooked, colonial implications of Hegel's philosophy. She believes his discussions of race, colonialism and Eurocentrism to be closely 'entwined'. As already established in this thesis, the problem of colonialism in Hegel largely stems from his denial to recognise Africa and Asia as adequately historical—in the case of Africa, he does not recognise them as historical at all.

⁶ In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Stone, Alison, 'Hegel and Colonialism', *Hegel Bulletin* 41.2 (2017) pp. 247-270

It is this failure to recognise them as free or even as having a conception of freedom which leads to his justification for trans-Atlantic slavery; Europe's enslavement of Africa and Asia can bring these areas into civilisation and expose them to history. Furthermore, Hegel believes not only that Africans are built for slavery but that they also benefit the most from their exposure to European culture. As a result, Hegel's endorsement of colonial slavery focuses itself on Africa. To Hegel, Africa is an area without morals or any consciousness of their freedom. Hegel reiterates the very nature of Slavery to be wrong in and of itself as it is in opposition to the essence of humanity which is freedom. And yet, he regards Africa as the exception.

Stone does a good job of explaining why Hegel looks the other way on the enslavement of Africa despite his seeming opposition to slavery; whilst Hegel says that slavery is morally wrong, he believes an enslaved Africa is comparatively no worse off than an Africa without slavery. In fact, in many ways, he regards slavery as a relative good for Africa. Stone outlines his reasoning for this as follows. Slavery is bad insofar as it violates the intrinsic capacities for freedom that man possesses. However, before the enslavement of Africa, Africans were so ignorant of their intrinsic capacities for freedom that they would never have realised their freedom. In fact, before the colonial enslavement of Africa, Africans were enslaving each other and acting on their 'animalistic' instincts; acting solely on animalistic instincts is not acting freely as you are merely succumbing to the way that you are biologically programmed to be. As a result, Hegel believes that Africa was in a state where it had no hope of moving towards its freedom and that it was much closer to an animal existence than to a human one. As a result, Stone succinctly characterises Hegel's stance as such:

So slavery was, relatively, an improvement, because it 'matured' the Negroes to become aware of their freedom. 'One must educate the Negroes in their freedom by taming their naturalness' (Hei 70). (p. 255)

For Hegel, endorsing the colonial slavery of Africa can be presented as choosing between two states of unfreedom but one of the states provides exposure to civilisation and history and the other is just a continual state of unfreedom; whilst slavery may violate the freedom of man, the African man had none to violate. Although we must ultimately aim at the end goal of abolishing slavery, Africans need to be educated through slavery and thus it ought not to be abolished yet; 'Colonialism is justified, on this view, because it spreads freedom to peoples who otherwise both lack it and have no native means of acquiring it' (ibid).

However, as previously shown in this thesis, the reasoning that slavery ought not to exist but it should not be abolished until Africa is free starts to feel like a project that perpetuates and legitimises colonialism rather than one that challenges it. This is especially true when you take into account that it is unclear whether Hegel believes that Africa will ever be historical (as discussed in the previous chapter)—he is effectively saying that slavery should be abolished when something, he believes may never happen, happens. Hegel's pro-colonialism is clear and, moreover, it is bound up with his conception of freedom.

But Stone asks the question of whether Hegel's conception of freedom is necessarily entwined with his pro-colonialism. The fact that both are closely linked in his philosophy does not necessarily mean that one entails the other. If both are necessarily linked, then his colonial endorsement alone should be sufficient grounds for the rejection of his conception of freedom. But Stone is reluctant to dismiss Hegel in this way as it would fail to recognise the role of Hegelianism in anti-colonial literature and critical thought:

But perhaps that would be to dismiss Hegel's thought too summarily, and thereby to do disservice not only to Hegel but also to anti-colonial and decolonizing thought and activism, which, after all, has regularly drawn on Hegel, both directly—e.g., when Frantz Fanon ([1952] 2008) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012) use Hegel to critique colonialism—and indirectly, through Hegel's influence on Marxism and critical theory. (p. 258)

In fact, Stone believes that there might be a way to bring Hegelianism into the 21st-Century such that it provides a strong condemnation of colonialism. A reconstruction of Hegelian Freedom would provide a progressive account that would condemn Hegel himself; if we can separate Hegel's conception of freedom from his Eurocentric view of world history, the modern Hegelian can provide an account of freedom that is anti-colonial. If the ignorant colonial premises upon which Hegel operates are removed, might that remove the colonial conclusions of his philosophy?

Stone outlines her reconstruction of Hegel's account of freedom as follows:

We can separate the essentials of Hegel's account of freedom from his concrete interpretation of the actual movement of history [...] A better informed judgment of non-European peoples would require a very different historical narrative. But that does not undermine Hegel's basic points that freedom develops historically in tandem with the consciousness of it, as embodied in different cultures and social institutions. When we separate these basic points from his actual narrative, we find that these points serve a progressive purpose, yielding grounds to reject colonialism. (Ibid.)

The basic breakdown of such an argument would be to present Hegel's basic conception of freedom and his account of World History as two distinct premises that arrive at a colonial conclusion;

P1. Hegel's Basic Account of Freedom that 'freedom develops historically in tandem with the consciousness of it, as embodied in different cultures and social institutions' (Stone, p.258)

P2. Hegel's account of World History that Africa proper is removed from history and all historical progression whereas Europe is historical.

P3. If a culture is removed from history, it necessarily should be educated through slavery by another historical culture.

C. Hegel's colonial endorsement.

If Hegel's account of World History was modified such that it did not regard Africa and native America as removed from history, the colonial conclusion that Africa proper must be enslaved would not follow. The success of such a reconstruction would be good for the Hegelian universal state; as it stands, Hegel's universalism refuses to acknowledge actual difference despite its claim that it transcends difference. As Stone points out, Hegel claims 'that the human capacity for self-determination is universal, not confined to Europeans' (p.258). Not only would revising Hegel's account of world history not cause a problem for the Hegelian account of freedom, but it may go some way to addressing some of the contradictions in Hegel.

But, when we take a closer look at Hegel's account of freedom, it becomes clear that simply revising Hegel's account of world history does not rescue Hegel's freedom project from the ignorance of his Eurocentrism because an underlying feature of Hegel's

discussions of freedom is Europe's superiority; Hegel thinks that Europe uniquely has a relation to freedom. As Stone discusses, there are non-European conceptions of freedom, namely Egyptian freedom, that are similar in quality (and just different in quantity) and, thus, Hegel may simply be wrong in his claim that Europe is uniquely related to freedom. However, as Stone makes clear, Hegel's discussions of freedom are a bit more nuanced and, therefore, he may be justified in believing that European freedom is not like other non-European conceptions of freedom. At this point, it appears that Hegel's freedom is arbitrarily Eurocentric because he thinks that the distinguishing features of freedom which really count are those that Europeans happened to have. Either way, Hegel's conception of freedom appears to have a Eurocentrism problem that we should address.

Stone believes that there are problems with Hegel's Eurocentric account of freedom beyond the obvious moral badness of its colonial conclusion. The first issue is that his account of world history showcases poor work as a historian; it is upon this account that his division between European freedom and non-Europeans' unfreedom rests and yet the account omits some of the important historical literature that was available to him at the time. As Stone points out, Hegel had access to evidence that directly undermined his characterisations of Africa proper and Indigenous Americans;

[...] yet contrary evidence was available to him. He might, for instance, have noted the Iroquois Confederacy of five (later six) Native American tribes, founded c.1600 and dissolved c.1800: a system of intra- and inter-tribal governance which 'maximized individual freedom while seeking to minimize excess governmental interference in people's lives' (Stone, p. 260)

Either Hegel's central account is a product of poor work as a historian or his characterisation of Africa and native America was not a genuine one—neither of these are good for his account. If the former is the case, then Hegel's account of world history desperately needs to be amended to rectify his glaring omissions. However, if the latter is the case, it is difficult to even attribute this portrayal to being a product of his time when his claims were made in spite of the information available to him at the time; he was not misled to believe that Africans and Indigenous Americans never had or never hoped to have a conception of freedom. And, Bernasconi believes that it was Hegel who was knowingly doing the misleading (Bernasconi 2007)—Hegel was embellishing, exaggerating and distorting his sources to legitimise colonialism; there are strong grounds to question the motivation behind his distinction between European freedom and non-European unfreedom. Given some of the literature available, a fairer judgement of Africa and native America would have recognised them as having views of freedom and would not characterise Africa proper as the 'land of darkness'. Whether the reason for the omission of Africa and Native America is a product of pure ignorance or something more sinister and calculated, it is clear that a 21st-century account of Hegel's philosophy needs to modify his view of World History such that it acknowledges the history of these areas and cultures.

Stone, also, raises a second problem with Hegel's account of Freedom—its inconsistency on when partial conceptions of freedom are sufficient for history. As Hegel states, the Ancient Greeks did not fully realise their intrinsic capacity of freedom. Although Hegel views the Greeks as the start of Europe's history, they had only a partial understanding of freedom. And yet, it is this partial understanding that is sufficient for the start of historical progression. Now this reads especially uncomfortably when we look at Hegel's claim that the Greeks overcame the unhistorical Oriental world with their conception of freedom—the

Greeks had a 'partial' conception of freedom that followed from the Egyptian 'partial' conception of freedom, Egypt was the 'hinge between the Orient and the Occident' (p.259):

The difference between the Egyptian view—human freedom is incompletely distinguished from (animal) nature—and the Greek view—human freedom is again incompletely distinguished from nature—appears to be a difference of degree, not kind. (ibid.)

When we look at the conceptions of freedom that Hegel believes the Orient was offering in comparison to the conceptions of freedom that Hegel recognises the Greeks as offering, it is not clear that the Greeks are offering a different conception of freedom. Rather, it seems that the difference between these conceptions of freedom is merely a matter of degree. If this is the case, then it seems that the Greeks are simply the next stage in the progression of a history that originated in the Orient. Stone raises the question of why one inadequate conception of freedom (the Greeks) is sufficient for the start of History in Europe when other similarly inadequate conceptions of freedom are insufficient to make the Orient historical. While this may not seem like a big issue for Hegel, it does appear to reveal some of Hegel's Eurocentrism; a partial conception of freedom is sufficient for Hegel to grant Europe as historical but a similar partial conception of freedom is insufficient for Asia to be historical. When we take into account the obvious conceptions of freedom present in Africa that Hegel's philosophy ignores, this question then extends to Africa. Hegel's account of World History arbitrarily grants history to Europe whilst excluding non-Europe from History. If the difference between European and non-European conceptions of freedom is not one of kind but solely one of degree (farther along in their historical progression towards freedom), then it is not at all clear why one can constitute freedom

whilst the other cannot. It is this arbitrary distinction that excludes non-Europe from world history and challenging it would also challenge Hegel's colonial conclusion. Stone puts it well:

Hegel could and, it seems, should have interpreted much of his material as evidencing how non-European peoples have grasped and practised freedom, albeit imperfectly [...] once it is admitted that non-European peoples are historical in principle, Hegel would also have to trace how historical advances unfolded in those societies, so re-interpreting his material once again. Each continent would have its own history of progression in consciousness of freedom, rather than non-European continents merely paving the way for Europe. The several continents would have histories of freedom that run in parallel, rather than corresponding to more or less advanced phases of a single historical line that culminates in modern Europe.

(Stone, p.260)

However, there may be a way to respond to this on Hegel's behalf; there are some reasons, that are not inherently Eurocentric, to believe that the Greeks' conception of freedom is different to the Oriental conception of freedom. If this is the case, Hegel would not, simply, be placing Europe on the right side of an arbitrary distinction, rather differentiating between two fundamentally different conceptions of freedom. Firstly, the idea that, at a certain point, humans start to see themselves qua humans as the focal point of freedom is not intrinsically Eurocentric, and Hegel thinks this occurs with the Greeks and their culture; Greek art celebrates an idealised human form and Greek religion has divinities which are basically glorified humans, whereas Egyptian art and religion does not — it celebrates animals and natural forces. And, if it is only European freedom that places humans at the centre of freedom, Hegel's claim that Europe have the right kind of partial

conception of freedom might not be inherently Eurocentric—a human-centred conception of freedom is an important component of Hegel’s freedom project (as it should be close to being realised in the near future). But this raises the question of whether Europe is simply the only continent that has the type of freedom that Hegel regards as important or whether Hegel’s conception of freedom favours specifically European traits as the most important. We can provide a charitable reading of Hegel here but this may just be another result of Hegel’s Eurocentric thinking.

Stone, also, acknowledges another way that Hegel justifies his belief that the European conception of freedom is better. Whilst the Greeks’ and the Oriental conception of freedom are both similarly insufficient for Hegel, Greek culture allows for their spirit to determine nature rather than the other way around. Non-Europeans allow their spirit to be immersed and absorbed by nature; nature governs the spirit. Being governed by nature is not proper freedom but rather it is merely acting as nature has determined you to. However, in their conception of freedom, the Greeks challenge nature. They reshaped nature such that they can be ‘at home with themselves in the other’ (p. 262). For Hegel, it is clear that the Oriental conception of freedom does not challenge nature in this way as their focus on agriculture inclines them towards ‘patriarchal family-based relationships and uncritical obedience to authority’ (p. 253).

It was this difference in conception of freedom that put Europe on the historical path to freedom in a way that Asia’s conception failed to do. Both understood freedom in inadequate ways, but the Greek conception of freedom had true self-determination that allowed for them to not be limited by nature. For Hegel, this allowed Europe to rationally criticise freedom in a way that non-European cultures could not. It is for this reason that Hegel provides such a Eurocentric account of world history. The seemingly arbitrary

distinction between similarly insufficient conceptions of freedom can indeed be explained as a distinction between wholly different understandings of freedom—one where spirit governs nature and another where nature governs spirit.

Hegel's claim that it is only in Europe that spirit governs nature may be a product of his Eurocentrism and borne out of the ignorant stereotypes attached to non-European culture. However, this might be the first suggestion that modifying Hegel's account of World History to remove his Eurocentrism may not be the simple, surface-level task that some defenders of Hegel make it out to be; if Hegel's very understanding of freedom is such that it promotes European world history, the removal of his Eurocentrism would require a fundamentally new basic account of freedom. The issue of Hegel's Eurocentrism is not a product of his placing of Europe on the right side of arbitrary distinctions but rather that his account for freedom favours things that he deems to be fundamentally European. Unless we can provide an account of non-European freedom that overcomes nature in the way that Hegel believes only a European conception of freedom has managed to do, it seems that the solution is to provide a new basic account for freedom. Stone believes that the former cannot be argued but that a strong response would be to argue that non-European conceptions of freedom have been able to motivate social criticism even without the element of overcoming nature. But this position would require Hegel's system to rethink how history relates to freedom:

[...] such a position would take us further away from Hegel's own account of the historicity of freedom, according which, as we have seen, that moment of overcoming nature, uniquely new in ancient Greece, is crucial in powering historical progression. (p.264)

Stone's position considers the different positions against colonialism that may result from amending his account of world history. The 'strong' position is the claim that, when Hegel's basic account of freedom is separated from Hegel's pro-colonial attitudes, Hegelianism reads against colonialism. Stone acknowledges that this position is a stretch too far, especially when it becomes clear that Hegel's conception of freedom is somewhat Eurocentric. Constructing a reading of Hegelianism that is actively anti-colonial fails in the same way that Buck-Morss' reading does. Stone believes that a better way of saving Hegel's philosophy would be a 'weaker' position against colonialism—that Hegel's system is not necessarily pro-colonial when we remove Hegel's pro-colonial attitudes from the system. Whilst this reading does not necessarily tell against colonialism, Hegel's system is also not necessarily a colonial endorsement. Though Stone is confident that we can avoid the colonial implications with this approach, she acknowledges that this is a complex task because of the way that Hegel's Eurocentrism is imbued into his conception of freedom. It seems to me that this process of rescuing Hegel from his Eurocentric ignorance by extracting his basic account of freedom is doomed to fail if Hegel's basic account of freedom is also affected by his Eurocentrism; for Hegel, Europe has a unique relation to freedom. But either this is just a false claim that actively ignores the literature that suggests Egypt (who he does not grant freedom) to have a similar partial conception of freedom to the Greeks (who he grants freedom) or he can pick out something unique about European freedom that is sufficient for granting them freedom—in which case, it appears that Hegel's conception of freedom is arbitrarily Eurocentric and is saying that the only qualities of freedom that really matter are those which are European. At this point, defenders of Hegel's system are faced with the following question: Are they comfortable with a Eurocentric account of freedom at the heart of Hegel's philosophy? If the answer to this is no, we must also reject Stone's approach of extracting Hegel's 'basic account of freedom'.

3.2 Colonisation in the Hegelian Civil State

But there may be something in Stone's idea that Hegel's philosophy can be rescued from its troubling colonial implications if we examine some of the colonial premises that Hegel puts forward. Whilst looking to extract a basic account of freedom that reads against slavery might be too difficult of a task, we may be able to do something similar to what Stone attempts. I propose a way of rescuing Hegelianism that, whilst having similarities to Stone's work, frames Hegel's argument for the colonisation of Africa in a subtly different way that makes it easier for defenders of Hegel. Stone's account focuses on extracting a basic account of freedom that reads against colonialism and looks to understand the 'arbitrary distinction between different conceptions of freedom' that places Europe in history and Africa in darkness. My view frames Hegel's argument for colonial slavery in a way that focuses on what I believe to be actually at the heart of his Europe/Non-Europe divide: it is rooted in racist stereotypes and 19th-century colonial rhetoric. Let us understand Hegel's argument for the colonial enslavement of Black Africans in the following two-part argument:

Premise 1: One is not free if they are driven by 'animalistic instincts'.

Premise 2: Black Africans are not fully self-conscious and rational, they are barbaric and animalistic.

Conclusion 1: Black Africans are unfree.

Premise 3: If you are unfree, colonial slavery cannot truly violate your freedom.

Premise 4: Colonial slavery can educate the unfree and bring them into European culture.

Conclusion 2: Colonial slavery is necessary to bring Africa Proper into the freedom of European culture and is not a true violation of the freedom of Black Africans, given they are already unfree.

When his argument for colonial slavery is framed in this way, it becomes easier to see how Hegelianism can overcome its colonial conclusion. One may propose that we can save Hegel from his own ignorance on Black Africa in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* simply by rejecting his claim in Premise 2 that Black Africans are not self-conscious and are unfree. By rejecting Hegel's ignorant assertions that Africa Proper is a land of savagery, the resulting endorsement of colonialism no longer follows. Since colonialism is only necessary for Hegel as the means through which Africa Proper can be integrated into civilisation, it should play no part in a Hegelian system that has been brought into the 21st century. For Hegel, the necessary evil of colonialism seems no longer necessary. The slavery that he states is 'unjust in and for itself, for the essence of man is freedom' (Hegel 1975, p.184) can be condemned. Disentangling Hegel's endorsement of colonialism from his system may be as simple as rejecting the starting point that led him down the colonial path. However, the process of removing Hegel's legitimisation of colonialism from his system is not an easy one, especially when we take into account his *Philosophy of Right*.

3.3 The *Philosophy of Right*.⁷

The *Philosophy of Right* (PR) tries to grasp the prerequisites for having freedom instantiated in a society. It does not present a story in time in the way that the *Lectures* do — each stage of the *Philosophy of Right* does not represent gradual progress towards freedom but rather represents the unfolding of a dialectical process. It starts from a very basic starting point for free society (abstract right) and logically shows why that starting point requires another thing for free society (punishment); 'abstract right', alone, is not sufficient for a free society without things like punishment. Then, in understanding

⁷ In this section, my references, unless otherwise specified, will refer to this text: Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge University Press, 1991)

punishment, free society shows itself to logically require another thing (morality). This process of logically uncovering what free society requires continues to unfold and logically reveals substantial ethical life, family and civil society to be necessary to a free society. This dialectical process continues until Hegel reaches the thing that is sufficient for a free society (the rational state). As previously established, everything uncovered in this dialectical process has shown itself to be logically necessary to the rational state and, more importantly, to free society.

The trouble for Hegelianism is that the *Philosophy of Right* outlines colonisation as one of the things that are established as logically necessary to a free society; a free civil society naturally makes the move across the sea;

The sea is “the natural element for industry, whose relations with the external world it enlivens [...] Rivers are not natural boundaries, which they have been taken to represent in modern times. On the contrary, both they and the oceans link human beings together. (§247)

For Hegel, it is clear that ‘all great and enterprising nations push their way to the sea’ (ibid.) and he states that ‘civil society is driven to establish colonies’ (§248); colonialism is simply a feature of a great society and it is through that process that civil society can provide ‘part of its population with a return to the family principle in a new country, and itself with a new market and sphere of industrial activity’ (ibid.). But this also provides another layer to Hegel’s colonial endorsement — up until this point, we had been working under the belief that colonial slavery is only for the good of the slave; it is a necessary evil that the master has to enact to give the slave a chance of freedom. However, now we are confronted with Hegel’s assertion that colonisation is logically

required of free society and that a free civil society will naturally colonise — this is the first time that colonisation has been framed in such a way that it is for the good of the coloniser. It also no longer seems to be the case that rejecting Africa's need for a civilising mission in the form of colonisation necessarily removes colonialism from Hegel; colonialism has value for the colonising civil society irrespective of Hegel's views of Africa. 'Systemic' colonisation is something which can help civil society deal with the issue of poverty and 'the rabble'. It is through colonisation that civil society can deal with 'the important question of how poverty can be remedied [...] which agitates and torments modern societies especially' (§244). Since 'civil society is not wealthy enough [...] to prevent an excess of poverty and the formation of a rabble' (§245), it can learn from the Ancient Greeks:

Whenever the population grew to a point at which it could become difficult to provide for it, the young people were sent off to a new region, which was either specifically chosen or left to be discovered by chance. (§248)

Colonialism provides the solution to civil society's inevitable poverty and overproduction problem on its journey to the rational state. By re-establishing the dignity that is lost with the emergence of poverty, colonialism prevents the rabble from derailing the progress of civil society. Defenders of Hegel want to cast Hegel's colonialism aside with his ignorant views on Africa and, whilst Africa is a large motivation for the 'necessary role of colonialism', his colonialism reappears in the *Philosophy of Right* as a necessary part of free society. The value of colonialism in this case is not solely for the colonised (as it is in the case of Africa proper) but rather for the colonising force. The end of §248 further presses this issue:

In more recent times, colonies have not been granted the same rights as the inhabitants of the mother country, and this situation has resulted in wars and eventual independence, as the history of the English and Spanish colonies shows.

The liberation of colonies itself proves to be of the greatest advantage to the mother state, just as the emancipation of slaves is of the greatest advantage to the master.

This is by far Hegel's most intriguing and puzzling claim of the section. In a section that positively sets up colonisation as a necessary feature of free society, the conclusion is that it is, in fact, the liberation of colonies that provides the greatest value to the mother state. One reading of this (that Buck-Morss would be sympathetic to) is that this assertion provides a critical commentary on how historical colonialism has been carried out. If it is the liberation of the colonies that provides the greatest advantage to the mother state, then maybe colonialism should look more like a global collaborative project — need colonialism be exploitative, brutal and dominating in nature or is that just the historical reality of it? Hegel might be suggesting a shift towards a global expansion of the civil state that does not remove the rights of the colonies — with this, defenders of Hegel may be able to portray Hegel's colonialism in a way that does not endorse the brutalisation or exploitation of other societies.

However, such a reading feels odd and does not seem to get to the heart of what Hegel is saying. The assertion that 'the liberation of colonies itself proves to be of the greatest advantage to the mother state' (ibid.) requires a process of colonialism from which the colony is liberating itself. If Hegel was simply positing the 'liberation of all colonies' as the starting point going forward, there would be no room for colonialism in his free society. And yet, it is logically required. Moreover, if it is experiencing the colonies' struggle for liberation that proves to be of the greatest advantage to the mother state, then this not only requires

the mother state to be a colonising force but it requires the mother state to colonise in such a way that brings about a liberation struggle — Hegel tells us how we achieve this: by denying colonies the same rights as the inhabitants of the mother state (ibid.). The mother state treating its colonies as subordinates brings about wars and the resulting struggle for liberation. Rather than reading this as criticism of the way historical colonialism was carried out, it is better read as an endorsement of the subordinating colonial process that brings about the fight for liberation. Hegel is endorsing a dominating colonisation process *because* at the end of this process lies a liberation struggle which benefits the mother state. And when we add in that Hegel believes, as Long Chu puts it, that ‘In Africa, only violence “deserves respect”(186)’ (Long Chu 2018, p. 421), we start to get an understanding of Hegel’s colonial picture. It is, also, important to note that the emancipation of the colony is not equal to the emancipation of the enslaved people — this is evident in the case of the British colonisation of America. The independence of America from English rule did not result in the abolition of the enslaved people in America. Thus, Hegel’s claim that the emancipation of the colony is to the greatest advantage of the mother state may not necessarily equate to the kind of emancipatory claim we envision — the colony can become independent whilst preserving its structure of slavery. Thus if we are to understand the two together, we need good reason to understand Hegel’s view of slavery as not distinct from his colonial discourse.

Having understood the way that the Dialectic informs our understanding of the *Lectures*, it would be remiss not to recognise the striking parallels that this section bears to the Dialectic too. I believe that the *Philosophy of Right* completes the colonial picture. A free society is a colonising one. Slavery has been long accepted to have an important role in Hegel’s freedom project but the question over what kind of slavery Hegel endorses is more disputed. Given the similar emancipatory role that Hegel assigns to colonialism in his

freedom project, I believe that his endorsements of colonialism and slavery are better understood together; his view of slavery helps us better understand the kind of colonialism he has in mind and his view of colonialism informs his view on slavery. Slavery serves primarily as a function for historical Europe to enlighten black Africa — its nature is *paternal* and *colonial*. Couple that with Hegel's claim all great nations are driven to colonise and that it is a logically necessary component of a free society, and Hegel's European colonial endorsement takes shape. Once we add in Hegel's assertion that colonisation that denies the colonies equal rights brings about the kind of struggle for liberation that is to the 'greatest advantage' of the master state, Hegel's colonial picture appears to be clear.

Hegel's endorsement of slavery should not be understood as distinct from his endorsement of colonisation; the nature of this colonisation is the kind of dominating slavery (much like the French colonisation that was occurring at the time of writing) that brings about a liberation struggle — this is mirrored by the 'fight until the death' and the subsequent enslavement in the Dialectic. Through the enslavement process, the enslaved begin to understand their freedom. This ends in a struggle for liberation (as we have seen in Haiti). Let us remember the necessary conditions that Stern outlines for the slave to gain a newfound sense of freedom in the Dialectic: fear, service and work on the world (Stern 2013). The master must colonise in such a way that it brings fear to the colonised and, thus, the colonial process will be brutal. We have previously established in our combined reading of the Dialectic and the *Lectures* that, for Hegel, the good of the 'enslavement' process comes from its final end of bringing the slave into freedom. And this is how we can understand his claim that this liberation that Hegel believes is 'of the greatest advantage to the mother state'. This is also how we can make sense of his confusing next part of this claim '...just as the emancipation of slaves is of the greatest

advantage to the master' (§248) which seems like the most obvious appeal to the Dialectic. A traditional reading of the Dialectic does not understand the master as having 'greatly' benefitted from the Master-Slave relation —usually it is understood that the slave has this newfound freedom whilst the master struggles with their dependence on both the labour and the recognition of the slave. Furthermore Hegel's Dialectic, importantly, does not conclude with Hegel's final vision of freedom. However, given our understanding of Hegel's civilising role of slavery, we may be able to understand the Dialectic in a slightly different way. Rather than the traditional reading that the master is worse off at the end of the Master-Slave relation, we can understand the negatives of the master's dependence on the slaves' labour and recognition as something that takes away his freedom during the Master-Slave relation and, once the slave gains his own freedom, the master is no longer burdened with this civilising mission that impacts their own freedom. Thus, the slave gains a newfound freedom and, as a result, the master regains their freedom — the master is no longer burdened with the necessary evil of slavery in the name of freedom. Hence, 'The emancipation of the slaves is of great advantage to the master'. And, in this reading, the emancipation of the slaves is also not Hegel's final vision of freedom (much like in the Dialectic) but it puts the slaves on a historical path so that this final vision becomes realisable. In my view, the Dialectic is key to bringing the 'necessary' slavery in the *Lectures* together with the 'required' colonialism in the *Philosophy of Right*. But the issue now is, unlike in the *Lectures*, colonialism does not necessarily go away if we posit that there is now no benefit to the slave. In the *Lectures*, it seems evident that if colonial slavery does not benefit the slave then the argument for it collapses. But, in *Philosophy of Right*, colonialism is logically required of free society. Moreover, it now appears that the colonial requirement no longer goes away once the journey to freedom is complete; it was Long Chu's worry that the journey to freedom can never be completed and it is that which perpetuates colonialism but in *Philosophy of Right* colonialism is a necessary feature of

free society. If Hegel's colonial endorsement maintains even when it is of no benefit to the slave state, then we start seeing shades of some of the troubling colonial arguments that were subsequent to Hegel in German Philosophy (Nietzsche 1980). If the 'good' of colonialism is that it brings about this Dialectic-style struggle for freedom, then we can understand how Hegel sees colonialism manifesting itself in free society:

1. Colonialism offers civil society a solution to the poverty problem.
2. If civil society colonises in a dominating way it will cause the colony to uprise.
3. The uprising and struggle for the liberation of the colonies is of greatest advantage to the mother state.
4. Like when the Dialectic falls into dissolution, the liberation of the colonies from the mother state is the instantiation of freedom (the rational state).

So it seems that free society needs to colonise other societies in order to bring about this liberation process that benefits the mother state. Thus, it needs to do so in a dominating way to bring about this struggle for freedom. If this is the case, the role of colonial slavery in healthy society becomes not too dissimilar to the later works of Friedrich Nietzsche who claimed that slavery was the 'essence of culture' (Nietzsche 1871, §6); both require the domination of another for society to progress. Simply rejecting Hegel's views on Africa does not provide an easy fix for Hegelianism; the process of disentangling Hegel's endorsement of colonial slavery from the system has shown itself to be a very intricate process if we are to preserve his system at all, especially if his view puts slavery at the heart of society in this rather Nietzschean manner.

3.4 Chapter 3 Conclusion.

The focus of colonisation in the Philosophy of Right is not on the emancipation of Africa, but it is on the good that it does for Europe. It frames the emancipatory process as a project for the benefit of the master. Hegel's teleology primarily promotes the establishment of the rational state in Europe, rather than the emancipation of Africa. As a result, Hegel's freedom project retains his hierarchical couplings if the true benefit of colonialism is not for both. His focus, when it comes to the liberation of the colonies, is the 'greatest advantage' of the mother state. This advantage is of no concern to the colonies; it is not even an afterthought, but rather something entirely unmentioned. In Chapter 2, we consider whether Hegel makes an error in justifying Europe's enslavement of Africa as a means to an end that will never be actualised. Long Chu believes that Hegel's 'remarkable stomach for slavery in fact reflects his commitments to freedom in his philosophy of world history' (Chu 2018, p. 416) but that, in his aim to emancipate Africa, he perpetuates their enslavement. The truth is that Hegel's analysis in the *Philosophy of Right* shows that he does not care if freedom is ever realised for Africa. Hegel disguises his colonial endorsement as an educational process. However, when he denies this process to Africa in his *Lectures*, the *Philosophy of Right* reveals the true motivation for colonialism. It is not driven by a colonial pedagogy aimed at liberating Africa, but rather is logically required by the European rational state and serves the greatest benefit of the mother state. The educational dimension of slavery, in Stone's account in Chapter 3, becomes useless because the whole process is geared not towards the emancipation of Africa but, instead, to the liberation of the mother state. Hegel's endorsement of colonial slavery no longer appears to be driven by concern for Africa's freedom, but entirely concerned with Europe's best interest. Despite the Hegelian account of slavery as a necessary evil that is only in the slave's best interests, at every step of the way, slavery is centred around the master's

interests: The master justifies why slavery is for the benefit of the slave. Whilst the slave is acting for the master, the master benefits from the slave labour and if the slave ever reaches the point where they pursue their own liberation, that is also to the 'greatest advantage of the master'.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis has explored the relationship between slavery, colonialism and Hegel's freedom project. Slavery and colonialism are best understood in Hegel when they are brought together—Hegel's endorsement of colonialism informs his endorsement of slavery and vice versa. Together, they are central to the ultimate end of Hegel's philosophy: freedom.

The first chapter explored Buck-Morss' claim that Hegel was not endorsing colonial slavery but, rather, he was an abolitionist, as evidenced by his Master-Slave Dialectic. The breakdown of the relation between the master and the slave was, for Buck-Morss, motivated by his enthusiasm for the Haitian slave revolt. Buck-Morss claims that Hegel's system does not endorse colonialism because his work was a revolutionary show of support for the oppressed slaves. As appealing as such a reading is, of course, it is wholly incoherent with the rest of Hegel's system and is directly undermined by Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Whilst Buck-Morss tries to account for these inconsistencies by stating that these later works were a product of his old age, her reading is simply not a plausible one. In fact, rather than understanding the *Lectures* as in opposition to the Dialectic, it is more helpful to read the Dialectic as an explanation of Hegel's colonial claim that Africa must necessarily be enslaved.

At this point, the second chapter moved on to Long Chu's account that attacked Hegel's system for perpetuating colonialism. Hegel rejects 'ought' on the basis that it generates bad infinity and any system that contains bad infinity should be rejected. Hegel overcomes his need for ought in his freedom project by removing the gap between *the actual world* and *the world where freedom is realised*. But Long Chu claims that Hegel's endorsement of colonial slavery is justified by an ought—that it ought not to exist. Furthermore, Long

Chu believes that this ought will never be realised—it will never quite be the right time for slavery not to exist because it will always be needed to help move us towards this ought. As a result, Long Chu claims that Hegel is guilty of two things: (1) having a bad infinity in his system, which is grounds for him to reject his own system and (2) justifying slavery as the means to an end with a realisability problem. But Hegel can respond to Long Chu if he can deny Long Chu's claim that the 'ought' of slavery will never be realised. By doing so, he overcomes (1) and goes some way towards remedying (2). The trouble for Hegel, however, is that his answer does not succeed in placing the realisation of the good in the immediate future. Hegel's bio-spiritual account of race, as presented by Hardimon, cannot place the realisation of a historical Africa Proper in the immediate future. In fact, for Hegel, a historical Africa Proper may never happen as Africa does not possess the important spiritual traits for freedom and is resistant to cultural influence. Hegel justifies colonial slavery as the means to an end that may or may not happen. Whilst this is not technically bad infinity, it is potentially as bad. His endorsement of colonial slavery, consequently, creates a realisability problem for the world where freedom is actualised.

Not only is there a colonial endorsement within Hegel's system but this endorsement is causing a problem for the system's ultimate end. Chapter 3 looked at whether there is a way to disentangle this colonial endorsement from Hegel's system. The way that both Stone and I attempted to do this is by rejecting the colonial premises that led Hegel's argument down the colonial path. By rejecting the racist views of Africa in the *Lectures*, the colonial conclusion that Africa needs saving ought not to follow and, as a result, Hegel's endorsement of colonial slavery should disappear with it. But it is only when trying to remove the colonial thought from Hegel that we realise just how imbued it is in his philosophy. Stone's attempt found Eurocentrism in Hegel's basic account of freedom. My attempt was made difficult by Hegel's assertion, in the *Philosophy of Right*, that

colonialism is logically required of the rational state where freedom is actualised. In both cases, the process of disentangling Hegel's philosophy from his colonial thought proved to be a tough task, because his philosophy placed his colonial endorsement at the heart of his freedom project.

To conclude, Hegel's system provides an endorsement for the colonial slavery of Africa, understood by combining the *Philosophy of Right*, the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* and the Master-Slave Dialectic from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He locates this colonial endorsement at the heart of his freedom project by claiming two things: (a) it is a necessary process to bring the unhistorical Africa into world history, with slavery being the tool to carry out this process, and (b) colonialism is logically required of the rational state where freedom is actualised. Even though his colonial thought causes problems for his freedom project, when we attempt to separate out his colonial thought from his system, we can see just how entwined freedom and colonialism are. This is not to say that it is an impossible task but that disentangling Hegel's colonialism from his philosophy is a complicated and intricate process. Contrary to the claims from defenders of Hegel that colonialism does not cut that deep into Hegel's system, colonialism runs as deep into Hegel's system as it goes.

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