

THE ANACHRONISM OF MYTH IN HEGEL AND BOLSONARIST BRAZIL¹

O ANACRONISMO DO MITO EM HEGEL E O BRASIL DO BOLSONARISMO

Adriano Kurle²

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Abstract: In this paper, I present some concepts of Hegel's philosophy of art, aiming to interpret a cultural-political situation, namely, Bolsonarism in contemporary Brazil. I present the ideas in the following order: (a) the modes of comprehension, mainly through the distinction between the poetic and the prosaic modes; (b) the conception of "Action [*Handlung*]" as a category of art, by means of its three levels: State of the World [*Weltzustand*], Situation [*Situation*], and Action itself [*Handlung als solche*]; (c) an evaluation of the anachronism of the ideas of myth and hero in contemporary times, through a reflection mediated by the categories of sublation [*Aufhebung*] and history.

Keywords: Hegel. Myth. Bolsonarism. Brazil. Hero.

Resumo: Neste artigo, eu apresento alguns conceitos da filosofia da arte de Hegel, visando interpretar uma situação político-cultural, a saber, o bolsonarismo no Brasil contemporâneo. Eu apresento as ideias na seguinte ordem: (a) os modos de compreensão, principalmente por meio da distinção entre os modos poético e prosaico; (b) a concepção de "Ação [*Handlung*]" como uma categoria, por meio de seus três níveis: o Estado de Mundo [*Weltzustand*], a Situação [*Situation*], e a ação ela mesma [*Handlung als solche*]; (c) uma avaliação do anacronismo das ideias de mito e herói na contemporaneidade, por meio de uma reflexão mediada pelas categorias de superação [*Aufhebung*] e história.

Palavras-chave: Hegel. Mito. Bolsonarismo. Brasil. Herói.

Introduction

In this paper, I present some concepts of Hegel's philosophy of art, aiming to interpret

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² Professor at Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), Brazil; adrianobk@gmail.com

a cultural-political situation, namely, Bolsonarism³ in contemporary Brazil. This analysis is motivated by the nickname given to Brazilian current president: the “Myth”. Also, I consider the association of the ex-judge and ex-minister of justice, Sergio Moro, to the fictional character *Superman*,⁴ a character in the superhero genre of fiction of the cultural industry of the 20th and 21st centuries. I also take into consideration a set of informal political propaganda (usually spread through WhatsApp) and cultural behaviors, propagated in social media on the internet, which associate the support to Bolsonaro to the nationalist, military and heroic imaginary. Given this situation, I present here some elements of the Hegelian conception of *heroic General State of the World*, as well as other elements related to it, in order to critically think, through Hegel’s dialectical-speculative and historicist conception, about what can be called the *Bolsonarist consciousness*. I do so mainly by means of the Hegelian diagnosis of *anachronism* of the mythical consciousness.⁵

In order to establish the relation intended here, I present some ideas from Hegel’s philosophy of art in the following order: (a) the modes of comprehension, mainly through the distinction between the poetic and the prosaic modes; (b) the conception of “Action [*Handlung*]”⁶ as category of art, by means of its three levels: State of the World [*Weltzustand*], Situation [*Situation*], and Action itself [*Handlung als solche*]; (c) an evaluation of the anachronism of the ideas of myth and hero in contemporary times, through a reflection mediated by the categories of sublation [*Aufhebung*]⁷ and history.

These concepts are presented in Hegel’s *Lectures on Philosophy of Art*, as related to the description of the *Ideal*. The ideas of Hero and poetic mode of comprehension are related to the classical period of art and culture (i.e. Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome), as constituting an

³ By this term, I understand a contemporary cultural and political movement related to the current Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro as one of the Brazilian versions of the global alt-right movement.

⁴ This could be seen in protests of new right-wing movements in Brazil, which used to be connected to Bolsonarism until the rift between Bolsonaro and Moro, in April 2020. This rift also divided the new right-wing movements.

⁵ Otto Pöggeler shows that Hegel thought about a construction of a modern or post-illuminist myth (a “new mythology”) during his period in Jena. I do not discuss these issues here, which would include an analysis of the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* and its supposed authorship by Hegel. He does not develop the idea of a modern myth in his mature system, but instead he defends the idea of an overcoming of myths in modern times, through the cultural hegemony of a philosophical perspective (See for instance the section “Absolute Spirit” in the *Encyclopedia* - HEGEL, 1986a. From now on, I will refer to it only as “Enz.”, followed by the volume, I, II, or III, and the paragraph, with the indication of “Zusatz” (supplement) when applicable. In this case: Enz. III). Pöggeler analyses the discussion on myth, culture, art, and knowledge in *Goethezeit* and in Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel. See PÖGGELER, 1984.

⁶ Which can also be understood as the plot.

⁷ I follow A. V. Miller’s translation for the term *Aufhebung* here. See HEGEL, 1969. For an explanation of the use of the term and how Hegel explores its polysemy, including the simultaneous use of three opposite meanings the word has: to negate, to preserve, and to elevate, see Enz. I, §§ 79 – 82; LUFT, 2001, pp. 143-148.

intuition-of-world [*Weltanschauung*]. In what follows I present these concepts, in order to relate it to the cultural event of Bolsonarism in Brazil.

Modes of comprehension: ordinary speaking, poetic, prosaic, and speculative

Hegel distinguishes four modes of comprehension (ordinary speaking, poetic mode, prosaic mode and speculative mode) while dealing with poetry in the *Lectures on Philosophy of Art*,⁸ despite focusing only on two: the poetic and the prosaic ones. These two are related to the levels of intuition and representation, while at the level of thinking we can also deal with other three. Therefore, connecting the *Lectures on Philosophy of Art* with the *Logic*⁹ and with the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*¹⁰ we can elaborate a scheme that leads us from the simpler modes of comprehension to the most complex and complete.

The first thing to notice is that for Hegel every determined content, being it empirical or abstract, involves an inferential articulation between the three levels of logical generality, i.e. the universal, the particular and the singular.¹¹ These elements articulate themselves along the cognitive process in its different levels.

After that, we have to take into account the structure of the theoretical subjective Spirit that can be considered the cognitive capacities of the individual self-conscious rational subject: intuition, representation and thinking.¹² We start from a first immediate and simple moment (i.e. where there is no distinction between the universal and the singular), move towards a progressive process of differentiations, and reach the final reunification, as a kind of return to the beginning that carries with itself the whole content developed in the way. This is the path

⁸ HEGEL, 1989 – 1990. From now on I will refer to this work in the footnotes only as “A” followed by its volume number I, II, or III, and page number. This work is a posthumous publication, edited by Hegel’s student Gustav Hotho, based on Hegel’s lectures on the topic and on his manuscripts. There are new editions of these lectures in the new Hegel’s *Gesammelte Werke*, which separate each lecture (1820/21, 1823, 1826 and 1828/29), based on his students’ manuscripts (unfortunately, Hegel’s manuscripts of these lectures are not available anymore). The work itself differentiates between Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art, making it clear that what Hegel is doing is a philosophy of art (for instance, see the initial observation in A I, p. 13). That is why I will refer to the work, in the text, as “Philosophy of Art” or “Lectures on Philosophy of Art”, as the new issues are called in the new *Gesammelte Werke*. In this article, I use Hotho’s edition. Unfortunately, the new complete works are too expensive for individuals or even our local libraries to procure. Fortunately, there are more accessible versions of these lectures: for the 1823 lectures, HEGEL, 2003; for the 1826 lectures, HEGEL, 2005; for the 1828/29 lecture, HEGEL, 2017.

⁹ I use here the logic of the *Encyclopedia*. Enz. I.

¹⁰ See Enz. III.

¹¹ Enz. I, §24, *Zusatz* 2.

¹² Enz. III, §§ 440 – 468. Hegel uses the word *Denken*, a nominalization of the verb *denken*, thinking, instead of *Gedanken*, thought. This is a conscious choice, and it seems that Hegel wants to highlight the capacity of thinking as an activity, in order to differentiate it from its objectified or reified products – what is thought.

from the simplest intuition (which includes sensations, feelings, and sentiments) to conceptual, judging and inferential thinking. Intuition is characterized by an initial apprehension of a given content, in a way that the cognitive subject still cannot distinguish what is *in itself* (the objectual content) and what is *for itself* (what is cognitively intended by a subject). Through the process of cognitive and spiritual treatment of the content, cognition raises the first distinction: what is related to the singularity of the object and what is the subjective content and the rule of representation; what is represented and what is representing; what is the object and what is its image.

Here we enter into the field of representation, which involves a diversity of cognitive tasks, marked by separation. Thus, we have first the moment of the reminiscence [*Erinnerung*] (as the first process of the crude content, which stocks and internalizes the sensible and intuitive data, making the relation of one sensation to another possible); second, the imagination, in its reproductive form (as a kind of subconscious mechanism that operates independently of the subject's conscious will, associating intuitive data); afterwards, we enter into the moment of cognitive control of the association of images,¹³ namely *fantasy* [*Phantasie*], as a kind of productive imagination, which leads us also to the capacity of constructing symbols and, finally, signs.

The symbol maintains the distinction between the symbolizing element and the content or meaning symbolized, in a way that comprehension depends on one relating to the other, for there is no clear delimitation between them yet – the symbol of a red lion roaring can refer to strength and courage, at the same time that it can also signify danger. On the other hand, this symbol can be taken as a representation (like a flag) of a people, a tribe, or a nation, in a determinate symbolic configuration.

The sign in turn carries in itself its meaning: when we say “school”, the word cannot be clarified by simply pointing to an object or a characteristic of objects (like a physical place, being a building or representing, abstractly, knowledge or human education), but it carries in itself, immediately, the meaning. If I understand the sign, I understand its meaning as well. Thus, if I say I am going to the cemetery, I immediately connect this meaning to another, which is implicit, namely, death.¹⁴ This process carries on to language and memory [*Gedächtnis*], which are the point of transition between representation and thinking.

¹³ This should not be confused with “image” as exclusively visual data. This concept here has a broader meaning. The original term is “*Bild*”.

¹⁴ “As a meaningful sign, intelligence demonstrates a freer rule and control in the usage of the intuition when it is signifying rather than symbolizing.” Enz. III, §458. The translation is mine.

Art has a special tie to intuition, but also to representation and imagination in the poetic field, since the poetic art (different from all the other singular kinds of art) has as instrument not material elements related to visual or auditory senses (like architecture, sculpture, painting, and music), but language and the representational content. In this sense, *fantasy* fulfills a very important role: “Fantasy [*Phantasie*] is the center in which the universal and the being, the own and the being-found, the internal and the external, are made into a complete unity”.¹⁵ We can understand here that the imagination, by means of fantasy, is able to guide the content either towards concepts (allowing the cognitive activity to be conducted towards thinking) or towards making the sign and the meaning into sensible representation. We could say, in a somehow Kantian manner, that the direction that is given to the cognitive material of the imagination can collaborate either to make a concept sensible or to make sensible data into a concept. Yet, it is important to consider that there is also a certain specificity in the level of fantasy: since there is the place where signs and symbols are produced, it is possible to consider the making sensible of signs without, necessarily, the (direct or indirect) participation of thinking (in the specific sense).

Therefore, the capacity of fantasy is very important for the poetic production, as well as (it is possible to deduce) to its understanding. When addressing poetry, Hegel will consider the distinction between the poetic comprehension and the prosaic. With this aim, Hegel will also consider ordinary speaking [*gewöhnlichen Sprechen*] and speculative comprehension.

We can say that ordinary speaking ties itself to the levels of reminiscence [*Erinnerung*] and intuition, proceeding by means of limited comprehensions, attached to the particular, but without establishing relations between the particularities. The poetic comprehension in turn has an important and fundamental characteristic to art, since it proceeds through a kind of inductive creation (this term is mine), since by starting from the particular it seeks the totalization of this particular, ascending to the process of universalization. Despite being universalized, it keeps itself particular: it is not the case that the artistic work becomes the whole of reality, but the poetic work has, in itself, a totality of meaning, becoming an autonomous and independent object. The poetic representation is *figured*, since it does not deal with the abstract essence, but with the concrete reality, but still it is a form of presentation that eliminates the contingencies and presents this figuration in a way that allows us to realize what is substantial.¹⁶

On the other hand, it is also possible to consider that, despite the poetic procedure not

¹⁵ Enz. III §457. The translation is mine.

¹⁶ A III, pp. 276-7.

being able to establish enough totalizing connections to deal with reality in its completeness (since it ties itself to the particular), it can generate interpretative references. This is the case of mythical cultures, which for Hegel are cultures based on art and the poetic mode of comprehension, i.e. the poetic work can be considered an object that contains in itself a complete world picture, that can be used as interpretative reference for reality itself as a whole. The poetic process can be thought as an operation, as already said, connected mainly to imagination, in spontaneous relation (through intelligence¹⁷) to intuition (both in the sense of producing images and meanings through intuitive material, and in the sense of making these produced images and meanings sensible).

The prosaic comprehension operates, in turn, at the level of understanding (one of the levels of the logical [*das Logische*], as we are going to see later), relating particular events between themselves through cause and effect, and establishing the interest in the objects in accordance to finalistic or teleological relations, in a way that the conception of reality is divided between the means and the ends (what can be considered both in the practical as in the theoretical point of view). In relation to this mode of comprehension, Hegel highlights its application in the social and personal organizations that we can call *bureaucratic*: the particular deeds tend always to adapt to universal ends, which subsume and regulate them: laws, advantages, profits, and so on.

Finally, we have speculative comprehension, which operates the ultimate systematic reunion of thought, by means of what Hegel conceives as the proper rational articulation. This level is connected (and so is the understanding) to the levels of the logical [*das Logische*] (and from the subjective point of view, these levels are tied to thinking). It has three levels: understanding, dialectical reason and speculative reason.¹⁸ There is a process that leads us from the understanding to speculative reason. The former is understood as a categorizing and classificatory process which, on one hand, targets the finite and, on the other hand, always appeals to something beyond (a finality which is beyond the object, a characteristic that does not fit into a determinate classifying concept, what obligates us to produce every time more and more classifying concepts etc.). From the understanding, we move towards the dialectical moment, as the negative moment, which seeks to generate contrapositions in relation to what can be universalized from the understanding and its opposite (that generates, at the same time, contrariety and contradiction). Finally, it arrives to the level of speculative reason, as a positive

¹⁷ See mainly Enz. III §457.

¹⁸ Enz. I, §§79 – 82.

moment that reunites coherently a conception of the whole by means of the process of sublation [*Aufhebung*], which solves the contradictions generated by the dialectical reason in an elevated reformulation of the conceptions.¹⁹

The process of comprehension here presented has the following hierarchical order (from the simplest to the most complex): ordinary speaking, poetic comprehension, prosaic comprehension/understanding,²⁰ dialectical reason and speculative reason.

We have to take into consideration that there is a historical process in the development of these cognitive capacities, and we must also consider how these cognitive capacities operate in the sociocultural organization. The dichotomy between the poetic and the prosaic comprehensions outlines the hegemonic cognitive modes of sociocultural procedure, and are hence connected to the historical development of humankind. Together with this, we have to think about the historical process of the artistic consciousness, which Hegel distinguishes in symbolic, classical and romantic.²¹ To put it briefly, they are modes of relating the content and the meaning of art to its sensible form, but they also designate forms of intuition-of-the-world [*Weltanschauungen*].²² To simplify: the symbolic consciousness aspires to something that it cannot grasp, while the classical consciousness finds the adequacy between the content and the sensible form, living thus through the intuitive and poetic comprehension. The romantic consciousness recognizes the impossibility of finite objects to fully express the rational content (which is infinite) and discovers this by means of the experience and development of the internal subjectivity.

From romantic art, the artistic consciousness moves towards the preponderance of the prosaic mode of proceeding. In the rise of modernity, the individual finds itself in a cultural situation of division between the universal and the singular: the universal regulates and subsumes the particularity, but the comfort and reconciliation between them cannot be found in art anymore, but only in philosophy. For what follows, it is important to highlight this difference between classical and modern culture.

¹⁹ Here I bring an oversimplified approach, since this subject is not the topic of this article. For an interesting and didactic approach to this subject, see CIRNE LIMA, 1993; LUFT, E., 2001.

²⁰ Maybe it is possible to distinguish between the prosaic comprehension and the understanding, but I do not intend to discuss these details here. Werle points to a distinction between the absolute prose and the prosaic of the understanding, but I think he does not define it in an understandable way. See WERLE, 2005, pp. 79-97.

²¹ For more references on romantic art and the passage to modern art, see PIPPIN, 2014; HERNÁNDEZ, 2009; VIEWEG, 2009; WERLE, 2009; WERLE, 2013, pp. 173-191.

²² I prefer the literal translation, since there is a direct relation of the word to the intuition [*Anschauung*], being then “intuition-of-world” the most correct technical translation for the term in Hegel’s philosophy of art [*Welt* = world, *Anschauung* = intuition]. This term is usually translated as “worldview”, but there is an important relation between intuition and art in Hegel, that I believe must always be explicit in this concept.

Every modern art form (as post-romantic or in the last stage of the romantic form of art, in Hegel's sense) finds itself questioning art,²³ doubting its meaning, and being certain of the impossibility of reconciliation. At the same time, philosophy makes itself culturally present and the prosaic, conceptual, perspective permeates all our relationships. The modern form of art must deal with this, and to keep being art, it must open a path to the artistic perspective without falling into the ridiculousness of anachronism (which in this case would be the hope of leading truth back to its intuitive moment as a last and ultimate stage of comprehension).

Therefore, modern art places itself as negativity in face of daily life, seeking to open a new context of viewing which highlights, separates, the presented event or object from daily reality (different from classical art, which incorporates and presents its content as an essential component of daily life). On the other hand, the content of modern art can only be something relevant, artistic, if it reveals the latent meanings of its own time.

Modern art must disclose another view, another form of presentation or, yet, a new cut of the contemporary daily reality, showing, through this highlighting, that which seems invisible, despite being present, in face of the blindness caused by daily habit – that which prosaic life is unable to recontextualize. Thus, art still fulfills a cultural, negative, and determinate function, despite it not being the same function it had in other historical stages of its development (as in classical and symbolic forms of art). Before the predominance of the scientific and philosophical worldview, art was not the unique mean of presentation of spiritual and cultural contents, but nowadays it serves still a specific function in its mode of presentation, in the questioning and in the opening of the possibility of reframing reality.

Hero and Action

Following the analysis of the modes of comprehension, we have in Hegel the concept of Action, as one of the key elements to the artistic manifestation, guided by the logical structure of the sensible appearance [*Schein*] of the idea (i.e. the *Ideal*). The act of making the Idea sensible involves individuation. On the other hand, the meaning is related to the universal (the content of both the performance and the artwork). The *Ideal*, as regulative element of art, must regulate the perfection of the sensible appearance of the *Idea*, in order to articulate the best possible balance of the relationship universal-particular-singular precisely in the sensibility,

²³ See also BERTRAM, 2011, p. 286.

which means: in the singularity.²⁴ The sensible appearance of the *Idea* seeks, then, the individuation and the unity: what leads us to the conceptions of the individual and the unity of action. In turn, the immediate and perfect unitary relationship must also bring the action and the individual into a unity. So we find the essential importance of poetry, which passes through all the historical moments of art (namely, the symbolic, the classical and the romantic), that presents the narrative and representative structure of the intuition-of-world [*Weltanschauung*] of the different peoples and nations.²⁵

The ideal artistic expression must conduct towards the unity between action and individual, i.e. the unity between the event and the character must be indistinguishable. The proper form of artistic cognition, from the point of view of the absolute Spirit, is intuition. This demands that the unity and the identity have to be immediate. Hence, we find the artistic beauty necessarily related to the intuitive mode of sensible apprehension of the artistic meaning, which occurs in the classical form of art in the historic-sociocultural consciousness – specifically, in the mythic consciousness of the ancient Greek people, which have in the artistic expression their hegemonic mode of comprehension of the world. An intuition-of-world based on intuition, accomplished in the classical art, that unifies the event and the character, involves the concept of *Action*. In this concept, there is the figure of the *hero* and the unity with their action as essential elements. The hero carries, in their actions, the universal meaning.²⁶

The hero, then, founds the law through his action. It is not the rational mediation, the concept, what founds justice in the classical intuition-of-world, it is actually the feeling of what happens as justice through the hero's achievements. The hero represents the whole nation in their action, but only retrospectively: the nation itself is constructed through the heroes' actions. In the classical period and in the artistic *Ideal*, the hero represents the independence of the *Idea* in the form of the immediacy. The ideal figuration is found in mythical times.²⁷

The structure of action (as a general concept) has the following elements: the general State of the World [*allgemein Weltzustand*], the Situation [*Situation*], and the action itself [*Handlung als solche*]. We can think of the first as representing the universal moment, the

²⁴ Materiality and sensibility imply singularity, in Hegel.

²⁵ Poetry should be understood here as including all arts that use language and representation – thus including literature and theater. The word in Hegel's original text is *Poesie*, but there is another word for "poetry" in the strict sense in German: *Dichtung*.

²⁶ See especially A I, pp. 242-244. Here I deal with the conception of Hero exclusively through philosophy of art. The concept also appears in Hegel's philosophy of History. See HEGEL, 1986b. For an approach of the Hero in Hegel's philosophy of History, see BORGES, 2009, pp. 129-142; from an aesthetic perspective, see WERLE, 2006, pp. 198-205.

²⁷ A I, p. 248.

second representing the particular, and the third, the singular. The State of the World [*Weltzustand*] is defined as the general conditions of the individual action and its character. The Situation is what brings the contextual situation and its conflicts, a kind of particularity of the condition [*Besonderheit des Zustandes*]. The action itself, in its turn, is a kind of comprehension [*Auffassung*] and reaction of the subject to the conflicts brought forth by the specific situation (which has, on the other hand, its own conditions and set of possibilities – and also, if it can be said, its meaning – defined by the State of the World).

The State of the World is thus the background for the storytelling to happen, being formed by a kind of “objective prosody” (this term is mine), which Hegel classifies as heroic [*Heroenzeit*] or prosaic [*gegenwärtige prosaische Zustand*]. The first being the ancient State of the World (especially Ancient Greece and the period of domination of the myth) and the second is the situation of the modern world (which I also like to call “bureaucratic world”²⁸).

The Situation, in turn, is the particular context in which the action happens, the particular level, where the collision is generated, despite the possibility of involving other less conflictive circumstances (as in the sculptural representations of the gods). Hegel says: “The Situation in general is first the general state of affairs [*Zustand*], particularized to the determinacy, and, in this determinacy, it is on the other hand also the stimulus for the determinate externalization of the content [*Inhalt*], which has to be brought outside in its singular existence [*Dasein*, being-there] by means of artistic exposition [*Darstellung*]”.²⁹

The dramatic process structure of the generation of the conflict, which in its turn generates the conditions for the action of the plot (the action itself, in the specific sense), thus, is the following: the first moment is the absence of situation, indetermination, the universal level. The second moment is the particularization, the innocuous determination [*harmlose Bestimmtheit*], which still does not conduct to an opposition (and, thus, does not lead to the conflict that generates action and brings about the necessity of a resolution). The third moment is the collision [*Kollision*], which is the development of the situation that conducts to the opposition and to the consequent conflict, to the action and to the reaction [*Aktion und Reaktion*], therefore it creates the conditions for the action itself.

The action itself, in turn, has three moments: the universal powers, the particular activity by means of the individuals, and, finally, the union of the universal powers and the individual

²⁸ For an analysis of the relation between Heroic times and Prosaic times (also considering the Philosophy of Right), see GONÇALVES, 2017.

²⁹ A I, p. 260. The translation is mine.

actions in the *disposition*.³⁰

In the heroic State of the world, the hero's action does not imply a merely subjective and partial responsibility, since the action is not considered through a perspective of a distinction between the objective conditions and the (thought) choices of the agent. Since the objective and the subjective conditions are connected immediately, the circumstances of action and the action itself involve the individual in their completeness. The action is guided by disposition and mood [*Charakter und Gemüt*], and not by thought [*Gedanken*], so there is no distinction between those elements over which the agent has control and those over which they have no control, between what the agent is conscious of and what they are not. The hero's motivation itself is the result of the objective conditions – they themselves are objective. Becoming a hero is, then, as much a product of chance as are their actions. That is why being a hero is not only a glory, but, first of all, a sacrifice. The hero is what they are without having the possibility of having been something else, even if the action had been not predetermined (since the action, in the heroic State of the world, actualizes itself in the contingency). This is one of the main characteristics that distinguish classical epic and classical tragedy from modern drama.

It is important to notice that there is a historical process that *demands* that the hero and the constitution of myths take place, as a way to establish the law and the political state. This objective historical process is tied to an intuition-of-world and to the poetic mode of comprehension. On the subjective side, the mode of comprehension itself has a historicity that follows a phenomenological process where a determinate actualization only makes itself effective when its conditions are given. In the phenomenological unfolding of the modes of comprehension, the poetic mode is a condition to the effective development of the prosaic mode. The intuition-of-world can be considered as a process that involves both an objective condition (the sociohistorical constitution) and a subjective condition (the modes of comprehension), in a way in which one imbricates into another and transforms itself, and the unity of this interweaving has as a result a determinate intuition-of-world.

In these lines, the rise of the political state and the law allow mediations that follow another mode of comprehension, namely, thinking (or yet, the prosaic mode of comprehension),

³⁰ We can think this triad through an example, taking the 2018 Brazilian elections and political ascension of Bolsonaroism, in the following way: the General State of World is the neoliberalism and the bankruptcy of historical communism; the situation is PT's fall, people's disbelief in the traditional political class and the specific related context (economic crisis and so on); finally, the action itself is the elections, with Bolsonaro's victory. For a general view of this action, see ANDERSON, 2019.

since now the law is what creates social mediation (which was absent before, since the law was concentrated in the contingent action of the hero, what demands a form of intuitive identification between the people and their hero), and this mediation allows for the calculation and the relations in accordance to the mode of understanding (at the level of thinking). Given this, the development of a new form of comprehension makes it so that what the hero finds also ruins them: that is why the hero must be sacrificed – because there is no possibility to accomplish the heroic action itself without the consequence of this action to bring about necessarily, with itself, the dissolution of the hero. The intuitive action cannot found laws anymore, but on the contrary, they are subsumed to the laws. The laws cannot be transformed by brute power anymore, but only through mediation. The rise of the state brings the objective conditions to the development of the prosaic mode of comprehension, which brings with itself the impossibility to comprehend and accept heroes. Therefore, the process of myth generates its own dissolution, or becomes itself *anachronistic*.

In a certain way, what is at stake here is precisely the development of the free individuality and the paradoxes that it generates: in the action in heroic times, only the hero was free, only the hero was a subject. On the other hand, in the modern prosaic State of the world, the law itself, which mediates the universalities, is a product of the recognition of individual freedom, while at the same time the law itself limits and restrains the field of individual action. Here we have found one more example, in Hegel's philosophy, of the transposition from a field of indetermination (namely, the contingent State of the world, open to the poetic mode of comprehension, where the creative field is freer precisely because it has a lower degree of previous determinations) to determination.³¹ Both the modern political state and the prosaic mode of comprehension bring with themselves a universal context of previous determinations, which limit the field of particular activity and, thus, the poetic creation.

It is important to highlight the relation between classical art, poetic comprehension, heroic times, and the epic genre. The epic is one of the achievements of classical culture, so I bring here only some of the characteristics that can highlight the “epic” way in which the Bolsonarist consciousness lives: the epic work of art brings together an intuition-of-world of a specific people, in order to give it unity, meaning, totality, and sensible presentation. Thus, the epic has as characteristic the unity between the hero and the nation, and the actions of the hero represent the unity of the collective intuitions, which were dispersed until that moment.

³¹ For an interesting intuition of this process, see the conception of “the world of Leibniz” in LUFT, 2014.

Final thoughts: *Aufhebung* and history

Through the notion of State of the world we can think about the context of the times and the modes of comprehension. The anachronism of myth consists precisely in that the epic (as one of the proper mythical forms) can only take place in a situation that not only does not exist anymore, but also cannot be recovered. The *return of the myth* (if we can use this expression) involves a *historical lag*, which would be unable to operate separately from *alienation* (from the objective point of view) and *cynicism* (from the subjective point of view). Only in an alienated way can the prosaic objectivity allow for an illusion of a regressive reunion with the objectivity. On the other hand, only by means of *cynicism* could the modern subject pretend that it does not know itself as modern – therefore conscious of the distinction between the individual and the universal, conscious of the difference between intentions, contexts and individual achievements. The modern notion of action, thus, blocks the *heroic* conception of action. That means that for the hero to be a hero, it is not up to them to wish for, plan, or have intentions of *heroism* (however their actions can, in some level, be intentional or planned), but the action itself must occur in such a way that it expresses heroism as a *destination*. Nonetheless, the hero is not a *god* (but the gods influence in the hero's accomplishments), and thus the conception of a *sanctifying idolatry* is something that can only be thought of in a process which is at odds with myth. It is not upon us to morally judge the classical epic heroism (reflection is the typical form of romantic art in Hegel; in literature, it is related to the interiority of the lyric and, mainly, to the conflicts between the subjective and the objective sides in modern drama).

Accordingly, the anachronistic hero depends, on one hand, upon the chance sacrifices (for instance: the survival to the stabbing), which occur as consequence of the opening to the accomplishment of the supreme moral end (“to save the nation”).

We can distinguish between the process of cultural formation and the diversity of the formation of particular and singular consciousnesses. It seems that, based on Hegel's philosophy, it would be improbable (or even impossible) that a hegemonic mode of consciousness could regress. That being so, we raise here two questions: the first is related to the diversity of conceptions and thoughts in their relation to the whole, represented by the figure of the consciousness that encompasses everything, the figure which is not only hegemonic, but also represents the proper rational result of the mediations between the diverse conceptions. Therefore, the question is the following: since the intuitive and mythical worldview is simpler

than the modern and prosaic view, would it be possible for a simpler, less diverse, worldview to arise, and even become hegemonic? Concerning this last point, we can answer that the process of development of the Spirit includes (following the logic of the *Idea*) the progressive increase of diversity in the unity – i.e. the richest possible coherence. That means that Spirit encompasses these new figures, like the Bolsonarist consciousness. On the other hand, a Bolsonarist consciousness could not (following Hegel’s philosophy) become hegemonic, at least in these terms.

The second question is how an anachronism in the social direction could be possible. Would it be possible for a human society to regress historically?

If it is true that the current idolatrous reality brings back the figure of the *hero* (the “myth”), would this be a cultural regression, which could not be explained through Hegel’s philosophy? Or should we understand this case in a *different way*? I think Hegel’s philosophy is philosophically rich enough to deal with situations like this, considering the polysemic character of the concept of sublation [*Aufhebung*] – which allows that something overcome to be, at the same time, conserved and, thus, *present*. Bringing back an already surpassed conception cannot happen in a simply regressive way: only anachronism and cynicism allow this regression to *seem* possible. However, the consciousness that this is false is latent. Thus, bringing back that which has been overcome (somehow repressed) does not have the same meaning that it had before. This means that the return of the repressed can be understood as the life of the negative, and what is old is also, when resumed, the expression of something *new* or, at least, of a conflict, which was not truly *overcome*.

Following the line of thought of *Philosophy of Art*, the post-prosaic poetic work has specific difficulties and cannot be considered anymore as constituting a universal narrative – since we are in another State of the world. However, it does not seem to be the case of a simple transposition of myth to the present: the mythical conception returns from its repression, but without erasing posterior movements – it is a “prosaic myth”. It is, therefore, a false myth. Nevertheless, bringing back the “hero” (mediated by the unconscious idolatry of modern advertisement and the cultural industry) includes an autocratic and authoritarian desire: this hero “carries” the universal in their singular action.

Therefore, there is a certain ignorance about or revolt against the prosaic narrative: the civil law and the social mediations are already determined and cannot simply be refounded by individual actions. This is not something ignored: the contemporary myths and supermen are not classical heroes, but shadows of reinterpretations by the cultural industry and modern

politics. In Hegel's conception of the classical hero, their action is not considered singular and intentional. The hero *founds* the nation. In the modern prosaism this cannot be other than autocracy and deceit, illusion: there is no guided chance in our conception of world. In this case, it becomes clear that the action is oriented to please the "citizen", so as to seem that the action of the governor absorbs the "wishes of the people" (precisely as the author in the classical epic does³²).

"He thinks like us". This is the motto of contemporary populist identification. The other side of it, however, is that despite thinking like "us", he could neither be nor think like us – namely, he receives our support because he could be different or superior, but he chooses to be like this, like us. The one who advocates against equality could not accept equality as a social motto: this equality is only a partial mirror of that which one wants to believe that it is. This perspective is different from that of the hero: they cannot be alike or equal, in no relevant aspect, except in national identification, which is created after the heroic action (i.e. it is not about characteristics that one can find among us, but about the model for characteristics we wish to imitate – this imitation, however, is not of a psychological or moral kind, it is the action itself). Contrary to the modern conception (in which the intention and the limitations of the contextual knowledge are taken into consideration), what matters is the action itself. Thus, the consideration of the heroism and the worth of the action is neither in the mere result of the action (like in the moral conceptions classifiable as consequentialists), nor in the motivation or intention (like in Kant and the deontological models), but it is a disposition which is not merely natural (like in the British empiricists), but actually (as we have seen) in the immediate reunion of the elements of the heroic action: the action itself is what matters. That the hero is its author is what makes them a hero. This, however, would lead us to a conception in which the hero could only become a hero after the heroic action. Well, this action cannot be analyzed as a result of a set of contingent elements, therefore, this hero would be a hero by chance and, consequently, no hero at all.

In spite of this fact, passivity is an essential characteristic of the hero, despite not being a characteristic of the heroic action, to which the hero pertains. Rather than to chance, the hero is connected to *destiny*: the idea that the achievement, supposedly casual and contingent, is *necessary*. This necessity, nevertheless, is not of a kind that could be predicted or the result of a causal inference. This necessity cannot even be considered previously determined by divine

³² A III, pp. 334-8.

will – even the divine will have to fight to determine itself. What gives *necessity* to the heroic action is the *result of the struggle*: the struggle is the legitimizing condition of the recognition of heroism, and victory is what imposes the *necessity* of its recognition. Therefore, the heroic action is determined by a *retrospective necessity*.³³ The anachronism of myth has as a possible characteristic the inversion of the eventual perspective: instead of recognizing the heroic action as the founder of the recognition of the social conceptions (of norms and ways of behaviors as *mimetic models*), the anachronistic myth stipulates *prospectively* the hero and the myth.

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³³ See GABRIEL, 2009.

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