

Studies in the History of Ethics

The Vanity of Temporal Things: Hegel and the Ethics of War

Andrew Fiala (California State University, Fresno)

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War is that condition in which the vanity of temporal things and temporal goods takes on a serious significance and it is accordingly the moment in which the ideality of the particular attains its right and becomes actuality.

--Hegel, Philosophy of Right¹

Hegel thought that war shows us the larger perspective in which morality and all other temporal things find their higher meaning. In his early lectures on “Natural Right and Political Science,” Hegel maintains that war “shows the nothingness of particularity.”² War reminds us that particular goods such as individuality and even morality are limited goods that must be understood from within a larger context. This idea is connected to Hegel’s larger systematic project which aims to show us progressively more complex wholes in which finite goods find their meaning. My aim in the present paper is to locate Hegel’s theory of war both within just war thinking and within the context of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought about war. While Hegel accurately describes war as a condition that shows us the vanity of temporal things, the danger of Hegel’s account is the corrosive effect that this has on attempts to defend moral limits on warfare.

Hegel, Deontology, and The Just War Tradition

The general Hegelian idea that morality and individuality are limited goods is unacceptable to many. Kantians will resist such claims by claiming that our duties are supposed to be universal and absolute and by maintaining that human individuals have a dignity that ought always to be respected. But Hegel claims that the Kantian view is limited: it is too abstract and formal to be meaningful. For Hegel, duty cannot be divorced from concrete, historically grounded ethical and political life (what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*); and individuals are always already members of larger social wholes. This means that deontological approaches to just war theory are insufficient from the Hegelian point of view. And it also means that “reasons of state” trump claims that are made on behalf of individuals.

States are, in Hegel’s terms, individual totalities.³ Individual human beings may be sacrificed—within limits—for the good of this larger whole. Hegel’s idea about sacrificing individuals for the good of the whole has made him a nemesis for liberals such as Karl Popper.⁴ Critiques of Hegel’s political theory and his philosophy of war can also be found in the writings of Cassirer, Marcuse, Adorno, and others who traced the outlines of 20th century totalitarianism in Hegel’s thought. But unless one advocates both anarchism and pacifism, the Hegelian view will have to be taken seriously.

Hegel’s approach has something in common with the just war tradition, especially with those who understand just war theory as part of a larger Christian theological doctrine aiming at a conception of the proper relation between Christian faith and political power.⁵ For Hegel, theological or spiritual interpretations of war remind us that morality and individuality are contained within a larger spiritual whole. Morality and individuality are not eliminated by

adopting this larger perspective. But for Hegel, the larger historical point of view shows us these goods only exist within historically given *Sittlichkeit*. Thus the state is the higher good that should be preserved even at the expense of sacrifices of individuality and moral purity. In this sense Hegel's ideas have something in common with the "Christian realist" approach of Reinhold Niebuhr.⁶ And Hegel's approach could be understood as one attempt to accomplish the "Augustinian" compromise that is part of just war thinking. This compromise acknowledges the importance of *tranquillitas ordinis*. As George Weigel explains this idea, it is "the order created by just political community and mediated through law."⁷ From this perspective, just wars are fought in defense of the tranquility of a well-ordered political community. This is a compromise insofar as seemingly immoral means will have to be employed in pursuit of the higher good of defending the well-ordered political community.

Christian just war theories might invoke the ideas of sin and grace in order to reconcile us to this compromise. But for Hegel, it is ultimately philosophy that provides for reconciliation. Hegel recognizes that human life contains alienation and apparent contradictions. The fact that we must make accommodations with "evil" indicates our finitude. We will be reconciled to this when we attain the philosophical purview in which evil and war are comprehended as part of the whole.

While the hope of the Christian just war tradition is that Christians can make use of lesser evils in order to obtain greater goods, the worry of pacifists is that any compromise with the evil of war will lead us too far beyond the bounds of ethics. Pacifists such as John Howard Yoder might criticize the idea that we should employ violence in defense of the state as a kind of "Constantinian heresy" that sacrifices spiritual and ethical purity for loyalty to political life.⁸ One need not be a pacifist to see that things get complicated when we admit that war allows for

exceptions to basic moral principles. Indeed, even defenders of principles of justice in war such as Michael Walzer and John Rawls admit to the idea of a “supreme emergency exemption” to just war principles: when a state has its “back to the wall” in a historical emergency of existential import, the rules of war may be set aside.⁹ Hegel would most likely accept this idea since the state is the “ethical substance” that must be preserved.

Hegel’s ideas have been used (some would say, abused) by those who claim that historical and political exigencies can necessitate violent excesses and violations of morality. Ernst Cassirer once noted that the battle between Germans and Russians in the Second World War could be described as a battle between Right- and Left-Hegelians.¹⁰ Karl Popper condemned totalitarian violence of the sort typical of the 20th century as a sort of “historicism” that he traced to Marx and Hegel. Popper described historicism as “the doctrine that history is controlled by specific historical or evolutionary laws whose discovery would enable us to prophesy the destiny of man.”¹¹ The idea that history has a *telos* can lead us to justify atrocities in the name of historical progress and it can lead us to support a strong hegemonic power in pursuit of historical destiny. Moreover, there is a tendency in Hegel to glorify war as both the crucible of historical change and the tonic that cures social ills. According to Popper, Hegel thought that “war is not a common and abundant evil but a rare and precious good.”¹² Hegel’s basic idea about war, according to the critical approach of Cassirer and Popper, is that war is a means that can be employed in achieving the goal of history and that war is a good thing for the life of a nation. This critique of Hegel’s ideas about war was of interest to those who were concerned with the struggles of the mid-20th century between fascism, communism, and liberal-capitalism. But Hegelian ideas resurfaced in the 1990’s with Francis Fukuyama’s Hegelian account of the “end of history” and in the general ideas of so-called “neoconservatives.”¹³ The

idea that war might be used as an instrument of history has been put into effect in the Bush Doctrine in U.S. foreign policy; and this idea has come under attack as a historicist approach that is willing to set aside traditional ideas about justice in war.¹⁴ Indeed, the Bush Doctrine has been willing to stray beyond the limits of traditional just war theory in pursuit of its agenda of historical transformation. At the same time, communist and fascist themes have been discovered in the background of Islamic totalitarianism; and it is possible to trace some of this back to Marxism and ultimately to Hegel as Paul Berman does in Terror and Liberalism.¹⁵ Thus, Hegel's understanding of the relation between morality, war, and the larger struggles of history remains of interest.

War and Tragedy

It is an exaggeration to say that Hegel glorified war; but he did think that war was an integral part of political life.¹⁶ The Hegelian philosophy of war combines three elements: a realist description of international affairs, a critique of deontological approaches to thinking about the morality of war, and an idealistic account of a historical destiny that superintends international conflict. One of the implications of this approach is the idea that war shows us the transience of the finite and directs us toward higher goods. In this sense, war is beyond morality in an important and interesting way. Hegel thought that morality was, properly speaking, the concern of private individuals focused on the limited goods of private life. But since war involves much larger structures than mere individuality, it is beyond any simple sort of *moral* judgment. This is not to say that Hegel thinks that there are no limits to warfare. Indeed, Hegel does claim that such limits are created by the historical and cultural contexts in which wars are

fought. In the modern West, this includes the fact that morality is an essential part of our cultural context.

Hegel's approach to war developed as part of his understanding of the relation between religion, ethics, and political life. Indeed, Hegel was aware of the differences between religious traditions with regard to warfare. He recognized that these differences were connected with the moral and political implications of religious truth. In his early work on "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate" he notes that within the Christian tradition as developed in modern Europe, "war is not waged against the individual, but against the whole which lies outside him." This is contrasted with the Islamic tradition in which the individual is thought to contain the whole and in which, during war, "every single individual is put to the sword in the most cruel fashion."¹⁷ Hegel seems to think that the developed Christian tradition represents progress beyond the Islamic notion of jihad because it recognizes that the state is a spiritual formation that transcends individuality. With regard to limitations on war in the European context, Hegel says that wars should "on no account be waged either on internal institutions and the peace of private and family life, or on private individuals."¹⁸ With this limitation, Hegel rejects acts of terrorism. Hegel also argues against the sort of total wars that were fought throughout the 20th century, what he calls in his early lectures, wars "whose sole aim is mutual destruction."¹⁹

Nonetheless, even within the European tradition war asks individuals to sacrifice themselves for the good of the nation and the state of war turns ordinary morality on its head. War does not cohere easily with either Christian theology or with the ideas of modern liberalism. Hegel's view of war reminds us that war calls many of our most cherished values into question. And thus it points beyond ethics and politics toward the larger spheres of reconciliation found in art, religion, and philosophy.

The charge that Hegel glorifies war can be traced to the fact that Hegel thought that war was essential to the health of modern nations because it helps to create patriotism and prevents nations from sinking into the complacency and stagnation of peace. Indeed, Hegel explicitly rejects the Kantian project of perpetual peace via a league of nations.²⁰ This idea is, according to Hegel, at odds with the modern idea of the nation state. Moreover, Hegel goes on to claim that peace causes nations to become “stuck in their ways,” “rigid and ossified.” Indeed, Hegel claims that even if there were peace, a nation would need to “create an enemy” because wars strengthen nations and because nations “gain internal peace as a result of wars with their external enemies.” Finally, war reminds us of the transience of finite things and especially reminds us that individuals have what Hegel calls a “universal duty” to sacrifice themselves for the good of the state.²¹

It is important to note, however, that Kant himself had expressed similar ideas. Hegel acknowledges that even Kant thought that perpetual peace was an ideal to be approached but not completed. In Kant’s language, it is an “ideal incapable of realization.”²² According to Hegel’s interpretation of Kant, it is an “ideal toward which mankind should approximate.”²³ The difficulty for thinking about the morality war is that the real world has not yet reached the condition of perpetual peace. Short of the end of history in perpetual peace, we must compromise with war. Indeed, we should also recognize that war has been an important force in historical progress. In his “Concluding Note” to his “Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History,” Kant indicates that while war is horrible, it is also an “indispensable means” of spiritual progress.²⁴ And even in Perpetual Peace, where he outlines a theory of justice in war (also developed in the Metaphysics of Morals), Kant indicates that nature uses war as a way of creating human progress.²⁵ This includes stimulating the love of honor that is essential to human

dignity, disseminating human culture around the globe, and even helping to develop the sense of international justice that is founding Kant's ideal. Hegel's ideas are thus not that far away from Kant's.

Hegel reminds us that Kantian morality alone is insufficient as a lens for considering war. But Hegel is not entirely opposed to thinking about morality in warfare. Rather, he locates the morality of war within the larger purview of historical *Sittlichkeit* in which struggle, contradiction, and war are ubiquitous. Hegel claims, somewhat metaphorically, that spirit is always at war with itself.²⁶ Spirit is self-alienating activity that struggles with and against itself. In history, these struggles are manifest as war within and between different cultural structures of identity. Unlike Kant, Hegel's goal was not to articulate a path to perpetual peace. Rather, he wanted to find a way to reconcile us to war, despite its horrors, by locating war within a larger philosophical purview.²⁷ Hegel's mature philosophy of war serves to reconcile us to history, not by proclaiming the end of war and the dawn of perpetual peace, but by showing us why war will continue to plague us and by accommodating morality to this fact.

In contemplating the destruction found in the history of spirit, we discover that spirit's self-identity is always fractured and tormented by the negative.²⁸ War thus shows us the tragedy of what Hegel called Objective Spirit. Specifically it shows us that the identities and commitments of political life are fraught with peril since these identities are formed in opposition to other identities with which they will inevitably conflict. According to Hegel's view of war as a tragic conflict between political identity formations, such conflicts cannot be ethically mediated because ethical universals are entirely contained within a given political totality. For Hegel, the effect of tragedy, when properly understood, is to reconcile us to ethical conflicts. "Reconciliation in tragedy is related to the resolution of specific ethical and substantive facts

from their contradiction into their true harmony.”²⁹ War is a tragic conflict that cannot be reduced simply to questions of guilt or innocence, right or wrong.³⁰ A philosophy of war that considers war as a tragic conflict is thus reluctant to provide an abstract formal evaluation of war, its methods, or its causes.

Hegel’s philosophy of war has been a subject of quite divergent interpretations. A useful typology of these discussions has been articulated by D.P Verene.³¹ The “totalitarian” approach views Hegel as advocating war and nationalism.³² The “conservative” approach regards Hegel as merely offering a descriptive account of international relations and the fact of war. The “liberal” approach tends to ignore Hegel’s account of war in order to keep Hegel’s political philosophy within the tradition of modern liberalism. Verene recognizes that there is no easy solution to the question of the status of Hegel’s account of war. This question, in large part, is only solved by answering the question of the status of Hegel’s political philosophy in relation to the whole of his philosophical system. Hegel’s philosophy of war indicates the instability of the identity formations we find in Objective Spirit. Hegel is less interested in questions about the justice of war or the relation of war to other political ideals than he is interested in the way that war shows us the limits of Objective Spirit. Thus one can say that Hegel offers us a “philosophy of war” in the Hegelian sense, where philosophy is an effort to comprehend the systematic structure of reality.³³

In Hegel’s most explicit consideration of war—in the discussion in the Philosophy of Right—Hegel discusses the ongoing *necessity* of war. This thesis is, basically, that political entities are dialectically related to other such entities in a struggle for mutual recognition. This struggle contains, at bottom, processes that are famous from Hegel’s analysis of the master-slave dialectic in the Phenomenology of Spirit.³⁴ However, in the realm of politics as Hegel conceives

it in the Philosophy of Right, there is no explicit hope for a lasting structure of mutual recognition that would resolve the differences between political entities.³⁵ The reason for this is quite simple: there is no sovereign power to unite the differences that exist between different states. The international struggle for recognition is thus a structural necessity of Objective Spirit as Hegel conceives it. This is the heart of Hegel's realism.

This structural realism seems to be in contradiction with Hegel's ideas about "the end of history" as emphasized by the Kojève-Fukuyama interpretation of Hegel. Fukuyama's thesis that liberal values will triumph through the historical struggle for recognition is an adequate interpretation of the early Hegel. This interpretation is especially useful when applied to developments *within* a national or cultural form of life, i.e., when applied to the European context. On the other hand, it is doubtful that in international affairs any final stage of mutual recognition is possible and that a clash of civilizations will ensue, especially when we hold out the possibility that different "civilizations" (what Hegel calls in the Philosophy of Right, "world-historical realms" or *welthistorischen Reiche*) will resolve their own "internal" struggles for recognition in different ways.³⁶ This interpretation reflects Hegel's more mature view as developed in the Philosophy of Right.

Although Kojève, Fukuyama, and others emphasize the goal of mutual recognition found in Hegel's Phenomenology,³⁷ even in the Phenomenology Hegel calls into question the process by which war creates spiritual progress. In the section on Spirit, Hegel writes that war is a limited mechanism precisely because it is physical and not spiritual. "Now, it is physical strength and what appears as a matter of luck that decides on the existence of ethical life and spiritual necessity."³⁸ The difficulty of integrating war into a philosophical account of Objective Spirit is that war is often resolved by way of contingencies (economics, weather, geography, and

just plain luck). This problem is revisited in the Philosophy of History where we find that spiritual progress uses the finite and the physical to develop its idea through history, i.e., the so-called “cunning of reason.” While other forms of realism acknowledge such contingencies, Hegel spiritualizes them and holds out the hope that spirit uses these contingencies to bring about progress. This indicates the need to move beyond the realm of Objective Spirit: spirit’s developmental trajectory can only be comprehended from the philosophical perspective, which reflects back upon the conflicts of political life and gives us a spiritual interpretation of these contingencies. Nonetheless war reminds us of the importance of contingency in the political realm: the phenomenon of war shows us that we need to adopt a larger perspective to make sense of the world.

Hegel in Context

As mentioned above, Hegel’s view of war was articulated in response to Kant. Hegel was also reacting to Hobbes and Rousseau. And his ideas should be understood in the context of 19th century history which included the Napoleonic wars and the realism of Hegel’s contemporary, Carl von Clausewitz. To begin, it is important to note that Hegel’s explicit rejection of Rousseau’s notion of the social contract informs his view of the duty that citizens have to sacrifice themselves for the state during war.³⁹ For Hegel, the idea of the social contract cannot account for the demands that the state makes upon individuals—especially the demand of self-sacrifice in war. Rousseau is also important for understanding Hegel because Rousseau distinguishes the properly *political* meaning of war from the state of personal enmity and ubiquitous violence that Hobbes called “war” in Chapter 13 of the Leviathan or Chapter 1 of De

Cive where he describes the state of nature as a condition of war that is of all men against all men (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). As Rousseau explains,

War, then, is not a relation between man and man, but a relation between State and State, in which individuals are enemies only by accident, not as men, nor even as citizens, but as soldiers; not as members of the fatherland, but as its defenders. In short, each State can have as enemies only other States and not individual men, inasmuch as it is impossible to fix any true relation between things of different kinds.⁴⁰

In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel agrees with Rousseau's idea that the term "war" ought to be reserved for the action of states.

Rousseau's contractarian perspective leads to the idea of limited warfare.⁴¹ Rousseau argues, for example, for noncombatant immunity: a declaration of war does not justify the killing of those who are not employed as soldiers. Declarations of war are warnings given to the citizens of the nation that is declared to be the enemy.⁴² The warning says that if citizens of the enemy state take up arms, they may be killed by the soldiers of the state declaring the war. Connected with this is the correlative right to surrender: when enemy soldiers lay down their arms, they are no longer acting as soldiers and thus ought not be killed. Rousseau connects his thinking about war with the master-slave relation in a way that resonates with Hegel. For Rousseau, the 'master' has no right to kill the "slave" because enmity should end once one party gives up its arms. But without the right to kill the 'slave', the 'master' has no power over him. Thus the master-slave relation is at best an unstable cease-fire that it is not actually a state of peace.⁴³

Hegel fills in the details of this in the Phenomenology by arguing that the way to overcome the master-slave dialectic is to move toward a higher level of mutual recognition. While the master-slave dialectic helps to explain the necessity of the social compact, it poses an interesting problem for international relations. If states are involved in a struggle for mutual recognition, as Hegel claims in the Philosophy of Right, and if there can be no lasting mutual recognition between states because there is no sovereign power over them, as Hegel also suggests, then international relations cannot reach a peaceful conclusion. Thus, while Hegel follows Rousseau at the level of domestic politics, he leaves us with something like a Hobbesian view at the level of international politics.⁴⁴ This follows from Hegel's understanding of political identity. In the realm of politics, it is states that are sovereign individuals. These sovereign individuals cannot give up their sovereignty without losing their own individuality. Although Hegel does argue that finite human persons find their individuality completed in the state, states themselves cannot be transcended in this way. The highest identity formation of Objective Spirit is thus left in opposition to other similar identity formations. And there is no way to resolve the struggle between these political "individuals", other than war.

Hegel, then, like Hobbes, can be considered as a "realist" with regard to international relations. To call Hegel a realist is implicitly to contrast him with the liberal idealism of Kant, who more explicitly argued against a Hobbesian approach to international affairs.⁴⁵ According to Kant, war should be conducted according to principles of justice in war. Moreover, according to Kant, there should be an end to war. The way for it to end was to establish a code of warfare, to expand liberal political institutions, and to create a league of nations in which disputes could be mediated without recourse to war. For Hegel, this is a utopian dream that runs counter to the truth of political life, which is that states are sovereign individuals who cannot cede their

sovereignty to an international institution without giving up their very identity. According to Hegel, a state is an individual entity opposed to other such entities. Thus we might say that Hegel's "realism" consists in his claims about the "reality" (or actuality) of the state, which, in Hegel's terms means the very idea that constitutes the state.⁴⁶ This realism acknowledges that there will always be conflicts between states and so the tragedy of war will continue.

We might think that Hegel shares with his contemporary, Carl von Clausewitz, the view that war is "a continuation of policy by other means."⁴⁷ Clausewitz means that war always has a political objective and that the nature of this objective should help give shape to the means employed. Limitations on warfare, according to Clausewitz, are derived from and proportional to the political goals of war. Hegel would most likely agree with this assessment. But Hegel incorporates the theory of war as a political instrument in a much broader context in which political life itself is comprehended. Like Clausewitz, however, Hegel thought that ideas about warfare needed to develop in concert with technological development and ultimately had to cohere with the political ideas that guided warfare.

Clausewitz, for example, thought that Napoleon was a genius for actualizing the new political ideal of France in military form: by using the mass army. And he recognized that Napoleon had evolved a new form of democratic warfare that moved away from the stylized battles of the 18th century. Hegel also celebrated Napoleon, who Hegel saw at Jena in 1806 and described as the "world-soul" on horseback. But Hegel also recognized that despite Napoleon's military prowess, "never was the powerlessness of victory exhibited in clearer light" because Napoleon's victories alone were unable to disseminate and expand the spiritual ideas of the age. As Hegel puts it, there can be no "revolution without a reformation."⁴⁸ Napoleon's failures demonstrate that war alone is insufficient as an instrument of progress.

Like Clausewitz, Hegel thought that new political arrangements and new technology required new ways of understanding war. In one interesting passage Hegel writes that the invention of the gun “has turned the purely personal form of valour into a more abstract form.”⁴⁹ In other words, modern warfare has become abstract insofar as modern technology de-personalizes warfare. As Hegel explains in the Philosophy of History, gunpowder neutralizes the force of mere physical strength.⁵⁰ It is no longer the strong arm that prevails. Rather, gunpowder creates conditions in which intelligence, generalship, character, and “unity of spirit” are more essential for determining the outcome of warfare. For Hegel, all of this is contained in the idea that in the long run wars are as much about ideas as they are about power.

War and Ideas

Wars are clashes of ideas that help people clarify their values as they unite in opposition to a common foe. Hegel indicates, for example, that the Trojan War had this effect on the Greeks, just as the Crusades served to unite Christendom during the Middle Ages.⁵¹ And he discusses the way in which the wars against the Turks united the European family of nations.⁵² Wars can also bring forth new eras of world-historical significance. The Greeks’ victory over Persia is interpreted by Hegel as the triumph of the principle of freedom against the principle of despotism. From Hegel’s perspective, it was the “importance of the cause itself” that shows us the importance of the war.⁵³ While some of this reflects a Romanticized view of the Greeks and Hegel’s Eurocentric view of history, there is something plausible about the idea that wars are fought in the name of ideas and that there can be wars that are regarded as progressive in this sense.⁵⁴ Progressive wars are those that helped to develop the notion of freedom, such as the wars of religion in the 17th century or the French Revolution. But Hegel’s ambivalence toward

the French Revolution and its excess shows us the sense of Hegel's philosophy of war: war might be necessary and progressive but nonetheless terrible.

In the realm of politics where there are dialectically differentiated political identities, war is often the only recourse when these identities come into conflict. These identities are not only focused on states, they also include religious differences. Such ideological warfare is a necessary part of the development of ideas in history. Hegel says of the Thirty Years War, for example, that it was "indispensable to the security of Protestants."⁵⁵ And in England, "war was indispensable to the establishment of the Protestant church."⁵⁶ It is interesting to note (especially in light of our current war on terrorism) that in this conflict, Hegel claims that the people were "fanatical"—basing their will to fight on religious faith.⁵⁷ This is significant because it indicates a further point of tragedy: that fighters on each side can be entirely convinced of the righteousness of their cause.

These religious wars involved a clash of absolutes—in Hegel's language they were based upon "absolute mistrust": "absolute, because mistrust bound up with the religious conscience was its root."⁵⁸ Hegel thus recognizes that religious and ideological differences can lead to war and that war cannot be reduced merely to self-interest narrowly conceived. Indeed, Hegel's interpretation of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars conceives of these events as political attempts to export philosophical ideas. However, Hegel claims that this was destined to fail because "it is false that the fetters which bind Right and Freedom can be broken without the emancipation of conscience—that there can be Revolution without a Reformation."⁵⁹ Individual nations must develop, on their own terms and at their own pace, toward the idea of freedom. Although wars can be fought in defense of ideas, ultimately war alone is insufficient to bring about progress. Genuine spiritual development is also necessary.

But war does facilitate spiritual development by reminding us of the vanity of temporal things. War makes the sublation of individuality that we find in religion palpable for us. In Hegel's language, war demands the "sacrifice" (*Aufopferung*) of individual persons: their property, their happiness, and their very lives.⁶⁰ It is significant that this is the same language that Hegel uses to describe religious devotion.⁶¹ Hegel recognizes that political patriotism and religious devotion are quite similar. In his discussion of this similarity in the Philosophy of History he says: "By sacrifice (*Opfer*) man expresses his renunciation of his property, his will, his individual feelings."⁶² The sacrifices of war thus have a religious connection. At least, war is about ideas and interests that are more important than individual property, happiness, and even life.

Hegel's view is important because it reminds us of the spiritual basis of war, i.e., a basis that transcends individual self-interest and material need. Individuals do sacrifice their lives and property for ideas. Fukuyama made this clear when he used Hegel to argue that wars in defense of liberalism were not simply wars in defense of bourgeois economic interests.⁶³ The demand that some individuals sacrifice their lives in defense of an idea only makes sense if this sacrifice is about spiritual values that transcend the immediate economic interests of the finite individual.

With this in mind it is easy to see why Hegel rejects the Kantian thesis that the spread of republican values will produce perpetual peace. Kant claims that peace will result from the republican emphasis on consent as the basis for government:

The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war. Among the latter would

be: having to fight, having to pay the costs of war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war leaves behind, and, to fill up the measure of evils, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself and that can never be liquidated on account of constant wars in the future.⁶⁴

For Hegel, this emphasis on individual consent, which devolves to a focus on material self-interest, fails to account for the power or majesty of the state. Even though it is possible for there to be international agreement about the principles of political right, Hegel seems to think that liberal nations might still go to war with one another, if only because their political identities are always involved in the mutual struggle for recognition.⁶⁵ What drives a nation to war is its interest in its own welfare but also its interest in being recognized by others.⁶⁶ These national interests cannot be reduced to the material interests of individuals in a way that might give support to the Kantian view. Moreover, without an international sovereign who might resolve potential conflicts, Kant's proposal for instituting a federation of nations is useless.⁶⁷

Justice in War

For Hegel, limitations on warfare, like other aspects of international law, are merely formal obligations (*Sollen*).⁶⁸ Such limitations are lacking because they are dependent upon the particular wills of the individual states involved and because they lack the force of political right that might be obtained were an international sovereign body able to enforce them. Thus limitations on warfare are at best one-sided and there can be no expectation of reciprocation. As is well known, in the Philosophy of Right, Hegel indicates the limits of the Kantian approach to

morality.⁶⁹ So it is no surprise that Hegel does not adopt a deontological approach to the question of justice in war. Hegel does argue that there should be limits on warfare even if these limits are merely the customs of warfare as developed in particular cultures.⁷⁰

Hegel understands war as a conflict between individual states, not as a conflict between the individual persons who inhabit these states. Hegel seems to think that war is properly conducted in a formal arena by representatives of the sovereign powers, the military class. In the section of the Philosophy of Right on Morality, in his critique of the idea that “the end justifies the means,” Hegel points out that there are formal codes, which determine what is appropriate in war. It may seem odd that soldiers can violate the commandment, “thou shall not kill.” But Hegel says: “Courts of law and soldiers have not only the right but also the duty to kill human beings; but in this case, there are precise definitions as to what kind of people and what circumstances make this permissible and obligatory.”⁷¹ Hegel defines the duty of the soldier solely in terms of the soldier’s duty to the state he represents; Hegel does not prescribe a universal theory of justice in war that would be the duty of all soldiers of any nationality.

And yet he does think that modern European states share certain ideas about justice in war. Hegel writes, for example: “Modern wars are accordingly waged in a humane manner, and persons do not confront each other in hatred.”⁷² Hegel continues: “At most, personal enmities will arise at military outposts, but in the army as such, hostility is something indeterminate which takes second place to the duty which each respects in the other.” Hegel’s idea is that the individual, insofar as he is a soldier, will transcend his particular tastes and inclinations (for example, hatred for the enemy). The soldier, as a representative of the state, is supposed merely to do his duty. That is, the soldier is supposed to sublimate his individual interests (his passions of

hostility and hatred, for example) in the name of the political universal. The soldiers themselves are only involved insofar as they are representatives of the state.

Hegel does recognize the contradictions that are involved in military service of the sort he describes. He says that military service “embodies the harshness of extreme opposites”:

Alienation itself, but as the existence of freedom; the supreme self-sufficiency of being-for-self, which at the same time exists in the mechanical service of an external order; total obedience and renunciation of personal opinion and reasoning, and hence personal absence of mind, along with the most intense and comprehensive presence of mind and decisiveness at a given moment; the most hostile and hence most personal action against individuals, along with a completely indifferent or even benevolent attitude towards them as individuals.⁷³

The contradictions of military service indicate the instability of political life. To be plain here: military service is necessary within the current formation of political identity. But military service seems to pervert individuality in ways that run counter to the idea of freedom that grounds the modern state. From this one might argue, as pacifists do, that war and the idea of military service should be eradicated. But for Hegel the current state of affairs demands continued use of military service and warfare. This fact is tragic: military service is a sort of contradiction within the ideals of modernity. This is why we must look beyond political life to the sphere of Absolute Spirit for final reconciliation.

The above discussion focuses on the *in bello* question of the means of warfare. But the other, perhaps more important, question of the just war theory has to do with causes for war, the question of the *ad bellum* justification of war. It is significant that Hegel has very little to say

about this; and what he does say is inadequate as a guide for thinking about the question of just cause. One reason for this is that Hegel emphasizes the contingent nature of war. Hegel indicates that there is no way to predict when a war will erupt. This is true because the will of a particular nation is motivated by contingent particular circumstances. Hegel thinks that there is no schematic way of formalizing acceptable system of causes for war: it is not possible to consider justifiable reasons for war in this abstract fashion. Hegel says that questions about specific causes of war (such as breaches of honor or failures of recognition) are “inherently indeterminable.”⁷⁴ Indeed, Hegel acknowledges that wars erupt over mere ideas (*Vorstellungen*) about harm and disadvantage, and that they are often based upon limited estimates and conjectures about the intentions of the enemy state.⁷⁵ While it seems that Hegel would admit that a really substantial harm would be an adequate reason for war, he also seems to indicate that it is difficult to determine such a harm in practice, in part because the perception of harm is contingent on the “personality” of the state. And in his early lectures he indicates that preemptive war is acceptable based on “the danger of an attack or injury, or excessive growth in strength” (of a rival state).⁷⁶

Because the causes of any particular war are contingent, questions of justice become quite complicated. Hegel hints that both sides could be right in a war.⁷⁷ At least, both states are entitled to pursue their own particular self-interest.⁷⁸ This again points us to the tragic nature of war and the instability of political life that war exposes. For Hegel, military power is contingent: might does not always make right. This is why Hegel hesitates to provide a discussion of concrete wars in the Philosophy of Right.⁷⁹ Although there may be some necessary force working through the larger course of history, specific battles and wars involve many contingent factors. However, since there must be some resolution to the conflict, this resolution is one of

force. The tragedy here is twofold. War does nothing to settle the spiritual dispute about the underlying conflict of goods. And war provides us with a resolution that reminds us of our finitude and inability to obtain permanent political satisfaction.

Conclusion

Hegel's approach to the philosophy of war has much in common with the way in which war is understood in Greek tragedy: Hegel accepts war as a part of the social world and attempts to deal with it as such. A philosophy of war, in Hegel's sense, must link the contingencies of physical nature, fate, and luck with the necessary logical development of spirit in history. Hegel's philosophy of history and politics develops as a dialectic between tragic conflicts and their philosophical reconciliation.⁸⁰ War shows us that there are tragic conflicts between and within spiritual formations. Thus war is the mechanism which pushes us beyond the state toward a realization of the transience of finite things, including perhaps toward a recognition of the transience of nations and states themselves.

This move beyond politics can seem to be spiritually fulfilling: a nation at war needs a higher sense of reconciliation in which the sacrifices of war are redeemed as reasons of state. The worry about this religious turn in thinking about war is that it allows us to ignore the suffering of war by claiming that spirit is actualizing itself on the slaughter-bench of history. But this critique applies to any approach to the morality of war that strays beyond deontological prohibitions and is willing to consider consequences, proportionality, and the possible historical necessity of supreme emergency exemptions. In the complex world beyond abstract deontological commandments, we are faced with difficult judgments of historical import involving the life and death of individuals and nations. The danger of straying beyond

deontology is that we may end up justifying atrocity in the name of historical destiny as did those “historicists” who were inspired by Hegel. To resist this slippage, we must recall that Hegel thought that there were limitations in modern warfare, even if these limitations were culturally and historically located. This is a sort of relativism: Hegel’s approach takes seriously the idea that change occurs in political ideas and in technological capacity. But Hegel also acknowledges that deontological morality continues to be one of the ideas that “we”—by which Hegel means, modern enlightened Europeans—must reconcile ourselves to. The virtue of Hegel’s approach is that he recognizes the power of war to reduce our most cherished values to nothing. A critic may contend that this is precisely why war should be abolished. But Hegel reminds us that until history ends, we will have to reconcile ourselves to the vanity of temporal things that is exposed in war.

NOTES

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), § 324, Remark. The German edition consulted is G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse in Werke*, vol. 7 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970). Subsequent references to Hegel will be cited by Hegel's section numbers (including "Remarks" and/or "Additions" to these sections).

² Hegel, Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science (trans. Stewart and Hodgson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), § 160.

³ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, §§ 321-322.

⁴ For a more detailed historical analysis of this critique of Hegel, that stretches back to 1856 and Rudolf Haym's *Hegel und seine Zeit* see Shlomo Avineri, "The Problem of War in Hegel's Thought" Journal of the History of Ideas (1961), 22: 4, 463-474; and Shlomo Avineri, Hegel's Theory of the Modern State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). For my own discussion of Hegel's view of the state see Andrew Fiala, The Philosopher's Voice: Philosophy, Politics, and Language in the 19th Century (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).

⁵ See, for example, Helmut David Baer and Joseph E. Capizzi, "Just War Theories Reconsidered: Problems with Prima Facie Duties and the Need for a Political Ethic" Journal of Religious Ethics 33: 1 (2005). This idea can be traced back to Reinhold Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics (New York: Scribners, 1940). Also see George Weigel, "Moral Clarity in a Time of War" First Things 139 (Feb. 2003); John Hymers, "Regrounding the Just War's Presumption Against Violence in Light of George Weigel" Ethical Perspectives 11 (2004); J. Daryl Charles, "Between Pacifism and Crusade: Justice and Neighbor Love in the Just War Tradition" Logos 8: 4 (Fall 2005); and my discussion of Weigel and the just war tradition in Andrew Fiala, Practical Pacifism (New York: Algora Press, 2003) and in "Citizenship, Epistemology, and the Just War Theory" in Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture, 7:2 (April 2004).

⁶ Niebuhr writes the following: "In its profoundest insights the Christian faith sees the whole of human history as involved in guilt, and finds no release from guilt except in the grace of God. The Christian is freed by that grace to act in history; to give his devotion to the highest values he knows; to defend those citadels of civilization of which necessity and historical destiny have

made him the defender; and he is persuaded by that grace to remember the ambiguity of even his best actions” [Reinhold Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics in War and Christian Ethics ed. Arthur F. Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 312].

⁷ George Weigel, “Moral Clarity in a Time of War” First Things 139 (February 2003). Also see Jean Bethke Elshtain, Just War Against Terrorism (New York: Basic Books, 2003), Chapter 3; and George Weigel, Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁸ John Howard Yoder, The Original Revolution (Herald Press, 2003). For discussion see Stanley Hauerwas, Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004), Chapter 7.

⁹ Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, Chapter 16; John Rawls, The Law of Peoples (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) Chapter 14. See my discussion in Practical Pacifism and in “Terrorism and the Philosophy of History: Liberalism, Realism and the Supreme Emergency Exemption” in Essays in Philosophy, Volume 4, Special Issue on Rawls and Terrorism, May 2002.

¹⁰ Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of The State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), 249. Cassirer attributes this idea to Hajo Holborn, “The Science of History” in The Interpretation of History, ed., Joseph Strayer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943).

¹¹ Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 1: 8

¹² Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, II: 71

¹³ Neoconservatism has roots that can be traced back through Francis Fukuyama and others to Allen Bloom and Leo Strauss, who was in turn in conversation with Alexander Kojève.

¹⁴ Robert Jervis, “Understanding the Bush Doctrine” Political Science Quarterly 118: 3 (2003); Robert Jervis, “Why the Bush Doctrine Cannot be Sustained” Political Science Quarterly 120: 3 (2005); Jonathan Monten, “The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power Nationalism, and Democratic Promotion in U.S. Strategy” International Security 29: 4 (2005), 112-156. For the critique of the Bush Doctrine and Walzer and other progressives who supported the war in Iraq that uses Popper’s idea of ‘historicism’ see James B. Rule, “‘Above All, Do no Harm’: The War in Iraq and Dissent” Dissent, Summer 2005.

¹⁵ Paul Berman, Terror and Liberalism (New York: WW Norton, 2003). Berman hints that Sayyid Qutb, one of the intellectual founders of Islamic Totalitarianism, may have been thinking of Hegel in some of his writings (Berman, 78).

¹⁶ For a recent discussion of the on-going discussion of whether Hegel glorified war see Colin Tyler, “Hegel, War and the Tragedy of Imperialism” History of European Ideas 30 (2004).

¹⁷ Hegel, “The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate” in Hegel, On Christianity: Early Theological Writings (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), 260.

¹⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 338, p. 370.

¹⁹ Hegel, Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science, § 163 Remark.

²⁰ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 333 Remark; and § 324 Addition.

²¹ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 325. A similar view has been explained recently by Chris Hedges, War is Force That Gives us Meaning (New York: Public Affairs, 2002). However, Hedges does not discuss Hegel at all.

²² Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, sec. 61 in Kant’s Political Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 171.

²³ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 324 Addition.

²⁴ Kant, Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History in Kant’s Political Writings, 232.

²⁵ Kant, Perpetual Peace in Kant’s Political Writings, 108-114.

²⁶ In the Philosophy of History Hegel says: “Spirit is at war with itself; it has to overcome itself as its most formidable obstacle. That development, which in the sphere of Nature is a peaceful growth, is in that of spirit, a severe, a mighty conflict with itself” [Hegel, Philosophy of History (Sibree trans. New York: Dover, 1956), 55.] But this translation is deceptive in its use of the word “war,” The German reads: *So ist der Geist in ihm selbst sich entgegen; er hat sich selbst als das wahre feindselige Hindernis seiner selbst zu überwinden; die Entwicklung, die in der Nature ein ruhiges Hervorgehen ist, ist im Geist ein harter unendlicher Kampf gegen sich selbst*” [Hegel, Werke (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 12: 76]. Hegel does not use the term *Krieg* here. But the point is that spirit is engaged in struggle against itself and, as is clear from the context, these struggles can be violent.

²⁷ Michael Hardimon is aware of this in describing Hegel’ “project of reconciliation.” He says that “Hegel maintains that war is no less a normal feature of the political life of states than

peace... He contends, quite plausibly, that if we are to become reconciled to the modern social world as it actually is, we must become reconciled to it as a place in which wars occur” [Michael O. Hardimon, Hegel’s Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 231.]

²⁸ This view is expressed clearly by Jean Hyppolite in his Introduction to Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1996), especially pp. 52-59.

²⁹ Hegel, Philosophy of Fine Art (London: G. Bell, 1920), vol. 4: 323. For a useful recent discussion of Hegel on tragedy see Dennis J. Schmidt, On Germans and Other Greeks (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), Chapter 3. Also see my essay, “Aesthetic Education and the Aesthetic State: Hegel’s Response to Schiller” in Hegel’s Aesthetics, ed. by William Maker. Albany, NY: State University New York Press, 2000.

³⁰ Tragic conflicts are not battles of good vs. evil. Rather they are clashes of good vs. good. As A.C. Bradley puts it, “The essentially tragic fact is the self-division and intestinal warfare of the ethical substance, not so much the war of good with evil as the war of good with good” [A.C. Bradley, “Hegel’s Theory of Tragedy” in Hegel on Tragedy (ed. by Anne and Henry Paolucci, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1962), 369]. If it is true that all of humanity constitutes one spiritual or ethical substance, then all wars are “intestinal” wars representing a tragic clash of goods.

³¹ D.P. Verene, “Hegel’s Account of War” in Z.A. Pelczynski, Hegel’s Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 171-172.

³² This view is associated with Popper’s critique of Hegel, including Popper’s attempt to link Hegel’s view of war to the views of 20th Century fascists. See Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies, vol. 2, Chapter 12.

³³ On Hegel’s concept of philosophy, see, for example, the Introduction to the Encyclopedia, G.W.F. Hegel, The Encyclopedia Logic (trans. Geraets, Suchting, and Harris, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §§ 1-17

³⁴ This is Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel, Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Study of Hegel (New York: Basic Books, 1969). Kojève’s point is that the Napoleonic wars—and the Battle of Jena in particular—represented the end of history for Hegel in terms of the triumph of liberal bourgeois ideas. A variant of this interpretation was adopted by Francis Fukuyama in The End

of History and the Last Man (New York: Free Press, 1992). Fukuyama locates the end of history at the end of the Cold War. For a discussion of the Kojève-Fukuyama thesis see David Sullivan, “Hegel on War and International Order” in Contemporary Political Studies (1996): 433-440.

³⁵ As Charles Taylor puts it: “as a locus of identification, the state cannot be superseded by some larger union” [Charles Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 449, note 1]. Taylor states this in opposition to Eric Weil’s interpretation in Hegel et L’Etat. One might want to argue that there is development in Hegel’s thought from a more hopeful resolution of the master-slave conflict in the Phenomenology toward a more tragic view in the later philosophy. Thus, perhaps the Kojève-Fukuyama thesis about the “end of history” might rely more on the Phenomenology than on the later works in which Hegel is thought to be more of a realist. To refute this developmental thesis, one might bring in works such as “The Constitution of Germany” [in Hegel’s Political Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)] and the Natural Law essay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), in which Hegel notes the fact of irreconcilable differences in international relations (cf. Shlomo Avineri, “Problem of War in Hegel” for an analysis of these texts in comparison with the Philosophy of Right). A more subtle thesis would emphasize the difference in intention between the Phenomenology and Hegel’s other works: the Phenomenology aims to explain the development of self-consciousness *within* a nation or culture; the other works acknowledge the fact of differences between and among national or cultural identities.

³⁶ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 354.

³⁷ This is also Merold Westphal’s interpretation in History and Truth in Hegel’s Phenomenology (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979), 157-158.

³⁸ Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit (trans. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 289.

³⁹ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 258, Remark.

⁴⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract in The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), 13-14. In the Philosophy of Right, as far as I can tell, Hegel does not use the word “war” (*Krieg*) until section 324 (in the Remark).

⁴¹ As Rousseau puts it, “war confers no right except what is necessary to its end” (Rousseau, The Social Contract, 15). For the distinction between just war and limited war see James Turner

Johnson, Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), Chapter 7. For further discussion of the just war tradition see Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

⁴² “Declarations of war are not so much warnings to the powers as to their subjects” (Rousseau, The Social Contract, 14).

⁴³ Rousseau continues to say that the idea of slavery “far from terminating the state of war, supposes its continuance” (Rousseau, The Social Contract, 15).

⁴⁴ States are in a “state of nature in relation to one another” and this state of nature is based upon their pursuit of their own self-interest without any international law that could hinder them” (Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 333). Herbert Marcuse has argued for an explicit connection between Hegel and Hobbes. He states that “Hegel’s idealism comes to the same conclusion as did Hobbes’ materialism” [Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983), 222].

⁴⁵ Kant’s critique of Hobbes is explicitly found in On the Common Saying: ‘This May be True in Theory But it Does Not Apply in Practice’ but the arguments of Perpetual Peace are obviously directed against a Hobbesian view of international relations. Both of these texts are found in Kant: Political Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴⁶ The “individuality” of the state is constituted by its idea, a point that is connected to Hegel’s notion of individuality in the Logic, but which is also expressed in the Philosophy of Right in the Addition to § 259.

⁴⁷ Carl Von Clausewitz, On War (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 119. Clausewitz and Hegel were social acquaintances in Berlin and they both died in 1831. See a brief mention in Terry Pinkard, Hegel: A Biography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 502.

Clausewitz’s essays were not published until after his death in 1832, so Hegel would not have had access to Clausewitz’s published thoughts on war.

⁴⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 451 and 453.

⁴⁹ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 328, Remark.

⁵⁰ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 402.

⁵¹ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 230-31.

⁵² Hegel, Philosophy of History, 432-433.

⁵³ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 257. Hegel goes on to say that in this war, “the interest of the World’s History hung trembling in the balance.”

⁵⁴ I discuss Hegel’s Eurocentrism in “The Dawning of Desire: Hegel’s Logical History of Philosophy and Politics” in Hegel’s History of Philosophy: New Interpretations ed. by David Duquette. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002. The idea that certain wars were necessary for the progress of the human spirit—despite the harms that they create—was made obvious in the 20th Century in wars that were fought to defend human life and liberty against genocide and fascism. Hegel, of course, knows nothing of such cases.

⁵⁵ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 434.

⁵⁶ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 435.

⁵⁷ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 435.

⁵⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 434.

⁵⁹ Hegel, Philosophy of History, 453.

⁶⁰ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 324 and Remark (Suhrkamp, p. 491-492.)

⁶¹ In the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel says that “to sacrifice” means “to sublimate the natural, to sublimate otherness” [Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: One-Volume Edition, the Lectures of 1827 (ed. by Hodgson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 469. For a discussion of both philosophy and religion as requiring the sacrifice of subjectivity see Philosophy of Religion, 193-195.

⁶² Hegel, Philosophy of History, 49; Werke, 68.

⁶³ From Fukuyama’s perspective, the materialist (what Fukuyama identifies with the Lockean) idea of liberalism as a social contract aiming at mutual prosperity is limited because it cannot account for the fact that individuals are willing to sacrifice their property, life, and liberty in pursuit of the good of the nation.

⁶⁴ Kant describes the reason that republican constitutions will tend toward peace as follows: “The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war. Among the latter would be: having to fight, having to pay the costs of war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war leaves behind, and, to

fill up the measure of evils, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself and that can never be liquidated on account of constant wars in the future” (Kant, Perpetual Peace in Kant: Political Writings, 100). For recent discussion of Kant’s thesis see Michael Doyle, Ways of War and Peace (New York: Norton, 1997) and John Rawls The Law of Peoples (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999)

⁶⁵ This is hinted at in the Philosophy of Right, § 339, Addition, where Hegel indicates that wars will persist even among the nations of Europe. Of course, it is an open question of whether Hegel thinks that these would really be wars between liberal states or whether they would be wars between liberal and illiberal regimes. His historical view is that there is a remaining world-historical conflict between the “Roman” and the “Germanic” realms (as in Philosophy of Right, § 360).

⁶⁶ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, §§ 334-336.

⁶⁷ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 324, Addition. Also see Philosophy of Right, § 259, Addition.

⁶⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 330.

⁶⁹ Hegel says that right and duty should coincide (Philosophy of Right, § 155). The critique of Kant is found in the section on Morality.

⁷⁰ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 339. For the same point in the early lectures on the Philosophy of Right see Hegel, Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science (trans. Stewart and Hodgson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), § 163 Remark.

⁷¹ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 140, Remark.

⁷² Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 338, Addition, p. 370.

⁷³ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 328.

⁷⁴ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 334.

⁷⁵ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, § 335.

⁷⁶ Hegel, Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science, §162 Remark.

⁷⁷ This is clearest in Hegel’s article “On the Constitutions of Germany”: “War is what will decide the matter: not which of the two rights is the more just—for both sides have just rights—but which of the rights will yield to the other. War must decide this, for just the reason that the two mutually contradictory rights are equally true and just.” (Quoted in Avineri, p. 471).

⁷⁸ Hegel, Philosophy of Right, §§ 336-337.

⁷⁹ As Avineri puts it: “concrete war retreats to the realm of the accidental” (Avineri, “The Problem of War in Hegel’s Thought,” 472).

⁸⁰ One inspiration for this idea is Robert R. Williams, Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), Chapter 10: “Absolute Spirit, Recognition, and Tragedy.”

Chapter Seven: The Vanity of Temporal Things: Hegel and the Ethics of War. Chapter Eight: American Ambivalence: Militarism, Pacifism, and Pragmatism. Chapter Nine: Sliding Scales and the Mischief of War. Chapter Ten: Waterboarding, Torture, and Violence. Chapter Eleven: Conscientious Refusal and the Liberal Tradition. Chapter Twelve: Public Myths and Private Protest. Bibliography.

Hegel's stress upon the "organic" nature of social wholes and the incommensurability of different. The "philosophy of spirit" of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel made its appearance upon the intellectual scene contemporaneously with Saint-Simonian and Comtean positivism, rivalling the latter in scope and influence and bringing with it its own highly distinctive theory of historical evolution and change. It was in this sense that Hegel claimed that spirit was "at war with itself" — it has to overcome itself as its most formidable obstacle. In concrete terms, this meant that historical advance did not proceed through a series of smooth transitions.