



## Jon Stewart: The Hegel Myths and Legends

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### Introduction

When one looks up the entry for “Hegel” in a standard reference work, it is not unlikely that one will find something like the following characterization: “the triadic process from thesis through antithesis to synthesis ... proves to be essential to Hegel’s philosophy.” Likewise, we are told not infrequently by such reference works or introductory texts that, according to Hegel, “in history everything happens according to reason.” These formulas are often reinforced in introductory classes where the usual time constraints and the level of difficulty of Hegel’s texts make it all but impossible to treat his thought carefully or responsibly. The result is that a handful of key concepts or slogans have come to be associated with Hegel and his philosophy in a way that, for instance, the famous phrase “I think, therefore I am” has come to be seen as representative of the spirit of the entirety of Descartes’ s thought.

This sort of sloganizing is not necessarily pernicious in itself. Such phrases or catchwords can be found for virtually every famous philosopher, and it may even be argued that they serve some sort of rudimentary pedagogical function. However, in Hegel’s case the slogans or anecdotes are much more plentiful and usually much more malicious than in the case of other philosophers. Indeed, the reputation of no other major philosopher has suffered such universal opprobrium on such a broad spectrum of issues as Hegel’s has. For instance, with respect to Hegel’s political philosophy, the following view is far from atypical in nonspecialized reference works: “By taking the Prussian State of the Restoration period, in which he lived, as the model for his rational analysis, he seemed more and more inclined to idealize the Prussian monarchy. What he said of the state in general, as a manifestation of the divine will, seemed to apply to this particular state.” Negative misconceptions such as this serve only to prejudice the student toward Hegel’s philosophy before he or she has ever embarked on a serious study of it. Even arguably neutral or benign slogans such as the thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad have an adverse effect on the proper understanding of Hegel’s ideas. These slogans have developed into what specialists have called the “Hegel myths” or “legends.” Under these headings fall the various misconceptions or misrepresentations, popular or otherwise, concerning Hegel’s philosophy.

The problem represented by these misconceptions is made more acute by the extremely difficult nature of Hegel’s own texts. His complex philosophical system, couched in a stilted, abstract, and idiosyncratic language, has certainly been one of the major causes for the disparity of opinion. Where some see profundity and originality in the obscurity, others see

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simply gibberish and nonsense. The result of Hegel's opaque writing style and neologistic vocabulary is that his works remain largely inaccessible to the nonspecialist. Consequently, the primary text is rarely consulted in order to confirm or refute the legitimacy of a given legend, and when the text is consulted, it does not seem in all cases to yield an unambiguous response. Hence, the myths live on and regenerate themselves in the absence of an accessible standard of adjudication.

The cleft between the popular understanding of Hegel's philosophy, prejudiced as it often is by the various myths and legends, and the professional philosopher's specialized understanding creates a difficult situation in the classroom. Students come to Hegel, as to few other philosophers, full of misconceptions and prejudices. The Hegel instructor, on the other hand, invariably has his or her own pedagogical agenda to execute in accordance with the goals of the class at hand. The problem is that the sort of student questions that issue from the various myths tend to depart from the goals and subject matter of most courses. The present collection aims at, among other things, ameliorating difficulties of this kind. It seeks to serve primarily the negative function of disabusing the student and general reader of these various Hegel myths in a way that will clear the ground for a serious study of his philosophy. It also seeks to make the unwary attentive to the trouble spots in Hegel's texts that still constitute points of contention among Hegel experts. Thus, the objective of this anthology is not merely to set the historical record straight and to clear Hegel's name of unjust charges, but also to be an aid to the already difficult task of teaching Hegel.

In an extremely useful essay on Hegel pedagogy, Robert Solomon suggests that one begin a course on Hegel by purging the students of whatever misconceptions they might have heard about him and his philosophy. This is also the strategy of a number of books on Hegel which dedicate an introduction or first chapter to just this task. This job of disabusing the student of the general prejudices toward Hegel can be accomplished effectively with the present collection. Simply cataloging the various Hegel myths for students and telling them that they are nothing more than myths will do little to change the rooted misconceptions at hand. However, in the essays collected here, in addition to accurate expositions of Hegel's own thought, the student will find detailed accounts of the origin and development of these misconceptions. Once their beginnings have been laid bare, the various myths immediately lose their credibility. These essays provide historical accounts of the reception of Hegel's philosophy and of the proliferation of the various misnomers. It is hoped that the essays will serve as useful pedagogical tools and will save the instructor a number of unfortunate detours in the classroom.

As is evinced by the contents of this collection, modern scholars of German idealism, in contrast to the popular understanding, have achieved an unusual measure of consensus with respect to most of these familiar misconstructions of Hegel's work. Those who have made a study of Hegel their specialization have unanimously rejected the various Hegel myths such that they have, in most cases, ceased to be points of genuine academic debate. Most of these exotic beliefs, referred to by Croce as "half comical and half disgusting," have no reasonable basis whatsoever in Hegel's texts themselves. Although there are a number of egregious Hegel myths to which no respectable scholar would give credence, there are other misconceptions that gradually shade over into the realm of legitimate dispute. For instance, in the area of Hegel's political philosophy and his views on war, there are still live interpretive issues surrounding significant Hegel legends. The goal of the present collection is twofold: first, to expose and correct the most flagrant of the Hegel myths once and for all; and second, when the issue is less clear, to separate the mythical version from the sphere of justifiable disagreement in the realm of legitimate Hegel interpretation.

## The Problematic Reception of Hegel's Philosophy

Hegel's philosophy has been the source bitter debate ever since its inception. In his own

time, Hegel had already become such a controversial figure that his reputation reached both extremes of the spectrum. On the one hand, he was deeply revered by his students and considered the genius of his day by many. He was, for example, hailed as “the modern Aristotle” by his British admirer J. H. Stirling. On the other hand, he was openly ridiculed as a sophist and a charlatan by some of his rivals and colleagues, such as Schopenhauer and the later Schelling. Since those days, Hegel has firmly established himself as one of the most important figures in the history of European letters. His philosophy, which marks the crossroads in the modern intellectual tradition, has given birth to virtually all of the major schools of contemporary thought: phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, critical theory, structuralism, pragmatism, hermeneutics, and so on. However, until very recently his influence has been limited almost exclusively to circles of continental philosophy. One reason for this has been the various myths and legends surrounding his philosophy that still continue to enjoy wide currency above all in the English-speaking world. In order to understand the development and proliferation of these misconceptions, we must take a brief look at the historical reception of Hegel’s philosophy.

There is a surprisingly long tradition of Hegelianism in the United States that began with two main centers in St. Louis and Cincinnati. The most important members of the St. Louis school included Henry Conrad Brokmeyer (1826–1906) and William Torrey Harris (1835–1909). The latter was the editor of the celebrated *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, which served as the principal organ for the dissemination of classical Greek and German philosophy in America at the time. The Cincinnati group, which included August Willich (1810–78), John Bernard Stallo (1823–1900), and Masure D. Conway (1832–1907), represented the Hegelian left on the American continent. This alignment can be seen, for instance, in the socialist political views of Willich, or in the unorthodox religious convictions of Conway. This American tradition of Hegelianism, although significant for many aspects of Hegel studies and American cultural life, was, however, less important for the development of the Hegel myths and legends in the English-speaking world than was the history of Hegel research in Great Britain.

The reception of Hegel in British philosophy has been particularly complicated and problematic, since it was there that Hegel found some of his most fervent allies as well as his most hostile critics. The first important expositors of Hegelian philosophy in Great Britain were T. H. Green (1836–82) and Edward Caird (1835–1908). Green employed idealist arguments against some of the classics of British philosophy, such as the empiricism of Locke and Hume. His main work, the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, was left unfinished at his death. By contrast, Edward Caird, a more systematic thinker and dynamic expositor than his long-time friend Green, produced a vast philosophical corpus in his lifetime. His early writings include *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant and Hegel*. His other two significant works, *The Evolution of Religion* and *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, strongly reflect Hegelian methodology in their attempt to trace the conceptual movement of theological ideas through their manifold historical forms. He, like Hegel, sought to unite long-standing pairs of opposites from the philosophical tradition, such as freedom and necessity, subject and object, and reason and passion.

The second generation of Hegel scholars in Great Britain was constituted by, among others, F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) and Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923). Bradley’s influential investigation, *Ethical Studies*, shows the marked influence of Hegel’s moral theory. In that work he examines different aspects of Hegel’s conception of *Sittlichkeit* or ethical life. He then uses this account of the situatedness of moral principles in historical communities to criticize the abstract individualism of utilitarianism and classical liberalism. On the other hand, Bosanquet’s influential essay, “Logic as the Science of Knowledge” (1883), betrays the influence of Hegel’s logical and metaphysical theory. There Bosanquet criticizes the hard distinction between judgment and inference as well as between deduction and induction. In addition, he tries in a Hegelian spirit to show the systematic unity of various logical

propositions. From this generation of Hegel scholars came the teachers of the eventual founders of analytic philosophy such as Russell, Moore, and others.

J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) developed, along Hegelian lines, his own theory of idealism, which served as a ready target for the incipient analytic philosophy. After his early exegetical works on Hegel, such as *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic (1896)*, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology (1901)*, and *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic (1911)*, McTaggart applied Hegelian methodology to construct his own philosophical system in his magnum opus, *The Nature of Existence* (vol. 1, 1921; vol. 2, 1927). There he developed a theory of ultimate spiritual reality, which he conceived as a reified aggregate of individual minds. McTaggart's extravagant metaphysical form of Hegelianism made him a preferred object of criticism of the early analytic philosophers, and it was his view that for many came to be synonymous with that of Hegel himself.

The birth of logical positivism and British analytic philosophy at the turn of the century has been analyzed largely by intellectual historians as a result of a rejection of the generation of British Hegel scholars, which included Bradley and McTaggart, in favor of a more "rigorous" philosophical method favoring analysis and more in line with mathematics or linguistics. Both Russell and Moore were convinced idealists in their early years, and this conviction of youth, as often happens, became the target of the most impassioned criticism in maturity. This intellectual transition is marked by the publication of Moore's essay "Refutation of Idealism" in 1903. As analytic philosophy grew and came into its own, distinctions hardened between, on the one hand, the various schools of continental philosophy, which traced their origins back to Hegel, and, on the other hand, the new analytic philosophy, which rejected Hegel and his followers categorically.

In addition to reasons of philosophical import such as these, there were later a number of historical, and perhaps less rational, reasons involved in the rejection of Hegelian philosophy in England and America. During the World Wars, Hegel's popularity, like that of many German thinkers, was at low ebb in the English-speaking world. First in L. T. Hobhouse's antipathetic *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, Hegel's "wicked doctrine" was made responsible for the ills of the First World War. Later, Karl Popper picked up where Hobhouse left off and performed the same function of saddling Hegel with the atrocities of World War II. He galvanized the already negative sentiment against Hegel and spread it beyond all previous dimensions with his well-known book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In the second tome of that work, Popper, in a rather untempered tone, argues that Hegel's political philosophy amounts to nothing less than a straightforward totalitarianism that has certain affinities with Nazi Germany. Thus, Hegel, like Nietzsche, suffered the fate of being branded as a forerunner of German national socialism, and this unfortunate association had a profound impact at the particular historical moment. This justly criticized reading was, despite its scholarly shortcomings, taken tip uncritically by a number of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.

The freeze between analytic and Continental philosophy gradually began to thaw, thanks largely but unintentionally to the work of P. F. Strawson. With his book, *The Bounds of Sense*, he rendered the service of making a small part of European philosophy reputable in the English-speaking world. In this book, Strawson analyzed Kant's classic, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and showed how Kant was in fact engaged in a number of epistemological issues that were relevant to the research program of the analytic philosophy of the day. Since Strawson himself had already established a solid reputation in the analytic camp, his name helped to propel Kant's work into the mainstream discussion of the analytic tradition. Kant became a philosophically legitimate topic in America and England, and a second, independent body of Kant research in English came into being alongside the already existing body of German literature. While Kant enjoyed this comeback of sorts in circles of analytic philosophy, Hegel remained in the shadows. No established analytic philosopher wrote on his philosophy or

tried to bring him into the analytic fold. During this time the prejudices against him continued to grow, and he was rarely represented in the classroom or in the professional journals.

Although Hegel's reputation has suffered most markedly in the English-speaking world, nevertheless, his work, with respect to some issues, has hardly received a fairer hearing on the continent itself. In Germany, the publication of Rudolf Haym's *Hegel und seine Zeit* in 1827 was perhaps the most important event in the reception of Hegel's philosophy for several years afterwards. Haym, a virulent critic of Hegel, inveighed primarily against the philosopher's political theory and philosophy of history, arguing that Hegel had written his theory of the state in order to justify and legitimate the oppressive Prussian political order of his day. According to Haym, Hegel's claim that the actual was the rational amounted to no less than a straightforward apologia for the reactionary Prussian status quo. On this view, Hegel, enjoying a distinguished and comfortable professorship in Berlin after an arduous career with humble beginnings, simply sacrificed his philosophical integrity and placed his intellectual abilities in the service of the Prussian authorities during the ticklish period of political agitation that followed the Congress of Vienna. Although Haym's thesis has been often and decidedly refuted by more exacting philosophical and historical analyses, nevertheless the view of Hegel as the official philosopher of the Prussian state enjoyed a wide following in Germany before it became famous in the English-speaking world. The view that Hegel was a political reactionary continues to this day to find adherents in the German academic world.

After Haym's work, Schelling's Berlin lectures in the 1840s must be seen as one of the most decisive negative influences on the reception of Hegel's philosophy in Germany. Although Hegel and Schelling were friends of youth, boarding together as theology students at Tübingen and later collaborating on the *Critical Journal of Philosophy* as colleagues in Jena, with time they gradually became estranged, and their mutual criticisms became less and less veiled. In 1841, ten years after Hegel's death, Schelling, the one time child-prodigy who had witnessed his own influence decisively wane as that of Hegel waxed, received a distinguished professorship in Berlin. In his Berlin lectures, which were attended by, among others, Marx [An error, Stewart means Engels] and Kierkegaard, Schelling mercilessly criticized and caricatured various aspects of Hegel's thought. Many Hegel myths that originated in Schelling's bitterness quickly spread through the influence of his famous pupils. As one writer puts it, "Through Kierkegaard legions of twentieth-century readers who barely know Schelling's name have come to take for granted as historically accurate his spiteful caricature of Hegel."

In France the lectures at the Sorbonne in the 1930s delivered by the Russian emigre Alexandre Kojève represent without a doubt the key event in French Hegel studies. Kojève's provocative, yet at times fully misguided, interpretation was the main source of information about Hegel's philosophy for the entire postwar generation of French intellectuals. The key figures of French phenomenology, existentialism, and Marxism, such as Raymond Aron, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Bataille, and Jacques Lacan, were all present at Kojève's lectures and later developed the interpretation of Hegel that they received there in various directions in accordance with their own research programs. These lectures, which were subsequently collected and published by Raymond Queneau in 1947, remained influential for future generations of French scholars long after Kojève's death. The interpretation offered by Kojève was not hostile to Hegel in the way Haym, Schopenhauer, and the later Schelling were, but it was rather idiosyncratic and contained a philosophical agenda foreign to Hegel's own. Kojève's reading focused almost entirely on the *Phenomenology* and on the "Lordship-Bondage" dialectic found there, thus doing much to render famous both this text and this chapter. Kojève seems to have borrowed heavily from the work of his fellow emigre, Alexandre Koyré, primarily with respect to the latter's emphasis on Hegel's purported claims about the end of history. These claims found clear affinities in the teleology of Marxist theory,

where Kojève was most at home. The view that Hegel saw the end of history in his own time or with his own philosophical system has had its most widespread acceptance in France due to the influence of these two men. Although in the literature these problematic views have long since been corrected and revised by more thorough French Hegel scholars such as Hyppolite and Labarrière, nonetheless in the popular mind they are still quite pervasive.

## The Hegel Myths and Legends

As a result of some of the historical factors and influential caricatures and misinterpretations I have discussed, a number of the so-called myths or legends about Hegel's philosophy arose and found fertile ground to take root and flourish. In the course of time, these have developed into a sort of common lore among students and nonspecialists. I cannot here pretend to be able to recount exhaustively all of the regrettable misconceptions that have plagued the reception of Hegel's philosophy; however, in what follows, by way of introducing the essays included in this collection, I catalog the caricatures of Hegel and his philosophy that have been most widespread.

## The Myth of the Rational and the Actual

It is often maintained that Hegel, carrying on in the spirit of Leibniz, was the ultimate optimist or a sort of German Candide, believing that everything that exists is good. This myth is usually traced back to Hegel's claim in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right* and in the Introduction to the *Encyclopedia* that the rational is the actual and the actual the rational. This disputed phrase, which was controversial even in Hegel's own time, overlaps with a number of other Hegel legends, in particular in the area of his political philosophy. The problematic passage concerning the actual and the rational is directly addressed and interpreted by three different commentators in the present collection.

First, M. J. Jackson's article, while providing an extremely useful overview of the literature and the various positions taken with respect to this issue, offers an interpretation and defense of Hegel's statement in its political context. Jackson aims at refuting above all the erroneous interpretations offered by Popper and others in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition. His essay thus serves as a useful and accessible introduction to this issue and foreshadows the next section of this collection, which is dedicated to the major myths and legends concerning Hegel's political philosophy.

Yirmiahu Yovel, the author of a number of works on Kant and Hegel, interprets Hegel's idiom in an ontological fashion. Yovel, insisting on Hegel's own hierarchy, which places philosophical knowing above religious knowing, tries to make sense of the disputed dictum by means of an interpretation of the meaning of the categories from Hegel's Logic, such as *Sein*, *Dasein*, *Existenz*, *Wirklichkeit*, and so on. This article nicely complements the final contribution to this section by Emil Fackenheim, in that it represents a working out of what might be called a secular version of some of Fackenheim's conclusions.

Fackenheim, the author of the influential study *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, interprets the famous dictum in a religious context. According to his view, the rational becomes the actual, for Hegel, in the course of history with the rise and spread of Christianity. What is still required is the secular philosophical understanding of this world-historical event. Thus, for Fackenheim, the correct interpretation of Hegel's statement is one that grasps both its religious and its philosophical meanings.

## The Myth of Hegel as Totalitarian Theorist or Prussian Apologist

Of all the aspects of Hegel's many-sided thought, it is probably his political theory that



has drawn the most venomous criticism. His political philosophy, as indicated above, has been reproached for its purported accommodation with the Prussian authorities, for its implicit German or Prussian nationalism, and for its role as a forerunner of modern totalitarianism or fascism. There are a handful of articles included here, each devoted to refuting one or more of the myths concerning Hegel's political philosophy.

The German scholar Henning Ottmann, known for his ambitious interpretive studies on Hegel, traces the history of the reception of Hegel's political philosophy through the ages. He instructively shows how every generation and every new political movement has attempted to portray Hegel as an ally of its particular creed. The result has been the unjustified association of Hegel's name with a number of unsavory political causes, many of which he himself had never heard of. Ottmann's account forms an extremely useful overview of the variety of legends about Hegel's political thought.

As we have seen above, due largely to the influence of Haym's interpretation, Hegel has been seen as the official court philosopher of the Prussian state, who not merely countenanced its reactionary and repressive regime, but served as its philosophical ideologue. T. M. Knox, known for his excellent English translation of the *Philosophy of Right*, addresses the question of Hegel's accommodation with the Prussian authorities, on the one hand, by setting the development of Hegel's political philosophy in its proper historical context and, on the other hand, by carefully analyzing a number of disputed passages in Hegel's text. His essay is intended largely as a response to E. F. Carritt's bitter condemnation of Hegel in *Morals and Politics*. Knox convincingly shows that the rational state that Hegel sketches in the *Philosophy of Right* has little to do with the Prussian political order of the day.

Karl Popper's caustic treatment of Hegel, as was discussed above, has done much to tarnish the philosopher's reputation in the Anglo-American world. The most powerful and sustained response to Popper's Hegel interpretation comes from Walter Kaufmann. Aside from his well-known work on Nietzsche, Kaufmann was also the author of an influential and highly readable book on Hegel. Although that study cannot be compared with more recent work in point of scholarly rigor, it did, however, do much to make Hegel respectable in the Anglo-American world at a time when analytic philosophy was at its zenith. In the essay selected here, Kaufmann directly addresses and conclusively refutes Popper's abusive contribution to the political legends by eloquently exposing Popper's distortions of Hegel's views.

According to one apocryphal view, Hegel's theory of the state amounts to a simple totalitarianism in which individuals are crushed and have no meaning in themselves. Franz Grégoire, the author of *Etudes hegeliennes*, was an important yet little-known expositor of Hegel's philosophy in the French-speaking world. In his first contribution to this collection, he responds to the claim of the Catholic French philosopher Jacques Maritain that Hegel's state amounts to a totalitarianism that recognizes no intrinsic rights or values in the individual, and whose power is absolute and unlimited. Grégoire responds to the first charge by sketching Hegel's conception of the state as an organism in which the individual and the state stand in a reciprocal relationship, with each term being fundamental and necessary for the whole. The second charge is likewise repudiated when Grégoire reminds us that the authority of the Hegelian state is limited in many aspects due to the fact that it is obliged to recognize the subjective freedoms of its citizens.

Despite an immense body of biographical evidence to the contrary, it has often been claimed that Hegel was a forerunner of German nationalism. This view is, of course, only a short step away from the interpretations that see Hegel either as a Prussian apologist or as a forerunner of Nazi Germany. This legend is addressed by Shlomo Avineri, who has been recognized as the leading authority in the field of Hegel's political philosophy in the English-speaking world ever since the publication of his now standard study, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*. His article effectively responds to the myth that Hegel was a

nationalist by carefully tracing and exposing the development of this myth from its origin. Together these articles represent the best responses to the central political myths that have surrounded Hegel's philosophy.

## The Myth that Hegel Glorified War

One of the more subtle issues relevant to Hegel's political thought involves the philosopher's genuinely ambiguous views on war. Those who would see Hegel as a totalitarian theorist or fascist ideologue claim that his views were fundamentally militaristic and that he glorified war as a human achievement. Although this caricature has been universally rejected, there is still much room for legitimate debate on the interpretive issue of exactly where Hegel stands on the issue of war and international relations. Due to the subtlety of the issue and the seriousness of the charge, a separate section in this collection has been devoted to responding to this question. There is a wide body of literature on this issue, and in this collection four of the best articles have been selected, all of which treat the key passages in the *Philosophy of Right* where Hegel provides a philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of war. The authors carefully demarcate the myth from the realm of credible interpretation, and within the sphere of the latter a handful of different views are put forth and argued for.

Avineri's lucid contribution to this issue nicely complements his first essay in the collection. Here he develops further his interpretation of the Hegelian state, arguing that it is in its basic principles consistent with liberal democracy. His conclusion with respect to the issue at hand is that Hegel's views on war cannot be rightfully construed as militaristic or as providing an ideological support for an expansionist or imperialist foreign policy. In fact, since Hegel is concerned with the concept of war itself and not with any particular war, his views cannot be justly called into the service of particular political causes such as nationalism. Avineri shows how Hegel, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, rejected the distinction between just and unjust wars, and thus eliminated the very concept of the former.

D. P. Verene, known for among other things his investigation on the *Phenomenology* and his collection on Hegel's political theory, claims that one must go beyond an account of Hegel's political philosophy to Hegel's overall system and general methodology in order to make sense of the philosopher's statements on war, which when taken on their own prove to be inconclusive. He tries to avoid traditional lines of interpretation and their concomitant polemics by understanding Hegel's methodology as taking up a third way, avoiding both a merely prescriptive and a merely descriptive account of war.

In his remarkably concise and straightforward essay, Errol E. Harris traces Hegel's views on war back to the account of the sovereignty of states that Hegel gives in the *Philosophy of Right*. Harris's analysis begins by convincingly refuting Popper's acrimonious interpretation, according to which Hegel identified national sovereignty with the person of the monarch and thus advocated a simple despotism. He goes on to show how Hegel's view of the sovereignty of states leads to a sober view of international relations and war. Far from glorifying war, Hegel, on Harris's view, gave a disabused philosophical account of it which, far from being outmoded, still in large measure accurately mirrors many of the unfortunate political realities of our day.

The characteristic feature of Steven Walt's account of Hegel's treatment of war is its attempt to carve out a middle position between, on the one hand, expressly negative views such as Popper's, according to which war is for Hegel a good in itself, and, on the other hand, what he sees as unqualified positive views such as Avineri's that claim that Hegel in fact condemned war. Wait argues that, although never glorifying or exalting war as Popper asserts, Hegel does nevertheless see it as something that is necessary and that follows



directly from his account of the relation of individuals to the state and from his views of the sovereignty of individual states.

## The Myth of the End of History

Due to the influence of Kojève and Koyré, there is, particularly in French Hegel studies, a widespread belief that Hegel believed that time would stop and history would come to an end, or that he saw the end of history in his own philosophical system. A further contributing factor to this Hegel legend was a quip by Nietzsche to the effect that Hegel, in a bout of vanity, thought that history reached its end point at the moment when he obtained the long desired professorship in Berlin. Recently, Fukuyama's surprisingly popular new book has brought this Hegel myth once again into the public eye, by attempting to defend Hegel's claim about the end of history in light of the political revolutions in Europe of 1989 and what he sees as the attainment of perfection of the liberal democratic state. In the present collection, the end of history myth is addressed by three different articles from established Hegel scholars.

Philip T. Grier's contribution addresses the popular misconceptions of the end of history that were disseminated recently by Fukuyama's work. He shows how Fukuyama uncritically takes the idiosyncratic interpretation offered by Kojève as an accurate account of Hegel's views on history. In his refutation of Fukuyama, Grier provides us with an excellent overview of this tradition of Hegel misinterpretation that begins with Koyré and Kojève.

The distinguished German Hegel scholar Reinhart Klemens Maurer has dedicated much of his philosophical career to just this issue. The thorough essay included here is perhaps the most concise statement of Maurer's conclusions, which receive their full treatment in his book *Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte*. In his essay, Maurer carefully isolates the various meanings of the concept "the end of history" that have been in circulation, and then attempts to determine whether any of these meanings can be correctly ascribed to Hegel.

Finally, the well-known Hegel scholar H. S. Harris, celebrated for his rigorous and detailed studies of Hegel's philosophy leading up to the *Phenomenology*, offers another perspective on this issue. Harris begins by showing that much of Hegel's philosophy of history can be seen as a development of Kant's notion of universal history. By putting Hegel's conception of the end of history in a Kantian context, Harris's essay serves as a useful supplement to the two preceding studies. Like Grier, Harris also takes issue with Fukuyama's slanted Hegel interpretation. He effectively demonstrates the poverty of Fukuyama's account, and shows that what Hegel means by "the end of history" is in no way consonant with Fukuyama's unqualified encomium of Western liberal democracy. Harris's essay is particularly readable and provocative due to its integration of current political events and issues in his analysis of Hegel's theory.

## The Myth that Hegel Denied the Law of Contradiction

It is often claimed in the Anglo-American tradition, which prides itself on its methodological rigor and deference to formal logic, that Hegel foolishly denied the law of contradiction. Some analytic philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell, have been led to this conclusion by a mistaken interpretation of Hegel's dialectical method, which they claim resolves all dualisms and oppositions by simply not recognizing the contradiction involved in simple statements such as "*P* and not *P*". The implication is that Hegel would have miserably failed a course on introductory logic. This Hegel legend is addressed by two different essays in this collection.

Robert Pippin, acclaimed for among other things his seminal study, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, recounts this myth and focuses on the notion of

contradiction as a logical category in Hegel's *Logic*. In his analysis of the *Wesenslogik* where Hegel's disputed doctrine makes its appearance, Pippin tries to unpack some of Hegel's most obscure philosophical terminology, such as "determinate negation" and "*Aufhebung*." On the basis of this he offers a corrective interpretation of the notion of contradiction according to Hegel's dialectical view.

In his essay, Robert Hanna complements Pippin's analysis of Hegel's doctrine of contradiction. Hanna indicates the different conceptual levels of logic according to Hegel, which allows him to make sense of Hegel's criticism of the logic of his predecessors. Far from denying any logical principles per se, Hegel's critique amounts to reinterpreting them from a higher standpoint. Hanna analyzes carefully Hegel's account of judgment, syllogism, and contradiction, and lays to rest the view that Hegel rejected the law of contradiction.

## Miscellaneous Myths

Aside from the hitherto discussed Hegel myths and legends, which lend themselves to some measure of categorization, there are a number of misconceptions about Hegel's philosophy that stand on their own and need to be addressed individually. The final section of this collection is dedicated to these miscellaneous Hegel myths.

The general ignorance concerning Hegel's natural philosophy in the inaugural dissertation, *De Orbitis Planetarum*, and in the second book of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* has given rise to some influential misinterpretations. His theory of the natural sciences has particularly been in disrepute because of its alleged attempt to demonstrate a *priori* that there were only seven planets, which proved to be particularly embarrassing given the discovery of Uranus in 1781, of which Hegel was apparently unaware. Thus, in a paradigm case of rationalism gone wild, Hegel, working with a purely non-empirical method, is thought to have wrongly deduced the necessity of the number of planets in the solar system. This myth is concisely treated by Bertrand Beaumont, who demonstrates that it has no foundation whatsoever in Hegel's texts.

One legend that touches at once on Hegel's political theory, his metaphysics, and his philosophy of religion is the view that Hegel deified the state and saw in it God on earth. This myth, like some of the ones discussed above, seems to ascribe to Hegel a form of political totalitarianism. Franz Grégoire's second essay offers a two-pronged attack on this myth of the divinity of the state. First, using what he calls the "philological method," Grégoire analyzes Hegel's difficult language and concludes that what Hegel means by "divine" in the context in question has little to do with the standard usage. Instead, "divine" is for Hegel a term applied to anything at all that evinces some form of rationality, such as human beings, history, nature, and so forth. Second, Grégoire discusses the Hegelian system as a whole, and isolates in it Hegel's theory, of the state and his account of religion. By determining the roles played by the various members of the system, Grégoire concludes here, as in his first essay, that the individual and the state stand in a reciprocal organic relation to one another, and thus that the individual has a necessary and fundamental value which stands on equal terms with that of the state.

It is further asserted, even by some enthusiastic supporters of Hegel such as McTaggart and Stace, that Hegel's dialectical method of argumentation takes the form of the thesis-anti-thesis-synthesis triad. This is among the most famous of all the Hegel myths and, as we have already seen, can still be readily found in encyclopedias and handbooks of Philosophy. If students "know" one thing about Hegel this is usually it. In his essay, Gustav Mueller, the author of a number of works on Hegel, irrefutably exposes this legend for what it is, by tracing the regrettable dissemination of this view back to Marx, who inherited it from a certain Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus, a long since forgotten expositor of the philosophy of Kant and Hegel.

Lastly, there exists the widespread belief that Hegel was an arch-rationalist. According to this misinterpretation, he is seen as the last gasp of rationalism before the onset of the so-called irrationalists such as Schopenhauer, Freud, and existentialists such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. According to this view, Hegel is regarded as a naive product of the Enlightenment, who believed that reason could conquer all and that everything in history is ultimately rational. This in turn gives rise to the misnomer that, as one writer puts it, "Hegel is the antipodes of existentialism." "The Myth of Reason in Hegel" tries to eradicate this Hegel legend by indicating certain continuities between Hegel and the irrationalist or existentialist tradition, which demonstrate Hegel's disabused awareness of the negative and destructive side of reason.

In the last few decades there has been an outpouring of literature on Hegel in the world of Anglo-American philosophy. The so-called Hegel renaissance is indeed in full swing, particularly in America. However, in the face of the resurgence of interest in Hegel, a number of the same intransigent prejudices still persist. The new Hegel commentators are faced with a reading audience that knows little about Hegel and still suffers from the numerous misconceptions stemming from the various myths and legends. The time is ripe to correct these long-standing prejudices once and for all, and at present the means are happily at our disposal for doing so.

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