

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL THEORY: SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT
AND THE MAKING OF THE CANON

Reception, context and canonicity: The demonization, normalization and eventual proliferation of G. W. F. Hegel in international relations

Seán Molloy*

University of Kent, Politics and International Relations, Rutherford College, Canterbury CT2 7NZ, UK
Email: s.p.molloy@kent.ac.uk

Abstract

G. W. F. Hegel is one of the most significant philosophers in history yet the reception afforded to him in International Relations (IR) does not compare with his peers, most notably Immanuel Kant. Although by no means absent from IR he cannot be described as a canonical figure. Given his stature in philosophy this comparatively minor interest in Hegel prompts investigation into his failure to enter the pantheon of ‘Great Thinkers’ in IR. The critical-historical investigation of Hegel’s reception in IR undertaken in this article reveals that Hegel, unlike Kant, was cast as an intellectual villain – a blood-soaked Priest of Moloch, whose demonic ideology of state-worship led to the slaughter of the First World War, the rise of the Nazis, and the catastrophe of the Second World War. Condemned by an array of leading intellectuals from John Dewey to Karl Popper, Hegel was side-lined and erased until his work was reconsidered by revisionist scholarship in philosophy and – eventually – in International Relations. From the 1980s, a number of hotly contested, decidedly uncanonical ‘Hegels’ have found expression in IR, from a ‘realist’ Hegel to a postcolonial Hegel. Ultimately, the article argues that the treatment of Hegel reveals that the formation of the IR canons was not an innocent, dispassionate process but rather was imbricated in the great ideological and military conflicts of modernity.

Keywords: canon; Hegel; history; IR theory; reception

1. Introduction

‘If the standard of measurement be the weight, the breadth and the duration of the influence which he exercised’, wrote E. H. Carr in 1946, ‘Hegel was beyond question the most important of modern philosophers . . . his teaching was the philosophical cradle of every significant political theory for a century to come.’¹ Despite Carr’s endorsement, IR would prove to be an exception as Hegel

*The author would like to thank Claire Vergerio and Paolo Amoroso for inviting him to participate in the *Canon of Great Thinkers in International Legal and Political thought* workshop at which this article was presented in an early draft form. The author would also like to thank them for including this article in the present special issue. The author thanks Shannon Brincat, Richard Ned Lebow, Russ Kerr, Tarik Kochi, and Vassilios Paipais for comments and suggestions regarding literature on Hegel and IR. Finally, the author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback on the first draft submission of this article.

¹E. H. Carr, ‘Lassalle Meets Bismarck’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 November 1946, 541.

played a minor, often reviled, role in its development.² In part, Hegel's marginal influence may be explained by the widespread lack of interest in the nineteenth century in general and German Idealism in particular in IR historiography. Justin Rosenberg argues that this neglect is due to an impression that the nineteenth century did not add anything significant to that of the eighteenth, while after the First World War, 'the international world of the previous century was already a distant, shattered memory'.³ Ronen Palan and Brooke Blair identify this failure of scholars to address the importance of German Idealism and the nineteenth century as a serious 'gap in the semi-official historiography of international relations'.⁴ Hegel's case, however, goes beyond mere neglect or disinterest: he would spend most of the twentieth century abhorred and exiled from IR and barred from admission to its canon.⁵ By the time of his rehabilitation in the 1980s it was too late for him to assume a canonical role – the allocation of 'Great Thinkers' to paradigmatic silos was over. Hegel's exclusion from the canon, however, does not mean that he is absent from IR theory: he does not occupy a place comparable to Kant, Grotius, Hobbes, or Machiavelli but he does play a number of different roles in various niches of its ecology.

This article examines how and why this exclusion of Hegel occurred and by doing so fulfils one of the key tasks of intellectual history, i.e., to 'unsettle the mythography of the discipline' by revealing that the reason for the overwhelmingly hostile interpretation of Hegel for the best part of a century lies not so much in his work as the political circumstances of the First World War and the interbellum.⁶ Inspired in part by Claire Vergerio's recent article on the reception of great thinkers in IR, the core of the article examines the process by which Hegel underwent a counter-canonization or *demonization*, in the wake of the First World War.⁷ Context is crucial in this process: the tragedy of the trenches required an intellectual villain representative of German culture and Hegel was configured to meet this role. Hegel's reception in the fledgling discipline of IR, which emerged from debates about his legacy in philosophy and political theory, is an exemplary case in point of Duncan Bell's argument that '[a]lthough social context should not be conflated with causation in the interpretation of texts, it still plays a key role, moulding and shaping responses, and setting the parameters of political language(s)'.⁸ Once the parameters were set and Hegel identified as a priest of Moloch, sacrificing the bodies of the lost generation on the altar of 'Prussianism', and later Nazism, it proved remarkably difficult to dislodge this impression from the collective consciousness of IR. Vergerio's more diachronic, *longue durée* intellectual history for IR is advantageous as it allows contemporary scholars of IR to 'understand the impact' of a great thinker like Hegel 'by tracing the reception' of his work over the course of a century.⁹ Just as interpretations of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* rose and fell in relation to the hope that international organizations could secure peace, so the meaning of Hegel's work has been 'a veritable hostage to the *zeitgeist* of different historical periods', with the World Wars being the key contextual determinants of his reception.¹⁰ It would take Hegel scholarship decades to escape their shadow.

²I should make clear at the outset that I refer in this article only to the development of mainstream IR in the English-speaking world. The history of Hegel's reception in non-Anglophone and heterodox approaches to IR is not broached in this article.

³J. Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society* (1994), 162.

⁴R. Palan and B. Blair, 'On The Idealist Origins of the Realist Theory of International Relations', (1993) 19(4) *Review of International Studies* 385, at 397.

⁵David Boucher argues that 'Hegel is probably second only to Marx in the extent to which he has been held responsible for some of the most contemptible developments in modern European history'. D. Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (1998), 330.

⁶W. Bain and T. Nardin, 'International Relations and Intellectual History', (2017) 31(3) *International Relations* 213, at 215.

⁷C. Vergerio, 'Context, Reception, and the Study of Great Thinkers in international Relations', (2019) 11(1) *International Theory* 110.

⁸D. Bell, 'International Relations: The Dawn of a Historiographical Turn?', (2001) 3(1) *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 115, at 121.

⁹Vergerio, *supra* note 7, at 114.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, at 127.

This article has five main sections followed by a conclusion. Section 2 examines the First World War debate centred on Hegel's alleged responsibility for articulating an ideology of nationalistic state worship in Prussia that would ultimately be a leading cause of the Great War. On both sides of the Atlantic, leading scholars such as Dewey, Hobhouse, and Santayana found Hegel guilty of fostering a 'wicked doctrine' of untrammelled power politics that denied morality and refused international law. Hegelians, especially Bosanquet, responded to these accusations, arguing that Hegel's critics misunderstood his sophisticated theory of the state and that it was order, not power, that was the focus of his international thought. Section 3 examines the influence of this debate on the emerging discipline of IR. Hegel's opponents held the field here: repeating almost verbatim the positions of Dewey et al. The worsening international scene in the 1930s, the emergence of the Nazis, and the outbreak of the Second World War intensified hostility to Hegel, within and beyond IR. This culminated in Karl Popper's ferocious denunciation in *The Open Society*, an attack so damaging that Hegel disappeared almost completely from view in IR until the 1980s. Section 4 outlines the recuperation of Hegel in political philosophy and political theory: the essential precondition of his redemption in IR. Writing in the 1950s and 1960s, Avineri and Kaufmann painstakingly countered the criticisms of Hegel's denouncers and, by close engagement with his texts, revealed a more accurate account of his theories of the state, war, and politics in general. Section 5 examines the rehabilitation of Hegel in international law and IR in the early 1980s through his *normalization* in Michael Mitias's article 'Hegel on International Law', Andrew Linklater's *Man and Citizen in International Relations*, and Andrew Vincent's article, 'The Hegelian State and International Politics'. Section 6 examines the febrile period following the normalization of Hegel within IR, a meristematic moment in which various Hegels proliferated to such an extent that they could not be contained within the established canonical frameworks. While some of these Hegels have withered on the vine, Hegel now enjoys a fiercely contested but remarkably *free* role within IR in a number of theoretical terrains.

2. A 'Prussian' Priest of Moloch: The first demonization of G. W. F. Hegel

The connection between Hegel (and German idealism in general) and the unprecedented 'savagery' of the German armed forces played out across newspapers, periodicals, academic journals, and a slew of books by some of the most prominent thinkers of the era. *The Times* correspondent 'Continuity' attributed the atavistic lust for battle of the 'new barbarians' in no small part to Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, whose erosion of Christianity freed 'that brutal German joy of battle'.¹¹ The corruption of German society – 'indoctrinated by a long succession of teachers and rulers from Hegel to Treitschke' – led to worship of the German state and 'in the name of this State-Moloch all things are sanctified'.¹² Moloch is also invoked by W. R. Sorley, who, while recognizing that Hegel's description of the state as an 'actual God' was a technical reference to an ideal, nonetheless concluded that 'we are apt to think that the Prussian State was identified in his mind with God upon Earth'. The tragedy of Hegel and his latter-day followers is that 'their sacrifices are made not to God but to a covetous and brutal idol . . . Rendering themselves up to Moloch, they become like him in violence and envy—the inhuman instruments of an inhuman system'.¹³ While

¹¹'Continuity', 'The New Barbarism: A Prophecy', *Times*, 21 September 1914, 9. The letter prompted a reply from J. R. Muirhead who insisted on a distinction between Kant and Hegel on one hand, who are innocent of association with Prussian aggression and militarism, and 'the violent naturalistic reaction inaugurated by Nietzsche and turned to the service of an inflated patriotism by von Treitschke': 'The New Barbarism: A Distinction', *Times*, 24 September 1914, 9. J. G. James added that it was 'the rejection, or at least the perversion', of Kant and Hegel's idealism 'on the part of the militarist school, which is responsible for the present horrible situation': J. G. James and H. D. Rawnsley, 'The New Barbarism', *Times*, 26 September 1914, 9.

¹²Anonymous, 'The Method of Terror', (1914) 15(24) *The Nation*, 831.

¹³W. R. Sorley, 'The State and Morality', in L. Creighton et al. (eds.), *The International Crisis: The Theory of the State* (1916), 25, at 42, 46.

distinguishing Hegel from the militarism of later German writers, the former MP and prominent journalist, G. P. Gooch, identified Hegel with the denial of ‘the existence of moral relations between States’, which marked a ‘sharp and deplorable reaction from Kant’. Hegel, according to Gooch, also proclaimed that ‘international law is no real contract, and no State is legally or morally bound by it. Differences can only be settled by war, which is neither good nor evil, but natural’.¹⁴

Perhaps the most influential British wartime critic of Hegel was the political theorist and sociologist Leonard Hobhouse. Hobhouse first broached the issue of Hegel’s baleful effect on the moral and political development of Germany in an article written in dialogue form between himself and an imagined partner, ‘Marryat’. In this dialogue it is made clear that:

Hegel is the father and by long odds the most serious champion of everything reactionary in the nineteenth century. The deification of the state and the belief that it is the supreme type of human organisation, the contempt for democracy, the unreal identification of liberty with law which simply put every personal right at the mercy of the legislator, the upholding of war as a necessity, the disregard of humanity, the denial of the sanctity of treaties and of international law can all be traced to the *Philosophie des Rechts*.¹⁵

Hobhouse was so aroused by Hegel that he wrote *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* to counteract the pernicious effect of ‘a false and wicked doctrine’ that spawned the Great War.¹⁶ In this book, Hobhouse elaborated on his belief that Hegel, ‘whose school has from first to last provided by far the most serious opposition to the democratic and humanitarian conceptions’ of the Enlightenment, had corrupted not only the German political and intellectual elite but also ‘the British world, discrediting the principles upon which liberal progress has been founded and in particular depreciating all that British and French thinkers have contributed’.¹⁷

At root, Hobhouse’s criticism of Hegel is that ‘it is a convenient doctrine; its bed-rock conservatism is proof against all criticisms of the existing order’. Hegel’s elevation of the state above moral reproach, valorization of war, and repudiation of a federation for peace along Kantian lines is compounded by his reduction of freedom to ‘conformity with the law and custom as interpreted by the ethical spirit of the particular society to which the individual belongs’.¹⁸ In international politics, even this respect for law is absent. States, for whom there is no court of appeal, ‘are put above the moral law’ and each state ‘is to think of its own well-being ... It is only the state’s concrete existence, not any of the general conceptions that are thought of as moral commands, that can be taken as the principle of its action’.¹⁹

Across the Atlantic, John Dewey argued that Hegel is a proponent of ‘an extreme form of the idea, not of the divine right of kings, but of the divine right of States ... The State is God on earth’.²⁰ Dewey reads Hegel as a philosopher of conflict, for whom the judgement of world history is synonymous with the overcoming of one state by another in a cycle of violence:

victory being the final proof that the world spirit has now passed from one nation to take up its residence in another. To be defeated in a way which causes the nation to take a secondary position among nations is a sign that divine judgment has been passed upon it.²¹

¹⁴G. P. Gooch, ‘German Theories of the State’, (1915) 107 *Contemporary Review* 743, at 749.

¹⁵L. T. Hobhouse, ‘The Soul of Civilisation’, (1915) 108 *Contemporary Review* 158, at 161.

¹⁶L. T. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, at 23–4.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, at 31.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, at 101–2.

²⁰J. Dewey, *German Philosophy and Politics* (1915), 110–11.

²¹*Ibid.*, at 114.

In what would become a leading theme of Hegel criticism, Dewey argues that Hegel's philosophy of history expresses the principle that the state is 'the march of God on earth through time . . . War is the signally visible occurrence of such a flight of the divine spirit in its onward movement'.²² Those other chief suspects in the decline and fall of civilization, the belief in the 'Darwinian struggle for existence and survival of the fittest' and the 'Nietzschean philosophy of power', actually 'have their roots in the classic idealistic philosophy culminating in Hegel'.²³

George Santayana, another leading light of American philosophy, added to Dewey's criticism the accusation that Hegel's aim was to reduce moral philosophy to 'simply an apology for the established order of things and for the prejudices of his time and country'. Hegel's 'pious wish . . . to interpret the orthodoxy of his generation was successful, and the modest hopes of his philosophy were fulfilled. Never perhaps was a system so true to its date and so false to its subject'.²⁴ Santayana claims that Hegel denies international morality due to the absence of 'a moral authority or tribunal higher than the state'. Hegel's position

is evidently false, since in the first place there is God or, if the phrase be preferred, there is the highest good of mankind . . . in the second place there is the individual, whose natural allegiance to his family, friends, and religion, to truth and to art, is deeper and holier than his allegiance to the state.²⁵

In a novel twist that would become a theme of Hegel criticism, Santayana also calls into question Hegel's character, ascribing to him an insincere ambition 'to flatter a government in whose policy war and even crime were recognised weapons'.²⁶

2.1 Devil's advocates: With Hegel and against the tide

Hegel was not without supporters during the Great War. John Watson argued in 1915 that Hegel 'did not endorse, but expressly attacked, the doctrine that the State rests upon force', adding that Hegel had in fact opposed von Haller – 'the von Treitschke of his day' – on this issue.²⁷ John Muirhead also identified the importance of Hegel's criticism of von Haller, and insists that while Hegel was both a statist and a monarchist, 'there is no ground to ally his political teaching with militarism as we are learning to know it to-day'. The 'militarist doctrine' that the foundation of the state is force, 'is precisely the view against which Hegel contends in the *Philosophy of Right*. "The binding cord," he writes, "is not force, but the deep-seated feeling of order that is possessed by us all". The Clausewitzian formula that war is politics by other means would be rejected by Hegel, according to Muirhead, because war 'is the failure of politics. The continuation of politics is art, science, religion, all that goes to make what Aristotle called the good life – for the full development of which the State is the essential condition'.²⁸ As Chris Brown would later observe, although Hegel offers a plausible account of conflict, 'it does not follow that war is a necessary feature of the relations between Hegelian states'.²⁹ For Muirhead, the 'Prussianization' and militarization of Germany was not a result of Hegel's philosophy but rather it is attributable to the 'violent reaction against the whole Idealist philosophy that set in shortly after his death'.³⁰

²²Ibid., at 118.

²³Ibid., at 120.

²⁴G. Santayana, *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916), at 87–8.

²⁵Ibid., at 96.

²⁶Ibid., at 97.

²⁷J. Watson, 'German Philosophy and the War', (1915) 23 *Queen's Quarterly* 365, at 366.

²⁸J. R. Muirhead, *German Philosophy in Relation to the War* (1915), 36–7.

²⁹C. Brown, *International Theory: New Normative Approaches* (1992), 70.

³⁰Muirhead, *supra* note 28, at 39.

The leading neo-Hegelian philosopher Bernard Bosanquet offered a sustained engagement with Hegel and his critics in his 1917 book, *Social and International Ideals*. Opposing the accusation that Hegel worshipped the state, Bosanquet argues that Hegel's statement that the state is an end in itself was made to counter the:

reduction of its purpose to the protection of property or the right of the stronger. He regards it as having in it some of the end of life, viz. the embodiment of liberty; of course, not the whole end. It is for him the basis of the further more specialised achievements (art, philosophy, and the like).³¹

Bosanquet clarifies elsewhere that 'Hegel means by the state, *not the machine of government*, but all that fulfils, in the actual community, the individual's mind and will'.³² Military strength and power are important to the state's survival, 'the first condition of the state's fulfilment of its function', but, stresses Bosanquet, 'it is too easily taken as the aim and whole upshot of the state'.³³ Hegel's theory of the state may have been perverted over time into a 'creed of violence and self-interest', but this is a consequence of the 'passage of a large and many-sided philosophical doctrine into the hands of ignorant and biased amateurs, soldiers, historians, and politicians'.³⁴

Hegel is depicted by his critics and detractors as a villain for pointing out the impracticality and potential for disruptive instability of grand proposals for legal and institutional reform in international politics.³⁵ Bosanquet counters these criticisms by asserting that all Hegel has done is to state 'a great fact, of the kind which philosophy stands or falls by stating truly. He does not say the wills could not become one, and we are showing, on a basis derived from him, how they can'.³⁶ Bosanquet argues that the Hegelian route to a genuine general will between states lies in developing a 'plain positive type of interdependence' based on *recognition* of common commitments to ideals. In this vein, Bosanquet argues that the key to creating 'an effective unity of or within mankind' lies not in international legal and institutional *machinery*, but in fostering *within* states 'devotion to the things in which man, at his best is one'.³⁷ The more states develop the capacity to promote law, order, and morality as aspects of 'objective mind' internally, the better they will be able to recognize in each other the particular expression of universal principles:

in a group or world of states, possessed by such a patriotism, and therefore organized so as to be free from causes of resentment, and united in aims and methods which admit of harmony, it is conceivable that a true general will (not a mere external convention) might grow up which should be solidly supported by the body, spirit, and sentiment of all the communities. In such a case a genuine international moral world would be created, and international politics would approach more nearly to the nature of private morality, though they could never be the same.

A central part of the process of creating genuine community between states based on these universal principles is to redevelop along Hegelian lines what constitutes the 'good' of the state:

³¹B. Bosanquet, *Social and International Ideals* (1917), 273. See J. Morrow, 'British Idealism, "German Philosophy" and the First World War', (1982) 28(3) *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 380–90.

³²B. Bosanquet, 'Patriotism in the Perfect State', in E. Sidgwick et al. (eds.), *The International Crisis in Its Ethical and Psychological Aspects* (1915), 132, at 133–4 (emphasis added).

³³*Ibid.*, at 136.

³⁴*Ibid.*, at 140.

³⁵Bosanquet, *supra* note 31, at 293. Even when he subsequently supported the establishment of the League of Nations, Bosanquet 'was hardly cheerful and shrewdly identified the central obstacles to be overcome', C. Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930* (2009), 207.

³⁶Bosanquet, *ibid.*, at 314.

³⁷*Ibid.*, at 313.

Its good is the form of life and feeling which it has made and chosen, *and includes its relations to others*. But if for good (*Wohl*) you read *exclusive* self-interest, the thing is done. A great idea slides before your eyes into the meanest of worldly maxims.³⁸

According to Bosanquet, therefore, Hegel is not advocating an aggressively chauvinistic ‘Prussian’ foreign policy of conquest, but rather insisting that in its calculation of its own ‘good’ the state factor in its relations to others. Bosanquet is clear that from a Hegelian perspective military strength in itself does not set the state ‘free to sully at its will the treasure it has to guard’, i.e., might does *not* make right. Without a commitment to the welfare of other states, ‘the public conscience, the compass of the difficult voyage, is gone. Everything depended on its recognition of the supreme values within its own good; and the change leaves them as mere names for whatever can be effected by force’.³⁹

3. Hegel and the fledgling discipline of International Relations

The Hegel that is present at the dawn of IR owes a clear debt to the debates in philosophy regarding his responsibility for the emergence of state worship and the glorification of war. The debt, however, is almost entirely one-sided in favour of Hegel’s accusers. The Somme and Ypres required explanation and scapegoats and Hegel fitted the bill. The Hegel of Muirhead and Bosanquet is correspondingly absent. Hegel’s perfidy as the architect of German autocracy is, in many instances, juxtaposed to the ‘saintly’ Kant. In *The Journal of Race Development* (which under its later guise, *Foreign Affairs*, became and remains a leading disciplinary journal) Charles Edward Lyon places Hegel in a line of thinkers culminating in Nietzsche that ‘represents a crescendo of the appeal to force and a diminuendo of the appeal to reason . . . At the mid-century period, Hegel’s abstract state was not so much a substitute for Kant as a sublimation of Kant’. Quoting J. M. Robertson’s *The Germans*, Lyon presents Hegel as positing ‘the law of strife with a positive proviso against the elimination of war, which he regarded as medicinal’. Lyon draws a direct connection to Bismarck who ‘administered this “medicine” whenever he deemed that the body politic had need of it’.⁴⁰

Similarly, the influential Czechoslovak statesman and intellectual, Thomas Masaryk, identifies Hegel as constituting ‘a transition to Prussianism and its mechanism, materialism and force . . . Hegel, with his “absolute idealism,” served the “authoritism” of the Prussian state’. Masaryk, like Lyon, also contrasts Hegel with Kant in that Hegel ‘abandoned humanity and the universal outlook of Goethe and Kant, and laid a foundation for the theoretical and practical employment of force’. Hegel, ‘originally a theologian . . . formulated the principles of the Prussian theocracy’ which ‘reached its consummation in the idea of the Prussian state and kingdom, deified by Hegel. Hegel created absolutism for the state, and justified right by strength . . . Hegel proclaimed not only the infallibility of the state, but the “self-serving” quality of war and militarism’.⁴¹ Another statesman, Newton D. Baker, Woodrow Wilson’s Secretary of War, also implicated Hegel as being responsible for developing ‘the concept of the state as the representative of the divine on earth and the consequent moral obligation of all to yield to the state unquestioned obedience’, leading to a Germany with:

an all powerful state speaking through an All Highest War-Lord in command of the greatest military machine the world had ever seen, and sustained by a people who had been taught to

³⁸*Ibid.*, at 141 (emphasis added).

³⁹*Ibid.*, at 142. For an account of the Hegelian milieu of which Bosanquet was a prominent member see D. Boucher, ‘British Idealism, the State and International Relations’, (1994) 55(4) *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67.

⁴⁰C. E. Lyon, ‘Mobilising the German Mind’, (1917) 7(4) *Journal of Race Development* 385, at 396.

⁴¹T. Masaryk, ‘Reflections on the Question of War Guilt’, (1925) 3(4) *Foreign Affairs* 529, at 534–5.

believe by their philosophers, their historians, and their religious leaders, both in the cultural supremacy of the Germans as a people, and the morality of their imposition of that culture on the rest of mankind, if necessary by the sword.⁴²

3.1 Hegel, International Relations and the Third Reich

The emergence of Nazism brought Hegel into further disrepute as, in addition to Prussian authoritarianism, he was now held responsible for contributing to the origins of National Socialism. The former editor of *The Times* (and noted anti-semitic and Germanophobe), Henry Wickham Steed, for example, argued in *International Affairs* in 1933 that 'It is true that, in a sense, the political edifice which Hitlerism is rearing upon the basis of this doctrine is an extension of the old Prussian State-idea, and a modern application of Hegel's deification of the State.'⁴³ The former Home Secretary and leader of the Liberal Party in Britain, Herbert Samuel, also stressed Hegel's status as a pernicious influence on German politics, noting that:

[t]he ideas of Fichte, of Hegel, and now of Nietzsche, can be seen to be among the principal causes of the unrest in the modern world. "Ideas," said Hegel, "have hands and feet." His own ideas have had hands that are violent, and feet of armies marching to war . . . the Hegelian doctrine of the reality and supremacy of the State which is the root of much of the evil of our times.⁴⁴

In 1938 Wickham Steed delivered a lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (later published in *International Affairs*) with the title 'From Frederick the Great to Hitler: The Consistency of German Aims', that was attended by G. P. Gooch, Arnold Toynbee and an array of other commentators on international politics. Again, Wickham Steed stressed Hegel's responsibility for providing 'pseudo-philosophic warrant' for the deification of the German state and also implicated Hegel in the development of the 'the "geo-political" school' of Nazi IR theory and foreign policy by serving as an influence on one of its sources, the political geographer Arthur Dix.⁴⁵

Five months before the start of the Second World War, the prominent American journalist Dorothy Thompson offered a more nuanced position on Hegel by arguing that although 'Hegel saw the glorified state and the possible total sweep of its character. He gave it a moral and intellectual meaning that nobody before him had thought to contribute'. Thompson, against the grain concluded that 'Hegel, a profound moralist, must be turning in his grave at the thought of a frame such as the state which he conceived, filled with such bestial power'.⁴⁶ Thompson's attempt to add balance to the reception of Hegel in IR was soon overtaken by an anti-Hegelian sentiment that was intensified by the Second World War and the manner in which it was conducted.

3.2 The second demonization of Hegel: The Second World War and aftermath

The intensification of the association between Hegel and Nazism is perhaps best illustrated by Lieutenant Colonel Hermann Gaston de Watteville's attempt to portray Hegel – 'a wizened, asthmatic invalid' – as perhaps the primary inspiration of the Third Reich through his 'theory of the

⁴²N. D. Baker, 'Why We Went to War', (1936) 15(1) *Foreign Affairs* 1, at 8–9.

⁴³H. W. Steed, 'The Future in Europe', (1933) 12(6) *International Affairs* 744, at 753.

⁴⁴H. Samuel, 'Philosophy, Religion and Present World Conditions', (1935) 147 *Contemporary Review* 257, at 262.

⁴⁵H. W. Steed, 'From Frederick the Great to Hitler: The Consistency of German Aims', (1938) 17(5) *International Affairs* 655, at 658, 671.

⁴⁶D. Thompson, 'The Problem Child of Europe', (1939) 18(3) *Foreign Affairs* 389, at 402.

omnipotence of the State and of the coming era of Germanic supremacy'.⁴⁷ Similarly, Hilda Graef, a German émigré theologian directly linked Hegel to the Nazi conception of the Totalitarian State, which 'can claim Hegel as its direct ancestor'.⁴⁸ Graef stresses that 'Hegel's influence on subsequent generations of political thinkers can hardly be exaggerated. His philosophy provided the ideas not only for the reactionary politicians of the Conservative Party . . . but also for the socialism of Marx and Engels', and it is Hegel's proto-totalitarianism that allowed the emergence of Nazism 'which in its beginnings was supported by reactionary Nationalists like Hugenberg as well as by Socialists of the type of Gregor Strasser'.⁴⁹

Carl Mayer also affords Hegel a central role in his account of the intellectual origins of the Nazi movement. Hegel's philosophy represents for Mayer the 'acme' of the Machiavellian tendency within German Idealism.⁵⁰ Two principles are particularly significant in Hegel's work for Mayer: that the state is the 'highest of the embodiments of the absolute mind on earth', and that 'Power is the basic fact of political life' which should not be judged by subjective morality, instead power and the 'political order must be judged and justified – within its own terms'. Mayer insists that 'Hegelian philosophy is, in a most radical way, the philosophic justification of the idea of the *Machtsaat* . . . there is justification in interpreting National Socialism as but a variation of Hegel's basic theme'.⁵¹ Mayer does, however, qualify his criticism of Hegel (and Fichte and Schelling) when he states that 'power and the state are to them not the ultimate reality but rather a fact that must be brought into the framework of, and interpreted according to, a philosophy of reason' and that in Hegel's case 'the true character of his political philosophy emerges only if it is read in the light of the whole of his ideas'. Hegel's emphasis on the state is 'because it is a manifestation of reason in reality' and his theorization of state morality does not imply advocacy of immorality as such. Distancing Hegel from the Nazis, Mayer also recognizes that Hegel invests the dignity of the individual with the status of an 'absolute value' and that 'the ultimate reality is not the state, but the solitude of man in the freedom of his thought'.⁵²

3.2.1 Karl Popper's excoriation of Hegel

No such qualifications occur in Karl Popper's watershed 1945 critique of Hegel's influence on modernity and his effect on the development of Germany. Accusing both Plato and Hegel of moral nihilism in international relations, Popper links the master/slave dialectic of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* directly to what he describes as 'its counterpart in Hegel's theory of international relations. Nations must assert themselves on the Stage of History; it is their duty to attempt the domination of the World'.⁵³ Presented as a willing stooge of the Prussian authorities, Popper accuses Hegel of 'reviving the ideas of the first great enemies of the open society, Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle'.⁵⁴ In a familiar theme, Popper argues that Hegel 'bowed and twisted Kant's view into its opposite' *en route* to developing a position 'which means the end not only of all science, but of all rational argument'.⁵⁵ Hegel's contemporary relevance lies in the fact that 'Hegel's hysterical historicism is still the fertilizer to which modern totalitarianism owes its rapid growth'.⁵⁶ The substitution of blood and race for spirit is merely cosmetic according to Popper, both Hegel and his totalitarian successors are presented as believing that 'War is not a common and abundant evil but

⁴⁷H. G. de Watteville, 'The Two Faces of Germany', (1941) 86 *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 646, at 648.

⁴⁸H. C. Graef, 'From Hegel to Hitler', (1940) 158 *Contemporary Review* 550.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, at 552.

⁵⁰C. Mayer, 'On the Intellectual Origin of National Socialism', (1942) 9(1) *Social Research* 225, at 229.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, at 230.

⁵²*Ibid.*, at 236–7.

⁵³K. Popper, *The Open Society & Its Enemies* (2013), 102, 225.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, at 245.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, at 252, 253.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, at 272.

a precious though rare good'. Hegel, who pretends to be a rationalist, 'ends up in irrationalism; in an apotheosis not only of passion, but of brutal force'.⁵⁷ Closely related to this irrationalism is what Popper identifies as 'moral positivism', which asserts that 'there is no moral standard but the one which exists, that what is, is reasonable and good; and therefore, that might is right . . . A moral criticism of the existing state of affairs is impossible, since this state itself determines the moral standard of things'.⁵⁸ Popper even finds space to accuse Hegel's philosophy of history of 'pure blasphemy' by attributing the authorship of the course of history to God, 'for the play was (and they know it) written not by God, but, under the supervision of generals and dictators, by the professors of history'.⁵⁹

The wave of Hegel criticism culminating in *The Open Society* was extremely successful in sidelining Hegel: only passing references are made to him in IR from 1945 until the 1980s. The few references that are made are entirely in keeping with the depictions provided by Hegel's critics from Hobhouse to Popper. E. H. Carr's departure from the discipline of IR marked the exit of Hegel's most high-profile interlocutor.⁶⁰ As IR began to take shape in America and Europe after the Second World War, IR did not know or want to engage with Hegel: at most he was slotted into the margins of Realism, a minor figure following in the wake of Machiavelli and Hobbes.⁶¹ Hans Morgenthau, perhaps the most significant figure in post-war IR, pointedly avoided mentioning Hegel.⁶² The restoration of Hegel in IR would have to come from outside its disciplinary borders.

4. Hegel's resurrection in philosophy

Any revival of interest in Hegel would have to confront directly the powerful tradition of Hegel criticism, and, in particular, Popper's definitive expression of anti-Hegelianism in *The Open Society*. The philosopher Walter Kaufmann began the process of reclamation through a detailed, forensic dismantling of Popper's case against Hegel.⁶³ Kaufmann, Shlomo Avineri, and Mitias's targeted treatments of the roles of war, nationalism, and international law, unlocked Hegel for a new generation of scholars not only in their own disciplines of philosophy, political theory, and law but also (after a lag) the emergence of the 'Hegel(s)' that currently proliferate throughout IR.

4.1 Walter Kaufmann's critique of Popper

The primary problem of Hegel in political theory and philosophy, according to Kaufmann, is that few of his critics have firsthand knowledge of Hegel, instead his work is 'known largely through

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, at 284.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, at 411–12.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, at 476.

⁶⁰Hegel plays an important – if double-edged – role throughout *The Twenty Years' Crisis* as a leading exemplar of 'modern' or 'historical' Realism.

⁶¹In his highly influential LSE lectures Martin Wight described Hegel as 'a pocket of fog' who obscures international thought. In the lectures Wight also complains of Hegel's 'characteristically inspissated language' regarding the state and its role in international society. M. Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (1991), 15, 31.

⁶²In his review of Morgenthau's collected essays, George Lichtheim acutely recognizes that Morgenthau's appeals to 'the Western Tradition' include a range of figures ancient and modern, including Meinecke and Ranke, before making the arch observation 'though for some reason not Hegel, from whom Ranke and Meinecke acquired whatever general notions they possessed'. Lichtheim implies that Morgenthau may have resisted directly referencing Hegel because he is 'a philosopher with a notoriously bad reputation in the English speaking world'. G. Lichtheim, 'The Politics of Conservative Realism', (1963) 35(6) *Commentary* 506, at 511, 513. When pressed by Michael Joseph Smith on whether or not his ethics of statecraft were Hegelian, Morgenthau 'denied that this was his intention in making the argument: "Hegel was the farthest thing from my mind." Nevertheless he agreed that the interpretation was quite plausible': M. J. Smith, 'Hans Morgenthau and the American National Interest in the Early Cold War', (1981) 48(4) *Social Research*, 76, at 778.

⁶³T. M. Knox wrote an important article 'Hegel and Prussianism', countering the anti-Hegelian output of the post-First World War era, which prompted a series of rejoinders in *Philosophy* in 1940, but its longer-term impact was stalled by the Second World War. T. M. Knox, 'Hegel and Prussianism', (1940) 15(47)*Philosophy* 51–63.

secondary sources and a few incriminating slogans and generalizations'. If nothing else, *The Open Society* provided 'a comprehensive, documented statement' of the Hegel 'myth' that codified a tradition 30 years in the making. As a distillation of the various myths regarding Hegel's thoughts on the state, war, ethics, and politics 'Popper's treatment contains more misconceptions about Hegel than any other single essay'.⁶⁴

Kaufmann mercilessly dissects the flawed scholarship pervading *The Open Society*. Kaufmann demonstrates the extent to which Popper's research is slipshod and determinedly ignores the most important works on his subject, e.g., Dilthey and Rosenzweig. Most damningly, 'Popper has relied largely on *Scribner's Hegel Selections*, a little anthology for students that contain not a single complete work . . . Popper . . . appears to be unaware of crucial passages, if not entire works, that are not included in these Selections'. Popper, despite his native German, uncritically reproduces the fateful mistranslation that 'the State is the march of God through the world', which had led to the widespread belief that Hegel deified the state. The original, Kaufmann reveals 'says merely that it is the way of God with the world that there should be the State, and even this sentence is lacking in the text published by Hegel and comes from one of the editor's additions', which in turn was taken from student lecture notes.⁶⁵

On the most controversial question of Hegel's influence on the Nazis, Kaufmann demonstrates the extent to which Popper was over reliant on Kolnai's *The War Against the West*:

Popper uses quotation after quotation from Kolnai to point out supposed similarities with Hegel, but never stops to ask whether the men he cites had read Hegel, what they thought of him, or where, in fact, they did get their ideas.⁶⁶

Worse, Popper juxtaposes Hegel's thoughts on fame with those of the much later far-right and anti-semitic essayist, Wilhelm Stapel: '[T]his is not history', Kaufmann wrote, 'but an attempt to establish guilt by association on the same page – in the hope, it seems, that *semper aliquid haeret*'.⁶⁷ Popper's accusations regarding Hegel's protofascist culpability for influencing Nazi racism, while celebrating Hegel's 'superior' enemies Fries and Schopenhauer, backfire in light of the fact that 'Fries and Schopenhauer, unlike the mature Hegel, were anti-Semites'.⁶⁸ Kaufmann also calls into question the assumed linkage between Hegel and the Nazis by pointing out that 'Hegel was rarely cited in the Nazi literature, and, when he was referred to, it was usually by way of disapproval'.⁶⁹

Hegel's alleged state worship, a fixation of Hegel criticism, is tackled head on by Kaufmann, who argues that:

When Hegel speaks of "the State" he does not mean every state encountered in experience . . . Hegel would distinguish between the Idea of the State, which he means when he speaks of "the State," and the many states around us.

⁶⁴W. Kaufmann, 'The Hegel Myth and Its Method', in W. Kaufmann (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy* (1970), 137, at 139–40.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, at 141. On this issue, Andrew Vincent writes that '[d]espite the fact that there is no way of knowing precisely what Hegel said, one can make an informed assessment of his idea. Hegel is not thinking of any doctrine of divine right of states or rulers, which he in fact criticizes in another addition. Rather, all he seems to be saying is that states have not arisen by accident. This simply runs in accord with his theory of history as a providential unfolding of Spirit'. A. Vincent, 'The Hegelian State', (1983) 9(3) *Review of International Studies* 191, at 198.

⁶⁶W. Kaufmann, *supra* note 64, at 144.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, at 144–5.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, at 145. Kaufmann concedes that Hegel's early theological essays contain 'violent prejudices against the Jews' but '[w]hen Hegel later became a man of influence, he insisted that the Jews should be granted equal rights because civic rights belong to man because is a man and not on account of his ethnic origins or his religion'. *Ibid.*, at 146.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, at 147. Kaufmann proves his point by reference to the Nazi intellectual Alfred Rosenberg denouncing Hegel twice in his *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*.

The philosopher's task in relation to the state is to 'd disentangle the rational core from the web of history', to discover the ideal immanent within the variations of states that have emerged in space and time. Popper and Hegel's other critics also misunderstand how states ought to be assessed. The criterion of judgment for a state is not success in terms of dominance but rather the extent to which 'what states would be like if they lived up fully to their *raison d'être*'. That *raison d'être* is only fully revealed in *The Science of Logic*, in which the 'whole realm of Objective Spirit and human institutions that culminates in the State is but the foundation of a higher realm of Absolute Spirit that comprises art, religion, and philosophy'. The state is not to be worshipped as an end in itself, rather it is worthy of appreciation because it is an instrument that enables human freedom and the cultivation of the mind.⁷⁰ In Hegel's philosophy of history, 'success' of states is not tied up with military power or fighting prowess. Hegel, 'does not believe that things are good because they succeed, but that they succeed because they are good. He finds God's revelation in history'.⁷¹ Successive cultures in history embody Spirit, e.g., the Ancient Persian Empire, Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, and the 'Germanic' states of modernity, but their success is due to their attunement to the *Zeitgeist*: Hegel's 'position depends on his assumption that ultimate reality is spiritual and that the spirit reveals itself progressively in history. The stages of this revelation are represented by different peoples, but by only one people at a time'.⁷²

Hegel's position on war is problematic to contemporary readers in the context of two total wars and the prospect of nuclear annihilation, but it is quite different from that of the Nazis.⁷³ War, which in Hegel's opinion is a phenomenon that should be ended as soon as possible after it starts, nonetheless has produced positive effects, most notably in the furtherance of civilization.⁷⁴ The primary task of the philosopher, according to Hegel is to confront reality and eschew utopia – if war has had positive effects in addition to negative ones, this should be acknowledged, e.g., when it results in the end of endemic corruption and/or leads to the end of states that do not advance the freedom of their populace. In addition, Kaufmann argues that Hegel's acceptance of risk to life and property in war is a consequence of his religious commitments: 'He considered all that is finite ephemeral'.⁷⁵ Popper's conclusion that Hegel 'considered "war as a good in itself"' is rejected by Kaufmann by reference to Hegel's attempt to solve the problem of evil:

by demonstrating that even evil serves a positive function . . . It is of the very essence of Hegel's dialectical approach to penetrate beyond such assertions as that war is good or evil to a specification of the respects in which it is good and those in which it is evil. Today the evil so far outweighs any conceivable good that we are apt to be impatient with anyone who as much as mentions any good aspects; but in a concrete predicament, the majority still feels that the good outweighs the evil, even if this point is made by speaking of the "lesser evil".⁷⁶

Kaufmann concludes his critique of Popper with a brief discussion of the latter's accusation that Hegel was instrumental in the restoration of tribalism and nationalism to the European continent. Kaufmann dismisses this claim by reference to Hegel's suspicion of 'the rabble'. Hegel's state is a

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, at 152–5.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, at 158.

⁷²*Ibid.*, at 159.

⁷³Thomas Mertens stresses that Hegel is a proponent of strictly *limited* wars that affect only a professional military class subject to strict rules of engagement. T. Mertens, 'Hegel's Homage to Kant's Perpetual Peace: An Analysis of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" §§ 321–340', (1995) 57(4) *Review of Politics* 665, at 680ff.

⁷⁴According to Steven B. Smith, 'Hegel's purpose is to render war rational, that is, intelligible within the total compass of human experience . . . Far from viewing war as something accidental or contingent in human affairs, Hegel attempts to give it a metaphysical foundation built into the very nature of things.' S. B. Smith, 'Hegel's Views on War, the State, and International Relations', (1983) 77(33) *American Political Science Review* 624, at 627.

⁷⁵W. Kaufmann, *supra* note 64, 166.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

bureaucratic constitutional monarchy, *not* a populist paradise of *Volkisch* enthusiasm. The *schwärmerei* of the Nazis receives no warrant from Hegel.

4.2 Avineri on Hegel, nationalism and war

Shlomo Avineri offers a much more extensive engagement with Hegel's approach to nationalism than Kaufmann. For Avineri, the accusation that Hegel was a prophet of 'Prussianism' or supremacist German nationalism is unsustainable as Hegel was in fact an avid admirer of the liberal principles (if not always the practices) of Revolutionary France. 'In contrast to Fichte, who died fighting the French', writes Avineri, 'Hegel "remained loyal to his pro-French, anti-German orientation"'. An opponent of Romantic German nationalism, Hegel did not embrace the idea of pan-German consciousness and ridiculed the early articulations of Aryanism in the nineteenth century. As Kaufmann also noted, Avineri stresses that Hegel 'demanded the granting of full equality of political and civic rights to the Jews, since "a man counts as a man in virtue of his manhood alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc."'."⁷⁷

Avineri demonstrates that the association of Hegel with German nationalism is an anachronistic twentieth century projection. German nationalists of the nineteenth century, like Rudolf Haym were clear that Hegel was hostile to nationalism. Treitschke, who is often presented as his intellectual heir by Hegel's critics, wrote that Hegel 'did not, and could not, understand the nationalist connection between the Volk and the state'.⁷⁸ The ties between German nationalism and Hegel were created posthumously by two parties: later Hegelians who wanted Hegel's work to remain relevant in an increasingly nationalist era, and later still writers like Popper who anachronistically read the Prussia of Hegel's time as in favour of unification, when in fact Prussia was anti-unification. Avineri finds particularly important the partial publication around 1850 of the previously unpublished essay 'The German Constitution', which was edited by Rosenkranz to appeal to prevailing nationalist sentiment.⁷⁹ The mistaken belief that Hegel promoted a nationalist ideology of German political supremacy was due to the translator of *The Philosophy of History* not distinguishing between *germanisch* (Germanic) and *deutsch* (German), a decision which 'aroused in Anglo-Saxon readers of the last half century every possible association with German political world domination'.⁸⁰ Avineri explains that this fear of the German state is misdirected in relation to Hegel for whom '[t]he Germanic world is not ... an ethnic, racial, or political nation. It is Christian Europe, Western Civilisation, including, according to Hegel, not only Germany, but Spain and France, England and Italy as well — and, perhaps, even Russia'.⁸¹

Avineri brings a similarly sharp revisionist scalpel to the claims that Hegel was a war-mongering priest of Moloch, an image of Hegel that needed 're-examination, as is often the case with a hypothesis which has taken root, gained acceptance, and become fixed to such a degree that it seems to require no proof or confirmation'.⁸² Avineri describes Hegel's mature thought on war as attempting 'one of the most difficult, and perhaps most thankless, theoretical tasks: namely, the painstaking effort to try and give a meaning, in a general philosophical context, to the phenomenon of war'. Employing a Hegelian motif, Avineri sees the core of Hegel's efforts as the identification of the 'rose in the cross of the present', i.e., that although war is a cause of suffering and death in the present it nonetheless may have positive effects to which philosophers should be alert.

⁷⁷S. Avineri, 'Hegel and Nationalism', (1962) 24(4) *Review of Politics* 461, at 461–3.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, at 464.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, at 464–6.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, at 481.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, at 483.

⁸²S. Avineri, 'The Problem of War in Hegel's Thought', (1961) 22(4) *Journal of the History of Ideas* 463.

The key to understanding Hegel's theory of war, according to Avineri, is that:

there lies in war an ethical (*sittlich*) element inasmuch as it exposes the accidental, the arbitrary, and finite in life. It prevents the particular interest from becoming the master of the universe . . . it serves as an ethical *memento mori*.

Avineri recognizes that while this:

metaphysical explanation will not receive much approval nowadays and may certainly seem dated if not obscurantist . . . it would not be welcome by any ideology which might be termed militaristic, as it is completely devoid of the ethos of war itself.⁸³

Avineri also makes the important point that Hegel is here referring to the concept of war, not particular wars, which 'require some other justification'.⁸⁴ Like Kaufmann, Avineri stresses that Hegel's theory of war as expressed in section 338 of the *Philosophy of Right* is one in which war should end quickly, is not a good in itself, ought to be fought in a limited fashion, and should not target civil society or civilians. War for Hegel should only involve standing armies fighting wars in a humane manner without enmity. War also only decides which party wins the political day:

according to Hegel war and victory in war can never suffice to indicate which party was right. A concrete war can never decide matters of justice; the victors are never necessarily the righteous, nor the vanquished the villains in the piece: *Might is not Right*.⁸⁵

In this vein, Ido Geiger makes the valuable point that war:

is not itself an ethical moment of human life. It is the values of the state, not war, that are ethically necessary. War is at most the necessary means by which the state and its values continue to exist; it is instrumental, not ethical.⁸⁶

The counterintuitive idea that war might serve a higher purpose resolves the tension in Hegel's work between the persistence of war and the desire ('wishful thinking') for peace – even as war 'plunges states into an ethical void. War is also, paradoxically, constitutive of the ethical sphere'.⁸⁷ Regarding the potential for ethical and political reconfiguration, Hegel identifies 'the formation of a family in accordance with the universal principle underlying their legal codes, their customs, and their civilization' as being an effective means to bring war in Europe to an end, as membership of such a family would promote a shared cultural conformity.⁸⁸ Although Avineri is anxious to stress that 'it seems doubtful that Hegel's position about war could, or should, be defended' it is still the

⁸³*Ibid.*, at 466–7. As Steven Walt points out: 'Hegel's discussion of actual wars need not therefore be taken to justify, much less glorify, the waging of particular wars. If anything, Hegel's discussion in the latter case (cf. 327–8, 327 A) is to be interpreted as a discussion of how little glory there is in modern warfare.' S. Walt, 'Hegel on War: Another Look', (1989) 10(1) *History of Political Thought* 113, at 121.

⁸⁴S. Avineri, *supra* note 82, at 467: 'Hegel is, however, careful enough to point out that his general explanation of the connection between war and politics should not be taken as a justification of this or that concrete war (§324A). His deduction shows only that even warfare is not totally absurd, but rather the obscure revelation of a hidden Logos or "Providence".' A. Peperzak, 'Hegel contra Hegel in His Philosophy of Right: The Contradictions of International Politics', (1994) 32(2) *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 241, at 253.

⁸⁵S. Avineri, *supra* note 82, at 471.

⁸⁶I. Geiger, 'War and the Foundation of the State in Hegel's Political Philosophy', 2003 20(3) *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 297, at 303–4.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, at 306.

⁸⁸It is probable, however, according to Hegel, that this family will inspire the emergence of another family of states opposed to the first.

case that Prussian authoritarianism and the Nazis ‘do not speak the language of Hegel, and the philosophical lineage of those attitudes cannot be ascribed to him’.⁸⁹

4.3 Hegel’s resurrection in International Law and International Relations

4.3.1 Hegel and International Law

The widespread belief that Hegel dismissed international law in favour of war and brute force to secure their interests was challenged by Michael Mitias. Mitias identifies the problem with Hegel’s critics as being one of misunderstanding the character of Hegel’s theory of law. The error lies in the assumption that because Hegel argues that there is no authority above states to enforce the law that this indicates Hegel dismissed international law *tout court*. Hegel’s theory is, according to Mitias, more complicated than the position attributed to him. Hegel begins with a simple observation regarding the absence of a Praetor among independent and sovereign states, but also recognizes that these states ‘are bound to interact with each other’ on a range of issues, which necessitates the development of an international law for that purpose, ‘[t]his law is dictated and made legitimate by the autonomous states: its basis is contract “pure and simple” (par. 332)’.⁹⁰ The foundation of this law is the recognition or respect of states for each other’s sovereignty. Hegel’s conjoining of right *and* power is for Mitias ‘a clear, and yet important, recognition that international law has in principle obligatory character’.⁹¹ The issue for Mitias is how far does this obligation extend and under what circumstances may obligations under international law be suspended or removed entirely?

The key to determining the limits of international law lies in accepting individual welfare as the supreme norm guiding the interaction of states. Hegel’s critics read this as Hegel insisting no law exists between states, a mistake according to Mitias who argues that a statesman:

cannot *ignore* a treaty or an international law unless the interest of state is in danger; for the recognition of the treaty of international law is, to begin with, justified simply on the ground that it promotes the welfare of the state.⁹²

Hegel was adamant that *pacta sunt servanda* was to be followed unless and until such time as a state was justified in abandoning it due to a clash with its most fundamental interests: the right to do so, however, is not absolute but *conditional*. The right to go to war in defence of interests is strictly circumscribed within Hegel’s theory of law and is restricted to instances of states being undermined or threatened with imminent danger. ‘A state’ from Hegel’s perspective, ‘is not at liberty to ignore its agreements with other states’ at will – it must at least couch its interests in terms of international law.⁹³

The obligations of states to each other should not be equated with the force necessary to impose the law: as Boucher argues,

[p]ower may be lacking to enforce international obligations, but this does not mean there are no obligations. It means they are unenforceable should a state decide to renege on them. The obligation remains irrespective of the power to enforce its discharge.⁹⁴

The obligation should also not be understood as *simply* moral in character, it is rather ‘prudential, or pragmatic, for it is based on and serves’ the interests of states. A state may even find it desirable

⁸⁹S. Avineri, *supra* note 82, at 473–4.

⁹⁰M. H. Mitias, ‘Hegel on International Law’, (1980) 9(2) *Clio* 269, at 274.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, at 275.

⁹²*Ibid.*, at 276.

⁹³*Ibid.*, at 77.

⁹⁴D. Boucher, *supra* note 5, at 346.

to 'restrict, or give up, some of its rights' in order to preserve the fabric of international law in which its own interests are embedded 'for only in this sort of existence can the state maintain the peace it needs for its growth and prosperity'. Ultimately, by restricting its rights 'it realizes its most fundamental right – the right to exist and to actualize itself in the life of the spirit'.⁹⁵ In this sense obligation is limited and circumscribed by the fact that they are underwritten by states, whose highest law is 'not international law, but welfare . . . The validity of international law thoroughly depends on whether it matches the particular interests of the participating states'.⁹⁶ Although eschewing utopian legal formalism, international law clearly plays an important role in Hegel's thinking about international relations.

5. The normalization of Hegel in International Relations

The effect of the revisionist critiques was not immediately apparent in IR. Mostafa Rejai and Cynthia Enloe, for example, were still presenting Hegel in much the same way as his First World War critics in 1969:

At the hands of Hegel, the state was turned into a God-like creature capable of commanding the unquestioned loyalty of all Germans as a step toward final unification. The state was seen as the supreme repository of all moral and spiritual values, the supreme object of man's devotion.⁹⁷

It is only in the 1970s that the first glimmer of the revisionists's influence becomes apparent in Peter Nicholson's reply to Peter Savigear's essay on the British idealists and philosophical idealism in international politics. Nicholson's Hegel is presented without judgment as a straightforwardly dispassionate observer of international relations: 'when Hegel writes of the possibility of war as a necessary feature of a world of states, he does not mean that this situation is inevitable or permanent or desirable: he is simply describing, correctly, contemporary relations between states'.⁹⁸

The first major landmark in the reception of Hegel in IR was Andrew Linklater's *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* in 1982. For Linklater, Hegel is significant as a theorist of social progress in domestic and international politics who theorized that the 'development of human freedom is exhibited in man's increasingly rational control of his self and his environment. In brief, history consists of ascending forms of social life' primarily in the context of the state but also in international relations.⁹⁹ Anticipating a significant research agenda of the future, Linklater writes that '[a]mong the rational practices developed in the modern world Hegel included the fact that states extend recognition to one another'.¹⁰⁰ Linklater also added a new feature to Hegel criticism by calling attention to the fact that '[i]f Hegel wished to avoid detailed analysis of alternative political realities, he certainly did not presume that changes of political structure should be dismissed as improbable', and in a marked contrast with previous commentators such as G. P. Gooch, asserts 'Hegel's system is philosophically superior to its Kantian predecessor because it incorporates individualism and universalism within a theory of the history of social and political life'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵Mitias, *supra* note 90, at 279–80.

⁹⁶Mertens, *supra* note 73, at 677.

⁹⁷M. Rejai and C. H. Enloe, 'Nation-States and State-Nations', (1969) 13(2) *International Studies Quarterly* 140, at 148.

⁹⁸P. P. Nicholson, 'Philosophical Idealism and International Politics: a Reply to Dr Savigear', (1976) 2(1) *British Journal of International Studies* 76.

⁹⁹A. Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (1982), 147.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, at 148.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, at 149. Linklater is, however, also noticeably critical of Hegel: 'the Hegelian theory of history fails to supply an adequate statement of its own conditions of existence. It appears as a one-sided doctrine which abstracts developments in self-consciousness from developments within the production of material life', 151.

Linklater's concern with ascending forms of social life was also a feature of Andrew Vincent's important article from 1983. Vincent directly challenged the standard interpretation in IR of Hegel as a worshiper of the state by drawing upon and developing the work of Avineri, Kaufmann and other Hegelian revisionists in political theory and philosophy. Vincent picks his way through what he calls the Finality Thesis, i.e., that ethics and freedom are exclusively to be found in the state and that 'there is no moral or ethical code which could mediate between states'.¹⁰² While conceding that there is textual evidence in support of this reading, Vincent argues that 'the most consistent Hegelian position will end up with a more cosmopolitan perspective. The nation state is not the final arbiter in international affairs and Hegel would have been ultimately sympathetic to some form of international order'.¹⁰³ A key part of Vincent's argument is that although Hegel identifies the state as the absolute power on Earth, in the same paragraph he 'argues that the recognition of a state is dependent on its content. This content is, he admits, dependent upon its constitution, situation and people; yet there are certain rational requirements encumbent on all states'. Non-fulfilment of these rational requirements allows the identification of 'bad' states which possess no 'genuine actuality'.¹⁰⁴ Vincent also identifies the importance of Hegel's idea that states can form a family, which 'supports the view that Hegel is interested in units over and above the nation state. Since it is customs which underpin the more fundamental view of the state, Hegel is, perhaps unwittingly, positing the possibility of a European state'. Rather than being a worshiper of state power for its own sake, according to Vincent, the state in Hegel's work 'is a dependent and rationally constrained institution . . . states are caught in a web of constraints internally and externally which modify their conduct'.¹⁰⁵

6. The Cold War and after: A proliferation of Hegels

By far the most widely cited Hegelian text published at the end of the Cold War was the political philosopher Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History?'. Fukuyama's revisionist task was not to disassociate Hegel from right-wing predecessors in nineteenth century Prussia or Nazi Germany, but from Karl Marx and the wider Marxist tradition. Fukuyama's argument is that Hegel – who he alleges declared the end of history after the Battle of Jena in 1806 – correctly diagnosed the liberal modernity of the West as the final stage of political and social order. For Fukuyama, Hegel's end of history entails:

understanding [that] the underlying processes of history requires understanding developments in the realm of consciousness or ideas, since consciousness will ultimately remake the material world in its own image. To say that history ended in 1806 meant that mankind's ideological evolution ended in the ideals of the French or American Revolutions.

Even opposing ideological forces such as Fascism and Communism by their very opposition ultimately spread the doctrine they combated, falling in the end to both its coercive and seductive power.¹⁰⁶ Although the West might face opposition in the future from any number of quarters these opponents stand no chance of preventing or arresting the end of history and the homogenization of political life within functionally similar and ideologically converging states.¹⁰⁷

Within IR proper, the gradual rehabilitation of Hegel enabled an explosion of interest in the former pariah in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Among the Hegel-inflected projects that emerged

¹⁰²A. Vincent, 'The Hegelian State and International Politics', (1983) 9(3) *Review of International Studies* 191, at 196.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, at 191.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, at 193–4. Vincent later draws an important inference from the existence of bad states, i.e., 'If might is always right we would not be able to make sense of Hegel's distinction between good and bad states', 198.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, at 195.

¹⁰⁶F. Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', (1989) 16(1) *The National Interest* 1, at 3–18.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, at 14ff.

several warrant revisiting by historians of international relations theory, e.g., James Der Derian's use of Hegel (*inter alia*) to theorize diplomacy in terms of alienation and Kreml and Kegley's ambitious reconstruction of IR theory via Hegel's ethics and epistemology.¹⁰⁸ Hayo Krombach's *Hegelian Reflections on the Idea of Nuclear War* stands out as both an engagement with Hegel and an application of dialectics to a substantive issue in IR. Krombach makes a strong case that '[w]ithout the study of Hegel our deliberations on the human life-world are reduced to positivistic fact-thinking, to the myopic minds of paradigms, or even to the anarchic hedonism of liberalism'.¹⁰⁹

Chris Brown's linkage of Hegel with Communitarianism at one point looked destined to be the route through which Hegel would make the greatest inroads into IR. Brown identifies Hegel as at 'the centre of one of the most important attempts to understand the notion of political community'.¹¹⁰ Brown's translation of Hegel into Communitarian terms in a sense was too successful. If Hegel is merely a cipher or mascot for a Communitarianism to which he has been adapted there is no real reason to engage with Hegel on his own – difficult – terms. In a similar vein, Mervyn Frost 'draws on Hegelian international community as a basis for institutionally or culturally situated human rights. By locating the foundations of liberal rights inside a community, he leverages a liberal order out of a communitarian one'.¹¹¹ Perhaps the most impressive attempt to assess Hegel in relation to international political thought is Kim Hutchings' treatment of his work in her book *International Political Theory*. A careful interpreter of Hegel, Hutchings skilfully reveals the limitations of previous readings such as those of Brown and Frost while highlighting the potential of Hegel's phenomenological approach for re-founding the bases for conducting research in the ethics of international politics.¹¹² Robbie Shilliam's reading of Hegel as proponent of social transformation via the sublation of French Revolutionary impulses within German culture, transforming but also preserving the *Kleinstaat* and thereby resolving 'in this very process . . . the modern problem of individual freedom – egoistic despotism' is an ingenious exploration of Hegel's efforts. Although Shilliam ultimately considers Hegel's project a failure, he nonetheless sees it as a hugely significant attempt to think through the problems of IR in the most dramatic phase of bourgeois civilization's anxious birth.¹¹³

Although all these interventions are important in their own right, they ultimately did not spark the same level of theoretical disciplinary attention in relation to Hegel's place in IR as the three following themes.

6.1 Hegel and Realism

One of the more sustained contemporary controversies relating to Hegel is his ambiguous relationship to Realism. As seen earlier, Carr admired Hegel and identified him as one of Realism's most significant figures, while Morgenthau avoided any mention of him and denied that Hegel was of any influence upon his thought. Since the turn of the millennium, concerted efforts have been made to address Hegel's position in relation to this tradition of thought. This discussion is

¹⁰⁸J. Der Derian, 'Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy', (1987) 13(2) *Review of International Studies* 91, at 102–4; W. Kreml and C. Kegley, 'Must the Quest be Elusive? Restoring Ethics to Theory Building in International Relations', (1990) 15(2) *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 155, at 160ff.

¹⁰⁹H. Krombach, *Hegelian Reflections on the Idea of Nuclear War: Dialectical Thinking and the Dialectic of Mankind* (1991), 256.

¹¹⁰Brown, *supra* note 29, at 60.

¹¹¹J. MacKay and J. Levin, 'A Hegelian Realist Constructivist Account of War, Identity, and State Formation', *Journal of International Relations and Development* (2018) 21(1) 75, at 79.

¹¹²K. Hutchings, *International Political Theory* (1999). According to Hutchings, 'Hegelian phenomenology, and the conceptions of spirit and ethical life on which it relies, offers a powerful alternative to the ontological and epistemological assumptions which inform standard approaches to normative international theory', at 109.

¹¹³R. Shilliam, *German Thought and International Relations: The Rise and Fall of a Liberal Project*, at 95.

the closest Hegel has come to canonical status, but the nature of his Realism – and indeed whether or not he is a Realist at all – is still open to question.

The process of addressing Hegel's relation to Realism began in earnest with a debate between Hans Martin Jaeger and Thom Brooks. Jaeger presents Hegel as a 'peculiar' and ultimately a 'reluctant' realist who does not conform to accepted ideas of what constitutes a Realist in IR. While Jaeger concedes that Hegel conforms to important aspects of Realism, Hegel's endorsement of the principle that states could, and perhaps in Europe already have, formed a family based on mutual recognition, extends the scope of possible relations between states much further than a typical realist would accept.¹¹⁴ Jaeger's conclusion is that:

Hegel's account of civil society provides indications for the transcendence of sovereign statehood and international anarchy as understood by realists. Hegel then is a realist of sorts, but he is the advocate of a realism which contains the seeds of its own transcendence.

In contemporary IR terms, Jaeger thinks that Hegel 'might be more aptly portrayed as a constructivist than a realist'.¹¹⁵

In his reply to Jaeger, Thom Brooks came to the opposite conclusion, stating unequivocally 'I believe Hegel satisfies perfectly the four primary characteristics of realism'.¹¹⁶ Brooks argues that Jaeger's claim of immanent transcendence within Hegel's Realism is misjudged because the level at which Hegel makes these claims is that of abstract right which 'does not entail any particular substantial relation'. The key problem with Jaeger's claim is that he draws an inaccurate parallel between states and individuals within domestic political society, when, according to Brooks 'the relations between states are distinctly *different* from those between individuals in civil society – a clear refutation of Jaeger's central argument'.¹¹⁷ Brooks also claims that Jaeger's invocation of Hegel's theory of civil society does not apply to interstate relations.

MacKay and Levin return to the question of Hegel's relationship to Realism and Constructivism in their inventive 2017 article that attempts to provide a 'point of entry for deploying Hegelian thought in IR theory, making room for a canonical political theorist in the canon of IR theory'.¹¹⁸ Drawing on Samuel Barkin's Realist Constructivism, MacKay and Levin argue that:

Hegel's framework offers an opportunity to clarify and apply the tenets of realist constructivism. It is broadly consistent with a decidedly realist approach to the social construction of international politics . . . the role of ideas, and the interaction between the two. In so doing, it provides tools for thinking critically about the role of ideas in world politics, without neglecting the role of power in shaping ideas.¹¹⁹

Employed cautiously and reflexively in order to minimize anachronism, MacKay and Levin argue Hegel's ideas bridge the divide between Realism and Constructivism and enable greater cross-pollination across the two theories. In contrast to Jaeger, for Mackay and Levin, insofar as he can be translated into IR, Hegel is both Realist *and* Constructivist.

¹¹⁴H. Jaeger, 'Hegel's Reluctant Realism and the Transnationalisation of Civil Society', (2002) 28(3) *Review of International Society* 497.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, at 516.

¹¹⁶T. Brooks, 'Hegel's Theory of International Politics: A Reply to Jaeger', (2004) 30(1) *Review of International Studies* 149 at 150. The four characteristics are: (i) States are primary actors and behave as unitary-rational agents; (ii) Relations between states are akin to a state of nature; (iii) Agreements between states are only temporary, as there is no higher adjudicator; (iv) The state is the ultimate unit of social and political life.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, at 150–1.

¹¹⁸MacKay and Levin, *supra* note 111, at 77.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, at 92.

The most recent treatment of Hegel and Realism by Athanasios Gkoutzioulis inverts Dewey's and Carr's identification of Hegel as the most important Realist in history by denying he was a Realist at all.¹²⁰ Conceding that some elements of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* chime with aspects of Realism, Gkoutzioulis nonetheless insists that Hegel's philosophy and methodology, when understood in the whole, are *incompatible* with Realism, the methodology of which rests 'on a flawed understanding of subjectivity which promotes a misleading understanding of knowledge, reality, and history'.¹²¹ The core of the issue, according to Gkoutzioulis, is that 'Hegel's methodology, unlike realism, has nothing to do with normative assumptions or scientific claims of objective knowledge'.¹²² Gkoutzioulis laments that 'the association with realism can be misleading since it obscures both the relevance of Hegel's philosophical system and its methodological insights'.¹²³ Familiarity with the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, argues Gkoutzioulis, would reveal a greater affinity with constructivist approaches than Realism.¹²⁴

6.2 Recognition and misrecognition

Hegel's principle of *recognition*, most commonly associated with his 'master/slave' dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* has spawned an IR research agenda in its own right. Drawing on the political philosophers Alexandre Kojève and Axel Honneth, Erik Ringmar was the first to employ recognition theory in an effort to explain international social relations and the legal frameworks through which they are expressed.¹²⁵ Ringmar argues that the desire for recognition is:

the core human desire, central to our sense of who we are. Only as recognized by others do we fully come to exist as persons since it only is as recognized that we can separate ourselves from the nature that surrounds us as well as from our natural desires.¹²⁶

Legal status is not, as in Kant, 'a guarantee of a pre-constituted, underlying individuality, but instead something which human beings merit as a result of the struggle for recognition'. Ringmar extends this concern with recognition to the level of interstate relations. In Ringmar's reading, 'Hegel envisioned that relations of mutual respect could be developed. The world could never become a full-fledged ethical community to be sure, but it could become a kind of "quasi-community" of states that mutually recognized each other's sovereignty.' Echoing Bosanquet, Ringmar anticipates states entering the 'family' of nations 'once they had established domestic ethical communities of their own and once their external struggles for recognition had abated. Among these states, conflict would still remain a possibility, but Hegel believed wars would become increasingly rare and increasingly humane'.¹²⁷ Ringmar uses the example of Gustav Adolf's intervention in the Thirty Years' War to illustrate that recognition is not given, but rather has to be fought for in war or asserted in such a manner that it is secured from other states. Once recognition is awarded, 'Hegel would stress, law provides us not only with a means of adjudicating

¹²⁰A. Gkoutzioulis, 'Challenging the Association of Hegel with Political Realism: the Contribution of Hegel's Methodological Insights to a Critique of Realism and a Richer Understanding of War and Statehood', (2020) *Journal of International Relations and Development* 970.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, at 15–16.

¹²²*Ibid.*, at 19.

¹²³*Ibid.*, at 2.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, at 6.

¹²⁵The significance of recognition to Hegel's theory of state relations had been realized previously outside the discipline of IR, e.g., by Bosanquet, but was also dealt with perceptively in A. C. Armstrong, 'Hegel's Attitude on War and Peace', (1933) *Journal of Philosophy* 684, at 685–6.

¹²⁶E. Ringmar, 'The Relevance of International Law: A Hegelian Interpretation of a Peculiar Seventeenth-Century Preoccupation', (1995) 21(1) *Review of International Studies* 87, at 93–4.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, at 97.

between right and wrong, but also with a way through which identities can be established, recognized, and developed.¹²⁸

Andrew Buchwalter, also drawing on Honneth, argues that ‘there are strongly realist and even Hobbesian features to Hegel’s theory of international relations’. Buchwalter parts company with Honneth, however, in relation to the *application* of recognition theory between states.¹²⁹ The key to Buchwalter’s argument is that Hegel’s thinking about IR cannot be limited to Realist ‘strategic action’ and he proposes instead a ‘a more capacious account, one acknowledging Hegel’s treatment of political communities as peoples or *Volksgeistern*’.¹³⁰ The self-assertion of the state contains within it a positive recognition of other states. Buchwalter also argues, contra Honneth, that this process of recognition is not limited to an ethical act of acknowledging marginalized and unrecognized states, it also applies to established and powerful states, who ‘have come to establish bonds with regard to values (*Sitten*) that go well beyond juridical mechanics. Nations have come to “form a family with respect to the universal principles of their legislation, customs, and culture (*Bildung*)”’. Recognition is not always peaceful, but ‘on Hegel’s dialectical account, directed to the identity of identity and difference, any achieved agreement on norms and values is itself shaped as much by dissensus as consensus’.¹³¹

The most cutting-edge treatment in this vein is the 2018 special issue of the *Review of International Studies*, which has as its unifying theme that rather than simple recognition, it is ‘misrecognition . . . the structural impossibility of actors being recognised in the ways that they want to be, [that] is the phenomenon that Hegel originally circumscribed by way of the dialectic of the master and servant’.¹³² The permanent dissatisfaction of the unrecognized, driven by a desire that cannot be sated, serves as the motor that drives relations between states. Through the master/slave dialectic Hegel ‘affords a crucial avenue for breaking open IR’s systemic theorising to new ways of envisaging systemic logics’.¹³³ Charlotte Epstein’s article on the vital role of the Negative in Hegel’s thought is particularly important as it is the antithetical, second moment of the dialectic that is ‘the dialectic’s engine, what causes its restless motion, since the initial negating of the first positive moment – the thesis – that prompts the *Aufhebung*, the moving beyond the contradictions that this negating set into play in the first place’.¹³⁴ The negative allows us to rethink not only what is, but what ought not to be and what is becoming. As a consequence, according to Epstein, it ‘is the very condition of possibility of all analytical, non-positivistic, and critical thinking . . . It remains a touchstone, I suggest, for thinking through IR’s processes, actors, structures, and concepts’.¹³⁵

6.3 The third demonization of Hegel: The postcolonial critique

An altogether more disturbing Hegel emerges from postcolonial IR, in which Hegel is an architect of, or at least instrumental in, the emergence of the modern racist mentality. Anna Agathangelou, drawing on Frantz Fanon, demonstrates the extent to which Hegel’s master/slave dialectic and the

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, at 101–2. Hersch Lauterpacht draws attention to Hegel’s identification of the importance of recognition to international law: ‘States, he taught, enter into legal relations with one another in conformity with their own will by virtue of the act of recognition. Prior to that act no relations of a legal nature can exist between them.’: H. Lauterpacht, ‘Recognition of States in International Law’, (1944) 53(3) *Yale Law Journal* 385, at 420.

¹²⁹A. Buchwalter, ‘Honneth, Hegel, and Global Justice’, in T. Burns and S. Thompson (eds.), *Global Justice and the Politics of Recognition* (2013), 21, at 23, 25.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, at 30.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, at 35.

¹³²C. Epstein, T. Lindemann and O. J. Sending, ‘Frustrated Sovereigns: the Agency that Makes the World Go Around’, (2018) 44(5) *Review of International Studies* 787.

¹³³*Ibid.*, at 804.

¹³⁴C. Epstein, ‘The Productive Force of the Negative and the Desire for Recognition: Lessons from Hegel and Lacan’, (2018) 44(5) *Review of International Studies* 805, at 816.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, at 806.

process of recognition is ‘not applicable to the colonial world, which is steeped in anti-black racism’. The colonial dynamic differs from the European in that ‘colonial masters, Fanon maintains, do not want recognition from the slaves, as they can get that from their white male counterparts’ – hence the eventual emancipation of the white slave through the process of the dialectic is not available to his black counterpart.¹³⁶ The philosopher Robert Bernasconi identifies how and why Hegel embellished and exaggerated tales of cannibalism and mass killings in Africa as part of his overall theory of race in which ‘Hegel’s account of Africa served as a null-point or base-point to anchor’ his philosophy of history.¹³⁷ Africa’s ‘barbarism’ justified intervention on the basis that ‘so-called “civilized” peoples could legitimately interfere with those at a lesser stage of development . . . Colonialism was the destiny to which Africa had to submit’.¹³⁸

Blaney and Inayatullah go further by identifying Hegel’s project as a ‘necro-ontology or necro-philosophy. We might see this as a secular sacralization of suffering and death’ imposed on the colonized in the name of a European symbolic order.¹³⁹ Being placed outside the European symbolic order, African peoples were not afforded membership in Hegel’s ‘family’ of states, which resulted in an unenviable position for them in a ‘distribution of power’ which ‘has served to promote mechanisms of hierarchy and domination . . . European powers imposed a regime of sovereignty for weak political entities in Africa that differed markedly from that which was set up for weaker European states’.¹⁴⁰ Celucien L. Joseph, however, argues that Hegel was *not* a racist. Joseph, following the historian Pierre Franklin Tavarès, argues that Hegel’s development of the foundational master/slave dialectic was influenced by an account of ‘the future victory of a Black slave over his master in the Black world’ written by L’Abbé Raynal and Diderot. It was after reading this book, claims Joseph, that Hegel ‘became a violent opponent of slavery in the Caribbean’. Joseph also makes the point that in *The Philosophy of Mind*, ‘Hegel completely destroyed the racist and racialist arguments of his time, notably by criticizing and making a mock of Gall’s phrenology’.¹⁴¹

Shannon Brincat and Lily Ling take a different but no less interesting approach to critiquing Hegel in their dialogue exploring the benefits of juxtaposing Hegelian and Daoist approaches to dialectics. Patiently working their way through the corridors of possibility that manifest when these approaches are put in dialogue, Brincat and Ling replace the opposition between Hegel and the Dao by ‘trying to build constructive bridges of understanding’.¹⁴² Their commitment to dialogue between Hegel and Daoism represents an interesting development in the postcolonial treatment of Hegel: the key concern of both in the course of their dialogue is a commitment to develop a shared language of cultural exchange and theory formation – an enfolding syncretism as opposed to an agonistic critique.

¹³⁶A. M. Agathangelou, ‘Fanon on Decolonization and Revolution: Bodies and Dialectics’, (2016) 13(1) *Globalizations* 110, at 116.

¹³⁷R. Bernasconi, ‘Hegel at the Court of the Ashanti’, in S. Barnett (ed.), *Hegel After Derrida* (1998), 41, at 51. Barry Hindess argues that Hegel’s philosophy of history is linked to his idea that Spirit develops through different phases, a claim which allows him ‘to present his disparaging perceptions of non-Western peoples as if they reflected a kind of historical necessity’: B. Hindess, ‘The Past Is Another Culture’, (2007) 1(4) *International Political Sociology* 325, at 327.

¹³⁸Bernasconi, *supra* note 133, at 58–9. See also J. McCarney, ‘Hegel’s Racism? A response to Bernasconi’, and R. Bernasconi, ‘Hegel’s Racism’, (2003) 119 (May/June) *Radical Philosophy*, at 32, available at www.radicalphilosophy.com/extras/mccarney-hegels-racism (accessed 1 July 2021).

¹³⁹D. L. Blaney and N. Inayatullah, *Savage Economics: Wealth, Poverty, and the Temporal Walls of Capitalism*. (2010), 126.

¹⁴⁰S. N. Grovogui, ‘Regimes of Sovereignty: International Morality and the African Condition’, (2002) 8(3) *European Journal of International Relations* 315, at 325. ‘In Africa, European states and their agents translated the weakness of political institutions and political turmoil into a licence to conquer and colonize. To this end, European powers not only claimed sovereign rights over Africans, they bestowed the resulting authority upon their citizens and corporate entities operating in the concerned geographical spheres’, at 326.

¹⁴¹C. L. Joseph, ‘On Intellectual Reparations: Hegel, Franklin Tavarès, Susan Buck-Morss, Revolutionary Haiti, and Caribbean Philosophical Association’, (2016) 9(7) *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 167, at 172.

¹⁴²S. Brincat and L. H. M. Ling, ‘Dialectics for IR: Hegel and the Dao’, (2014) 11(5) *Globalizations* 661, at 682.

7. Conclusion

Today, thanks to the rehabilitation ushered in by revisionists within and outside IR, Hegel's presence in the discipline is much greater than was previously the case. Despite his normalization and the increasing application of Hegelian ideas in IR theory, Hegel remains an elusive figure: where once he was hard to find in a discipline that deliberately shunned his work, now he is difficult to pin down as he plays so many roles within the various discourses that lay claim to or contest his legacy. Hegel's peculiar disciplinary presence is due in large part to historical contingency: his demonization at the hands of influential intellectuals in the wake of the First and Second World Wars sidelined him at the moment IR began to crystallize and find the shape it would take for most of the rest of the century. Hegel therefore was an early victim of 'the discipline's infamous misportrayal of great thinkers' ideas' as it went about the process of canon formation.¹⁴³ Cast into the disciplinary darkness as an example of all that was to be abjured in the culture of a twice defeated challenger for hegemony, and all that it represented in the mind of the victors, Hegel could not assume canonical status except in demonic terms. Once typecast in this manner Hegel became enmeshed in the 'large numbers of casual allusions . . . contributing to a body of received wisdom' passed from generation to generation of IR scholars.¹⁴⁴ The content of Hegel's works was largely irrelevant in this context of a discipline reproducing itself and in which a mythic Hegel's function was to serve as an avatar of vanquished evil and error.

Hegel could only be rehabilitated in IR when the discipline gained enough historical self-awareness to realize that 'better readings of the classics can help dispel the myths and bromides that populate the International Relations literature'.¹⁴⁵ Importantly, this process of recovery did not and possibly *could not* have originated within the discipline, but rather relied on philosophy and political theory, for both the methods by which a more accurate account of Hegel could emerge and for the content of Hegel's IR to be articulated. The diachronic perspective taken on Hegel's reception in this article reveals IR to be dependent upon philosophy to such an extent that it relied on that discipline to generate and curate its content.¹⁴⁶

The most sobering conclusion to be drawn from this study of Hegel's reception in IR, however, is that it confirms that 'all theorizing is caught within politics'.¹⁴⁷ Generations of IR theorists reproduced the shibboleths that the discipline imposed on Hegel in the wake of the First World War and the rise of the Nazis. Informed Hegel specialists such as Bosanquet were ignored in the rush to scapegoat Hegel. Canon formation, and exclusion from the canon, is revealed to have been in Hegel's case a function of wartime partisanship. This was particularly the case in the most influential critique of Hegel – *The Open Society* – which Popper described as 'my war effort'.¹⁴⁸ The emergence and development of an IR canon therefore is not an innocent exercise in the history of political thought, but is rather a product of warring ideological factions, often embedded within era defining conflicts and producing their own casualties in turn.¹⁴⁹ It is perhaps

¹⁴³Vergerio, *supra* note 7, at 112.

¹⁴⁴D. Vigneswaran and J. Quirk, 'Past Masters and Modern Inventions: Intellectual History as Critical Theory', (2010) 24(2) *International Relations* 107, at 119.

¹⁴⁵W. Bain and T. Nardin, *supra* note 6, at 223.

¹⁴⁶As Edward Keene has observed certain traditions in IR 'have been relatively poorly served . . . [because] the canonical skeleton around which the new contextualism in international intellectual history is fleshed out largely comes from Political Theory and Law, rather than having been created de novo by IR scholars themselves': E. Keene, 'International Intellectual History and International Relations: Contexts, Canons, and Mediocrities', (2017) 31(3) *International Relations* 341, at 348.

¹⁴⁷K. Hutchings, *supra* note 112, at 117.

¹⁴⁸Popper, *supra* note 53, at 508.

¹⁴⁹R. B. J. Walker makes a related point regarding the use of 'traditions' in IR: 'References to a tradition of International Relations theory are by no means innocent . . . particularly as they are inserted into textbooks, into passing references and obligatory footnotes—accounts of a tradition serve to legitimise and circumscribe what counts as proper scholarship.' R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside* (1993), 29.

no surprise that Hegel could only be fully brought in from the cold after both Germany and the USSR (Hegel's influence on Marx making him guilty by association with the Communist behemoth) had ceased to be existential threats to the predominantly English-speaking world in which IR emerged and developed. The history of Hegel's reception reminds critical scholars of IR of the necessity to identify and remove themselves from the fray as much as possible and to treat claims of a canon of great thinkers in IR with caution, if not outright suspicion. The history of International Thought might better prosper if, in Ian Hall's terms, it is conceived of as a 'process of translation, of making past arguments comprehensible to the present, opening up rather than closing down the possibility of conversation between past and present theories'.¹⁵⁰ Such translation might also profitably incorporate Richard Devetak's determination to break philosophy's spell over IR's sense of its own possibilities by the development of a critical-historical capacity for self-examination and reflection.¹⁵¹ Certainly, a greater degree of dialogue between philosophy, history and IR, in which IR is informed but not dominated by the other two fields of study, offers hope for the kind of reflexive and critical understanding of its past and present that could break IR out of the intellectual *cul-des-sac* to which it has been prone.

¹⁵⁰I. Hall, 'The History of International Thought and International Relations Theory: From Context to Interpretation', (2017) 31(3) *International Relations* 241, at 254.

¹⁵¹R. Devetak, "'The Battle Is All There Is': Philosophy and History in International Relations Theory', (2017) 31(3) *International Relations* 261, at 262.

Cite this article: Molloy S (2022). Reception, context and canonicity: The demonization, normalization and eventual proliferation of G. W. F. Hegel in international relations. *Leiden Journal of International Law* 35, 497–520. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156521000716>