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Philosophy and War: Hegel's Therapeutic Movement of the Spirit

Abstract *In addition to Axel Honneth's thesis on the therapeutic function of the concept of ethical life in Hegel's philosophy, I want to underline two moments which, to my mind, show Hegel's views on the therapeutic dimension of both philosophy and the war against the pathology of civil society more clearly. In this context, (a) philosophy performs a corrective function by fostering the individual's virtue conceived as an ethical duty of care both for oneself and for others. The main aim of Hegel's practical philosophy is hence to return the individual from abstract subjective concepts to his concrete everyday intersubjective practices, and to show him the way to understand himself and the social world as originally related to each other; (b) one of the main problems for the moral development of individuals consists in their propensity to perceive the good in particularist and selfish terms: in this context events such as natural disasters or wars can be seen as performing a therapeutic function by teaching individuals to view the good in more principled and general terms.*

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Keywords: *Therapy, Practice, Spirit, War, Moral, Ethical Life, Suffering, Hegel, Honneth*

The revival of Hegel's philosophy at the beginning of the 21st century didn't bypass the vicinity of his philosophy of spirit with the psychoanalytical theory in regard to the therapeutic dimensions of his philosophical concepts. This paper should contribute to that investigations on the ground of answering the following question: What can the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of moral consciousness within Hegel's philosophy mean for philosophical practice regarding therapeutic dimensions of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*)?¹ Although my answer is purely theoretical, I maintain that Hegel's insights into the nature of the human spirit and its processuality, as well as the inherent tendency of the individual as such for self-realization, can be of great benefit to the conceptual foundation of philosophical praxis as a new paradigm in the human pursuit of philosophy. Hegel's philosophy essentially speaks about the ways of human relation to the world, about the individual's healthy views on the world and about the contingent conditions of the human existence. Hegel's therapeutic inquiry thus lies in enabling the individual to feel 'at

¹ This paper was written as part of project no. 179049 funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

home' in the world.² For, if the man is aware of his own mind, self-consciousness and capability for moral judgment, particular and profound suffering arises with the attempt to reconcile the sublime side of human existence with its animalistic desires and passions. This very suffering is one of the things which discloses the need for philosophy, which can be understood as a therapeutic attempt to integrate man with himself and with (his) world. The main aim of Hegel's practical philosophy is hence to return the individual from abstract subjective concepts to his concrete everyday intersubjective practices, and to show him the way to understand himself and the social world as originally related to each other.

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The therapeutic dimensions of Hegel's philosophy, which are of great benefit for psychoanalytical thought are well known, and were an object of philosophical investigations mainly concerning his early work, *Phenomenology of spirit*.³ There, Hegel maintains that the task of bringing about the universal "consists not so much in purging the individual of an immediate, sensuous mode of apprehension, and making him into a substance that is an object of thought and that thinks, but rather in just the opposite, in freeing determinate thoughts from their fixity so as to give actuality to the universal, and impart to it spiritual life" (PdG, 19—20). *Phenomenology* is hence a therapeutical presentation of the perceptual deformations of natural, pre-philosophical consciousness.

However, the first insights into the therapeutic function that the concept of ethical life has within Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* was put forward by Axel Honneth in his book *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom: Hegel's Social Theory*.⁴ Honneth's thesis on the nature of ethical life may have

2 Hegel 2007: 11: "To him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn, presents a rational aspect. The relation is mutual." References to the *Philosophy of Right* are to G.W.F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* [= PhR], trans. by T. M. Knox, revised, edited, and introduced by S. Houlgate (Oxford: University Press 2008). Those to the third part of *Encyclopedia's* are to G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind* [= Enz], trans. from the 1830 Edition, together with the *Zusätze* by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007). Those to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are to G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* [PdG], trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: University Press 1977).

3 J. Lacan was the first who has brought in closer connection Hegel's philosophy and psychoanalytical theory. Cf. also: M. Dolar, "Hegel as the Other Side of Psychoanalysis", in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflections on Seminar XVII*, ed. by J. Clemens and R. Grigg, (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2006), pp. 129–155; J. Mills, *The unconscious abyss: Hegel's anticipation of psychoanalysis* (New York: Suny Press 2012); M. Macdonald, *Hegel and Psychoanalysis: A New Interpretation of "Phenomenology of Spirit"* (New York: Routledge 2013); as well as the various works of S. Žižek.

4 English translation (Princeton: University Press 2010) of: Axel Honneth, *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit: Eine Reaktualisierung der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001. I am referring here to the German edition.

strong implications for psychoanalytic thinking, and it grounds itself on the Honneth's programmatic stance that psychoanalysis "has the same significance for the central content of Critical Theory as do Hegel, Marx, Weber, and Lukacs" (Honneth 2009: 36), precisely because psychoanalysis also indicates the immanent pathology of the absolutization of norms of individual self-consciousness. Indeed, if we can speak of the psychoanalytic political program — and Todd McGowan thinks that we can — then "neither the subject nor the social order exists independently but instead emerges out of the other's incompleteness. The subject exists at the point of the social order's failure to become a closed structure, and the subject enters into social arrangements as a result of its own failure to achieve self-identity. The internal contradictions within every social order create the space for the subject, just as the internal contradictions of the subject produce an opening to externality that links the subject to the social order. Failure on each side provides the connective apparatus and constitutes the bond between the subject and the social order." (McGowan 2013: 145)

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This position is also shared by Hegel, who attempts to sublimate the split (*Entzweiung*) between the right of modern subjectivity and the objective norms of social institutions with the fundamental notion of his legal and political philosophy — the notion of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*). Honneth gives a particular meaning to this notion by binding it soundly to the therapeutic function of 'liberation from suffering' within the social life-world (*Lebenswelt*), which is caused by pathological forms in which the individual necessarily embroils with the effort to achieve the ultimate values and final ends of the human life as such through the absolutization of normative content from the standpoint of reflexive moral subjectivity. Thus the purpose of coexistence is pathologized by the fact that at the end "freedom of others appears only as the means to satisfy one's own interest" (Honneth 2001: 57). Totalizing the impulse that leads to the formation of pathological effects in society isn't peculiar only to the moral view of the world, but is also intrinsic to the nature of abstract, formal right:

To have no interest except in one's formal right may be pure obstinacy, often a fitting accompaniment of a cold heart and restricted sympathies: for it is uncultured people who insist most on their rights, while noble minds look on other aspects of the thing. Thus abstract right is nothing but a bare possibility and in that respect something formal as compared with the whole range of the situation. On that account, to have a right gives one a warrant, but it is not absolutely necessary that one should insist on one's rights, because that is only one aspect of the whole situation. (PhR, § 37 Addition)

Honneth follows the pathological forms that show the failure of the constitution of normative patterns of self-realization within the legal and moral aspects of thinking and acting of individual consciousness. However, Honneth limits the pathological effects of the absolutization of natural law and morality to the social sphere of common life, by deriving severe distinction between social and political philosophy, along the lines of early critical theory of the Frankfurt School. In addition to Honneth's thesis on the therapeutic function of the concept of ethical life in Hegel's philosophy, I want to underline two moments which, to my mind, show Hegel's views on the therapeutic dimension of both philosophy and the modern state against the pathology of civil society more clearly. In this context, (a) philosophy performs a corrective function by fostering the individual's virtue conceived as an ethical duty of care both for oneself and for others. The corruption of the individual which is possible within their 'civil' status is thus remedied by their ethical work performed towards the community as a whole, which is the domain of the philosophy of spirit. (b) One of the main problems for the moral development of individuals consists in their propensity to perceive the good in particularist and selfish terms: in this context events such as natural disasters or wars can be seen as performing a therapeutic function by teaching individuals to view the good in more principled and general terms.

I will (1) start with the brief overview of Honneth's thesis of the therapeutic dimensions of Hegel's philosophy. In the second step (2) I will try to show that his argument is unjustifiably limited to the social sphere of human life, so that (3) we can find much more fertility and context in Hegel's views on the therapeutic role of philosophy within his understanding of political institutions (war, care for society, duty towards others...) and philosophical thought, that endeavors to conceive the Absolute within the standpoint of 'We', i.e. the standpoint of spirit.⁵

Hegel's ethical life as therapy in the work of Axel Honneth

Honneth finds the therapeutic dimension of ethical life in its function to *liberate the individual from suffering*. 'Suffering' here refers to the moral stance of the subject, who meets resistance and strength of the world

5 It has been noted that Honneth's program lacks the political dimension of recognition; cf. Deranty and Renault 2007: 97: "Given that the ethics of recognition intends to describe the clash between social groups about the value of institutions, it constitutes a political as much as an ethical theory."

through absolutization of moral purposes, and with an insistence on the unconditioned demand for their immediate implementation. The individual thereby encounters concrete forms of imperfection and particularity in which evil and unjust relationships between individuals prevent the realization of an abstract set of moral demands. Encountering the present injustice in society, the individual suffers.

Honneth's analysis herein does not differ from Hegel's. Institutions and forms of ethical life exercise the corrective therapy on the individual, and, so to speak, implant or embed him in world event that he no longer finds alien. The current ethos of community offers him a framework for action and for concrete and no longer merely subjectively based and purely abstract fulfillment of duty.

Honneth rightly recognizes that Hegel's quasi-psychological statements about suffering due to life-worldly insufficiency, about the states of apathy and dissatisfying circumstances also belong to the starting points of the *Philosophy of Right*. However, Hegel's crucial philosophical step consisted in reducing "different manifestations of social suffering [...] to a conceptual, notionable confusion [Verwirrung]" (Honneth 2001: 71). This *Verwirrung*, which causes social suffering, can essentially be traced to the misunderstanding of human freedom by 'abstract right' and 'morality' as a modi of human relation to the world. It is important to understand that this is not just a cognitive error or a wrong attitude, but what is already become the shape of objective spirit. These are not, in other words, subjective beliefs, nor a mere philosophical propositions that can be reduced to a theoretical error – this *Verwirrung* has "already become an intersubjectively shared, effective-action [handlungswirksam] perspective of the social actors themselves" (Honneth 2001: 73). The only help here, according to Honneth, is "a therapeutical critique in the sense of constructive excitation of the liberating self-reflection" (Honneth 2001: 73): "the moment readers accept the offer of an interpretation of their lifeworld as an instance of ethical life, they should liberate themselves from the deceptive attitudes that have so far prevented them from realizing their freedom." (Honneth 2001: 75) Therapeutic self-reflection will simultaneously lead to insight into the communicative conditions of those forms of interaction, which at the same time represent the conditions for the existence of individual freedom. Individual freedom – covered by networks of formally legal and moral spheres of life – can come to its right only if there are also conditions for the intersubjective realization of freedom. Those conditions base themselves on achieved 'horizontal'

recognition between individuals, on the one side, and between individual and socio-political institutions on the other side.⁶

The sequence of Honneth's argumentation only retains the intersubjective spheres of family life and friendship as suitable recognitional patterns through which ethical life exercises therapy on pathological forms of the understanding of human freedom. Although Honneth does not fail to emphasize Hegel's view that the purpose of the state is to enable the individuals to "live a universal life" (PhR, § 258 Remark), he sees in Hegel's notion of the state (PhR, §§ 257—360) (which, beside the inner and external right of the state [*Staatsrecht*] or inner and external sovereignty, includes a peculiar philosophy of history too) a fall behind the intersubjective institutions of marriage, friendship, and corporations. Recognition between the political institutions and the individual here is no longer a 'horizontal', but a 'vertical' relation. Accordingly, individuals need "not refer to recognizing each other to be able to produce the Universal through joint activities, as this Universal appears as a substantial already given, so that the recognition is given the sense of a completed bottom-upwards confirmation". (Honneth 2001: 125–126)

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While I agree with Honneth's stance on the changed structure of recognition when we enter into the sphere of the state in Hegel's *Philosophy of right*, I consider, regardless of that, that this chapter of Hegel's doctrine of objective spirit contains much deeper therapeutic moments than the social institutions of marriage and friendship. In the next step, I will present the arguments for my thesis, and, at the same time, I will point out the ways in which philosophical practitioners can carry out their practice based on Hegel's philosophical views.

Double-sided therapy: theoretical and phenomenological

Now, I want to expand Honneth's thesis, in regard that the freedom guaranteed by the institutions of ethical life is necessary intrinsically incomplete, for Hegel's philosophical strategy in general is immanently

6 Thus, ethical life liberates the individual from social pathologies, and at the same time offers identical conditions for the realization of freedom to every individual. The therapeutic function of Hegel's philosophy is, according to Honneth, inseparable from his theory of justice. Such a theory of justice must primarily banish the danger of the uncontrolled capitalistic market (cf. Honneth 2001: 120, and further). A society is just only if it is capable of providing all of its members with equal opportunity to realize themselves in all three modi of freedom: personal or legal-formal, moral and communicative freedom.

dynamic. At one point, Hegel says (PhR, § 216 A) that the particular German sickness lies in the demand to treat the legal code as something absolutely complete, incapable of any further determination, although in the nature of a finite subject-matter like civil law or the state one can find only perennial approximation. The essential finitude and transitoriness of the particular and individual forms of spirit carries with it, on the one side, a Hegelian vision of therapy as a liberation from the pathologies of civil society, and, on the other side, a thought about the complete and perfect self-realization *only* within the sphere of the absolute spirit, that is, of the life in the realm of speculative thinking. The individual then is not only ‘honorable’ in respect to his familial, civil or political life, but is educated in every domain of *paideia*: he devotes himself to theoria, he respects divine things, he thinks and enjoys. The individual fulfills its determination thus, with honorable life and ethical virtue of citizenship, with love towards art, with piety and pure knowledge.⁷

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This is shown on two levels in Hegel’s conception of the objective and absolute spirit: phenomenological and theoretical, which corresponds to Hegel’s understanding of the therapeutic dimension of war and philosophy. In other words, the therapeutic dimension of his philosophical theory Hegel performs in two ways: (a) theoretical, through conceptual settings of his philosophy, and (b) simultaneously through the phenomenological example of war: Hegel treats the phenomenon of war similarly to natural disasters.

a. Intersubjective dimension of war

I will start with the phenomenological level and offer a thesis that Hegel’s conception of war (PhR, §§ 321—351) brings additional determination to the therapeutic function of ethical life which, to some extent, undermines Honneth’s ideas about these issues. But in order to properly understand what Hegel meant by the therapeutic effect of war, we must return to our first and main question and expose what the overcoming of moral consciousness represents within Hegel’s philosophy — that is, overcoming of moral consciousness, and not of morality as such.

It is important to appreciate that the pre-philosophical consciousness understands itself primarily in moral terms. And due to the fact that morality is understood absolutely, this consciousness also wants to reduce justice to moral reasoning. It is therefore necessarily related to the existing law,

⁷ For a full list of the concrete duties in the *Philosophy of Right*, cf. Peperzak 1997: 188–190. Although we will also see that, according to Hegel, such self-realization doesn’t exclude a specific concept of sacrifice for the common good.

and thereby it leaves its 'inner' sphere, where moral can only be understood as 'reasonable' (*vernünftig*). Hegel sees this as the expression of the blind will to power. The will to power thus becomes the motive of all methods of moral convictions, and that includes the moral judgment of others. Thus, moral consciousness understands justice as something that it needs to take care of. The existence of the world thus becomes an object of concern. Such moral consciousness thereby transforms itself into anxiety that will fail in relation to its task.

The term 'depression' (*Gedrückttheit*), which Hegel uses to mark the moralism of the reflective individual, evokes the misfortune of moral indecision and ambiguity, from which Hegel himself had suffered in his early Frankfurt period. This 'depression' which the individual "cannot escape in his moral reflections on what ought to be and what might be" (Hegel 1973: 491), Hegel psychologically describes as follows:

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For the human individual who is reflected in himself is always in consultation with himself, broods in himself, without strong self-feeling and without spiritual health. Out of this illness, out of this brooding simple duty liberates him. For in duty man acts in a universally valid way, because he has given up his particularity. The illness of reflection is to be particular. This is the moral unhealth, in part depression, in part complacency, in which he is not actual because he is in disharmony with the objective [reality].⁸ (Hegel 1973: 491)

Hence, it is in the duty that the individual liberates himself to the substantial freedom (PhR, § 149). Duties are necessary determinations in which freedom concretizes itself. As abstract — as in the sentence: "we want to be free, but free in general"⁹ (Hegel 1973: 490) — freedom leads to an eruption of violence and subjective arbitrariness. Duty is — and here I agree with Honneth — liberation. The moral subject, on the other hand, who merely defends his abstract freedom from objective existence, is afraid of external reality. He — being "pathological and weak" (Hegel 1973: 491) — withdraws himself from the concrete ethical life. Such a position of

8 "Denn der in sich reflectirte Mensch geht ewig sich zu Rathe, grübelt in sich, ohne kräftiges Selbstgefühl, ohne Gesundheit des Geistes. Aus dieser Krankheit, aus diesem Grübeln also befreit die einfache Pflicht. Denn in der Pflicht handelt der Mensch auf allgemein gültige Weise, hat aufgegeben seine Besonderheit. Die Krankheit der Reflexion ist, ein Besonderes zu sein. Dieß ist die moralische Ungesundheit, theils der Gedrücktheit, theils der Selbstgefälligkeit, in der er nicht wirklich ist als in Disharmonie mit dem Objectiven." Hegel's concept of self-feeling offers, according to C. Lauer, "an organic conception of overcoming trauma that accounts for the impulse toward health in its very structure" (Lauer 2012: 142). For every sort of trauma brings the individual into opposition with itself and drives it to overcome this opposition, and thus traumatic pathology also.

9 Cf. PhR, § 5 Addition.

moral consciousness is thus a position of fear and sensitivity, but when it tries to express itself, this manifestation appears as “political rapture, as fanaticism” (Hegel 1973: 490) as it did in the great French Revolution. Such a vantage point is, according to Hegel, “the main viewpoint and illness of the present time” (PhR, § 138). An illness that needs therapy.

Absolutization of the moral standpoint is egoism, which, for Hegel, is the principle of evil (cf. PhR, §§ 139—140). Although egoism and observance of one’s own interests retain their subjective right within the sphere of civil society, Hegel seeks to act therapeutically towards an individual with one particular ethical institution, and only at a certain moment. The therapeutic function that war carries with it according to Hegel becomes transparent here.

On the assumption that concrete ethical life is established within the state, and that the individual came to his substantial freedom by acting not only from conviction, but also from the duties and the trust in the institution of ethical life – in other words: that the individual lives in the spirit of mutual recognition, what Honneth names as the communicative community – on that assumption Hegel considers particular spheres of the states, trying to isolate themselves as the ultimate purpose of the shared life in the state as illness (PhR, § 278 Remark). In this way, the individual will fall back to the standpoint of abstract moral consciousness, while the civil society as a ‘system of needs’ will suppress the idea of the whole and common good. Only one step separates such a community from its downfall into the violent pathologies and civil war. We should not lose sight of the fact that the states actually disappear in such a way, and not only through the defeat in war.¹⁰ The young Hegel has described that with a famous phrase “the tragedy in ethicality” (*Tragödie im Sittlichen*) (Cf. Hegel 1970b: 495). In that moment the ethical institutions

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10 Holding political apathy as a disease that affects a state, understood as an organism is one of those lines that spans the entire nineteenth century. Apathy born from individualism was the greatest threat to democracy even for Tocqueville. Cf. the closing paragraph of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* – Tocqueville 2010: 1293–1294: “You cannot say in an absolute and general way that the greatest danger of today is license or tyranny, anarchy or despotism. Both are equally to be feared and can emerge as easily from the same single cause, which is *general apathy*, fruit of individualism; this apathy means that the day when the executive power gathers some strength, it is able to oppress, and that the day after, when a party can put thirty men in the field, the latter is equally able to oppress. Since neither the one nor the other is able to establish anything lasting, what makes them succeed easily prevents them from succeeding for long. They arise because nothing resists them, and they fall because nothing sustains them. What is important to combat is therefore much less anarchy or despotism than apathy, which can create almost indifferently the one or the other.”

lose their ground of existence and go down into the positivity of the calm and peaceful duration in time.

According to Hegel war is one ethical moment, which prevents the absolutization of the subjective interest and the abstract law of the individual. The particular spheres of ethical life – property, enrichment, enjoying self-sufficiency and luxury etc. – are set up through war in their truth as the vanishing moments, determined through their inherent finitude and transience (PhR, § 324). The recognition of the individual that his property and his life are transient and finite is according to Hegel “the individual’s substantial duty – the duty to maintain this substantial individuality, i.e. the independence and sovereignty of the state, at the risk and the sacrifice of property and life” (PhR, § 324). The war is thus “the state of affairs in which the vanity of temporal goods and concerns is treated with all seriousness” (PhR, § 324 Remark). The state preserves “the ethical health of peoples” through war (PhR, § 324 Remark). This isn’t meant to show us that states should conduct wars to preserve their ethical health, but instead to show us the pure fact that states do go to war.

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War therefore demands a possible sacrifice from the individual. The sacrifice of his possessions and even life. “The sacrifice on behalf of the individuality of the state” (PhR, § 325) joins other ethical duties. It is the ultimate duty and it is only through it that the therapeutic function of ethical life can be fulfilled. Only in one’s sacrifice for the existence of the spirit of mutual recognition, achieved in ethical life, the individual reaches the ultimate insight into the reason for his existence. This insight gets its phenomenological form in the character of Hegel’s reactualization of the ancient understanding of the virtue of justice.

Virtue, as well as the mind (*Vernunft*), ought not to be a *private matter* for the individual. Virtue cannot enter into conflict with the public things. The concepts of virtue, and mind, are necessarily in accordance with the space of *res publica*. The virtue of justice can no longer be a moral virtue, because it does not make further demands from within itself, but consists in the power to endure a reality. The individual, who is in possession of the virtue of justice, has stopped with the absolutization of his own ideas about what is best for everyone. When he judges, he does not convict any more. He does not know whether he himself is just. Justice is a virtue, that is a being, and not an apprehension, which should be fulfilled. The virtue of justice has trust (*vertrauen*) as its condition, and no longer the ‘conviction’ of the individual in the existing ethical life as a spirit of mutual recognition, where people actually live together, each with its own moral principles, and all

together under external conditions. The spirit of recognition is in allowing the other's individualities to be. It is a recognition of one's own otherness in relation to others and, therefore, a recall of his own moral judgment in relation to the otherness of others. Trust as an expression of the existing spirit of recognition goes to the extreme ability to sacrifice oneself for the whole ethical reality (Enz, § 516), while the subjective reflection at the same time does not decide whether it should be the way it is. In such reflection the individual would again absolutize his own apprehension about the common good, and therefore, would not care about the individuality of others. For that reason, virtue "has its place and reality only in exceptional circumstances" (PhR, § 150 Remark), that is, in the state of war.

b. Thinking the Absolute

Although the notions of sacrifice and war represent the ultimate political institutions of ethical life, they simultaneously form the transition to the forms of absolute spirit by seeking a higher justification. According to Hegel, this justification can only be offered by philosophical thought, which is the only one that can adequately conceive and represent the absolute content of the spirit, that is, content which isn't conditioned by the externality of form, as it was the case in the sphere of the objectivity of spirit (for the objectivity of spirit requires institutions for its realization). For, if one tries to absolutize the limited perspective of Hegel's *Philosophy of right*, the wrong impression would arise, as if the final realization of freedom should be in the 'objective' world of law, politics and history. Hegel's philosophy of law should not be read separately from the whole philosophy of spirit. Free spirit, as the last determination of the subjective spirit, does not find its completion in the juridico-political life and its institutions, as well as in the events of world history, but its determination implies being-in-and-for-itself in the shape of apprehensible, representable and notional union with the world.¹¹

Therefore, the Absolute is *inaccessible* to law, politics and morality. It exceeds all institutions, all power of juridico-political authority. It is always

11 Cf. Hegel's example of the deranged mind, which is not in the union with the world: "There is for example the case of the Englishman who lost interest in everything, first in politics, and then in his affairs and his family. He sat motionless, looking straight in front of him, said nothing for years on end, and exhibited a stupefaction which made it doubtful whether he knew his wife and children or not. He was cured by someone who dressed exactly as he did and sat in front of him copying him in everything. This put the patient into a violent passion, which forced him to pay attention to what was about him, and drove him permanently out of his state of self-absorption." (Enz, § 408 Addition)

absent from the existing and applicable ethical and legal norms of human intersubjective relations. While thinking the Absolute as absent, Hegel's philosophy performs the last therapeutic effect on the individual, by referring him to the last and highest reason for his existence and self-realization. Through the artistic enjoyment of beauty, through the philosophical knowledge of limitations of the political realization of freedom, and, finally, through the religious and eschatological idea of freedom that will come, the individual sets his finitude in *openness*, no longer seeking final synthesis and closure, — not only the closure of his own situation in the world (closure through happiness, material enjoyment, stoic impotence, or whatever form it can take), but also the closure of his own mind. By thinking the Absolute Hegel speaks only about the essential existence of the *split* (*Entzweiung*) in the Absolute itself. This is the split between the *concrete* structure of the juridico-political order and the infinite *universal* demand for equal liberty. Therefore the individual should liberate himself from higher expectations, which by default have been driven to sublate principle transitoriness and finitude of the human existence.

However, before allowing the individual to merit and go into the esoteric realm of human existence — therefore beyond any possible therapeutic effect entailed by the phenomenological experience of negativity and sacrifice — Hegel introduces one important moment for philosophical practitioners: the concept of *forgiveness* (*Verzeihung*). Although Hegel doesn't discuss this notion within the development of the notion in *Philosophy of Right* — it's completely absent from Hegel's mature legal and political philosophy — in *Phenomenology of Spirit* it represents (not only semantically) the last stage of the spirit's shape before the appearance of the conclusive notion of Hegel's philosophy overall: the notion of reconciliation (*Versöhnung*). The absence of the term from Hegel's late philosophy is conspicuous, and, without a doubt, it deserves its own particular analysis and justification. But, at this point I do not have space for such an examination. For the purposes of this paper it will be sufficient to point out the implicit therapeutic function of the concept of forgiveness in the social space of a group, essentially determined with joint intentionality, or of a whole society, for forgiveness marks the emergence of the 'We' within the movement of the spirit.¹²

12 Cf. PdG, 409: "The reconciling Yea, in which the two I's let go their antithetical *existence*, is the *existence* of the 'I' which has expanded into a duality, and therein remains identical with itself, and, in its complete externalization and opposite, possesses the certainty of itself: it is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge."

Hegel begins his consideration of the notion of forgiveness from his famous theory of dialectical disproportionation between intentions and the act in the phenomenon of human action; from the fact that the individual barely learns of his own transgression and crime through the judgement of others. The philosophical practitioner should at this point be interested in the connection of *responsibility* and forgiveness, and precisely in responsibility for the consequences of his own actions, which the individual didn't count on and couldn't have controlled. When an individual tends to reflect his actions and their possible consequences, knowledge alone is not sufficient — the act of faith is also required, i.e. forgiveness,¹³ so different from abstract morality that seeks to be based on imperatives and noncontextual norms. Such a communal forgiveness isn't limited to a face-to-face communication (victim-perpetrator) but represents a move to a process between two or more groups, between different classes. Hannah Arendt has noticed that too, and links the concept of forgiveness to action, which is always happening in the sphere of plurality, which is “the condition — not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam* — of all political life” (Arendt 1998: 7). Forgiveness aims to re-establish a *normality* through its very specific — we can name it like Derrida does: exceptional, extraordinary (Cf. Derrida 2001: 32) — power of reconciliation. Responsibility is hence a *communal* responsibility: I am responsible for others. Only if I am responsible for the other, and I also know that while I'm doing wrong, I can simultaneously introduce a moment of forgiveness as a social act. Only through its sociability can I incorporate it into myself. While doing so, it is necessary for me to avoid applying and practicing this notion on myself, as well as attempting to forgive myself for committed errors. Because it could lead to pathological forms of consciousness. Forgiveness is always forgiveness to the other. Sacrifice (*Opferung*) is always sacrifice for the other (*Aufopferung*): “The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit : to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself” (PdG, 492), as we can read in the last paragraphs of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

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Consequences for philosophical practice

Let me summarize the results of the previous analysis of the significance of Hegel's text for philosophical praxis.

¹³ It should be noted that, during the twentieth century, this originally theological notion gains the sharp lines of a political theology out of attempts to determine particular economic categories, and solve some financial issues of sovereign states through 'forgiveness' or remission of the debt.

In this paper I went from Honneth's thesis on the therapeutic function of Hegel's notion of ethical life, i.e. that liberation from suffering and social pathologies in the sphere of ethical life is at the same time liberation from abstractness and insufficiency of the moral and formally legal standpoint of understanding of the nature of human freedom. At the same time, however, I went a step further than Honneth was prepared to go, defending his programmatic stance on the firm distinction between social and political philosophy. In that sense, I argued that only the political institutions of the state, and here I am primarily referring to the institution of war, can adequately present Hegel's attribution of therapeutic functions to his philosophy of absolute spirit. Thus, I argued that the liberation from, or, better yet, sublation of the moral standpoint, by judging the nature of human freedom, is also procuring the individual under the standpoint of absolute spirit. This happens in two ways in Hegel's philosophy: (a) individuals come to grasp the phenomenon of war through the finitude and temporality of human things; (b) through philosophy and idealistic settings on the subjective, objective and absolute spirit, individuals come to the insight that the Universal is always absent. That the universal realization of freedom is thus a task, not the fact.

Hegel's therapy is therefore an embracement of *amor fati*, middle way (*Mittelwesen*), as Hegel express himself in one letter to his friend Niethammer on November 23rd 1814:

“The essential point is your belief that it will not get so bad we cannot put up with it. Your view coincides pretty much with my own belief that we cannot hope for something good enough to merit any particular praise. This colorless, tasteless intermediary state, which allows nothing to get too bad and nothing too good, for once rules our world.” (Hegel 1984: 320, Letter 255)

Hegel medically prescribes such a quasi-quietism to the individual who morally sways, who doubts the justification of the world and existence of justice in the world. The same kind of therapy, as is well known, Hegel experienced himself in his 'Frankfurt period', when he thought the world in its 'weight' had him completely overwhelmed. Therapy, therefore, relates to the individual who doubts the correctness of his actions, doubts the very possibility of universal moral justification of human action. Therapy aims to encourage the individual to build a strong and, from the adversities of the outside world, over which he cannot govern, independent human nature that is able to bear any loss of a part of its world (cf. Enz, § 402 Addition). Hegel uses the word 'to bear', *zu ertragen*. If an individual is able to bear, *zu ertragen*, the primary alien world, then

it is for him *Ertrag*, *yield*. Hegel uses a verb that functions as a noun ‘*das Ertragen*’ (cf. Enz, § 408 Addition) to emphasize the connection with *ertragen*. There are no results, no improvement of the therapeutic effects in individuals – and that goes for the essence of the Spirit too – without that moment of ‘to bear’. However this ‘to bear’ should not prevent reactions of the individual to the unfair circumstances of ‘his’ world: against corrupt institutions, forfeit of other individuals, etc. Just the contrary, Hegel considers that this *ertragen*, ‘to bear’, represent the condition for afterwardly right action. For, without achieved and completed therapy, there is no possibility for healthy participations in joint matters. This applies not only to socio-political institutions, large corporations, or different firms where individuals are employed; it is primarily related to the private life of the individual, to his relationship with his family and friends.

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And war is – as we have seen – the biggest challenge to the individual to successfully reach out to understand how to bear an unfair and often terrible reality. However, anticipating further development of philosophy in Marxism and, through the new notion of the proletariat, a key side of the negativite reality that still survives in the modern institutions and the state founded upon ethical life, Hegel sees in class inequality:

On the contrary, it has to be said that it is just the great development and cultivation of modern states that produces the supreme concrete inequality of individuals in actuality, whereas, through the deeper rationality of laws and reinforcement of the lawful condition, it brings about a freedom that is all the greater and more firmly entrenched, a freedom that it can allow and tolerate [*vertragen*].¹⁴ (Enz, § 539 Addition)

Inequality is tolerated, *vertragen*; even the highest legal and political development of freedom in the modern state and within ethical life can not completely remove the phenom of inequality: inequality of individuals should be accepted, endured, tolerated, and not beared, *ertragen*. In order to act despite the existence of inequality, individual effort isn’t required within the therapy; the individual doesn’t have to struggle, *ertragen* — it is enough for him to understands it. Each individual can make a class-progress; the institutions of ethical life don’t hinder it; but

14 “Im Gegenteil ist zu sagen, daß eben die hohe Entwicklung und Ausbildung der modernen Staaten die höchste konkrete Ungleichheit der Individuen in der Wirklichkeit hervorbringt, hingegen durch die tiefere Vernünftigkeit der Gesetze und Befestigung des gesetzlichen Zustandes um so größere und begründetere Freiheit bewirkt und sie zulassen und *vertragen* kann.”

he will still have to tolerate general inequality. We now have both levels of therapy represented:

(a) In order to make progress, the individual should bear, *ertragen* the horrible circumstances of reality, which is superior, through participating in the ethical life of his community, by doing his ethical duties. Hegel is honest: he sees and does not hesitate to say that ethical duties always and for every known community of people – hence, for the modern state, as well – represent only one side of self-sacrifice, *Aufopferung*. Sacrifices for family and close friends; sacrificing for their own, particular interests; sacrificing for success and advancement of the parent company; up to the sacrifice for the survival of the state as the highest institution of ethical life. The temporality and transitoriness of human life is, perhaps, most noticeable in war, but that does not mean that an individual's life is not already endangered by his own actions for the welfare of his family members.

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(b) To be able to tolerate, *vertragen*, generally expressed class inequality — perhaps more challenging for philosophical practitioners not only due to class, but also due to various pathologies caused — the individual has to 'become' the philosopher. He must, according to Hegel, raise himself to the level of knowledge of *Wir*, 'we'. We have seen that this knowledge, this standpoint of absolute Spirit, this union with the world, expresses itself triply: through the differential enjoyment of beauty, through respect for different religious confessions (i.e. allowing that the religious secret is not only 'one'), and, finally, through the philosophical knowledge of the limitations of judicial, ethical, and political realizations of freedom. Surrendering to the theory, acting within philosophical thoughts represents satisfaction (*Schadenfreude*) for the one who recognizes the size and strength of injustice in the world: "the fine gentlemen, released from their captivity, come forth with a terrible outcry, voicing the opinion that everything must be changed. But as they set to work, one thing after another eludes their grasp, and, apart from the vanity of affixing their own etiquette on it the matter has preserved itself through its own weight." (Hegel 1984: 327, Letter 272)

In a word, the cause of the pathology of the individual, and thus civil society, lies in the subjective power of abstract thought, which, according to Hegel, is based on the reasonable (*vernünftig*), and not on the speculative (*speculativ*) understanding of the world. Abstract thinking tends to approach things externally – externally to impose norms and universal

moral principles. Hegel believes that such an action of the individual, who falls into unrealistic expectations, leads him to the traumatic experience of reality, and to developing of pathological forms of intersubjectivity within a community. The therapy that his philosophy prescribes – performed on the traumatic experience of the absolute spirit itself, and the pain and suffering it had to undergo due to self-realization – can not be avoided, and is necessarily addressed by those experiences of human beings that are capable of shaking their existence to its foundations and thus directing them to the consideration of the truth that is not separated from intersubjective practices through valid rules and norms, i.e. from the existing content of the ethical life. The aim of Hegel's therapeutical philosophical thought is to return the individual to his concrete everyday practices, and to show him the way to understand himself and the social world as originally related to each other.

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Primljeno: 22. septembar 2014

Prihvaćeno: 9. novembar 2014

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Rastko Jovanov

Filozofija i rat: terapeutsko kretanje duha u Hegelovoj filozofiji

Apstrakt

Nadovezujući se na tezu Aksela Honeta o terapeutskoj funkciji pojma običajnosti u Hegelovoj filozofiji, želim da ukažem na dva momenta koji, po mom mišljenju, bolje pokazuju dimenziju terapije koju Hegel dodeljuje sopstvenom shvatanju filozofije i rata naspram patoloških oblika građanskog društva. U tom smislu, (a) korektivna funkcija, koju nalaže Hegelova dijagnoza patologije pojedinca unutar građanskog društva i formalnog prava, može biti ispunjena samo putem realizacije i reaktualizacije antičkog ideala vrline i dužnosti staranja, ne samo o sebi nego i staranja o drugima. Osnovni cilj Hegelove praktične filozofije nalazi se u tome da se individua oslobodi patnje koju uzrokuje zahtev za neposrednom realizacijom apstraktnih i subjektivnih pojmova i da se, na taj način, individua vrati konkretnim svakodnevnim intersubjektivnim praksama; (b) Hegelova filozofska terapija će shodno tome biti analogna posledicama prirodnih katastrofa, ali ujedno i spremnosti države da povede rat da bi terapijski delovala na individuu građanskog društva i njeno partikularno i egoistično shvatanje dobra.

Ključne reči: terapija, praksa, duh, rat, moral, običajnost, patnja, Hegel, Honneth