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John Dewey's "Permanent Hegelian Deposit" and the Exigencies of War

JAMES A. GOOD*

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW of John Dewey's philosophical development dates back to Morton White's *The Origins of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, published in 1943. According to White, Dewey embraced British neo-Hegelianism as a neophyte philosopher, but during the 1890s he began to criticize neo-Hegelianism and gradually overcame his need for transcendent realities, both in his philosophy and in his personal religious commitments. Dewey heroically liberated himself from his absolutist chains and proclaimed to the world his newfound philosophical freedom in the *Studies in Logical Theory* in 1903.¹ For years, subsequent studies debated the precise timing of Dewey's development during the 1890s, but accepted the *Studies in Logical Theory* as his definitive declaration of independence.² Perhaps few Dewey scholars still read the *Studies in Logical Theory*; when I first read it several years ago I was astonished to discover that Hegel was never mentioned in the book.³ Despite William James's oft-quoted praise of the *Studies*, it is significant

¹ According to White, during the 1890s Dewey "continued to hammer away at his [Hegelian] chains." Morton White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 106.

² Neil Coughlan, *Young John Dewey: An Essay in American Intellectual History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973); George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973); Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Steven Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995). All of these studies assume the correctness of White's claim that Dewey made a clean break with Hegel and that it was completed by 1903. Even Thomas Dalton, who has recently placed greater emphasis on Hegelianism in Dewey's mature thought, claims that "no other attempt to reconstruct Dewey's philosophical roots came close to ably tilling the Hegelian soil from which Dewey reaped his naturalism than Morton G. White." Thomas C. Dalton, *Becoming John Dewey: Dilemmas of a Philosopher and Naturalist* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 257.

³ In the *Studies*, Dewey criticized the assumptions of traditional epistemology as found in Rudolph Hermann Lotze, *Logic*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., trans. Bernard Bosanquet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888). Scholars assume that this was also an attack on Hegelian logic, but Lotze claimed he rejected Hegelian

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that C. S. Peirce, who complained that it was a *Phänomenologie* of thought, failed to see it as a clean break from Hegel.⁴ Moreover, in his recent autobiography, White made an admission about the writing of *The Origins of Dewey's Instrumentalism* that may put his interpretation in a different light. The book was White's Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia University, which he defended in the spring of 1942. White explains,

I followed Dewey's development only up to 1903 . . . because I had written enough in my discussion of these early years for a coherent book that could earn the Ph.D. And since I *had* to publish my thesis according to the rules then existing at Columbia—and *might* have had to publish it at my own expense—there was a premium on keeping it short.⁵

Regardless of why the traditional view was initially articulated, the issue of Dewey's debt to Hegel continues to beleaguer Dewey scholars partly because, in 1930, he acknowledged "that . . . Hegel ha[d] left a permanent deposit in [his] thinking."⁶ But Dewey's vagueness about the content of that deposit has puzzled scholars ever since. In recent years, John Shook and I have countered the traditional interpretation of Dewey's intellectual development by arguing that he broke from British neo-Hegelianism during the early 1890s, but he never made a clean break from Hegel.⁷ I suspect that the persistence of the traditional view is due partly to academic fragmentation, according to which historians and philosophers generally ignore one another's work, and even within history and philosophy departments, Americanists rarely study Hegel or his German intellectual context in any depth, and thus oversimplify the issues.⁸ I also suspect that the traditional view has endured partly because of a desire, motivated by the horror of two world wars, to demonstrate that the philosopher of American democracy presciently recognized the allegedly inherent authoritarianism of Hegelian philosophy well before the first of those disastrous conflagrations. In this brief article I cannot fully excavate Dewey's Hegelian deposit, but I hope to demonstrate that the traditional view, conceived at the height of World War II, has outlived its usefulness and to recommend a more fertile avenue of research into this problem.

logic, and Henry Jones, a British neo-Hegelian, criticized Lotze in much the same way as Dewey. Jones, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Lotze: The Doctrine of Thought* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose and Sons, 1895).

⁴ Charles S. Peirce, "To John Dewey, on the Nature of Logic," in *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 8 vols., eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931–58), 8: 180–84. For James's praise of the *Studies*, see James to Schiller, 8 April 1903, in Ralph Barton Perry, ed., *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company: 1935), 2: 374, 521.

⁵ Morton White, *A Philosopher's Story* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1999), 32 (emphasis in the original).

⁶ John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" (1930), in *The Later Works, 1925–1953* [LW], ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1981–91), 5: 154.

⁷ John Shook, *Dewey's Empirical Theory of Knowledge and Reality* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000); and James A. Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity: The "Permanent Hegelian Deposit" in the Philosophy of John Dewey* [*A Search for Unity in Diversity*] (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

⁸ Although many scholars have discussed Dewey's debt to Hegel, I have discovered only two sources that include significant textual analysis and comparison of the writings of both philosophers: Jim Garrison, "Dewey's Philosophy and the Experience of Working: Labor, Tools and Language," *Synthese* 105 (1995): 87–114; and Joseph Charles Flay, "Hegel and Dewey and the Problem of Freedom" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1965).

Although Dewey was certainly influenced by the British neo-Hegelians during the early years of his philosophical development, he was immersed in an American Hegelian tradition, particularly defined by the St. Louis Hegelians, that scholars have neglected. I have argued elsewhere that the St. Louis Hegelians' influence on Dewey was significant.⁹ In sum, Dewey published his first four articles in their *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (JSP), edited by William Torrey Harris, and resolved to pursue a career in philosophy largely because of Harris's encouragement.¹⁰ Their correspondence demonstrates that Dewey and Harris remained close personal friends until Harris's death in 1909.¹¹ Moreover, for the first fifteen years of its existence the JSP was the only serious philosophical journal in the English language. For that reason, all of the intellectuals with whom Dewey studied and interacted were well aware of the St. Louis Hegelians' interpretation of Hegel. Finally, Dewey associated with Harris and other St. Louis Hegelians at Thomas Davidson's Glenmore Summer School of the Culture Sciences throughout the 1890s.¹² Among other things, this American Hegelian tradition encouraged Dewey to see Hegel as a politically liberal and eminently practical philosopher, to embrace his view of the individual's relationship to society and his concept of positive freedom, and to develop a theory of learning and human growth similar to Hegel's.¹³ To understand how Dewey received this vision of Hegel from his American peers, we need a more nuanced appreciation of the American Hegelian tradition and the context in which it was shaped.

⁹ Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*. See also the introductions by Michael H. DeArmye and James A. Good in *The St. Louis Hegelians*, 3 vols. (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 2001); and Good, "Introduction," in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1867–1893 [JSP], 22 vols. (reprint, Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 2002), 1: v–xx.

¹⁰ John Dewey, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" (1882), in *The Early Works, 1882–1898* [EW], ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1967–72), 1: 3–8; "The Pantheism of Spinoza" (1882), EW 1: 9–18; "Knowledge and the Relativity of Feeling" (1883) EW 1: 19–33; "Kant and Philosophic Method" (1884), EW 1: 34–47. In 1882, Dewey offered to translate Rosenkranz's introduction to "Kirchmann's ed. of Hegel's *Encyclopädie*," which, he stated, he had "been reading recently" (John Dewey to W. T. Harris, 1 July 1882, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*, vol. 1, ed. Larry Hickman [Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 2002]). Cf. John Dewey to W. T. Harris, 22 October 1881, *ibid.* In later years, Dewey remarked that W. T. Harris's response to his first two articles "was so encouraging that it was a distinct factor in deciding me to try philosophy as a professional career" ("From Absolutism to Experimentalism" [1930], LW 5: 150).

¹¹ See all of their correspondence in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*. Their friendship is also apparent in correspondence between Dewey's wife and children and Harris.

¹² Davidson was an active member of the St. Louis Philosophical Society from 1868 to 1875. In 1889 he established the Glenmore Summer School of the Culture Sciences in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York at which Harris, Dewey, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana all lectured for several summers. Harris built a summer cottage for his family at Glenmore. Dewey built a summer cottage on land he bought across the road from Glenmore.

¹³ In this context, 'liberalism' means a devotion to the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity. Although Hegel was a liberal in the context of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Prussia, he was quite critical of the British liberal tradition. See Steven B. Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism: Rights in Context* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989). Hegel influenced Dewey in more profound ways than I outline here, but in this article I focus on themes he found in the thought of the St. Louis Hegelians.

THE AMERICAN HEGELIAN TRADITION

The story of the American reception of Hegel is punctuated by war. The American Civil War (1861–65) and the series of European wars that culminated in German unification (1864–70) stimulated the growth of a budding American interest in German culture. During the period between the end of the Civil War and the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, the vast majority of American intellectuals viewed Germany as one of the most advanced nations in the world and German idealism as a politically liberal philosophical movement. The American perception of German culture was abruptly reversed during World War I, however, as many intellectuals argued that German idealism, particularly the philosophy of Hegel, was inherently militaristic and authoritarian. Some World War I attacks on Hegel were republished during World War II, and new ones appeared as well.¹⁴ Our post-World War II perception of Hegel has clouded our understanding of the way Americans perceived German thought and culture during the nineteenth century.

Early in the nineteenth century, prominent American educators traveled to Germany to observe the educational system, and a few Americans studied there.¹⁵ During the antebellum period, a gradual transformation of American primary education began, inspired by Pestalozzi's and Froebel's advocacy of love and respect for the individuality of the child.¹⁶ After the Civil War, the trickle of American intellectuals who traveled to Germany became a torrent because of the unification of the German states, which was completed in 1870, and a growing respect for German research universities. Americans viewed unification as a liberal advance that paralleled the unification of the United States during and after the Civil War.¹⁷ Moreover, the fact that German-Americans who fought in the Civil War overwhelmingly chose to fight for the abolition of slavery associated Germaness with the advance of liberal politics in the minds of American intellectuals. Americans were also impressed by the German ideal of academic freedom and their standards of research, both of which transformed higher education in America at

¹⁴ For example, Dewey's *German Philosophy and Politics* was published in 1915 and 1942; Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945); Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950); and Hans Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951).

¹⁵ John A. Walz, *German Influences in American Education and Culture* (Philadelphia: Carl Shurz Memorial Foundation, 1936), 8–19. Cf. Karl-Ernst Jeismann, "American Observations Concerning the Prussian Educational System in the Nineteenth Century," in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, ed. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21–42; and James A. Good, "Introduction," in Frederick Henry Hedge, ed., *Prose Writers of Germany* (1847; reprint, Bristol, U.K.: Thoemmes Press, 2002), v–xvi.

¹⁶ Neith Headley, *The Kindergarten: Its Place in the Program of Education* (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1965); Carolyn R. Toth, *German-English Bilingual Schools in America* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); and Karl-Heinz Günther, "Interdependence between Democratic Pedagogy in Germany and the Development of Education in the United States in the Nineteenth Century," in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, 43–58.

¹⁷ Denton Snider, *The St. Louis Movement in Philosophy, Literature, Education, Psychology, with Chapters of Autobiography [The St. Louis Movement]* (St. Louis, MO: Sigma, 1920), 143–44; James A. Good, "A 'World-Historical Idea': The St. Louis Hegelians and the Civil War," *Journal of American Studies* 34, n. 1 (2000): 447–64.

the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Because of its emphasis on respect for the individual and academic freedom, American intellectuals viewed German educational thought as a liberalizing influence and Germany as the nation the United States should emulate.¹⁹

This perception of German thought and culture is most apparent in the writings of the St. Louis Hegelians, a philosophical group that began to form before the Civil War and coalesced immediately after the War. Harris, a Connecticut Yankee who rose to prominence as a local public educator, was the primary leader of the group.²⁰ Harris served as editor of the JSP from 1867 to 1893, and Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools from 1868 to 1880. Soon Harris was one of the brightest stars in the American intellectual firmament because, under his editorship, the JSP became the flagship publication of American philosophy, and under his superintendence, the St. Louis public school system received international recognition for its progressive approach to education.²¹ Thus Bronson Alcott enthusiastically named Harris resident sage of the Concord Summer School, a position in which Harris served from 1879 to 1889, and President Benjamin Harrison appointed him United States Commissioner of Education, a title Harris carried with distinction from 1889 to 1906.²² There can be no doubt that American intellectuals, including Dewey, paid close attention to Harris and his work. Yet American historians today know little about Harris's reading of Hegel.

It is often correctly noted that Harris and his colleagues in St. Louis were devoted students of Hegel's logic, and historians seem to presume that this exposes them as right-wing Hegelians who espoused a metaphysical/theological reading of Hegel much like the British neo-Hegelians.²³ The assumption seems to be that nineteenth-century Hegelians could choose one of two diametrically opposed paths: either they became reactionary right-wingers or revolutionary left-wingers. This obscures the complexities of the spectrum of Hegelians in Germany, some of whom were theologically left wing, but politically more moderate than the Young Hegelians. Although Harris defended the doctrine of the Trinity in an effort to

¹⁸ Walz, *German Influences in American Education and Culture*, 51; also, Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 383–407.

¹⁹ Carol Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of Higher Education in America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975); Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965); Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship, 1770–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); and Konrad H. Jarausch, "American Students in Germany, 1815–1914: The Structure of German and U.S. Matriculants at Göttingen University," in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, 195–212.

²⁰ Kurt F. Leidecker, *Yankee Teacher: The Life of William Torrey Harris* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946).

²¹ On Harris's importance, see James Canfield, [no title] *American Review of Reviews* 34 (1906): 164–66; and John Roberts, *William T. Harris: A Critical Study of His Educational and Related Philosophical Reviews* (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1924), 349–50.

²² Bronson Alcott, *The Journals of Bronson Alcott*, ed. Odell Shepard (Boston: Little, Brown, 1938), 444, 499; and Teck-Young Kwon, "A. Bronson Alcott's Literary Apprenticeship to Emerson: The Role of Harris's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1980).

²³ John Watson, "Idealism and Social Theory: A Comparative Study of British and American Adaptations of Hegel, 1860–1914" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), 50; and Merle Curti, *Social Ideas of American Educators* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 310–47.

rescue Hegel from pantheism, this alone does not definitively associate him with the theological Hegelian right in Germany.²⁴ Moreover, a careful perusal of the St. Louis Hegelians' publications demonstrates that, unlike the British neo-Hegelians, they studied all of Hegel's work and were particularly fascinated by the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophical Propaedeutic*.²⁵ The St. Louis Hegelians translated and published, with commentary, portions of both works in the JSP. Moreover, Harris's *Hegel's Logic* included five chapters on the *Phenomenology* that demonstrate his conviction that it is the introduction to Hegel's system.²⁶ For this reason, Harris's reading of Hegel is distinct from that of the British neo-Hegelians who were influenced by James Hutchison Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel* (1865). Stirling tended to ignore the *Phenomenology*, and later British neo-Hegelians followed his lead on this point, viewing *The Science of Logic*, rather than the *Phenomenology*, as the beginning point of Hegel's system.²⁷

The St. Louis Hegelians are more comparable to the German Hegelian center—Eduard Gans, Karl Ludwig Michelet, Karl Rosenkranz, and Johannes Schulz. The Center Hegelians were pupils of Hegel who eschewed Prussian conservatism as well as the revolutionary thought of the Young Hegelians.²⁸ Michelet and Rosenkranz were auxiliary members of the St. Louis Philosophical Society and, according to Arnold Ruge, Rosenkranz was "the most liberal of all the Old Hegelians."²⁹ The St. Louis Hegelians corresponded with Rosenkranz and were profoundly influenced by his 1844 biography of Hegel. In that work, Rosenkranz contextualized Hegel within the German neo-Humanist tradition that included Wilhelm von Humboldt, Goethe, Schiller, and Novalis and drew on Hegel's short political essays to depict him as a cultural, rather than a political, nationalist and

²⁴ See W. T. Harris, "Theism and Pantheism," JSP 5 (1871): 86–94. It is significant that Harris rejected personal immortality; see Harris, "The Speculative," JSP 1 (1867): 6. Other St. Louis Hegelians did not share Harris's concern about the doctrine of the Trinity; see Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 24–26.

²⁵ Hegel, *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, ed. Michael George and Andrew Vincent, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: B. Blackwell, 1986). The St. Louis Hegelians also studied Karl Rosenkranz, *Pädagogik als System*, trans. Anna Brackett, JSP 6, no. 4 (1872): 290–312; 7, n. 1 (1873): 49–71; 7, n. 2 (1873): 40–67; 7, n. 3 (1873): 1–23; 7, n. 4 (1873): 1–27.

²⁶ W. T. Harris, *Hegel's Logic: A Book on the Genesis of the Categories of the Mind: A Critical Exposition [Hegel's Logic]* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1890), 57–121. One year before the book was published, Dewey took over editorship of the Griggs Philosophical Classics Series in which it appeared on the untimely death of his graduate school mentor and University of Michigan colleague, George Sylvester Morris.

²⁷ See J. B. Baillie, "Introduction," in Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Humanities Press, 1949).

²⁸ See John Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 71–154, 203–42.

²⁹ Quoted in Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, trans. David E. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 54. See Rosenkranz, "Hegel as Publicist," trans. G. Stanley Hall, JSP 6 (1872): 258–79. The JSP contained 129 pages of translations of Rosenkranz's commentary on Hegel. In addition to Rosenkranz, other European intellectuals were auxiliary members of the Society, specifically, James Hutchinson Stirling, Ludwig Feuerbach and J. H. Fichte. See Kurt F. Leidecker, ed., *The Record Book of the St. Louis Philosophical Society, Founded February 1866* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1990). For more on Rosenkranz and the St. Louis Hegelians see Michael H. DeArme and James A. Good, "Introduction," in *Origins, the Dialectic and the Critique of Materialism*, vol. 1 of *The St. Louis Hegelians*, xvii–xviii.

a lifelong advocate of the ideals of the French Revolution.³⁰ An examination of the translations of, and commentaries on, German philosophical and literary works in the JSP reveals that the St. Louis Hegelians promoted neo-humanism and that this shaped their reading of Hegel.³¹ In this context, Hegel appears less as the philosopher's philosopher, fixated on the perennial conundrums of the Western tradition, and more as the liberal humanist who sought to set those problems aside in order to reconstruct Western thought and culture for the purpose of individual emancipation. Hegel's potential contribution to Dewey's mature philosophy looks markedly different when one considers this reading of his thought rather than that of the British neo-Hegelians.³²

During their nation's sectional crisis, the St. Louis Hegelians found a sophisticated philosophy of cultural unification in Hegel's thought.³³ Hegel's criticisms of radical French revolutionaries provided them with the conceptual tools to argue that radical American abolitionists like John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison misunderstood the social and historical context of moral standards. Hegel's criticisms were motivated by the Reign of Terror which, he argued, arose because revolutionaries believed they followed a morality that transcended their society and that gave them license to execute their opponents summarily. Hegel criticized Kant in the same way, arguing that the notion of an absolute duty to the categorical imperative disregards our desires and the concrete social limitations in which we must act. More seriously, Hegel warned that absolute devotion to an abstract ideal would lead to fanaticism and a disregard for the consequences of our actions.³⁴ Moreover, Hegel criticized radical French revolutionaries because they embraced a negative or abstract theory of freedom, the notion that man is free and equal in the absence of social restraints. Similarly, the St. Louis Hegelians argued that this one-sided perception of freedom led the radical abolitionists to mistakenly conclude that the eradication of the institution of slavery alone, with-

³⁰ Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Leben* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1844). The translation and publication of Hegel's "minor" political writings in 1964 by T. M. Knox has prompted similar assessments of his political commitments. Hegel, *Hegel's Political Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox, with an introductory essay by Z. A. Pelczynsky (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). See Frederick G. Weiss, "A Critical Survey of Hegel Scholarship in English: 1962-1969," in *The Legacy of Hegel: Proceedings of the Marquette Hegel Symposium 1970*, eds., J. J. O'Malley et al. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 27.

³¹ The St. Louis Hegelians were particularly fascinated with Goethe. See Henry C. Brokmeyer, "Letters on Faust," JSP 1 and 2 (1867, 1868): 178-87, 114-20; the contributions of Thomas Davidson, W. T. Harris, and Denton Snider to F. B. Sanborn, ed., *The Life and Genius of Goethe: Lectures at the Concord School of Philosophy* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886); and Thomas Davidson, *The Philosophy of Goethe's Faust* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1906). Harris and Brokmeyer were co-founders of the postbellum St. Louis Philosophical Society. Harris was the organizing and administrative force behind the Society, and Brokmeyer was its inspirational visionary. See Harris, *Hegel's Logic*, xiii; and Snider, *A Writer of Books in His Genesis; Written for and Dedicated to His Pupil-friends Reaching Back in a Line of Fifty Years* (St. Louis, MO: Sigma, 1910), 317-29.

³² See the editor's introduction to JSP, 1: v-xx.

³³ See H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight, 1770-1801* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); José María Ripalda, *The Divided Nation, The Roots of a Bourgeois Thinker: G. W. F. Hegel*, trans. Fay Franklin and Maruja Tillman (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, Assen, 1977); George Armstrong Kelly, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis: Studies in Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); and Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁴ See George Armstrong Kelly, *Idealism, Politics, and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 301-6.

out more profound reform of society, would fully emancipate American slaves. Hegel's analysis of the Reign of Terror convinced the St. Louis Hegelians that negative freedom would inevitably lead to the indiscriminate destruction of social, religious, and political institutions as the way to protect transcendent rights. As institutions were destroyed in the Terror, Hegel argued, restraints on individuals were diminished, resulting in an accelerating frenzy of annihilation. In the same way, the St. Louis Hegelians feared that negative freedom would inevitably lead to "some sudden eruption . . . of madness and fury."³⁵

The St. Louis Hegelians were also influenced by Hegel's theory of learning, which was based on the organic *Bildung* model of education as individual and collective growth to promote cultural, rather than national, unity.³⁶ Hegel was critical of the Enlightenment's fixation on a narrow conception of knowledge, arguing that *Bildung* requires self-knowledge, an accurate perception of one's talents and abilities. Hegel's concept of *Bildung* entails that knowledge is gained only from experience and from the widest variety of experience. Furthermore, on the *Bildung* model, learning involves activity. Hence Hegel rejected Locke's passive spectator theory of the mind, according to which we should restrain our passions in order to gain objective knowledge. For Hegel, learning involves a passionate search for truth. Hegel's notion of *Bildung* emphasized *Selbsttätigkeit*, self-activity and self-development, according to which, true education is a matter of conscious self-development that requires arduous individual effort and responsibility.³⁷ Yet Hegel was also critical of the "beautiful soul," the person who is so consumed with his own salvation that he has no adequate sense of the suffering in the world and is unwilling to act to counter it for fear that he will corrupt his own soul. For Hegel, fulfillment must come in the activities of real life.³⁸

Finally, unlike the British neo-Hegelians, Harris and the St. Louis Hegelians resisted the temptation to conflate the tangible world of experience with the ideal because it opened the door to subjective idealism and idealistic pantheism. Rather

³⁵ W. T. Harris, *Psychologic Foundations: An Attempt to Show the Genesis of the Higher Faculties of the Mind* (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 287.

³⁶ On this and other issues, the St. Louis Hegelians' reading of Hegel is consistent with a great deal of recent Hegel scholarship. See Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 269.

³⁷ As indicated in W. H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Jeffrey Reid, "Hegel and the State University: The University of Berlin and Its Founding Contradictions," *The Owl of Minerva* 32, n. 1 (2000): 5–19; James Schmidt, "A *Paideia* for the *Bürger als Bourgeois*: The Concept of 'Civil Society' in Hegel's Political Thought," *History of Political Thought* 11, 3 (1981): 469–77; John H. Smith, *The Spirit and Its Letter: Traces of Rhetoric in Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); and John Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 15–41.

³⁸ The preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* includes a discussion of *Bildung*, and it is a recurring theme throughout the *Philosophy of Right*. Royce advocated reading the *Phenomenology* as a *Bildungsroman* much like Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and Friedrich Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* (*Lectures on Modern Idealism*, ed. Jacob Loewenberg [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964]). On the "beautiful soul" see Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §§632–71. See also Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); and Robert E. Norton, *The Beautiful Soul: Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

than absorb the real into the knowing self, and ultimately into an absolute self, Harris specifically explained that Hegel affirmed the reality of both object and subject in the dialectic. In ordinary experience, object and subject exist in undifferentiated unity and harmony. In the successful solution of a problem, object and self, which have been rendered separate by the problem, are reciprocally related and, without surrendering any measure of their identity, reunited in a more inclusive whole that has shaped them both. Rather than a pre-existing substance that acts on material set over and against it, the self is a self-determining activity that incorporates without obliterating the other into its identity. More plainly, the self is a process of growth through a perpetual striving for unity and harmony.³⁹ On the St. Louis Hegelians' neo-Humanist reading of Hegel, *Bildung* is the lifeblood of the self.

DEWEY AND HEGEL

As a graduate student at Johns Hopkins from 1882 to 1884, Dewey embraced Hegelianism under the tutelage of George Sylvester Morris, a frequent contributor to the JSP and a friend of Harris. To be sure, during these years Dewey was a close student of the British neo-Hegelians, especially T. H. Green, but as early as 1886 he distinguished his thought from theirs in "The Psychological Standpoint" and "Psychology as Philosophic Method."⁴⁰ According to Dewey, the neo-Hegelians erred in the same way as Kant because they attempted to explain experience by introducing elements that went beyond possible experience when they posited a transcendent absolute self.⁴¹ In a development that paralleled Dewey's move from liberal Congregationalism to humanistic religion, soon after the publication of his 1887 *Psychology*, Dewey permanently jettisoned the neo-Hegelian concept of a transcendent absolute. In 1892 Dewey elaborated on his critique of neo-Hegelianism in "Green's Theory of the Moral Motive." First, Dewey explained, Green erected a sharp dualism between the ends that would satisfy the finite, individual self, and those that would satisfy the infinite, universal self. The ideal self was the goal of the moral life, but it was ultimately unattainable for the particular self. Second, Dewey argued that ethical theories based on standards of moral perfection were impractical because they remain "the bare thought of an ideal of perfection, having nothing in common with the special set of conditions or with the special desire of the moment."⁴² Here Dewey restated Hegel's critique of Kant's categorical imperative. Dewey referred to Green as a neo-Kantian because he transformed Hegel's temporal and immanent absolute into a timeless,

³⁹ See Harris, *Hegel's Logic*, 59–73, 78.

⁴⁰ Dewey, "The Psychological Standpoint" (1886) EW, 1: 123–43; and "Psychology as Philosophic Method" (1886), EW 1: 144–67. See also "Illusory Psychology" (1887), EW 1: 168–75.

⁴¹ Many scholars would agree with Dewey's assessment of Green. See John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1966), 55–56; Rudolf Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 272–73; Geoffrey Thomas, *The Moral Philosophy of T. H. Green* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 40–41. Dewey continued this critique of the neo-Hegelians in logical writings of this time. See Dewey, "The Present Position of Logical Theory" (1891), EW 3: 125–41.

⁴² Dewey, "Green's Theory of the Moral Motive" (1892), EW 3: 163.

transcendent absolute for the same reason that Kant postulated a noumenal realm and the categorical imperative.⁴³

Although Dewey's flirtation with British neo-Hegelianism was brief, it is rash to assume that his criticisms of Green entail a rejection of Hegel. To say the least, it is odd to claim that this Hegelian critique of Green's moral theory signals that Dewey was progressing toward a definitive break with Hegel. Elsewhere I have argued that Dewey was developing a non-metaphysical reading of Hegel, similar to that espoused in recent years by Klaus Hartmann and the numerous Hegel scholars he has influenced.⁴⁴ This shift has been difficult to discern in part because Dewey articulated it most clearly in an unpublished 104-page 1897 lecture that was apparently unavailable to White and that more recent Dewey scholars have overlooked. We get a sense of this shift near the beginning of that lecture in a passage that calls to mind Hegel's infamous proclamation in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, "What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational."⁴⁵ According to Dewey,

Hegel was a great actualist. By this I mean that he has the greatest respect, both in his thought and in his practice, for what has actually amounted to something, actually succeeded in getting outward form. . . . Hegel is never more hard in his speech, hard as steel is hard, than when dealing with mere ideals[,] vain opinions and sentiments which have not succeeded in connecting themselves with the actual world.⁴⁶

By this point in his philosophical development, Dewey had come to understand Hegel's dictum not as an admonition passively to accept the actual, the status quo, because it is rational, but as a critique of ethical theories that provide only abstract rules, empty ideals, as guides to action.⁴⁷ Truly rational moral principles have actual effects in the world, and the rational does not transcend the world in any way.⁴⁸ This understanding of Hegel's maxim was common among

⁴³ Cf. Dewey's critique of Kant during these years to his critique of Green's ethical theory, in "Psychology as Philosophic Method" (1886), EW 1: 145; "The Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green" (1889) EW 3: 27; "On Some Current Conceptions of the Term Self" (1890), EW 3: 60–70; "Green's Theory of the Moral Motive" (1892), EW 3: 163; *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891), EW 3: 239, 294–98, 335; and "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal" (1893), EW 4: 53.

⁴⁴ Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*. Cf. Klaus Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View," in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. MacIntyre (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972), 101–24; and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Klaus Hartmann and G. W. F. Hegel: A Personal Postscript," in *Hegel Reconsidered: Beyond Metaphysics and the Authoritarian State*, eds. Engelhardt and Pinkard (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 225–29. I intend to imply not that William James's *Principles of Psychology* or Darwinian biology did not influence Dewey during these years, but that it is not clear that those influences motivated him to reject Hegel. See Shook, *Dewey's Empirical Theory of Knowledge and Reality*, 11–19, 49, 100–5, 118–20, 213–15.

⁴⁵ Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen Wood, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20.

⁴⁶ Dewey, "Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit: Lectures by John Dewey," ["Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit"] The University of Chicago, 1897 (Southern Illinois University, Morris Library, Special Collections, John Dewey Papers, Collection 102), 6.

⁴⁷ White admits only of a right-wing reading of this claim, in *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, 98.

⁴⁸ I have no doubt that Dewey's German was good enough for him to understand that Hegel's term *wirklich*, which is translated as 'actual' in this passage from the *Philosophy of Right*, is derived from the verb *wirken*, which means "to be active or effective." If one reads Hegel's claim as stating that the effective is rational and the rational is effective, it is conceivable that Dewey saw significant elements of

American Hegelians. In *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, Josiah Royce wrote that "for Hegel, thought is inseparable from will, [and] logic exists only as the logic of life." Royce also stated that the dialectic possessed "for Hegel pragmatic significance . . . illustrating the way in which men live as well as the way in which men must think."⁴⁹ Dewey also rejected the view that Hegel's dictum reduces empirical reality to the thought process of a rational, transcendent mind; rather, it elevates thought to the same degree of reality as the world of ordinary experience. In Dewey's words, Hegel "implies that thought is so real that it can be found only in the object and not in any subjective opinion."⁵⁰

In the lecture Dewey also specifically mentioned Rosenkranz's biography of Hegel and characterized him as a politically liberal philosopher. At this time there was only one other full-length biography of Hegel available, Rudolf Haym's *Hegel und seine Zeit* (1857).⁵¹ Haym's biography fueled the characterization of Hegel as the official philosopher of the reactionary Prussian state. Hence, it is significant that Dewey preferred Rosenkranz's interpretation of Hegel to Haym's. There is other evidence in the lecture that Dewey agreed with Rosenkranz. Although Dewey characterized Hegel's theory of the state as artificial, he explicitly rejected the notion that Hegel was an apologist for Prussian authoritarianism.⁵² According to Hegel, Dewey asserted, the central task of the modern state was the preservation of individual rights.⁵³ Of Hegel's philosophy of history, Dewey flatly asserted that it "is absurd" to claim Hegel forced the particular events of history into an *a priori* scheme. Every history must be given some sort of unity, he explained, or it would not even be "a child's fairy tale, for children require a certain point in their stories."⁵⁴ Dewey argued that this charge against Hegel would be correct if he had postulated the goal of history arbitrarily, but that he discovered the goal by taking the facts of history seriously and letting them speak for themselves.

This reading of Hegel's philosophy of history is part and parcel of the fact that Dewey had taken the St. Louis Hegelians' humanistic Hegel in a more consistently historicist direction than Harris, decisively rejecting the British neo-Hegelians' efforts to "correct" Hegel's historical relativism by elevating the absolute into a transcendent personal being that guaranteed the permanence of fixed logical categories. In this way Dewey moved to the left of Harris within the Ameri-

pragmatism in Hegel. For a discussion of the ways Hegel's dictum has been misunderstood, see M. W. Jackson, "Hegel: The Real and the Rational," in *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ed. John Stewart (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 19–25.

⁴⁹ Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, 145, cf. 86.

⁵⁰ Dewey, "Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit," 3.

⁵¹ Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit, Vorlesungen über Entstehung und Entwicklung, Wesen und Werth der Hegel'schen Philosophie* (Berlin, 1857). Dewey could have relied also on Edward Caird's *Hegel* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott; Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1883), and Frederic Ludlow Luqueer's *Hegel as Educator* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), for biographical information, but both of those books were based on Rosenkranz's biography.

⁵² Dewey, "Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit," 84, 94, 98.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 84–98.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 86. Similarly, Hegel wrote, "A history without such aim and such criticism would be only an imbecile mental divagation, not as good as a fairy tale, for even children expect a motif in their stories, a purpose at least dimly surmisable with which events and actions are put in relation" (*Philosophy of Mind, Translated from The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971], §549).

can Hegelian tradition.⁵⁵ This is evident in the 1897 lecture in which the absolute spirit is nothing more than the human race in its historical development. Rather than a pre-existing ground of being or guarantor of logical categories, absolute spirit is an interpretation of human history. Absolute spirit “is simply a theoretical formulation of the idea of subjectivity, of individuality, of freedom, which has played so large a part in the modern consciousness.”⁵⁶

As late as 1904 Dewey argued that Hegel had opposed Kant’s ethical formalism by grounding morality in “an ethical world (as real as the physical) from which the individual must take his cue.”⁵⁷ And although Dewey associated himself with pragmatism in 1905, in that same year he also acknowledged a continuing debt to Hegel in his Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association.⁵⁸ In that address Dewey complained about the “purely Anglo-American habit” of “interpreting Hegel as a Neo-Kantian, a Kantian enlarged and purified.” Unlike Kant, Dewey argued, Hegel emphasized “life in its own developing movement” over logic.⁵⁹ In “Intelligence and Morals” (1908), Dewey rejected the notion that Hegel’s identification of the real with the rational glorified the conservative Prussian state. According to Dewey, Hegel’s dictum

gave the pleasant appearance (which Hegel did not strenuously discourage) of being specifically an idealization of the Prussian nation, and incidentally a systematized apologetic for the universe at large. But in intellectual and practical effect, it lifted the idea of process above that of fixed origins and fixed ends, and presented the social and moral order, as well as the intellectual, as a scene of becoming, and it located reason somewhere within the struggles of life.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ It is not as clear to me that this move put Dewey to the left of all of the American Hegelians, but I must resist the temptation to elaborate on that point at this time. Suffice it to say that, among other things, three lectures William James gave on psychology at the Concord Summer School in 1881 stimulated Denton Snider to make a similar shift in his reading of Hegel. See Calvin Victor Huenemann, “Denton J. Snider: A Critical Study” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1953), 27. There is evidence that Royce and Peirce were also moving in a similar direction. According to John Smith, Royce came to view

the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* [as] superior to the Hegel of the *Logic*. . . Royce saw very well how prominent a place Hegel gave to experience, to concrete life and the inner development of the self in that vast and mysterious odyssey of the mind called the *Phenomenology*. Royce even suggested a parallel in James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Much of the current renewal of interest in Hegel’s thought is focused on his concern for the self and for the dialectic of experience stemming from the crucial fact of self-consciousness. [Royce’s] *Lectures* anticipates this consequence and thus puts the reader squarely in the middle of current discussion. (John Smith, “Foreword” in Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, ed. Jacob Loewenberg [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964], viii)

Compare this to Peirce’s newfound interest in the *Phenomenology*, suggested by his marginalia in his copy of Harris’s *Hegel’s Logic*. See William Elton, “Peirce’s Marginalia in W. T. Harris’s *Hegel’s Logic*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 2 (1964): 82–84. Cf. Frederic H. Young, “Charles Sanders Peirce: 1839–1914,” in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Philip H. Wiener and Frederic H. Young (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 275; and Harvey G. Townsend, “The Pragmatism of Peirce and Hegel,” *Philosophical Review* 37 (1928): 297–303.

⁵⁶ Dewey, “Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit,” 25, 26.

⁵⁷ Dewey, “Ethics,” (1904), in *The Middle Works, 1899–1924* [MW], ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1976–1983), 3: 55–56.

⁵⁸ Dewey, “The Realism of Pragmatism” (1905), MW 3: 154.

⁵⁹ Dewey, “Beliefs and Existences” (1906), MW 3: 86.

⁶⁰ Dewey, “Intelligence and Morals” (1908), MW 4: 43.

FROM ACTUALISM TO BRUTALISM

For a variety of reasons, Dewey refrained from talking about his debt to Hegel between 1905 and 1915. One simple explanation for this fact is that he was much more concerned about advancing philosophy than preserving his intellectual history. Without abandoning the insights he found in Hegel, Dewey had decided much earlier that he could better contribute to philosophy's progress by discarding Hegel's notoriously obscure language in favor of more contemporary terms.

There was a period extending into my earlier years at Chicago when, in connection with a seminar in Hegel's *Logic I* tried reinterpreting his categories in terms of "re-adjustment" and "reconstruction." Gradually I came to realize that what the principles actually stood for could be better understood and stated when completely emancipated from Hegelian garb.⁶¹

No doubt, professional pressures are also relevant to Dewey's abandonment of Hegelian nomenclature. Robert Westbrook correctly notes, "on the face of it, the years between Dewey's move to Columbia [in 1905] and American entry into World War I in 1917 were among the most professional of his career." The American Philosophical Association was founded in 1901 and Dewey served as its president in 1905. In this professionalizing context Dewey took part in a lively debate among pragmatists, realists, and idealists. Heated polemics in this dispute made it almost customary to exaggerate the views of one's opponents, and all idealists were routinely lumped together as devious purveyors of a transcendent absolute mind and a necessary historical teleology. If Dewey had any chance of defending pragmatism, he had to do so in terms that his peers would respect. And because one might justifiably conclude that idealists ultimately lost the debate, as their philosophy went into decline until after World War II, it is no surprise that Dewey would prefer to distance himself from that camp.

That pragmatists like Dewey needed to distance their thought from idealism is apparent in numerous articles, such as Warner Fite's "The Experience Philosophy" (1906). Fite claimed that pragmatism and idealism were both variants of subjective idealism. According to Fite, subjective idealism, pragmatism, personal idealism and the radical empiricism of James all "deny that there is a world beyond experience; all, in substance, hold with Berkeley and Schopenhauer, that 'the world is my idea.'"⁶² Focused on the defense of pragmatism, Dewey did not attempt to disabuse realists of the claims they made about idealism or to articulate his reading of Hegel. It is notable, however, that Dewey defended pragmatism from the charge of subjective idealism by appealing to his version of Hegel's notion of self-alienation and return. In "The Realism of Pragmatism," Dewey argued that "States of consciousness, sensations and ideas as cognitive, exist as tools, bridges, cues, functions—whatever one pleases—to affect a realistic presentation of things, in which there are no intervening states of consciousness as veils, or representatives."⁶³ The problematic alienates us from the world in a veil of con-

⁶¹ Jane Dewey, ed., "Biography of John Dewey," 18.

⁶² Warner Fite, "The Experience Philosophy," *Philosophical Review* 15 (1906): 1.

⁶³ See, for example, Dewey's reply to Stephen Sheldon Colvin's "Is Subjective Idealism a Necessary Point of View for Psychology?," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 2 (1905): 225–31, in "The Realism of Pragmatism" (1905), MW 3: 154.

sciousness; completed inquiry, in which we come to integrate the problematic into the whole allows us to return to ourselves, to our ordinary “naïve realism.”⁶⁴

Contrary to the traditional account of his repudiation of Hegel, Dewey’s first published criticism of the philosopher appeared rather abruptly during World War I. The conclusion that Dewey’s reassessment of Hegel was motivated by geopolitical realities rather than impartial philosophical analysis is difficult to avoid. While it is true that the direct influence of Hegel’s philosophy on the English-speaking world had gradually declined before World War I, Bruce Kuklick correctly notes that “the anti-idealist movement might have been a dubious challenge to Hegel’s place in Modern Philosophy were it not for the war. . . . After the war Hegel became, for Americans, a silly, pompous, and *defeated* figure, unworthy of the great tradition.”⁶⁵ Thus, as Americans deliberated about their nation’s entrance into World War I, Dewey prepared his first public condemnation of Hegel, *German Philosophy and Politics* (GPP).

Dewey’s primary goal in GPP was to reveal the cultural/philosophical roots of German militarism.⁶⁶ The book’s main target is Kantian dualism, or what Dewey called Kant’s “two worlds” thesis. Though it may seem odd that he focused on the advocate of “perpetual peace,” throughout his career Dewey criticized Kant more than any other philosopher. Dewey proclaimed that Kant’s doctrine of “the two realms, one outer, physical and necessary, the other inner, ideal and free” is the element of German philosophy that has defined German national character. The German people were not, Dewey added, consciously devoted to Kantian philosophy; rather, “Kant detected and formulated the direction in which the German genius was moving, so that his philosophy is of immense prophetic significance.”⁶⁷ In this regard, GPP is Hegelian intellectual history. Dewey’s claim was that Kant had understood and was a vehicle for the German *Zeitgeist*.

In a summary of his objections to Kant, Dewey wrote,

Kant’s decisive contribution [to German philosophy] is the idea of a dual legislation of reason by which are marked off two distinct realms—that of science and that of morals. Each of these two realms has its own final and authoritative constitution: On one hand, there is the world of sense, the world of phenomena in space and time in which science is at home; on the other hand, is the supersensible, the noumenal world, the world of moral duty and moral freedom.⁶⁸

Kant’s dualism, Dewey averred, facilitated a “combination of self-conscious idealism with unsurpassed technical efficiency and organization in the varied fields of action.”⁶⁹ More explicitly, Dewey claimed that Kantian philosophy fostered an

⁶⁴ Dewey, “The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy” (1917), MW 10: 39. Cf. Lewis Hinchman, *Hegel’s Critique of the Enlightenment* (Gainesville and Tampa: The University Presses of Florida, 1984), 63–64; and Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §36.

⁶⁵ Bruce Kuklick, “Seven Thinkers and How They Grew: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz; Locke, Berkeley, Hume; Kant,” in *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy* eds. Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 133.

⁶⁶ Dewey had previously expressed concern about authoritarianism in German culture. See Dewey, “Interest in Relation to the Training of the Will” (1895), EW 5: 113–46. Nonetheless, *German Philosophy and Politics* [GPP] contained Dewey’s first association of Hegel with German authoritarianism.

⁶⁷ Dewey, GPP (1915), MW 8: 152. Cf. Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), MW 12: 136.

⁶⁸ Dewey, GPP (1915), MW 8: 147.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

absolute devotion to transcendent ends, ends that could not be checked by practical and humane considerations, thereby facilitating a preoccupation with technical efficiency at the expense of everyday decency. Dewey scholars have missed the extent to which this is a Hegelian critique of Kant, and after his discussion of Kant Dewey turned his attention to Hegel without acknowledging the similarity.

Dewey proclaimed that, "It is customary to call [Hegel] an Idealist," but that, "In one sense of much abused terms, he is the greatest realist known to philosophy. He might be called a Brutalist."⁷⁰ This comment signals a decisive change in Dewey's attitude toward Hegel. He also associated Hegel with the "purely artificial cult of race" in Germany, which he described as a crucial component of Germany's geopolitical ambitions.⁷¹ This shift in Dewey's characterization of Hegel correlates to a shift in the sources on which he relied. In his 1897 lecture, Rosenkranz's reading of Hegel influenced Dewey as it had the St. Louis Hegelians. But in GPP, Dewey uncritically cited Rudolf Haym's biography of Hegel.⁷² It is perhaps noteworthy that this is the only place in Dewey's entire thirty-seven-volume corpus in which he mentioned or cited Rudolf Haym.

Dewey also quoted, without citation, passages from §258 of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to support this reading of Hegel.

The State is the rational in itself and for itself. Its substantial unity is an absolute end in itself. To it belongs supreme right in respect to individuals whose first duty is—just to be members of the State. . . . [The State] is the absolute reality and the individual himself has objective existence, truth and morality only in his capacity as a member of the State.⁷³

Comparison to S. W. Dyde's 1897 translation of the *Philosophy of Right*, the only one then available, indicates that Dewey used his own rather loose translation of passages from the *Philosophy of Right*.⁷⁴ Dewey ignored a paragraph just two sections after the one he quoted that contradicts his reading of §258. In §260, Hegel wrote,

The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But *concrete freedom* requires that personal individuality [*Einzelheit*] and its particular interests should reach their full *development* and gain *recognition of their right* for itself. . . . The principle of the modern state has enormous strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to attain fulfillment in the *self-sufficient extreme* of personal particularity, while at the same time *bringing it back to substantial unity* and so preserving this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁷¹ Ibid., 188. According to Sydney Hook, Dewey's charge committed "an injustice to Hegel, who was free from racialism." See Hook, "Introduction," MW 8: xxxi. Hook's assertion, however, begs for explanation that he did not provide. Hegel is infamous for his argument in the *Philosophy of History* that Oriental and African cultures are outside world history because they had not internalized conceptions of law and morality that are necessary to the attainment of concrete freedom. Nevertheless, Hegel was highly critical of German anti-Semitism and, although he was certainly Eurocentric, his negative assessments of other cultures were not based on biological racism. See Josephy McCarney, *Hegel on History* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 140–45.

⁷² Dewey, GPP (1915), MW 8: 193.

⁷³ Ibid., 192–93.

⁷⁴ Hegel scholars would certainly find H. B. Nisbet's 1991 translation (cited above) less objectionable than Dewey's.

In a discussion of these sections, Allen Wood writes that it is “a gross distortion to associate Hegel’s view with the image of individuals having to sacrifice themselves to the ends of the state. Such sacrifices may be required in some circumstances, but it is precisely the *abnormality* of such circumstances which makes the state an end in itself.”⁷⁵ Despite these evidentiary problems in his reading of Hegel, and despite the fact that in 1905 he claimed that Hegel did not elevate logic above lived experience, Dewey now claimed that the problem in Hegel’s political thought arose from the identification of the actual with the rational, coupled with the conviction that reason drives history with no regard for individual rights and interests.⁷⁶ This is similar to Dewey’s critique of Kant. Both philosophers, Dewey claimed, subordinated practical considerations of right and wrong to an overarching rationality, both set up a “dual legislation of reason.” Dewey went on to state that Hegel equated reason with both God and the state, thus making it the duty of the individual to subordinate his interests completely to the state.⁷⁷

An important element of this shift is revealed in Dewey’s characterization of Hegel’s philosophy of history, which he reiterated in *Democracy and Education*, published in 1916.

But since Hegel was haunted by the conception of an absolute goal, he was obliged to arrange institutions as they concretely exist, on a stepladder of ascending approximations. Each in its time and place is absolutely necessary, because a stage in the self-realizing process of the absolute mind. Taken as such a step or stage, its existence is proof of its complete rationality, for it is an integral element in the total, which is Reason.⁷⁸

In GPP, Dewey’s characterization of Hegel is completed in his claim that Hegel’s necessary teleology is fulfilled through war. Contrary to the St. Louis Hegelians, Dewey construed Hegel’s philosophy of history in nationalistic terms. As a rabid nationalist, Dewey contended, it was inevitable that Hegel would articulate a “philosophical justification of war.”⁷⁹ Although in *Democracy and Education* Dewey articulated what can be plausibly read as a defense of education as *Bildung*, Hegel had become, for Dewey, the bellicose philosopher of Prussian conservatism.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Allen Wood, “Editor’s Introduction” in Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen Wood, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xxvi.

⁷⁶ Dewey, “Beliefs and Realities” (1905), MW 3:86.

⁷⁷ Although others have read Hegel this way, it requires defense. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel’s students recorded him as claiming, “the universal spirit or world spirit is not the same thing as God. It is the rationality of spirit in its worldly existence” (*Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in World History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975], 213). John Sibree published the first English translation of this introduction in 1857, so it was available to Dewey.

⁷⁸ Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), MW 9: 64.

⁷⁹ Dewey, GPP (1915), MW 8: 118. See Dewey’s remark, “One can only regret that [Hegel] died before his contemplative piety could behold Bismarck,” (GPP [1915], MW 8: 194).

⁸⁰ Without acknowledging it, Dewey advocated a version of *Bildung* in the opening paragraph of chapter two. See Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), MW 9: 14; see also 46–58. On Hegel as a defender of “the political *status quo*,” see Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), MW 12: 189–90, 194–95. In a 1904 review of W. R. Benedict’s *World Views and their Ethical Implications*, Dewey offered a more positive reading of Hegel’s perception of conflict in world history and rejected the implication that Hegel had a “two worlds” thesis. Dewey, MW 3: 311.

But as his nation fought another devastating war with Germany, Dewey republished GPP in 1942 with an additional introduction that includes a new criticism of Hegel. He distinguished Hegel's concepts of *Vernunft* (reason) and *Verstand* (understanding) in a way that is difficult to defend with reference to Hegel's writings, and in fact he provided no defense of his reading. According to Dewey, Hegel subordinated *Verstand*, which Dewey defined as "reflection, inquiry, observation and experiment to test ideas and theory," to *Vernunft*. Dewey's point was that Hegel denigrated empirical inquiry, valorizing a transcendent reason instead. Hence Dewey defined Hegel's concept of *Vernunft* as a metaphysical entity or force, the agent that moves world history.⁸¹ Oddly enough, in 1916, Dewey republished his 1900 essay, "Some Stages of Logical Thought." In that essay, Dewey more plausibly characterized *Verstand* as our ability to make ideas precise rather than experimentation to test ideas. Moreover, in that essay Dewey implied that *Verstand* is a stage of thought, or a function within the process of experience, rather than a discrete faculty. Dewey made no changes to the republished essay although he republished it during World War I. Nor did Dewey bother to mention in the 1942 edition of GPP that he had characterized *Verstand* very differently in previous work.⁸²

DEWEY'S MOTIVES

The reasons I have already given for Dewey not talking about his debt to Hegel in the ten years prior to World War I do not explain his less than rational repudiation of Hegel during the war. A partial explanation for that repudiation could well be that during the twenty-five years prior to World War I, Dewey's family was battered by a series of emotional traumas that led him to reflect on the contingency of human existence and may well have made him more suspicious of any philosophy, like Hegel's, that might give the appearance of positing a necessary historical teleology, whether it really did or not.⁸³ Although his critics have accused Dewey of being naïve about historical progress, evidence in his poetry indicates that this

⁸¹ Dewey, GPP (1915), MW 8: 441. See Dewey's definition of "posit" in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1902) MW 2: 207. In his definition of "Rationalism," Dewey indicated that Hegel's concept of reason was not opposed to experience ("Rationalism" [1902], MW 2: 218). In "Understanding and Reason," Dewey depicted Hegel's concept of reason as "the result of the development of the understanding to its full implications," rather than as a faculty opposed to the understanding ("Understanding and Reason" [1902], MW 2: 261).

⁸² Dewey, "Some Stages of Logical Thought" (1900), MW 1: 156. Dewey's pre-World War I explanation of Hegel's concepts of *Verstand* and *Vernunft* is much easier to defend. Rather than two distinct entities or mental faculties, contemporary Hegel scholars tend to describe *Verstand* as the stage of analysis that must be completed in *Vernunft*. See, for example, Hinchman, *Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment*, 73–75. See Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism*, 204–17.

⁸³ I believe one should consider the cumulative effects of losing two sons, the circumstances under which Dewey and his wife Alice resigned from their positions at the University of Chicago, and the toll these events seem to have taken on their marriage. For a recent discussion of Dewey's "crisis" during these years, see Bruce Wilshire, *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy: Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Native American Thought* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000), 121 ff.; and Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 263–99.

series of existential crises led him to reflect on the contingencies of human existence.⁸⁴

Although this existential explanation may account for some lack of judgment on Dewey's part, in and of itself it does not explain why he targeted German philosophy in the way that he did in 1915. It is not difficult to understand why Dewey would reject the notion of a necessary historical teleology, since it requires something that exists beyond history, an ahistorical, unchanging purpose to history. Because Dewey provided no evidence for his claim that Hegel posited such a teleology, we must look beyond his writings to explain the sudden reversal of his assessment of Hegel.

At the time of the original publication of GPP, war had been raging in Europe for a year, and some might conclude that Dewey was mired in popular anti-German hysteria. Yet in 1915 widespread anti-German hysteria had not begun in the United States and most Americans still favored President Wilson's policy of neutrality.⁸⁵ It was only *after* the publication of GPP that Dewey engaged in impassioned polemics about American involvement in World War I.⁸⁶ The most satisfying explanation I have found is that Dewey's attitude toward German thought and culture in general was adversely affected by the rhetoric of German and German-American intellectuals during the war.

A prime example of extravagant pro-German rhetoric is the wartime writings of Hugo Münsterberg, a German-American psychology professor at Harvard. In *American Patriotism and Other Social Studies* (1913), Münsterberg articulated the sort of rhetoric about duty that animated Dewey in GPP. According to Münsterberg, "systematic education" in Germany "with sharp training and hard discipline early inculcates into every mind a habit of hard work. This energy for doing one's duty in spite of all selfish temptations, moreover, is greatly strengthened by the years of military service, the great national high school of labor and disciplined effort."⁸⁷ In *The War and America* (1914), Münsterberg conceded that British propaganda had been the most effective, argued that Germany was forced into the war by the actions of Russia and France, and depicted the war as unavoidable. Though the "war might have been delayed a month, perhaps a year," Münsterberg claimed,

⁸⁴ See Dewey's 1905 poem about the deaths of Gordon and Morris, in *The Poems of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), xviii, 30. Philip W. Jackson's article on Dewey's poetry supports the claim that Dewey himself, and the family as a whole, was devastated by these events; see "John Dewey's Poetry," *American Journal of Education* 9 (1982): 65–78. During World War I, Dewey also published an eloquent critique of the "dream of automatic uninterrupted progress," in "Progress" (1916), MW 10: 234.

⁸⁵ Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1991), 184 ff. The fact that Wilson handily won reelection in 1916 running on a platform of neutrality indicates that as late as November of that year most Americans still favored American neutrality. See Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁸⁶ At this time Dewey was only mildly involved in the "preparedness versus pacifism" debate, opposing universal military training for schoolboys. See Dewey, "Universal Service as Education" (1916), MW 10: 183–90; and "Universal Military Training" (1917), MW 10: 377–93.

⁸⁷ Hugo Münsterberg, *American Patriotism and Other Social Studies* (1913; reprint, Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), 105. In the following discussion of intellectuals during the war, I am indebted to conversations with James Campbell, and to an unpublished draft of the fifth chapter of his history of the A.P.A., "Philosophers in Wartime: The A.P.A. and World War One."

political tensions in Europe made it inevitable. War was brought on by the natural growth of European empires, including both the Central and the Allied Powers; thus, "no one is to be blamed." Each nation entered the war convinced that it was "fighting for a just and solemn cause and that it was performing its national duty."⁸⁸ In his defense of war as a positive good Münsterberg penned a passage that Dewey would have found provocative:

It is as if at the eastern frontier at the town of Königsberg a little old-fashioned man had left the grave, Immanuel Kant, and whispered into the heart of everyone: 'There is only one thing worth while in life, and that is the moral will.' And all are ready to give their lives to protect those boundaries against the Russian onslaught. Never was the moral will of the nation more alive and more pure.⁸⁹

Münsterberg continued this Kantian theme in a third volume, *The Peace and America*, but it is difficult to know if Dewey had time to read it before he published GPP.⁹⁰

Although Münsterberg's writings are more relevant to Dewey's attack on Kant, they were but a small part of the flood of pro-German war propaganda. In a letter "To the Civilized World" published in the *New York Times* in 1914, a galaxy of distinguished German scholars, including Rudolf Eucken, Ernst Haeckel, Karl Lamprecht, Max Planck, Wilhelm Windelband and Wilhelm Wundt, protested the "lies and calumnies with which our enemies are endeavouring to stain the honour of Germany in her hard struggle for existence—a struggle which has been forced upon her." The letter condemned those "who have allied themselves with Russians and Serbians" and who incited "Mongolians and Negroes against the white race."⁹¹ Two years after its publication, Dewey identified the moment as one of sudden and profound disillusionment with the German intellectual tradition that had figured so prominently in his own intellectual formation.

But I doubt if a single outsider who had previously refrained from committing himself as to the justice of the cause did not conclude that if that was all that Germany had to say for herself, bad indeed must be her cause. . . . I doubt if anyone can reread, say, the Address to the Civilized World, without being again overcome by those old sensations of incredulity and amazement. Was it possible that men to whom we had been trained to look up could lend their names, even in a moment of patriotic fervor, to such a farrago?⁹²

Dewey's heightened concern about the notion of inevitable historical progress was not unique among American intellectuals. As Franklin H. Giddings wrote in 1916, whereas "the nineteenth century had closed in a blaze of scientific glory"

⁸⁸ Münsterberg, *The War and America* (New York: D. Appleton, 1914), 43

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 206–7.

⁹⁰ Münsterberg, *The Peace and America* (New York: D. Appleton, 1915). Before his death in 1916, Münsterberg managed to publish a fourth volume in support of the German war effort entitled *Tomorrow, Letters to a Friend in Germany* (New York: D. Appleton, 1916). A Columbia University colleague of Dewey, George Stuart Fullerton, also published a defense of German culture in 1915, but it drew less obviously on Kantian themes; see Fullerton, *Germany of To-day* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1915).

⁹¹ Quoted in Ralph Haswell Lutz, ed., *Fall of the German Empire, 1914–1918*, 2 vols., trans. David G. Rempel and Gertrude Rendtorff (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1932), 1: 74–75.

⁹² Dewey, "Our Educational Ideal in Wartime" (1916), MW 10: 180.

and hopes for the future, World War I raised disturbing doubts about the notion of progress.⁹³ Nicholas Murray Butler eloquently encapsulated the trauma many intellectuals felt:

The peoples who are engaged in this titanic struggle are not untamed barbarians or wild Indians of the virgin forest. They are the best-trained and most highly educated peoples in the world. They have had every advantage that schools and universities can offer, and they have been associated for generations with literature and science and art and everything that is fine and splendid in what we call civilization.

For Butler, and others, civilization had proven to be a “thin veneer” over the “passions of jealousy, envy, hatred, and malice.”⁹⁴

FUTURE RESEARCH INTO DEWEY’S HEGELIAN DEPOSIT

The arguments I have presented here should undermine the traditional view that Dewey made a clean break from Hegel by 1903 and demonstrate that his wartime writings contain, at best, an ambiguous rejection of Hegel. More precisely, rather than reject Hegel during the 1890s, Dewey rejected the British neo-Hegelians’ metaphysical/theological Hegel and, with the assistance of a distinct American Hegelian tradition, embraced a reading that is significantly comparable to the humanistic/historicist Hegel of recent scholarship, according to which he did not posit a transcendent absolute and was primarily concerned with human growth and development. To further mine Dewey’s Hegelian deposit, scholars must distinguish between neo-Hegelianism and the humanistic/historicist Hegel and study Hegel’s writings and recent scholarship on his thought. I am confident that this approach will reveal a more sizeable and interesting Hegelian deposit than has been identified thus far.

Moreover, there is much in recent Hegel scholarship to suggest that there is more to be said about Dewey’s debt to the German philosopher. In 1994, for example, Tom Rockmore asserted, “Hegel . . . proposes a new paradigm of systematic knowledge without foundations with an obvious, but as yet largely unexplored relation to pragmatism.”⁹⁵ Many other scholars have identified unexplored similarities between Hegel’s thought and pragmatism.⁹⁶ The interpretation of Dewey’s debt to Hegel that I have suggested here can help Dewey scholars appreciate these claims by contemporary Hegel scholars.

⁹³ Franklin H. Giddings, “Introduction,” in *Towards an Enduring Peace: A Symposium of Peace Proposals and Programs, 1914–1916*, ed. Randolph Bourne (New York: American Association for International Conciliation, 1916), vii.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Murray Butler, *A World in Ferment: Interpretations of the War for a New World* (New York: Scribner, 1918), 89–90.

⁹⁵ Tom Rockmore, “Hegel’s Metaphysics, or the Categorical Approach to Knowledge of Experience,” in *Hegel Reconsidered* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), 54.

⁹⁶ See Robert Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel: A Study of G. W. F. Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 11, 176; Robert Brandom, “Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel’s Idealism,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 7 (1999): 164–89; Antje Gimmler, “Pragmatic Aspects of Hegel’s Thought,” in *The Pragmatic Turn in Philosophy: Contemporary Engagements between Analytic and Continental Thought*, eds. William Egginton and Mike Sandbothe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 47–66.

In 1965 George Eastman complained about Joseph Ratner's need to show "that Hegelianism—and idealism in general—is an effete, a somehow suspect, if not dissolute philosophy from which Dewey wisely, and heroically, freed himself."⁹⁷ Perhaps Dewey's GPP and other books like it motivated some Dewey scholars to identify a clean break from Hegel and to place it at a relatively early date in his intellectual development. Perhaps it is also no accident that the book that inaugurated this trend in Dewey scholarship, White's *The Origins of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, was written during World War II and published in 1943, just one year after the second edition of GPP. To understand better his "permanent Hegelian deposit," Dewey scholars must liberate themselves from the chains of prejudice about Hegel that were created by the exigencies of twentieth-century warfare.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ George Eastman, review of *John Dewey: Philosophy, Psychology and Social Practice*, ed. Joseph Ratner, *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 4 (1965): 95–104. See also Joseph Ratner's "Reply to George Eastman," *Ibid.*, 105–7.

⁹⁸ I presented previous versions of this paper to the Department of History at Rice University; the 2002 Young Scholars Forum at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C.; and at the *Institut für historische Bildungsforschung Pestalozzianum* in Zürich, Switzerland. I benefited greatly from comments I received in all of those venues as well the comments of readers for this Journal.