

## THE ONTOLOGY OF MODERN TERRORISM: HEGEL, TERRORISM STUDIES, AND DYNAMICS OF VIOLENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** While the terrorism studies literature speaks of a shape of terrorism unique to modernity, the exact nature of modern terrorism, let alone the nature of modernity or its starting point, remain much in dispute. In this article we suggest that the confusion and conflict within the literature arises from a tendency to focus on certain outward or inessential features associated with modernity. In order to truly answer the question of what makes modern terrorism modern, the question needs to be set on a new footing, one which inquires into the necessary and not instrumental relationship between modernity and terrorism—i.e., that inquires into the possibility of an inner dynamic which can take us from the nature of modernity itself to terrorism. In this article we suggest that the intellectual resources for an understanding of modern terrorism in the fullest sense can be found within the preeminent nineteenth-century philosopher of the birth of the modern, G.W.F. Hegel. More specifically, through a reconstruction of Hegel's account of the French Revolution we can uncover the possibility of understanding modern terrorism as an ontological rather than a temporal category. In other words, we can uncover resources that help us grasp what modern terrorism is, rather than in what age—with its instrumental possibilities given by, say, technology or ideology—it is found. What makes modern terrorism truly modern, we will argue, is a particular shape of self-consciousness that, Hegel shows us, stands as the deep structure of early modernity, and which contains within it an inner dynamic towards a uniquely modern shape of terrorism. While all terrorism that occurs within modernity is not modern, a truly modern terrorism can be identified.

**KEYWORDS:** Hegel; Terrorism; Modernity; French Revolution

### I. INTRODUCTION

While the terrorism studies literature speaks of a shape of terrorism unique to modernity, the exact nature of modern terrorism, let alone the nature of modernity or its starting point, remain much in dispute. In this article we suggest that the confusion and conflict within the literature arises from a tendency to focus on certain outward or inessential features associated with modernity. In order to answer the question of what makes modern terrorism truly modern, the question needs to be set on a new

footing, one that inquires into the *necessary* and not *instrumental* relationship between modernity and terrorism—i.e., that inquires into the possibility of an inner dynamic which can take us from the nature of modernity itself to terrorism. In this article we suggest that the intellectual resources for an understanding of modern terrorism in the fullest sense can be found within the preeminent nineteenth-century philosopher of the birth of the modern, G.W.F. Hegel. More specifically, through a reconstruction of Hegel's account of the French Revolution we can uncover the possibility of understanding modern terrorism as an *ontological* rather than a *temporal* category. In other words, we can uncover resources that help us grasp what modern terrorism *is*, rather than in what age—with its instrumental possibilities given by, say, technology or ideology—it is found. What makes modern terrorism truly modern, we will argue, is a particular shape of self-consciousness that, Hegel shows us, stands as the deep structure of early modernity, and which contains within it an inner dynamic towards a uniquely modern shape of terrorism. While all terrorism that occurs within modernity is not modern, a truly modern terrorism can be identified.

The argument of this article moves through five sections: Part II examines attempts by the terrorism literature to locate and conceptualize the relationship between terrorism and modernity; Part III begins our turn to Hegel's account of modernity and terrorism, by exploring his attempt to locate the nature of modernity; Parts IV and V comprise the heart of our analysis of Hegel's account of the French Revolution, and the relationship between a uniquely modern logic of identity, community, and the dynamic of terroristic violence that necessarily emerges from it; and, finally, Part VI concludes with the implications of our analysis for the terrorism literature.

## II. THE QUESTION OF MODERNITY AND TERRORISM WITHIN TERRORISM STUDIES

If we wish to understand the nature of modern terrorism as something truly or ontologically bound up—and not something merely chronologically associated—with the modern era however understood, we suggest that the intellectual resources to do so can be found in Hegel's account of the French Revolution in his notoriously difficult *Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in 1806 and his later *Philosophy of Right*, published in 1821.<sup>1</sup> Yet, is such a turn to Hegel even necessary? In sec. A we show that the terrorism studies literature focuses on a variety of features, including ones associated with the French Revolution, as important to an understanding of the relationship between modernity and terrorism as Hegel also does, however, as we will see in sec. B, this literature in general provides no adequate way to move from the identification of this plurality of *facts* associated with modern terrorism to *why* such terrorism might be *necessarily* modern.

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, New York, Oxford University Press, 1977; all citations are by paragraph number. G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Allen W. Wood (ed.), trans. H.B. Nisbet, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996; citations are to section number, except in the Preface where only page numbers are given.

### A. *The French Revolution and Historicizing Terrorism*

Many studies of terrorism begin discussion of the concept with the French Revolution, or even with a later event. Weinberg argues that the Revolution had the effect of providing an ideal for subsequent revolutionaries to pursue and a model for using tyrannicide as a means of removing repressive leaders.<sup>2</sup> As terrorism increasingly came to be seen as an action perpetrated against the state, starting studies of the phenomenon with the Revolution makes some logical sense. Moreover, the etymology of ‘terrorism’, as a term, is traceable to 1793–94’s *régime de la terreur*. As has been widely noted, however, in this context, terrorism was the system by which the Revolutionary government protected the new state against ‘enemies of the people’, counterrevolutionaries and other internal threats. The mainstream, present, view of terrorism as revolutionary or antigovernmental violence conducted predominantly against the state by substate actors, is a more recent evolution of the term.<sup>3</sup>

The French Revolution also marks the point at which accusations of terrorism are first used to delegitimize and discredit political opponents, through demonization and exaggerated accounts of the atrocities committed by the revolutionaries. Messer shows that Edmund Burke ‘sought to discredit the revolutionaries’ policies and principles by portraying them as enemies of humanity—inhuman brutes who abandoned reason and politics in favor of destruction and terror’. Since Burke was writing *Reflections on the Revolution in France* during the early phases of the Revolution in 1790, rather than during the much more lethal Terror of 1793–94, his description of mass violence owed as much to his reactionary political inclinations as to events occurring in France.<sup>4</sup> Narratives treating terrorism as an innately pejorative term and its perpetrators as inherently illegitimate actors continue to the present. The French Revolution becomes the start of modern terrorism and at the same moment it begins a modern dialogue of counter-terrorism.

While Hoffman and others have shown that the term ‘terrorism’ can be traced to a specific time and place in history, as Laqueur suggests, ‘there have been terrorists (and terrorism movements) *avant la lettre*’.<sup>5</sup> However, Laqueur’s examples of such violence before the French Revolution focus on religious motivations, notably the three ancient groups (Zealot-Sicariis, Assassins, Thugees) highlighted by Rapoport.<sup>6</sup> Others have focused primarily on tyrannicide as a form of proto-terrorism.<sup>7</sup> If pre-French Revolution

2. Leonard Weinberg, *Global Terrorism: A Beginner’s Guide*, Oxford, OneWorld, 2005, pp. 22–23. Laqueur has shown how the revolutionaries of Russia in the 1880s found inspiration in the Terror and the actions of St Just, Robespierre and others. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, New York, Little, Brown, 1987, pp. 25–26.

3. Cindy C. Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 24. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2006, 2nd Ed., p. 3.

4. Peter C. Messer, ‘Feel the Terror: Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*’, in Isaac Land (ed.), *Enemies of Humanity: The Nineteenth Century War on Terrorism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 23–44.

5. Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, p. 12.

6. David C. Rapoport, ‘Fear and Trembling in Three Religious Traditions,’ *American Political Science Review*, vol. 78, no. 3, 1984, p. 658–677.

7. Weinberg, *Global Terrorism*, p. 22; Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 20–24; Martin Miller, ‘The Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism in Europe’ in Martha Crenshaw (ed.) *Terrorism in Context*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, p. 29.

terrorism is characterized as being largely motivated by religion or limited to some form of assassination, then the Revolution would represent a significant shift from anything that preceded it, being both overtly secular and more widespread than the earlier non-religious violence. Chaliand and Blin have noted that key French Revolutionaries understood that executing a single tyrant might not end a tyranny.<sup>8</sup> Therefore they engaged in a systematic intimidation of the enemy that although initially spontaneous and instinctive, was latterly bureaucratic and doctrinaire.<sup>9</sup> This systemic intimidation had ‘the goal not only of changing the political regime, but also transforming society,’<sup>10</sup> and in adopting such methods, they were followed by subsequent revolutionaries in different countries.

Duyvesteyn has critiqued this standard historical account within the literature of terrorism in the nineteenth century. She suggests that such discussions focus on elements that supposedly distinguish political violence in that century from the violence which preceded it. First, she identifies the growth of secret societies, most notably the Carbonari sects from the early nineteenth century, consisting of like-minded individuals dedicated to using violence to attain political objectives, but suggests that this can be seen as little more than a variation in the age-old use of conspiracy to attain such goals. Second, she notes the theoretical changes that allegedly permitted terrorism to be used to achieve such political ends—most notably, the works of Karl Heinzen and Johann Most justified murder as the most effective means to make such gains. Duyvesteyn makes two points here. First, she asks whether the rise of secular justifications for murder really offer a substantially different account of what is permissible from the religious justifications of earlier ages and, even if it does so, how radical a break from precedence such justification provide, given that earlier secular justifications exist in the early sixteenth century work of Niccolò Machiavelli?<sup>11</sup> Duyvesteyn’s second point relates to technology, a central factor of some of the accounts discussed below.<sup>12</sup> Miller similarly questions the unique contribution of changes in technology and justifications for terrorism associated with the Revolution, he nonetheless suggests that the French Revolution matters to the history of terrorism because it represents a crucial shift in the targets of violence ‘[d]iscrete objects of violence now were transformed into indiscriminate subjects of violence’ and in doing so, political violence became the province of virtually undifferentiated subjects who were simultaneously its potential victims, replacing the discrete objects of the past, and its perpetrators’<sup>12</sup>

In this brief survey, we see that the dominant lines of thought within the terrorism literature locate the importance of the French Revolution as an instance of modern terrorism because, variously, of the way it introduces new objects of violence, utilizes new

8. Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, ‘Manifestations of Terror Through the Ages’ in Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin (eds.), *The History of Terrorism From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007, p. 84.

9. Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, p. 26.

10. Chaliand and Blin, ‘Manifestations of Terror Through the Ages’, p. 84.

11. Isabelle Duyvesteyn, ‘The Role of History and Continuity in Terrorism Research’ in Magnus Ranstorp (ed.), *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Direction*, London, Routledge, 2007, pp. 56-57.

12. Miller, ‘Modern Terrorism in Europe’, p. 31.

technologies, as well as new motivations and justifications for violence that empirically differ from earlier modes of violence, even that characterized as terroristic. However, the identification of the fact of this new mode of terrorism is not the same as an explanation of why modernity itself makes it so. At this point, then, we must move from the ‘that it is so’ (terrorism in the modern age *seems* different because of this or that feature) to ‘why it is so’.

An awareness of this need to shift from the whole complex of *facts* associated with terrorism in modernity (objects, technologies, motivations)—what we might call the ‘playing field’ of modernity—to a larger account which can explain the *animating orientation* to that whole complex of facts—what we might call the ‘game’ that is played—is not absent from the terrorism literature. For example, we see Gueniffey suggesting that ‘The Terror was neither a product of ideology nor a reaction to circumstance. It is attributable neither to the rights of man, nor to the plotting of the Coblenz émigrés, nor even to the Jacobin utopia of virtue. It was the product of the revolutionary dynamic, as it would be, perhaps, of all revolutionary dynamics. In that, it arose from the very nature of the Revolution, of all revolution.’<sup>13</sup> As well, we find Duyvesteyn rhetorically asking ‘Is it fair to ascribe [...] a revolutionary effect only on the phenomenon of terrorism? To what extent can societal developments and changes in the practice of terrorism be separated?’<sup>14</sup> These attempts by Gueniffey and Duyvesteyn point us in the right direction, because they point to an attempt to explain the inner necessity (located in the nature of revolution or society development) that generates terrorism rather than is simply *used* by it. Here, then, to understand what is modern in terrorism (and there may be all sorts of terrorism which are not modern) is to locate that uniquely modern inner dynamic towards terrorism.

### B. Terrorism and Modernity

The issue of when the modern era of terrorism begins is disputed, in part because the most salient features of modernity are also disputed within the terrorism literature. Rapoport has provided a vision of such terrorism as having four waves, starting with anarchist terror in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, followed by anti-colonial violence from the 1920s to the 1960s, leftist terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s and finally religiously motivated terrorism from the 1980s onwards.<sup>15</sup> He argues that ‘Modern terror began in Russia in the 1880s and within a decade appeared in Western Europe, the Balkans, and Asia.’<sup>16</sup> Rapoport notes two key changes which permitted the Russian anarchists to engage in violence unlike anything that had preceded it. First, communication and transportation changed rapidly in the last decades of the nineteenth century,

13. Patrice Gueniffey, *La politique de la Terreur: Essai sur la violence révolutionnaire*, cited in Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 99.

14. Duyvesteyn, ‘The Role of History and Continuity in Terrorism Research’, pp. 56-57.

15. David Rapoport, ‘The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism’ in Audrey Cronin and James Ludes (eds.), *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, Washington DC, Georgetown University Press, 2004, pp. 46-73.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

dramatically altering the constraints of geography. Telegraphs, railways and mass newspapers all meant that events could become widely known, only days after they had occurred. Furthermore, members of the Russian group, Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will), were able to travel widely, disseminating their message. Rapoport argues that the second critical change was the development of a particular doctrine or culture or strategy of terror that others might emulate and improve upon. He cites Max Weber's assertion that the desire to make an activity efficient and to rationalize it is a central feature of modern life.<sup>17</sup> Yet while these changes in technology and the presence of a strategy of terror may allow for the efficient and violent instrumentalization and dissemination of terror, the *purpose* for which this instrumentalization is done is given by a deeper shared motivation or total self-conception: anarchist, nationalist, leftist, and religious. Implicitly in Rapoport's account, changes in self-conception constitute the boundary posts, marking the transition from one wave to the next. Disputes about these boundaries are, likewise, disputes about the relevant animating self-conception, as for example in Sedgwick's reworking of Rapoport's typology.<sup>18</sup>

One of Rapoport's goals in historicizing terror in this way was to demonstrate that any accounts of modern terrorism that began only in the late 1960s, and certainly only on September 11, 2001, were flawed accounts of the phenomenon. The argument that 'modern, international terrorism' began in July 1968 is best articulated by Hoffman. He is certainly not suggesting that terrorism began in the 1960s or 1970s, but he does make a case for 1968—when members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked an El-Al plane en route between Rome and Tel Aviv—as being seen as the start of the type of terrorism that has dominated through to the present. For Hoffman, with this attack

the nature and character of terrorism demonstrably changed. For the first time, terrorists began to travel regularly from one country to another to carry out attacks. In addition, they also began to target innocent civilians from other countries [...] simply in order to endow their acts with the power to attract attention and publicity that attacks against their declared or avowed enemies often lacked. Their intent was to shock and, by shocking, to stimulate worldwide fear and alarm. These dramatic tactical changes in terrorism were facilitated by the technological advances of the time that had transformed the speed and ease of international commercial air travel and vastly improved both the quality of television new footage and the promptness with which that footage could be broadcast around the globe.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Ibid, pp. 48-49, 65.

18. Sedgwick suggested recategorizing the waves as Italians (nineteenth and early twentieth century revolutionary groups, including the Russians and anarchists with which Rapoport begins his account, inspired by the Risorgimento), Germans (reactionary groups inspired by the SA during the 1920s and 1930s), Chinese (groups, including those with anti-colonial or left-wing revolutionary objectives from the 1950s to 1970s, that were inspired by the Maoist triumph in the Chinese civil war), and Afghans (Islamist-nationalist groups, operating from the late 1970s onwards and inspired by the mujahidin). Mark Sedgwick, 'Inspiration and Origins of Global Waves of Terrorism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2007, pp. 97-112.

19. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 63-64.

Rapoport's and Hoffman's accounts seem at odds if we focus only on the question of where modern terrorism begins. However, if our purpose is to ask how we might theorize the inner relationship between modernity and terrorism, we can notice important and complimentary insights into the relationship between modernity and violence. Both emphasize that the shape of modern violence becomes comprehensible not only by understanding the technological possibilities associated with modernity, but more importantly by understanding a particular conception of consciousness or shared self-understanding that takes advantages of these technologies in unique ways. When taken together, Rapoport's and Hoffman's accounts mark out the range of phenomena that must be included in any attempt to locate the inner necessity of truly modern terrorism. From Rapoport, we see that such a unified account must include the general self-consciousness or 'energy' that provides the broad motivations and purposes—i.e., strategies—for the violent instrumentalization of technology. From Hoffman, we see that whatever other factors we identify, they must be able to account for, out of itself, why violence at all and why violence in its *specific shape*. Without the broad self-consciousness rooted in the age, there is no ontologically modern self-understanding to provide motivations and justifications that characterize modern terrorism. Without the linking of the tactics of violence to a modern self-consciousness, there is no ontologically modern terrorism. So, if we cannot discover a broad account of modern self-consciousness which internally gives rise to a modern shape of violence, then modernity would at most merely provide the unique playing field in which the old game of terrorist violence is played out with new technological and ideational equipment. If there is an inner connection between modernity and terrorism, then modernity must generate both the playing field *and* the shape of the game itself.

We are unable to find resources to theorize such a link within the terrorism literature, even if theorists such as Duyvesteyn, Gueniffey, Rapoport, and Hoffman implicitly point us towards the need for such theorization. What we suggest is that we step behind the terrorism literature to a much earlier account of the relationship between modernity and terrorism: Hegel's account of the French Revolution and the Terror. Hegel's work on the Terror has not, for the most part, directly informed the terrorism literature.

### III. HEGEL, HISTORY, AND THE ONTOLOGY OF MODERNITY

If we are to move from an instrumental or external understandings of the relationship between modernity and terrorism we must search for that inner dynamic which takes us from modernity to that violence we call terrorism. Such a search requires, though, that we know what modernity is. Here a turn to Hegel's political thought holds promise because he attempts to locate both what modernity *is* and connects this ontology of modernity to the Terror of the French Revolution, such that the latter becomes, for him, the uniquely modern moment of violence. Now, Hegel's grand theorizing has much fallen out of favour, replaced by more analytic concerns, and even his most in-

fluent contemporary revivers, such as Charles Taylor, have noted that Hegel's 'ontology of Geist is close to incredible'.<sup>20</sup> Yet, we can also grasp Hegel's social ontology simply as an attempt to locate the central organizing principle of a particular social world in a way that we have also seen in Rapoport's waves of terrorism. While the question of modernity's relationship to terrorism does not require we accept or explore these larger claims about Hegel's ontology of *Geist*, we do need to begin with his account of the development of modernity in order to locate the principle he takes to be at work within it.

In his most important political work, the *Philosophy of Right* (published in 1821, and intended to accompany his lectures at the University of Berlin),<sup>21</sup> Hegel provides his reader with a broad and infamous periodization of world history as one that develops from the ethical inadequacies of the 'Oriental Realm' through 'Greek' and 'Roman' worlds towards the completion of human freedom in the 'Germanic Realm'.<sup>22</sup> In doing so, Hegel leaves us with the impression that modernity is exhausted by a particular set of familial, economic, and political institutions that would be broadly familiar to his lecture audience in the post-Napoleonic West.<sup>23</sup> Hegel's historical account, though, is undergirded not by a study of the procession and relation of empirical details concerning institutions or attitudes, but by an account centred on principles of identity or self-conception. For Hegel, only by grasping these principles of identity does one have a philosophically sound periodization. Indeed, to fixate on the empirical details alone is to fixate on what is arbitrary. Such details, as Hegel says dismissively, 'are questions of appearance, and consequently a matter for history' and the historian; they are and not matters for 'scientific cognition' and the philosopher.<sup>24</sup> These principles of identity, however, go beyond simply a matter of ideological world view or religious or cultural identity. They are objective structures of both individual identity and the institutional order because these principles are the internal source out of which the distinct empirical worlds of identity, culture, and institution are generated. So, for Hegel, to grasp the principle of identity is to grasp the *intrinsic* connection between institution, meaning, action and epoch, for it is to grasp the principle of periodization itself. Those institutions, meanings, and actions that do not fit the principle of the age are then to be seen as contingent: a matter of historical curiosity perhaps, but philosophically uninteresting. Since our question is the relationship between this age of modernity and the act of terrorism, Hegel's idea of principles of identity holds out the promise that we can inquire

20. Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 69.

21. Hegel, PR Preface, p. 9.

22. Hegel, PR § 354. See also Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 196-209.

23. Indeed for this reason Rudolf Haym called Hegel 'the philosophical dictator of Germany' whose aim was to justify the political order 'as it stood in Prussia in 1821' (cited in Joachim Ritter, *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, trans. Richard Dien Winfeld, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1984, pp. 35-36. For a good discussion, and rejection of Hegel's subservient relation to the Prussian state, especially as it pertains to the Carlsbad decrees of September 20, 1819 see T. M. Knox, 'Hegel and Prussianism' in Walter Kaufmann (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, New York, Atherton Press, 1970, pp. 13-29.

24. Hegel, PR § 258 Remark [p. 276].



into the relationship between modernity and terrorism in a fundamental rather than contingent (i.e., historical) way.

Within Hegel's most important political work, there are three principles of identity which structure human history. Using his formidable terminology, they are: the substantive, the subjective, and the ethical (*Sittlich*).<sup>25</sup> Although these labels are both opaque and abstract, their meanings can be translated into more familiar language. The substantive principle and the world it generates is one in which all identity is given—found before us—in the shape of fixed roles and obligations and traditions already, and unmodifiably so, filled with content. Hegel associates the substantive principle most strongly with the ancient 'Oriental' and 'Greek' realms and their thorough-going dominance of the community.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, the subjective principle and its world inverts the substantive principle, so that all the content of the world is now understood to be *created* by each individual, not imposed onto each. Importantly, as we will see below, Hegel links this principle to the French Revolution and its Terror. Finally, the principle of ethicality generates a world of institutions, meanings, and events that allows for the living unity or 'interpenetration'<sup>27</sup> of the previous principles of substance and subject, in what Hegel calls 'the infinitely subjective substantiality of ethical life'.<sup>28</sup> This 'ethical' unity is possible, he suggests, only in the post-Napoleonic world of the north European state: 'for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning'.<sup>29</sup> Only there does he see an empirical world in which the bearers of the two antecedent principles—particular individuality (subjectivity), and the state (substance)—find their proper relationship and fulfillment each inextricably through the other.

Now we notice here, not a tension but a more complex mapping between the three-fold principles of identity which allow a philosophic periodization and the periodization that Hegel provides in the *Philosophy of Right* which moves from the Orient to the Greeks and Rome and ends with the Germanic realm. The movement from the Orient to Rome is for Hegel a movement in which the principle of substantiality gives way, in discreet steps, to a world in which subjectivity becomes dominant within that substantiality. The Germanic realm encompasses all that comes after Rome, and yet the Germanic realm is the realm of *ethical* modernity. We are left with the question: in what age does the principle of subjectivity reside? If subjectivity does not reside within modernity and if the only great act of violence that Hegel mentions, the Terror, is associated with subjectivity then Hegel turns out to be a rather poor choice for understanding the relationship between modernity and terrorism. However, we ought not to give up on

25. These three principles are the articulations of three logical forms—universality, particularity, and singularity—which comprise the very structure of thought and the will (see Hegel, PR §§ 5-7, 24-27, 352-354, and Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, H.S. Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1991, § 163).

26. Hegel, PR § 355 Remark.

27. Hegel, PR § 261 Remark [p. 284].

28. Hegel, PR § 187 Remark [p. 225].

29. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, p. 197.

Hegel too quickly, for he indicates that the Germanic realm's ethicality has *two* distinct shapes: one of 'ethical barbarism and of crude arbitrariness'<sup>30</sup> which he crucially associates with the 'inwardness of this principle' of ethicality, i.e., with 'subjectivity';<sup>31</sup> and, the other with ethicality absolved of barbarism because subjectivity comes to properly mediated and moderated by the substantiality of the state.<sup>32</sup> Although Hegel speaks here of subjectivity as merely a modality of ethicality, and therefore as if *ethicality* were the only relevant principle for distinguishing the modern (Germanic) world from the pre-modern (Orient to Rome), subjectivity is in fact both a logically and a politically distinct principle for Hegel.<sup>33</sup>

So, Hegel's account of the singularity of modernity as an epoch, on one side, and the logical and political distinctness of the principles of subjectivity and substance on the other, are not in tension. Instead, Hegel points us to the way that modernity as an age is marked by *two* principles of identity. At its birth, modernity is animated by the principle of subjectivity and this establishment of 'the right of *subjective freedom* [...] is the pivotal and focal point in the difference between *antiquity* and the *modern age*'.<sup>34</sup> At modernity's end, when 'actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state' and the 'shape of [modern] life has grown old',<sup>35</sup> modernity is animated by the principle of ethicality: subjectivity interpenetrated with substantiality. So, modernity is *one* because the principle of ethicality underwrites that unity, yet it has two philosophically distinct moments depending on whether one focuses on its birth or its completion. In modernity's old age, for Hegel, the principle of subjectivity will give to the ethical state its 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*.<sup>36</sup> But, at modernity's birth this same principle necessarily produces 'the most terrible and drastic event',<sup>37</sup> 'the fanaticism of destruction, demolishing the whole existing order, eliminating all individuals regarded as suspect by a given order, and annihilating any organization which attempts to arise anew'.<sup>38</sup> So, to grasp the inner connection between modernity and terrorism, in a way that existing approaches do not, we now need to explore with Hegel this uniquely modern principle of identity.

30. Hegel, PR § 359.

31. Hegel, PR § 359.

32. Hegel, PR § 360.

33. See Hegel, PR §§ 25, 33, and Part II Morality; and Hegel, PhG 'Absolute Freedom and Terror', ¶¶ 582-595. For a discussion of the relationship between the terms 'ethical' and 'morality' and in the *Philosophy of Right* and *Phenomenology* see Will Dudley, 'Ethical Life, Morality and the Role of Spirit' in Dean Moyar and Michael Quante (eds.), *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

34. Hegel, PR § 124 Remark. We must say 'establishment', not simply 'awareness' of subjectivity because, e.g., Hegel notes that in part Plato's genius consisted in his being 'aware that the ethics of his time were being penetrated by a deeper principle' (Hegel, PR Preface pp. 20-21; see also §§ 46 Remark, 185 Remark [pp. 222-223] and Addition, 206 Remark [p. 238], and 262 Remark and Addition).

35. Hegel, PR Preface, p. 23.

36. Hegel, PR § 260.

37. Hegel, PR § 258 Remark [p. 277].

38. Hegel, PR § 5 Remark [p. 38].

#### IV. THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF MODERNITY AT ITS BIRTH

For Hegel, the political playing out of the logic of subjectivity occurs in the French Revolution, and so we need to turn to his account of that event in his *Phenomenology of Mind*. As we will see, there are three uniquely modern demands which subjectivity makes. They concern: (sec. A) the sources of political and cultural meaning; (sec. B) the necessity of membership in a community; and, (sec. C) the possibilities of the community's speaking on behalf of its members. As we will see in Part V, these three demands constitute the inner dynamic of modernity itself towards violence and not merely *pre-conditions* for violence.

##### *A. The Individual Will as the Absolute Source of Meaning*

To be certain that one's world view is correct and ought to be respected by others is not a unique feature of modernity's principle of subjectivity. However, pre-modern claims to individual certainty are grounded in a different principle: they are undergirded by substantive claims of externally given authority—one here needs only to think of Socrates and his *daimonion*, Roman formal reliance on auguries, and the Abrahamic religions' use of revelation as its moment of grounding authority. For Hegel, the emergence of modernity's founding principle radically transforms the source of our certainty from a pre-modern externality to a new, modern internality. Rather than the external world transported inwards (e.g., through spiritual messengers, animal innards, divine revelation or more prosaically, an attitude of piety and obedience to the community's laws and traditions), the subject—the one who experiences this certainty—is now taken to be the *source* of all meaning. Modernity's birth is simultaneously the birth of a new 'self-consciousness', one that 'grasps the fact that its certainty of itself is the essence of all spiritual "masses", or spheres, of the real as well as the supersensible world, or conversely, that essence and actuality are consciousness's knowledge of *itself*'.<sup>39</sup> With this new mode of self-consciousness, the pre-modern possibilities and relations of identity are inverted: the multiplex differentiations of existing social, cultural, political, and religious life all can no longer be understood to have their own validity, their own obligations, and respect that is owed to them by their very givenness. They can no longer serve as a source for self-consciousness' content. In Hegel's language, 'the complexities of existence' in which the first modern self-consciousness finds itself 'immersed' at its birth—i.e., the premodern into which the modern consciousness is born—are now obstacles to meaning, rather than its source.<sup>40</sup>

In this way, Hegel asks us to look at this first modern self-consciousness and its system of meaning, not in terms of some its concrete content (e.g., the particular ideological content of anarchism, nationalism, communism, or religious fundamentalism which Rapoport identifies) but as a *relation* to concrete content. This uniquely modern relation is that *all* pre-existing concrete content *whatsoever* is rejected because its source

39. Hegel, PhG ¶ 584.

40. Hegel, PhG ¶ 594 [p. 362].

is other than the individual will. Therefore, unlike the pre-modern sources of meaning, first modernity's are absolute and singular. Absolute, because the 'complexities of existence' have lost their validity and no given content can constitute a meaningful challenge to the will. Singular, because in 'the view, especially prevalent since Rousseau', meaning has but a single source: 'the *particular* individual, [...] [i.e.,] the will of the single person in his distinctive arbitrariness'.<sup>41</sup>

At this point, Hegel's foundation for modernity and modern terrorism can seem but a variant of the idea of rejectionist violence: violence emerges out of the dismissal of externally-validated orders or structures. Despite this conformity, there is something more radical going on in Hegel's account. For Hegel's identification of the modern self-consciousness is one that does not depend upon or require any particular *content*. In this way, modernity's animating principle is *prior to* ideological content and is indeed the precondition for the development of any *truly modern* ideologies by establishing the modern *relation* of individuals to the world. Nonetheless, the radicality of Hegel's rejectionist account does not take it beyond the core features that Hoffman, and many others, see as constitutive of terrorism as a phenomenon (whether modern or not): first, violence is 'organized, deliberate and systematic' rather than random or indiscriminate; second, it reflects a drive to create a 'new and better society' to replace a corrupt or unfair political system.<sup>42</sup> So, to understand modern terrorism, we do not need to look for ideological content that forms a 'blue print' of a new world, but we do need to see how this uniquely modern self-consciously nonetheless produces *relational criteria* for a new world, one that no world can ever actualize—as we will see. The first such criterion is membership in a community.

### *B. Membership in the Community as the Absolute Duty*

If modernity's birth places 'the will of the single person in his distinctive arbitrariness' as the 'substantial and primary factor'<sup>43</sup> we might think that Hegel would see modernity as demanding a radical pluralism or relativity of meaning, e.g., as present in Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy in the late seventeenth century, who argues that there is no '*finis ultimus*, (ultimate aim,) nor *summum bonum*, (greatest good,) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers' to rule and measure objectively individual claims about the good.<sup>44</sup> Now, terrorism as a project requires a motivation that is political and therefore that is bound up with shared and not radically idiosyncratic understandings of the world. In other words, terrorism as a project requires ideas that exist in such a way that one can *act on their behalf*. Hoffman and others have observed that 'the terrorist is fundamentally an altruist: he believes that he is serving a 'good' cause designed to achieve a greater good for a wider constituency—whether real or imagined—that the terrorist

41. Hegel, PR § 29 Remark.

42. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 4.

43. Hegel, PR § 29 Remark.

44. Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998 [1651], Bk. I, ch. 11 [1], p. 65.

and his organization purport to represent'.<sup>45</sup> Since terrorism *qua* terrorism is not, literally, madness, terrorism *qua* terrorism requires membership in a community. If the founding principle of modernity does not contain an internal dynamic to community then terrorism either cannot be uniquely modern or, if uniquely modern, it cannot be terrorism.

For Hegel, Rousseau's political writings anticipate the shape of the first modern community by articulating the new shape of membership that modernity's birth demands: membership must not be understood as membership in a particular, historically bound, and therefore finite, community but as membership in a universal or infinite community created and sustained only by the active participation of each individual subjectivity. Rousseau called this membership and its attendant community the 'general will' (*volonté générale*). Within it, Hegel sees radically creative possibilities, for unlike pre-modern communities, this general will, this first modern conception of the community is 'not the empty thought of will which consists in silent assent, or assent by a representative, but a real general will, the will of all *individuals* as such'.<sup>46</sup> Only in this active self-creation can membership not be something externally conferred by birth (e.g., the Greeks) or a juridical act (e.g., Romans) or through voluntary assent for pragmatic reasons (e.g., British seventeenth century social contract theorists, Hobbes and Locke), but internally produced. Membership here dictates the possibilities of the community's content, for if it emerges out of *all* individuals, then that content can only be 'the *common element* arising out of [...] [each] individual will as a *conscious will*'.<sup>47</sup> In other words, the community can not consist in what is *empirically* shared or common to individuals but only what is '*commonly*' willed by all individuals. For this reason, Hegel speaks of the birth of the modern self-consciousness as the seeming destruction or loss of the community as 'each individual consciousness raises itself out of its [previously] allotted sphere, [so that it] no longer finds its essence and its work in this particular sphere, but [instead] grasps itself as the *concept* [*Begriff*] of the will, [and] grasps all spheres as the essence of this will'.<sup>48</sup> What is lost, though, is not the idea of membership in community as critical to identity but the idea that identity and membership is defined by given content (e.g., class, religion, ethnicity, geography, birth, etc.), rather than an act of the will.

So, at this moment at the birth of modernity, we have the critical reconfiguration of the relationship between the absolute source of meaning (the individual will) and the re-

45. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 37.

46. Hegel, PhG ¶ 584; see also Hegel, PR § 258 Remark [p. 277] and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* in *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (ed.), New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1762], Bk. II, ch.1, p. 368.

47. Hegel, PR § 258 Remark [p. 277].

48. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585 (translation modified, here and elsewhere, so that *Begriff* reads 'concept' instead of 'Notion'). Compare this modern setting-aside of the given world with Joseph de Maistre, the preeminent philosopher of the counter-revolution, who comments 'Every man has certain duties to fulfil, and the extent of his duties is relative to his civil position and the extent of his means. The same action on the part of two given men may be very far from being equally criminal. In the same way, an action that is only an error or a bit of madness on the part of an obscure man suddenly raised to unlimited power would be a crime if committed by a bishop, duke, or peer' (Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France*, trans. Richard A. Lebrun (ed.), New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006 [1797], ch. 2, pp. 10-11).

quirement of membership in the community. If there is nothing valid outside of my will, then the process of willing together the formation of the community (participating in the general will) is the only process by which I, as an individual, can determine whether what I will has emerged from the now-invalid complexities of external existence or has emerged from my subjectivity alone. For subjectivity is that pure universality ‘in which every limitation, every content, whether present immediately through nature, through needs, desires, and drives, or given and determined in some other way, is dissolved’.<sup>49</sup> In this way, the modern principle of subjectivity cannot exist without membership, and the shape of this membership cannot be any other than membership in the universal community. Notice here how this ontologically modern idea of membership radicalizes the relationship between individual and identity. The individual does not *represent* some good (e.g., as Hoffman characterizes it) as if the good were external and independent of individuals. The good is only present, now, *as* the will of each, and *only* exists as that willing-together, as the general will. As we will see below, this unity of good and the will has profound implications for the shape of the community and for fashioning modernity’s inner dynamic towards the ‘fanaticism of destruction’.

### *C. The Community as the Absolute Truth of the Individual Will*

Modernity lives not only as a principle but as a world or, more prosaically, a community. Unlike approaches that look to the distinctive shape of the modern community in unique forms of communication or transportation technology, particular ideological goals, tactical intentions, or some particular religious world view Hegel’s account of subjectivity as the principle of first modernity suggests they are not able to grasp what is definitively unique about modernity itself because they look for a unique *content* to modernity, whereas modernity’s uniquely animating principle can produce only a world that ‘no longer has any content, possession, existence, or outer extension, but is merely this knowledge of itself as an absolutely pure and free individual self’.<sup>50</sup> Since the principle at modernity’s birth only can give rise to a new *relation* to content, one in which there are no valid ‘complexities of existence’, Hegel’s account draws our attention to the way in which modernity’s absolute demands of meaning and membership construct a new kind of community through a new consciousness of the proper relationship between the individual and the community.

This new, uniquely modern relationship promises that the ‘earthly’ world of everyday practical action will become the ‘heavenly’ world animated by what is now taken to be the only true foundational principle, the individual will. In the French Revolution, Hegel sees this promise play itself out in a community which attempts to live such that ‘[t]he two worlds are reconciled and heaven [is transplanted to the earth below]’.<sup>51</sup> The ‘heaven’, though, consists in no substantial blueprint, no positive image of the content of the new world, but is the principle that the world, i.e., the community, is to be animated

49. Hegel, PR § 5, Remark and Addition.

50. Hegel, PhG ¶ 590.

51. Hegel, PhG ¶ 581 [p. 355].

only by the individual will. So animated, the community can then liberate the individual from the merely given content, the ‘complexities of existence’ of the old world. In this way, the first modern community can speak and act for the individual, not because the community represents the individual or the individual is organically included within the community, but because the community’s will is the true will of the individual. Its rules and measures are the individual’s own rules and measures. For Hegel, Rousseau infamously captures the logic of this new purely modern community in the demands it can authentically make on behalf of the individual him- or herself when he writes in the *Social Contract* that ‘whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the entire body: which means nothing other than that he shall be forced to be free’<sup>52</sup>—i.e., forced to be what he or she most authentically *is*.

Although, the modern community begins with the individual will as its singular foundation, once the community becomes the truth of the individual’s will, then the individual has lost all valid claim that she or he can make against the community. Indeed, now any difference between the community and the individual cannot be understood as the difference between two different but valid (even if hierarchically arranged) duties or principles or interests, but as ‘only the *semblance* of an antithesis [*Gegensatzes*]’.<sup>53</sup> As Isaiah Berlin has noted, a profound difference exists between a claim by the community that its deliberations are just or insightful or authoritative and a claim that its deliberations are the truth of *one’s own* thoughts and insights, regardless of what one thinks and sees.<sup>54</sup> The former claim is found in pre-modernity, the latter is uniquely modern. So, although beginning foundationally with the individual will, modernity’s birth nonetheless requires an absolute community. ‘Absolute’, because there are no sources of meaning or authority other than the individual will whose truth is only spoken through the community.

Rousseau, Tocqueville, and Berlin see a danger associated with this modern, absolute community. However, each locates this danger as something external to the structure or nature of the modern community itself. For Rousseau, the community of the general will is the *solution* to the possibility of ‘the most enormous abuses’<sup>55</sup> caused by traditional (i.e., pre-modern) rulers and modes of authority—the problem of tyranny that the literature on terrorism notes emerges as a trope—because modernity’s new relation of community to individual ought to make it ‘impossible for the [social] body ever to want to harm all of its members, and [...] it cannot harm any one of them in particular’.<sup>56</sup> Tocqueville and Berlin each take this idea of an external threat and locate it explicitly in some pre-existing disposition for which the idea of a universal community as the ‘*finis ultimus*’ or ‘*summum bonum*’ furnishes new justifications. As Tocqueville suggests ‘[u]ntil our day it had been thought that tyranny was odious in all its forms. Now it has been discovered that there are legitimate tyrannies and sacred injustices,

52. Rousseau, *Social Contract* Bk. I, ch. 7 [8], p. 364.

53. Hegel, PhG ¶ 586.

54. Isaiah Berlin ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’ in *Liberty*, Henry Hardy (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 179-180.

55. Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk. I, ch. 7 [8].

56. Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk. I, ch. 8 [5].

provided that they are exercised in the name of the people.<sup>57</sup> Berlin elaborates this justification writing in the voice of such a tyrant:

I may conceive myself as an inspired artist, who moulds men into patterns in the light of his unique vision, as painters combine colours or composers sounds; humanity is the raw material upon which I impose my creative will; even though men suffer and die in the process, they are lifted by it to a height to which they could never have risen without my coercive—but creative—violation of their lives. This is the argument used by every dictator, inquisitor and bully who seeks some moral, or even aesthetic, justification for his conduct.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, in a way that Rousseau, Tocqueville, and Berlin—and the terrorism literature which emphasizes that modernity provides *conditions* (material, technological, ideational) for terrorism to use—do not, Hegel grasps that there is an immanent and not instrumental dynamic from the logic of this community to a ‘fanaticism of destruction’ and ‘the most terrible and drastic event.’<sup>59</sup> So Ivianski, e.g., is correct that this modern revolution and its forging of a new community and person will allow actions to be taken ‘in the name of nations, without consulting them and claiming their gratitude while trampling them underfoot,’<sup>60</sup> but we need to grasp why it is modernity *itself* which produces this result.

## V. MODERNITY’S ‘FANATICISM OF DESTRUCTION’: THREE SHAPES OF VIOLENCE

For Hegel, the violence of the Terror is one with the violence of the Revolution—not because violence in both phases of the Revolution is instrumentalized, but because violence for both is the immanent consequence of the first modern matrix of meaning (the individual will), membership (as an absolute duty), and community (as the only valid voice of the individual) established by the principle of subjectivity. When set in motion as a force in the world, this matrix itself gives birth to: (sec. A) a ‘heavenly’ violence consisting in a reconceptualization and destruction of existing meaning; (sec. B) an ‘earthly’ violence that is directed against individual and collective deviation from the community; and, (sec. C) the necessary equation of the use of violence with death as spectacle. So, to understand how the logic of modern self-consciousness gives rise to violence thus provides an account of the logic and shape of an *ontologically* modern terrorism.

### *A. Heavenly Violence: The Destruction of Meaning*

Hegel’s account of the violence of the French Revolution and the Terror can have the appearance, as philosophy often does, of merely dressing up a commonplace in impen-

57. Cited in Zeev Ivianski, ‘The Terrorist Revolution: Roots of Modern Terrorism’ in David Rapoport (ed.), *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, London, Frank Cass, 1988, p. 129.

58. Berlin ‘Two Concepts of Liberty’, p. 197.

59. Hegel, PR§§ 5 Remark [p. 38], 258 Remark [p. 277].

60. Alexis De Tocqueville, quoted in Ivianski, ‘The Terrorist Revolution: Roots of Modern Terrorism’, p. 129.



eternal language. The commonplace in his account of violence seems to be of two sorts. First, that violence is merely a pragmatic response to resistance that accompanies the process by which ‘each individual consciousness raises itself out of its [previously] allotted sphere.’<sup>61</sup> Second, an idea at least as old as Plato and Aristotle,<sup>62</sup> that violence is a response to conflicts between world views. If either of these commonplaces validly applied to Hegel’s analysis, he could make no contribution to answering the relationship between modernity and terrorism. We will deal with the first commonplace in sec. B below. Let us turn to the second commonplace here.

Ideological conflict by itself is merely contingent conflict for the simple reason that it requires something outside of itself as the instigating factor. In an obscure sentence, Hegel provides a radically different account of the conflict between the new world view of modernity and that of the *ancien régime*. Using the word ‘concept’ (*Begriff*) as a term-of-art to capture a foundational world view animated and made logically coherent by a particular principle, Hegel writes: ‘What made the concept [of the *ancien régime*] into an existent *object* was its diremption into separate *subsistent* spheres, but when the object [i.e., the ‘real’ world of objective existence] becomes a concept as the will [as it does in modernity’s first moment], there is no longer anything in it [the objective world] with a continuing existence; negativity has permeated all its moments.’<sup>63</sup> Here, Hegel side-steps completely an account of the particular ways that modernity’s world view might conflict with the *ancien régime* with regard to political authority, religion, equality, or some such. Instead he notes only that there is *nothing* in the *ancien régime* that has continued meaning and therefore which affirms anything valid. With modernity’s birth all that had positive content is now permeated instead with ‘negativity’—it becomes worthless, of no meaning. The conflict is not between ideational realms and their attendant, concrete social worlds (or plans for a social world), but between an ideational realm that claims to be the truth of the world as a universal community which is *opposed* to all content—all ‘complexities of existence’—whatsoever.

We have here, and for the first time, something other than a conflict between two ideological blueprints. For in the latter, the conflict exists where one contentful vision of the world comes into conflict with another contentful vision. Here, though, the conflict is between the purity of the will and any content at all. So, our great mistake is to understand the unique shape of modernity’s own violence as a response to this or that feature of the *ancien régime*. Indeed, we can say that the *ancien régime* itself, with its particular features of social, political, cultural, and economic organization, is not the specific object of attack. Rather, it is the very existence of *any* concrete world which claims validity that is the object of attack—and this world happens to be in the shape of the *ancien régime*.

In this way, the first moment of truly modern violence, Hegel shows us, is not the moment of physical violence, but the ideational (*not* ideological) destruction of the va-

61. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585.

62. Plato, *Euthyphro* 7d, and Aristotle, *The Politics* Bk. 5, both speaking of conflicts over conceptions of justice.

63. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585.

lidity of any existent world. What is destroyed is not just the old world of meaning but the very possibility of transferring any meaning (e.g., what is true, just, or good) to new world. For, once the source of meaning is shifted to the immaterial principle of the will and the universal community, i.e., to a ‘heaven’ which consists not just in the forsaking of *these* complexities of existence, but *all* complexities of existence (present or imagined), then no particularity (be it given institution, obligation, duty, role, identity, material condition and so on) is left in the world that could act as a limit to action. No moment of the empirical world can conceptually avoid being ‘permeated with negativity’. To be something concrete and something other than the will of the community is to be meaningless and affirmative of nothing.

While the terrorism literature identifies numerous causative factors for terrorism, a common heuristic element is the role of ideology. As we have seen, such ideational considerations represent a convenient means of distinguishing between types of terrorism, but remain insufficient to account for what is uniquely modern in that violence. In this regard, we argue that Hegel’s account does *not* require the displacement of those accounts which focus on conflicts over the nature of the relevant ‘complexities of existence’ for three reasons. First, Hegel provides a way, now, to evaluate ideologies and therefore ideological conflict to see if they are *ontologically* rather than just *temporally* modern—i.e., whether the ideologies are animated by the world view of the principle that gives birth to modernity: subjectivity. Therefore, ideology and modernity as sources of terrorism are not competing explanations. Second, in relation to this first point, some terroristic instances of violence may, indeed, simply be ideological in that they are animated by a particular ‘blue print’ of how the world should be specifically organized, attentive to the complexities of existence and, therefore, not ontologically modern. Third, even where the terroristic violence is ontologically modern, the specific way in which the principle of modernity is lived may nonetheless take on or borrow from existing ideologies. But, in doing so, the ideology merely imparts a specific character—albeit, outward and inessential—to the act, just as a disease can impart certain characteristics to an organism, without being the nature of the organism itself.

Now, let us turn to an examination of what the total forsaking of the complexities of existence means for the perpetration of violence.

### *B. Earthly Violence: The Destruction of Things*

If we understand ‘heavenly’ violence to be merely a condition of possibility for physical or ‘earthly’ violence then we grasp modernity not as something with an internal dynamic to violence, but as merely the kindling onto which some external spark (existing where?) comes to be thrown. If this gap between ‘heavenly’ and ‘earthly’ violence could not be filled by the inner dynamic of modernity at its birth, then Hegel’s understanding of the relationship between the demands of a world view and physical violence would be no different than Karl Marx’s who notes that the proletariat’s ‘contest with the bourgeoisie’ is necessitated by class identity, but the transformation of the conflict into a violent

revolution that ‘sweeps away by force the old conditions of production’ is merely ‘compelled, *by the force of the circumstances*’.<sup>64</sup> Violence and revolution, for Marx, are not the *true* work of communism because they are not intrinsically bound to its world view—even if the practical situation may make violence unavoidable.

Similarly, one could think of Machiavelli’s advice to the Prince to be attentive to the ways that violence or ‘cruelties [can be] badly used or well used’. Cruelties well used are those bound by the pragmatic ‘necessity to secure oneself, and are then not persisted in but are turned to as much utility for the subjects as one can’ whereas ‘[t]hose cruelties are badly used which, though few in the beginning, rather grow with time than are eliminated’.<sup>65</sup> The Prince only goes wrong, for Machiavelli, when he takes his guide not from the what Hegel will call the ‘complexities of existence’ (in Princes’ case, the objective interests of his state as well as other relevant social classes) but from what Machiavelli calls the ‘imagined republics’ which ‘have never been seen or known to exist in truth’.<sup>66</sup> Within terrorists’ own accounts of their actions, this idea of action compelled by force of circumstance appears as the common theme ‘we had no choice’—e.g., Menachem Begin writing on his involvement with the Irgun, ‘What use was there in writing memoranda? What value in speeches? [...] No, there was no other way. If we did not fight, we should be destroyed. To fight was the only way to salvation’.<sup>67</sup>

So, for both Machiavelli and Marx, as well as the terrorism literature, earthly violence can be limited by the appropriate apprehension of facts in the world and by the objective determinations of actual interests. Unlike their pragmatic—and therefore contingent—exercise of earthly violence, Hegel’s account of the logic of modernity’s founding points us towards an immanent dynamic between heavenly and earthly violence, for he claims that modernity’s first founding *necessarily* produces the ‘destruction of the actual organization of the world’.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Hegel’s claim is even stronger than merely the existence of this immanent dynamic from heavenly to earthly violence: it is that the process of physically dissolving the externally valid world *is the only possible work* that modernity’s first world view can accomplish. The permeation of negativity (i.e., that what has concrete content is meaningless) throughout all the moments of *ancien régime* extends to the permeation of negativity throughout *all* the work of the Revolution, even the

64. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.26; emphasis added.

65. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Leo Paul S. de Alvarez, Long Grove, Waveland Press, 1989 [1513], ch. VIII, pp. 37-38.

66. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. XV, p. 61.

67. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun*, New York, Henry Schuman, 1951, p. 46. Similarly, Bassam Abu-Sharif, a leading member of the PFLP from its foundation, wrote about his response in the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967: ‘There was no going back. My own fight began here, now. I would not stop until that girl, and the thousands like her, were back in their rightful homes. I would regain our country, or die for it. I could not lead a normal life...Could I just walk away from these people around me in the desert? Turn my back, and try to forget what I had seen? I could never forget. We must have justice [...]. Only one road led to justice’ (Bassam Abu-Sharif and Uzi Mahnaimi, *Tried By Fire*, London, Little, Brown & Company, 1995, p. 50).

68. Hegel, PhG ¶ 590.

‘positive’ work of building a new society. In this way Gueniffey is correct when he suggests that ‘[Terror] had become an integral component of the Revolution, inseparable from it, because only terror could ultimately bring about a republic of citizens [...]. If the Republic of free citizens was not yet possible, it was because men, warped by their history, remained evil; through Terror, the Revolution—history as yet unwritten and brand new—would make a new kind of man.’<sup>69</sup>

Hegel’s analysis of the French Revolution reveals that the movement from heavenly (ideational) to earthly (physical) destruction takes two forms within modernity’s founding. The first form consists in the total destruction of the old social world, not because it possesses this or that substantive quality or because of any objective resistance it presents—as Hegel says, the matrix of modernity ascends ‘without any power being able to resist it’<sup>70</sup>—but because that world, in whatever shape it takes, has come to be through a process other than the individual will whose universal truth is spoken for it by the community. We normally associate this first form of violence with revolution and the extirpation of the old social order, even one so thorough that ‘the being of faith’ disappears into ‘the exhalation of a stale gas, of vacuous *Être suprême*’.<sup>71</sup>

The second form of violence is easy to overlook because it initially appears as a positive development: the construction of universal projects in which the old ‘complexities of existence’ are replaced not with new complexities but attempts to bring the ‘general will’—the universal community—into earthly existence. To do so requires that the community not be animated by this or that aim, its product not be this or that law, its activity not a project for this or that group. Rather, community’s purpose now must be ‘the general purpose, its language universal law, its work the universal work.’<sup>72</sup> In Hegel’s account of late or ethical modernity this universalism of purpose, law, and deed is a positive development because it then regulates and holds a new set of ‘complexities of existence’ universally available for the state’s citizens to participate in. However at modernity’s founding, where subjectivity alone is the organizing principle, this very universalism is ironically a *continuation* of that first shape of earthly violence which had abolished the old, particularist social order. For in heralding a new world this universal language, codes of laws, and work for the general welfare serves as a continuation of earthly violence by *preventing* the emergence of definite rules, concrete practices, and specific laws. Established instead is only the contentlessness and therefore infinitely pliant *thought* of law (as for example, natural law),<sup>73</sup> the *thought* of justice (as for example the ever chang-

69. Gueniffey, *La politique de la Terreur*, cited in Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, p. 102.

70. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585; see also Hannah Arendt’s comment that ‘Terror becomes total when it becomes independent of all opposition; it reigns supreme when nobody any longer stands in its way’ (Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001, pp. 464-65).

71. Hegel, PhG ¶ 586; see also Michael Phillip Carter, ‘The French Revolution: “Jacobin Terror”’, in David Rapoport and Yonah Alexander (eds.) *The Morality of Terrorism: Religious and Secular Justifications*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, 2nd ed., pp. 141-42.

72. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585.

73. For Dan Edelstein, natural law played a crucial, but instrumental, role in the Terror by furnishing for use ‘a legal category, the *hostis humani generis* [enemy of all humanity] which thus provided a legal justification for the exterminating zeal of the Jacobin Terrorists’ (Dan Edelstein, ‘*Hostis Humani Generis*:

ing court procedures), or the *thought* of well-being (e.g., the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’ of 1789).

The result of both shapes of earthly violence (the extirpation of the old order and the prevention of a new one under the guise of establishing universal laws, works, and purposes) is that, in Hegel’s words, the logic of modernity’s founding can ‘let[] nothing break loose to become a *free object* standing over against it.’<sup>74</sup> As such, a social world animated by the principle of subjectivity

cannot achieve anything positive, either universal works of language or of reality, either of laws and general institutions of conscious freedom, or of deeds and works of freedom that *wills* them. [For] [t]he work which conscious freedom might accomplish would consist in that freedom, *qua universal* substance, making itself into an *object* and into an *enduring being*.<sup>75</sup>

Because the principle at modernity’s birth cannot allow anything to objectively endure, the birth of modernity is simultaneously the birth of a dynamic to earthly violence that is, in principle, without limit. No objective condition is a boundary; no action—insofar as it *authentically* emerges from the matrix of modernity—is instrumental and therefore is subject neither to pragmatic calculation nor restriction.

Now, this idea that terrorism, and modern terrorism in particular, is characterized by a dynamic to violence that is, at least, not fully explicable as an instrumental calculation is also present within the terrorism literature. For example, we see Chaliand and Blin suggest that the violence within the French Revolution can be seen as an example of total terror, something that far exceeds any conceivable instrumental purpose.<sup>76</sup> We see Hannah Arendt, provides a non-instrumental dynamic in the idea of a ‘law of movement’ whose engine is some collective identity and whose objects are indeterminate:

Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action [...]. It is this movement which singles out the foes of mankind against whom terror is let loose, and no free action of either opposition or sympathy can be permitted to interfere with the elimination of the ‘objective enemy’ of History or Nature, of the class or the race.<sup>77</sup>

Similarly, Rapoport identifies modernity’s waves of terrorism as ‘driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups’ characteristics and mutual relationships’<sup>78</sup> rather than by objective and definite goals.

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Devils, Natural Right, Terror, and the French Revolution,’ *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought* vol. 141, 2007, pp. 57-81, p. 80).

74. Hegel, PhG ¶ 588.

75. Hegel, PhG ¶ 588.

76. Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, ‘The Invention of Modern Terror’ in Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, pp. 101-102.

77. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 464-65.

78. David Rapoport, ‘Four Waves of Terrorism’ in Dipak K. Gupta (ed.), *Terrorism and Homeland Security*, Belmont, Wadsworth, 2005, p. 10.

These three approaches to locate the move to violence outside of prudential calculation and in the nature of identity itself reflect Hegelian insights into the nature of truly modern violence. However, these insights stop at the first form of earthly violence: it is the mere otherness of the existing world or group or individuals who are singled out, that they differ from the community who speaks on behalf of the true or primary identity (e.g., 'History or Nature', 'class or the race' for Arendt, the various ideologies of modernity for Rapoport) that seemingly provokes the violence. In this use of 'otherness', though there remains the idea that there is some objective quality which picks out the enemy and, therefore, conversely some feature of the *objects* that could limit the violence, mark out its scope, divide the guilty from the innocent. In this way, these approaches within, or which inform, the terrorism literature fail to appreciate or see the full logic of violence contained in purely modern identity: that there is a second form of violence which consists not in the destruction of the old world, but in the conceptual impossibility of *substantively* creating a new world (as opposed to the emptiness of talk and declarations), of letting *anything or anyone* stand as meaningfully independent of the community. The primary concern is not what it objectively is, but did it *come from* the will of the universal community?

This failure to appreciate this second and preventative form of earthly violence, or the logic of identity that animates it, leads to a failure to be able to explain the necessity of the movement from the identification of the other or enemy or guilty as worthless to the requirement of their death, and death as spectacle.

### *C. From Violence to the Total and Spectacular Work of Death*

Robespierre justified the use of terror and its place within the Revolution in two key speeches delivered on December 25, 1793 and February 5, 1794. In the first, he differentiated between constitutional government and revolutionary government. The former sought the preservation of the republic; the latter, the foundation of the republic, a goal that necessitated defending the republic against its enemies. Robespierre argued that: 'To good citizens the revolutionary government owes the nation's every safeguard; to enemies of the people it owes only death.' In the later speech, he outlines the 'Principles of Political Morality which should Guide the National Convention in the Internal Administration of the Republic', stating that 'in revolution [the principle of popular government] is simultaneously virtue and terror: virtue, without which terror is fatal, and terror, without which virtue is powerless'.<sup>79</sup> In doing so he implies that there is some way to distinguish between 'good citizens' and 'enemies of the people'—i.e., as if the criteria distinguishing guilt and innocence were objectively available and that, therefore, violence could avoid being 'cruelty badly used' in Machiavelli's words. Hegel's account of the necessary failure to sustain this distinction between innocent and guilty is crucial for explaining the systemic and internal dynamic from violence directed at particular and limited objects (e.g., the *ancien régime*) to unlimited and total violence such as characterized the Terror.

79. Carter, 'The French Revolution', pp. 139-140.

At its birth, violence is modernity's immanent fulfillment: its certainty of being the truth of the world can occur only through a universal community whose very logic, we have shown, requires the conceptual (heavenly) and the twin physical (earthly) dissolution of the validity of the complexities of existence. Yet, why does this internal dynamic towards violence require death? If the external world is removed of meaning, if the old world is powerless as Hegel suggests, then why is *death* the immanent fulfillment of modernity's founding for Hegel? This question, which is as crucial for the study of genocide<sup>80</sup> as it is for terrorism, can be answered by examining Hegel's account of the transformation of the Revolution into the Terror. In that account we can reconstruct why the promise of respect and recognition for subjectivity present in modernity's drive for 'universal freedom' becomes 'merely the *fury* of destruction'.<sup>81</sup>

At first, we might take Hegel's argument to be that the failure to build a new world, to establish new 'complexities of existence', produces 'the *fury* of destruction' simply as some pragmatic diversion or instrumental response temporarily needed to overcome objective obstacles to the revolution. Indeed, this pragmatic use of violence is what the Revolutionary government itself hoped with Saint-Just, for example, arguing that 'terror was but a temporary substitute for the institutions which could ensure the survival of a republic properly constituted'.<sup>82</sup> Once the Republic had been established and safeguarded, terror would have met its purpose and could be replaced. This hope is, for Hegel, betrayed not by a man (Robespierre), but by the very logic of modernity at its birth which animates the revolution itself both in its destruction of the *ancien régime* and the revolution itself. Why so?

For the first modern community, to exercise its certainty of itself, it must replace the old particularist, differentiated world with a new one that instantiates its respect for the will as the source of all meaning by establishing the duty of universal membership in a universal community. Here, the modern community experiences a necessary contradiction between how the new world is understood to be (the will alone is the truth of the world) and the new world's ability to *live* that understanding. To live is to act in the world, to decide and to do—and only individuals (i.e., subjects) can decide and do; structure is not agency. Thus, '[b]efore the universal can perform a deed it must concentrate itself into the One of individuality and put at the head an individual self-consciousness; for the universal will is only an *actual* will in a self, which is a One'.<sup>83</sup> Yet, the truth of the individual remains the universal community. So, in the very moment of decision the individual act ceases to be a moment of the *universal* will of the community and be-

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80. e.g., see Zygmund Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989, Maureen Hiebert, 'The 'Three Switches' of Identity Construction in Genocide: The Nazi Final Solution and the Cambodian Killing Fields', *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, vol. 3, no.1, 2008, pp. 5-29, Alexander Hinton, 'The Dark Side of Modernity: Toward an Anthropology of Genocide' in Alexander Hinton (ed.), *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002, and Eric Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003.

81. Hegel, PhG ¶ 589.

82. Carter, 'The French Revolution', pp. 146-47.

83. Hegel, PhG ¶ 589.

comes the product of that one or few who decided. In the tragic—and fatal—irony of modernity's birth, the very attempt by individuals to make the universal will live only serves to divide those very individuals from the community.

In the context of the French Revolution Hegel captures this paradox by speaking in terms of the problem of government and faction. On the one hand, for the modern community to live, government must be established; '[o]n the other hand, it [the government] excludes all other individuals from its act, and on the other hand, it thereby constitutes itself a government that is a specific will, and so stands opposed to the universal will; consequently, it is absolutely impossible for it to exhibit itself as anything else but a *faction*.'<sup>84</sup> So, we see that the possibility of faction is produced by, not the pragmatic demands of the Revolution or the personalities involved, but by the logic of the world view that gives rise to the Revolution in the first place. The mere concrete presence of some particularity, whether of decision or of act, constitutes a *separation* from the universal community and thereby a betrayal of the community's claim to be the exclusive and only true product of what the individual most is.

Unfortunately, all individuals are particular: each acts and lives in ways that are empirically unique, if only in the unavoidable sense that each occupies a time and place that others do not and cannot, and each must operate in the world according to the demands of that time and place (i.e., the complexities of existence). Since the universal community can, by its very universality provide no criteria for distinguishing which unavoidable particularity 'stands opposed to the universal will' and which is an innocent feature of mere existence itself, '[*b*]eing suspected, therefore, takes the place, or has the significance and effect, of *being guilty*' of this opposition.<sup>85</sup> For where objective facts have no meaning, only the will of the community does. And then it is the *quality* of the will that matters: being perceived as unreliable by the universal community becomes a greater consideration than any specific acts an individual might or might not have committed.

Here, then, the inability to distinguish between objective guilt and innocence lies not with the vagueness of the law (e.g., Article V of the Law of Prairial (1794)) or the inadequacies of the judicial proceedings.<sup>86</sup> Nor is the problem one of personality, rooted in Robespierre's 'missionary zeal' in 'purging society of vice'.<sup>87</sup> Rather it is the logic of the world view which the law and judicial proceedings and individuals articulate. So, there would always be further challenges against which to defend, others who failed the test of a good citizen and who consequently had to be eliminated, not because of the objective fact of challenge or threat, but because *all* decision and doing, whatever its content is a particularization and therefore a separation from the community. So, Arendt is correct when she notes that when '[t]error becomes total', objective '[g]uilt and innocence become senseless notions',<sup>88</sup> but the two processes—totalizing violence and the loss of

84. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591.

85. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591 [p. 360].

86. See Carter, 'The French Revolution', pp. 142-43, 147-48.

87. Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, 'The Invention of Modern Terror' in Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, pp. 105, 110.

88. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 464-65. See also Carter, 'The French Revolution', p. 148.



the relevance of guilt and innocence—are underpinned by the same dynamic rooted in modernity's first identity.

Yet, to have explained why the logic of modernity's birth contains within it a dynamic to violence that turns on itself as easily as it turns on the old world does not itself answer why the shape of this violence 'consists in the cold, matter-of-fact annihilation.'<sup>89</sup> From Hegel's account, we can reconstruct three reasons why the inner dynamic within modernity's founding has as its final destination, not just death, but death as public spectacle.

First, to be other than what the community articulates one truly is (in the case of the French Revolution: a good citizen; but in other manifestations of this modern moment: a good comrade, a good Muslim, and so on), is to be guilty of separation from the universal community. But why is the suspected faction or individual warranting of violence in the first place, as opposed, e.g., to simply ignoring or excluding individuals from communal life? It is to challenge the world view at modernity's birth in which the community alone articulates what is real and true. That is: to be other than the universal demands of the community require is to make one's 'mere being' into an existential threat to the community. To be apart from the community (or to be suspected as being apart from the community—there is no distinction between these two states possible) is to become 'a free object *standing over against*' the community.<sup>90</sup> This condition is an existential threat, not because the suspected individual or group needs to possess (or be reconceptualized as possessing) real power, but because the logic of modernity's founding cannot allow the modern consciousness to abide by the meaningful existence of what is not a product of itself. To do so is to say that there is *another* truth present, one that is valid other than through and as the universal community. It is to say that the 'complexities of existence' do indeed matter.

Second, within the logic of the world view that lies at modernity's birth, the 'guilt' of separation of the community can only be extirpated through the cancellation of that separation. But if mere difference, bare particularity, sunders oneself from the community then the bare existence of *this* particular body is the only 'defect' that can be corrected. As Hegel says 'nothing else can be taken away but its mere being'.<sup>91</sup> Reeducation, imprisonment, and so on, do not and cannot alter the fact of existence, and therefore there is no conceptual possibility of using violence for anything other than death. Since particularity is robbed of all meaning with modernity's birth, death of the sundered individual can be 'the cold, matter-of-fact annihilation of this existent self'.<sup>92</sup>

Third, Hegel points to a final necessity, not just for death being the true shape of violence at modernity's founding, but for death assuming the shape of spectacle, of requiring the *publicity* of violence. This spectacular nature of death is easily but mistakenly explained if we only see the application of mortal violence as a means. However, the question is not whether death as spectacle is possible to conceive before the principle of

89. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591.

90. Hegel, PhG ¶ 588; emphasis altered.

91. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591.

92. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591

subjectivity ‘ascends the throne of the world’<sup>93</sup>—Machiavelli notes it as a feature of the prudent politics in the early sixteenth century<sup>94</sup>—but whether it is possible to conceive an *internal* or *necessary* connection between modernity and death as ‘tremendous spectacle’. Hegel implies just such a necessity when he notes that for the Revolution, ‘[t]he sole work and deed of universal freedom is therefore *death*, a death too which has no inner significance or filling, for what is negated is the empty point of the absolutely free self. It is thus the coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water’.<sup>95</sup> If all decision and action by the government serves only to sunder government from the universal community (faction), or of individuals from the community (enemies of the people), or laws and institutions from the universal purpose because they benefit not the ‘general welfare’ but only these *particular* individuals and groups, and so on, then the universal community seemingly cannot ‘achieve anything positive, either universal works of language or of reality, either of laws and general institutions of conscious freedom, or of deeds and works of freedom that *wills* them’.<sup>96</sup>

Yet, at least, in removing what is sundered, the community is doing *something* that *is* an articulation of its being: the community tries to preserve its self-conception, its identity as that which alone is whole and universal. In this way, there is only one task authentically congruent with the pure logic of modernity at its birth: to annihilate what breaks loose from it, to destroy what stands guilty (i.e., suspected) of insisting on its self-subsistence by the mere fact of the way that it *is* in the world. Annihilation becomes the ‘sole work’ of the Revolution and of ontologically modern terrorism because it is the only deed that does not leave the residuum of particularity behind it. This deed is done as spectacle because only as spectacle, only by making death public, does death have the appearance of being a universal act that comes from the individual, and enacted on its behalf by the community.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The role of philosophy and even of Hegelian philosophy for the study of violence has been noted by the literature, but largely as source of influence, or perhaps an indirect cause. While Karl Popper explores this idea in the broader context of the rise of totalitarianism,<sup>97</sup> Chaliand and Blin typify this approach within the study of modern terrorism. They suggest that the Hegelian view of history had a profound effect through

93. Hegel, PhG ¶ 585.

94. See Machiavelli’s discussion of the ‘ferocity of th[e] spectacle’ of the death of Duke Cesare Borgia’s majordomo, Remirro de Orco (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. VII, pp. 29-30).

95. Hegel, PhG ¶ 590. As Robert Wokler has shown, these references to ‘cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water’ index specific modes of public execution employed by the Revolutionary government (Robert Wokler, ‘Contextualizing Hegel’s Phenomenology of the French Revolution and the Terror’, *Political Theory*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1998, pp. 33-55).

96. Hegel, PhG ¶ 588.

97. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. II: The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, ch. 12.

its critical influence on Marx, which, in turn, would come to be one of the predominant features of nineteenth and twentieth century revolutionary violence. With the transformation of Hegelian ideas of the passive, retrospective description of what is rational within what is—most infamously captured by Hegel’s aphorism that ‘what is rational is the actual; and what is actual is rational’<sup>98</sup>—to a philosophy through history of class struggle and prospective revolutionary liberation of humanity *to* what will be, Marxism permitted ‘the opportunist implementation of a policy of terror’ by revolutionaries.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Duyvesteyn argues, that the terrorism literature has under-stated the significance of the role of ideas in favour of the more tangible aspects of modernization in the nineteenth century: ‘Equally important or even more important was perhaps the rise of “liberation” ideologies from the ideas of the French Revolution such as democracy, Marxism and nationalism, which were to have such a large effect on twentieth century history, including terrorist activity. In none of the sources [within the terrorism literature] these factors seem to receive the attention they can be argued to deserve.’<sup>100</sup>

However, as our argument also shows, to truly reclaim the importance of ideas for an understanding of modern terrorism requires more than simply reclaiming philosophical ideas as causal ‘factors’. It requires being able to show the *inner dynamic*, the *immanent necessity*, that moves from the ideas to the shape of terrorist violence itself, not the ‘opportunist implementation’ or justification for terrorist violence. To understand what is modern in modern terrorism is to understand how modernity generates not the playing field of material and ideational objects used by terrorism but, simultaneously, the game of terrorism itself. Here, then, we have argued that a reconstruction of Hegel’s account of the French Revolution and its Terror does more than uncover a causal influence (e.g., by way of Marx), but a *framework of analysis* which reveals this inner dynamic between truly modern ideas and truly modern terrorism.

As we have shown, the shape of this inner dynamic is a uniquely modern self-consciousness: a world view in which subjectivity, and the place of the individual will in the creation of the true world, is foundational. This Hegelian insight does not supplant the emphasis on the specific ideological underpinnings of terrorism which, for instance, undergird Rapoport’s waves of terrorism or the emphasis on liberty and nationalism that otherwise brings the French Revolution to the fore as a beginning of modernity and modern terrorism within the literature. Nor does it displace the opportunities that various communication and transportation technologies present for the instrumentalization of violence. Rather, the identification of this more foundational comportment or understanding of self and world as the deep logic of modernity at its birth, provides the otherwise inexplicable direction and internal coherence to certain shapes of terrorism—even as they are given particular *outward* appearances and trajectories by specific ideologies, technologies, and circumstances.

98. Hegel, PR Preface p. 20.

99. Chaliand and Blin, ‘The Invention of Modern Terror’ in Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, pp. 104-105.

100. Duyvesteyn, ‘The Role of History and Continuity in Terrorism Research’ in Ranstorp, *Mapping Terrorism Research*, p. 58.

By reconstructing how this subjective mode of self-consciousness gives rise to the requirements of membership and then universal community, which then internally produces ideational and physical violence culminating in ‘cold, matter-of-fact annihilation,’<sup>101</sup> the total and spectacular ‘fanaticism of destruction,’<sup>102</sup> we have a way to bring unity and order to the study of terrorism that is uniquely modern. Where, as we have seen, the literature identifies but can agree upon neither the variety of features that characterize modern terrorism—e.g., indiscriminate objects of violence, the justifications and motivations for the violence, the technologies instrumentalized, and so on—nor their relative importance, Hegel’s account allows us to inquire into the unity of modern terrorism. For it provides those intellectual resources that reveal how these different features, insofar as they are indeed truly modern, emerge from a common, foundationally modern source: the world view of pure subjectivity. In this way, Hegel’s account provides a way to settle disputes about where modernity and modern terrorism begins, by providing the criterion for determining how would know if one found its nature. Can the factor identified *itself* explain, the shape and logic of the phenomenon as a whole, not merely the instruments by which that logic or nature plays itself out? If the answer is ‘yes’—as our reconstruction of the logic that moves from a unique modern identity to community to modalities of violence has shown—then that factor is primary, and the incidence of terror is an instance of modern terrorism. If the answer is ‘no,’ then the factor is not primary, but may be an important intermediate variable which shapes outward features, not the inner dynamic.

The argument presented here, then, introduces the idea of an ontological conception of modern terrorism, not a temporal one. Here, modern terrorism is modern, not because it occurs within the modern age, but because it is animated by the inner dynamic found at the birth of modernity itself. So, the modern age may contain varieties of terrorist movements and events which are not modern because they are animated by concerns that are simply utilitarian, i.e., *choosing* asymmetrical warfare as means to some other end, attentive to the complexities of existence and taking their bearings from them. In Machiavelli’s terms, some terrorism in the modern age may simply be ‘cruelty well used.’ Now, since modernity for Hegel is born in one world view (subjectivity), but finds its completion and stability in another (ethicality), the moment of truly modern terrorism had, for Hegel, but one *necessary* occurrence: the Terror of the French Revolution. For Hegel, after the Terror has run its course by showing to itself the impossibility of building on a new world animated by subjectivity alone a world view of late-modernity is ushered in by Napoleon Bonaparte (‘this world-soul’ who, ‘astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it’)<sup>103</sup> who reintroduces new ‘complexities of existence’—a new institutional order that has an independent existence—which now can accom-

101. Hegel, PhG ¶ 591.

102. Hegel, PR § 5 Remark [p. 38].

103. Letter from Hegel to Friedrich Niethammer, 13 October 1806. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984, Briefe 74. Reference is to numbered correspondence in G.W.F. Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Johannes Hoffmeister (ed.), Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969.

moderate subjectivity, without surrendering the world to it. In this way, contemporary terrorism that is truly modern terrorism is atavistic. It is not a rejection or reaction against modernity, but, ironically, a *reenactment* of the birth moment of modernity, a reactivation of pure subjectivity in a world that has already moved beyond it.

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