

# Interpretations of Hegel's Philosophy After his Death

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## Summary

*This research paper deals with the different interpretations of Hegel's philosophy which followed his death. In these interpretations, the assumption that with Hegel's death his philosophy had also come to an end, is very much present. We find this view also in the works of influential thinkers of the 19th century such as Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. Each of them considered philosophizing as the ultimate venture beyond Hegel's thought. However, in the meanwhile, Hegel's philosophy — despite heavy philosophical and ideological criticism — will undergo a great renaissance in philosophical discussions both in and outside of universities. In this paper, the reasons and arguments for this renaissance are discussed as is also the theoretical relevance that Hegel's philosophy continues to enjoy to this very day in contemporary debates in the fields of philosophy and the social sciences. These debates include not only the fundamental issues of social and political philosophy, but also epistemological issues and issues on the philosophy of mind.*

*Keywords: Hegel; critique of Hegelianism; Hegelian renaissance; theoretical relevance of Hegelian philosophy; the liberal–communitarian state*

## Introduction

At the beginning of the last century — in 1915, to be precise — the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce published a book bearing a title in the form of a question: *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel?* In fact, in his book Croce strove to move between two diametrically–opposed positions which at that time were dominant in the interpretation of Hegel's work. One was a whole–hearted affirmation of his work and the other, an utter rejection of it. In his analysis Croce came to the conclusion that both approaches were essentially wrong, since Hegel in his philosophy had not said everything; however, neither

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had he erred in everything. For Croce, Hegel had captured an important moment of truth, which deserved to be accepted and appreciated. The living part of his philosophy remains the concept of the concrete universal, the dialectic of opposites and the doctrine of levels of reality, while the part that should be considered dead deals with panlogism and speculative constructions on the individual, history and nature (Croce, 1915, 202–203).

Thus, in his study, Croce applied Hegel's instruction to Hegel's own work. This was the instruction saying that, in each philosophy, one should seek a moment of truth, but not the whole truth. Hegel applied this instruction in his history of philosophy in order to give logical meaning to the endless plurality of diverse questions about truth and reality.

A century after Croce's intervention, the reading of Hegel remains of great importance in Western academic circles, which tend toward humane scholarship, and also more broadly. That is to say, the continuous prophecies on the obsolescence and museumization of his philosophy have not been fulfilled.

## *1. Three attacks and three pejorative personae for Hegel*

Before we consider the key explanations for the topicality of Hegelian philosophy, we should review some of the more significant declarations regarding its obsolescence. There have been at least six main attacks against Hegel and his work, namely, three in the nineteenth century and three more in the twentieth.

### *1.1 The three main attacks in the nineteenth century*

The first three main attacks are linked to three eminent names in philosophy: Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Marx declared that Hegel's philosophy was inverted — a perspective which, according to him, was guaranteed only to produce distorted interpretations of reality, interpretations which then became codified into an ideological system. Thus Marx (1976, 33) writes: »In Hegel, the dialectic is standing on its head. It must be set on its feet if the rational core within the mystic shell is to be revealed.« Whether or not he achieved this aim, Marx's point has provoked substantial debate among scholars who have dealt intensively with the philosophical relationship between him and Hegel. The “continuity school” insists that Marx remained a Hegelian to the end, while the “discontinuity school” insists that Marx broke entirely from any kind of Hegelian influence in his mature writings (Levine, 2012, 4).

Kierkegaard, on the other hand, was terrified by the spirit of the all-encompassing Hegelian system, a spirit that for him was overwhelming and which eliminated any space for individual freedom and existence. As Karl Löwith (1964, 149) writes, the philosophy of Kierkegaard propounds a thorough protest against this system. For Kierkegaard, the true lies not in totality, as Hegel insists in his famous preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, but in the existence of the indi-

vidual and his direct and unmediated relationship with the Absolute. »The category of individuality is not one category among others, but the definition of all reality, above all« (Löwith, 1964, 149). The defence of individuality against being swallowed up by philosophies of totality has led many students of Kierkegaard to see it as a precursor for the existentialism of the twentieth century which developed in a context where philosophical totality was equated with political totality. As we shall see below, this comparison would be used to demonize Hegelian politics, even though Hegel repeatedly insisted on the protection and actualization of human individuality which is embodied in the fundamental principle of the modern age — that of subjectivity.

For his part, Nietzsche saw in the Hegelian philosophical system nothing less than a “theology masked” by the veil of abstract philosophical categories. Nietzsche among others accused Hegel of “the historicist disease” which, for him, had become too great a burden for the freedom and culture of modern man. In his early essay *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Nietzsche (1997, 104) wrote: »I believe that in the history of German culture in this last century we shall not find any dangerous disruption or deviation that has not been made yet more dangerous because of the gigantic influence, which continues to this very minute, of that philosophy — I speak of the Hegelian philosophy.« Naturally Nietzsche’s anti-Hegelianism was not confined to just his early writings, when he was under the influence of one of the most radical critics of Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer. This anti-Hegelianism runs through all of the main themes of Nietzschean philosophy, including the “Death of God,” the “Will to Power” and the “Eternal Recurrence of the Same.” From Nietzsche’s perspective, the Death of God also includes the death of Hegelian metaphysics, the Eternal Recurrence of the Same seems clearly to imply a wholesale rejection of the progressive Hegelian dialectic, and the representation of the world as a chaotic game of impersonal forces — as is found in the notes for the “Will to Power” — in essence incorporates a total contradiction of Hegel’s panlogistic ontology.

All three of these harsh critics of Hegel emerged from the context of a broader anti-Hegelian climate, which began to develop soon after his death. In Eric Weil’s view, even Prussia’s royal government contributed to this climate; Hegel was thought to have been a philosophical apologist for the government during his lifetime, something that prompted much animus from liberal writers and those on the left. The government took concrete steps to degrade Hegel’s reputation by summoning to Berlin his old philosophical rival Schelling and ejecting his followers from university positions. The basic reason for all this was that the Prussian state did not perceive itself in the political philosophy of Hegel (Weil, 2022, 17).

### *1.2 The three main attacks in the twentieth century*

In the twentieth century, the main attacks on Hegel came from three other positions: analytic philosophy, then liberal political philosophy and the dogmatic philosophy of the Second Socialist International, the latter drawing on Engels’ works popularizing and simplifying the philosophy of Marx.

Analytic philosophy, which developed most powerfully during the first part of the twentieth century, is based upon a simple answer to the old question of why the fundamental problems of philosophy have still, after thousands of years, not arrived at any satisfactory resolution. The answer suggests that these problems have been falsely posed! They thus only represent a collection of pseudo-problems, which have been handed down to us as a result of the misuse of language. Therefore, the only wise and useful business of philosophy is to free itself of these false issues. The path to be followed towards such liberation is the criticism of language, which Wittgenstein (2000, 48) defined as the first and last duty of philosophy. In this context, everything that Hegel had written could be considered as mere logical and linguistic deviancy, and nothing more. »All of his doctrines are mistaken,« asserted Bertrand Russell, one of the founders of analytic philosophy, concluding that Hegel's philosophy is an example of »how the worse the logic is, the more interesting are the consequences that it produces« (Russell, 2005, 307–326). The word *interesting* here has pejorative connotations, of course. The principal work of Hegel on which the analytic philosophers focused their anti-Hegelian contempt was *The Science of Logic*, in which — contrary to the notion of formal logic — Hegel united in one integral theoretical construction formal logic, general metaphysics, transcendental philosophy and rational theology (Hösle, 2017, 120). For the analytic philosophers, this kind of synthesis was the clearest demonstration of Hegelian irrationality.

Another onslaught came from liberal political philosophy. Liberals, with their scepticism about the state and their fear of the concentration of power, were horrified by the glorification of the state that may be found in Hegel, especially in his work *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, in which among other things he sees the state as the advance of God on earth.<sup>1</sup> In liberal eyes this rhetoric ran contrary to their fundamental concept of a minimal state having no mission or moral vision to be fulfilled apart from guaranteeing individual human rights and freedoms. Furthermore, liberals extracted from this rhetoric the philosophical and ideological basis for the absolutist and totalitarian regimes that were emerging across Europe during the first part of the twentieth century. Their fear was best articulated in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, by the liberal philosopher Karl Popper during the Second World War. In this work Popper levies one of the gravest accusations against Hegel, making him — together with Plato and Marx — intellectually responsible for the birth of totalitarianism on both ideological wings. For the liberal Popper, Hegel represents the bridge between the totalitarian utopianism of Plato and that of Marx. Both of these utopias, when taken seriously and attempted in practice in societal reality, lead unavoidably to a regime of state terror. Popper summarizes the charge against Hegel thus: »Hegel redis-

1 The standard misunderstanding of this Hegelian phrase springs from the fact that the difference is ignored between Hegel's notion of God and the personalist notion of God as found in classic Christian theology. The Hegelian God is neither transcendent nor personal. He is not a being who lives beyond the world. He is an impersonal force immanent in the world; a name for the rational structure of the world (Beiser, 2005, 143).

covered the Platonic ideas found behind the endless revolt against freedom and reason. Hegelianism is the rebirth of tribalism. The historical meaning of Hegel may be seen in the fact that he represents the ‘missing link’ that existed between Plato and the modern form of totalitarianism. The larger part of modern totalitarians are unaware that their ideas go straight back to Plato. But many do know that they are in debt and obliged to Hegel and all of them are immersed in the closed atmosphere of Hegelianism« (Popper, 1963, 30–31).

Although Popper’s thesis was criticized for its simplifications and superficial reading of Plato and Hegel, its influence on liberal philosophical circles has been great, especially during the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> The irony is that the ideologies of Nazism and of Communism did not want to accept that their philosophies had sprung from Hegel. There was appreciation for Carl Schmitt when, the morning after Hitler came to power, he declared that »it may now be said that Hegel is dead« (Wolin, 1992, 424–447). This was not a merely ephemeral statement. Indeed, it expressed summarily the Nazi ideology with regard to Hegel. »Basically, the relationship of Hitler’s fascists to Hegel’s philosophy is very simple: they resolutely reject it. Alfred Rosenberg, the main Nazi theorist, sees in the connection between Hegel and Marx an essential reason to define the Hegelian philosophy as hostile to the “national socialism” that radically combats it. This is not, of course, the only reason for this hostile attitude. Hegel’s rejection by the Nazis is focused, as we will show later in detail, on his idea of the rationality of the world, on his theory of development, but mainly on his theory of the state« (Lukács, 1943).

From their side, meanwhile, the ideologues of communism did all they could to locate Hegel in the camp of their enemies. Georg Lukács himself, in his Stalinist work *The Destruction of Reason*, made Hegel part of the general climate of what he termed “German philosophical irrationalism” — from which, according to Lukács, sprang National Socialism (Lukács, 1980, 95–308). This was at odds with the earlier interpretation of Hegel that Lukács had elaborated in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), considered a founding text of the Western current of Marxism (Anderson, 1989, 60), and one of the three works that defined the principal philosophical debates of the twentieth century, along with Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1926) and Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) (Schnädelbach, 1984, 1).

Thus, while analytic philosophy declared Hegel an erroneous thinker, and liberal political philosophy perceived him as a serious threat to the open democratic society and its freedoms, the dogmatic philosophy of the Second Socialist International saw in Hegel only a philosophy that had gone too far in its Marxist interpretation of history and human society. The philosophical circles of the Second Socialist International transformed this interpretation into a dogma, which needed only belief and exegesis — just as theologians would treat the holy

2 During this period many liberal thinkers devoted excessive importance to the concept of totalitarianism and its ‘theoretical origins’. A substantial literature grew up around the theme. Two examples are: Arendt, 1951; Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1956.

writings of their particular faith. This is orthodox Marxism, dogmatic Marxism, telling us that there is only one philosophical and scientific path to the truth, the path of Marx, canonized in dialectical materialism and its sociological sub-variant, historical materialism, while all other paths to wisdom are mistaken.<sup>3</sup> A little later the communist states adopted this brand of Marxism as their official ideology. This ideology frequently took the form of what diverse authors termed a political religion (Gentile, 2020).

In this way, in the first half of the twentieth century the name Hegel represented three personae: an erroneous thinker, a dangerous ideologue and a philosopher of theoretical excess.

## 2. *The Renaissance of Hegel in the twentieth century*

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, these three figures had disappeared. Hegel is among us once more, and he is present in a very different aspect. How has this happened?

It seems that the greatest credit for launching the rehabilitation of Hegel belongs to a variant of Marxism that developed in Western Europe from the 1920s onward. Maurice Merleau-Ponty christened it “Western Marxism” (Merleau-Ponty, 1973, 30–58). The core of this designation has to do with a reading of Marxist philosophy that differs from a reading within the framework of orthodox Marxism. The difference lies in the fact that Western Marxism undertakes an open and critical reading of the works of Marx, seeing in them only one among many epistemological paths towards a knowledge of social and historical reality. The founding slogan of Western Marxism is that “Marx alone is not enough,” and thus it is necessary to combine his philosophical approach with those of others. This slogan enabled the birth and development of diverse variants of Western Marxism, such as Freudo-Marxism, Hegelian Marxism, Existential Marxism, Structural Marxism and others. Perry Anderson, one of the most important scholars of Western Marxism, states that it is precisely this form of Marxism that deserves the credit for putting Hegel back on the philosophical map (Anderson, 1989, 61). Thinkers of this strain see in Hegel not a peripheral predecessor of Marxist thought but, on the contrary, its most important and influential predecessor. In this context, Marx’s concepts are seen as derivations of Hegel’s concepts and, at the end of the day, even the “Marxist narrative of the emancipation of man” is presented as just a modification of the Hegelian narrative of history. For many Western Marxists, the “story of the liberation of the proletariat” was pre-figured in the “dialectic of the master and the slave,” to be found in the pages of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Robert Fine goes so far as to declare that the ghost of Hegel roams the later writings of Marx (Fine, 2001, 79).

3 For the notion of ‘Orthodox Marxism’ see: Lukács, 1971, 1–26.

Western Marxism reached the pinnacle of its renown in the sixties and seventies of the previous century, and precisely this period witnessed what Frederick Beiser called “the Renaissance of Hegel.” These were years of great ideological and philosophical tension. The Cold War between the two great blocs was at its height, and radical leftist movements were very active in Western Europe, especially among students and trade unions. Marx was one of the leading ideological icons of these movements. However, Beiser writes that the Marx who inspired them was not the later Marx, the Marx of *Kapital* — a work written more for economic experts — but the Marx of the youthful works, full of revolutionary inspiration and full of Hegelian terminology (Beiser, 2008, 1). In this way the passionate intensity of these writings<sup>4</sup> would go right to the heart of Hegelian philosophy and, consequently, of Hegel’s reawakening. All at once, interest in Hegelian thought began to grow, and this growth was significant enough to cross the Atlantic and penetrate American academia. An indication of this is the publication there, in 1975, of one of the most widely-debated studies in the history of interpreting Hegel. This was the study by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. In conducting a resounding deconstruction of Hegel’s entire philosophical system, something that had hitherto never been done, Taylor opened a new field in Hegelian studies in North America. Ever since then, the fertility of that field has only continued to increase. It has been well said that the influence of Taylor’s work may be compared with that of *A Theory of Justice*, by John Rawls, published in 1971. Just as Rawls had revived political philosophy in American academia, (Kymlicka, 2002, 10) so too did Taylor revive Hegel.

These two works challenged the hegemony of analytic philosophy in the British and American academic world, the earlier by reaffirming the normative character of political philosophy, the later by reaffirming the metaphysical interpretation of Hegel. It was precisely Taylor’s focus on Hegel’s metaphysics that would stimulate a fruitful counter-reaction in Hegelian studies. It was from there, writes Taylor’s pupil Frederick Beiser, that there sprang a multiplicity of important interpretations of Hegel. Among them he mentions three of the more distinguished: those of Klaus Hartmann, Robert Pippin and Robert Brandom (Beiser, 2008, 4). The first two are epistemological interpretations, developing the theme that the essence of Hegel’s philosophy deals with his epistemological project. For Beiser, Hartmann’s interpretation might be termed “the theory of categories,” since it asserts that »the philosophy of Hegel is not a speculation about mysterious entities, such as the Absolute or the Spirit, but an attempt to develop a system of categories, of the basic concepts through which we consider the world« (Beiser, 2008, 4). References to entities such as God, the absolute Spirit, and world Mind are no more than metaphors through which the Hegelian argument operates.

4 These included: the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, the Communist Manifesto and German Ideology, among others.

Pippin too, in his interpretation, insists that the focus of Hegelian investigation is epistemological and bound up with the continuity of the Kantian tradition of the transcendental subject. »The subject at the centre of Hegelian Idealism is not some conception of the self-affirmation of the spirit, but the Kantian unity of apperception, the principle that consciousness of the self is a necessary condition for all experience« (Beiser, 2008, 4). The third interpretation, meanwhile, sees Hegelian philosophy in its social aspect. According to Brandom, Hegelian Idealism — with its concept of mutual recognition of the basis of normativity in social life — should be understood within the Kantian paradigm in which moral normativity and recognition arise from the autonomy of the individual and are experienced in a world that Kant calls “the Kingdom of Ends”. “Hegelian mutual recognition” is another term for this kingdom. Brandom’s interpretation recalls the earlier anthropological interpretation of Alexandre Kojève,<sup>5</sup> revived at the end of the Cold War by the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama for his analysis of the fall of communism and the triumph of liberalism (Fukuyama, 2006, 163–216).

Fukuyama’s work expresses a kind of paradox which Beiser explores thoroughly: the paradox has to do with the fact that while at the end of the Cold War the reputation of Marx, which had aided the revival of Hegel, had fallen, the reputation of Hegel continued to shine in defiance even of the most fashionable philosophical trend, postmodernism. The latter was dispensing with all the ideas and concepts of modernity, in the context of which Hegel’s whole philosophy had developed. Beiser declares that we have lost our feeling for the absolute — the feeling that inspired Hegel’s thought. After two World Wars, after the Gulag and the Holocaust, we have lost our belief in the progress of human history, and this belief was the basis of Hegel’s ideas about history. We live in an epoch of pluralism and specialized knowledge, which has abandoned the ideal of totality and unity — the ideal that stands as the foundation of Hegel’s theoretical edifice (Beiser, 2005, 1). Even in these circumstances, Hegel is still widely read and his ideas are still being extensively analysed.

### *3. Hegel at the beginning of the twenty-first century*

How to explain this situation? How can we explain the fact that while the discourse<sup>6</sup> surrounding modernity is blocked in a crisis, the philosopher who inaugurated this discourse continues to rouse considerable interest?

Beiser believes that it has to do with the fact that Hegel has had an extraordinary impact on trends in modern thought. Like him or loathe him, continues

5 Alexandre Kojève and his lectures deserve the credit for attracting attention to Hegel’s philosophy in France in the 1930s. Since that time, French philosophy’s interest in Hegel has been unbroken (Sinnerbrink, 2007, 126).

6 Habermas (1990, 51) elaborates this perspective on Hegel as inaugurator of the discourse of modernity.



Beiser, it is difficult to ignore Hegel when the majority of the strands of modern philosophy have been influenced by him or developed as a reaction against him; Hegel is the wellspring of modern philosophy, from which many rivers flow and diverge, and if a modern philosopher seeks to find the roots of his position he will, sooner or later, come back to Hegel (Beiser, 1993, 1). Much the same line of thought is adopted by another significant scholar of Hegel's work, the German philosopher Vittorio Hösle, when he writes that the explanation for the perennial rebirth of Hegel, and for the reason that no important philosopher can avoid reconciling himself to him, is bound up with the fact that anyone who rejects or ignores Hegel loses the capacity to perceive a stratum of philosophy without which it is impossible to attain the heights (Hösle, 2017, 117).

However, this is apparently only one of many historical and pedagogical reasons to explain the great interest in Hegel's work. Beiser finds yet another reason related to the solutions Hegel offered to problems: »How is it possible to avoid the extremes of conventionalism and foundationalism in epistemology? How is it possible to combine realism with a social epistemology? How is it possible to synthesize the freedoms of liberalism with the ideals of community? How is it possible to adopt the insights of historicism and not lapse into relativism? How is it possible to avoid dualism and materialism in the philosophy of mind? All these questions are very much on the contemporary agenda; but they were crucial issues for Hegel too. It is no accident that many philosophers now see Hegel as the chief antidote and alternative to many outworn and problematic positions, such as Cartesian subjectivism, naive realism, extreme liberalism and mental–physical dualism, or reductivist materialism. So here is another reason for reading Hegel: he still remains, despite his damnable obscurity, an interesting interlocuter to contemporary philosophical discussions« (Beiser, 2005, 3).

These include the chief debates that are unfolding in political philosophy today; one of them, if not the most important, is the debate between libertarianism and communitarianism, which is in essence a continuation of the old debate about the relationship between the individual and society and about determining which takes ontological precedence. In the context of this debate, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*<sup>7</sup> is no longer seen as an ideological work in the service of the Prussian state of that time, nor as a piece of philosophical rhetoric with stimulating material for the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that would emerge during the twentieth century, but as a politico–philosophical work offering us a synthetic solution to the debate above, a solution reached by overcoming the deficiencies of its two sides while at the same time upholding their more worthy values. In this light, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* may be seen as a work which — in the spirit of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* — traces the possibilities and constraints of different political philosophies, but with one difference: while the Kantian dialectic of

7 Vittorio Hösle, one of the most distinguished of contemporary philosophers, judges Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to be »one of the most important works in German philosophy regarding justice and the state« (Hösle, 2017, 123).

opposites is inescapably trapped in its antinomies, the Hegelian dialectic finds a way out through the *Aufhebung* of concepts. This enables Hegel to be at one and the same time both communitarian and liberal. Not in an eclectic form, of course, but in a unity complementary and necessary in its opposites.

Hegel is philosophically liberal when he affirms the point of view that the principle of the modern world is freedom and subjectivity, and when he turns this freedom into a standard of evaluation and legitimization for political orders (Hegel, 1991). He is liberal too in the fact that he accepts the clear distinction between state and civil society, and pointedly defends the autonomy of the latter from the former (Hösle, 2017, 124). However, Hegel's liberalism also incorporates another essential element of liberal political philosophy: the principle of constitutionalism, otherwise known as the principle of the rule of law or the sovereignty of law. In defiance of those who see him as a theoretical inspiration for authoritarianism, Hegel reveals himself as a constitutionalist thinker who perceives the guarantee of freedom as being dependent upon the rule of law: »There is generally freedom only where law reigns and not the arbitrariness of the individual« (Hegel, 1986, 23). For Hegel this is the fundamental issue of modern politics, while the question of whether a regime is a democracy or monarchy remains secondary. With all these points considered in their entirety, the concept of the state as elaborated by Hegel is the concept of the classic liberal state and, from this perspective, all those — including Popper — who accused Hegel's political thought of being the forerunner of totalitarianism have erred (Hösle, 2017, 124).

On the other hand, Hegel is also an etatist (not in the negative meaning of the word), because he sees the state as an entity that should prosecute the general interest, and not something related to the so-called “invisible hand of the market.”<sup>8</sup>

This may best be seen in the paragraph of *The Philosophy of Right* where Hegel writes: »The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But concrete freedom requires that personal individuality [Einzelheit] and its particular interests should reach their full development and gain recognition of their right for itself (within the system of the family and of civil society), and also that they should, on the one hand, pass over of their own accord into the interest of the universal, and on the other, knowingly and willingly acknowledge this universal interest even as their own substantial spirit and actively pursue it as their ultimate end. The effect of this is that the universal does not attain validity or fulfillment without the interest, knowledge, and volition of the particular, and that individuals do not live as private persons merely for these particular interests without at the same time directing their will to a universal end [in und für das Allgemeinewollen] and acting in conscious awareness of this end« (Hegel, 1991, 282).

Here once again we see the famous Hegelian procedure, the procedure of the *Aufhebung*, the synthesis and unity of opposites, the synthesis and unity of

8 From this perspective, Hegelian political philosophy can be seen as a platform for criticism of the doctrine of libertarian market fundamentalism.

the general and the individual, the unity of the concerns of the individual and the concerns of the community, the unity that gives us the template for a state where the quest for the good of the individual does not lead to the destroying of the general good (extreme liberalism), and nor on the other hand is the good of the individual destroyed in the name of the general good (communism or classic conservatism).

This, in fact, is the template for the liberal–communitarian state, emerging from the rubble of the extreme claims of liberalism and communism. Today we can see Hegel as the philosopher of such a state, by the very fact that his defence of communitarianism and his criticism of liberalism are neither for the sake of the former nor to the detriment of the latter, but in the service of synthesizing communitarianism and libertarianism within a coherent concept of the modern state — and this renders Hegel very relevant in contemporary political and social thought (Beiser, 2005, 225).

This relevance is an added reason why Hegel's star continues to shine in the philosophical firmament of the West, even today, 192 years after his death.

### *Conclusion*

Hegel is one of the most important philosophers in all modern thought. His influence upon the currents and debates of modern philosophy has been enormous. This has ensured that — aside from much adulation — his ideas have met with the harshest criticism. Such criticisms have often manifested themselves as announcements of the end or the obsolescence of Hegelian philosophy. Thus, in the wake of Hegel's physical death, a significant part of the philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was occupied with declaring his philosophical death. The great names in philosophy have been its heralds. In contrast to this, during the twentieth century Hegelian philosophy underwent a renaissance, attracting academic attention which has only continued to grow and remains growing steadily even at the beginning of the twenty–first century. The reason for this lies not only in the fact that Hegel is seen as having the status of “inaugurator of the philosophical discourse of modernity,” but also in the solutions that his philosophical methods offer to epistemological and political questions. Hegel succeeded in establishing a highly sophisticated concept of society and of the modern state, and this has secured him an undeniable place in the debates that have unfolded and continue to unfold about this society and this state. The general wisdom of Hegelianism is in the idea that solutions to problems are found in the fruitful syntheses of values that appear as opposites in conflict, and not in some zero–sum game between these opposites. Today the world needs more than ever to hear the voice of such Hegelian wisdom.

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## *Interpretacije Hegelove filozofije nakon njegove smrti*

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### *Sažetak*

*Ovaj rad propituje interpretacije Hegelove filozofije koje su se pojavile nakon njegove smrti. U tim interpretacijama prisutna je pretpostavka da je Hegelova filozofija njegovom smrću također došla svojemu kraju. Stječemo takav dojam također u djelima utjecajnih mislilaca 19. stoljeća, poput Sørenea Kierkegaarda, Karla Marxa i Friedricha Nietzschea. Oni su smatrali da je filozofiranje ono posljednje što nadilazi Hegelovu misao. U međuvremenu, Hegelova filozofija je, unatoč teškim filozofskim i ideološkim kritikama, doživjela veliku renesansu u filozofskim raspravama unutar i izvan sveučilišta. Ovaj rad obuhvaća razloge i argumente te renesanse, a također i teoretsku važnost koju Hegelova filozofija i dalje uživa do današnjega dana u kontekstu suvremenih rasprava u filozofiji i u društvenim znanostima. Te rasprave uključuju ne samo osnovna pitanja iz društvene i političke filozofije, nego i epistemološka pitanja te pitanja o filozofiji uma.*

*Gljučne riječi: Hegel; kritika hegelijanizma; renesansa hegelijanizma; teoretska važnost Hegelove filozofije; liberalno–komunitarna država*

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