

Reconsidering Otherness: Reading Hegel on the Post-9/11 Global Occasion

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Abstract

This essay examines the ways in which Hegel's theory of the Other interacts both with the American exceptionalist discourse of post-9/11 and with the phenomena of neoliberal globalization. By way of exploring the genealogy of the term the Other and its association with the grand narrative of modernity—the narrative of development and progress, it argues that the ostensibly universal idea of liberty, justice, and even history bears a certain nature, however slight, of violence, *per se*, which would erase all the different identities, experiences, and histories. Given that Hegel's philosophy not simply exposes the ongoing tension between the Hegelian master narrative of progress and a contemporary history of human struggle that contradicts its central claim, but unconceals the imperial and exclusivist logic that neoliberal

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globalization has always already harbored, the essay focuses on two claims: 1) that the legacy of Hegel's notion of the Other and his progressive narrative has been updated for the current postglobal occasion to the point where we are dealing with two different but related kinds of violence: the literal kind and the epistemic violence of "imposing" a metanarrative of modernity, progress, and so forth onto the contingencies of human history; and 2) that the Hegelian hierarchical knowledge system has continued to describe the West's own ascendance as inexorable, logical, and permanent.

[Key Words] Otherness, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 9/11, American Exceptionalism, Neoliberal Globalization, Violence of the Universal

I. The Problematic: Hegel and Modernity

With numerous writings and ideas from different disciplines seeking to problematize the Hegelian narrative of teleological history, the last few decades have seen the rise of deconstructive postmodernist thoughts whose essential tenets are radically opposed to absolute forms of knowledge. That is to say, these theories are very interested in how the grand narrative of modernity – the narrative of progress and development – has been primarily engaged in containing and conforming our ways of knowing, from Western imperialism and colonialism to American Exceptionalism, and even to the current discourse of neoliberal globalization, essentially relying upon the white European male national narrative. And it follows that this Eurocentric narrative,

derived from the white man's mantle of responsibility for the world, has never given "other" peoples such as women, the colonized, foreigners, and the stateless the same access to the rights and resources to narrate their own history. In other words, modern nations, or in Benedict Anderson's well-known term, "imagined communities" have rendered other agents as "docile and useful," to borrow Michel Foucault's phrase, by excluding them from the public and universal narrative: white, patriarchal, and heterosexual national identity, not for all, but for a privileged group of people.¹⁾

At an epistemological level, this privileging of a certain group of people, saying "we," originates from the privileging of "I" over "another I," upon which a human being comes to consciousness of itself as a self. For a human being, in Hegelian terms, can only acquire self-consciousness through the encounter with something that is not the self, which is called the Other. This notion of self-awareness within the relation to the other subject, thus, constitutes a theoretical and practical framework for understanding

1) It is imperative to reconsider the fact that Anderson's discussion of "imagined communities" has proved itself less effective in examining how the project of nation-state formation has been complicit with imperialism and colonialism. In this sense, Melani McAlister is right to say: "scholars of all stripes need to stop acting as if Benedict Anderson had solved-rather than defined-a problem" (Melani McAlister, "Can This Nation Be Saved?" in *American Literary History*, vol. 15, no. 2, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 423). On the other hand, this critical attention to the unilateral force of the process of nation-state building has been significantly articulated by later poststructuralist mode of thought (as embodied in thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler, both of whom have been deeply influenced by the Foucauldian concept of docile bodies).

the world from Hegel's perspective, which has had a great impact on the development of modern criticism and theory.

On a deeper level, calling attention to the key element of Hegelian thought and language that places individual factors into relation to one another within the master and slave dialectic, the vast majority of postmodern approaches to forms of criticism and theory have come to acknowledge that the constitution of meaning and truth is never fixed since it is always in process. In a word, within the Hegelian mode of thought, the socio-historical context is presumed to be quite essential. More fundamentally, however, the notion of Absolute Spirit (i.e. Hegel's version of God/Truth) is bound to be admired as the most determinative agent in the Hegelian system of knowledge, which may sound contradictory in the sense that it still posits something absolute, universal, and transcendental as a self- developing conceptual hierarchy. Put differently, if Hegel's philosophy and his notion of the Other are built upon the systemic hierarchy, there would be no way to avoid an obvious confrontation between Hegel and his posthumous critics' efforts to undermine the prevailing monolithic knowledge system.²⁾ The implication being that, although Hegel could have wished his phenomenology to be a science of observation, those appearances must always bow to the exigencies of a larger theoretical and ideological system. In this aspect, it stands to

2) What makes the Hegelian system untenable for his posthumous critics, say, poststructuralists lies in the dependence of a theoretically fixed (essential) structure and endpoint upon phenomena that are by definition impermanent and contingent. Relatedly, Agamben's critique of modernity as a master, yet exclusivist, narrative also recognizes this implicitly.

reason that the modes of thought exist within the dialectic itself, as a self-proclaimed science of observation that nevertheless posits a given, fixed endpoint in advance.

Within this context, this essay examines the ways in which the Hegelian mode of thought has revealed the ongoing tension between the Hegelian master narrative of progress and a contemporary history of human struggle that contradicts its central claims. Given that Hegel's philosophy is a globalization avant la lettre—or phrased another way, it unconceals the imperial and exclusivist logic that neoliberal globalization has always already harbored—the first part of this paper reads the sections “Self-Consciousness” and “Lordship and Bondage” from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*³⁾—by linking the genealogy of the term “Other” to the narrative of development and progress. Then, it extends the discussion of the notion of the Other to the political rhetoric of 9/11 in terms of how the language of Hegel has permeated and saturated itself throughout the events of 9/11, and its close ties to the notion of American Exceptionalism. The last part attempts to demonstrate the ways in which Hegelian thoughts and language have been enacted in the age of neoliberal globalization contemplating the degree to which the projection of the universal idea of freedom and justice has embodied its own promise in actual history. In the end, the paper focuses on two claims: 1) that the legacy of Hegel's notion of the Other and

3) G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977. Unless noted otherwise, hereafter all references to the text will be made by page numbers with paragraph numbers in parentheses.

his progressive narrative has been updated for the current postglobal occasion to the point where we are dealing with two different but related kinds of violence: the literal kind and the epistemic violence of “imposing” a metanarrative of modernity, progress, and so forth onto the contingencies of human history; and 2) that the Hegelian hierarchical knowledge system has continued to describe the West’s own ascendance as inexorable, logical, and permanent.

II. Genealogy of the Other

Given that the term “Other” is significantly introduced and articulated in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it may be easy to concede that the notion of the Other has been inherited by Hegel in the later development of modern philosophy. In particular, the section entitled “Self-Consciousness” deals with the concept of the Other in terms of how a human being’s self-consciousness is either acquired or recognized through and by the other self. This notion of self-consciousness is discussed in tandem with Hegel’s analysis of “sense-certainty,” which both Descartes and Kant have commonly described as an essentially undoubtful and self-evident knowledge about the object within our consciousness (i.e., thing-in-itself) in such a way that all things and objects of the material world are cognizable only within our consciousness. Built upon, yet, in large measure opposed to these two previous metaphysical premises, Hegel makes the claim with the aim of

avoiding the potential pitfalls of solipsism and noumenalism that “self-consciousness” holds the contradictory and self-negating elements in knowing itself. Moreover, in the process of developing his theoretical ground for the master-slave dialectic, Hegel introduces the notion of desire:

[S]elf-consciousness is Desire in general. Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however for self-consciousness has the character of a negative; and the second, viz. itself, which is the true essence, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object. In this sphere, self-consciousness exhibits itself as the movement in which this antithesis is removed, and the identity of itself with itself becomes explicit for it. (p. 105: par. 167)

For Hegel, Desire is a key idea for understanding the notion of “recognition” and its relationship to “self-consciousness.” For “the self-certainty comes from superseding this other: in order that this supersession can take place, there must be this other. Thus self-consciousness, by its negative relation to the object, is unable to supersede it; it is really because of that relation that it produces the object again, and the desire as well” (p. 109: par. 175). Namely, in one sense, when we say “I want you or I need you,” this would mean that my desire to present and attain my self-consciousness is able to be fulfilled through the other self-consciousness, which is to say, Desire can be an ontological expression of self-consciousness. In another sense, Hegel also views the notion of “self-consciousness” as a dual process of identity being constructed by “I”

or “myself” in the first place and then next, or, at the same time, by an “other” self whose self-consciousness sees and recognizes “I” as an “other” (the in-itself). In other words, in acquiring the meaning of the self-identity, there are two subjects: one subject is aware of a thing in-itself, of whom the other subject is aware in return. This is also why Hegel extends his discussion of “self-consciousness” to one of the monumental notions, called the master and slave dialectic in the “Lordship and Bondage” section, by way of arguing that “Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another: that is, it exists only in being acknowledged” (p. 111: par. 178). Alternatively, as Philip Kain puts it, the meaning of “I” and the subject of “I” are being constructed by the “other” “I” without which “I could not exist as a solid self” (p. 42) since Desire as distinct from mere blunt need or want is a pre-condition of consciousness.

If we were to necessarily sum up the entire section of “Lordship and Bondage,” which is a tragic version of the dynamics of Desire and self-consciousness, it might be encapsulated in the following statement: “each seeks the death of the other” (p. 113: par. 187). Given that there are two supposed self-consciousnesses: one is mine, and the other one is somebody’s, “Desire” of “each” self-consciousness desires one’s own presence to counter-consciousness to the extent that “I” desire the negation and even elimination of the “other” in order to affirm and assure my sense of significance and reality. After all, these two Desires encounter each other in the combating stage at an extreme level, even if the two Desires are intended to “*recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another*” (p. 112: par. 184); and, as a result of

this combat, the two agents of self-consciousness end up realizing that “they exist as two opposed shapes of consciousness; one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is lord, the other is bondsman” (p. 115: par. 189).

Likewise, the birth of the master-slave dialectic emerges from the dynamics of Desire and self-consciousness of two agents, and moves forward in the name of “the struggle for recognition,” taking over, dominating, and mastering another self-consciousness or subject. Alexandre Kojève, one of the twentieth century’s most distinguished and influential scholars of Hegel’s philosophy of intersubjectivity in terms of “the struggle for recognition,”⁴⁾ writes in his famous *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*:

[A]ll human, anthropogenetic Desire – the Desire that generates Self-Consciousness, *the human reality – is, finally, a function of the desire for “recognition.”* And the risk of life by which the human reality “comes to light” is a risk for the sake of such a Desire. Therefore, to speak of the “origin” of Self-Consciousness, is necessarily to speak of *a fight to the death for “recognition.”*⁵⁾

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- 4) Judith Butler also agrees on reading self-consciousness as Desire. In her essay “Desire,” she argues that the desire for “recognition” becomes transformed into “an effort to destroy the Other” in the sense that “[T]he desire for destruction is thwarted by the sudden realization that the Other, who mirrors the subject, wields the power to destroy his in return” (Judith Butler, “Desire” in *Critical Terms for Literary Studies*, ed. by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 379).
- 5) Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by James H. Nichols. Cornell University Press, 1969, p. 7.

As Kojève's reading of Hegel implies, the next object of desire for "recognition" ends up spreading and dispersing itself across diverse agents—from animals, women, and men, to other abstract ones such as political communities, cultural representations, geographical territories, etc.—primarily because "the human reality is finally a function of the desire for 'recognition.'" Starting with the individual self-consciousness, which is a significantly simpler form of subjectivity, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* becomes increasingly concerned with the broader and more complicated forms of subjectivity and formulates different forms of consciousness from the individual and the cultural, to the absolute, each of which is considered a state or passage of the dialectic journey toward the point where "the True is the whole" (p. 11: par. 20).

Therefore, in the Hegelian picture of human history wherein self-subjectivity attains its "recognition" from the "Other," because of Desire of self-consciousness moving toward the Absolute Knowing or Spirit, a countless number of other subjectivities are inevitably enmeshed in such a way that each can be alienated, excluded, dominated, mastered and destroyed even to the death. In a sense, then, one could argue that Hegel's dialectical human reality has generated, to use Gayatri Spivak's phrase, "epistemic violence," which illuminates the long tradition of Western philosophical tenet that underlies its will to power over difference.⁶⁾

6) In "Can The Subaltern Speak?," Spivak defines this epistemic violence as the "complete overhaul of the episteme" arguing that "the clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other."

Furthermore, we can find a better example of this epistemic violence in the complexities of Hegel's thought and its lingering influence in the post-9/11 world.

III. 9/11 and the Exceptionally Imagined States of America

With regard to the concept of "the desire for destruction," the contemporary explanatory framework for a "war on terror" would be one of the most relevant examples of how the Hegelian master-slave dialectic has long been ensconced not simply within the cause and effect of the tragic incident on 9/11, but also within its aftermath. As has been acknowledged, one of the dominant responses to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September, 11, 2001, is George W. Bush's plaintive, rhetorical question: "Why do they hate us, when we are so good?" On its surface, this question can be read as registering a typical and expected response to the situation given the ethos of the US at that moment; however, if we examine the structure of that question more carefully, we see that the question itself raises a more intricate and convoluted problem of who is right or who is wrong. Above all, the question presumes "we" America as a representative of the "good" agent that another "evil" agent hates, by categorizing the world into a binary logic of opposition, namely: Us versus Them, as in Hegel's "lord" versus "bondsman"

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. by Rosalind C. Morris, Columbia University Press, 2010, p. 249.

dialectic, in which “each seeks the death for the other” (p. 113: par. 187). On the other hand, as Noam Chomsky would put it, one can also ask if one is good and right, why the other one is bad and wrong. One of the quintessential problems of the aforementioned issues, then, including Hegel’s dialectic, is that there is always a solid plausibility for one agent becoming insincere, an agent “who refuses to apply himself (or herself) to the standards s/he applies to others.”⁷⁾

One relevant and insightful response to both Bush’s and America’s nationalistic discourse is represented in Mohsin Hamid’s novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). In this novel, the narrator Changez does not merely demonstrates his reluctant stance toward American/ness, but implicitly criticizes both the project of Western modernity and the notion of American Exceptionalism. This young Pakistani immigrant, who is an Ivy League graduate working for a Manhattan-based firm, makes a resonant statement about post-9/11 New York, after returning to the city from his business trip to Manila:

Your country’s flag invaded New York after the attacks; it was everywhere. Small flags stuck on toothpicks featured in the shrines; stickers of flags adorned windshields and windows; large flags fluttered from buildings. They all seemed to proclaim: *We are*

7) Noam Chomsky, “Interview with Noam Chomsky for the film *Power and Terror*” in *Power and Terror: Post-9/11 Talks and Interviews*, ed. by John Junkerman and Takei Masakazu, Seven Stories Press, 2003, p. 29. In this interview, Chomsky expresses his strong reservation about both visible and invisible violence that the American exceptional ethos has always disavowed.

America—not New York, which, in my opinion, means something quite different—*the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath.*⁸⁾

This description of New York fraught with nationalistic sentiments right after 9/11 exposes both the narrator's and the author's anxiety over the mightier collective subjectivity "imagined" as one unified and coherent consciousness within a national combat stage. In addition to that, the narrator also encompasses the view that those who are not included in this national boundary of America, such as foreigners, immigrants, and non-American citizens, say, the Other, are automatically excluded from that public discourse. Eventually, Changez becomes apparently aware that there is no longer a "marvelously diverse"⁹⁾ New York, nor the highly "cosmopolitan nature of New York,"¹⁰⁾ yet merely "America" as an exceptionally "imagined community." This raises the whole question of the function of imagination in the nation-states. Although Hegel does not come too close to approaching the problem of nationalism in the master-slave discourse, though he does later in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, reading Hegel through the context of collective consciousness (i.e., public imagination and national narrative alike) would be a great way of revealing the complex dynamics by which the Hegelian master narrative has been inscribed in the notion of American Exceptionalism, as well as in the post 9/11 occasion.

8) Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Harcourt, 2007, p. 79.

9) *Ibid.*, p. 38.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 48.

One can argue, then, that imagination serves as an active, but simultaneously, fatal agent within a specific culture, and that it mirrors and affects a set of particular socio-historical needs and conditions. And this is definitely true of the American national identity, which is fundamentally grounded upon the notion of American Exceptionalism. One could also call the idea of American Exceptionalism a mode of belief, as William Spanos states: “the American Puritan’s divinely ordained ‘errand in the wilderness’ to build ‘a City on a Hill’; its secularized adolescence in the period of westward expansion under the aegis of Manifest Destiny; and its apogee in the post-World War II period, when the United States assumed the status of a global power.”¹¹⁾ Interestingly enough, in reality, this collective dream of being “exceptional” made it possible to found America as an independent nation-state, and America appears to sustain its “imagined” narrative as one “community” throughout three hundred years of turbulence and change. However, this communal dream of being exceptional and therefore superior is not necessarily entirely desirable or positive for the community, since it always bears a dark and harmful underside through which a certain monolithic narrative might legitimize its reducing the Other to the preterite and the wretched, or, at an extreme level, to nothing more than an ontological base, as we have seen in Hegel’s master-slave relationship.

As the above passage from Hamid’s novel illustrates, in witnessing the tide of flags, a blatant symbol of the imagined

11) William V. Spanos, *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Globalization: The Specter of Vietnam*, SUNY Press, 2008, p. 66.

community, Changez takes issue with the idea of nationalism, in one sense, and, in another sense, the notion of American Exceptionalism, by way of emphasizing the fact that “we” are “America,” and “we” will show “our wrath” against whoever has tried to challenge and defy “us.” This succinct sentence also exemplifies the extent to which most non-white Americans or immigrants, including the narrator of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, would feel about their various identities classified as ethnic minorities since 9/11. As Lisa Lowe has argued in *Immigrant Acts*, Asia or an Asian heritage has always been “figured as exotic, barbaric, and alien,” and even “as a ‘yellow peril’ threatening to displace white European immigrants.”¹²⁾ Now that this generally acknowledged racial categorization is wedded to a sense of guilt over the attacks and the victims along with other Muslims, as a South Asian who is considered darker than East Asian, not only Changez himself but also other Pakistanis as well must suffer an even more pronounced case of nationalistic discourse and exclusionary rhetoric. In short, since 9/11, recognition of one collective identity has been willingly repudiated by another one which always already is prepared for “a fight to the death for,” to use Kojève’s famous phrase.

Jean Baudrillard, one of the scholars studying the terrorist attacks on September 11 as a perfect example of a by-product of both Western modernity and its complicity with globalization, writes in *The Spirit of Terrorism*:

12) Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, Duke University Press, 1996, p. 4.

When global power monopolizes the situation to this extent, when there is such a formidable condensation of all functions in the technocratic machinery, and when no alternative form of thinking is allowed, what other way is there but a terroristic situational transfer? It was the system itself which created the objective conditions for this brutal retaliation. By seizing all the cards for itself, it forced the Other to change the rules.¹³⁾

As the passage above indicates, the point of contention, then, is that the general idea of terrorism and its intrinsic nature is necessarily engaged with the hegemonic power of the world, which bear their “internal fragility.”¹⁴⁾ In particular, as Baudrillard’s statement exposes, the more the single power dominates the Other, the greater the probability that the “terroristic situational transfer” would turn into a catastrophe. In short, Baudrillard’s statement can be also translated into the following argument that the 9/11 attacks are significantly influenced both by “the single-track thinking of the West” in general, and by the notion of American Exceptionalism in particular.¹⁵⁾

With regard to this question of “the single track thinking of the West,” Baudrillard argues that the Western-identified model for modernization has lost its “critical negativity,” and as a result “opens on to another kind of violence,” which he calls “the violence of the global.”¹⁶⁾ However, in distinguishing two “deceptive”¹⁷⁾ similar terms, the universal and the global, he

13) Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism*, Verso, 2002, pp. 8-9.

14) *Ibid.*, p. 8.

15) *Ibid.*, p. 100.

16) *Ibid.*, pp. 87-92.

17) *Ibid.*, p. 87.

seeks to put more positive pressures on the former. On the surface, it may seem as though he champions the notion of abstract universality; upon closer inspection, however, unlike Baudrillard's desire that "the universal comes to grief in globalization,"¹⁸⁾ the notion of globalization is no less than an ongoing version of abstract universality, which has turned out what one would call the violence of the universal in that the universal comes before the global: the global is almost always a consequence of the universal. In this regard, in addition to providing us with an opportunity to view a "terroristic situational transfer,"¹⁹⁾ to use the term from Franco Moretti, as a "symbolic brake" on the violence of the global,²⁰⁾ Baudrillard's arguments also take on another level of significance toward an understanding of the inseparable relationship between the notion of the universal and the global economy and politics.

IV. Neoliberal Globalization: The Spectre of Hegel

One can argue that one of the undaunted illusions in the

18) *Ibid.*, p. 89.

19) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

20) The term "symbolic brake" is used by Franco Moretti in *Modern Epic* to describe the emergence of the novel as "a symbolic brake upon modernity" that takes into account "the novel perhaps not as exactly a conservative, but certainly a *moderating*, form" (Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to Garcia Marquez*, Verso, 1988, p. 195). Following Moretti's original sense of the term, what I mean by that here is that a certain terroristic attempt can function as a symbolic (and representational) brake upon the violence of the unilateral.

modern era is the grand narrative of progress and development insofar as a great majority of people of the planet come to believe that the world is developing or advancing. Given this master narrative of progress, we have taken it for granted that the world is categorized into two or three regions: the developed countries and the developing countries, or the underdeveloped countries. Since the period of the Enlightenment, this narrative of development has defined itself as an undeniable frame of reference for nearly all political communities such as nation-states from Western Europe to non-Western countries, which have flourished and emerged over the last three centuries. With the tide of the Hegelian sense of Spirit of the Enlightenment and its uncontrollable energy, the emergence of the nation-state in the West, as a political expression of modernity, has begun to impose this surreal vision of development and progress on the rest of the world.

Moreover, the West's own constitution of the stage of development has been drawing the world through one perspective: the global village or the age of globalization. Mesmerized and riveted by this narrative of development and progress, the so-called now-developed countries keep condescendingly arguing that the developing and underdeveloped countries' sincere national agendas should be brought to bear upon two "good institutions." The two "good institutions" include: politically, Euro-American style democracy and bureaucracy; and economically, the free market-oriented capitalist system; both of which have been urged or recommended for adoption and practice to the non-developed nations by the now-developed ones.

However, few of us living in the age of globalization have solemnly asked: who initiated this narrative of development? Why is this progressive discourse so vastly and visibly cast in the world? How reliable or valid can the idea of progress and development be? The short and simple answer to these questions is that Hegel founded his whole philosophy on that assumption. And it follows that the grand narrative of development and progress has been introduced and disseminated by and large not by nature, but by force; consequently, *pace* Hegel, the progressive narrative and discourse have turned into one of the absolute mythologies of the modern age, a mythology which can never be real. That is to say, impossible without at least the recourse to violence (epistemic and literal).

Most European countries and the US, for instance, have vehemently demanded that every country open its doors to a foreign country with a lower tariff for the sake of its development and advancement under the aegis of equal opportunities for and access to mutual free trade. Although this may sound fair and plausible at first glance, it is quite contradictory, if we take into consideration that this agenda of global free trade would ultimately serve the particular group's interests, i.e., the now-developed countries' interests and needs. For, as Ha-Joon Jang argues in *Kicking Away the Ladder*, the now-developed nations almost without exception have wished to "kick away the ladder" by which they climbed to the top and so prevent developing countries from applying the basis of protectionism and subsidies upon which they themselves relied so as to develop their industries in the first place.²¹⁾ In essence, this is why the now-developed

Western Europe and America have championed and reiterated the notion of free trade from the period of imperialism and colonialism right up until the present global moment without acknowledging the inner workings of “the ladder.” Of course, the inner workings of “the ladder” can be translated into a kind of Hegelian desire for recognition not mutually but exclusively and unilaterally to the extent that one attempts to take over, dominate, subjugate, control, and master another by presenting one’s own phenomenology as the inevitable result of a disinterested process.

In this light, we need to read what has been concealed within the inner workings of “the ladder,” so as to better observe the reality of the world, no matter how cruel, that we now live in. In this light, unlike Baudrillard’s relatively limited conception of the universal as equivalent to something that we have lost and therefore must restore, the unstoppable engine of globalization is, indeed, powered by the projection of the universal ideas and principles such as liberal democracy and human rights, which has transmogrified its initial meanings into the violence of the universal, or the epistemic violence. Moreover, it appears that a great majority of people of the contemporary world still seem not merely to endorse, but quite often even apotheosize, without considering it critically, the so-called Euro-American ideas of universality, namely liberty, justice, and human rights sponsored by the abstract equivalence, including the aforementioned narrative of progress and development. Above all, as we have learned from the entire history of imperialism and colonialism, this universal

21) Ha-Joon Jang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Anthem Press, 2002. pp. 1-9.

manifesto of human civilization does not simply legitimize the colonizer's taking over of two-thirds of the earth's space, but justifies their reducing the colonized to non-human beings: the uncivilized and the barbaric, or the "naked life," in Giorgio Agamben's term.

Before proceeding with the current discussion on the ramifications of Hegelian thought and their association with the notion of the violence of the universal, it seems necessary at this point to consider a couple of analogies. Firstly, in the nations situated along the globe's equator there is no single word for 'snow' or 'frost,' since that environment, named a tropic climate, has not produced the need for that kind of term or language. Secondly, a group of people in the Arctic has a widely acknowledged custom of eating the dead, instead of interring or cremating them—in actuality, it would be impossible to inter or cremate them due to the severely cold weather conditions. For this reason, they have come to believe the view that eating away the body of the dead would grant him or her eternal life by placing him or her within a body of the living, which seems to coincide with Buddhist thought that all living beings are caught in an eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth into other forms, as is represented in one of the Four Seals: the concept of impermanence.

In many respects, these two analogies bring to mind Hegel's fully articulated genealogy of the end-of-history discourse, the final stage of his dialectic journey, since Hegel's geographical schema illustrates and even legitimizes the epistemic violence that a priori posits Africa as an Other to human history. In *Philosophy of History*, he writes:

The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas—the category of Universality. In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence—as for example, God, or Law—in which the interest of man’s volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained; so that the Knowledge of an absolute Being, an Other and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality—all that we call feeling—if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character.²²⁾

As stated in the above passage, the oft-cited discourse of “Africa has no history” presupposes that in the region called Africa there is no self-awareness as one-self, nor Law and God as self-developed forms of Spirit, and hence it is no doubt inappropriate for Africa to have its own history and to be part of World History as well. Having borne witness to the actually forceful viability of Hegel’s overly schematic understanding of the contingencies of world history as three or four stages in accordance with the maturity of Spirit, his claim that “Africa has no history”

22) G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Jibree, Dover, 1956, p. 93.

seems plausible.

However, more significantly, as we can extrapolate from the two aforementioned analogies, the fact that a certain region of Africa does not have a Western-style God and code of law does not necessarily mean that there is no “volition” of human being, and therefore “it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit.”²³⁾ In the same way that the nations along the equator do not have a word for snow and the regions in the Arctic do not have a custom of burying or cremating their dead on the grounds of living the actual circumstances faithfully, knowledge production is not uniform, but rather indexed by environment. That is to say, a different environment will consequently produce a different knowledge – or phrased another way, “a language of landscape”²⁴⁾ is a decisive factor in the constitution of a set of episteme and value system.²⁵⁾ Even when we have failed to define that different knowledge and value system as something definite and articulate or systematic and hierarchical, it is reckless and small-minded to conclude that it is something poor, wrong, inferior, or below standard.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 99.

24) Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. by J. Michael Dash, University of Virginia Press, 1989, p. 146.

25) We can find a more resonant example of this language of landscape in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*. In the episode of daffodils, the colonizer's own description of daffodils as beautiful and appreciated is easily debunked by the narrator's language of landscape, since daffodils do not simply grow in her native land, the island Antigua in the Caribbean (Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*, Farr, Straus and Giroux, 1990, pp. 17-41). Consequently, her suspicious reading of the narrative of daffodils proposes an essential critical method by and through which one seeks to interrogate any form of hegemonic knowledge production.

Again, as the entire history of colonialism and imperialism has taught us, this is a clear instance of why and how the ostensibly universal ideas and principles serve the specific ideas of a particular class in a limited sector of the world. Insofar as the notion of the universal is bound to homogenize the contingencies of the world and materiality without regard to the differences of degree, it is no more than the expression of the interests of a particular group of people or culture. Said expression then can be named the violence of the universal. Consequently, one would argue that Hegel's geographical schema amply illustrates the epistemic violence that *a priori* posits Africa as an Other to human history.

V. Envisioning a World of Convivencia

This essay has elaborated upon the ways in which Hegel's theory of the Other interacts with the American exceptionalist discourse of the post-9/11 global occasion. By way of exploring both the genealogy of the term "the Other" and its historical and political association with the narrative of development and progress, it has argued that the ostensibly universal idea of liberty, justice, human rights, and even history bears a certain nature, however slight, of violence, *per se*, which would erase all the different identities, experiences, and histories. In other words, both Hegel's and the Western epistemological tendency to privilege "I" as only one self-consciousness (i.e., a higher and

superior subjectivity over another self-consciousness) has developed and extended to other forms of subjectivity, ranging from individuals and cultures, through the nation-states, to religions, necessarily superseding, replacing, eliminating, and mastering other entities. In a word, the whole notion of privileging “I” as self-evident and self-sustained, instead of admitting “another I” as the same agent, has mapped out the geography of the world today with a distinct dichotomy of the civilized West versus the civilizing or the uncivilized East and Africa.

As we have witnessed the volatile post-9/11 occasion, namely: post-Usama bin Laden’s death and Al-Qaeda’s vow to revenge, the world today is still compulsively obsessed with the Hegelian sense of dichotomy: whose justice is right, and who is “Good” and who is “Evil.” Furthermore, when Usama bin Laden’s death made the cover of all the major newspapers and newsmagazines, American mainstream society began to chant its nationalistic and exclusionary discourse with a vengeance; it even openly celebrated the death of a human being. It seems as though the world is waiting for one more “plebiscite called by the mighty US,” to use the phrase by Arjun Appadurai, to take sides for or against the American concept of justice, and any reservations and abstentions are not permitted.²⁶⁾ As the US government has monopolized the notion of justice and even appropriated its range of applicability solely by virtue of the muscle of its war machine, this exceptionally imagined community, unfortunately, has missed and thus failed again to redefine and rethink of the very idea of America as the

26) Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, Duke University Press, 2006, p. 20.

signifier of a freer people, a more inclusive community, and a more equal world. In the end, insofar as “I” or “We” refuses to acknowledge “You,” “S/he,” “They” as an equal agent of its own identity, truth, and history (and to make it operative in reality), nothing will break this tragic circle of Hegelian dualistic-dialectic thinking. As one would argue, it is always rewarding to speculate the unfamiliar that would envisage a new type of knowledge or political community different than the current boundary-based one, wherein all living entities can be equally or at least solicitously treated and thereby given equal agency. No fatal struggle; noting inferior; no master and slave, as in the case of a hermaphrodite species.

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국문초록

타자성에 대한 재고: 헤겔을 통해 바라보는 포스트 9·11 지구화시대

이 근 성(퍼듀대 박사수료)

본고는 헤겔의 타자이론이 두 개의 담론, 즉 9·11 이후 미국 예외주의와 더불어 신자유주의 지구화 담론과 어떻게 조응하는지 살펴보고자 하는 연구이다. 타자라는 용어 및 개념에 대한 계보와 발전과 진보 서사로 압축되는 근대성의 거대 서사와의 관계를 동시에 고찰함으로써, 본고는 자유, 정의, 역사에 대한 보편적 관념은 다양하게 존재하는 정체성과 역사적 경험들을 제거하는 폭력적 요소를, 그것이 아무리 미미할지라도, 지니고 있음을 주장한다. 헤겔의 철학은 헤겔의 진보 거대 서사와 그것의 핵심 주장과 배치됨을 보여주는 인간의 분투가 담긴 당대 역사 사이에 존재하는 현재진행형 갈등과 긴장을 드러내준다. 이와 동시에 헤겔 철학은 신자유주의 지구화 담론이 지속적으로 담지하고 있는 제국주의적이고 배타주의적인 논리를 폭로해줄기도 한다. 이를 바탕으로 본고는 다음의 두 가지 논점에 초점을 맞춘다. 첫 번째 논점은 헤겔의 타자 이론과 진보서사의 유산이 현재 지구화시대 우리가 논의하는 다른 듯하면서도 관련성 높은 두 가지 폭력의 형태로 갱신되었다는 사실이다. 이 두 가지 폭력은 진보 혹은 근대성이라는 메타 서사를 우발적 사건의 집합체인 다양한 역사에 ‘강요하는’ 물리적 폭력과 인식론적 폭력이다. 두 번째는 헤겔식의 위계적 지식 체계는 서구 자신의 주도적 영향력을 거부할 수 없는 논리적이고 항구적인 것으로 지속적으로 규정하고 있다는 점과 관련된다. 이상의 두 가지 주요 논점은 먼저 전반부에서 이루어질 헤겔의 『정신현상학』에 등장하는 ‘자 의식’ 개념 및 ‘주인과 노예’의 변증법에 대한 세부적인 분석을 통해 논의될 것이다. 후반부에서는 첫 번째 논점을 확장하는 차원에서 모신 하미드(Mohsin Hamid)의 소설 『주저하는 근본주의자(The Reluctant Fundamentalist)』에 재현된 미국 예외주의와 테러리즘, 그리고 세계화의 역학관계 문제가 타자 이론과의 연관성 속에

서 숙고될 것이다. 이러한 노력은 따라서 ‘타자’의 존재에 대한 우리 ‘자의식’의 대 전환이 필요하다는 당위적 사실을 확인시켜주는 장이 될 것이다.

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