

## Howard Caygill On Resistance: *ecce homo*

Although our intellect always feels itself urged towards clearness and certainty, still our mind often feels itself attracted by uncertainty. Instead of threading its way with the understanding along the narrow path of philosophical investigations and logical conclusions... it prefers to remain with the imagination in the realms of luck and chance. Instead of living yonder on poor necessity, it revels here in the wealth of possibilities. (Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 117).

a focus on possibility leads directly to the centrality of the idea of freedom... In place of freedom, Clausewitz is interested in the Akt or actuality of war (Caygill, *On Resistance*, p. 17).

These opening quotations from Clausewitz and Caygill herald a puzzle. Clausewitz's preference for possibility and with it the imagination stands in contrast to Caygill's view that Clausewitz concentrated on the capacity of resistance 'actualising itself' (Caygill, 2013, p. 192). How then does Caygill resolve this puzzle? Can one enjoy the creativity of uncertainty and chance within the strictures of actuality as 'the sum of appearances'? (p. 18) Peter Hallward says that Caygill excludes the option of 'thinking actuality and possibility together' (Hallward, 2014, p. 28). Against this, I want to suggest not only does Caygill think possibility, actuality *and* necessity together, he does so in understanding the aporetic logic of Kant, Nietzsche and Hegel, in different ways, to be the call to singularity; in which case we are also exploring the singularity called as Caygill: *ecce homo*.

*On Resistance* is partly its own time apprehended in thought. As the power and wealth of 'developed' nations marches relentlessly forward to the grotesque, so Western political imagination seems petrified when faced with the idea that the poor will be with us always. Caygill's book, on one reading, demonstrates the poverty of schemas of revolution and reform. He takes a stand against the formal, the formulaic, the revolutionary, and the teleological, indeed against anything that falls into the simplistic and fatally flawed dualism of problem and solution. Specifically, Caygill takes a stand against the tyranny of solutions abstracted from the conditions of possibility which mediate them. Caygill's *On Resistance* is not therefore a handbook for direct political action against a traditionally defined opponent. Instead, Caygill's little red book seeks the imaginative, the creative, and the spontaneous, in and as the actuality of forces of opposition. Such is open-ended resistance, or resistance

without a goal. In a world without tangible solutions to the inequality of resources, or to the logic of economic growth and its inability to hold itself accountable to the conditions it creates and re-creates, it is perhaps timely that we should be asked by Caygill to seek wisdom where solutions seem most elusive.

Resistance for Caygill can be aligned to revolution or to reform, but needs to resist *ressentiment* and reaction in favour of affirmation. At times this is ‘pure resistance’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 28) or a struggle ‘in the name of difference itself’ (p. 186). Merely reactive resistance is self-defeating for it sees the struggle through the eyes of the master and accepts his version of events and of identities. Like the door to the law in Kafka (with which Caygill ends *On Resistance*) struggle is pre-defined in such a way as to ensure failure. This is a powerful education for the protester who is faced by a decision to run or resist. Caygill says to this protester ‘don’t you realise that the game and its rules are fixed in this pre-determined theatre of resistance? You are behaving exactly as the police want you to do, for in doing so you will justify the actions they take against you. You lost by even turning up. Indeed, you lost because you see yourselves through the eyes of your oppressors.’ Perhaps many will want to resist such a seemingly defeatist description of political action.

The philosophical presuppositions that ground Caygill’s philosophy of resistance appear to be an affirmation of Nietzschean affirmation and a negation of Hegelian negation and resolution. However, as we will see, there is more than one version of Hegel in Caygill’s work. For the most part, the Hegel of *On Resistance* is the Hegel of a linear philosophy of history, a tyranny of reason and consciousness, and a resolver of dialectical oppositions and contradictions. In the idea of confrontation, the duel, fought to a resolution in a decisive stand-off, is the absolute war of Hegelian roots. It is fuelled by the ‘lure of dialectical resolution’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 181) fought out within ‘an already established context of opposed forces’ (p. 4). This Hegelian dialectical model of opposition and resolution is incapable of creating new conditions or of imagining itself differently from its definition within the opposition. Adding to the difficulty, resistance must avoid being accommodated into the Hegelian language of a single concept, for that is to be identified again within the logic of resolution, even though,

for resistance to make some sense, there has to be a ‘certain consistency’ (p. 6) in its practice. We are seeking the ‘conditions of the possibility for the thinking of resistance while, nevertheless, not exhausting its capacity’ (p. 10). Caygill’s first Inaugural Lecture, (May 1999) opened with a distancing of himself from Hegel ‘the monster of ambiguity... [who] lurking at the beginning of the 19th century... [and] in spite of repeated dismissals, refuses to go away’ (Caygill, 1999, p. 2). He supports the projects of Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray and Levinas which are ‘dedicated to subverting the universal claims of philosophical reason’ (p. 2) and he offers ‘cultural history as a corrective to the universal claims of philosophy’ (p. 2). Against this Hegelianism of the mere repetition of opposition, resolution, and opposition, Caygill asks, *what is it that can return as new?*<sup>1</sup> ‘Resistance’ and ‘resistant subjectivity’ are his latest and perhaps most challenging way of putting this question into practice.

### **Aporetic Kantian Judgement**

In his first book, *Art of Judgement* (1989) Caygill explores how—like originality, which without a name stares us in the face, and like the imagination in Kant which produces synthesis in general, but is ‘the blind but indispensable function of the soul... of which we are scarcely ever conscious’ (Kant, 1968, A78/B103) — judgement-power ‘cannot itself be spoken’ (Caygill, 1989, p. 3). This makes the sovereignty of judgement-power aporetic, and finds Kant’s *Critique Of Judgement* ‘stating a difficulty rather than resolving it’ (p. 2). Caygill’s work is modelled on this approach, consistently uncovering and stating difficulties rather than resolving them. This is never more true than in *On Resistance*. For Caygill, what makes this *aporia* enjoyable is that when judgement ‘has recourse to itself for its own principle’ (p. 2), it evokes pleasure. This self-limiting law of the principle of judgement relies on ‘a proportionality which exceeds and underlies the question of sensibility and reason in the transcendental distinction’ (p. 298). Law in aesthetic judgements is without an end or concept or interest. Pleasure is not assigned to any concept by the modalities. Instead, ‘logic is subordinated to pleasure’ (p. 300). The art of judgement – and now the art of resistance – is in ‘establishing proportionality’ (p. 302) between the objects which are judged, something achieved only in the open-endedness and pleasure of analogy, something which is always and only ‘the representation of a representation’ (Kant, 1968, A68/B93). The arts of judgement

and war are affirmative in that ‘pleasure and finality exceed the transcendental distinction of sensibility and understanding and point to their unity in concrete experience’ (Caygill, 1989, p. 302). They exceed also the Hegelian dialectic of resolution, and the duel between master and slave. Resistance, like aesthetic judgement, ‘legislates for itself’ (p. 305) and does so imaginatively and creatively, beyond any subsumption within the logic of pre-existing concepts.

### **Colour of Experience**

This same aporetic approach receives another philosophical treatment in Caygill’s book on Walter Benjamin, *The Colour Of Experience* (1998). Here the difficulty of the relation between sensibility and reason is expressed in the difficult way that Benjamin recasts Kant’s ‘transcendental concept of experience into a speculative one’ (Caygill, 1998, p. 1). He does this by putting the absolute into experience but not, for Caygill, in an Hegelian way.

Benjamin’s notion of ‘coming philosophy’ is an ‘anti-Hegelian speculative philosophy driven by the nihilistic refusal of any attempt to grasp or comprehend the absolute through finite categories’ (p. 1). In addition, Benjamin avoids the Hegelianism of an experience of the absolute that is developmental and determined by a pre-existing goal or end or logic. Instead, says Caygill, Benjamin argues that absolute experience appears indirectly in ‘complex, tortuous and even violent forms’ (p. 2), but also in uncompleted projects, in fragments. One such fragment from which Caygill derives the terminology for Benjamin’s transcendental and speculative philosophy of history is ‘On Perception in Itself’.<sup>2</sup> In *On Resistance* Caygill cites the relation in Kant between concept and intuition as the starting point for having ideas that can be defined without being subsumed within their definition. This is the case here with the colour of experience. The ‘transcendental condition of experience’ (p. 4) determines the consistency of what experience is, but these conditions are themselves formed and enacted by, and dependent upon, the specific or actual configuration of any particular experience.

This is the open-endedness, the open palm, that Caygill finds in Kantian reflective judgement, against the closed fist of Hegelian opposition and resolution. The ‘colour’ of experience exceeds concept and intuition, not as grey in grey, but as the ‘paradisiacal rainbow’ (p. 150)

announcing a new and unnamed law, but remaining immanent to experience. It reveals the absolute in a passive nihilism which attends to the ways in which the absolute is removed and which in turn leads to an active nihilism wherein the hope of new freedom is announced 'in the distorted, comical and even terrifying patterns of modern experience' (p. 32). This affirmative nihilism is a way of describing Caygill's notion of affirmation. It tries to square the circle of turning a resentful infinite regression into an affirmative practice of yes-saying, by means of joyful and creative affirmative and resistant subjectivity exceeding transcendental pre-conditions which separate concept and intuition. This is the transcendental and speculative yes-sayer: *ecce homo*.

### **Levinas and the Political**

In a personal letter Caygill describes his Levinas book as a 'bleak read', and sent just 'when you thought the summer was looking good.' It is in contrast to the affirmation of *On Resistance* that the bleakness of the Levinas book is truly emphasised. Caygill admits to finding in Levinas at times, a 'chilling... unsentimental understanding of violence and power' (Caygill, 2002, p. 1) which was 'not what I expected from the philosopher I had been taught to regard as the thinker of ethical alterity and the subject of a growing body of sentimental commentary' (p. 1). Levinas's political judgement defines what is seen by many other commentators as his 'irreproachable ethical rigour' (p. 1). If *On Resistance* is affirmative in resisting a totality of war, and an infinity of escalation, then in contrast Levinas's political judgement lacks any affirmation of the present, as he is 'haunted by an unassimilable past of political horror and an unforeseeable future of political promise' (p. 3). Affirmation is impossible between the twin powers of impossible mourning and prophecy. It is a 'strange fire' rather than affirmation that takes its place within the aporia of judgement between understanding and sensibility. The middle between war and peace in Levinas does not have recourse to itself, finds no pleasure or joy, no proportionality between war and peace. It rules out exactly the kind of philosophy of resistance that Caygill has unfolded in his new book. It offers only the 'permanent possibility of war' (p. 105) and meaningless self-destruction or 'sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice' (p. 105). The bleak judgement is that in Levinas any opposition to war becomes 'a declaration of war by peace upon war' (p. 107).

## *On Resistance*

As early as the second introduction in *On Resistance* Caygill has aligned the project of resistance to that of the *aporia* of Kantian judgement. A ‘philosophy of resistance’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 6) must resist subsumption under a ‘single concept [which is] amenable to legitimation and appropriation’ (p. 6) by those who are being resisted. Resistance therefore ‘has continually to be reinvented’ (p. 6) in philosophical reflections, and ‘a good point of departure for such reflection’ (p. 7) is Kant’s ‘formula’ (p. 6) that ‘thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind’ (Caygill, 2013, pp. 6-7; Kant, 1968, A51/B75). If Kant intended by this ‘the mutual restitution of plenitude and sight’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 7) Caygill now re-forms our understanding of the dualism of unification and dispersal, finding here a ‘conceptuality that permits consistency without imposing unity’ (p. 7). Perhaps, says Caygill, ‘it should be thought of as a variant of Kantian reflective judgement, but one in which the individual case does not only demand a change in the concept or rule of judgement, but actively *resists* its subsumption under such a concept or rule’ (p. 7): *ecce homo*.

Caygill describes resistance not as a the unity of a concept, but as needing to express the ambiguity of ‘consistency without imposing unity’ (p. 7). From Clausewitz Caygill holds this ambiguity of resistance by conceiving it as ‘the capacity to resist’ (p. 10). Thus ‘the war of resistance is bivalent: it is dedicated not only to compromising the enemy’s capacity to resist, but also to preserving and enhancing one’s own capacity in the face of the enemy’s application of force’ (p. 10). This is not a self-enclosing totality of the Hegelian kind, for, like judgement, it is where resistance has ‘recourse to itself for its own principle’ (Caygill, 1989, p. 2). Its puzzle, or aporetic character is that while on the one hand ‘there is never a moment of pure resistance, but always a reciprocal play of resistances’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 5), on the other hand ‘it is crucial to avoid lapsing into a reactive posture’ (p. 67). Hence the central philosophical question as I see it in *On Resistance* is, *what is it that can return as new?*

This question is played out in terms of the drama of movement, enmity, chance and character. Creativity characterises those who have been able to work with fluidity rather than the oppositions of consciousness (Sun Tzu, Mao, Luxemburg, Gramsci, Lukacs and the Frankfurt School) and is present in new ways of resisting (guerrilla war, partisan war, wars of duration, non-violent opposition, including that of Ghandi and the Greenham Common women).

Enmity and chance demand creativity for they disrupt the best laid plans. Insecurity and threat for Clausewitz characterised an insecure subjectivity prior to any ‘legally constituted and peaceful order’ (Caygill, 2012, p. 21).<sup>3</sup> Even the transcendental unity of apperception is only a ‘tactical response to a condition of insecurity’ (p. 21). Yet to become brutalised by the violence employed by one’s enemies is both escalation and becoming an enemy to creativity. It enlists chance and enmity for the enemy. Unlike Kant, Fichte or Hegel, Clausewitz sees history more as a realm of chance and accident than as the teleology of reason. ‘In Hegel’s philosophy of history the accident is a stage or moment in a rational historical sequence, while for Clausewitz it is the interruption or the thwarting of any aspiration to such a rational sequence’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 18). Clausewitz is less concerned with the free will rationally securing its freedom than with ‘the management of violence released by the workings of chance and enmity. These were not effects that could be carried through to some dialectical resolution and brought to yield a positive result; indeed, chance and enmity stand as a sign for the ruin of any dialectical endeavour’ (p. 18). Fanon shows how cathartic violence can liberate *from* a colonial past but not necessarily *for* a postcolonial future’ (p. 103). However, he illustrates how the Zapatistas lack any sense of personal enmity which could brutalise their enemies and also themselves.

Caygill states that ‘a surprising feature of resistant subjectivity is its mobilisation of the theory of the traditional cardinal virtues of justice, courage/fortitude and prudence in the understanding of resistance. Resistance is motivated above all by a desire for justice, its acts are performed by subjectivities possessed of extreme courage and fortitude and its practice guided by prudence, all three contributing to the deliberate preservation and enhancement of the capacity to resist’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 12). Character is the antidote to *ressentiment*. The

resistant subjectivity does ‘not enjoy freedom’ (p. 97) because there is ‘no choice but to resist’ (p. 97). As such ‘resistance and the pursuit of freedom do not enjoy a pre-established harmony’ (p. 97). On the contrary, resistance begins with the necessity of ‘a bare capacity to resist’ (p. 98) and emerges ‘reactively in response to a predicament of oppression’ (p. 98). This is a spontaneous ‘lashing out at oppression’ (p. 98) and is for all that still only reactive. This reactive resistance is ‘volatile and vulnerable’ (p. 98) and ‘remains shaped by the enemy and is initially a resistance of *ressentiment*’ (p. 98). It will remain self-destructive unless it can ‘metamorphose into an affirmative, inventive resistance that does not just react to an intolerable predicament but transforms itself and its condition through the work of resistance, the actualising of its capacity to resist’ (pp. 98-9). This actuality is the character of resistant subjectivity, for resisting with no goal other than to actualise resistance means ‘resistance is closer to the pre-modern doctrine of the virtues than to the modern value of freedom: it responds to an implacable demand for *justice* with actions characterised by *fortitude* or the ability to sustain courage over a long period of time without any certainty of outcome, along with *prudence* in the choice and deployment of limited means’ (p. 97). Such subjectivity is principled not in conforming to the closed fist of theoretical principles, but to the open palm of practical principles, i.e. virtue, which leads to ‘the formation of new capacities to resist’ (p. 99).

This all leads to the conclusion of the book where the pleasure of invention in the necessity of resistance overcomes the mechanical reactive lashing out, and forms new resistant subjectivities which have their actuality in their own character, i.e. in the character of their active struggle. Against the persistent (Hegelian) dualism of domination and bondage (in which the slave perhaps works, or perhaps resists), resistance is disillusioned if it is only reproductive of that same dualism. Instead, as an end without an end, one where resistance is action formative of its own principles/virtues, Kant’s art of the aesthetic judgement becomes an honourable art of resistance, ‘one with its own necessities, its own affirmations and its own joy’ (p. 208): *ecce homo*.

### **Affirmation**



The roots of Caygill's notion of affirmation lie partly in Nietzsche. In an essay 'Affirmation and Eternal Return In The Free-Spirit Trilogy'<sup>4</sup> Caygill explores eternal return as 'the outcome of a crisis of judgement' (Caygill, 1991, p. 216) which is rehearsed in the free-spirit trilogy of *Human All Too Human*, *Daybreak*, and *The Gay Science*, and is recommended by Nietzsche in *Ecce Homo*. Caygill's reading emphasises 'the difficult, aporetic character of the doctrine' (p. 217) over any systematic relation to will to power or the overman. It is more of a statement of the puzzle than the solution of the enigma of liberation. Heidegger's notion of affirmation, says Caygill, is the ecstatic account of temporality or authentic *Dasein*. But, he asks, is there a way of understanding judgement which is not 'exhausted by past and future united in the movement of willing?' (p. 219) Here Caygill asks the key question, 'what is it that can return as new?' (p. 226)

The post-Zarathustra period is Nietzsche's no-saying, but only in order to draw in the *gebildeten* to the horror of their passive nihilism and slave morality. It is also the period in which Nietzsche returns to the earlier trilogy, through the new Prefaces written in 1886. These Prefaces do not mark a recovery of the I that was lost in the crisis of subjectivity which the trilogy expresses. Instead, what is recovered 'in remembrance is new and original, even if it had always been present' (p. 224). For Caygill the new is recovered from within the crisis, but is not determined by subsumptive judgements of yes and no, of negation and recovery, of denial and affirmation. This return is a form of questioning 'which really inverts the meaning of the signature "Nietzsche"' (p. 225). It is to reinvent Nietzsche by keeping open the question of who Nietzsche is. This is an art of affirmation, creative, open and inventive, in search of the man called Nietzsche rather than recovering him. These new Prefaces do not return to 'deliver his own or philosophy's funeral oration [Hegel's grey in grey]... but to announce the recovery of his calling; he returns to announce his return' (p. 225) – much in the way that Caygill notes how 'calls' to resistance 'perform a capacity to resist which, once declared, is actualised' Caygill, 2013, p. 192). The calling is testimony 'to a capacity to resist in the course of actualising itself' (p. 192).

Here, then, in answer to the question *what is it that can return as new*, Caygill says ‘the return of the calling is the discovery of something new and original’ (p. 226). It is a process of invention and discovery even if what is discovered and created had always been present. The new in eternal return is the colour of experience in Benjamin, and is what is missing from Levinas’s notion of the political. Hegelian recollection, for Caygill, is ultimately only a repetition of the same while the calling in Nietzsche includes recollection but also exceeds it. It satisfies the dualistic desire for process and result, but it is also ‘other, strange, a tyrant without a name’ (p. 226). Avoiding this tyrant only exacts retribution, and demands penance. This nameless tyrant is ‘originality’ (Nietzsche, 1974, §261) and ‘it stares us all in the face’ (§261). It is the burden of the question ‘which must be borne to the extent of becoming *the greatest weight*’ (Caygill, 1991, p. 226). *Daybreak* is ‘the return of the calling of something new and questionable’ (p. 226). It is to execute the tradition, using both senses of the word – to end and to actualise. These are the free spirits; those who are liberated in ‘judgement’s questioning of judgement’ (p. 230): *ecce homo*. This judgement of judgement is not grey in grey, it is ‘beyond human measure’ (p. 230); its affirmation is ‘beyond man and time’ (p. 230).

Interrupting Caygill here for a moment, I note my own suspicion of such notions of excess which appear to me to be a *ressentiment* against actuality, ‘a despairing rationalism without reason’ (Rose, 1996, p. 7). But Caygill’s notion of excess is both transcendental and speculative. For example, in a paper on Blake and Hegel he distinguishes the Hegel of completion from the Hegel of ‘Bacchanalian revel keeping its shape through constant movement’ (Caygill, 2000, p. 197). Blake’s doctrine of contraries, found in ‘energy, genius, infinity, excess and prodigiousness’ (p. 199), is capable of receiving ‘the infinity of spirit’ (p. 200). Exceeding resolution here in both cases is transcendental and speculative. Yet the Hegel of completion and recollection is also present here. Caygill points out that unlike Blake’s colour of experience, Hegel’s grey on grey fails to ‘exceed ... the bounds of received metaphysical opposition’ (p. 202). What this illustrates is that Caygill finds Hegel’s work at times to be deterministic, and at times to be aporetic. Caygill’s own use of Hegel embraces this puzzle. In ‘The Promise of Justice’ Caygill finds the excess of justice both ‘familiar and strange’ (Caygill, 2007, p. 30). This notion of excess needs to be seen within the puzzle of the

transcendental and its actuality, within the aporetic philosophy of Kant, Nietzsche and Hegel. (I failed to do justice to this in an earlier draft of this paper, where my own criticisms exceeded the aporetic Caygill I was trying to support.) The relation between them becomes even more intriguing in the discussion of Nietzschean affirmation. In describing the *formation* of the affirmation of unnameable singularity, this return did ‘not simply invert or ignore the old yes and no, [it] “sublated” them’ (Caygill, 1991, p. 230). This use of *aufheben* is significant. It speaks of the generous Hegel of phenomenology, of misrecognition and recognition, of movement, of reveal, and as we will see, of education, lurking in Caygill who, despite repeated dismissals, refuses to go away.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the ‘truth’ here of *aufheben* as a notion of excess and return, the arts of judgement and resistance are affirmative in doing penance for the limits of justice and subsumptive logic. ‘The New, the Unique, the Incomparable, cannot be named; “their” calling is not the affirmation of a given limit but a limitless giving which exceeds the bonds of human measure. With this Nietzsche both fulfils and destroys the tradition of judgement’ (p. 235): *ecce homo*. Indeed, before the yes and no there must be a yes of judgement, else how could there be judgement, law, or concept? The place of this originary yes is nameless yet ‘stares us all in the face’ (p. 235). It is affirmed precisely in calling all oppositions into question because this questioning ‘destroys the very opposition’ (p. 231) of yes and no. What stares us in the face is that judgements are *aporetic* and must ‘both return and be made anew’ (p. 236). To affirm this, to say yes and amen to the return and to the new, is to will the question of judgement eternally. Was that life staring me in the face? Well then, once more. The ‘extreme statement of *eternal* return – one beyond time – leads paradoxically to an affirmation of singularity’ (p. 236): *ecce homo*. When this return is made eternal ‘it is driven to its limit in absurdity’ (p. 236); and at the moment of parody the greatest burden ‘changes into the greatest joy’ (p. 236) – the same joy that is released when resistance transforms its yes or no into an affirmation of singular resistant subjectivity: *ecce homo*.

This point is made again twenty years later in Caygill’s second Inaugural Lecture. Zarathustra’s ‘ethical recommendation to live each moment as if it would return eternally can

be read as a formula for the constitution of resistant subjectivity' (Caygill, 2012, p. 24). This eternal return 'is also the test of the character of such subjectivity – a test of the ability to accept the insecurity implied by the formula as either the greatest burden or liberation' (p. 24).

### **The trilogy of 'The Speculative Community'**

If *On Resistance* pits Clausewitz against Hegel through Nietzschean affirmation, this was not the case in an earlier trilogy written by Caygill in 1994, entitled *Hegel And The Speculative Community*. These essays conjoin Kant on judgement, Clausewitz on war, and Hegel on politics. Even more interesting is that the Hegel of these essays is not the Hegel of *On Resistance* where dialectical oppositions are resolved without waste or excess.

The Hegel of the 1994 trilogy is much more generous than the Hegel of *On Resistance*. Hegel's release from the left/right distinction – originally forged by the young Hegelians of the 1830s – by a Kant/Nietzsche axis of interest has allowed Hegel's philosophy to be read as a reflection on revolutionary events 'without adopting a dogmatic or partisan position with respect to them' (Caygill, 1994, p. 3). This allows Caygill to explore community, violence and constitution in Hegel in just such a generous spirit. In addition, Caygill notes that the *Science Of Logic* shows the impossibility of reconciling thought and being and is 'a continuation of the phenomenology of the misrecognitions of reason and actuality' (p. 11). Spirit here is the 'recognition of the necessity of misrecognition' (p. 12) and is practised in speculative philosophy and perhaps in the speculative community. It is this (albeit oblique) reference to the *educational* nature of recognition and misrecognition that underpins much of Caygill's more generous Hegel. Against a reading of the rational as real or the real as rational he notes that Hegel, shortly before his death, is reported to have said 'what is actual is rational. But not everything which exists is actual, what is bad is insubstantial and broken in itself' (p. 12). This broken Hegel is not to the fore in *On Resistance*, neither is the Hegel in which truth is movement, 'the dance that never ceases, cannot cease' (p. 19), the revel and repose of the true. Yet this Hegel is central to Caygill's notion of the speculative community. He derides the dialectical which in its own crisis of duality posits unity or destruction and

ruin, a vicious circle returned to in *On Resistance*. But what is not found in *On Resistance* is a view of the speculative which ‘tries to assume responsibility’ (p. 21) for the violence of the misrecognition and the political form it takes. Taking responsibility here, and taking responsibility in *On Resistance* for the calling to the question, are both experiments in affirming resistant subjectivity.

In his trilogy, one of Caygill’s major criticisms of Hegel’s *Philosophy Of Right* is that it abstracts violence from political rights in a way not justified by either the *Phenomenology* or the *Science Of Logic*. The early Hegel clearly saw the violence of property determining the sphere of civility and legal rights. But by the time of the *Philosophy Of Right*, says Caygill, Hegel had ceded the monopoly of violence to the universal class of the bureaucracy, pushing violence to the borders occupied by military specialists. This is precisely a move in civil violence that does not take responsibility for itself, and refuses the calling to it of the question of its own violence. This is important because, for Caygill, in *The System Of Ethical Life*, Hegel ‘mobilises Kant’s *aporia* of judgement which emerges between concept and intuition’ (p. 30) not merely to employ or overcome violence but as a way of registering their complicity without assigning hierarchy to one or the other. To register complicity is to register responsibility, and to take responsibility for the Kantian *aporia* of judgement is to commit to an art of judgement, or an art of resistance, in which the recourse of judgement to itself – precisely the taking of responsibility – is the affirmative joy of the resistant subjectivity. Finding Hegel and Kant (and Nietzsche) so close here should not surprise us, for Caygill says ‘it is evident from *The System Of Ethical Life* that Hegel’s political philosophy is largely a radical development of Kant’s language of judgement’ (p. 35).

The trilogy is also interesting for its observations on Clausewitz in anticipation of *On Resistance*. For Clausewitz, it is the separation of civility and violence which ‘opens the theoretical space for an abstract philosophy of war’ (p. 31). He too ‘developed a radical version of Kant’s *aporia* of judgement’ (p. 35) but whereas the *Philosophy Of Right* prioritised civility almost to the exclusion of violence, Clausewitz prioritises violence almost as its own ‘pure’ (p. 27) abstraction. This violence is beyond the relation of concept and

intuition, and is beyond the logical. Furthermore Clausewitz at times ‘equates judgement with the violence of imagination’ (p. 36). There is in war ‘everywhere a margin for the accidental’ (Clausewitz, 1982, p. 117) and therefore the imagination is needed for the commander of military forces to have a ‘sense of locality’ (p. 153) and, for example, to be able to hold and present a ‘mentally drawn map’ (p. 153) to reason. In short, ‘where the logician draws the line, where the premises stop which are the result of cognition – where judgement begins, there Art begins’ (pp. 101-2). Caygill concurs; the art of judgement, as of war, involves ‘making decisions without the aid of logic’ (Caygill, 1994, p. 39).<sup>6</sup>

Caygill ties Hegel and Clausewitz together in the observation that violence is integrated into civility, either by seeing state institution as violence giving itself existence (Clausewitz) or by seeing political rights as the legality of the violence of possession and property, whilst also separating civility and violence such that it is given over to a realm of specialists (Hegel). As such, Clausewitz’s account of a pure violence of war depends upon Hegel having separated war from civility in the *Philosophy Of Right*; and, for the early Hegel, ‘with the translation of private into public rights, politics becomes a means of prosecuting the clash of private interests at a political level’ (Caygill, 1994, p. 39).

### **The force of learning**

The notion of affirmation that lies at the heart of *On Resistance* is a Nietzschean affirmation, a Kantian affirmation, but not, it would appear, also an Hegelian affirmation. The affirmative resistant subjectivity is motivated by a desire for justice, but motivated, too, to affirm itself beyond the *ressentiment* that is one of its conditions of possibility. Where the mature Hegel of dialectic and resolution can only reflect backwards on a failed campaign, Kant, Clausewitz and Nietzsche can, in different ways, affirm the yes and amen that pre-figures the resentful yes or no of self-hatred. But even the early Hegel of recognition and misrecognition – of education – seemingly plays no part in *On Resistance*, and he is left out of the ‘insurrectional community... a league of the just or a commune of friends’ (Caygill, 2013, p. 199). The league of the just is no longer inclusive of the speculative community even though the latter ‘bases its ethical and political decisions on a recognition of its violence’ (Caygill, 1994, p.

50). Is it true to say that over the last 20 years Caygill has turned away from this more generous Hegel? If so, is Hegel now the *hunted* monster?

I think the exclusion of Hegel from the insurrectional community can be countered by retrieving the educational Hegel that appears in the aporia of the deterministic Hegel. Moreover, this Hegel, despite appearances to the contrary, is in fact at the core of the project of *On Resistance*. When Caygill writes of his generous Hegel in his Trilogy it is at one point very clearly expressed in terms of *education*. For example, in the Hegel that takes responsibility for the ‘unacknowledged violence of the possessions of civility’ (p. 30) Caygill finds the Hegel who mobilises Kant’s aporia of judgement into a ‘phenomenology of judgement’ (p. 30), which uncovers the violence implicit in the way concept and intuition seem to correspond with each other. This culture of ethical life, its ‘phenomenological *Bildung*’ (p. 30), its ‘*Bildung* of Spirit’ (p. 30) says Caygill, is exactly how Hegel avoids ‘the hierarchical relationship of concept as law to intuition’ (p. 30). But in *On Resistance*, when Caygill becomes self-conscious of his relation to Hegel the monster, this education is somewhat suppressed.

Equally in *Art Of Judgement* the problem of ‘establishing a principle of judgement discloses itself as the problem of formation and culture’ (Caygill, 1989, p. 298), and law and pleasure are united in ‘formative activity or “life”’ (p. 229). In both Kant and Hegel, Caygill has previously worked with the educational import of the aporia of judgement, and suggested that it is education that resists, perhaps prevents, concept becoming law to intuition. Why, then, does Caygill now appear to resist this educational language in addressing the concept of resistant subjectivity?

In fact, *On Resistance* does have its own actuality in Caygill’s generous Hegel. In the first few pages, with Clausewitz, Caygill defines energy and not the free will as the capacity to make things happen, or to create actuality. Here Caygill turns to Hegel’s description of perception as Force in the *Phenomenology Of Spirit*. By exploring the notion of the actuality

of Force, he is implicitly working with the *aufheben* of Force, where *aufheben* is seen, as above, not as resolution, but aporetically as the return of the new within the old. Hegelian actuality, seen merely as sad and recollective, will not see any possibility for creative or affirmative resistance, because the totality of such a notion of actuality mitigates against anything new. But Caygill, by opening up the notion of resistance to the *aufheben* of Force – an *aufheben* of aporia, not resolution – retrieves the generous Hegel who can actualise the aporia of judgement as education, and reminds us of the aporetic Caygill for whom excess remains mediated by its conditions of possibility. In *On Resistance* Caygill makes it clear how the aporia of transcendental conditions and speculative configuration (logic and grammar in Clausewitz) does not allow possibility to exist free from their actuality, but equally does not allow actuality to exhaust possibility.

Caygill's critique of Sartre's understanding of the events of October 27, 1960, in Paris, is that it is grounded in a fantasy of freedom of decision and choice. It fails to understand how *this* specific opposition is part of a fluid force of domination and defiance which is pre-formed and ever-changing. In describing the scene in terms of Hegel's notion of Force, Caygill is able to draw out two significant features. First, the only equilibrium between the crowd and the police is that both are the fluidity and energy of Force. Force has divided itself into two seemingly reciprocal and opposed parts, but the reciprocity is not balanced or equal. Just as the life and death struggle in Hegel plays out the diremption of Force into domination and bondage, and just as illusory being plays out the diremption of (the Force of) logic into reflective subjectivity and its object, so the diremption of Force in perception plays out the difference between 'one' and 'other'. Each fluidity involves an abstract unity needing to express itself in and through its being for-itself by being for-another. This whole process of revel and repose is the fluidity of absolute knowing in Hegel.

These oppositions of one and other *appear* as if they are reciprocal. The crowd can solicit the police to reflect on its illusory universality as the neutral medium, just as the police can solicit the crowd to respect this universality. But, as Caygill emphasises, the dice is loaded. The theatre in which Force acts hides its director, its scene construction, its script writer, as if



the confrontation is played out on a neutral stage undetermined in anyone's interest or in anyone's favour. The illusion here, that the maintenance of order is not a particular interest enacted by a particular script, is the same order of illusion that sees the 'free' master as the neutral medium of the definition of freedom, and the reflective subject as the neutral medium of philosophical thinking. What is hidden is in plain view; it is just that it is unseen because it is absolutely visible. Its being taken completely for granted is its most powerful way of remaining unexamined. Crucially, this is *not* the structure of ideology critique. It is rather the structure of the *aporia* of ideology critique. It is the structure of the 'the totality that is false' (Adorno, 1991, 28), or of the *aporia* of the transcendental and the speculative, of Kant and Hegel, and of possibility and actuality.

What, then, does resistance mean if it is pre-determined within the diremption of Force into domination and servitude, one and other, within its theatre – totality – of operations? The Hegel of dualism and resolution only re-enacts this totality, and looks back forlornly each time at its repetition of grey in grey. But the aporetic Hegel, and the aporetic Caygill, see actuality differently. To see the theatre, the totality, for what *it is*, is not merely to see how actuality has been put together to look neutral and not to represent vested interests. Ideology critique is vulgar when it assumes that, in knowing this, ideology is overcome. Force is more complex than this. Force is the universal neutral medium, *and* it is the opposition of one and other, *and*, returned to itself or called to itself in this opposition, without having overcome itself as opposition, it is returned – sublated – the same and different. Force is always already resistance to itself. It is its own capacity for resistance. And the *necessity* of this return, the necessity of possibility and actuality thought together, is *learning*. Learning is the process in which what returns to itself does so differently or as the new. In this sense, it is learning, as the actuality of return, that also actualises the capacity of resistance to affirm itself. Education here, is the formation of the resistant subjectivity, affirming itself by resisting all attempts by the neutral medium to prevent or to block its capacity to resist. Learning is how affirmation affirms itself without closing itself down – learning is never finished – and without exceeding or abstracting itself from attachment to its actual conditions of possibility – learning is always part of what it learns about. Caygill does not want to align this Force of affirmation solely with consciousness. So be it. But for Hegel this affirmative Force of aporetic learning, of

sublation – of *aufheben* as possibility, actuality and necessity – is subjective substance: *ecce homo*.

How, then, to resist the illusions of Force if forced to do so without freedom? The answer is: *resist actually*. For Caygill, resistance is found in knowing actuality as the condition of the possibility of possibility. This is not excess ‘beyond’ actuality. It is rather excess beyond the *illusion* of the mere possibility of excess, an illusion formed within the universal medium and its appearances as and in oppositions. What ‘goes beyond’, what is new, what is learned, is still *within* the actuality of those illusions. This is the actuality of imagination, genius, energy, excess, infinity and creativity, which have always been the substance (or Force) (or strange fire) of Caygill’s thinking. This is how I now understand how Caygill, the champion of possibility, necessarily lives alongside Caygill, the champion of aporia of possibility, within actuality. The art of judgement and the colour of experience, the transcendental and the speculative, argue for a tarrying with ‘poor necessity’ because in the aporias of this poor necessity lie its own rich possibilities.

Can the actual also contain the new? The logic of non-contradiction says no. The logic of dialectical contradiction says yes – but dialectic remains abstract if it is not its own education about the aporetic experience of dialectic. The actual logic of aporia says yes and no, and says yes and no to that. If this is to be the Nietzschean affirmation of eternal return, then it is that last no which is also needed if aporia (and the aporia of eternal return) is to do justice to itself. In Hegel, this science of logic is the science of aporetic logic, and is absolute knowing. I do not think Caygill is prepared to sanction the term absolute as aporia’s own truth, or its own logic. No matter. Resisting actuality, and the actuality of resistance, both affirm themselves in the aporia of possibility and necessity that relates them, in the aporia which expresses their truth. To return actuality to itself differently is to change the world, sometimes in the most minute ways, occasionally in momentous ones.

Caygill does not use the language of education in *On Resistance*. But his notions of possibility and actuality, in being necessarily aporetic, are of education. Education, the capacity to learn, is the capacity for resistance that is inherent in the character of the logic of aporia. This is a redefinition, a re-learning, of absolute knowing, for it is where affirmation as actual resistance, working for and against opposition, is to be found. As I said, I hesitate to presume that this is now the definition of absolute knowing for Caygill. Were I to do so, I would mean only that, in knowing Caygill, what stares me in the face, what solicits me, is Caygill the educator: *ecce homo*.

## References

- Adorno, T.W. (1991) 'Why philosophy?' in D. Ingram and J. Simon-Ingram (eds.), *Critical Theory, the Essential Readings*, New York: Paragon House.
- Caygill, H. (1989) *Art of Judgement*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Caygill, H. (1991) 'Affirmation And Eternal Return In The Free-Spirit Trilogy' in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, London: Routledge.
- Caygill, H. (1994) *Hegel and the Speculative Community: Three Essays*, Norwich: University of East Anglia.
- Caygill, H. (1998) *Colour of Experience*, London: Routledge.
- Caygill, H. (1999) 'Philosophy and Cultural History', Inaugural Lecture (1), 11<sup>th</sup> May, Goldsmith's College: London.
- Caygill, H. (2002) *Levinas and the Political*, London: Routledge.
- Caygill, H. (2012) 'Also Sprach Zapata' *Radical Philosophy* 171 (Jan/Feb), 21.
- Caygill, H. (2013) *On Resistance*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Clausewitz, C. von (1982) *On War*, trans. Anatol Rapoport, London: Penguin.
- Comay, R. (2011), *Mourning Sickness*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hallward, P. (2014) 'Defiance or Emancipation,' *Radical Philosophy*, 183 Jan/Feb 2014, 29.
- Kant, I. (1968) *Critique of Pure Reason* London: Macmillan.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1990) *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, trans. HV and EH Hong, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rose, G. (1996) *Mourning Becomes the Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---

<sup>1</sup> In some ways, this is the same question Rebecca Comay raises, asking ‘Can Hegelian lingering ... be differentiated from slave deferral?’ (2011, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> The fragment (1917) reads:

*perception is reading*

*only that appearing in the surface is readable...*

*surface that is configuration – absolute continuity.*

<sup>3</sup> This is from Caygill’s second Inaugural Lecture, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2011, Kingston University, London, reprinted in Caygill 2012.

<sup>4</sup> I am using a draft copy of this paper and an accompanying personal letter (17<sup>th</sup> December, 1990). Page numbers refer to the published version in Caygill, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Lurking, even though seemingly dismissed here by Caygill in a version of excess where, beyond the logic of yes and no, and the illogic of refusing them, there is an *alogic*, just as beyond the yes or no of justice there is an *ajustice*. Nietzsche calls this a purification, a new born child, a self-forgetting and a self-spinning wheel. This penance for the law of yes and no is ‘what is *more* than human’ (Caygill, 1991, p. 231).

<sup>6</sup> Of direct relevance to Caygill’s work, Clausewitz also discusses whether art or science is the correct term to describe judgement-power employed in warfare. He says that knowing and doing should never be mistaken for each other. If science is the knowing and art is the doing then ‘the ‘doing’ cannot properly stand in any book and therefore art should never be the title of a book’ (1982, 201). But, and explaining Caygill’s own title *Art of Judgement*, Clausewitz says that art has come to mean the branches of knowledge necessary for the practice of an art. So art is used as the knowledge necessary to do something, while science is reserved for that enquiry in which knowledge is the object. Art cannot be *techne*, if *techne* means applying a set of rules or skills according to a pre-determined method, but if *techne* is defined more loosely to include guile, cunning, and imagination/judgement then this is applicable to Clausewitz’s *Art of War* and to Caygill’s *Art Of Judgement*. The use of knowledge remains an art, and the line between knowledge and power, says Clausewitz, is difficult to find in man himself. The art of war, says Caygill, is a branch of the art of judgement in that it involves making decisions without the aid of logic’ (1994, 36).