

☐ Contemporary  
Literary Criticism

**CLC**

**320**

**Contemporary Literary Criticism, Vol. 320**

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27500 Drake Rd.  
Farmington Hills, MI, 48331-3535

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13: 978-1-4144-7091-7

ISBN-10: 1-4144-7091-6

ISSN 0091-3421

# Contemporary Literary Criticism



## Preface

**N**amed “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

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*CLC* provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

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- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *CLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, films, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

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# Francis Fukuyama

## 1952-

American political scientist and social critic.

The following entry presents an overview of Fukuyama's career through 2011. For additional information on his life and works, see *CLC*, Volume 131.

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most well-known public intellectuals in the United States, Fukuyama has written widely on issues concerning democratization, foreign affairs, the technology revolution, and scientific progress. Fukuyama is internationally famous for his "end-of-history" thesis, which he introduced in the 1989 essay "The End of History?" and elaborated upon in his 1992 book, *The End of History and the Last Man*. Originally articulated just months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Fukuyama's thesis declared that history was directional and biased toward the eventual triumph of free-market economics and liberal democracy. Fukuyama provoked a voluminous worldwide response with his central claim: "What we are witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or a passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Bryan-Paul Frost wrote in 2009, "To say that Fukuyama's article and the book that followed it created anything less than an academic and public firestorm would be an understatement." In subsequent writings, Fukuyama adapted his vision of political evolution in light of advancements in bioscience suggesting possibilities for the genetic alteration of human characteristics. Beginning in the early 1980s, Fukuyama became closely identified with the rise of neoconservatism through a series of political appointments in Republican political circles. But he has more recently sought to distance himself from the neoconservative movement. Especially noteworthy in this regard was his opposition to the ongoing war in Iraq and his objection to what he considered an overly militarized approach to American foreign policy in the Middle East. He described the shift in his political position and the alleged failings of the George W. Bush administration in *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and*

*the Neoconservative Legacy* (2006). A prolific contributor to academic periodicals, Fukuyama and other members of the editorial board of the conservative *The National Interest* (where "The End of History?" appeared) broke off from the journal in 2005 to establish their own magazine, *The American Interest*.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

An only child, Fukuyama was born in the Hyde Park suburb of Chicago, Illinois, but grew up in Manhattan and College Park, Pennsylvania. Fukuyama came by the academic life naturally. His father, Yoshio Fukuyama, was a Congregational minister and professor with a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago, and his maternal grandfather, Shiro Kawata, founded the Economics Department at Kyoto University. Fukuyama received a B.A. in classics from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in political science from Harvard. In 1979, Fukuyama started a long association with the RAND Corporation global policy think tank based in Santa Monica, California. While in California, he met his wife, a graduate student at UCLA, with whom he now has three grown children. Fukuyama was appointed to the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. Department of State for 1981-1982. A second Policy appointment, as deputy director for European political-military affairs, coincided with the publication of "The End of History" essay. This piece, Eyal R. Goldstein explained in 2011, "rocketed him into the orbit of intellectual celebrity" and determined his future course: "His argument—that the war of ideas is over, and Western-style liberal democracy has triumphed . . . neatly captured the emerging zeitgeist of the post-cold-war world. Cue the lucrative book deals, tenured positions, political appointments and packed lecture halls—all of which conspired to keep him in Washington." Fukuyama was a professor of public policy at George Mason University from 1996 until 2000, when he transferred to Johns Hopkins University as a fellow in the Paul H. Nitze School of International Studies. From 2001 to 2004, Fukuyama was a member of the President's Council on Bioethics. It was not until the summer of 2010 that Fukuyama left the Washington, D.C., area to accept a post at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

## MAJOR WORKS

Fukuyama's "end-of-history" thesis owes its inspiration to the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and, more specifically, to the manner in which Hegel was interpreted in the mid-twentieth-century by the Russian-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève. Fukuyama's ideas about historical progress rest on his ideas about what it means to be human. Fukuyama separates the human species from animals based on the former's language and reasoning ability and humankind's deep need for "dignity," understood as the urge to be recognized as free by another free human being (the so-called "thymic" urge first articulated by Plato). Humans, according to Fukuyama, are qualitatively different from the rest of the natural world by their capacity to influence history. History, as his theory goes, has gradually progressed in the direction of capitalist liberal democracy because that type of government has done the best job of satisfying the human desire for dignity. Fukuyama declared the imminent demise of global communism and asserted that liberalism as a form of social organization would encounter no serious contender in the future. With Kojève, and Hegel before him, Fukuyama claimed that history, in the sense of ideological evolution, had come to an end when Napoleon and the ideals of the French Revolution had triumphed over the Prussians at the Battle of Jena in 1806.

Implicit in Fukuyama's thesis is humankind's capacity to make value judgments. In subsequent writings, most notably *Our Posthuman Future* (2002), Fukuyama qualified his end-of-history thesis in view of the biotechnology revolution. He has observed with great foreboding that genetic engineering might allow humans to fundamentally alter their natures and therefore their value orientation. Fukuyama admits that an unstoppable bioscience revolution would suggest that history as he understands it might never end.

In *The Great Disruption* (1999), Fukuyama addressed the deterioration of social values and family life attendant upon the shift from the industrial to the information age. He has expressed optimism for a return to social order by virtue of humankind's natural instinct to create moral rules that bind communities together. Fukuyama's *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (2011), traces the development of society from tribalism to the modern political state. The first of two projected volumes on the topic, *Origins of Political Order* takes Fukuyama's study from ancient times to the birth of the American and French Revolutions.

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the democratization of Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, Fukuyama was hailed by many scholars as a political prophet. But detractors have complained that he served simply as a spokesperson for a neoconservative push for Western hegemony. Certain political factions in Russia were especially hostile to his thesis. As quoted by Andrei P. Tsygankov in his *Whose World Order? Russia's Perception of American Ideas after the Cold War*, one account in the Russian newspaper *Den'* referred to Fukuyama's theory as "a form of geopolitical ideology behind an aggressive Western culture . . . that pretends to be universal, but in reality wants to rule the world." Another account, in *Nash Sovremennik*, cautioned, "The historical task before Russia and all other nations of the world is not to allow the twenty-first century to become the worldwide American century and a totalitarian New World Order of the United States and the world financial conspiracy to result in the end of history."

In mainstream circles, Fukuyama's thesis was subjected to a great deal of misinterpretation and, in view of succeeding historical events, caricature. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, were especially damaging to the acceptance of Fukuyama's ideas, causing many intellectuals to believe that history had refuted him empirically. Even some of his former advocates were swayed to the side of Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington, who had challenged Fukuyama's thesis in 1993, declaring not an end to history but the start of a long "clash of civilizations." But other analysts came out in Fukuyama's defense, emphasizing that Fukuyama had not declared the end of international political conflicts but, rather, had predicted that the outcomes of such conflicts would favor liberal democracy in a kind of historical inevitability.

Fukuyama reasserted the claims of modernization over Islamic fundamentalism in *Origins of Political Order*: "Liberal democracy as the default form of government has become part of the accepted political landscape at the beginning of the 21st century." The 2011 popular uprisings demanding democratic reforms throughout Northern Africa and the Middle East, the so-called Arab Spring, have once again seemed to confirm the truth of his thesis. Aside from testing Fukuyama's theory against modern political realities, scholars have assessed the validity of his appropriation of Hegel and the logical consistency of his arguments distinguishing between history and the immutable laws of nature.

They have also studied his end-of-history thesis and his evaluation of the bioscience revolution as it bears

on Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of the "last man"—Nietzsche's belief in the weakening of humankind signaled by the continued and growing acceptance of the egalitarian ideals of the Enlightenment. According to many of his critics, Fukuyama's lasting fame can be attributed to the fact that virtually all subsequent political prognosticators have felt it necessary to define their position in relation to his. As Frost noted, "It seems that Fukuyama 'touched a sensitive nerve,' that he raised new and possibly disturbing questions about the meaning or spirit of our historical epoch. The fact that so many individuals felt it necessary to respond to Fukuyama—that even those who vehemently disagreed with his thesis could not silently dismiss it—strongly suggests that the issues Fukuyama raises are still relevant for contemporary political scientists."

*process in The End of History and the Last Man blinds him to empirical reality and causes him to consign momentous events to the category of historical "accident."]*

*[T]he whig historian can draw lines through certain events, . . . and if he is not careful he begins to forget that this line is merely a mental trick of his; he comes to imagine that it represents something like a line of causation. The total result of this method is to impose a certain form upon the whole historical story, and to produce a scheme of general history which is bound to converge beautifully upon the present—all demonstrating throughout the ages the workings of an obvious principle of progress.*

—Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*

*"If this is the best of all possible worlds," he said to himself, "what can the rest be like?"*

—Voltaire, *Candide*

## PRINCIPAL WORKS

\*"The End of History?" (essay) 1989

†"A Reply to My Critics" (essay) 1989

*The End of History and the Last Man* (nonfiction) 1992

‡"Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later" (essay) 1994

*Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (nonfiction) 1995

*The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (nonfiction) 1999

*Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (nonfiction) 2002

*State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (nonfiction) 2004

*America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (nonfiction) 2006

*Falling Behind: Explaining the Development Gap between Latin America and the United States* [editor] (essays) 2008

*The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (nonfiction) 2011

\*Published in the journal *National Interest*.

†Published in the journal *National Interest*.

‡Published in *After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics*, edited by Timothy Burns.

## CRITICISM

Roger Kimball (essay date 2000)

SOURCE: Kimball, Roger. "Francis Fukuyama and the End of History." In *Experiments Against Reality: The Fate of Culture in the Postmodern Age*, pp. 319-34. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000.

*[In the following essay, Kimball argues that Fukuyama's devotion to a neo-Hegelian view of historical*

It is difficult to remember an article in an intellectual political quarterly that made as big a splash as did Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" when it appeared in the Summer 1989 issue of *The National Interest*. While the response was far from unanimously favorable, it was extraordinarily large and passionate. Such prominent figures as Allan Bloom, Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Samuel P. Huntington, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote in the pages of *The National Interest* to comment on the fifteen-page piece. The article became something of a cause célèbre, attracting heated commentary across the U.S. as well as in Europe, Asia, and South America. Its millenarian title, sans question mark, soon became a slogan to be bruited about in Washington think tanks, the press, and the academy. The young Fukuyama, then a deputy director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff, quickly emerged as a minor celebrity, replete with a position at the RAND corporation and a generous book contract allowing him to expand on his ideas. Even those who took issue with the article—"I don't believe a word of it," was Irving Kristol's rejoinder to its main thesis—were careful to praise the author's intellectual sophistication. Rarely has the word "brilliant" been used with such cheery abandon: perhaps here, in the response to "The End of History?", were those "thousand points of light" we had been hearing so much about at the time.

Why the fuss? Writing at a moment when Communism was everywhere in retreat, it was hardly surprising that Fukuyama should have proclaimed the end of the Cold War and "unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism." Such proclamations were already legion. What commanded attention was something far



more radical. Claiming to distinguish between "what is essential and what is contingent or accidental in world history," Fukuyama wrote that

What we are witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or a passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

"The end of history as such," "the evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government": these were the sorts of statements—along with Fukuyama's professed conviction that "the ideal will govern the material world in the long run"—that rang the alarm.

Some of the negative responses to Fukuyama's article, as he was quick to point out, were based on a simplistic misreading of his thesis. For in proclaiming that the end of history had arrived in the form of triumphant liberal democracy, Fukuyama did not mean that the world would henceforth be free from tumult, political contention, or intractable social problems. Moreover, he was careful to note that "the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world."

What he did maintain, however, was that liberal democracy was the best conceivable social-political system for fostering freedom; and therefore—because "the ideal will govern the material world in the long run"—he also claimed that liberal democracy would not be superseded by a better or "higher" form of government. According to Fukuyama, other forms of government, from monarchy to communism to fascism, had failed because they were imperfect vehicles for freedom; liberal democracy, allowing mankind the greatest freedom possible, had triumphed because it best instantiated the ideal. In this sense, what Fukuyama envisaged was not the end of history—understood as the lower-case realm of daily occasions and events—but the end of History: an evolutionary process that represented freedom's self-realization in the world. The "end" he had in mind was in the nature of a *telos*: more "fulfillment" than "completion" or "finish."

True, one might still ask whether the career of History so understood is anything more than a speculative fancy—whether, indeed, the ambition to distinguish between "what is essential and what is contingent or accidental in world history" is not bootless, given man's limited vision and imperfect knowledge. In any

event, the idea of the end of History is hardly novel. In one form or another, it is a component of many myths and religions—including Christianity, with its vision of the Second Coming. And anyone familiar with the interstices of nineteenth-century German philosophy will remember that the end of History also figures prominently in the philosophies of G. W. F. Hegel and his disgruntled follower Karl Marx. It is perhaps worth noting, too, that one important difference between most religious speculation about the end of History and versions propagated by philosophers is hubris: orthodox Christianity, for example, is gratifyingly indefinite about the date of this eventuality. Hegel harbored no such doubts or hesitations. What he called "*the last stage of History, our world, our own time*" was ushered in by Napoleon's armies at the Battle of Jena in October 1806. "As early as this," Fukuyama writes, "Hegel saw . . . the victory of the ideals of the French revolution, and the imminent universalization of the state incorporating the principles of liberal democracy." It is Fukuyama's view that "the present world seems to confirm that the fundamental principles of sociopolitical organization have not advanced terribly far since 1806."

As Fukuyama acknowledges, the philosophy of Hegel, especially as interpreted by the Russian-born Marxist philosopher and French bureaucrat Alexandre Kojève, was the chief theoretical inspiration for "**The End of History?**". Whatever else can be said of Hegel's philosophy, or its interpretation by Kojève, there can be no doubt that it demands an extraordinarily cerebral view of the world. In the famous lectures that he gave in the 1930s on Hegel's first book, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Kojève tells us that History "cannot be truly understood without the *Phenomenology*," and, moreover, that "there is History *because* there is philosophy and *in order that* there may be Philosophy."<sup>1</sup> For those less persuaded of philosophy's determinative importance in human affairs, such statements may help explain why Hegel, in the preface to the *Phenomenology*, should have defined "the true" as *der bacchantische Taumel, an dem kein Glied nicht trunken ist*: "the Bacchanalian whirl in which no member is not drunk." Inebriation of some sort, at any rate, would seem desirable when entering such heady waters.

Curiously, Fukuyama's attitude toward the end of History is deeply ambivalent. On the one hand, faithful Hegelian that he is, he regards it as the final triumph of freedom. He speaks of nations or parts of the world that are still "stuck in history" or "mired in history," as if residence in the realm of history were something it behooved us to change. On the other hand, he

foresees that “the end of history will be a very sad time,” partly because he believes that the things that once called forth “daring, courage, imagination, and idealism will be replaced by economic calculation,” and partly because “in the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history.” Thus he acknowledges “a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed” and even suggests that the prospect of perpetual ennui that awaits mankind “after” History may “serve to get history started once again.”

When we turn to Fukuyama’s elaboration of his thesis in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) we find that he has collected a number of careful hedges and qualifications to place around the ideas he put forward in “The End of History?” For example, he continues to insist that there has been “a common evolutionary pattern for *all* human societies—in short, something like a Universal History of mankind in the direction of liberal democracy.” But instead of presenting this Universal History as the record of an ineluctable dialectic, he now admits that it is “simply an intellectual tool.” Early on in *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama repeats his claim that

We cannot picture to ourselves a world that is *essentially* different from the present one, and at the same time better. Other, less reflective ages also thought of themselves as the best, but we arrive at this conclusion exhausted, as it were, from the pursuit of alternatives we felt *had* to be better than liberal democracy.

But at the very end of his book he hesitates, suggesting that the evidence for necessary progress—evidence that the “wagon train” of history is moving in the right direction, that the lead wagons have in fact reached their destination—is “provisionally inconclusive.” The generous response to such tensions is that they render Fukuyama’s discussion richer and more nuanced; the skeptical response is that, in an effort to answer his critics, he has opened himself to the charge of inconsistency on fundamental issues.

Fukuyama claims at the outset that *The End of History* [*The End of History and the Last Man*] is not simply a restatement of his famous article. Perhaps, then, we should call it a re-presentation and expansion of the ideas he articulated in “The End of History?” Divided into four parts and some thirty chapters, the book painstakingly presents the case that history possesses a structure and direction, that the direction is up, and that we in the liberal West occupy the final summit of the historical edifice. What’s new is a lot of detailed philosophical discussion. Fukuyama provides a summary of Plato’s speculations about the origin of

our sense of honor and shame as well as a long discussion of the famous master/slave dialectic in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. Following Hegel, he presents the “struggle for recognition” as the “longing” that drives history, and concludes that liberal democracy offers the most complete and “rational” satisfaction of that longing possible. The last part of the book is essentially a meditation on his claim that the end of history will be “a very sad time.” Fukuyama is particularly worried that the satisfactions of living at the end of history will leave mankind so dull and complacent that his spiritual life will atrophy and he will find himself transformed into that flaccid creature, Nietzsche’s “last man,” described in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as “the most despicable man” who is “no longer able to despise himself.”

Like the article that occasioned it, *The End of History* also provides two quite disparate views of the world. On one side we have Fukuyama the conservative political analyst, commenting in lithe, well-informed prose on the state of the world. This gentleman is hardheaded, wry, and full of quietly witty obiter dicta. “In America today,” he writes, “we feel entitled to criticize another person’s smoking habits, but not his or her religious beliefs or moral behavior.” Moreover, this Fukuyama recognizes that, whether or not we are at the end of History, nothing has happened to cancel a nation’s need for vigilance: “no state that values its independence,” he insists, “can ignore the need for defense modernization.” Indeed, one imagines that he would accede wholeheartedly to the wise observation of the Roman military commentator Flavius Vegetius: *si vis pacem, para bellum* (“If you want peace, prepare for war”). One is not surprised to find endorsements on the book jacket from such well-known figures as Charles Krauthammer, George F. Will, and Eduard Shevardnadze.

On the other side we have Fukuyama the philosopher, impressively erudite, deeply committed to a neo-Hegelian view of the historical process. This Fukuyama seems to put greater stock in ideas than facts (indeed, one suspects that he would scorn the distinction between ideas and facts as an artificial construct). He speaks often about “the motor” or “directionality” of history, “internal contradictions” that must be overcome, and “the complete absence of coherent *theoretical* alternatives to liberal democracy.” He even suggests that “the present form of social and political organization is *completely satisfying* to human beings in their most essential characteristics.” It is not quite clear what the Messrs. Fukuyama have to say to each other, though their co-habitation clearly makes for sensational copy.

We have nothing but good wishes for Fukuyama 1; about Fukuyama 2, however, we have grave reservations, not least because of the threat his ideas pose to his more commonsensical twin.

Like most world-explaining constructions invented by humanity, Hegel's dialectic acts as catnip on susceptible souls. Once one is seduced, everything seems marvelously clear and, above all, *necessary*: all important questions have been answered beforehand and the only real task is to apply the method to clean up the untoward messiness of reality. It is very exciting. "All of the really big questions," as Fukuyama puts it in his preface, "had been settled." But the problem with such constructs is that they insulate their adherents from empirical reality: since everything unfolds "necessarily" according to a preordained plan, nothing that merely *happens* in the world can alter the itinerary. As the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski observed in his book *Religion*,

Monistic reductions in general anthropology or "historiosophy" are always successful and convincing; a Hegelian, a Freudian, a Marxist, and an Adlerian are, each of them, safe from refutation as long as he is consistently immured in his dogma and does not try to soften it or make concessions to common sense; his explanatory device will work forever.

What one gains is an explanation; what one loses is the truth. There are good reasons—from the rise of multiculturalism to the state once known as Yugoslavia—to believe that what we are witnessing today is not the final consolidation of liberal democracy but the birth of a new tribalism. For those committed to the end of History, however, it's simply that "the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world."

Among the unpleasant side effects of adherence to such doctrines is the habit of intellectual arrogance. Hegel offers the supreme case in point. About his "firm and invincible faith that there is Reason in history," for example, the philosopher assures us that his faith "is not a presupposition of study; it is a *result* which happens to be known to myself because I already know the whole." It is cheering to possess knowledge of "the whole," of course, but a bit daunting for the rest of us. Not surprisingly, such arrogance also expresses itself about competing doctrines. Thus we find Fukuyama, supplementing Hegel with Nietzsche, explaining that "the problem with Christianity . . . is that it remains just another slave ideology, that is, it is untrue in certain crucial respects." How gratifying to be able to docket the whole of Christianity and file it away as an example of mankind's spiritual immaturity!

Perhaps the most obvious problem with Hegel's philosophy of history is that the "necessary" freedom which his system mandates can look a lot like unfreedom to anyone who happens to disagree with its dictates. As the German philosopher Hans Blumenberg observed, "If there were an immanent final goal of history, then those who believe they know it and claim to promote its attainment would be legitimized in using all the others who do not know it . . . as a mere means." The twentieth century has acquainted us in terrifyingly exquisite detail with what happens when people are treated as "moments" in an impersonal dialectic. We find ourselves in a situation where "real freedom," as Hegel puts it, demands the "subjugation of mere contingent will." It is hardly surprising that Leszek Kolakowski, writing about Hegel in *Main Currents of Marxism*, should conclude that "in the Hegelian system humanity becomes what it is, or achieves unity with itself, only by ceasing to be humanity." Once again, the contrast with Christianity is illuminating. The good Christian, too, believes that freedom consists in the "subjugation of mere contingent will." But he endeavors to act not in accordance with "the Idea" as formulated by a nineteenth-century German philosopher but with God's will. Moreover, while Hegel insists that with the formulation of his philosophy "the antithesis between the universal and the individual will has been removed," Christianity has had the good manners to attribute a large dollop of inscrutability to God's will. By refusing to saddle mankind with "necessary freedom," Christianity preserves a large domain for the exercise of individual freedom in everyday life.

Fukuyama's commitment to the Hegelian dialectic leads him to some strange inversions. Early on in his book, he remarks that "it is possible to speak of historical progress only if one knows where mankind is going." But is this so? Is it not rather that what one needs in order to discern progress is knowledge of where mankind has *been*, not where it is going? And in any case, whom should we trust to furnish us with accurate reports about where mankind is going? Is G. W. F. Hegel, for all his genius, really a reliable guide? Is Fukuyama? No: history, a humble account of how man has lived and suffered, is what we require to declare progress, not prophecy.

It is important to stress that the issue is not whether mankind has made progress over the millennia. Surely it has. The exact nature and extent of the progress can be measured in any number of ways. The material progress of mankind has been staggering, especially in the last two hundred years. Ditto for mankind's political progress, despite the tyrannies and despotisms that

remain. As Fukuyama points out, in 1790 there were only three liberal democracies in the world: the United States, France, and Switzerland. By 1990 there were sixty-one. That is remarkable progress. But it is also *contingent* progress, reversible by the same means that accomplished it in the first place: the efforts of individual men and women.

Indeed, one of the great casualties of Hegel's system is the whole realm of individual initiative. Fukuyama has told us that "in the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy," precisely because at the end of History nothing remains for those disciplines to accomplish. But how often, even before Hegel, has that end been proclaimed. Gilbert Murray, in *The Classical Tradition in Poetry*, recalled being told that "one of the very earliest poems unearthed in Babylonia contains a lament that all reasonable subjects for literature are already exhausted." And just about the time Hegel was proclaiming the end of History, we find the French painter Eugène Delacroix observing that "Those very ones who believe that everything has been said and done, will greet you as new and yet will close the door behind you. And then they will say again that everything has been done and said."

It is also worth noting, as the philosopher David Stove pointed out in his response to Fukuyama's original article, that

the mixture which Fukuyama expects to freeze history forever—a combination of Enlightenment values with the free market—is actually one of the most explosive mixtures known to man. Fukuyama thinks that nothing will ever happen again because a mixture like that of petrol, air, and lighted matches is widespread, and spreading wider. Well, Woodrow Wilson thought the same; but it is an odd world view, to say the least.

One of the most serious moral problems with the idea of the end of History is that it implacably transforms everything outside the purview of the theory into a historical "accident" or exception, draining it of moral significance. Hegel's system tells us what *must* happen; what actually does happen turns out not to matter much. Fukuyama admits that "we have no guarantees" that the future will not produce more Hitlers or Pol Pots. But in his view, evil, e.g., the evil which produced the Holocaust, "can slow down but not derail the locomotive of History." More: "At the end of the twentieth century," he writes, "Hitler and Stalin appear to be bypaths of history that led to dead ends, rather than real alternatives for human social organization." But what can this mean? The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 was the tragedy that sparked *Candide*, Voltaire's attack on Leibniz's dictum that ours was necessarily "the best of all possible worlds." What philosophical

empyrean need one inhabit in order to regard the course of history since 1806 as the reprise of a completed symphony? How far shall we trust a "Universal History" that relegates the conflagrations of two world wars and the unspeakable tyranny of Hitler and Stalin to epiphenomenal "bypaths"? I submit that any theory which regards World War II as a momentary wrinkle on the path of freedom is in need of serious rethinking.

If Fukuyama's commitment to Hegel is itself problematic, so at times is his interpretation of Hegel's teaching. For it is not at all clear that Hegel himself was a champion of anything like what we call liberal democracy. Fukuyama complains that people have labeled Hegel "a reactionary apologist for the Prussian monarchy, a forerunner of twentieth-century totalitarianism, and . . . a difficult-to-read metaphysician." Let's grant that the bit about totalitarianism is moot. What about the rest? No one is going to give Hegel a prize for limpid prose. Perhaps, as Fukuyama says, Hegel was par excellence the "philosopher of freedom." Perhaps. Certainly he talked about freedom a great deal. He was fond, for example, of claiming that "the History of the World is nothing other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom." We must of course hope that that notion is a consolation to the multitudes whom the dialectic has consigned to the uncomfortable (but, alas, necessary) role of unfreedom in the lower-case day-to-day history we all merely live through.

But liberal democracy? No doubt it was just one of those lucky strokes of fortune, an example of life imitating art: still, it is remarkable that "*the Germanic world*" of the nineteenth century should emerge as the political zenith of Hegel's system, *primus inter pares* of "those nations on which the world spirit has conferred its true principle." *Mirabile visu*, convenience once again jibes seamlessly with necessity. But question: was Hegel's Prussia, the Prussia of Metternich, of Frederick William III, et al., a "liberal democracy"? Did Hegel believe that it was? Fukuyama is surely correct that to have a liberal democracy, the people must be sovereign. But in *The Philosophy of Right* Hegel seems to think that the sovereign should be sovereign. "The monarch," he tells us, is "the absolute apex of an organically developed state," "the ungrounded self-determination in which finality of decision is rooted," etc. He says, further, that constitutional monarchy such as we see in . . . oh, well, in nineteenth-century Prussia, for example, is "the achievement of the modern world, a world in which the substantial Idea has won the infinite form." In other words, Hegel likes it.