

**Samuli Lahtinen**

**samuli.s.lahtinen @tuni.fi**

**+358400354883**

**Working paper / Presentation title: Foundation for Science of War: Speculative Hermeneutic Idealism and Ontological Inquiry**

**Working Groups: War Studies, Armed Forces and Society**

**Abstract**

A central problem in war studies is the lack of a theoretical system to study war.<sup>1</sup> This research illustrates the principle of individuation as the central problem of empirical military science, offering a new theoretical framework speculative hermeneutic idealism as a metatheoretical solution for descriptive ontology as a methodology.<sup>2</sup> This research argues Hegelian idealism can be utilized as a metatheory for military science and formulates an isomorphic theory of forms, to describe the ontology of war as a dialectical process, dependent on synthetic continuity by an affirmative agent.<sup>3</sup>

Despite calls for political scientists to engage war as a 'critical science,' little progress has been made regarding the ontology of war.<sup>4</sup> This paper argues against the Anglo-American tradition in strategic studies, that has steered military science towards behavioral economics.<sup>5</sup> Strategic studies emphasize the axiomatic concept of 'rational strategic man' as a formalistic model, which is hindering paradigm development in military sciences.<sup>6</sup> Illustrating military science formulated on principles of natural sciences are insufficient for ontic research. Law-like statements grounded in empirical determinations describing particularity are unable to differentiate between particularity- and universality of existence. Claiming there is a connection between contemporary ontology in military science and logical positivist epistemology in determining the validity of theoretical frameworks.<sup>7</sup>

Contemporary military science epistemology has failed to explain and describe the phenomenology of war. As information – and political warfare have challenged traditional concepts of war, hermeneutics

---

<sup>1</sup> Barkawi, T., & Brighton, S. (2011) *Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique*, *International Political Sociology*, Volume 5, Issue 2, June 2011, Pages 126–143, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2011.00125.x> Von Clausewitz, C. & Howard, C et al. (1989) *On War*, Indexed Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, A. (1970). *Aristotle's Principle of Individuation*. *Mind*, 79(316), new series, 519-529. Retrieved August 28, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2252437> & Hegel, G.W.F, Miller A.V (1977) *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Oxford University Press; Oxford. ISBN-13 978-0-19-824597 Pbk.

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, G.W.F, Miller A.V (1977) *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Oxford University Press; Oxford. ISBN-13 978-0-19-824597 Pbk. (Also discussing: Heidegger, M. (2010). *Being and time*. New York; New York University Press. United States. Translated by Stambaugh, J. Originally Published by Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tubingen (1953). & Žižek, S. (2012). *Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism*. London: Verso)

<sup>4</sup> Barkawi, T., & Brighton, S. (2011) *Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique*, *International Political Sociology*, Volume 5, Issue 2, June 2011, Pages 126–143, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2011.00125.x>

<sup>5</sup> Brodie, B. (1949). *Strategy as a Science*. *World Politics*, 1(4), 467-488. doi:10.2307/2008833. & Schelling, T. (1980). *The strategy of conflict*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University. & Kahn, H., New, A & Jones, E. (2017). *On Thermonuclear War*. Routledge Ltd.

<sup>6</sup> Booth, K. (1979). *Strategy and ethnocentrism*. New York: Holmes & Meier.

<sup>7</sup> Carnap, R. (1950) *Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology*. *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 4 (1950): 20-40. Reprinted in the Supplement to *Meaning and Necessity: A Study in Semantics and Modal Logic*, enlarged edition (University of Chicago Press, 1956). & Walker, T. (2010). *The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities: Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper*. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(2), 433–451. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001180.434-435>.

emerges crucial in understanding war as phenomena affecting perceptions of reality, both – in and outside spectrums of mechanical violence.<sup>8</sup> For open military science to emerge as epistemological tradition, research programs must develop alternative metatheories suitable for military science.

In addition to introducing a new metatheory, this paper presents an analytical method to describe continuity in warfare on the ideational level as a hermeneutic instrument for subjective consciousness to affirm through action. Speculative hermeneutic idealism establishes new descriptive categories as levels of analysis, for explicating temporal differentiation from universality. To distinguish how dialectical change is present in every-day praxis of military institutions, grounding strategy, and theoretical military science in the unity of phenomenal and noumenal forms as isomorphic synthesis. Speculative hermeneutic idealism presents a possibility for military science to engage knowledge in the ideal - as parallel to the empirical realm, reclaiming speculative theorizing to provide a conjectural analysis of ontology as a process of determination.

## **References**

- Aristotle, & Höffe, O.(transl.) (2010). *Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"*. Leiden, the Netherlands ;: Brill. Print.
- Aristotle, (1998). *The metaphysics* (Penguin classics) (Lawson-Tancred, Hugh Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Barkawi,T., & Brighton,S (2011) *Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique, International Political Sociology*, Volume 5, Issue 2, June 2011, Pages 126–143, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2011.00125.x>
- Booth, K. (1979). *Strategy and ethnocentrism*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Brodie, B. (1949). *Strategy as a Science. World Politics*, 1(4), 467-488. doi:10.2307/2008833.
- Carnap, R(1950) "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology". *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 4 (1950): 20-40. Reprinted in the Supplement to *Meaning and Necessity: A Study in Semantics and Modal Logic*, enlarged edition (University of Chicago Press, 1956).
- Eliaeson, S. (2000). "Max weber's methodology: An ideal-type." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, XXXVI(3), 241-263.
- Gerovitch, Slava. *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak : a History of Soviet Cybernetics* . Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002. Print.
- Hegel, G.W.F, Miller A.V (1977) *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Oxford University Press; Oxford. ISBN-13 978-0-19-824597 Pbk.
- Heidegger, M. (2010). *Being and time*. New York; New York University Press. United States. Translated by Stambaugh,J. Originally Published by Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen (1953).
- Kahn, H ., New, A & Jones, E. (2017). *On Thermonuclear War*. Routledge Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315125701>
- Kant, I., Guyer,P., Wood, A(2000) *Critique Of Pure Reason*. Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press Syndicate; The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, UK.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd Ed. Chicago; London: University of Chicago, )1996). Print. University of Chicago Press, Ltd., Chicago. ISBN: 0-226-45808-3
- Lefebvre, Vladimir. (2010). *Lectures on Reflexive Control Theory*. Los Angeles: Leaf & Oaks Publisher.
- Quine, W. V. (1951). Main Trends in Recent Philosophy: Two Dogmas of Empiricism. *The Philosophical Review*, 60(1), 20-43. doi:10.2307/2181906
- Schelling, T. (1980). *The strategy of conflict*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University.
- Surber, J. (1979). Heidegger's Critique of Hegel's Notion of Time. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 39(3), 358-377. doi:10.2307/2106492.
- Thomas,Timothy. (2004). *Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military*. Journal of Slavic Military Studies
- Von Clausewitz,C. & Howard,C et al. (1989) *On War*, Indexed Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Walker, T. (2010). The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities: Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(2), 433–451. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001180.434-435>.
- Zižek, S. (2012). *Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism*. London: Verso

---

<sup>8</sup> See for example: Lefebvre, Vladimir. (2010). *Lectures on Reflexive Control Theory*. Los Angeles: Leaf & Oaks Publisher. & Timothy,T. (2004). *Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military*. Journal of Slavic Military Studies