

HEGEL'S THEORY
OF MENTAL ACTIVITY

An Introduction to Theoretical Spirit

WILLEM A. DEVRIES

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To Dianne

Contents

	Preface	xi
	A Note on the Texts	xvii
	The Structure of Subjective Spirit	xxi
1	Science, Teleology, and Interpretation	1
	Physicalism and Causalism	1
	Our Relationship to Nature	4
	Two Approaches to Nature	4
	Objective Purpose	7
	Universal Purpose	10
	The Need for Philosophy	13
2	Hegel's Reconception of the Philosophy of Mind	18
	Philosophical Psychology: Hegel's Predecessors	18
	Against Rational Psychology	19
	Against Empiricist Psychology	22
	Philosophical Psychology: Hegel's Methodology	24
	From Soul to Spirit	25
	Subjective Spirit	26
	Philosophy and Psychology	28
	The Philosophy of Spirit	31
3	Nature and Spirit	33
	Metaphysics and the Structure of the Sciences	33
	The Languages of Nature and Spirit	35
	Hegel as a Weak Monist	41

	Distinguishing Nature and Spirit	46	
	Externality and Self-determination	46	
	The Nature of Spirit	49	
4	Sensation: Mind's Material		53
	The Sentient and the Nonsentient	54	
	The Nature of the Animal Organism	55	
	The Sentient Organism	56	
	The Object of Sensation	60	
	Inner and Outer Sense	61	
	Mediate and Immediate Objects of Sense	63	
	Sensation as Noncognitive	67	
5	Feeling		71
	The Role of Feeling	72	
	Feeling and the Self	74	
	The Soul's Relation to Reality	78	
	The Liberation of the Soul	84	
6	Phenomenology: The I Emerges		87
	Consciousness and the I	89	
	Does "I" Refer?	90	
	The Sense of "I"	92	
	The Reference of "I"	97	
	The Thinking Subject	99	
	Universality and Self-relation	99	
	Thinking as a Subject	104	
7	Intuition		108
	The Role of Intuition in the Psychology	108	
	Attention, Space, and Time	111	
	Intuition Proper	116	
8	Representation and Recollection		119
	The Role of Representation	119	
	Recollection	125	
9	Imagination: Universality and Signification		135
	Associative or Reproductive Imagination	135	
	Symbolic Imagination	141	
	Sign-making Imagination	143	

10	Memory: Language as the Material of Thought	149
	Signification and Language	149
	The Stages of Memory	153
	Recollective Memory	153
	Reproductive Memory	154
	Mechanical Memory	157
11	Representing versus Thinking	164
	Traditional Accounts of Thought	164
	The Classical and Symbolist Theories of Mind	164
	Problems with Symbolism	167
	Problems with the Classical Theory	169
	Problems with Representationalism	170
	Hegel's Response to the Traditions	171
	The Active Concrete Universal	171
	The Rejection of Inspectivism	174
12	Thought	176
	The Immediacy of Thought	176
	The Nature of Thought	178
	The Formal Structure of Thought	179
	Concepts	179
	Judgments	180
	Inferences	190
	The Nature of Thinking Activity	195
	The Transition to Practical Spirit	198
	Conclusion	200
	References	203
	Index	207

Preface

I have high hopes for this book. First, it should fill a conspicuous gap in the Hegel literature, for the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* is—unjustly—second only to the *Philosophy of Nature* in the lack of attention it receives.

The book should also help stir up a bit more interest in Hegel in Anglo-American philosophical circles, where the philosophy of mind is currently one of the most active and exciting fields. It is in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* that Hegel confronts the questions about the nature of human understanding and thought so central to the British tradition after Locke. I think I show here that Hegel's appreciation of the complexity of our minds and the peculiarities of our discourse about them is quite sophisticated—more so than that of his major contemporary rivals.

My own philosophical language is that of the Anglo-American tradition, but few of my comrades have devoted enough time to Hegel's works to appreciate him. There is surely no excuse for Hegel's writing style; it is simply abominable. But the stylistic difficulties of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* have not prevented them from being read carefully and often. Hegel's technical language cannot be the only way to express his insights, so I have tried to make Hegel speak Anglo-American here (I say "Anglo-American" rather than "English" because I am not just translating into my native language). No doubt my efforts will distress many readers, both because I have made Hegel too Anglo-Ameri-

can and because I have not done the job thoroughly enough. If opinion on this matter is roughly split, I will be content.

Third, I hope that the book is controversial. A fight has been brewing among Hegel scholars, one that has been kept relatively quiet because the field is small. It is not quite the old battle between left and right Hegelians, which centered on religious and social issues, but a new (though related) battle centered on the correct Hegelian treatment of the empirical sciences. Everyone has to admit that Hegel paid close attention to the empirical sciences. The disagreement is over whether philosophy itself emerges out of them and depends on them in some real sense (this would be the position of the Hegelian left, I suppose) or comes to the empirical sciences from outside, with a fund of knowledge both independent of and superior to that of the empirical sciences (the position of the right). Neither extreme position is correct (of course), but on the whole readers will find this book constantly straining toward the left, despite the many right-wing pronouncements of Hegel himself. The Hegelian system can be equally consistently developed toward the left—and it is so much more vital and interesting when it is.

Thus I read Hegel as a great naturalist, as one who saw man as arising out of and continuous with nature and capable of being understood only in this natural context. He was certainly not a total naturalist, but no ultimate break is to be found between nature and spirit in Hegel's system. In his dislike of absolute dichotomies Hegel shares an important trait with his (to me most congenial) successors, the pragmatists.

I must point out right away that this is not a book about the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There are plenty of those (new ones, too) already. I have focused almost exclusively on Hegel's mature system as it is found in his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. This work, supplemented by his lecture notes, constitutes his considered and final opinions in the philosophy of mind. The early *Phenomenology*, as fascinating as it is, is by Hegel's own admission a "peculiar early work." In particular, as even a cursory glance shows, it lacks precisely those parts of the system which are most important for the philosophy of mind, the Anthropology and the Psychology. The attention lavished on the early *Phenomenology* has probably been the major reason the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* has been slighted. It would be easy to think that the early *Phenomenology*, like the greater

Logic, contains the full version of something that the *Encyclopedia* has only in outline. I think such a view is simply wrong; Hegel did a great deal of rethinking while he was in Nürnberg, but I cannot argue that point here. I hope that this book will spur a greater interest in the relation between the early *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopedia*.

One more word of caution. I have often used material from the *Zusätze* in the *Encyclopedia*, the additions based on Hegel's and his students' lecture notes inserted as clarificatory material by Hegel's posthumous editors. Because this material does not always stem directly from Hegel's hand and because some of the original sources have disappeared and cannot be checked, the *Zusätze* arouse suspicion among many Hegel scholars, especially now that, thanks to the editors of the new critical edition of the corpus, we are finally becoming accustomed to reliable texts. In the case of the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, however, where no complete collateral texts are available, and where the *Zusätze* comprise the bulk of what material we have, using these notes is almost unavoidable if the interpretation is going to have any real meat on its bones. To think that the *Encyclopedia* could be interpreted adequately without the *Zusätze* is simply to ignore the fact that our background understanding of Hegel and his project—a background on which any further or new interpretation must draw—has already been deeply affected by the *Zusätze*, which have been part of the corpus since Hegel's death. Our understanding of Hegel has already been influenced by this material; we probably cannot extirpate its influence, so it is best to make it explicit. Sufficient amounts of the annotation can be traced to independent sources (especially the Kehler and Griesheim manuscripts) to attest to its pedigree. Judicious use of this material is possible, justifiable, and certainly helpful. I have been careful, though, to indicate whenever a quotation comes from a *Zusatz*.

The first chapter of the book is an account of Hegel's most important systematic commitments that bear on the philosophy of mind. It is quite general and should help orient the reader who has had little contact with Hegel's texts. The second chapter narrows the view to Hegel's philosophy of mind, emphasizing its relations to its well-known predecessors. Again, no familiarity with Hegel's texts should be necessary. In the opening chapters I have sought to avoid "front-loading" the book with explanations of Hegelian terminol-

ogy. People very familiar with Hegel will find that a bit frustrating, for they are used to discussing Hegel in Hegel's terms. I can only ask that such readers bear with me. Several non-Hegelian readers have told me that these chapters do a good job of getting Hegel across precisely because they do not try first to get the terminology across and only later to fill in the position.

In the third chapter the view widens again temporarily in order to make the Hegelian distinction between Nature and Spirit clearer. I argue that this distinction is not an absolute dichotomy, that there is a vague gray area between the two polar concepts. I also propose an interpretation of the relation between the natural (bodily) and spiritual (mental) aspect of a person that, if correct, shows Hegel's sophistication as a philosopher. Although no detailed knowledge of Hegel's texts is required in this chapter, without a general familiarity with the system the larger picture I am trying to make sense of will not be clear.

From the fourth chapter onward we are in the thick of Hegel's philosophy of mind. At this point real textual exegesis is unavoidable. I have cited much of the relevant material, which is often quite skimpy, since the *Encyclopedia* is only an outline of the system, and have tried to make the essential points as clear as possible in my interpretations. The order of the chapters basically follows Hegel's own ordering of the topics: sensation, feeling, the I, intuition, the varieties of representation, and, finally, thought. Chapter 6, on the I, serves as a timely centerpiece, recapitulating the previous chapters and foreshadowing what follows. Chapter 11, on the distinction between representation and thought, sets off the last chapter, on thinking, by showing how this most Hegelian part of Hegel's system relates to a long-standing, fundamental disagreement in the philosophy of mind; it is really only at this point that the full scope of Hegel's philosophy of mind comes into view.

In many ways this book is only an introduction to Hegel's philosophy of mind. The issues are extremely complex; questions of textual interpretation are very thorny. But work on this important part of Hegel's system has to begin somewhere; the reading of his philosophy offered here will have served well if it prompts others to challenge it, rebut it, and dig still deeper into Hegel's philosophy of mind.

As I near the end of this project, I realize humbly how much help I have received. I have been fortunate to have been generously supported by the German Fulbright Commission; without their support I could not have attempted to write about Hegel. Chapter 6 was written while I attended an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers given at Cornell University by Sidney Shoemaker; I am grateful to everyone involved, especially Professor Shoemaker. Amherst College provided funds for research expenses, and the final revisions of the manuscript were undertaken while I enjoyed an Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellowship at Harvard University.

Though financial support was a *sine qua non* for this project, the people who helped me were its lifeblood. Starting with my work on Hegel in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh, a setting not known for cultivating Hegel scholars, I have received helpful advice and searching criticism from Wilfrid Sellars, Paul Guyer, Annette Baier, and Nicholas Rescher. The time I spent at the Hegel Archive of the Ruhr University in Bochum was crucial to this enterprise, and I am beholden to Walter Jaeschke, Hans-Christian Lucas, Kurt Meist, Friedrich Hogemann, Manfred Baum, Wolfgang Bon-siepen, Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, and Klaus Düsing for their assistance. A special word of thanks is due to Frau Exner, who made extra efforts to make both research and life in Germany easier.

My former colleagues at Amherst College were sometimes amused by my interest in Hegel but always supportive; William E. Kennick, however, went beyond the call of duty to read and comment on the entire manuscript in an earlier draft. His constant encouragement was very important to me. Contacts among a small but growing group of "young Hegelians" also provided needed comment and support. Harold Kincaid, Crawford Elder, R. C. Solomon, and Kenneth Westphal all deserve my thanks. Michael Hardimon is another brave soul who dared a large chunk of the manuscript and thereby made it better.

My final scholarly thanks also go well beyond the scholarly. The philosophical discussion group I participated in for six years in the Pioneer Valley, the infamous Propositional Attitudes Task Force, has been a constant source of philosophical and personal support. What philosophy of mind I know I owe to them. My thanks and more to the PATF and the visitors who have joined us: Murray

Kiteley, John Connelly, Thomas Tymoczko, Janice Moulton, Thomas Wartenburg, Meredith Michaels, Lee Bowie, Herbert Heidelberger, Bruce Aune, William Lycan, Lynne Baker, Christopher Witherspoon, Steven Weisler, and an extra thanks to Jay Garfield, a colleague in graduate school and in the Valley, perhaps the closest member of my philosophical family. An honorary member of the PATF and a Mellon fellow at Harvard, Daniel Lloyd, has endured the entire manuscript and yet become a close friend. I spent a wonderful year at Tufts University while the manuscript was being turned into a book. I'd like to thank my colleagues there, as well as my student Daniel Mullen, who scoured page proofs for me.

Cornell University Press has been a pleasure to work with. At every turn the press has proved itself efficient and gracious; I could not have dreamed of more. My thanks to John Ackerman, Barbara Salazar, John Thomas, and all the others who have made this manuscript into a book.

I am grateful to Kluwer Academic Publishers for permission to quote from M. J. Petry's translation of *The Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* (copyright © 1978 Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Holland), and to *Idealistic Studies* for permission to use segments of my article "Hegel on Representation and Thought," published in vol. 15 (May 1987).

Finally, to thank my family—both the greatest inspiration and (as we all know) the greatest impediment to work—seems fatuous: how can one presume to thank a *raison d'être*? My wife, Dianne, has the uncanny ability to make me write clearer, better prose, even though she claims to understand Hegel neither before nor afterward. My respect for her intellect and my reliance on her love have never stopped growing. I hope my children look at the book someday; I am not sure I wish that fate on the rest of my family, but I thank them for their unfailing support. My mother, Dr. Jenny B. deVries, helped as both a supportive parent and an expert in the German language; I owe her too much to catalog.

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A Note on the Texts

Readers who are new to Hegel often find the references to his works confusing. There is no standard citation format for his books, and it is not even clear from the titles to the translations just how they correspond to the German editions. Let me take a moment to review the status of the texts for the neophyte Hegelian. Hegel published only four books in his life: *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in 1807; *The Science of Logic*, in three volumes, published in 1811, 1812, and 1816; *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, which was originally published in 1816 and revised in 1827 and 1830; and *The Philosophy of Right*, published in 1822. He also published some articles early in his career and during his Berlin period in the 1820s. After Hegel died, his students and admirers (they called themselves the "society of the friends of the eternalized") decided to publish a collected edition of his works. Besides collecting the pieces Hegel had published himself, they assigned various members of the group to collect and edit texts of Hegel's lectures on art, religion, the history of philosophy, and the philosophy of history. The editors used Hegel's own lecture notes (often several sets from different years) and student notes as well in reconstructing a single text for each topic. This posthumous edition became the basis for all subsequent editions of Hegel; only now, with the new critical edition being assembled in Germany, is a serious effort being made to reconstruct the Hegelian corpus on the basis of the original texts.

Of particular interest to us is the fate of Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. This is not quite (though almost) the hubristic

adventure that its title makes it seem; it was written to be a lecture guide for Hegel's students. By the time Hegel wrote the *Encyclopedia*, he thought he had developed a unitary, coherent system within which each philosophical topic, from logic through political theory to aesthetics and beyond, could be treated. The *Encyclopedia* is the outline of this system, made available primarily so that his students could locate his lectures in their broader context. The sections of the *Encyclopedia* offer mere summaries of what sometimes took Hegel several lectures to get across. (For readers unfamiliar with the overall structure of the Hegelian system, W. T. Stace's book *The Philosophy of Hegel* contains a fold-out synopsis of the ordering and subordination of all the concepts in the system. It is, in fact, a properly laid-out table of contents for the *Encyclopedia*. For Hegel even more than for Kant, the architectonic of his system is a major element of the system, perhaps even the single most important aspect of it. I have included an outline of the part of Hegel's system dealt with here—the structure of subjective spirit—following this note.)

When the *Encyclopedia* was included in the posthumous edition of Hegel's works, the editors, cognizant of the fact that its extreme compression makes for very obscure and difficult reading, added supplementary material taken from Hegel's lectures (both Hegel's notes and his students') to the relevant sections. This procedure undoubtedly made the *Encyclopedia* easier to read, but it has raised numerous worries about the authenticity of the supplementary texts—called *Zusätze* in German. I have defended in the Preface my use of the *Zusätze*.

The *Encyclopedia* is divided into three major sections—Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit—and German publishers usually issue them as separate volumes of the *Encyclopedia* (the one-volume Pöggeler-Nicolin edition omits the *Zusätze*). The English translations have been published as separate titles—*The Logic of Hegel*, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, and *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*—with no indication that they are parts of a larger work. The *Encyclopedia* consists of consecutively numbered paragraphs (demarcated by the symbol §), and the English translations preserve the paragraph numbers. Because the paragraphs are generally quite short, even with the *Zusätze*, I have used them as my citation markers in all references to the *Encyclopedia*; thus readers may use any edition, English or German, to track the references.

Recently Michael J. Petry, noting the shameful lack of attention that the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* has received, published a very scholarly bilingual edition of this portion of the *Encyclopedia*. Appearing under the title *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, this is not a separate book but simply a new and scholarly edition of the first third of the last third (the philosophy of spirit) of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*. Petry does, however, include new material beyond that included in the original posthumous edition: he traces some of the *Zusätze* back to the two remaining sets of lecture notes available, and he also includes an unfinished work in which Hegel hoped to expand this part of the *Encyclopedia*. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is an expansion of the material contained in the philosophy of objective spirit, the part of the *Encyclopedia* that follows the philosophy of subjective spirit. After publishing the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel started work on a similar expansion of the earlier part of the *Encyclopedia*, but he never finished it.

I have put citations in the text whenever possible. Standardized citations have been used when they were available. Full bibliographic details are given in the bibliography. To keep the Hegel citations in the text short, I have indicated their sources by the following abbreviations:

- PhG G. W. F. Hegel. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Edited by J. Hoffmeister. 6th ed. Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1952.
- PhS G. W. F. Hegel. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- SL G. W. F. Hegel. *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by A. V. Miller. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969.
- WdL G. W. F. Hegel. *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Edited by G. Lasson. Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1934.

All references to the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* are by section numbers (§). If the citation is to textual material added by the editors of the posthumous edition of Hegel's works, I indicate it as a *Zusatz*. The current standard edition of the *Encyclopedia* in German (*Enzyklopedie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, edited by F. Nicolin and O. Pöggeler [Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1959]) does not contain the *Zusätze*, so I have worked principally with the Suhrkamp *Theorie Werkausgabe* (G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopedie der phi-*

losophischen Wissenschaften, vols. 8–10 of G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970]). When the provenance is not clear from the context, I distinguish references to sections in the *Encyclopedia Logic* and the *Philosophy of Nature* by marking them *EL* and *PN*, respectively. Most references are to the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* (*PSS*). I have worked largely with the available English translations of the *Encyclopedia*, especially Petry's, but I have not hesitated to supply my own translations for greater accuracy. Unless I have noted otherwise, translations of substantial quotations are Petry's. The English editions are:

- Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. Translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*. Translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*. 3 vols. Translated and edited by M. J. Petry. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970.
- Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. 3 vols. Edited and translated by M. J. Petry. Boston: D. Reidel, 1978.
- The Logic of Hegel*. Translated by W. Wallace. New York: Oxford University Press, 1892.

The Structure of Subjective Spirit

- I. Anthropology—The Soul
 - A. The Natural Soul
 - 1. Natural Qualities
 - 2. Natural Changes
 - 3. Sensibility
 - B. The Feeling Soul
 - 1. The Feeling Soul in Its Immediacy
 - 2. Self-feeling
 - 3. Habit
 - C. The Actual Soul
- II. The Phenomenology of Spirit—Consciousness
 - A. Consciousness as Such
 - 1. Sensuous Consciousness
 - 2. Perception
 - 3. Understanding
 - B. Self-consciousness
 - 1. Desire
 - 2. Recognitive Self-consciousness
 - 3. Universal Self-consciousness
 - C. Reason
- III. Psychology—Spirit
 - A. Theoretical Spirit
 - 1. Intuition
 - a. Feeling
 - b. Attention

- c. Intuition Proper
- 2. Representation
 - a. Recollection
 - i. The Image
 - ii. The Unconsciously Preserved Image
 - iii. Recollection Proper
 - b. Imagination
 - i. Associative, Reproductive Imagination
 - ii. Symbolic Imagination
 - iii. Sign-Making Imagination
 - c. Memory
 - i. Name-Retaining Memory
 - ii. Reproductive Memory
 - iii. Mechanical Memory
- 3. Thinking
 - a. Understanding
 - b. Judgment
 - c. Formal Reason
- B. Practical Spirit
 - 1. Practical Feeling
 - 2. Impulses and Willfulness
 - 3. Happiness
- C. Free Spirit

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