HEGEL'S THEORY
OF MENTAL ACTIVITY

An Introduction to Theoretical Spirit

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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
Contents

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
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 BonSiepen, Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, and Klaus Dusing 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.

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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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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 over-
all structure of the Hegelian system, W. T. Stace’s book The Philoso-
phy of Hegel contains a fold-out synopsis of the ordering and subor-
dination 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, Phi-
losophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit—and German pub-
lishers 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 (de-
marcated 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:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

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 (\textit{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, \textit{Enzyklopedie der phi-
A Note on the Texts

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:


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
HEGEL’S THEORY
OF MENTAL ACTIVITY