

Introduction

Sebastian Stein and Joshua I. Wretzel

The prophet's voice possessed of god
 requires no ornament, no sweetening of tone,
 but carries over a thousand years.

Heraclitus (535–475 B.C.)

In 1817, Hegel published a condensed articulation of his basic philosophical commitments, designed to help make his notoriously difficult lectures a bit easier to follow. He titled this compendium the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline* and, for the rest of his life, made consistent use of it in his classes, constantly amending it until its last, more detailed version was published in 1830. That Hegel called this text an “encyclopedia” was as bold a choice as it was strange. For on the one hand, it of course suggests that Hegel saw his own knowledge and system of philosophy as encyclopedic. But on the other hand, the text also bears no structural resemblance to any other encyclopedia.

This uniqueness is due to its method. Hegel presents his work in three parts – *Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, and *Philosophy of Spirit* (or *Geist*) – and argues that his *Encyclopedia* proceeds “according to a method that will some day be recognized, I hope, as the only true method” (Hegel 2010a). But what is this method and how does it define the *Encyclopedia*?

According to Hegel, the structuring principle (Hegel 2010a: §§17&18, 45–6) of all philosophical knowledge is ‘the concept’ (Hegel 2010a: 507). Synonymous with reason, it defines reality and all thought about reality and functions as the common denominator for the categories of philosophy. These categories define thought and being in general, nature and all mind-related and spiritual life, that is, *Geist* (Hegel 1986: 17), and their shared origin in the concept gives definition and unity to their sequence.

The sum of philosophy’s categories and their relations thus define philosophical knowledge. Tracking the concept’s activity, this knowledge takes a circular form: the *Encyclopedia*’s categories form a “circle of circles” (Hegel 2010a: §15, 43), where each category is justified by its predecessors

and prepares its successors. Strictly speaking, there is thus no beginning and no end to philosophical knowledge, as each category is defined in relation to all other categories without there being a sequentially first or a last point. This is true even if we, as finite thinkers, prefer to proceed from the concept's most abstract to its most concrete categorial determinations (Hegel 1991c: 29–32).

Still, if read in a linear manner, the *Encyclopedia* presents its concept-engendered categories as a 'progress' from the *Logic*'s greatest possible abstraction to the most concrete account of 'philosophy' as truth's self-comprehension. Each category addresses a contradiction in its predecessor and provides a new question that its successor sets out to answer until the category "philosophy" provokes the question "what does philosophical knowledge consist in?" and thereby leads back into the *Logic*'s 'beginning' with 'undetermined being'.

In the *Encyclopedia*'s first part, the '*Logic*', Hegel deduces the concept and argues that the more abstract categories that precede it already *are* the concept, albeit in a self-inadequate form (Hegel 2010a: 509). Once the 'subjective concept' has been deduced, it is shown to turn itself into objectivity and to then unite itself with this objectivity to become the living and manifest ontological truth that Hegel calls "the idea" (Hegel 2010a: §18, 46). This idea has three forms and each major section of the *Encyclopedia* represents one of them, thus defining the entirety of conceptual truth.

What kind of knowledge do the *Encyclopedia*'s propositions represent? Hegel argues that there is an intellectual desire in every mind-possessing being for the most profound kind of knowledge (Hegel 1991c: 28). Such desire grows out of *Geist*'s eternal need to know itself, its thought and the world (Hegel 1986a: 13, 24). It reaches for answers that are deeper than a collection or even a systematic interpretation of patterns amongst empirical facts and events of the past and present or a speculation about the future. It is a curiosity about principles that are unconditioned and unchanging (Hegel 1986a: 14).

These principles enable empirical reality and its changes (Hegel 1986a: 14) they define the eternal 'now' and always have been, are and always will be true (Hegel 1986a: 21). They constitute the origin and the final end of all that empirically exists, function as the absolute condition of all possibility and actuality and define the meaning of life. They even enable the intellectual overcoming of death: to think philosophical truth means to participate in the eternity of its content and in eternal truth's self-contemplation.

Introduction

3

When philosophy succeeds in satisfying the thinkers' desire for such ultimate principles, Hegel argues, it speaks with the voice of eternal truth that comprehends itself (Hegel 1986a: 13). Philosophy thus empowers thinkers to comprehend the eternity in which they always already participate and to "enjoy" their own participation in it:

[In philosophy,] the eternal Idea, the Idea that is in and for itself, eternally remains active, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute [*Geist*]. (Hegel 2007c: §577, 276)

Crucially, the knowledge that philosophy affords is also always *our* knowledge. While the truth thinks itself through us, it also needs us to think itself. Hegel's finite philosopher lets the truth speak for itself, and yet, it takes the philosopher to have it spoken (Hegel 2010a: 10). Despite its unconditionality, philosophical truth is thus available to and enabled by us as self-determining thinkers that are confronted by specific empirical circumstances (Hegel 2008b: 16). Philosophy thus enables the thinker to think through an empirical context and comprehend the reality-immanent, yet unconditioned truth (Hegel 2010a: §236, 299).

While some empirical circumstances might make it more difficult or even impossible for some thinkers to comprehend the truth that governs the empirical world, and while philosophical truth expresses itself through finite means, truth's eternity is not dependent on finitude but vice versa: the empirical world is the 'appearance' of the truth that the philosophers seek to express (Hegel 2010a: §209, 280–1).

To Hegel, philosophical comprehension is thus the closest that a mind-equipped being can ever hope to come to freeing itself from its own finitude as it cleanses the thinker of the influence of irrational historical, social and cultural conditioning and sets her or him free of prejudice, assumptions, stereotypes and dogma (Hegel 2010a: 8–9), stripping away everything that is mere "ephemeral existence, external contingency, opinion, unsubstantial appearance, untruth, illusion" (Hegel 2008b: §1, 17).

Philosophical insight includes the realization that all philosophical thought of the past, present and future is part of the articulation of the one truth. Finite philosophers, including Hegel, thus aspire to be truth's messengers and to relate what they are able to grasp of it (Hegel 1986a: 20). This requires a free act of will on the part of the thinker: one must independently decide to keep philosophy and its truth alive. In an effort to avoid dogmatism, the philosopher must accordingly scrutinize and test every supposedly true statement. This requires a mental attitude that,

unlike scepticism, is consciously directed at the truth while allowing for the falsehood as much as for the truthfulness of thought. Philosophical propositions thus have to be constantly tested, potentially reformulated and regained in order for the truth they carry to stay alive and to have actual impact on the contemporary world (Hegel 1986: 22).

Every philosophical proposition or system might thus turn out to be false or to be true only in part and thus stand in need of revision. This includes Hegel's *Encyclopedia* (Hegel 2010a: 33), making it a summons for thinkers to think for themselves and to express in their own language whatever they find to be true in Hegel's and in their own thought. Hegel's readers are supposed to be humbled by and stand in the service of truth, not of Hegel, and appropriate from the *Encyclopedia* only what is true in it: they must reject or reformulate the statements they find to fail the standard of truth.

The *Encyclopedia's* standing as a most fundamental account of philosophical truth also defines its relationship to Hegel's other works. His lectures on religion, art, history and philosophy discuss the myriad empirical forms that the truth, which the *Encyclopedia* seeks to describe has taken throughout history: by philosophically defining truth in all its forms, the *Encyclopedia* uncovers the rational purpose of the historical manifestations that the lectures discuss in more detail (Hegel 1986: 58).

The *Encyclopedia* thus not only differs from Hegel's other works by virtue of the unity of its presentation, its systematicity and its reach. It also holds the key to a properly systematic comprehension of the entirety of Hegel's philosophical thought and, by extension, to his non-philosophical thought as a whole.

* * * *

The volume offers chapters on each of the *Encyclopedia's* three sections.

Section 1: System and the *Logic*

These chapters deal with the *Encyclopedia's* method and its most fundamental and abstract description of the categories of thought/being. They provide contextualized discussions of the individual parts of the *Logic*, the foundations of Hegel's method and how and why everything in the *Encyclopedia* hangs together in the way it does.

Robert B. Pippin's contribution, "Logical and Natural Life: One Aspect of the Relation between Hegel's *Science of Logic* and His *Encyclopedia* in His *Science of Logic*", addresses the concept of 'life' in Hegel's *Encyclopedia*.

Pippin focuses on the notion that life is a *pure* concept that is knowable non-empirically. But as Hegel also offers two different accounts of life in the *Encyclopedia* – in the *Logic* and in the *Philosophy of Nature* – there arises a question of what the two different treatments say about the concept’s purity. Pippin employs the oft-used term “relatively *a priori*” to describe this status of life and thematizes it as a means for grasping the place of the *Science of Logic* within the *Encyclopedia* more broadly.

Sally Sedgwick’s piece, “Hegel’s *Encyclopedia* as the Science of Freedom”, considers the claim made in Hegel’s *Logic* that philosophy as a whole can be understood as “the science of freedom” (Hegel 2010a: §5). Sedgwick argues that this fittingly describes his project because it relies on free subjectivity and its feature of generating its own form.

Stephen Houlgate’s “Essence in Hegel’s *Encyclopedia* and *Science of Logic*: The Problem of Form” addresses differences between the so-called “greater” (*The Science of Logic*) and “lesser” (*The Encyclopedia Logic*) *logics*. Houlgate focuses on the categories of form, matter and content and shows how Hegel’s statements in both works are compatible with the notion that he is committed to a single and consistent logical programme.

With a related focus, “The Concept’s Freedom”, by Jean-François Kervégan offers an “onto-logical” view of the *Logic* as a whole: the *Logic*’s ‘concept’ is subjectivity and thus freedom. Since objectivity and idea are products of the concept’s activity and the *Logic* ends with the absolute idea, the *Logic* ultimately describes (forms of) the concept’s freedom.

Section 2: Philosophy of Nature

These contributions are meant to shed light on this relatively dark corner of Hegel’s thought, his *Philosophy of Nature*. They do much to give structure to what might seem to be an account long disproven by scientific progress.

Christian Martin’s “From Logic to Nature” studies the crucial moments of transition from the first to the second part of the *Encyclopedia* system. He offers two general theses about them. The first is that there is a difference between the *transitional* relation between a *Science of Logic* and a *Philosophy of Nature* and between logic and nature more broadly. Secondly, Martin shows what it means to say that “the concept” is “immanent” within nature: nature exhibits certain regularities and forms that allow it to be known by intellects like ours.

The section's final chapter, "Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: The Expansion of Particularity as the Filling of Space and Time", by Ralph Kaufmann, Ansgar Lyssy and Christopher Yeomans, defends an interpretive framework for the three main parts of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* that focuses on space, time and the differences between mechanical, physical and organic processes, finding that mechanical processes 'fill' the space-time continuum in a non-directional manner; physics displays directional processes while organic processes are cyclical in kind.

Section 3: Philosophy of *Geist*

The *Philosophy of Spirit* consists of three parts, each of which is further divisible into three subsections: (1) "Subjective Spirit" consists of the "Anthropology", "Phenomenology of Spirit" and "Psychology"; (2) "Objective Spirit" of "Right", "Morality" and "Ethical Life"; and (3) "Absolute Spirit" of "Art", "Religion" and "Philosophy". Each of its parts has more than one chapter dedicated to it, with a focus on the section on absolute *Geist* and its three forms: art, religion and philosophy.

In "Hegel's *Anthropology: Transforming the Body*", Jane Dryden addresses an increasingly popular section of Hegel's *Encyclopedia* system through a contemporary lens. She focuses on Hegel's theory of the body as "ownership" and his subsequent association between "nature" and "unfreedom", and discusses the implications of these facets of Hegel's thought for race, gender and disability.

Joshua Wretzel's piece, "Hegel's Critique of Materialism", deals with the opening sections of the "Anthropology" and provides a means to understanding Hegel's metaphysics of mind within the larger context of the *Encyclopedia* system. It develops a "minimalist critique of materialism", a "minimalist conception of immaterialism" and a "transformational conception of materialism" to show how Hegel's metaphysics provides a viable alternative to the "disenchanted" view of materialist philosophy.

Dean Moyar's "Hegel's Psychology: The Unity of Theoretical and Practical Mind" offers an inferentialist take on Hegel's philosophy of mind. Focusing on the theory of "free mind", Moyar argues that this refers to a *capacity to make valid practical inferences*. He shows how this notion connects with Hegel's accounts of theoretical and practical spirit, and also to the logical 'concept' itself.

Paul Redding's "Political Ontology and Rational Syllogistic in Hegel's Objective Spirit" argues that the principles of singular subjectivity that Hegel establishes in the *Logic* also inform his view of political normativity:

his account of modern political life is defined by freedom-informed, critical engagement with social norms in a manner that had to escape classical authors due to their reliance on (quasi-)Aristotelian forms of logic.

In his chapter “Taking the System Seriously: Hegel’s Objective Spirit and Its Importance for the *Philosophy of Right*”, Thom Brooks defends and illustrates the systematic approach to Hegel’s political philosophy. He stresses that it is only by appreciating the *Encyclopedia*’s account of objective spirit and its relationship to the rest of the system that the content of the *Philosophy of Right* can be adequately appreciated. This includes Hegel’s accounts of the free will and of the architecture of the *Philosophy of Right* and several of its key concepts.

Turning to the *Encyclopedia*’s final section, on “absolute spirit”, Terry Pinkard’s “Art as a Form of Absolute Spirit” considers the development of Hegel’s thought about art, its relationship to religion and how his statements in the *Encyclopedia* and in the lectures on the subject attempted to capture the rationality that inheres in these. While the development of Hegel’s thought on the matter is found to display a consistent concern with the importance of religious art and places religion over art with regard to its ability to function as a stabilizing social force, Hegel’s optimism about religion-based progress is found to have possibly been unduly informed by the features of his historical period.

While Pinkard’s piece takes a broad view on Hegel’s encyclopedic philosophy of art and its connections to other works, Ioannis Trisokkas focuses on what he calls “The Stubbornness of Nature in Art”. This refers to the way that nature resists formation by and thereby a complete unity with thought. Trisokkas argues that this is evident in three elements of nature that are all present in art: materiality, natural form and genius. This “stubbornness” gives rise to Hegel’s claim that art is absolute spirit only implicitly.

Roberto Vinco’s piece, “The *Encyclopedia*’s Notion of Religion”, shows how religion is woven into the fabric of Hegel’s thought in the encyclopedic system. Vinco contends that Hegel’s notion of absolute idealism is, ultimately, a philosophical articulation of a religious worldview, that the Hegelian conception of revealed religion is a modern counterpart to Scholastic theology and that speculative thinking can be regarded as a *cultus* or, in Hegel’s terms, a “divine service”.

Finally, Sebastian Stein’s chapter “Hegel’s Concept of Philosophy: Spinozism in Disguise?” analyses Hegel’s concept of philosophy to find out in what sense, if any, Hegel could be called a ‘Spinozist’. Stein argues that, despite the thinkers’ common commitment to the notion that

philosophy is “the self-comprehension of unconditioned truth”, Hegel thinks that Spinoza’s account renders the finite philosophers dependent on truth’s self-causing. In contrast, Hegel’s concept-metaphysics enables him to argue that individual philosophers still exert control over their thought and remain free in their acts of channelling truth.

This concludes the volume’s discussion of Hegel’s most systematic work. Its authors and editors are looking forward to continued exchanges about its content with all interested parties and hope the volume will contribute to a wider discussion about the possibility, nature and form of philosophical truth.

CHAPTER I

Logical and Natural Life
One Aspect of the Relation between Hegel's Science of Logic
and His Encyclopedia

Robert B. Pippin

1.1 The Logical and the Extra-logical

The least ambitious way to characterize how Hegel wants us to understand the relationship between the *Logic* and the *Philosophies of Nature* and *of Spirit* in the *Encyclopedia* is that that relation itself entails that the conceptual structure of any interrogation of nature or spirit cannot be coherently understood as wholly empirically determined.¹ Each depends in some way on a non-derived conceptual structure manifested in its pure form in the SL. This characterization of dependence is not incorrect, but it does not yet distinguish how Hegel thinks of that relationship in a way that will exclude the commonsense notion of an empty, subjective pure form being filled in by objective empirical experience, or imposed on an extra-logical material. This cannot be right because on Hegel's approach any such conceptual structure already determines the concrete possibility of determinately intelligible empirical content. It does not determine or derive or deduce the content itself (this is clearly denied in §250 of the PN), but it does determine the inseparable form of any such content as the intelligible content it is. As he says in the penultimate paragraph of the EL:

The method is not an external form but the soul and concept of the content, from which it is distinguished only insofar as the moments of the *concept*,

¹ Hegel's works are cited, insofar as it is possible, from the edition of his *Gesammelte Werke* (GW) (Hegel 1968–). For the *Science of Logic* (SL), the volume number and page are cited. The Cambridge translation of the *Logic*, by George di Giovanni (Hegel 2010b), has helpfully listed the volume and page number of the GW in the margins, and his translation is the one used, although I have often altered it in cases of disagreement. For the *Encyclopedia Logic* (EL) and the *Philosophy of Nature* (PN) and *Philosophy of Spirit*, I have used volumes 8–10 in the *Werke* (Hegel 1970–1). Passages are cited by paragraph number. The translation of the EL used is that by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Hegel 1991b).

even in *themselves*, in their [respective] *determinacy*, come to appear as the totality of the concept.

Die Methode ist auf diese Weise nicht äußerliche Form, sondern die Seele und der Begriff des Inhalts, von welchem sie nur unterschieden ist, insofern die Momente des *Begriffs* auch an *ihnen selbst* in ihrer *Bestimmtheit* dazu kommen, als die Totalität des Begriffs zu erscheinen. (EL §243)

Contrary to idealisms which hold that external objects depend for their existence or their sense on the subject, Hegel's idealism holds that there is an identity of form between thought and being, and much interpretive energy has been spent trying to understand such an identity.

But in the move to the *Encyclopedia Philosophies of Nature and of Spirit*, this all must mean that we should also attend to logical form now understood as in some way inflected by attention to the form of what is wholly other than pure thought in space and time, and the form of human action in the world, including collective human action. Said another way, the *Philosophies of Nature and of Spirit* remain *philosophy*. The conceptual structures laid out in both parts still aspire to a kind of conceptual or a priori truth, even if the results of the empirical sciences are everywhere incorporated. But, as already noted, this is not because Hegel thinks of either part as a result of a simple application of the moments of a *Seins- und Wesenslogik* to an external, indifferent, material *Stoff*. In these parts of the *Encyclopedia* too, the method “is not an external form but the soul and concept of the content” (*ist auf diese Weise nicht äußerliche Form, sondern die Seele und der Begriff des Inhalts*). So what is the right way to understand the bearing of the logical, as Hegel understands it, on the extra-logical? In what way are the philosophies of nature and spirit a priori sciences?

1.2 A Transition That Is Not a Transition

Hegel cautions us that the turn to *Realphilosophie* should not be understood as a “transition” in the sense we have become used to within the *Logic*. He writes instead something somewhat mysterious. He writes that the logical idea “freely discharges” or releases (*entläßt*) itself (12.253). He means that the logician can understand this bearing of relevance of the *Logic* on the extra-logical without any qualification on the self-sufficiency and philosophical priority of the absolute idea, even with respect to the “externality of space and time absolutely existing for itself without subjectivity” (*die absolut für sich selbst ohne Subjectivität seyende Aeusserlichkeit des Raums und der Zeit*) (12.253). This self-sufficiency and priority is not