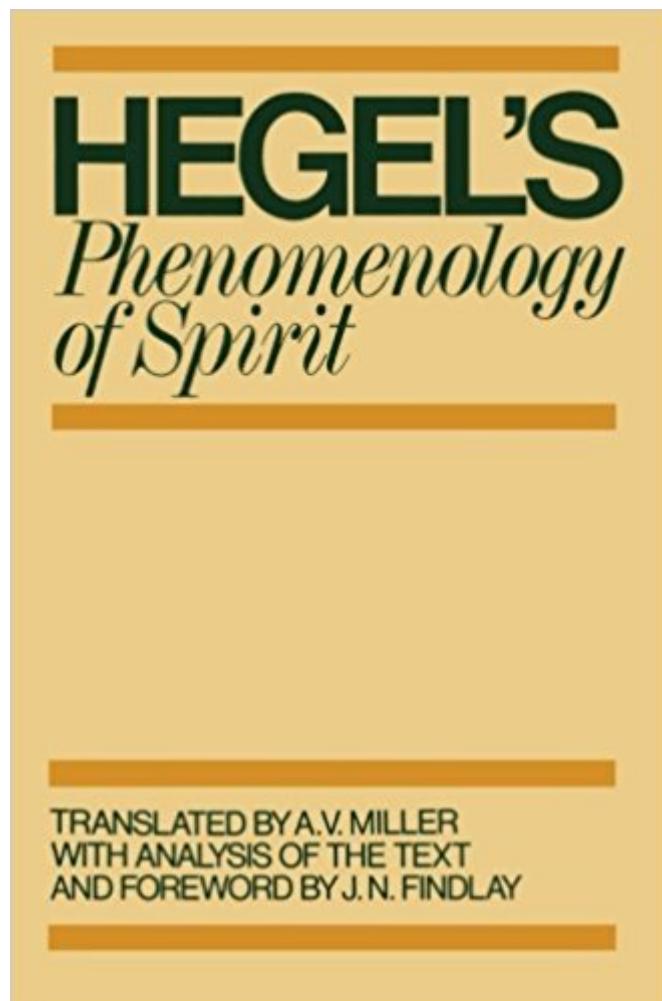


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Phenomenology Of Spirit



Synopsis

This brilliant study of the stages in the mind's necessary progress from immediate sense-consciousness to the position of a scientific philosophy includes an introductory essay and a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the text to help the reader understand this most difficult and most influential of Hegel's works.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, German (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

'Hegel's Phenomenology was written, so the story goes, on the eve of Napoleon's destruction of the Holy Roman Empire and at the beginning of the German 'Wars of Liberation.' The book itself is no less dramatic or revolutionary. It is Hegel's grandest experiment, changing our vision of the world and the very nature of the philosophical enterprise.

Not for the faint of heart. You must have a strong desire to study German philosophy. I actually like the preface more than the book. Got about 1/3 through before putting back on the shelf. If you finish this, consider yourself VERY smart :-)

Excellent

Will Phenomenology and Logic ever agree? Hegel has many a story to tell in this most amazing book. The most important, at least for our era, is the story of a final and complete reconciliation between all members of the human family. How could that, given the almost countless differences between myriad human groups, ever be achieved? Hegel achieves it by arguing (and dialectically showing) that everything partial, ambiguous and irrational in history is burned away in the process of that history until ...what? Until all that remains is all that could possibly (Hegel means theoretically and practically, logically and existentially) remain. There are, as you might guess, several non-trivial difficulties with a position as profound as this. To begin, until the promised 'utopian' end-state finally and completely arrives different people interpret this end state differently. This is why Hegel reminds us that philosophy can only equal Science (of Wisdom) at the end of this phenomenal and historical process. Until then, and this is important, each and every understanding of Hegel necessarily remains mired in partiality, ambiguity and irrationality. (- This is also true, I would argue, of the ones that base themselves on (Hegel's) Logic.) But this, the ambiguity of speculative or dialectical Logic & Phenomenology, leads to other difficulties. For instance, this end state has been taken by 'Hegelians' in either a religious or atheistic manner. But until world history catches up to the 'necessities' of the Logic, whatever they may be, even something as fundamental as this necessarily remains ambiguous. Another problem, is Hegel himself at the end of this process (at least as far as Logic/System are concerned) or is he the beginning of the end of this process? In fact, one can say, with perhaps only a little exaggeration, that the Logic itself waits, or seems to wait, on human history to turn the final page. But that is the problem with this 'biography of Spirit' - does the hand that turns the page also write 'new' pages? Is the Logic (and System, the full account of reality) changed too by the (seemingly endless) 'phenomenological' ruses of human history? For if the 'new' occurs in this sense (Logically) then there is no System at all. If you object that the Logic (or the Hegelian System) forbids the new (at least in Logic & System) then you will find yourself in the uncomfortable position of explaining how Hegel himself could introduce a new operator (the speculative or, if you prefer, the dialectic) into Logic. For, while the 'new' in history can be explained (or so Hegelians maintain) by the Logic, by the self-contained Circularity of the System, all this collapses, or so one suspects, if the new can also happen in the Logic. ...How does (or could) one explain, from within the System, the irruption of the new within the Logic? One cannot. This is why Kojève (correctly and, from his point of view, necessarily) reminded us, in his great commentary on the Phenomenology, that Hegel "definitely reconciles himself with all that is and has been, by declaring that there will never more be anything new on earth." It is this 'declaration' by Hegel that is

the great stumbling block of the System. Did the new come to an end in Jena almost 200 years ago? Is the Logic the only thing that no longer develops in the Hegelian System? We all need to read the Phenomenology and the Logic together, each in the light of the other, again. To reiterate all this in a different manner; for Hegel, one can indeed say that the System never encounters anything new. There is indeed only this great circularity of the Concept. But this is only correct from the standpoint of the Logic. From the standpoint of the Phenomenology (and History) the new does indeed emerge out of the ruins of the old. The 'new' can perhaps be best understood as what's left after as much of the superfluous (the partial and ambiguous) and the unreasonable are subtracted (or burned away in the Golgotha of Spirit, the hell of history) as possible. It is only at the end of this process, the beginning of that end is the publication of the Phenomenology, that Logic and Being are precisely the same. Or, to put it yet another way, the only thing that doesn't change in Hegel is the System. Everything else, possibly even the Logic understood as the schematics of Spirit, moves. For Kojève (and possibly Hegel) when movement finally stops (the End of History) one has the System entire. ...This is perhaps why Merleau-Ponty, in the Adventures of the Dialectic, calls this position of Kojève an 'idealization of death.' As an aside I want to point out that the earlier mention of Kojève should remind us of his great sparring partner, Leo Strauss, the great explicator of the esoteric. The political esoteric he writes about (and demonstrates in his commentaries on Plato, Al-Farabi, Maimonides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Nietzsche) is the only real methodological rival of Dialectics, at least for political philosophy. By way of comparison I will briefly say that Esotericism excludes nothing; everything comes back. There is no progress or change, not even through some exclusion of the negated. There is, of course, the hidden - but the hidden always returns, as the greatest modern esotericism, the one we find in Nietzsche, affirms. In esotericism the 'negated' (or hidden) remains, indeed, if it didn't remain esotericism would have no reason for continuing in its esoteric manner. This esoteric says there never was anything fundamentally new while the Hegelian Dialectic teaches that the new emerges until, and only until, Logic and Phenomenology are exactly the same. All that the esoteric requires is (exoteric) myth; all that the dialectical requires is Science. Each particular myth dies, but the necessity of myth is unending; while Science (in the Hegelian sense) seemingly can never reach birth. ...This is the impasse that the great methodological war of our time has brought us to: undying myths vs. unreachable Science. There is so much more to say about this book and the vistas it has opened to philosophy. I will say only this, the Phenomenology is easily one of the most important texts in the history of philosophy; read it at your peril.

Great condition

This review and the rating is entirely about the edition, not about the original German text and its merits and demerits. This is a product review, not a philosophical analysis. If you are new to Hegel/German philosophy and are looking for the latter, start with this:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>. I would also recommend: 1) Robert Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991

(<http://www..com/Modernism-Philosophical-Problem-Dissatisfactions-European/dp/0631214143>)

though its super pricey, so your local library is a much better option unless you're very invested

2) Robert Stern, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit*, London, Routledge,

2001 (http://www..com/Routledge-Guidebook-Hegels-Phenomenology-Spirit/dp/0415664462/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1412732242&sr=1-1&keywords=Routledge+Philosophy+Guidebook+to+Hegel+and+the+Phenomenology+of+Spirit)

If you would like more, the bibliography of the SEP page (the link I have here) will be a good start to the inexhaustible literature on Hegel, as are the bibliographies of both of the above books— the bibliographies of which you can find for free on google books or search inside without actually buying these)-----OK, the edition

itself! Unfortunately, this is pretty much the only good edition of Hegel in English available for a reasonable price right now. (Luckily, a new 2 volume edition is forthcoming, and should be much better.) Given that, you would expect it to be quite polished, particularly since so many college students use this book. Quite the contrary. In addition to a number of typos, which, though never egregious or conceptually confusing, are really obnoxious, the book is physically quite pathetic. The pages are of a rather rough and soft quality, making any pencil marking both quite damaging to the paper, but also not very visible, precisely the opposite of what one wants. The translation itself is quite good (with a few exceptions, which your professor can point you towards— "Notion" for "Begriff" for example, which should just be translated with the usual "concept" as it is through the German canon), and Miller has done a wonderful thing by adding numbers to the paragraphs! This is a huge improvement over the German edition and is used by scholars German and English alike. In short, you don't have much choice as of yet, but don't expect a beautiful edition from this. It will satisfy your college needs, but won't be that lifelong edition of the Phenomenology you're looking for.

This is probably the only English translation that contains the entire preface, where Hegel

painstakingly differentiates his system from other philosophies of the time, such as Kant, Calvin, etc. That preface alone is worth the price. But wait, there's more! You may find that the 20th century British rejection of Hegel as "illogical", doesn't entirely stand up when you encounter this careful translation: One of Hegel's great breakthroughs was his refutation of Apologetics. Hegel isn't "pretty printing" by modern standards, but he was the first philosopher to create a simple explanation for the mind's power, based on thought, and through this both simplifies and finishes Kant's analysis, allowing all Kant's types of 'synthesis' to coexist freely. His idea here corresponds well to modern notions of phenomena, which both refract and expand through applying the consciousness.

Hegel is a very hard read for those who take comfort in the clarity of Schopenhauer, but he is a necessary read for anyone who wants to sample all the major philosophers. He is also a good link into the psychology of those educated in the late 18th Century for those who want to know how and why they know/believe in what they do. For those who are Thomas Kuhn fans, one can almost see the progression of science with Hegel's use of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

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