

G.W.F. Hegel

**Introduction to
The
Philosophy
of History**

with an appendix from
**The Philosophy
of Right**

Translated by
Leo Rauch

**Introduction to the Philosophy of History with
Selections from The Philosophy of Right**

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel , Leo Rauch (Translator)

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. . . eminently readable . . . admirably picks up the spirit of what Hegel is saying. . . . more readable and accurate than Hartmann's, and it translates a more readable text than does Nisbet's. It includes (as Hartmann's does not) an excerpt, which serves as chapter five, from 'The Geographical Basis of History' (particularly interesting for what it says of America), and a brief chapter six, entitled 'The Division of History.' The volume closes with an appendix, translating §§341–360 of Hegel's Philosophy of Right and deals directly with the very concept of 'World History.' It constitutes a big help in coming to grips with what Hegel means by 'Spirit.' --Quentin Lauer, SJ, Fordham University, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*

Introduction to the Philosophy of History with Selections from The Philosophy of Right Details

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Null says

This work is a pseudophilosophical theological enterprise. The aim of pure old philosophy is to dispel, not to entangle in circuitous neologisms and dogmatic assertions. Theodicy is the business of the church. Hegel employs bad writing and labyrinthine grammar to sometimes say interesting things which are always contingent to a "universal realization" of his unsound systematizing.

Tyson Guthrie says

I found this brief volume very helpful in understanding Hegel's [positive, I believe] contribution to historiography. Specifically, Hegel qualifies historicism in subtle, but significant ways. These qualifications may be overstated in Hegel himself, but provide a helpful way forward for Christian historians in particular. Indeed, my own interest in Hegel is in his influence on Philip Schaff--arguably the greatest Christian historian to date.

Micah Musser says

booooooooo the posited existence of the objective will is diametrically opposed to the healthy expression of the subjective will booooooooo

M.F. Moonzajer says

Hegel has a quite different and unique approach to philosophy of right. Unlike a mason who sees the angle, and a carpenter who sees the balance, Hegel sees things from many perspectives and defines them in a form acceptable and arguable for everyone. His book introduction to philosophy of history ... rights is everything one needs to know to walk into the discourses of rights, history, fallacy and logic.

David says

The best thing I have to say about this work is that the Libravox audio version is a very relaxing read. This was my bedtime story for several months, because the narration mixed with the simultaneously dry and obscure subject matter never failed to put me to sleep within 30 minutes (which is fast for me, as I am somewhat of an insomniac).

If you are hoping to gain a better grasp of Hegel's conceptions of dialectic, idealism, freedom, history, etc.. Well, the answers are in here. Somewhere. Sort of. But Hegel just isn't the type of author to come out and just "define" his terms for you.. Nor is he the sort to use them consistently, or to write sentences that human

beings might consider "coherent."

The task of pinpointing just exactly what he is talking about, and what his point is, is somewhat like solving a puzzle. The clearer passages are segues that merely make the more equivocal passages all the more incomprehensible, by serving as apparently contradictory signposts.

Probably the best way to get a handle of this, or any other work of Hegel's, is to work with several study guides, keep a notebook with working definitions of his terms, as he reveals a bit more here and a bit more there. My method, listening to narrations on my iPhone, left me with a rather superficial grasp of the material (unlike many other books I've listened to and understood about as well as if I'd read them).

Still, if you are looking for a nighttime sleep aid, this one is pretty good.

J. Sebastian says

This is a very difficult text, but if you are curious enough about Hegel's *Philosophy of History* to be reading this review, you are likely prepared for the intellectual rigours that absorbing and understanding Hegel will involve. Give yourself the time to digest it slowly; one wants to linger over the beauty of certain passages, or just lay the book aside and recline in wonder and admiration over his beautiful dream. And I ask myself, *How could he dream this up; what sort of an inspired, romantic genius was he?*

He helps me to understand the world, and to make sense of all the pain and the horrors that our race has witnessed upon the *slaughter-bench of history*. (p. 24) Hegel perceives that "*world history is not the place for happiness. Periods of happiness are empty pages in history,*" (p. 29) but his philosophical construction of history is magical and full of wonders. "*Our approach is a theodicy,*" writes Hegel, "*a justification of the ways of God.*" (p.18) Is Hegel's philosophy a scientific analogue to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the concern of which was "*to justify the ways of God to men?*" I believe it is.

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is interesting, beautiful, and frightening all at once; because of this, reading him handsomely repays one's efforts. It will change how you see the world. Here are a few of my favourite selections (but they do no justice to the majesty of Hegel's whole conception, nor in isolation can all their richness be perceived):

This restless succession of individuals and peoples that are here for a time and then disappear suggests one general thought, one category above all, that of universally prevalent change. And what leads us to apprehend this change in its negative aspect is the sight of the ruins of some vanished splendor. What traveler, amidst the ruins of Carthage, Palmyra, Persepolis, or Rome, has not been led to contemplate the transiency of empires and of men, and to sorrow at a once vigorous and rich life that is now gone? This is not a sorrow that dwells upon personal losses and the transiency of one's own aims; instead, it is a disinterested sorrow at the decline of a radiant and cultured life. (p. 76)

This reminded us today of Shelley's *Ozymandias*:

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

And Hegel had also written, *daß nichts Großes in der Welt ohne Leidenschaft vollbracht worden ist*, “that nothing great was ever accomplished in the world without passion.” (p.26)

Brief Comparison to Hartman's Translation

Last year I read Hartman’s translation and wrote a brief review there. Hartman includes a forty-two page introduction; Rauch’s translation is more readable and natural in English, and includes chapters on the *Geographical Basis of History* and on *the Divisions of History*, as well as relevant passages from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* that Hartman does not include, but I still like the feel of Hartman’s edition, the sturdiness of its binding, and its compact size more than the Hackett version with the Rauch translation. It’s not a bad thing to read or own them both.

g says

this is a very strange translation - almost vulgar and in your face, and at the same time, full of mistakes. one striking example was the use of the word morality instead of ethics. if you're interested in reading the book, find a copy of the dover edition. the dover translation is older but more elegant.

Jordan says

Hegel really blows my mind, which I think is what he intended to do, and even if the system is really a bunch of bull shit, he's an incredible, incredible genius.

I once asked a philosopher professor a question about this Introduction to which she stuttered for several moments and had no real answer; every head in the classroom turned and looked at me, and I think it might be the proudest moment in my institutional education's history.

Robot says

There is something that is the best thing to start with if you are going to start trying to read Hegel. This is it. Repeat: do NOT start trying to read *Philosophy of Right*, even if you have lots of secondary literature working on your side. . . well, for me at least, that didn't end well. but this, this is great.

Tom says

There are some interesting debates that Hegel brings up here, readable in parts and more difficult in others, obviously the lynch pin for the idea of the development of the state is his idea of the dialectal change that occurs when, according to Hegel it develops from the primitive to the modern.

There is also some interesting debate around North and South America and some quite well founded predictions that he makes about America as a future world power.

Owlseyes says

(Introduction to the History of Philosophy)

I have an older edition (1951) yet not featured in GR. It comprises a preface by Joaquim Carvalho with interesting words, namely, referring Germany as "holding the Philosophy flame" like once Athens did; "German self-affirmation" and her "own existence".

The words of Hegel (in an inaugural speech of 20th October 1816, in Heidelberg) were utter surprise for me; who would imagine he could speak that way?

Today's certain apostles (I know some) of dialectics, haters of nationalism and the God-belief, would deny the next speech: "This science again raises its voice (after being voiceless)...the world of spirit too much occupied with the physical reality could not reflect upon itself". "Now that the German people saved their nationality,...think again in the kingdom of God".

But the words *are* by Hegel.

Jessica Injejikian says

So glad I didn't have to try to work my way through the entirety of this! Germans tend to be super dense and convoluted from this time...translations don't help. Hegel's dialectical understanding of history, emphasizing the world-history figure, divinity, and the political, was extremely influential...impacting Marx (a student of Hegel who obviously materialized his philosophy, attributing economics as the ultimate historical mechanism) and even intellectuals involved in the French College of Sociology of the 1930s and 1940s. The more I study, the more I realize the importance of this work cannot be underestimated.

Jessica Ohara says

As estrelas vão principalmente pelo livro ter sido realmente uma introdução, explicando de forma pormenorizada como é a metodologia de Hegel. Muitas coisas ficaram obscuras, mas mais por questões de concordar ou não com aquela lógica do que por não ter entendido.

Christine Cordula Dantas says

Este foi o meu primeiro contato com Hegel, escrito por ele mesmo, e a reputação de sua escrita ser difícil se confirmou para mim. Este texto seria teoricamente mais fácil, uma vez que se refere à introduções ao seu curso de história da filosofia. De fato, alguns trechos o são, e pode-se aprender algo de sua visão filosófica. Particularmente, não consigo aceitar bem seu conceito de "Espírito" da razão atuando ao longo da história. Para entender isso melhor, parece-me fundamental recorrer às suas obras mais importantes. Este livro é, portanto, apenas uma porta de acesso ao pensamento de Hegel.

Donald says

This is my first time really reading Hegel. I had tried the intro and preface to the Phenomenology, but I didn't get it. This time, I think I get it. The only part in this collection that I disliked was a brief thing about geography. Feel free to skip it.

Reading Marx's Grundrisse I've been struck by how Hegelian it is, and I'm excited to read The Philosophy of Right next year alongside Marx's Critique.

Wouldn't it be amazing to somehow be a Hegelian without Marx or Kojève or Derrida or anybody? To really believe in the World Spirit? I wish I could do that.
