

KARL ROSENKRANZ'S 'LIFE OF HEGEL' 6/24 - HEGEL IN JENA, PART TWO

AN ABRIDGED AND COMMENTED TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

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< <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-8ac9glDvA0I/T-tjUjLDt5I/AAAAAAAAAO4/iok0TwGGeBo/s1600/Jena.jpg>>

This post covers the remainder of Hegel's time in Jena, drawn from chapters 7-14 of *Hegels Leben* (1844) by Karl Rosenkranz, down to publication of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and the fleeting encounter with Napoleon.

BOOK TWO

Chapter Seven Didactic Changes to the System

In Jena, Hegel was soon led to modify his system in light of the needs of his students. This is not covered by Walter Kaufmann through whom I first learned about Hegel, though perhaps later biographers include this material. There are problems arising from the conflicting dates attributed to manuscript material, though the main points remain valid. - SC The changes affected the presentation, leading to the addition of lengthy introductions, but also the structure and content of the material.

The introductions addressed the need for philosophy and its relations to concrete sciences. Whilst Hegel still used the triad of Idea Nature Mind, he added Religion in his lectures at the end as a reconciling item. His vocabulary and poetic repertoire expand, conceptual determinations become sharper and new images pour forth. He refers to the transparency of knowing as the aether of spirit, for example. He retains a fondness for Greek mythology and the supposed Greek *Volksgeist*. Thus Greek art and mythology supposedly embody the consciousness of a people. The artist who works with this mythology is like the person who puts the capstone on an arch to make it self standing, or who takes away the last sod of earth that reveals a spring. Political revolutions too are the work of a people. Much of this eloquence is reproduced in the posthumous lectures. The polemic against versions of the philosophy of nature developed by Schelling appears here for the first time. Hegel acknowledges the modern use of imagery to express the Idea, as in Jacob Boehme, though such deliverances he thinks must be subject to rational evaluation. The Concept itself is a limpid element. Here he expresses a preference for German words as he does not want the Absolute to appear as something alien to the mind of his hearers.

Hegel taught *ex dictatis*, which means using notebooks, and these survive. The changes that Rosenkranz identifies affect both logic and the philosophies of nature and mind and Rosenkranz discusses these in turn:

Logic

Hegel expounds his thought here "in the element of free universality, following a logical method that he considers as the internal organisation of reason" (320). He wishes to "free mind from subjection to nature" (320) and now considers the neglect of logic in modern philosophy something strange. Ethical comments intervene at this point. Hegel finds a role for the idea of the great man as an instrument who awakens a new ethical form, like Jacob wrestling with God, bringing to light a new manifestation of divinity. Alexander the Great thus passed from the school of Aristotle to the conquest of the world. Rosenkranz quotes a description by Hegel of his logical method that would probably be of some interest to some on this list. He considers himself to be restoring an old idea of philosophy and to be using the logical forms of the understanding as a vehicle for reason. He first identifies the universal forms of reason as such without asking whether they are subjective or objective. Then he examines the forms of concept, judgement and syllogism as finite. Finally, he asks how far they correspond to reason as such. This seems to correspond more to the subjective than to the objective logic as published. For my own part, I still find this obscure in the execution if not in the design. In 1806, Hegel himself refers to the Idea as "the Night of Divine Mystery" (326) going on to characterise the goodness, justice and wisdom of God in terms of his philosophy.

Philosophy of Nature

There are some interesting changes here. Hegel abandoned his former idea of solar and terrestrial systems in favour of a tripartite division of the subject matter into mechanical, chemical and organic parts. This is what we find in the published versions of the Philosophy of Nature. Karl Michelet (1801-93) describes these changes in his 1842 edition of Part Two of the *Encyclopaedia*. Most of the Additions by Michelet to the *Philosophy of Nature* date from this period. The notebook from which they were taken was later edited by Hoffmeister (1931) and there is another edition from 1988. Michelet went on to write *Natural Law or Philosophy of Right as Practical Philosophy* (Berlin, 1866) and there is a brief account of some disagreements he had with Rosenkranz.

Philosophy of Mind

There are greater changes in the philosophy of mind. Here the lectures Hegel gave covered law and politics with other aspects of mind treated only in extended opening and closing remarks. In these remarks there is some association of psychology with practical life and with this the Platonic element in Hegel fades into the background. In these manuscripts, Rosenkranz thinks there is a lack of organisation of matters of detail in the material collected. The structure of the lectures covered:

1. Self (theoretical and practical) and the Family
2. Recognition (property, contract, testaments, justice)
3. Constitution (in general and the Estates)

This is interestingly different from the published *Philosophy of Right*, where the family is in Part Three. The account of the Estates is really a sort of political economy, or so it seems to me. Hegel made at this time a fundamental distinction between the so called Lower Orders and Public Servants. The Lower Orders are farmers, industry and commerce, whilst the Public Servants are police (in an extended sense of administration), government and the army. Rosenkranz remarks acutely that the ideas of an educated peasantry or of universal military service in a militia are not represented in this division.

Hegel criticises again the idea of the State as originating in contract. Interestingly, he brings in again the idea of the great man, whose violence is necessary and just. The fear of death annihilates the immediate authority of the private individual and thus establishes the public realm. It appears that this is part of the context of the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology*. It is a version of Machiavelli. The German lack of central authority stems from their neglect of this principle. The Greeks in contrast had not sufficiently developed their individuality prior to relinquishing it. There is a passage that Rosenkranz misreads as in support of monarchy that in fact refers to educated public opinion.

Hegel thinks that the Church should be subject to the State, but only insofar as they share the same fundamental vision of humanity. The State he thinks is the more rational element. He wrote:

"When the State submits itself to the Church, either it is at the mercy of fanaticism which sacrifices the present to the representation of a Beyond and it is lost, or else one would have the introduction of a clerical government which is not an exteriorisation of action and existence in and for themselves, but that of the will as such into existence as such and this not all in regard to the universality of the being recognised, but in regard to a singular will as such." (333)

Of course, one might object, fanaticism need not be exclusively religious even though the secular realm has its own legitimacy.

Chapter Eight The Notebook 1803 to 1806

Hegel was a colleague of Schelling for two and a half years prior to Schelling moving to Würzburg in Bavaria in 1803. Perhaps with the consequent end of the Critical Journal, Hegel began to write in a Wastebook (he uses the English expression, says Rosenkranz, though Commonplace book is the one I am familiar with from John Locke). Here there are many extracts in this from English, French and German books, especially on the sciences. He seems to have done experiments on light and there is a mediocre sketch of himself at a window observing the light from it. Some of the comments and aphorisms, especially against *Naturphilosophie*, found their way into the *Phenomenology*. There are beautiful remarks on Homer and tragedy. My impressions are that the aphorisms are insightful, without the heady sense of their own importance that you find in Nietzsche but with a similar style and appearance on the page.

One telling remark is that he finds that people now expect philosophy to make up for the loss of religion.

Rosenkranz then cites a once famous Promethean confession by Hegel reminiscent of a reading of Faust by Goethe which he tries with difficulty to reconcile with the more usual style of Hegel. However, Osmo points out that it was shown in an article in *Hegel Studien* in 1973 that this is in fact an extract from a review of novels and so the explanations of Rosenkranz are superfluous.

Hegel appears here as a patriotic figure. The events of the day elicit sympathy, irony, but most often sarcasm. In the start of a discussion continued later, Rosenkranz says that these remarks reveal that Hegel did not see the real as rational and that he greeted unreason in reality even with anger. He discusses this more in a biographical context later in connection with the *Philosophy of Right*.

Chapter Nine The Phenomenological Crisis of the System up to 1807

Hegel had announced a Manual from the publisher Cotta, but this did not appear. Rosenkranz suggests that perhaps the frequent changes in his views explains the delay. The lectures on the history of philosophy in 1805 to 1806 mark a step forward for Hegel. In these he discerned a unity of philosophy in its diverse manifestations. It is indeed worth noting that the amount of solid knowledge in philosophy could be reduced to a much smaller compass if one eliminated all the repetition of errors, etc that make up the bulk of the literature and this Hegel attempted to do in the Encyclopaedia. I take it though that what is meant may be a unity of development. By this point, Hegel conceived universal history from the standpoint of absolute knowl-

edge. As always, I find this concluding standpoint questionable, as do many, but I will not develop my own musings here.

All modern philosophy, thinks Hegel, issues from the concept of self-consciousness. To interject again, this is true of Descartes and Locke, as well as Kant. At this time, Rosenkranz remarks, Hegel employed an idea of substantiality as opposed to self-consciousness, but as also being the experience that self-consciousness makes for itself. This latter idea became from 1804 a sketch of the *Phenomenology*. Into this sketch, Hegel consigned the most consistent of his writings.

As background, Fichte had analysed theoretical, practical and teleologico aesthetic judgements in his *Wissenschaftslehre* (the distinctions are Kantian). Schelling in contrast had applied the same distinctions concretely in the treatments of nature, history and art in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*. This illustrates the interplay of theoretical and concrete approaches in contemporary philosophical literature.

Consciousness thus determines itself progressively until it coincides with the infinity of its content. Thus there is a determination, a relation of this to previous consciousness and a progression ("Aufhebung"). This he interprets as self development. Consciousness must attain a form adequate both to its own nature and to its content. It thus abandons a series of shapes that were adopted unilaterally, but which have a relatively absolute value. What we decide sinks back into what we have been, the limitations and consequences of which become apparent as following necessarily from the original decision.

Rosenkranz points out that Phenomenology is the title of the fourth chapter of Kant's *Metaphysical Elements of Nature* (1786) and before that it appears in the *New Organon* (1764) of Lambert. The term named a doctrine of appearances. Hegel later called the *Phenomenology* his "Voyages of Discovery".

The principal steps are:

- Consciousness
- Spirit (meaning subjectivity as substance)
- Absolute Knowing

In the conclusion, consciousness conceives itself as conceiving absolutely. The book thus has the function of an introduction. Consciousness appears again in the system, but in the *Phenomenology* it appears as knowing itself in nature, ethical life, culture, morality and religion. In this, situations reappear from different angles. For example the passages from stoicism to scepticism, from ethical life to the rule of law, from aesthetic to absolute religion correspond to the passage from the Greek to the Roman worlds in universal history. Similarly the unhappy consciousness, romanticism, faith, alienated spirit, beautiful soul and the passage from revealed religion all correspond and develop a logic of self-consciousness torn between consciousness of mutability and the eternal. This is the principle of their renunciation of the world. Hegel thinks of the medieval clerical hierarchy, but the logic applies to all such hierarchies.

The interplay of vanity and cultural work is typified by pre revolutionary French culture. Here Diderot (whose *Rameau's Nephew* was translated by Goethe in 1804), but also Marivaux and Rousseau are meant). Rosenkranz indicates that he could equally have taken Lucien and the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger as an instance of a culture in dissolution. Likewise, Rosenkranz likens the "Beautiful Soul" to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, but it applies generally to the logic of a separation from action.

There is thus a journey of self-consciousness towards a transparent self knowledge. The method as described in the Preface is to let the subject matter develop in its own terms. Truth arises from interaction of subject and substance. The final reconciliation is figured in the death of Christ, resurrection and advent of the Spirit. To interject, I think there is a danger of a pridefulness here that is not wholly Christian in sensibility, though of course this has long been a moot point. Rosenkranz reproduces a long quote, otherwise lost, indicating a confidence in investigating nature and mind. Several of these quotes are reproduced in the Documents of Hoffmeister, Osmo notes.

Hegel had been writing the *Phenomenology* since 1804, but he gave a course on it only once, in the summer of 1806, with pages distributed to his audience. Would it not be marvellous to go back in time and attend that class! Herr Professor, what did you mean when you wrote... The printing was completed in 1807. His last course in Jena finished in September 1806 and Rosenkranz cites the peroration from it, about a new era emerging for the human spirit, that philosophy must recognise for what is eternal in it and greet as such. This is often reproduced in biographies.

Chapter Ten Influence on Students

Rosenkranz turns to the social life of Hegel in Jena for the next several chapters and in this chapter discusses his influence on students. In terms of character, Hegel at this time held to facts, being stimulated to thought by the impulses of the present day and he made advances in thought, but was sometimes dogmatic in his expression. His eyes turned inwards, but his glance became impressive when they shone forth. So too, his voice was not sonorous, but he was capable of inspirational utterance. His smile was benevolent, but he could be acerbic, cutting, pained, or perhaps rather ironical, at the same time.

On the body of students in the university town, he made little impression other than as a distant oddity. Those who wished to try out one of the younger assistants rather than the more experienced professors would sooner turn to Jakob Fries (1773-1843). Osmo comments here that Fries was a student of Fichte who approached a Kantian problematic from a psychological perspective close to Jacobi. He published a *New Critique of Pure Reason* (1807) and wrote extensively. Fries taught at Heidelberg from 1805 and at Jena from 1816. He was suspended for his role in the patriotic Wartburgfest in October 1817, but reinstated in 1825. Hegel had a low opinion of him. Another lecturer Krause also had hearers.

One student Suthmeier advocated for Hegel, but was felt to be dissolute in his manners and this was felt by some to bolster the case against the orthodoxy of the philosophy of the Absolute; another, Zellman was more profound. Rosenkranz illustrates a humour that grew up around the obscurity of the Absolute as an idea. One student said he didn't know if was ducks or geese and a verse was composed on the saying. In the late course on the history of philosophy, a student from Mecklenberg burst out,

"Then all must die! "

Suthmeier replied that through such death there was life. In another anecdote, Hegel turned up an hour early and lectured to the wrong class, on which he made a jest about the illusions of sense certainty. Rosenkranz draws attention to a letter to Zellman (*Correspondance I*, Letter 85, 129) as illustrative of close relations to students. The letters of Hegel to another student, Van Ghent, were later published.

There was gossip: he had a pipe for example and casual remarks were given an imagined significance. In a small university town, such things were events. He knew the bookshop owner Frommann, whose sister in law looked after his natural son, Ludwig Fischer. Rosenkranz of course passes over this in silence.

Chapter Eleven Marks of Honor and Professorship

Hegel studied nature in these years. In particular he studied physiology with Ackermann; botany with Schelver; chemistry with Seebeck; medical science with Kastner. He also studied geology. He was a member or played a role with the Mineralogical Society of Jena, the Association of Naturalists of Westphalia at Brockhausen. The Physicians Association of Heidelberg recognised him in various ways.

In Jena, Hegel was awarded an extraordinary professorship in February, after he had complained in a letter about the promotions of others with less experience than he. On 1st July 1806 he received his first and last payment of 100 Thalers, with an accompanying letter from Goethe apologising that it was not more, but stating that much was accomplished once the first step was taken. I cannot but feel that someone in the ministry may have had a sense of humour in choosing the amount of 100 Thalers, given its role in Kant and the feigned indifference of Hegel in his discussion of the Ontological argument.

Hegel had to apply to Stuttgart for permission to accept the sum, as having income elsewhere would have implications for his citizenship of Württemberg. When he moved to Nuremberg later, he lost his Württemberg citizenship. It is interesting to note these restrictions on commerce within what is now a single country.

Chapter 12 Close Friendships

Schelling then Niethammer, were the closest friends of Hegel during his time at Jena. Schelling left in the summer of 1803 and they corresponded until November 1807 when Schelling read the "night in which all cows are black" passage in the preface to the *Phenomenology* on his *A is A* formula for the Absolute. Rosenkranz did not have access to many of the letters between them prior to that, according to Osmo.

He prints a letter from Hegel to Schelling from 1803 with news of Jena. In this Hegel expresses dislike of Kotzebue (1761 to 1819) who was later assassinated as an alleged spy of the Tsar in liberal and nationalist circles. He remarks that Schiller is writing *William Tell*. Goethe and Schiller also remark on Hegel in their letters, more Goethe than Schiller. Goethe recognised his profundity, but lamented his obscurity and presentation. Goethe and Hegel discussed books together, including *God* (1800) by Herder and the differences between its two editions.

Hegel was also close to Jakob Gries (1775 to 1842), a translator of Romance poetry and member of that became the League of Free Men. He was not close to F Schlegel, who lectured once on transcendental idealism with no great success and was mistakenly reckoned an influence on Hegel by some later writers. At this time, conversions to Catholicism were no rarity and there is a letter from a student to Hegel on the subject.

He looked over a French translation of Spinoza in connections with the edition of Paulus (1802) which was accompanied by a biography by Paulus. This is what I was thinking of in some earlier comments, but overall other thinkers seem to have been more influential on Hegel. On this see *SW15*, 371 and *Correspondance I*, Letter 32, 67.

Hegel also knew Knebel who translated Lucretius and whose wife was a singer; and Niethammer from whom, says Rosenkranz, he had no secrets and his wife. He kept up this latter acquaintance until his death. Niethammer helped in various ways, continuing after his move to Munich.

Chapter Thirteen Projects

Hegel had wished to publish his system since his second year at Jena. Eventually, the project was accepted by Goebhardt of Bamberg and thus the *Phenomenology* was in due course brought to fruition. This is the subject of another chapter.

Rosenkranz mentions several friends who wished Hegel to join them at Heidelberg, as well as some cool reaction to the idea of his moving there or to Baden. On the sources for this this see *Correspondance I*, letter of Kastner 15/11/1805 and Hegel to Voss, pages 95 to 98. In the letters to Voss, the translator of Homer, he makes the remark of making philosophy speak German, as Luther had the Bible (and Voss Homer). However, the New Philosophy as it was known was seen by some in authority at this time as a threat to religion, which was considered in turn a support of the State.

In the course of this correspondence, Hegel also proposed to teach Aesthetics on the model of French literature. He also wished to translate the *Physiologie* (1801) of Richerrand, a pupil of Bichat whose name will be known to readers of Schopenhauer.

Most of all Hegel projected a Critical Review that would focus on important publications rather than aiming to be comprehensive or exhaustive in its treatment of the literary and scientific output of the day. He would aim not at summaries and verdicts, but at analyses of content and principles which would most benefit the reader. To interject here, this might be modelled on the Edinburgh Review which took advantage of new paper and printing technology and identified a new market. Hegel got as far as a prospectus for the new journal, which was to be called the Journal of German Literature. This consisted of Maxims which are preserved in the modern Suhrkamp edition of *Jenaer Schriften*, Works Vol II, 568. The journal was to have commenced publication in July 1807, but by then other events of a pressing nature had intervened.

Chapter 14 The Catastrophe of Jena, Autumn/Fall 1806

The passage of the Prussian army through Jena drew a remark from Hegel whose critical tone proved all too apt. Many letters to Niethammer in Bamberg survive from this time. A letter of 13 October 1806 survives, the day of the entry of Napoleon into the town. This was a Monday and he had sent off the manuscript of the *Phenomenology* on Wednesday and Friday last. This is where he writes:

"I saw the Emperor, this world soul, ride through the town ..."

It is impossible not to admire him, he went on and it seems that many people felt this. Napoleon met with Goethe around this time. Hegel even wishes luck to the French army, who were more impressive than the Prussians, and that peace will thereby return. Edouard Gans said dramatically that he finished the manuscript as the cannons roared at the battle of Jena. Certainly he put the last sheets in the post to the printer at this time, uncertain of their fate.

Hegel was pillaged by French soldiers who turned menacing. He appealed to the *Legion d'Honneur* of one soldier, saying that hoped such a man would respect a simple German scholar. On 14 October he was put up by the Vice Rector of the University, taking his manuscript of the *Phenomenology* and leaving his books. Napoleon ordered the fire that was raging in the town to be circumscribed and Hegel was then able to return to his lodging. Hegel had to borrow pen and paper locally and ask for money from Niethammer.

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