

KARL ROSENKRANZ'S 'LIFE OF HEGEL' 8/24 - NUREMBERG

AN ABRIDGED AND COMMENTED TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

[Stephen Cowley](#) (Editor of the blog 'Hegelian News & Reviews'), 2012

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This post covers my reading of Hegel's period at Nürnberg, including his rectorship at the Aegidiengymnasium and marriage, drawn again from Book II of Karl Rosenkranz's *Hegels Leben* (1844). I will reserve comments on the *Science of Logic* for a separate post.

Chapter Seventeen - Passage to the Nuremberg Rectorate, End of Fall 1808

A spirit of reform was afoot in South and South West Germany, i.e. Baden, Württemberg and Bavaria. In Bavaria, this particularly concerned education. Rival scholastic and utilitarian schemes had emerged and set the tone of the debate. In this context Hegel's friend Niethammer (1766-1848) wrote *The Conflict of Philanthropy and Humanism in the Educational Theory of our Time* (Jena, 1808). In this, he sought a middle way between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment. He also composed a Directive [in an official capacity]. There are also writings by Hegel on this subject.

Niethammer had been called to Munich and had a class there. [He had become a Commissioner of Education in Bavaria in 1807.] He offered a post at a Gymnasium in Nuremberg to Hegel, who was glad of it. It turned out Paulus was also interested in the position when he heard of it. "Thus was Pegasus harnessed to the plough of a school", says Rosenkranz. Yet, he goes on, it was not such a bad thing. Although Hegel aimed at a university post, the German universities under Napoleon had little freedom between 1808 and 1813; and Hegel had already been a tutor for eight years and so had a practical grasp of teaching. All Hegel's letters from Nuremberg express satisfaction with his lot, though he never lost sight of possibilities in the universities.

At the Aegidiengymnasium of Nuremberg, Hegel had to teach philosophy. In doing so, he further increased the attention he had begun to pay at Jena to the relations of non philosophical consciousness and speculation. [To interject, I wonder if there is not an unnecessary dualism at work here, but I think this is developed elsewhere. - SC]

Chapter Eighteen - Hegel as a Teacher

[Osma first notes that Rosenkranz edited Volume 17 of the *Werke* of Hegel that includes the *Philosophical Propaedeutic*. His experience at the Aegidiengymnasium increased his clarity of expression, thinks Rosenkranz.]

Hegel was indefatigable as a teacher. Until 1812, he rewrote his courses thoroughly each semester and adapted them to the age of the pupils. He taught philosophy and religion, though in the absence of other teachers, he could turn his hand to Greek and even mathematics (calculus). In his principal classes, he dictated paragraphs, then explained them. He used tobacco. Pupils had to make fair copies and were asked to summarise the last lesson orally in the next class. They could ask questions in class. He addressed the pupils formally (as Monsieur, presumably Herr) to encourage responsibility. The school overall was a success.

From 1811 and more so after the retreat from Moscow reaction grew against French oppression. As Rector, Hegel remained outwardly aloof and impartial. However, Rosenkranz remarks that: "In town, and above all amongst the teaching staff, he passed for a Francophile." (403) He did not encourage a German reading group amongst the pupils though, recommending Homer instead. The group continued clandestinely. [To interject, my impression from Rosenkranz is that Hegel was more a steady influence than an agitator.] He insisted on religious observance by both Catholic and Protestant pupils.

Hegel dressed in a grey suit and hat, properly but without ostentation. In the evenings, he read the newspapers in the Nuremberg Musee (which had a reading room). [Reading rooms had become a social institution in Europe at this time. -SC] Socially, he visited Paulus (the editor of Spinoza) and Seebeck. He took an interest in the researches of the latter into the theory of colours of Goethe. He was an examiner of philosophy teachers, for which purpose he set questions on the history of philosophy.

Five talks on teaching by Hegel, given on school prize days, are contained in *Werke 16* (there is also a French edition edited by B Bourgeois, but I do not recall hearing of this in English yet.) In these, he sees the school as a medium between the family and public life. Rosenkranz polemicises at this point that there is a great deal of ethical content here, as there is in the *Philos-*

ophy of Right, arguing against those who deny an ethical content in Hegel. Hegel argued that the study of the ancients gives a sense of wholeness that modern life with its distinct trades and professions does not facilitate. [This thought is more associated with Adam Smith in the UK, but seems to reflect a concern of the era.] There is a similar talk on the retirement of Schenk, his predecessor. The individual pupil, says Hegel, is animated by the life around him: family, school, country, church. Rosenkranz refers to a faulty edition of these talks in 1835 and to a newspaper critique where the faults were identified.

Chapter Nineteen - The Philosophical Propaedeutic 1808 to 1812

Bavarian standards for philosophy teachers were contained in a directive, which Rosenkranz reproduces. The teaching was intended to lead up to a Speculative standpoint and to deal with ideas as its end at a university entrance level. For students for whom this aimed too high, the content of the course would start with logic (using Lambert and Plouquet as texts); followed by cosmology and natural theology; then psychology, ethics and juridical concepts (with Carus and Kant as texts); and finally what was called Philosophical Encyclopaedia, a view of the whole. [This sounds ambitious enough to me, though something of the sort is attempted in the last year of French secondary education. - SC] Hegel changed this, proceeding instead:

- Lower class: law, morality and religion
- Middle class: psychology and logic (including the antinomies of Kant)
- Higher class: Encyclopaedia (per the directive)

This latter covered syllogism, scientific method, phenomenology, the State and religion. He wrote a report to Niethammer on this initiative (see *SW17*), in which he explains that the ethical subject matter was more adapted to the students. Rosenkranz edited the *Philosophical Propaedeutic* himself (*SW18*) and says that it was decisive for Hegel, who learned to combine brevity and precision.

In the *Propaedeutic*, Hegel formulated the following tripartite plan for Logic:

1. Objective Logic

- Being
- Essence (essence as such, proposition, ground)
- Reality (*Wirklichkeit*)

2. Subjective Logic

- Concept
- Judgement
- Syllogism (incorporating the idea of goal)

3. Doctrine of Ideas

- Life
- Knowing and Willing
- Science as System

These, Rosenkranz comments, mark and advance on the Jena structure. [To comment, it also diverges from the published *Science of Logic*, and in fact makes more sense to me than the published version. I have always had difficulty seeing the subjective logic as a consequence of the objective logic on analogy with the development of metaphysical ideas in the first part and indeed seeing how the concluding path to the absolute idea was a part of subjective logic as such. I suppose the third part corresponds loosely to the concept of definition in Aristotle.]

Rosenkranz remarks finally that in the philosophy of mind there is greater attention to subjective mental phenomena, namely intuition, imagination, memory, language, etc.

Chapter Twenty - Hegel's Marriage, Autumn 1811

Hegel's life was characterised by tranquil progress and organic maturity. There was no rush to action, but matters were brought to fruition in due course. In this spirit, says Rosenkranz, Hegel married at age 40. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Locke, Hume and Kant had remained bachelors. Fichte was the first modern philosopher of world importance to marry, as did Herbart and Schelling. Christiane, Hegel's sister, rejoiced for him.

His wife, Marie von Tucher (1791 to 1857) was from a noble family with local roots. Her father had been a *Bürgermeister* of Nuremberg. She reflected the feelings Hegel had for her. They complemented each other as personalities, which leads Rosenkranz to praise her vivacity and imagination. Rosenkranz reproduces some verses that Hegel wrote for her. She seems like a joyful and assured person to judge from the anecdotes relating to her and letters by her. Some explanations were required during the engagement. She took offence or was concerned by an expression he used: "in as much as happiness is my destiny in this world." Hegel thought marriage was essentially religious. He wrote a letter saying that happiness is tinged with melancholy in higher natures and arguing that she had promised to heal him from what led him away from belief in happiness. Love is our love, not mine for you and yours for me, he says.

The couple married on 16 September 1811. A daughter died in early childhood (of a suffocating catarrh). They had two sons: Karl Hegel (1813 to 1901) who became a professor of history and Immanuel Hegel (1814 to 1891) who became a civil servant. Karl Hegel edited the second edition of *The Philosophy of History* in 1848, the first having been edited by Edouard Gans in 1837. He also produced the first edition of the *Correspondence* (1887), says Osmo.

Hegel was an attentive husband. His homes were functional more than elegant. The family had a servant, but only one, save after children were born. He kept household accounts. In Berlin, his flat was well situated. You entered the sitting room straight from the corridor. He and Marie enjoyed excursions as a way of relaxing. They visited Niethammer and his wife in Munich who return visited.

Chapter 21 - Hegel's Relations with the Philosophers of his Time

Rosenkranz notes that Hegel slowly emerged as a central figure in the German philosophy of his time, taking up contemporary debates in his own work. At this time, those around him included:

- followers of Schelling (such as Ast, Kanne and Goerres)
- more detached followers of Schelling (such as Steffens, Oken, Stutzmann, Klein)
- those leaning towards Hegel.

Schelling's *Philosophical Researches on the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) had sown the seeds of a intended reply to Hegel. Another thinker, Wagner, tried to unify logic and mathematics. Herbart in Königsberg was an isolated figure who anyway published his major works late in Hegel's life. In an important piece of publicity, Bachmann reviewed the *Phenomenology* in the *Heidelberger Jahrbucher* in 1810.

There is correspondence with Isaak von Sinclair (1775-1815), Karl Windischmann (1775-1839), Nicolaus von Thalen (d1848), Berger of Kiel, Karl Solger (1780-1819) and van Ghert. Of these Sinclair and Solger are the most important. It is typical of Rosenkranz that he summarises the relations between Hegel and his contemporaries, leaving room for further investigations into who they were and what the significance of their relationship with Hegel was. Since Rosenkranz wrote, much of this correspondence has been published. In general, more evidence of interest in Spinoza emerges here.

Isaak von Sinclair

Hegel kept up relations with Isaak von Sinclair (1775-1815). This I think is often overlooked in English commentaries as Sinclair is not known in English language philosophical literature. However, the letters between them are interesting. Hegel reserved holidays for replying to letters and often only a sketch of his reply survives rather than the actual letter. Sinclair had written poetry and tragedy, but had recently published three volumes of philosophy under the title *Truth and Certainty* (1811) This gave rise to an exchange of letters. Hegel writes asking if Sinclair is still relentlessly Fichtean and what does he say about the progress to infinity. He writes to Sinclair:

"I am an educator who has to teach philosophy, and that is perhaps why it is my conviction that philosophy must be a structured edifice, as well as geometry, which can be taught as well as it." (429)

The content of philosophy is one thing, creative talent another, he continues, saying that he wishes to add to the scientific form. He recalls how from doleful Frankfurt he looked at Feldberg and Altkoenig, mountains of the Taurus range.

The work of Sinclair begins of doubt, which is a medium between certainty and ignorance. This sounds similar to ideas that Hegel had already absorbed from Sextus Empiricus. In his book, Sinclair passes in review relations to self, world and God from something of a Fichtean standpoint. Doubt again is a midpoint between life and science. Hegel writes to Sinclair:

"It is above all the new philosophers who demand a beginning that would be an absolute to which they would not straight away oppose their verbiage, an irrefutable first..." (431)

The non-philosopher wants to bring in his own understanding, full of common sense. There is a note of irritation here, I think. He and Sinclair had been sufficiently methodical in starting out, he thinks, in their different ways. A beginning is bound to be imperfect, just because it is a beginning. Yet, he continues, it must be a beginning of philosophy, and therefore already philosophy itself. Sinclair on the other hand starts with a need for philosophy and Hegel disagrees with this. Hegel writes:

"I assuredly agree with you that one cannot start blindly. The point is that the beginning be essentially a beginning of philosophy. In consequence, I require for the beginning still more than you do, that it already itself be, in fact and in substance, philosophy and avow itself as such, that it thus be more than the need alone of philosophy, but also not more than it can be as a beginning of philosophy." (432)

An analysis of doubt such as Sinclair includes, itself brings in a lot of philosophy indirectly, in an underhand way. Sinclair smuggles in contraband goods. He admits doubt as a fact. Hegel says that his own beginning is a fact, the immediate. This is a beginning because it is not yet progress. He writes:

"Now contraband is forbidden by Imperial decree and it would be necessary that a tribunal should recognise already, in the unwarranted character of this activity a metaphysics or an ideology." (431)

This is a rare reference to *Idéologie* by Hegel, writes Osmo, for the terms are in French in the text. The content of doubt is already more than immediacy. He writes "My sole and unique goal is to teach in a university." (433) The tumult of the present day leaves little room for expenditure on universities, still less for metaphysics. Ministerial priorities are the professions – law, medicine, theology – but of these philosophy is a foundation (see *Correspondance II*, letter 218) Sinclair soon died at the Congress of Vienna and is now (1844) forgotten.

Karl Windischmann

Hegel discussed Catholicism and medicine with Windischmann. In 1810, Windischmann wrote that the *Phenomenology* was a manual of human liberation, like the key to the gospel that Lessing had announced. He tried to relate religion in medicine, to awaken the priest in the doctor, as he put it. He was also interested in somnambulism and annotated a translation of De Maistre's *Soir[ées de Saint Petersburg]* (1824). This of course was a famous text of the Restoration similar to *Reflections on the Revolution in France* of Burke. He praised the review of *Aphorisms on absolute Knowing and not Knowing* by Göschel (see Rosenkranz III,15). Hegel later thought he saw plagiarism in Windischmann's *Philosophy in the Course of World History* (4 vols, 1824 to 34).

Nicolaus von Thalen

He discussed Protestantism and political economy with von Thalen. Thalen was a Danish student at Flensburg who knew Reinhold and had studied philosophy at Kiel. He also knew Hulsén of the League of Free Men and Rosenkranz says more of him in his edition of volume 23 of Kant's *Werke*. He sought rational precision rather than the mystical enthusiasm of Windischmann. He responded to the *Logic* and wrote on it in 1815. The *Science of Logic* had been given three reviews, by Fries, Krug and an anonymous reviewer, published in Heidelberg, Halle and Leipzig. By 1816, Hegel had accepted a post at Heidelberg in preference to Erlangen and suggestions from Berlin which came later. He says that up to then he had worked in quasi solitude. A university post is necessary to disseminate a philosophy and personal contact will improve his ability to express it.

Thalen liked the First Edition of the *Encyclopaedia* and the essay on the Wurttemberg Estates, but not so much the *Philosophy of Right* (1821) and in particular its defence of primogeniture (paras 305 to 307). Pride is a fault of philosophers, he reminds Hegel, whom he accuses (wrongly) of having written about Fries and Schopenhauer in the *Wiener Jahrbucher*. He offered various advice, e.g. about calming the dispute with Schleiermacher.

Berger

Berger of Kiel published an *Elements of Science* that drew syncretically on Kant and Schelling. He had a typically North German sense of pious attention to the secular and its duties. Like Sinclair, he is now forgotten, Rosenkranz remarks.

Karl Solger

Karl Solger was a medium between Hegel and Schelling, but only knew Hegel when he went to Berlin. In fact, Solger proposed Hegel to Berlin, but dies a year later. Solger studied Spinoza. Rosenkranz has much of interest to say about him, but it is the Berlin part of the book in connection with Hegel's review of his posthumous writings.

Van Ghert

Hegel had a Dutch pupil, van Ghert, who was later helpful to him. Van Ghert stayed in Amsterdam and later Brussels where he had administrative posts. He offered to help Hegel, commenting that the Dutch liked Spinoza, but not Kantian philosophy in general. Hegel asked if he knew of any manuscripts of Spinoza and van Ghert identified a Hebrew grammar. He sent Hegel an edition of Jacob Boehme. His interests included animal magnetism (see *SW16*, 475 to 483).

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