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Hegel

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A QUESTION OF RELEVANCE

Why read Hegel? It is a good question, one no Hegel scholar should shirk. After all, the burden of proof lies heavily on his or her shoulders. For Hegel's texts are not exactly exciting or enticing. Notoriously, they are written in some of the worst prose in the history of philosophy. Their language is dense, obscure and impenetrable. Reading Hegel is often a trying and exhausting experience, the intellectual equivalent of chewing gravel. 'And for what?' a prospective student might well ask. To avoid such an ordeal, he or she will be tempted to invoke the maxim of one of Hegel's old enemies whenever he lost patience with a tiresome book: 'Life is short!'¹

The question is all the more pressing when we ask what Hegel has to say to us today in our post-modern age. In the beginning of the last century Franz Rosenzweig, one of the greatest Hegel scholars, declared that he lived in an age *post Hegel mortuum*.² Rosenzweig's statement seems as true now as it was then. Our age seems to have outgrown Hegel. We have lost the feeling for religion, 'the taste for the absolute', which was the inspiration for Hegel's metaphysics. After two world wars, the gulags and the Holocaust, we have lost faith in progress, though this faith is the cornerstone of Hegel's philosophy of history. We live in such a specialized and pluralistic age that no one expects to see the restoration of wholeness, the recovery of unity with ourselves, others and nature; but these were the grand ideals behind Hegel's philosophy.

2 Hegel

When we consider all these points it seems we have no choice but to accept Rosenzweig's verdict. Hegel, it seems, has little to say to our age, which has moved beyond him. So the question is all the more imperative: Why read Hegel?

Part of the answer, of course, is that even if Hegel is dead, he was still enormously influential, so much so that he is still deeply interwoven into our culture today. If we are to understand that culture, we have to comprehend its origins, which means that, eventually but inevitably, we have to come to terms with Hegel. It is a remarkable fact that virtually every major philosophical movement of the twentieth century – existentialism, Marxism, pragmatism, phenomenology and analytic philosophy – grew out of reaction against Hegel. The concepts, arguments and problems of these movements will remain forever alien and arcane to us until we understand what they grew out of and what they reacted against. So here we have at least one good reason to read Hegel: to understand the roots of our own culture.

We might well question, however, whether Hegel is really that dead after all. In some respects he is more alive than ever. Since the Hegel renaissance of the 1970s, Hegel has become an established figure in the history of philosophy. The dissertations, books and articles on every aspect of his philosophy have increased exponentially since then. It is a striking fact that Hegel's star seems to be steadily rising just as those of his most vocal critics (e.g. Popper and Russell) have been steadily sinking. The reason for the Hegel renaissance lies to some degree in an overdue recognition of Hegel's historical importance. Many of those who studied Hegel did so to uncover the roots of Marxism, which had a great flowering in the 1960s. But there were then, as there are now, more philosophical reasons for Hegel's revival. In the 1970s and 1980s Hegel became, at least in the Anglophone world, the rallying figure for the reaction against analytic philosophy. To study Hegel was to protest against the narrow scholasticism of analytic philosophy and to embrace 'continental philosophy'. Ironically, Hegel was as important for the

philosophical counterculture of the 1970s and 1980s as he was for the cultural mainstream in late nineteenth-century England and America.

Nowadays the cultural war between continental and analytic philosophy has lost much of its original meaning. But it is striking that the interest in Hegel remains as strong as ever. Hegel has now been adopted by some prominent philosophers in the analytic tradition, who study him not for historical but philosophical reasons.³ They recognize they share some of the same problems as Hegel, and that he has something interesting to say about them. How is it possible to avoid the extremes of conventionalism and foundationalism in epistemology? How is it possible to combine realism with a social epistemology? How is it possible to synthesize the freedoms of liberalism with the ideals of community? How is it possible to adopt the insights of historicism and not lapse into relativism? How is it possible to avoid dualism and materialism in the philosophy of mind? All these questions are very much on the contemporary agenda; but they were crucial issues for Hegel too. It is no accident that many philosophers now see Hegel as the chief antidote and alternative to many outworn and problematic positions, such as Cartesian subjectivism, naive realism, extreme liberalism and mental-physical dualism, or reductivist materialism. So here is another reason for reading Hegel: he still remains, despite his damnable obscurity, an interesting interlocuter to contemporary philosophical discussions.

A QUESTION OF METHOD

Assuming that we should read Hegel, the question remains how we should do so. There are two possible approaches. We can treat him as if he were a virtual contemporary, as a participant in present conversations. In that case we could analyze his arguments and clarify his ideas to show how they are relevant to our contemporary concerns. Or, we can treat him as an historical figure, as a contributor to past conversations. In this case we study him in his historical

4 Hegel

context, trace the development of his doctrines, and attempt to reconstruct him in his historical integrity and individuality. The first approach has been characteristic of many recent analytic interpretations of Hegel; the second approach has been characteristic of many older hermeneutical studies, especially the work of Rudolf Haym, Wilhelm Dilthey and Theodor Haering.

Both approaches have their rewards and pitfalls. The danger of the analytic approach is anachronism. We make Hegel alive and relevant, a useful contributor to our concerns; but that is only because we put our views into his mouth. What we learn from Hegel is then only what we have read into him. With good reason this approach has been caricatured as 'the ventriloquist's conception of the history of philosophy'.⁴ On the other hand, the trouble with the hermeneutical approach is antiquarianism. Although we are more likely to concern ourselves with the philosophy of a real historical being, it is of less interest and relevance to us because his ideas and problems are so specific to his age. What we are left with, it seems, is like an historical portrait from a museum.

So how do we avoid both anachronism and antiquarianism? This is the eternal dilemma of all history of philosophy. We could attempt an eclectic strategy. We could take the analytic approach and be careful not to confuse our contemporary reconstruction with historical reality; or we could take the hermeneutical approach and be selective about those aspects of the historical Hegel that are relevant to our contemporary concerns. But, either way, we seem to compromise what is of value in each approach. For, unfortunately, there is a discrepancy between the real historical Hegel and the contemporary relevant Hegel. The more we make Hegel relevant to our contemporary concerns, the less he will be like the real historical thinker; and the more we reconstitute Hegel in his historical individuality, the less he will be relevant to our contemporary concerns. In any case, an eclectic strategy approach is easier to devise than execute. For who among the analytic interpreters has a precise historical knowledge of Hegel, so that he or she knows how to

avoid anachronism? And who among the hermenetical interpreters has a thorough knowledge of contemporary philosophy, so that he or she can escape antiquarianism? Alas, what we know about Hegel is the result of our method; it is not as if we can choose the right method based on what we already know.

In the face of this predicament the philosophical historian has to make his or her choice. There can be pragmatic reasons for a decision, but there is no right or wrong when each method has its strengths and weaknesses. Contrary to the current preference for the analytic approach, the present study adopts the older hermenetical method. It does so for two reasons. First, many recent analytic studies of Hegel have lapsed into anachronism, and indeed to such an excessive degree that their reconstructed relevant Hegel has virtually no resemblance to the actual historical Hegel. Rather than frankly admitting the distance between these Hegels, they virtually confuse the two, as if the real Hegel were the analytic thinker of their dreams. Second, contemporary Hegel scholars, especially those in the Anglophone tradition, have failed to individuate Hegel. They assume that certain ideas are characteristic of Hegel that were really commonplaces of an entire generation. We are told that Hegel's absolute idealism, his attempt to wed communitarianism and liberalism, to synthesize Spinoza's naturalism and Fichte's idealism, were original and unique to him; but these projects were really part of the legacy of early romanticism. If, however, we cannot individuate Hegel – if we cannot state precisely how his views differ from some of his major contemporaries – can we be said to understand him? Especially when these differences were often so crucial to him?

The most pressing need of Hegel scholarship today is to individuate him, to determine what was his precise relation to his contemporaries. This need will become more apparent when scholars recognize the full import of the latest research on early romanticism. This research, undertaken by Dieter Henrich, Manfred Frank, Violetta Waibel, Michael Franz, Marcelo Stamm, and many

others in Germany, has greatly illuminated the philosophical depths of early romanticism. Until we can situate Hegel within that movement – showing precisely what he inherits from it and where he takes issue with it – we cannot claim to have an adequate understanding of his philosophy.

The anachronism of analytic studies is especially apparent from the many recent non-metaphysical interpretations of Hegel. These studies attempt to rehabilitate Hegel – to make him viable in the light of contemporary concerns – by reading the metaphysics out of his philosophy. If Hegel were a metaphysician, these scholars argue, then his philosophy would be doomed to obsolescence. Hence Hegel's philosophy has been read as virtually everything but a metaphysics: as a theory of categories, as social epistemology, as neo-Kantian idealism, as cultural history, and as proto-hermeneutics. What all these studies have in common is the belief that Hegel's philosophy is in its essential purport or spirit non-metaphysics. This can mean either of two things: that his metaphysics is irreducible but unimportant, so that the rest of his philosophy can be perfectly understood without it; or that his metaphysics, when properly understood, is really reducible to a theory of categories, social epistemology, neo-Kantian idealism, and so on. No one would have protested more stridently against such interpretations, however, than Hegel himself, who regarded metaphysics as the foundation of philosophy, and as the basis of each part of his system. To understand Hegel in his individuality and integrity demands first and foremost restoring metaphysics to its central role in his thinking. For this reason virtually every chapter of this study will stress how metaphysics is fundamental to each part of Hegel's system. We shall find that metaphysics plays a pivotal role in Hegel's social and political philosophy, his philosophy of history and aesthetics.

Those who advocate non-metaphysical interpretations might protest that to read the metaphysics back into Hegel is to make him obsolete to our own non-metaphysical age. It is precisely here,

however, that Hegel challenges us to rethink our own philosophical presuppositions and values. For most of the contemporary objections against Hegel's metaphysics, it must be said, simply beg the question against him, coming from perspectives that he had already questioned. In Hegel's view, any form of positivism about metaphysics was simply bad philosophy because it involved, but failed to reflect upon, a metaphysics of its own. Rather than helping to combat such positivism, contemporary Hegel scholarship has simply bowed to it, betraying one of the most valuable aspects of Hegel's legacy.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

In 1844 Karl Rosenkranz, Hegel's first biographer, wrote that 'The history of a philosopher is the history of his thinking, the history of the formation of his system'.⁵ Rosenkranz claimed that this maxim was especially true of Hegel. His life was the story of his academic career. Hegel did not have the love affair of an Abelard, the political intrigues of a Bacon, the religious dramas of a Spinoza. Some biographers would question Rosenkranz's dictum, which does seem drastically reductionist. A close examination of Hegel's life shows that it too had its own personal dramas and scandals, such as bouts of melancholy, an illegitimate son by his *Putzfrau*, a desperate struggle to earn a living. Still, Rosenkranz had a point. For Hegel himself gave little importance to his own individuality and he defined himself by his devotion to philosophy. No doubt, his passions and obsessions would fill a volume the size of Rousseau's *Confessions*. But the problem is that Hegel himself did not regard them as noteworthy. True to Rosenkranz's dictum, Hegel's life divides rather neatly, with a few lapses and aberrations, into the stages of an academic career.

1 Stuttgart (August 1770–September 1788)

Hegel was born in Stuttgart on 27 August 1770, the eldest son of a middle-class family. His father was a minor civil servant in the

Duchy of Württemberg. The duchy was a Protestant enclave surrounded by Catholic territories. Several generations of Hegels had been ministers in the Protestant Church, and Hegel's mother, who died when he was only 11, probably envisaged a career in the clergy for her son. From his earliest years Hegel developed a strong sense of his religious identity. Though he did not become an orthodox Lutheran in belief or habit, his Protestant heritage is still fundamental for understanding his thought. He embraced some of its basic values, imbibed some of its intellectual traditions.⁶

After receiving his first Latin lessons from his mother, Hegel attended a Latin school from the ages of 5 to 7. He was then sent to the *Gymnasium illustre* in Stuttgart, which he attended for the next eleven years (1777–88). Rosenkranz astutely summarizes his education there by saying that it 'belonged entirely to the Enlightenment with respect to principle, and entirely to classical antiquity with respect to curriculum'.⁷ Hegel's teachers imparted to him the values of the Enlightenment; and the curriculum consisted mainly in the Greek and Latin classics. His education was governed by the belief that classical Greece and Rome are the highest models of civilization.⁸ This belief would sometimes clash with Hegel's Protestant education, leaving him, as so many before him, with the perennial problem of reconciling Christianity with ancient paganism.

2 Tübingen (October 1788–October 1793)

After graduating from the *Gymnasium*, Hegel went to the *Tübinger Stift*, a seminary to train Protestant clerics for the Duchy of Württemberg. It is a commonplace that Hegel's training in the *Stift* biassed him toward religion and made him a covert theologian; but the evidence does not support this: Hegel never intended to be a minister, and he had a profound distaste for the study of orthodox theology.⁹ He probably entered the *Stift* only because it allowed him to receive his education at state expense. Like many of his fellow students, Hegel had a deep aversion to the basic values of the

Stift, which seemed to represent all the vices of the *ancien régime*: religious orthodoxy, princely despotism and aristocratic nepotism.¹⁰ He was highly critical of the reactionary theology of some of his professors, who attempted to use Kant's doctrine of practical faith to buttress traditional dogmas.

Although Hegel was not happy at the Stift, he formed two friendships there that were to have the greatest importance for himself, and indeed the history of German philosophy. In autumn 1788 he met Friedrich Hölderlin, who became one of Germany's greatest lyric poets; and in the autumn of 1790 he met Schelling, who became one of Germany's leading philosophers and later Hegel's rival. In the Stift the three became close friends, and for a while even shared a room together. Schelling and Hölderlin, who were more advanced in their philosophical education than Hegel, soon became important influences upon him.

For the first two years in the Stift, Hegel studied for the degree of *Magister*. His courses for this degree were mainly philosophical, and included logic, metaphysics, moral philosophy, natural law, ontology and cosmology.¹¹ In his second term, the Summer Semester of 1789, Hegel took a course on empirical psychology, in which he studied for the first time Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹² For the next three years Hegel had to qualify for the ministry, and so his curriculum became essentially theological. He had to take courses on ecclesiastical history, dogmatics, moral theology and the gospels.¹³ Apart from the official curriculum, Hegel read, on his own or with friends, some of the latest philosophical literature. He read Plato, Schiller, F.H. Jacobi, Rousseau and Voltaire. His favorite author was Rousseau. Though Hegel had already read Kant, it is noteworthy that he did not join a club to discuss his ideas. It was probably due to the influence of Schelling and Hölderlin that he later came to appreciate fully the import of Kant's philosophy.¹⁴

The most important event of the Tübingen years was the French Revolution. Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin celebrated the events across the Rhine as the dawn of a new era. They read French

newspapers, sang the *Marseillaise*, and formed a political club to discuss the events and read revolutionary literature. According to legend, on one fine Sunday morning in 1790 Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin went out to a meadow in Tübingen and planted a liberty tree. While this story is probably false, it at least represents what the three would have liked to have done. Hegel was known as one of the most ardent spokesmen for liberty and equality in the Stift.¹⁵ His sympathy for the Revolution lasted his entire life. Even in his final years he toasted Bastille Day, admired Napoleon, and condemned the Restoration.

The surviving writings of the Tübingen period are only four sermons and several short fragments.¹⁶ Of these fragments the largest and most important is the so-called *Tübingen Essay*, the fragment ‘*Religion ist eine der wichtigsten Angelegenheiten . . .*’.¹⁷ This fragment sets the agenda for much of Hegel’s early development. True to his republican politics, Hegel’s main concern is to outline a civic religion. In the republican tradition of Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Rousseau, Hegel believed that the chief source of republican virtue and patriotism came from religion.

3 Berne (October 1793–December 1796)

After passing his *Konsistorialexamen* in September 1793, Hegel got a job as a *Hofmeister*, a private tutor, to the Berne patrician family of Hauptmann Friedrich von Steiger. Although the job left him free time to pursue his own studies, Hegel felt lonely and isolated in Berne. He wished to be with Hölderlin and Schelling, closer to the exciting intellectual activity now taking place in Weimar and Jena.

In Berne Hegel read a lot, wrote much, but published nothing. Still, he had hopes for a literary career. Like many young men of literary ambition in the 1790s, he saw himself as a *Volkslehrer*, a teacher of the people, in the tradition of the *Aufklärung* or German Enlightenment. His aim was to enlighten the public, to fight superstition, oppression and despotism. There was a political objective behind such an education: to prepare people for the high civic

ideals of a republic. True to the ideal of a *Volkslehrer* Hegel explicitly and self-consciously forswore the goal of becoming a professional philosopher, a *Doktor der Weltweisheit* at a university. He wanted to popularize and apply the principles of Kant's philosophy, not investigate their foundations.

True to his ideal, Hegel continued to occupy himself with his project for a civil religion. This concern is most evident in a series of sketches known as the *Berne Fragments*.¹⁸ These fragments are notable for their many sharp criticisms of orthodox Christianity. Hegel's search for a civil religion eventually led him to write the one complete fragment of his early years, his 1795 *Life of Jesus*.

Hegel's main writing during the Berne years, a work constantly revised but never finished, was his so-called *Positivity Essay*.¹⁹ The main aim of this essay is to explain how Christianity, whose gospel consists in moral autonomy, degenerated into a positive religion, i.e. a religion commanded by civil authority. To answer this question, Hegel delves into the fundamental issue of alienation, of why people abandon their own freedom. His analysis of this issue anticipates Feuerbach and Marx, and his later account of the 'Unhappy Consciousness' in the *Phenomenology*.

The Berne years were especially formative for Hegel's political thought. He read the Scottish political economists; and he studied closely at first hand the affairs of the Berne aristocracy, whose nepotism appalled him. True to his republican beliefs and his mission as a *Volkslehrer*, he decided to expose the despotism of the Bernese by translating a pamphlet by J.J. Cart, *Lettres confidentielles*, which attacked the Bernese aristocracy for depriving the people of the 'pays de Vaud' of their native liberties. The pamphlet, published anonymously with Hegel's notes and introduction, was his first publication.²⁰ More important for the development of Hegel's political views in the Berne years was his sketch of a liberal political philosophy in some sections of the *Positivity Essay*. Here Hegel argues that the state has the duty to protect my rights, among which are freedom of speech and conscience as well as security of person and

property. Such liberalism did not jibe well with Hegel's ideal of a civil religion. This tension raised a broader issue of central importance for Hegel's mature political philosophy: How is it possible to reconcile communitarian ideals with liberal principles?²¹

4 Frankfurt (January 1797–January 1800)

Later in 1796, thanks to the efforts of Hölderlin, Hegel got a post in Frankfurt as a *Hofmeister* to the family of a rich wine merchant, Johann Gogel. Hölderlin had been in Frankfurt since early 1796, and Hegel rejoiced at the prospect of joining him there. In Frankfurt Hegel recovered his spirits, and was happier with his circumstances. Rather than attempting to save humanity as a *Völkserzieher*, he became more reconciled with his world. He took part in social life, going to balls, concerts and operas. Living close to Hölderlin, he had constant conversations about philosophy, politics and poetry.

During the Frankfurt years, Hegel's thinking about religion and politics underwent a dramatic reversal. In the Berne years Hegel interpreted and criticized religion from the standpoint of the Enlightenment; in the Frankfurt years, however, he defended religion against such criticism and re-interpreted it in more mystical terms. While in Berne Hegel believed he could reform the world according to the principles of reason, in Frankfurt he criticized such idealism and preached reconciliation with history.

The first manuscripts of the Frankfurt period, the *Sketches on Religion and Love*, which Hegel probably wrote in the summer of 1797, reveal the radical change in Hegel's thinking. These sketches are attempts to define the distinctive nature of religion, what separates it from metaphysics and morality. Rather than identifying religion with morality, as Hegel had done in Berne, Hegel now finds the essence of religion in the mystical experience of love where subject and object become perfectly identical. The main writing of the Frankfurt years was Hegel's large manuscript *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*. In many respects, this manuscript is the birthplace of Hegel's mature philosophy. It is here that Hegel first

formulates, if only in nuce, his idea of spirit, his concept of dialectic, his theme of reconciliation, and his organic vision of the world.

The reversal of the Frankfurt years was in large measure the result of Hegel's appropriation of early Jena romanticism, of which Hölderlin was an essential contributor and participant. In fundamental respects, Hegel's thinking adopts the substance of early romanticism: an organic concept of nature, an ethic of love, an appreciation of religious mysticism. Most significantly, he even disputes the Enlightenment principle of the sovereignty of reason, the power of reason to criticize religious belief. Hegel will never depart from the content or substance of the romantic legacy; his main departure from it will be only in terms of its form, in how to demonstrate this substance.

5 Jena (January 1801–March 1807)

After receiving a modest inheritance upon the death of his father, Hegel decided to attempt to realize his hopes for an academic career. He joined his friend Schelling in Jena in January 1801. When Hegel arrived 'the literary frenzy' of Jena had already died down, most of its leading lights (Reinhold, Fichte) having left years ago. Hegel became a *Privatdozent*, his income entirely dependent on student fees; he never achieved there his ambition of becoming a salaried professor.

Hegel's resolve to become a university professor marked a significant shift in his intellectual ambitions. He ceased to regard himself as a *Volkserzieher* who would simply apply philosophical principles to the world; he now saw himself as a philosopher in his own right, devoted to the development of his own system. The reasons for this shift seem to be twofold. First, as a result of political developments, Hegel had lost much of his earlier idealism (see pp. 214–16). Second, he also realized that the Kantian principles he intended to apply were problematic or suspect.

Hegel's debut in Jena was his first philosophical publication, his so-called *Differenzschrift*. True to title, this tract explains the basic

differences between the systems of Schelling and Fichte; it also defends the thesis that Schelling's philosophy is superior to Fichte's. With this thesis Hegel at once ended the old alliance between Fichte and Schelling and forged a new one with Schelling. The *Differenzschrift* is Hegel's manifesto for absolute or 'objective idealism', a critique of the 'subjective idealism' of Kant and Fichte.

The formation of the Schelling–Hegel alliance led to their joint editorship of a common journal, the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*. Some of Hegel's most important early works are essays from the *Journal*. They include *Faith and Knowledge*, *Scientific Treatment of Natural Right* and the *Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy*. The *Journal* lasted only a few issues, beginning in January 1802 and ending in spring 1803. The Schelling–Hegel alliance dissolved when Schelling left Jena in the spring of 1803. It is a mistake to think that Hegel was simply Schelling's disciple, his 'stout warrior' or 'spear carrier'. This ignores too many basic facts: that Hegel developed the outline of his metaphysics before his arrival in Jena; that Schelling's own metaphysics underwent crucial changes from 1801 to 1803 due to Hegel's influence; and that even in the *Differenzschrift* and *Critical Journal* Hegel does not hesitate to express views at odds with Schelling's.

Throughout the Jena years Hegel struggled, without success, to formulate his own system of philosophy. His lectures were often preliminary accounts of parts of the system.²² These lectures concerned logic and metaphysics, the philosophy of nature, and the philosophy of spirit. There are many surviving drafts of these lectures, the so-called *Systementwürfe* of 1803/4, 1804/5 and 1805/6.²³

After Schelling's departure from Jena, Hegel became more critical of his old colleague. In his 1804/5 Winter Semester lectures he began to criticize Schelling's views openly and to rethink the foundation of his metaphysics. He rejected Schelling's attempt to base absolute idealism upon an intellectual intuition and developed instead the idea of a science to lead ordinary consciousness up to the standpoint of philosophy. This line of thought eventually

culminated in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's self-described 'journey of self-discovery', the beginnings of his mature philosophy.

6 Bamberg (March 1807–November 1808)

After failing to find a salaried professorship in Jena, Hegel became in March 1807 the editor of a small town paper, the *Bamberger Zeitung*. Hegel was successful at his job, which gave him a nice salary and social status. His newspaper supported the Napoleonic reforms of the Bavarian government, then an ally of the French. Although this job did not fulfil Hegel's academic aspirations, it did suit his political ideals. Hegel held that the Napoleonic reforms could succeed only if they found broader-based support among the people; a newspaper was the perfect means to create that support.

7 Nuremberg (November 1808–October 1816)

In November 1808, through the mediation of his friend I.H. Niethammer, the Bavarian minister of education, Hegel became the rector of the *Ägidien-Gymnasium* in Nuremberg. Here too Hegel proved very successful, both as administrator and teacher. It is noteworthy, however, that he judged the attempt to introduce philosophy into the *Gymnasium* a failure. In September 1811 Hegel married Marie von Tucher, daughter of a Nuremberg patrician family. Despite his busy life as a rector, Hegel managed to find time to finish his *Science of Logic*, which he had begun in Jena. He published the first volume in 1812, the second in 1813, and the third in 1816.

8 Heidelberg (October 1816–October 1818)

In October 1816 Hegel finally achieved his academic ideal, becoming a professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. When Hegel arrived at Heidelberg, however, the literary scene had already disappeared, just as happened in Jena; he was disappointed by some professors' hostility toward philosophy and by the students'

purely vocational attitude toward learning. In Heidelberg Hegel gave his first lectures on aesthetics; his 1817/18 lectures on political philosophy there became the basis for his later *Philosophy of Right*. The most important publication of the Heidelberg years was Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, a three-volume work, the first exposition of the whole system.

9 Berlin (October 1818–November 1831)

In December 1817 the Prussian minister of education, Karl Altenstein, wrote Hegel to offer him the chair of philosophy, once taken by Fichte, at the new University of Berlin. Altenstein wanted Hegel chiefly because he knew him to be sympathetic to the goals of the Prussian Reform Movement, which had begun in 1807 under the leadership of Baron von Stein. This movement hoped to realize the ideals of the French Revolution by gradual reforms from above. Its ideals were a new constitution ensuring fundamental rights for all citizens, freedom of trade, abolition of feudal privileges, and more local self-government. Hegel was greatly attracted to Berlin chiefly because he shared the ideals of the Reform Movement. Prussia laid great importance upon its new university for the regeneration of Prussian cultural life. In Berlin Hegel knew he would finally find himself in the center of a lively cultural scene, and in a position to have some influence on Prussia's cultural and political affairs.

Shortly after Hegel's arrival in Berlin, however, the Reform Movement suffered a serious setback. In 1819 the Prussian government under Friedrich Wilhelm III, fearing radical conspiracies, revoked its plans to introduce a new constitution. It then endorsed the repressive Karlsbad Decrees, which introduced censorship and strict measures against 'demagogues'. Suspected of subversive activity, some of Hegel's students were banished or imprisoned; Hegel himself was under police surveillance for some time. Although Hegel endorsed the goals of the Reform Movement, and although he was despised by reactionary circles within the Prussian court,

many of his liberal contemporaries suspected him of collusion with the reactionary government. Since he enjoyed the support of Altenstein, and since he had supported the dismissal of two liberal professors, whom he had viciously attacked in the preface of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel seemed to many to endorse a reactionary politics. This was the beginning of one of the oldest Hegel legends: that he was a spokesman for the Prussian restoration.

It was in Berlin that Hegel acquired fame and influence. Although by all accounts Hegel was a poor university lecturer – he stuttered, moved rigidly, gasped for breath, and tirelessly repeated ‘Also’ – his many lectures gained a wide following. On several occasions he held lectures on aesthetics, the history of philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of history. Though Hegel himself never published these lectures, they were recorded by his students, who put them in the first edition of his collected works.

Due to his position and success, Hegel finally found time and means to travel. An avid tourist, he made trips to Prague, Vienna, Brussels and Paris. Though he gave many lectures, Hegel published little during the Berlin years. In 1826 he founded a leading journal, *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, for which he wrote several review articles; he published two new editions of the *Encyclopedia* (1827, 1830); and he began to rework his *Logic*, volume I of which appeared in 1832.

Hegel died suddenly in Berlin on 14 November 1831, according to legend from cholera, but probably from a stomach ailment or gastrointestinal disease. The funeral was a massive procession of Berlin notables and his students. According to his wish, he was buried next to Fichte in the Dorothea cemetery in Berlin.