

**HEGEL, AS THE
NATIONAL PHILOSOPHER
OF GERMANY**

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Hegel, as the National Philosopher of Germany by Karl Rosenkranz

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KARL ROSENKRANZ

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NATIONAL PHILOSOPHER
OF GERMANY**

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HEGEL

AS THE NATIONAL PHILOSOPHER OF GERMANY.

31"

(Johann) (Friedrich)

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George S. Hall

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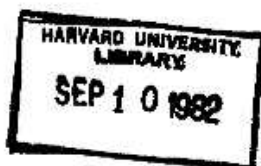
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NOTICE TO THE READER.

The following work contains about one-half of the German work of the same title, prepared by Professor Rosenkranz as his tribute to the celebration of the centennial anniversary of Hegel's birth-day, 27th of August, 1869. In order that the reader may see the relation of what is here translated to the whole work, I give the table of contents of the rest of the work, marking by Roman numbers the location of the chapters of this work as given on the previous page:

(1) Preface and Introduction; (2) Definition of the attempt here made; (3) Ancient German Mysticism as the preliminary foundation of German Philosophy; (4) The Wolffian Popular Philosophy; (5) The Philosophy of the "Illumination"; (6) Kant, the first Classic Philosopher of Germany; (7) Schiller, Reinhold, and Fichte; (8) Schelling; (9) Hegel's Education to Philosophy; (10) The Embryo of Hegel's System; (11) Hegel's Sketch of a New Constitution for Germany; (12) The Difference between the Fichtian System and that of Schelling; (13) Critical Journal of Philosophy; (14) XVI. (see previous page); (15) Hegel as Journalist in Bamberg; (16) His Philosophical Propædeutic and Lectures at the Gymnasium; (17) II.; (18) III.; (19) IV.; (20) V.; (21) VI.; (22) VII. (23) VIII.; (24) IX.; (25) X.; (26) XI.; (27) XII.; (28) XIII.; (29) XIV.; (30) XV.; (31) Hegel as Critic; (32) Hegel as Stylist; (33) Relation of Hegel to his contemporaries—Schelling, Baader, Krause, Herbart, Schopenhauer; (34) Hegel's Position in German Literature; (35) His Position in the World Literature; (36) Prejudice and Polemics against Hegel; (37) The Future of the Hegelian System; (38) The Summary of Results; (39) Epilogue.

The parts translated and herewith presented are believed to be the most interesting and valuable portions of the work.

 S. HALL.

Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, }
April 10, 1874. }

Introduction to

HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHIC METHOD.

William Brown
BY W. T. HARRIS.

To Hegel has been ascribed the honor of discovering a new Philosophic Method. In the Introduction to his great central work, "The Logic," Hegel himself claims that although the method which he has "followed in that book—or rather the method which the system itself has followed—may be capable of much improvement, or more thoroughness of elaboration, as regards details, yet I know that it is the only true method." "Because," he adds, "it is identical with its object and content; for it is the content in itself, the Dialectic which it has in itself that constitutes its evolution." "The only thing essentially necessary to an insight into the method of scientific evolution is a knowledge of the logical nature of the negative; that it is positive in its results,—in other words, that its self-contradiction does not result in zero or the abstract nothing, but rather in the negation of its special content only; that such negation is not simple [or absolute] negation, but the negation of a definite object which annuls itself, and is therefore a definite negation. Hence in the result there is contained essentially that from which it resulted—which amounts to a tautology, for otherwise the somewhat would be an independent original existence and not a result."

If we restate his method and affirm it to be the process of discovering in the finite or limited what it is that constitutes its limitation or finitude, and thereby of ascending through

successive syntheses to the self-limited or infinite, we shall see in that statement its substantial identity with the Platonic Dialectic. To trace out the dependent to that on which it depends is to go from the part to the whole, from that which is not self-existent to that which is self-existent. (Plato's definition we shall quote below.)

The triad—Being, Naught, and Becoming—with which Hegel begins his Logic furnishes an example of an application of the general method as well as an exhibition of what is peculiarly Hegelian. In consideration of the fact that this triad is better known than anything else of Hegel, and that it has furnished the point of attack to his most powerful opponents—Trendelenburg in particular*—an exposition of his method in the evolution of this triad will serve to exhibit the true nature of the Hegelian Philosophy more directly than any general disquisition on its results.

Let us at once, then, proceed to grapple with this much disputed beginning of Hegelian Logic, and make, *first*, an abstract exposition of the theme; *second*, a more concrete or explanatory one; *third*, a critical one, directed towards the position of Trendelenburg. We will attempt to give Hegel's thought in our own manner.

I. Abstract Exposition.

A. *Introduction: why we begin with the category of Being.*

Whatever we postulate as a beginning of pure science must be, as such, not yet scientifically determined. It is the object of pure science to develop a system, and of course the beginning cannot be a system. Since in pure science we must not receive determinations (attributes, qualities, categories, definitions, logical terms, &c.) except those justified and defined by the system, any determination that we postulate, and that is not objectively evolved, must be regarded as unscientific and therefore rejected. Determination and negation are identical, and the complete removal of determination or negation should give us pure being as a beginning or starting-point of our system. Were our system to start with any other category, as for example with the Ego,

* *Logische Untersuchungen.*

that category must be as empty as pure being; if not, it would contain pure being plus determinations, and thus duality would be present before the system had evolved it. It would be ostensibly seized as a simple somewhat, and yet the mind would *mean* something else more concrete. Science has to do with what is *expressed* and not with what is merely *meant*. Hence, unless Science is to start unscientifically, it must commence with pure Being.

B. *Being: what comes of the pure thought of it.*

- I. Being is the simple undetermined.
- II. Since it is the not-determined, it is distinguished from the determined, and is already determined by the contrast. (The abstraction from the world of concrete being here becomes explicit.)
- III. But since according to its definition (I.) it is the absolutely undetermined, it must be the negative of all determined somewhats, and hence of itself, if it is determined through contrast. It is therefore negative of itself as Being, if Being be defined at all as contrasted. Such a universal negative may be named, substantively, Naught.

Remark.—Here we have I. its definition, whence results II. its opposition or contrast, III. its self-relation. Thought endeavors to seize the object (Being) as a whole, i.e. to comprehend it in its entirety. It seizes first the abstract definition, and then proceeds to realize it as thus defined. It finds contrast, and then further, universal negation as the more adequate statement of the idea which it is contemplating.

C. *Naught: the result of attempting to think it purely.*

- I. Being can comply with its definition—which requires it to be kept distinct from its determination or negation—only by negating itself and thus becoming *Naught*. Naught is the negative of all Being.
- II. Naught as the negative of all Being is defined through contrast: it is distinguished from Being.
- III. But since Naught is the negation of all Being, it is the negative of itself; for if Being were regarded as the determined, Naught would be the undetermined, and hence the negative of itself as the opposite of Being (i.e. contrasted with Being); or, if Being is defined as the undetermined, then Being becomes universal ne-