

Preface to the Commentary

In writing the Introduction and headnotes to our translation I have found the much more ambitious commentary provided by the Italian translators very helpful. This translation, *Logica e metafisica di Jena*, edited by F. Chiereghin and others, came to our notice too late to be of assistance in the making of our own, English version. But the commentary (which is about twice as long as the translated text) deserves the attention of all readers who can use it. Chiereghin and his collaborators have traced both the earlier and the later evolution of the main categories of the present work.

My own aim here is much humbler—and rather different. The best summary and analysis of Hegel's argument in its own terms that I was able to give when this translation was still in its infancy will be found in my *Night Thoughts*, chapter 8.¹ So instead of repeating that, I have here tried to interpret the structure and goals of Hegel's logical construction in terms of the "real philosophy" that it was designed to lead to—and especially in terms of the "First Philosophy of Spirit,"² which Hegel had only recently composed and clearly intended to revise as the climax of the manual that he was here trying to write. It will be clear to any careful reader that the theory of social consciousness that forms the main thread of my interpretation is not the only concern in Hegel's mind. Indeed, the student of the text may even be tempted to think at some stages that this concern is not in

1. *Hegel's Development 11: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801–6)*, hereinafter referred to as *Night Thoughts*.

2. In *Gesammelte Werke*, v1, 268–331; and in Harris and Knox, trans. and eds., *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*, pp. 205–50.

Hegel's mind at all. I have, however, focused attention on the way in which the argument of the *Logic* and *Metaphysics* is exemplified in social experience because I believe that this is the best way to show how Hegel's project arose from (and is related to) the earlier projects and problems of Kant and Hegel.³ The manuscript here translated is the earliest formulation of Hegel's conception of "pure thinking" that has survived. But because the projects of the later *Phenomenology* and *Science of Logic* are united in a single undertaking in this *Logic* and *Metaphysics*, Hegel's own determination to develop logical theory from a neutral standpoint does not obscure his preoccupation with the more "subjective" logic of Kant and Fichte. I have relied on this generally evident preoccupation to justify my own reading of the whole argument in terms of the emergence of consciousness (or singular subjectivity) in the social substance.⁴

H. S. HARRIS
Glendon College
York University

3. If we forget about Kant's "deduction of the categories" and Fichte's "self-positing of the Ego," then the affinities of Hegel's work with the *Parmenides* of Plato, with Aristotle's theology, and with the Cartesian tradition may lead us to agree with Michael Rosen, in *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism*, that the short answer to the question "What is living in the logic of Hegel?" is "Nothing" (p. 179).

4. Even the Italian commentators could perhaps learn from my few pages to concentrate their attention on Leibniz, rather than Spinoza, as Hegel's philosopher of "substance" in the present text.