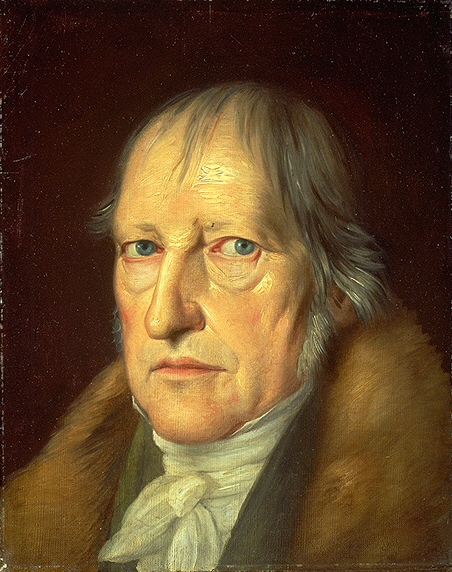
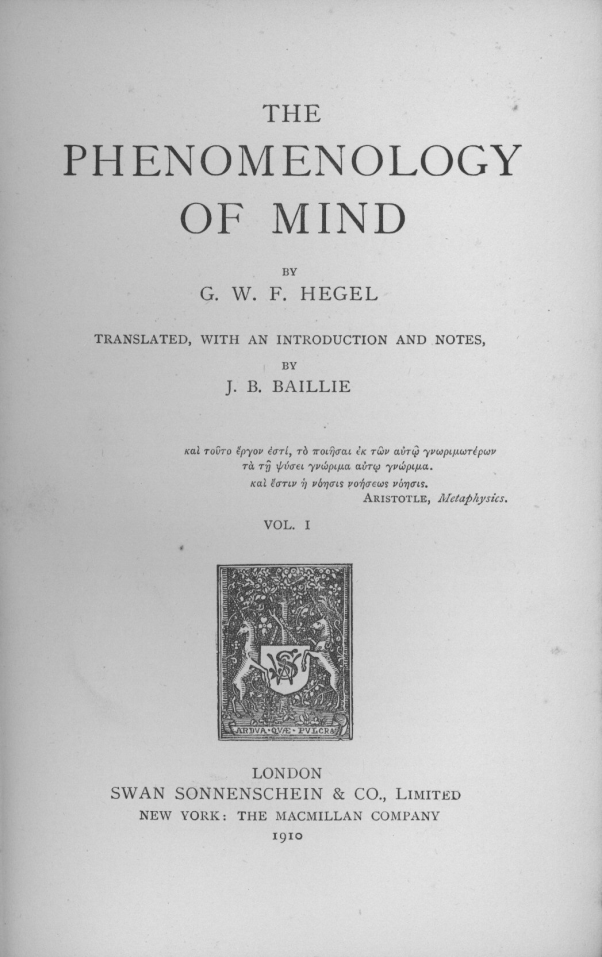
**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 1770-1831**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg\_Wilhelm\_Friedrich\_Hegel**

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**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (German pronunciation: [[ˈɡeɔʁk ˈvɪlhɛlm ˈfʁiːdʁɪç ˈheːɡəl]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_German)) (August 27, 1770 – November 14, 1831) was a [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germans) [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher), one of the creators of [German Idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Idealism). His [historicist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicist) and [idealist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism) account of [reality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality) as a whole revolutionized [European philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_philosophy) and was an important precursor to [Continental philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_philosophy) and [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism).

Hegel developed a [comprehensive philosophical framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_idealism), or "system", to account in an integrated and developmental way for the relation of [mind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind) and [nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature), the [subject](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject) and [object](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object) of [knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge), and [psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology), the [state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_%28polity%29), [history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History), [art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art), [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) and philosophy. In particular, he developed a [concept](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept) of [mind or spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geist) that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately [integrated and united](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aufheben), without eliminating either pole or reducing one to the other. Examples of such contradictions include those between nature and [freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_will), and between [immanence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanence) and [transcendence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_%28philosophy%29).

Hegel influenced writers of widely varying positions, including both his admirers ([Bauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruno_Bauer), [Feuerbach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Feuerbach), [T. H. Green](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hill_Green), [Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx), [Bradley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F._H._Bradley), [Dewey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey), [Sartre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul_Sartre), [Küng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_K%C3%BCng), [Kojève](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Koj%C3%A8ve), [Žižek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavoj_%C5%BDi%C5%BEek), [Brandom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Brandom)) and his detractors ([Schelling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling), [Kierkegaard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard), [Schopenhauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer), [Nietzsche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche), [Stirner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Stirner), [Peirce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce), [Popper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Popper), [Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell)).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-1) His influential conceptions are of speculative logic or "dialectic", "absolute idealism", "Spirit", negativity, sublation (*Aufhebung* in German), the ["Master/Slave" dialectic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master-slave_dialectic), "ethical life" and the importance of history.

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**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=1)**] Life**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=2)**] Early years**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=3)**] Childhood**

Hegel was born on August 27, 1770 in [Stuttgart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuttgart), in the Duchy [Württemberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W%C3%BCrttemberg) in southwestern Germany. Christened Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, he was known as Wilhelm to his close family. His father, Georg Ludwig, was *Rentkammersekretär* (secretary to the revenue office) at the court of [Karl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Eugen,_Duke_of_W%C3%BCrttemberg).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-2) Hegel's mother, Maria Magdalena Louisa (*née* Fromm), was the daughter of a lawyer at the High Court of Justice at the Württemberg court. She died of a "bilious fever" (*Gallenfieber*) when Hegel was thirteen. Hegel and his father also caught the disease but narrowly survived.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-3) Hegel had a sister, Christiane Luise (1773–1832), and a brother, Georg Ludwig (1776–1812), who was to perish as an officer in Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-4)

At the age of three Hegel went to the "German School". When he entered the "Latin School" aged five,he already knew the [first declension](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_declension), having been taught it by his mother.

In 1776 Hegel entered Stuttgart's *Gymnasium Illustre*. During his adolescence Hegel read voraciously, copying lengthy extracts in his diary. Authors he read include the poet [Klopstock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klopstock) and writers associated with the [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) such as [Christian Garve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Garve) and [Gotthold Ephraim Lessing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotthold_Ephraim_Lessing). Hegel's studies at the *Gymnasium* were concluded with his *Abiturrede* ("graduation speech") entitled "The abortive state of art and scholarship in Turkey."

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=4)**] Tübingen (1788-93)**

At the age of eighteen Hegel entered the [Tübinger Stift](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCbinger_Stift) (a Protestant seminary attached to the [University of Tübingen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_T%C3%BCbingen)), where two fellow students were to become vital to his development—his exact contemporary, the poet [Friedrich Hölderlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_H%C3%B6lderlin), and the younger brilliant philosopher-to-be [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling). Sharing a dislike for what they regarded as the restrictive environment of the Seminary, the three became close friends and mutually influenced each other's ideas. They watched the unfolding of the [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) with shared enthusiasm. Schelling and Hölderlin immersed themselves in theoretical debates on Kantian philosophy, from which Hegel remained aloof. Hegel at this time envisaged his future as that of a *Popularphilosoph*, i.e., a "man of letters" who serves to make the abstruse ideas of philosophers accessible to a wider public; his own felt need to engage critically with the central ideas of Kantianism did not come until 1800. Hegel engaged critically by himself.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=5)**] Berne (1793-96) and Frankfurt (1797-1801)**

Having received his theological certificate (*Konsistorialexamen*) from the Tübingen Seminary, Hegel became *Hofmeister* (house tutor) to an aristocratic family in [Berne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berne) (1793–96). During this period he composed the text which has become known as the "Life of Jesus" and a book-length manuscript entitled "The Positivity of the Christian Religion". His relations with his employers having become strained, Hegel gladly accepted an offer mediated by Hölderlin to take up a similar position with a wine merchant's family in [Frankfurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt), where he moved in 1797. Here Hölderlin exerted an important influence on Hegel's thought.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-5) While in Frankfurt Hegel composed the essay "Fragments on Religion and Love". In 1799 he wrote another essay entitled "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate" which was not published during his lifetime.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=6)**] Career years**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=7)**] Jena, Bamberg and Nuremberg: 1801-1816**

In 1801 Hegel came to [Jena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jena) with the encouragement of his old friend Schelling, who was Extraordinary Professor at the [University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Jena) there. Hegel secured a position at the University as a [*Privatdozent*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privatdozent) (unsalaried lecturer) after submitting a [*Habilitationsschrift*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habilitation) (dissertation) on the orbits of the planets. Later in the year Hegel's first book, [*The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Difference_Between_Fichte%27s_and_Schelling%27s_Systems_of_Philosophy), appeared. He lectured on "Logic and Metaphysics" and, with Schelling, gave joint lectures on an "Introduction to the Idea and Limits of True Philosophy" and held a "Philosophical Disputorium". In 1802 Schelling and Hegel founded a journal, the *Kritische Journal der Philosophie* ("Critical Journal of Philosophy") to which they each contributed pieces until the collaboration was ended by Schelling's departure for [Würzburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W%C3%BCrzburg) in 1803.

In 1805 the University promoted Hegel to the position of Extraordinary Professor (unsalaried), after Hegel wrote a letter to the poet and minister of culture [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe) protesting at the promotion of his philosophical adversary [Jakob Friedrich Fries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_Friedrich_Fries) ahead of him.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-6) Hegel attempted to enlist the help of the poet and translator [Johann Heinrich Voß](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Heinrich_Vo%C3%9F) to obtain a post at the newly renascent [University of Heidelberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Heidelberg), but failed; to his chagrin, Fries was later in the same year made Ordinary Professor (salaried) there.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-7)



Hegel sees the "world spirit on horseback", Napoleon.

His finances drying up quickly, Hegel was now under great pressure to deliver his book, the long-promised introduction to his System. Hegel was putting the finishing touches to this book, now called the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as Napoleon engaged Prussian troops on October 14, 1806, in the [Battle of Jena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jena) on a plateau outside the city. On the day before the battle, Napoleon entered the city of Jena. Hegel recounted his impressions in a letter to his friend [Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Immanuel_Niethammer):

I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it [...] this extraordinary man, whom it is impossible not to admire.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-8)

Although Napoleon chose not to close down Jena as he had other universities, the city was devastated and students deserted the university in droves, making Hegel's financial prospects even worse. The following February Hegel's landlady Christiana Burkhardt (who had been abandoned by her husband) gave birth to their son Georg Ludwig Friedrich Fischer (1807–31).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-9)

In March 1807, aged 37, Hegel moved to [Bamberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bamberg), where Niethammer had declined and passed on to Hegel an offer to become editor of a newspaper, the *Bamberger Zeitung*. Hegel, unable to find more suitable employment, reluctantly accepted. Ludwig Fischer and his mother (whom Hegel may have offered to marry following the death of her husband) stayed behind in Jena.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-10)

He was then, in November 1808, again through Niethammer, appointed headmaster of a *Gymnasium* in [Nuremberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremberg), a post he held until 1816. While in Nuremberg Hegel adapted his recently published *Phenomenology of Mind* for use in the classroom. Part of his remit being to teach a class called "Introduction to Knowledge of the Universal Coherence of the Sciences", Hegel developed the idea of an encyclopedia of the philosophical sciences, falling into three parts (logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of spirit).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-11)

Hegel married Marie Helena Susanna von Tucher (1791–1855), the eldest daughter of a Senator, in 1811. This period saw the publication of his second major work, the *Science of Logic* (*Wissenschaft der Logik*; 3 vols., 1812, 1813, 1816), and the birth of his two legitimate sons, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm (1813–1901) and Immanuel Thomas Christian (1814–1891).

#### [[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=8)] Heidelberg and Berlin: 1816-1831

Having received offers of a post from the Universities of [Erlangen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Erlangen), [Berlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Berlin), and [Heidelberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Heidelberg), Hegel chose Heidelberg, where he moved in 1816. Soon after, in April 1817, his illegitimate son Ludwig Fischer (now ten years old) joined the Hegel household, having thus far spent his childhood in an orphanage.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-12) (Ludwig's mother had died in the meantime.)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-13)

Hegel published *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sentences in Outline* (1817) as a summary of his philosophy for students attending his lectures at Heidelberg.



Hegel sees the "world spirit on horseback", Napoleon.

In 1818 Hegel accepted the renewed offer of the chair of philosophy at the [University of Berlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Berlin), which had remained vacant since Fichte's death in 1814. Here he published his *Philosophy of Right* (1821). Hegel's efforts were primarily directed at delivering his lectures; his lecture courses on aesthetics, the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of history, and the history of philosophy were published posthumously from lecture notes taken by his students. His fame spread and his lectures attracted students from all over Germany and beyond.

Hegel was appointed Rector of the University in 1830, when he was 60. He was deeply disturbed by the riots for reform in Berlin in that year. In 1831 [Frederick William III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William_III_of_Prussia) decorated him for his service to the Prussian state. In August 1831 a [cholera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera) epidemic reached Berlin and Hegel left the city, taking up lodgings in [Kreuzberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kreuzberg). Now in a weak state of health, Hegel went out little. As the new semester began in October, Hegel returned to Berlin, with the (mistaken) impression that the epidemic had largely subsided. By November 14 Hegel was dead. The physicians pronounced the cause of death as cholera, but it is likely he died from a different gastrointestinal disease.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-14) He is said to have uttered the last words "And he didn't understand me" before expiring.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-15) In accordance with his wishes, Hegel was buried on November 16 in the [Dorotheenstadt](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dorotheenstadt&action=edit&redlink=1) Cemetery next to Fichte and [Solger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Wilhelm_Ferdinand_Solger).

Hegel's son Ludwig Fischer had died shortly before while serving with the Dutch army in [Batavia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakarta); the news of his death never reached his father.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-16) Early the following year Hegel's sister Christiane committed suicide by drowning. Hegel's sons Karl, who became a historian, and Immanuel, who followed a theological path, lived long lives during which they safeguarded their father's [*Nachlaß*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nachla%C3%9F) and produced editions of his works.

## [[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=9)] Works

Hegel published only four books during his life: the [*Phenomenology of Spirit*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenology_of_Spirit) (or *Phenomenology of Mind*), his account of the evolution of consciousness from sense-perception to absolute knowledge, published in 1807; the [*Science of Logic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_of_Logic), the logical and [metaphysical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics) core of his philosophy, in three volumes, published in 1811, 1812, and 1816 (revised 1831); [*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia_of_the_Philosophical_Sciences), a summary of his entire philosophical system, which was originally published in 1816 and revised in 1827 and 1830; and the [*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elements_of_the_Philosophy_of_Right), his political philosophy, published in 1822. In the latter, he criticized [von Haller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Ludwig_von_Haller)'s reactionary work, which claimed that laws were not necessary. He also published some articles early in his career and during his Berlin period. A number of other works on the [philosophy of history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_history), [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_religion), [aesthetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetics), and the [history of philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_philosophy) were compiled from the lecture notes of his students and published posthumously.



Hegel's tombstone in Berlin

Hegel's works have a reputation for their difficulty and for the breadth of the topics they attempt to cover. Hegel introduced a system for understanding the [history of philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_philosophy) and the world itself, often described as a "progression in which each successive movement emerges as a resolution to the contradictions inherent in the preceding movement"[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]. For example, the [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) for Hegel constitutes the introduction of real [individual political freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_%28political%29) into [European societies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) for the first time in recorded history. But precisely because of its absolute novelty, it is also absolutely radical: on the one hand the upsurge of violence required to carry out the revolution cannot cease to be itself, while on the other, it has already consumed its opponent. The revolution therefore has nowhere to turn but onto its own result: the hard-won freedom is consumed by a brutal [Reign of Terror](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reign_of_Terror). History, however, progresses by learning from its mistakes: only after and precisely because of this experience can one posit the existence of a [constitutional state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_state) of free citizens, embodying both the benevolent organizing power of rational [government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government) and the revolutionary ideals of freedom and equality. Hegel's remarks on the French revolution led German poet [Heinrich Heine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Heine) to label him "The [Orléans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orl%C3%A9anist) of German Philosophy".

Hegel's writing style is difficult to read; he is described by [Bertrand Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell) in the *History of Western Philosophy* as the single most difficult philosopher to understand. This is partly because Hegel tried to develop a new form of thinking and logic, which he called "[speculative reason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speculative_reason)" and which includes the more famous concept of "[dialectic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic)", to try to overcome what he saw as the limitations of both common sense and of traditional philosophy at grasping philosophical problems and the relation between thought and reality.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=10)**] Thought**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=11)**] Freedom**

Hegel's thinking can be understood as a constructive development within the broad tradition that includes [Plato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato) and [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant). To this list one could add [Proclus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proclus), [Meister Eckhart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart), [Leibniz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leibniz), [Plotinus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plotinus), [Jakob Boehme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_Boehme), and [Rousseau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau). What all these thinkers share, which distinguishes them from [materialists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Materialists) like [Epicurus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicurus), the [Stoics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoicism), and [Thomas Hobbes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes), and from [empiricists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empiricists) like [David Hume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume), is that they regard freedom or self-determination both as real and as having important [ontological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontology) implications, for soul or mind or divinity. This focus on freedom is what generates Plato's notion (in the [Phaedo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaedo), [Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Republic_%28Plato%29), and [Timaeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timaeus_%28dialogue%29)) of the [soul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul) as having a higher or fuller kind of reality than inanimate objects possess. While Aristotle criticizes Plato's "Forms", he preserves Plato's preoccupation with the ontological implications of self-determination, in his conceptions of ethical reasoning, the hierarchy of soul in nature, the order of the cosmos, and the prime mover. [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant), likewise, preserves this preoccupation of Plato's in his notions of moral and noumenal freedom, and God.

In his discussion of "Spirit" in his *Encyclopedia*, Hegel praises Aristotle's [*On the Soul*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Soul) as "by far the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of philosophical value on this topic".[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-17) In his [*Phenomenology of Spirit*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Phenomenology_of_Spirit) and his [*Science of Logic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_of_Logic), Hegel's concern with Kantian topics such as freedom and morality, and with their ontological implications, is pervasive. Rather than simply rejecting [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant)'s dualism of freedom versus nature, Hegel aims to subsume it within "true infinity", the "Concept" (or "Notion": *Begriff*), "Spirit", and "ethical life" in such a way that the Kantian duality is rendered intelligible, rather than remaining a brute "given."

The reason why this subsumption takes place in a *series* of concepts is that Hegel's method, in his *Science of Logic* and his *Encyclopedia*, is to begin with ultra-basic concepts like Being and Nothing, and to develop these through a long sequence of elaborations, including those mentioned in the previous paragraph. In this manner, a solution that is reached, in principle, in the account of "true infinity" in the *Science of Logic'*s chapter on "Quality", is repeated in new guises at later stages, all the way to "Spirit" and "ethical life", in the third volume of the *Encyclopedia*.

In this way, Hegel intends to defend the germ of truth in Kantian dualism against reductive or eliminative programs like those of materialism and empiricism. Like Plato, with his dualism of soul versus bodily appetites, Kant wants to insist on the mind's ability to question its felt inclinations or appetites and to come up with a standard of "duty" (or, in Plato's case, "good") which goes beyond them. Hegel preserves this essential Platonic and Kantian concern in the form of infinity's going beyond the finite (a process that Hegel in fact relates to "freedom" and the "ought"[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-18)), the universal's going beyond the particular (in the Concept), and Spirit's going beyond Nature. And Hegel renders these dualities *intelligible* by (ultimately) his argument in the "Quality" chapter of the *Science of Logic* that the finite has to become infinite in order to achieve "reality." This is because, as Hegel suggests by his introduction of the concept of "reality",[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-19) what determines itself rather than depending on its relations to other things for its essential character, is more fully "real" (following the Latin etymology of "real": more "thing-like") than what does not. Finite things don't determine themselves, because, as "finite" things, their essential character is determined by their boundaries, over against other finite things. So, in order to become "real", they must go beyond their finitude ("finitude *is* only as a transcending of itself"[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-20)).

The result of this argument is that finite and infinite—and, by extension, particular and universal, nature and freedom—don't face one another as two independent realities, but instead the latter (in each case) is the *self-transcending* of the former.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-21) Thus rather than being merely "given", without explanation, the relationship between finite and infinite (and particular and universal, and nature and freedom) becomes intelligible. And a challenge is issued to reductive and eliminative programs like materialism and empiricism: What kind of "reality" do *your* fundamental entities or data possess?

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=12)**] Progress**

The obscure writings of [Jakob Böhme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakob_B%C3%B6hme) had a strong effect on Hegel. Böhme had written that [the Fall of Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fall_of_Man) was a necessary stage in the [evolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution) of the [universe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universe). This evolution was, itself, the result of [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God)'s desire for complete self-awareness. Hegel was fascinated by the works of [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant), [Rousseau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau), and [Goethe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe), and by the [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution). Modern philosophy, culture, and society seemed to Hegel fraught with contradictions and tensions, such as those between the subject and object of [knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge), mind and nature, [self](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self_%28philosophy%29) and [Other](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other), freedom and authority, knowledge and faith, the [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) and [Romanticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism). Hegel's main philosophical project was to take these contradictions and tensions and interpret them as part of a comprehensive, evolving, rational unity that, in different contexts, he called "the absolute idea" or "absolute knowledge".

According to Hegel, the main characteristic of this unity was that it evolved through and manifested itself in [contradiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contradiction) and [negation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negation). Contradiction and negation have a dynamic quality that at every point in each domain of [reality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality)—[consciousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consciousness), [history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History), [philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy), [art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art), [nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature), [society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society)—leads to further development until a [rational](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationality) unity is reached that preserves the contradictions as phases and sub-parts by lifting them up ([Aufhebung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aufhebung)) to a higher unity. This whole is [mental](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind) because it is [mind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind) that can comprehend all of these phases and sub-parts as steps in its own process of comprehension. It is rational because the same, underlying, [logical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic), developmental order underlies every domain of reality and is ultimately the order of self-conscious rational thought, although only in the later stages of development does it come to full self-consciousness. The rational, self-conscious [whole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole) is not a thing or [being](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Being) that lies outside of other existing things or minds. Rather, it comes to completion only in the philosophical comprehension of individual existing human minds who, through their own understanding, bring this developmental process to an understanding of itself.

"Mind" and "Spirit" are the common English translations of Hegel's use of the German "[Geist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geist)." Some have argued that either of these terms overly "psychologize" Hegel,[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] implying a kind of disembodied, solipsistic consciousness like [ghost](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost) or "soul." Geist combines the meaning of spirit—as in god, ghost or mind—with an intentional force.

Central to Hegel's [conception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conception_%28idea%29) of [knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge) and mind (and therefore also of reality) was the notion of [identity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_%28philosophy%29) in [difference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Difference), that is that mind [externalizes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Externalization) itself in various forms and [objects](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_%28philosophy%29) that stand outside of it or opposed to it, and that, through recognizing itself in them, is "with itself" in these external manifestations, so that they are at one and the same time mind and other-than-mind. This notion of identity in difference, which is intimately bound up with his conception of contradiction and negativity, is a principal feature differentiating Hegel's thought from that of other philosophers.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=13)**] Civil society**

*See also:* [*Civil society*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society)

Hegel made the distinction between civil society and state in his [*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elements_of_the_Philosophy_of_Right).[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-22) In this work, civil society (Hegel used the term "buergerliche Gesellschaft" though it is now referred to as *Zivilgesellschaft* in German to emphasize a more inclusive community) was a stage on the [dialectical relationship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical) between Hegel's perceived opposites, the macro-community of the [state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_state) and the micro-community of the family.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-23) Broadly speaking, the term was split, like Hegel's followers, to the [political left](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_left) and [right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_right). On the left, it became the foundation for [Karl Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx)'s civil society as an [economic base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Base_and_superstructure)[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-glob-24); to the right, it became a description for all non-state aspects of society, expanding out of the [economic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic) rigidity of [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) into [culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture), [society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society) and [politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics)[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-25). This modern liberal distinction between [political society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_society) and [civil society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_society) was followed also by [Alexis de Tocqueville](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_de_Tocqueville).[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-glob-24)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=14)**] Hegel and Heraclitus**

According to Hegel, "[Heraclitus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus) is the one who first declared the nature of the infinite and first grasped nature as in itself infinite, that is, its essence as process. The origin of philosophy is to be dated from Heraclitus. His is the persistent Idea that is the same in all philosophers up to the present day, as it was the Idea of Plato and Aristotle."[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-26) For Hegel, Heraclitus's great achievements were to have understood the nature of the infinite, which for Hegel includes understanding the inherent contradictoriness and negativity of reality, and to have grasped that reality is becoming or process, and that "being" and "nothingness" are mere empty abstractions. According to Hegel, Heraclitus's "obscurity" comes from his being a true (in Hegel's terms "speculative") philosopher who grasped the ultimate philosophical truth and therefore expressed himself in a way that goes beyond the abstract and limited nature of common sense and is difficult to grasp by those who operate within common sense. Hegel asserted that in Heraclitus he had an antecedent for his logic: "... there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my logic."[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-27)

Hegel cites a number of fragments of Heraclitus in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-28) One to which he attributes great significance is the fragment he translates as "Being is not more than Non-being", which he interprets to mean

Sein und Nichts sei dasselbe  
Being and non-being are the same.

Heraclitus does not form any abstract nouns from his ordinary use of "to be" and "to become" and in that fragment seems to be opposing any identity A to any other identity B, C, etc., which is not-A. Hegel, however, interprets not-A as not existing at all, not nothing at all, which cannot be conceived, but indeterminate or "pure" [being](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Being) without particularity or specificity.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-29) Pure being and pure non-being or nothingness are for Hegel pure abstractions from the reality of becoming, and this is also how he interprets Heraclitus. This interpretation of Heraclitus cannot be ruled out, but even if present is not the main gist of his thought.

For Hegel, the inner movement of reality is the process of God thinking as manifested in the evolution of the universe of nature and thought; that is, Hegel argued that, when fully and properly understood, [reality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality) is being [thought](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism) by God as manifested in man's comprehension of this process in and through philosophy. Since man's thought is the image and fulfillment of God's thought, God is not [ineffable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ineffability) (so incomprehensible as to be unutterable) but can be understood by an analysis of thought and reality. Just as man continually corrects his concepts of reality through a [dialectical process](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic) so God himself becomes more fully manifested through the dialectical process of becoming.

For his god Hegel does not take the logos of Heraclitus but refers rather to the [nous](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nous) of [Anaxagoras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaxagoras), although he may well have regarded them the same, as he continues to refer to god's plan, which is identical to God. Whatever the nous thinks at any time is actual [substance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Substance_theory) and is identical to limited being, but more remains to be thought in the substrate of non-being, which is identical to pure or unlimited thought.

The universe as becoming is therefore a combination of being and non-being. The particular is never complete in itself but to find completion is continually transformed into more comprehensive, complex, self-relating particulars. The essential nature of being-for-itself is that it is free "in itself"; that is, it does not depend on anything else, such as matter, for its being. The limitations represent fetters, which it must constantly be casting off as it becomes freer and more self-determining.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-30)

Although Hegel began his philosophizing with commentary on the Christian religion and often expresses the view that he is a Christian, his ideas of God are not at home among some Christians, although he has had a major influence on 19th- and 20th-century theology. At the same time, an atheistic version of his thought was adopted instead by some [Marxists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism), who, stripping away the concepts of divinity, styled what was left [dialectical materialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical_materialism), which some saw as originating in Heraclitus.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=15)**] Religion**

Hegel's thoughts on the person of Jesus Christ stood out from the theologies of the Enlightenment. In his posthumous book, The Christian Religion: Lectures on Philosophy of Religion Part 3, he espouses that, "God is not an abstraction but a concrete God." "God, considered in terms of his eternal Idea, has to generate the Son, has to distinguish himself from himself; he is the process of differentiating, namely, love and Spirit". This means that Jesus as the Son of God is posited by God over against himself as other. Hegel sees both a relational unity and a metaphysical unity between Jesus and God the Father. To Hegel, Jesus is both divine and Human. Preceding the 'death-of-God' theologians, Hegel further attests that God (as Jesus) not only died, but "...rather, a reversal takes place: God, that is to say, maintains himself in the process, and the latter is only the death of death. God rises again to life, and thus things are reversed." Hegel therefore maintains not only the deity of Jesus, but the resurrection as a reality.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=16)**] Legacy**

See also: [Hegelianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegelianism)

There are views of Hegel's thought as a representation of the summit of early 19th century Germany's movement of philosophical [idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idealism). It would come to have a profound impact on many future philosophical schools, including schools that opposed Hegel's specific [dialectical idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dialectical_idealism&action=edit&redlink=1), such as [Existentialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existentialism), the [historical materialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_materialism) of [Karl Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx), [historicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism), and [British Idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_idealism).

Hegel's influence was immense both within philosophy and in the other sciences. Throughout the 19th century many chairs of philosophy around Europe were held by Hegelians, and [Kierkegaard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kierkegaard), [Feuerbach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Andreas_Feuerbach), [Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx), and [Engels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engels)--among many others—were all deeply influenced by, but also strongly opposed to, many of the central themes of Hegel's philosophy. After less than a generation, Hegel's philosophy was suppressed and even banned by the [Prussian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussia) [right-wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-wing), and was firmly rejected by the [left-wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left-wing) in multiple official writings.

After the period of [Bruno Bauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruno_Bauer), Hegel's influence did not make itself felt again until the philosophy of [British Idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_idealism) and the 20th century Hegelian [Western Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Marxism) that began with [Georg Lukács](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Luk%C3%A1cs). The more recent movement of [communitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communitarianism) has a strong Hegelian influence.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=17)**] Reading Hegel**

Some of Hegel's writing was intended for those with advanced knowledge of philosophy, although his "Encyclopedia" was intended as a [textbook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textbook) in a [university](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University) [course](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_%28education%29). Nevertheless, like many philosophers, Hegel assumed that his readers would be well-versed in [Western philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_philosophy), up to and including [Descartes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descartes), [Hume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume), [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kant), [Fichte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichte), and [Schelling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling). For those wishing to read his work without this background, introductions to and commentaries about Hegel can contribute to comprehension, although the reader is faced with multiple interpretations of Hegel's writings from incompatible schools of philosophy. The German philosopher [Theodor W. Adorno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_W._Adorno) devoted an essay to the difficulty of reading Hegel and asserted that there are certain passages where it is impossible to decipher what Hegel meant. Difficulties within Hegel's language and thought are magnified for those reading Hegel in translation, since his philosophical language and terminology in German often do not have direct analogues in other languages. For example, the German word "Geist" has connotations of both "mind" and "spirit" in English. English translators have to use the "phenomenology of mind" or "the phenomenology of spirit" to render Hegel's "Phaenomenologie des Geistes", thus altering the original meaning. Hegel himself argued, in his "Science of Logic", that the German language was particularly conducive to philosophical thought and writing.

One especially difficult aspect of Hegel's work is his innovation in logic. In response to Immanuel Kant's challenge to the limits of [Pure Reason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critique_of_Pure_Reason), Hegel developed a radically new form of logic, which he called *speculation*, and which is today popularly called [dialectics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic). The difficulty in reading Hegel was perceived in Hegel's own day, and persists into the 21st century. To understand Hegel fully requires paying attention to his critique of standard logic, such as the [law of contradiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_contradiction) and the [law of the excluded middle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_the_excluded_middle), and, whether one accepts or rejects it, at least taking it seriously. Many philosophers who came after Hegel and were influenced by him, whether adopting or rejecting his ideas, did so without fully absorbing his new speculative or dialectical logic.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

If one wanted to provide a big piece of the Hegel puzzle to the beginner, one might present the following statement from Part One of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences: The Logic*:

... a much misunderstood phenomenon in the history of philosophy — the refutation of one system by another, of an earlier by a later. Most commonly the refutation is taken in a purely negative sense to mean that the system refuted has ceased to count for anything, has been set aside and done for. Were it so, the history of philosophy would be, of all studies, most saddening, displaying, as it does, the refutation of every system which time has brought forth. Now although it may be admitted that every philosophy has been refuted, it must be in an equal degree maintained that no philosophy has been refuted. And that in two ways. For first, every philosophy that deserves the name always embodies the Idea: and secondly, every system represents one particular factor or particular stage in the evolution of the Idea. The refutation of a philosophy, therefore, only means that its barriers are crossed, and its special principle reduced to a factor in the completer principle that follows.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=18)**] Left and Right Hegelianism**

Some historians have spoken of Hegel's influence as represented by two opposing camps. The [Right Hegelians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_Hegelians), the allegedly direct disciples of Hegel at the [Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humboldt_University_of_Berlin), advocated a [Protestant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant) orthodoxy and the political conservatism of the post-[Napoleon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_I_of_France) Restoration period. The [Left Hegelians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Hegelians), also known as the Young Hegelians, interpreted Hegel in a revolutionary sense, leading to an advocation of [atheism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism) in religion and [liberal democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_democracy) in politics.

In more recent studies, however, this paradigm has been questioned.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-31) No Hegelians of the period ever referred to themselves as "Right Hegelians"; that was a term of insult originated by [David Strauss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Strauss), a self-styled Left Hegelian. Critiques of Hegel offered from the Left Hegelians radically diverted Hegel's thinking into new directions and eventually came to form a disproportionately large part of the literature on and about Hegel.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

The Left Hegelians also spawned [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism), which inspired a global movement lasting more than 150 years, encompassing the [Russian Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Revolution_%281917%29), the [Chinese Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Revolution) and even more national-liberation movements of the 20th century. Yet those movements are not a direct result of Hegel's philosophy.

Twentieth-century interpretations of Hegel were mostly shaped by [British Idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_idealism), [logical positivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_positivism), [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism), and [Fascism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism). The Italian Fascist [Giovanni Gentile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Gentile), according to [Benedetto Croce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedetto_Croce), "...holds the honor of having been the most rigorous neo-Hegelian in the entire history of Western philosophy and the dishonor of having been the official philosopher of Fascism in Italy."[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-32) However, since the fall of the [USSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR), a new wave of Hegel scholarship arose in the West, without the preconceptions of the prior schools of thought. [Walter Jaeschke](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Walter_Jaeschke&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Otto Pöggeler](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Otto_P%C3%B6ggeler&action=edit&redlink=1) in Germany, as well as [Peter Hodgson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Hodgson) and [Howard Kainz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Kainz) in America are notable for their recent contributions to post-USSR thinking about Hegel.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=19)**] Triads**

In previous modern accounts of Hegelianism (to undergraduate classes, for example), especially those formed prior to the Hegel renaissance, Hegel's dialectic was most often characterized as a three-step process, "[thesis, antithesis, synthesis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thesis,_antithesis,_synthesis)"; namely, that a "thesis" (e.g. the [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution)) would cause the creation of its "antithesis" (e.g. the Reign of Terror that followed), and would eventually result in a "synthesis" (e.g. the Constitutional state of free citizens). However, Hegel used this classification only once, and he attributed the terminology to [Immanuel Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant). The terminology was largely developed earlier by [Johann Fichte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Fichte). It was spread by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus in a popular account of Hegelian philosophy, and since then the misfit terms have stuck[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]. What is wrong with the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" approach is that it gives the sense that things or ideas are contradicted or opposed by things that come from outside them. To the contrary, the fundamental notion of Hegel's dialectic is that things or ideas have internal contradictions. From Hegel's point of view, analysis or comprehension of a thing or idea reveals that underneath its apparently simple identity or unity is an underlying inner contradiction. This contradiction leads to the dissolution of the thing or idea in the simple form in which it presented itself and to a higher-level, more complex thing or idea that more adequately incorporates the contradiction. The triadic form that appears in many places in Hegel (e.g. being-nothingness-becoming, immediate-mediate-concrete, abstract-negative-concrete) is about this movement from inner contradiction to higher-level integration or unification.

Believing that the traditional description of Hegel's philosophy in terms of thesis-antithesis-synthesis was mistaken, a few scholars, like [Raya Dunayevskaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raya_Dunayevskaya), a devout Marxist who was once [Leon Trotsky's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Trotsky) secretary, have attempted to discard the triadic approach altogether. According to their argument, although Hegel refers to *"the two elemental considerations: first, the idea of freedom as the absolute and final aim; secondly, the means for realising it, i.e. the subjective side of knowledge and will, with its life, movement, and activity"* (thesis and antithesis) he doesn't use "synthesis" but instead speaks of the *"Whole"*: *"We then recognised the State as the moral Whole and the Reality of Freedom, and consequently as the objective unity of these two elements."* Furthermore, in Hegel's language, the "dialectical" aspect or "moment" of thought and reality, by which things or thoughts turn into their opposites or have their inner contradictions brought to the surface, what he called "[aufhebung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aufheben)", is only preliminary to the "speculative" (and not "synthesizing") aspect or "moment", which grasps the unity of these opposites or contradiction. Thus for Hegel, reason is ultimately "speculative", not "dialectical".

It is widely admitted today[[*by whom?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Avoid_weasel_words)] that the old-fashioned description of Hegel's philosophy in terms of "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" is inaccurate. Nevertheless, such is the persistence of this misnomer that the model and terminology survive in a number of scholarly works.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=20)**] Renaissance**

In the latter half of the 20th century, Hegel's philosophy underwent a major renaissance. This was due to: (a) the rediscovery and reevaluation of Hegel as a possible philosophical progenitor of Marxism by philosophically oriented Marxists; (b) a resurgence of the historical perspective that Hegel brought to everything; and (c) an increasing recognition of the importance of his [dialectical method](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical_method). The book that did the most to reintroduce Hegel into the Marxist canon was perhaps [Georg Lukács](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Luk%C3%A1cs)' *History and Class Consciousness*. This sparked a renewed interest in Hegel reflected in the work of [Herbert Marcuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Marcuse), [Theodor W. Adorno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_W._Adorno), [Ernst Bloch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Bloch), [Raya Dunayevskaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raya_Dunayevskaya), [Alexandre Kojève](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Koj%C3%A8ve) and [Gotthard Günther](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotthard_G%C3%BCnther) among others. The Hegel renaissance also highlighted the significance of Hegel's early works, i.e. those published prior to the [*Phenomenology of Spirit*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomenology_of_Spirit). The direct and indirect influence of Kojève's lectures and writings (on the Phenomenology of Spirit, in particular) mean that it is not possible to understand most French philosophers from [Jean-Paul Sartre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul_Sartre) to [Jacques Derrida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Derrida) without understanding Hegel.

Beginning in the 1960s, Anglo-American Hegel scholarship has attempted to challenge the traditional interpretation of Hegel as offering a metaphysical system: this has also been the approach of [Z.A. Pelczynski](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Z.A._Pelczynski&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Shlomo Avineri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shlomo_Avineri). This view, sometimes referred to as the 'non-metaphysical option', has had a decided influence on many major English language studies of Hegel in the past 40 years. U.S. [neoconservative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoconservative) [political theorist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_science) [Francis Fukuyama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Fukuyama)'s controversial book [*The End of History and the Last Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man) was heavily influenced by Alexandre Kojève. Among modern scientists, the physicist [David Bohm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bohm), the mathematician [William Lawvere](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Lawvere), the logician [Kurt Gödel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_G%C3%B6del) and the biologist [Ernst Mayr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Mayr) have been interested in Hegel's philosophical work.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

A late 20th century literature in Western [Theology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology) that is friendly to Hegel includes such writers as [Dale M. Schlitt](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dale_M._Schlitt&action=edit&redlink=1) (1984), [Theodore Geraets](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Theodore_Geraets&action=edit&redlink=1) (1985), [Philip M. Merklinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Philip_M._Merklinger&action=edit&redlink=1) (1991), [Stephen Rocker](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stephen_Rocker&action=edit&redlink=1) (1995) and [Cyril O'Regan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_O%27Regan) (1995). The contemporary theologian [Hans Küng](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_K%C3%BCng) has also advanced contemporary scholarship in Hegel studies.

Recently, two prominent American philosophers, [John McDowell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McDowell) and [Robert Brandom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Brandom) (sometimes, half-seriously, referred to as the [Pittsburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Pittsburgh) Hegelians), have produced philosophical works exhibiting a marked Hegelian influence. Each is avowedly influenced by the late [Wilfred Sellars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilfred_Sellars), also of Pittsburgh, who referred to his seminal work, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,* as a series of "incipient *Méditations Hegeliennes*" (in homage to [Edmund Husserl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Husserl)'s treatise, [*Meditations Cartesiennes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartesian_Meditations)).

Beginning in the 1990s, after the fall of the [USSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR), a fresh reading of Hegel took place in the West. For these scholars, fairly well represented by the Hegel Society of America and in cooperation with German scholars such as Otto Pöggeler and Walter Jaeschke, Hegel's works should be read without preconceptions. Marx plays a minor role in these new readings, and some contemporary scholars have suggested that Marx's interpretation of Hegel is irrelevant to a proper reading of Hegel. Some American philosophers associated with this movement include Clark Butler, Vince Hathaway, Daniel Shannon, David Duquette, David MacGregor, Edward Beach, John Burbidge, [Lawrence Stepelevich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Stepelevich), Rudolph Siebert, Randall Jackwak, Theodore Geraets and William Desmond.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=21)**] Criticism**

Criticism of Hegel has been widespread in the 19th and the 20th centuries; a diverse range of individuals including [Arthur Schopenhauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer), [Karl Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx), [Søren Kierkegaard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard), [Friedrich Nietzsche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche), [Bertrand Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell), [G. E. Moore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._E._Moore), [Eric Voegelin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Voegelin), and [A. J. Ayer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._J._Ayer) challenged Hegelian philosophy from a variety of perspectives. Among the first to take a critical view of Hegel's system was the 19th German group known as the [Young Hegelians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Hegelians), which included [Ludwig Feuerbach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Feuerbach), [Karl Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx), [Friedrich Engels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Engels), and their followers. In Britain, the Hegelian [British Idealism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_idealism) school (members of which included [Francis Herbert Bradley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Herbert_Bradley), [Bernard Bosanquet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Bosanquet_%28philosopher%29), and, in the United States, [Josiah Royce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah_Royce)) was challenged and rejected by [analytic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analytic_philosophy) philosophers [G. E. Moore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._E._Moore) and [Bertrand Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell); Russell, in particular, considered "almost all" of Hegel's doctrines to be false.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-33) [Logical positivists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_positivism) such as [Alfred Jules Ayer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jules_Ayer) and the [Vienna Circle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_Circle) also criticized Hegelian philosophy and its supporters, such as [F. H. Bradley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Herbert_Bradley).

Hegel's contemporary [Schopenhauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer) was particularly critical, and wrote of Hegel's philosophy as "a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking" [[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-34) [Kierkegaard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%B8ren_Kierkegaard) criticized Hegel's 'absolute knowledge' unity [[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-35) Scientist [Ludwig Boltzmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Boltzmann) also criticized the obscure complexity of Hegel's works, referring to Hegel's writing as an "unclear thoughtless flow of words".[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-36). [Bertrand Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertrand_Russell) stated that Hegel was "the hardest to understand of all the great philosophers" in his *Unpopular Essays* and [*A History of Western Philosophy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_History_of_Western_Philosophy).

[Karl Popper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Popper) makes the claim in the second volume of [*The Open Society and Its Enemies*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Open_Society_and_Its_Enemies) that Hegel's system formed a thinly veiled justification for the [absolute rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) of [Frederick William III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William_III_of_Prussia), and that Hegel's idea of the ultimate goal of history was to reach a state approximating that of 1830s [Prussia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussia). Popper further proposed that Hegel's philosophy served not only as an inspiration for [communist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism) and [fascist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism) totalitarian governments of the 20th century, whose dialectics allow for any belief to be construed as rational simply if it could be said to exist ([doublethink](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doublethink)). This view of Hegel as an apologist of state power and precursor of 20th century [totalitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totalitarianism) was criticized by [Herbert Marcuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Marcuse) in his *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, on the grounds that Hegel was not an apologist for any state or form of authority simply because it existed: for Hegel the state must always be rational. Other scholars, e.g. [Walter Kaufmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Kaufmann_%28philosopher%29) and [Shlomo Avineri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shlomo_Avineri), have also criticized Popper's theories about Hegel.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-37) [Isaiah Berlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah_Berlin) listed Hegel as one of the six architects of modern [authoritarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authoritarianism) who undermined [liberal democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_democracy), along with [Rousseau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rousseau), [Helvetius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helvetius), [Fichte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichte), [Saint-Simon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Simon), and [Maistre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maistre).[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel#cite_note-38)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=22)**] Works**

For the volume numbers of his complete works (Gesammelte Werke) and the corresponding subjects of each volume, see [List of Georg Hegel's works](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Georg_Hegel%27s_works).

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=23)**] Published during Hegel's lifetime**

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*Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. J. B. Baillie, 1910; 2nd ed. 1931

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*Science of Logic*, tr. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, 2 vols., 1929; tr. A. V. Miller, 1969

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**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=24)**] Published posthumously**

* [*Lectures on Aesthetics*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectures_on_Aesthetics)
* [*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectures_on_the_Philosophy_of_History) (also translated as *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*) 1837
* [*Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectures_on_Philosophy_of_Religion)
* [*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectures_on_the_History_of_Philosophy)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=25)**] Secondary literature**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=26)**] General introductions**

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**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel&action=edit&section=27)**] Essays**

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* [*Hegel & Haiti* by Susan Buck-Morss, 2000](http://abahlali.org/files/Buck-Morss_Hegel_Haiti.pdf)

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