

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Hegel's Introduction to the System: Encyclopaedia Phenomenology and Psychology by Robert E. WOOD

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contrast, came to believe that his early concern for *Dasein* was but a first step in the more fundamental quest to recover the contemplation of being. In recasting Heidegger as a philosophical anthropologist, Withy largely ignores his late works on fundamental ontology, which would have cast doubt on his anthropocentrism; the last essay she considers was drafted in 1942 (though *Introduction to Metaphysics* was revised and published in 1953). Nonetheless, Withy's book fits into a wider trend among scholars to draw phenomenology back into the human lifeworld and away from the wilds of ontology.

For Heidegger specialists, *Heidegger on Being Uncanny* will undoubtedly prove a welcome addition. As Withy notes, Heidegger's "reliance on uncanniness has been overlooked," despite Jacques Derrida's interest in it. For other scholars, however, including non-Heideggerian readers of this journal, the book's significance may be less apparent. Saying that the uncanny "illuminat[es] something about what it is to be human" is not very enlightening; many topics do just that. The study's significance grows even cloudier when we learn that Heidegger's usage may not have been so novel; as Withy shows, it was not only foreshadowed by Freud's famous analysis, but it also echoed a similar formula in Kant. What, then, do we gain from such a thorough study of a neglected Heideggerian *topos*? Does its conclusion—that the human being is always uneasily and inconclusively seeking after being—move us beyond modern and postmodern debates about the human condition that Heidegger did so much to spur? It may, but an author needs to make the case for significance rather than assume it.—Michael Gubser, *James Madison University*

WOOD, Robert E. *Hegel's Introduction to the System: Encyclopaedia Phenomenology and Psychology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. xi + 210 pp. Cloth, \$60.00; paper, \$24.95—This is a very fine introduction to Hegel's system of philosophy. Unlike so many other commentators on Hegel's work, Robert E. Wood takes seriously Hegel's own suggestions about how one should be initiated into the system. It is well known that Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* was written as a kind of "ladder" by means of which the reader might ascend to the point of view of Hegel's system. Less well known is the fact that Hegel later reformulated some of his central arguments from the *Phenomenology* and reprised them in his *Philosophy of Spirit*, which constitutes the third part of his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. In this book, Wood provides a brief account of Hegel's life and thought, a general overview of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, a new translation of key sections of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, and section-by-section commentary on the newly translated material.

In the first chapter of this book, Wood sets the stage by contextualizing Hegel's life and work. Though the biographical overview is highly condensed, Wood rightly underscores some of the central issues that animated Hegel's philosophical project, including Hegel's concern over a fundamental question: "How must the cosmos be constituted so that the ongoing development of human rationality—in science, technology, government, and art—is possible?" In the next three chapters, Wood provides a summary of each of the three main parts which make up Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*: the *Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and the *Philosophy of Spirit*.

With the fifth chapter of this book, Wood begins to provide his translation and running commentary. The newly translated material is taken from the three subsections which make up the first part—the "Subjective Spirit" part—of Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*. These three subsections are: "Anthropology" (chapter five in Wood's book), "Phenomenology" (chapter six), and "Psychology" (chapter seven). In these three central chapters, Wood has wisely opted to place his section-by-section commentary in close proximity to each translated section upon which it is a commentary. So immediately after providing a section of translated text, Wood provides his commentary on that text; he then goes on to provide the next section of translated text, which again is immediately followed by commentary on that text. With this ordering of text and commentary, the reader is spared the annoyance of having to thumb through several pages in order to move back and forth between translated text and commentary on that text. The book's two final chapters (chapters eight and nine) are dedicated to summarizing (though without any newly translated material) the second and third parts of Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*. These two parts, which follow the "Subjective Spirit" part, are the part on "Objective Spirit" (including the realms of right, morality, and ethical life) and the part on "Absolute Spirit" (including the realms of art, religion, and philosophy).

As Wood rightly notes, Hegel's *Logic* operates as a kind of "onto-logic," providing an account of the conditions not only of what can be thought but also of what can be. Accordingly, the *Logic* "presents the interlocking set of presuppositions for the other two realms" discussed in the *Encyclopaedia*, namely, the realm of Nature and the realm of Spirit. Just as Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* is divided into three main parts (Logic, Nature, and Spirit), so too is Hegel's *Logic* divided into three main parts: the Doctrine of Being, the Doctrine of Essence, and the Doctrine of the Concept. As Wood helpfully explains, the categories of Being pertain to what simply is in its immediacy; the categories of Essence pertain to the difference and relation between what simply is and what manifests itself as the essence of what is; and the categories of the Concept pertain to the unity of what is and what manifests itself insofar as this unity of being and self-manifestation is a comprehensive wholeness which comprehends (*begreift*) itself. The categories of the *Logic* repeat themselves (though at a higher level, so to speak) in the realm of Spirit (in general) and in the

realm of Subjective Spirit (in particular). Accordingly, Wood explains that the three subsections which make up the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit can be correlated with the three main parts of the *Logic*: “Anthropology” (the account of Spirit as it is organically embodied and thus as it is immediately and therefore only implicitly Spirit) corresponds to the logical realm of Being; “Phenomenology” (the account of Spirit as the actualization of subject-object relations as these manifest themselves within consciousness) corresponds to the logical realm of Essence; and “Psychology” (the account of Spirit as the organically-living, conscious, and self-comprehending unity of being and being-for-self) corresponds to the logical realm of the Concept.

Wood’s unique and onto-logically informed approach to Hegel’s system allows him to shed light on a surprisingly wide and rich diversity of philosophical topics (for example, being, knowing, mind or soul, necessity, contingency, materiality and embodiment, life, language, history, sexuality, love, freedom, teleology, habit, family, right, morality, politics, art, religion, God, and goodness) and to uncover the often overlooked interconnectedness of these topics. Wood does an excellent job of showing how Hegel’s thought looks backward by creatively integrating the ideas of earlier thinkers (including Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, and Fichte), but also looks forward insofar as it anticipates the insights of later thinkers (including Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Freud). Wood makes an especially compelling case for the claim that Hegel’s thought on being and knowing is illuminatingly close to Aristotle’s thought on the status of nous which is, “in a way, all things.” For philosophers—whether rookie or veteran—wishing to enhance their appreciation of the breadth, depth, and lasting relevance of Hegel’s system, this is the book to read.—Michael Baur, *Fordham University*