

the reprioritisation of wealth distribution. While all of these might be important concerns, not only should the choice and the context of his examples be considered, so should the connection be strengthened between each overarching section and the book's larger aspirations. This text, then, is best suited for those with particular interests intersecting with Read's, or for those who can make the leap between a belief in the wholeness of philosophy and itemised sketches, or for those who wish to be quixotically reminded as to why philosophy matters. What will come across to all readers is that while philosophy cannot resolve any problems, it can add to our understanding of the problem, and enrich life.

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***Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God***

**G.W.F. Hegel**

**Trans. Peter C. Hodgson**

**Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2007; vi + 213 pages.**

Continuing the ongoing project of the Oxford's *Hegel Lectures Series*, Hodgson has once more rendered an invaluable service to those interested in the philosophy of Hegel by producing a readable, precise and scholarly translation of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*. As is standard with the series, this translation includes marginal pagination referring to Jaeschke's critical edition of the German text, editorial footnotes that point to relevant passages in Hegel's other works, and a translation glossary. Hodgson has also provided a substantial editorial introduction to the text, including a lengthy summary of each lecture and the supplementary passages from a manuscript fragment on the cosmological proof and material from Hegel's 1831 lectures on the teleological and ontological proofs respectively.

The significance of this book is partly reinforced by the fact that only three days before his death Hegel signed a contract to produce a book entitled *Über das Dasein Gottes*. (1) Hodgson claims, following Jaeschke and Marheineke, that the 1829 manuscript of Hegel's lectures on the proofs essentially constitutes a draft of that projected work. (2) Given that Hegel may with some justice be said to have published only

two books in his lifetime (the *Encyclopaedia* and *Philosophy of Right* being essentially outlines for his lectures), one would think that the present translation would be greeted with substantial interest. Unfortunately, and I think mistakenly, it shall likely be overlooked.

A large part of the success of the *Hegel Lectures Series* can be attributed to the fact that the early editions of Hegel's lectures were constructed from a pool of manuscripts and student notes from lecture series delivered sometimes decades apart. The new critical editions of Hegel's lectures have at last given us the ability to examine Hegel's lectures individually so as to trace the development and changes in his approach and presentation. It is thus, ironically, unfortunate that the present manuscript, far from suffering at the hands of Hegel's original editors, was left intact to such a degree that Jaeschke's critical edition of the manuscript and appended material is, apart from a few rather insignificant changes, essentially a reproduction of the same material from the 1832 edition of Hegel's *Werke*. (4) Consequently, Hodgson was able to use the 1895 Speirs and Sanderson translation of the *Proofs* in the old *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* "as a starting point for what hopefully is [and indeed is] a much more precise and readable version." (4) Given, then, that none of the material presented in this translation is exactly "new" and that the old translation or Hodgson's summary of the lectures may easily be consulted by those interested in gaining a rough understanding of their content, I shall use the remainder of this review to argue for the significance of the present text by attempting to provide at least a plausible answer to the following question: why, at the age of sixty-one, would Hegel commit himself to writing his third, and what he must have suspected would be his last, book on the much maligned proofs for God's existence?

To answer this question we must turn to the last years of Hegel's life. Although at the peak of his career, these years were fraught with worries and dangers. Attacked from the left and right, Hegel was accused of both Christian nationalistic conservatism and atheistic liberalism. Such issues, moreover, were not merely of external concern, for Hegel's own students tended in these contrary directions of interpretation, as one sees from the letters of Daub and Feuerbach who read Hegel as a panlogist and atheist respectively. The Hegelian middle was thus already showing its cracks while, contrary to his pronouncement in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel had come in his later years to regard philosophy as

the province of a few, an esoteric study that had no immediate effects in the world. Hegel's philosophical system however, insofar as it is essentially historical, presupposed as its ground the implicitly reconciled rational state and religious community. The final blow thus arrived when the July Revolution in France appeared, on Hegel's own interpretation, to signal the collapse of the rational state and a turn in Europe to the sort of democratic regimes which he had always regarded with deep suspicion.

Although Hegel was eventually able to disabuse Daub of the panlogist interpretation of the system, Daub remarked that such interpretations would persist until Hegel published his *Philosophy of Natural Science*. One might indeed suspect that misinterpretations would persist until Hegel managed to publish his complete system of science, including most especially an elaboration of the final three sections of the *Philosophy of Spirit* with its complex syllogisms of the system, and at last provided an account of the relation between and transitions amongst the moments of the system. Yet given the trouble that revising, much less writing, the *Science of Logic* had caused him and the sheer breadth of information and topics covered in his supplementary lectures, one may reasonably suspect that, at the age of sixty-one and with failing health, Hegel could not see himself completing this monumental task. Instead he decided to write on the proofs of God's existence. While we may not be certain of the final form that such a work would have taken if Hegel had lived, a careful examination of these lectures provides tantalizing clues as to why Hegel would choose this topic for his last book.

On the surface these lectures would seem to be merely marginal in the system, tucked away as a footnote in either the philosophy of religion or history of philosophy. In 1829, however, Hegel claimed that he had chosen to speak on the proofs because he wanted to teach on an individual topic and had "chosen a topic that is connected with the other lectures given on logic." (37) One will thus find in these lectures quite useful elaborations of some of Hegel's central logical categories, including a long discussion of the relation between possibility and actuality. The virtue of Hodgson's careful and consistent translation of Hegel's terminology should thus be obvious, and those interested in the *Logic* will find much of value here. Of course, Hegel repeatedly insisted on a close tie between the *Logic* and *Philosophy of Religion* and indeed repeatedly claimed that his system and the revealed religion were essentially identical in content and differed only in form. Leaving aside the troubling as-

pect of that claim given Hegel's explanation of the relation between these categories in the *Logic*, and even taking into account his obvious interest in claiming religious orthodoxy given the constant threats of censorship, it is still difficult to see why Hegel would dedicate his final work to the proofs of God's existence, especially if it would merely serve as a somewhat loose mapping of these proofs onto various categories in his *Science of Logic*. Hegel's characterisation of the proofs in the course of the 1829 lecture, however, points to a much broader and more ambitious conception of their significance. Hegel's plan in these lectures, only partially carried through, was to treat the cosmological, teleological and ontological proofs successively. While the first proof followed the path of necessity, the second followed the path of purposiveness and freedom. (170) The third and final ontological proof, transformed and reconceived in accordance with Hegel's speculative dialectical method and concepts, was taken by him as the last proof, but such that, as the identity of concept and object in the absolute, it comprehended the other two proofs as moments of itself and its own self-comprehension in otherness. This characterisation of the proofs is neither benign nor accidental, for Hegel uses precisely the same terms to characterise the final three syllogisms of the system in the *Philosophy of Spirit*.

What I am suggesting, then, is that Hegel's final work on the proofs was planned as an attempt to explain the entire logic of his philosophical system and the relation of its moments in a manner that was at once esoteric and exoteric. On the one hand, the proofs provided Hegel with an opportunity to explain and defend the central categories of, and connections between, the three parts of the system and thereby defend himself against the misinterpretations of the so-called left and right Hegelians. On the other hand, Hegel had always used the presuppositions of Christian religious consciousness to gain a foothold with those who were not yet initiated in his system, and this approach had met with a good deal of success in his highly popular lectures on religion. Could it be that in his final days Hegel had once more become confident that philosophy could become the externally universal form of consciousness (a change perhaps already announced in Hegel's poem to Stielglitz on August 27, 1831)?

If I am correct, then these lectures would have formed the basis for what would have been Hegel's crowning achievement. I thus sincerely hope that Hodgson's new translation will convince scholars to reconsider this neglected manuscript.

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***Philosophy and the City: Classic to Contemporary Writings***

**Edited by Sharon M. Meagher**

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Like feminist philosophy, environmental philosophy, and philosophical approaches to racism before it, urban philosophy has found it difficult to gain entrance to the canon of philosophical fields in university curricula and scholarly publications. However, unlike these groundbreaking efforts—erstwhile, and still in some quarters, considered offbeat if not philosophically unrespectable—philosophical treatment of things urban may be found in the works of mainstream philosophers dating from Plato and Aristotle and continuing through Augustine to Francis Bacon, then Walter Benjamin, John Dewey, and most recently interventions by Habermas, Foucault, and Iris Young, among others.

If, moreover, More, Campanella, Fourier, and other classic utopians are considered philosophers and if one counts philosophically informed sociologists, planners, and architectural theorists (for instance, George Simmel, Louis Wirth, Henri Lefebvre, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, Richard Sennett, Manfredo Tafuri), there is certainly enough material to constitute an already existing philosophical tradition. That it has not been so recognised likely derives in part from the unavoidable interdisciplinarity of any study of the subject. It may also be that just as philosophers have tended to think of themselves as disembodied thinkers, so they have regarded the origins of their wisdom as deriving, if not from nowhere but themselves, then just from the ideas of prior philosophers or perhaps from university-based “schools” of thought, but not from their situation within specific urban environments.

This collection of readings both reflects and aims to promote relatively new interest in cities by contemporary philosophers. It is composed of 40 excerpts from classic and recent books and articles, includ-