

*The Philosophy of Hegel.* By G. R. G. MURE. Home University Library, 255. (London : Oxford University Press. 1965. Pp. x + 213. Price 12s 6d).

This is Mr. Mure's third book on Hegel, and its publication in The Home University Library suggests that it is intended for a wider audience than *An Introduction to Hegel* (1940) and *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (1950). But the volume is disappointing.

There are a great many footnotes, but no references to Hegel's works to support quotations, paraphrases, or interpretations. Nor is there any discussion of rival interpretations. Most of the footnotes either contain observations that might better have been included in the text, or consist of cross-references to other parts of the book. It is not unusual to be told in a footnote on p. 55, " Cp. p. 53 above ". The over-all impression is one of being caught in a closed system that is often extremely obscure : one feels like escaping into Hegel's own writings to see if the original texts might not be clearer ; but any such recourse has been made extremely difficult.

The title of the first chapter, ' The Principles of the System,' perpetuates the notion that Hegel's philosophy is essentially a system. There are ample grounds for seeing Hegel differently. His two greatest works—indeed, in a sense his only two books—the *Phenomenology* (1807) and the *Science of Logic* (3 vols., 1812, 1813, 1816) were written before he became a professor and published a system in syllabus form : the *Encyclopaedia* of 1817. In 1821 he published, also in syllabus form, his *Philosophy of Right*, and in 1827 and 1830 a second and third edition of his *Encyclopaedia*, both radically revised. These later works were intended not so much to be read as " For Use in Connection with His Lectures," as the title pages proclaim explicitly. Moreover, the system of 1827 is virtually a new work, and that of 1830 differs at thousands of points from the second edition.

Now it might seem that theism, idealism, the unity of thought and being, negation, truth and falsity, and dialectic—the subheads of Mure's first chapter—are for all that central themes that deserve to be clarified at the outset. But they are hardly clarified, and this non-developmental approach is alien to Hegel's own approach and recommendations. Nor is any effort made to link Hegel's philosophy to twentieth-century movements. The author seems to find existentialism and Marxism, as well as analytical philosophy, too repugnant. Yet, one can hardly doubt that if Hegel were alive today he would make every effort to link his own concerns to those of the age, if only polemically. While that does not necessarily place an interpreter under any obligation to do likewise, especially in a very short book, the total absence of all such efforts helps to reinforce the sense that one is caught in a closed world, with no exit.

I have emphasized major limitations of the book instead of taking issue with individual points, because a brief review affords no space for detailed arguments. A few errors, however, can be corrected summarily. We are offered the old adage that " Karl Marx . . . claimed, justly, to have ' stood Hegel on his head ' " (p. 32), although Marx claimed, of course, that Hegel had stood man on his head. That Hegel uses the terminology of " thesis-antithesis-synthesis " (p. 34) " far less often than most of his followers " is a curious way of saying that he does not use it at all. And that in " *The Positivity of the Christian Religion*, Christianity compares not over-favourably with . . . Hellenism " (p. 44) may henceforth be considered a paradigm case of understatement. Hegel's words, " The Emperor—this world soul—I saw riding through the city . . ." become " I have seen the *Zeitgeist* on horse-back " (98), which leads one to wonder whether other quotations, complete with German terms, are also offered from memory. Hegel's *Veränderlichkeit*, a common German word meaning changeableness, variability, fickleness, becomes " Othering " (p. 117). Even the old chestnut that Hegel called the state " the march of God in the world " is served up again (p. 169). And we are told that Socrates fought at Marathon (p. 179), as if he had not been born over twenty years after that battle.

Such minor points are easier to nail down than such expositions as " Crime logically demands punishment, and with punishment of crime, in which abstract right culminates, morality of conscience emerges " (p. 166). This is much less obscure than most of Mure's exposition, but it does not help much if one wonders whether crime does indeed logically demand punishment, or what the next two clauses mean. It is the same when we are told very clearly, five pages later, that " Bride and groom contract to yield up their personalities . . ." Do they? If Mure meant to ridicule Hegel, such passages would pose less problems ; but he admires Hegel and fails to furnish us with grounds for sharing his admiration.

For all these faults, the book is much more scholarly than most previous British studies of Hegel. It is odd that a nation so pre-eminent in classical scholarship should have been satisfied so far with infinitely lower standards of accuracy in the field of German philosophy after Kant.

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