

Hegel's Psychology

Hegel and Mind. Rethinking Philosophical Psychology, by Richard Dien Winfield, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 184 pp., \$85.00 (hardcover).

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This is only the second book-length treatment of Hegel's *Psychology* in English ever published. Although the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* was translated into English in 1894, it was not until 1971 that the explanatory notes provided posthumously by Hegel's students were translated. But by this time, the intellectual fad around Hegel's *Phenomenology* was swamping Hegel scholarship, and the profound and complex structure of the Mind presented in Hegel's mature works has been completely ignored.

Winfield's very readable book aims to introduce Hegel's conception of mind into the contemporary discourse of "philosophy of mind," currently dominated by analytical philosophy. As such his efforts are to be applauded. On the other hand, Winfield shares the assumption of analytical philosophy that mind is something going on within the body, if not the brain cavity, and this does detract from the value of the book.

Nonetheless, cultural-historical activity theory has its roots in Hegel, and a readable exposition of Hegel's psychology is something every one of us should have an interest in.

Winfield shows that Hegel saw the mind as a three-level process, the levels Winfield names Psyche, Consciousness, and Intelligence. The Psyche is the immediate neurophysiological processes mediating the organism's interactions with its environment. By becoming habituated to repeated stimuli and forming habits, the organism distances itself from the barrage of stimuli, with the remaining stimuli standing out in relief as Sensations.

The basic unit of Consciousness are Sensations, which Consciousness takes as pointing to objects having their own independent unity. Whereas the Psyche has no awareness of objectivity or subjectivity, Consciousness takes its objects as belonging to an objective world. Through participation in a division of labour, Consciousness becomes *self*-conscious but still regards the difference between subject and object as absolute. However, in coming to see the objectivity of its own subjectivity and the subjectivity of its objects, Consciousness attains universal self-consciousness. This lays the basis for Intelligence, thinking as such, the objects of which are both subjective and objective.

Intelligence is initially prelinguistic, but through a series of transformations in which images come to act as signs, signs build up a network of associations, then become detached from the

original images and intuitions from which they evolved, and language is formed. Hegel holds that all words represent generalisations, and in fact the Intellect cannot represent individuals at all. Individuals can only be thought through the particularisation of universals.

Concepts are the basic units of the intellect, and the same concepts are the basic units of the formations of consciousness (social formations) in which the individual participates. The Self, then, is a concept, not *like* a concept, but a concrete concept, just like the forms of social practice in which an individual participates.

Readers will doubtless see intriguing points of contact with Vygotsky and Leont'ev's ideas of psychology. But these connections have never been fully explored. Winfield's book is a stimulus for such an exploration.