

"Thinking as 21st Century Hegel is simply a volume about what thinking means today. So it is not a book for specialists but a book for everyone who seriously wants to think!" - Slavoj Žižek

# ***ENTER THE ALIEN: THINKING AS 21ST CENTURY HEGEL***



**Foreword, Conclusion:** Cadell Last  
**Introduction:** Alexander Bard  
**Edited:** Daniel Garner, Cadell Last  
**Articles:** Philosophy Portal PoS Class of 2022.



**PHILOSOPHY  
PORTAL BOOKS**



*ENTER THE ALIEN:*  
THINKING AS 21ST  
CENTURY HEGEL

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**PHILOSOPHY PORTAL BOOKS**





*For Absolute Knowers.*



"I'm not comparing myself with Hegel, but at least at some level, we have something in common. Are people aware that when *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's masterpiece, when it first appeared, it was dismissed by many critics as a totally confused work, where Hegel jumps from one to another example, mixing culture, religion, history, philosophical, logical, psychological, scientific ideas, as a totally confused mixture, and so on. So there is already something of jumping from one example to another, in Hegel's way of thinking. In this sense, I don't think that bringing aliens into it, is really to bring in something strange to Hegel. Hegel is the big alien of modern philosophy. Literally. I mean, it's almost a doxa of contemporary philosophy, 19th century onwards, to define yourself through a distance to Hegel. It's as if we are all still post-Hegelians, in the sense that all versions of modern philosophy, are some kind of reversal of Hegel. Like against Hegelian idealism you emphasise concrete life, against rationalism, you emphasise the irrationality of life, whatever. It is almost as if contemporary philosophy is anti-Hegelian, which of course, I find suspicious, in the sense that, why do we all need Hegel, why do we build this monster, Hegel?"

Slavoj Žižek





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“The collective work *Enter the Alien: Thinking 21st Century Hegel* is an extraordinary achievement. Instead of interpreting Hegel from a safe historical distance and judging what is still alive in his work, it treats Hegel as our contemporary, as a philosopher whose time has finally come today. And it is a profoundly Communist work: a collective endeavour in which the new picture of Hegel emerges through the interaction of multiple individual interventions. For this reason, the volume should be read (at least) two times, so that one is able to grasp how the meaning of a single text is affected by what precedes and by what follows. It is thus one of those rare works which are ‘Hegelian’ already in its form. *Thinking as 21st Century Hegel* is simply a volume about what thinking means today. So it is not a book for specialists but a book for everyone who seriously wants to think!”

Slavoj Žižek (August 25, 2022)



## **Note on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit***

Cadell Last

G.W.F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is one of the strangest philosophical texts ever written. It is not even so clear that the book is to be interpreted so much as Hegel's own philosophical thought, as in the development of his own philosophical stance in relation to the history of philosophical thought, as such (for this we should rather turn to the *Science of Logic*). The book rather functions like a necessary reflexive introduction to the structure of Spirit in the modern world, a Spirit that finds itself in the historical moment of Science. For Hegel, it was not enough that Spirit accommodate itself to Science, it was also necessary that Science accommodate itself to Spirit. What was meant by this accommodation was the in-depth raising to conscious awareness of the work of historical spirit up to this point in the historical drama, and the way in which this work recapitulated itself as a developmental process in every newborn spirit. That is to say that the shapes of consciousness which structure the narrative-arc of the *Phenomenology*—Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, Spirit, Religion, Absolute Knowing—were shapes that had to be lived out by every newborn Spirit. For example, a Spirit who had matured his or her self-notion on the level of Self-Consciousness (becoming entangled in desires for recognition), or for a Spirit who had matured his or her self-notion on the level of Reason (attempting to mediate an understanding of matter and mind), it was not enough for this spirit to then assume the position of Absolute Knowing and take into its historical control the tools and powers of modern Science. What was rather necessary, for Hegel, was that the scientific society of the modern world organise itself in such a way that Spirit was also aware of the necessity to mature its self-notion as Spirit, that is to cultivate itself as virtuous substance, becoming aware of the inner battle of good-evil that runs along the lines of every heart; and also that Spirit become aware of the necessity to mature its self-notion

as Religion, that is to cultivate itself as a leader of a real-living community. Only after the spirit had internalised the spiritual work of Self-Consciousness, Reason, Spirit, and Religion, could it then assume the position of Absolute Knowing, and be properly positioned in relation to the tools and powers of modern Science. In this way, the *Phenomenology* is not a foundation for modern Science (as Hegel makes so clear in the *Preface*), but rather a precondition for modern Science as such in the historical drama constituted by Spirit.

This meditation necessarily leads me to reflecting on my own position in the Phenomenological Drama. As a leader of the Philosophy Portal course attempting to teach the *Phenomenology* to the next generation of Spirit, I must be aware of my position in the drama, of the inner work that I have recapitulated inside myself, since this will necessarily impact the way I perceive, understand, and teach the materials in Reason. I should state that, for me, I am not teaching this text as a typical university professor would teach it. That is to say, I am not teaching this text on an annual routine, as a demand or a requirement from a university body to repeat the same materials year after year. I am teaching this text for the first time, in the context of my own life drive, and as a necessity of my drive to better understand the way in which Spirit recapitulates the drama of spiritual history inside itself. I may never teach this text again. Or, I may teach this text again, at a later moment of my spiritual development, where I feel that my position in the historical drama would allow me to offer a new perspective on the book, which I was not able to offer the first time around. With that being said, insofar as I am aware of my self-notion as a historical process, I would say that I primarily locate my own Spirit in the tension between the Spiritual and the Religious layer of the Historical Idea. I would specifically locate my historical self as having moved through the vicissitudes of the capacity for sense-understanding (i.e. my first years of existence as Consciousness), the desire for

recognition (i.e. my maturation as a young teen and and a young adult seeking adult approval and encouragement), mapping of rational cognition (i.e. generating structures of the understanding of both matter and mind, the external cosmos and the inner psyche), and also cultivating in myself a virtuous substance from the real-life antagonisms of pathos (i.e. sexual difference and intellectual community). Where I perhaps have yet to unfold my spiritual journey is on the level of the Religious Idea, that is on the level of the spiritual community that is attempting to hold the intensities and tensions of the heart as such, which could appear in the formation of family-building, as it does in Hegel's chapter on Spirit, or in a larger sense, in the formation of a real spiritual community dedicated to the heart's highest Being, as it does in Hegel's chapter on Religion.

With that being said, I do believe that I have some contact with what Hegel refers to as Absolute Knowing, which is beyond Religion, since the strangest thing about Absolute Knowing is the fact that you are always-already it, even if the developmental unfolding of the notional shapes is also necessary to reach and become (this simple notion that I am). Consequently, I do believe I was able to offer the students of the Philosophy Portal a deep insight into the nature of both Religion and Absolute Knowing. However, and at the same time, my simple self notion has perhaps not touched the concrete dimensions of the Religious Idea that I will necessarily have to confront in the years or perhaps decades to come. From this perspective, it is entirely possible that, in a few decades' time, I will revisit/repeat the *Phenomenology* with new eyes and prove able to offer a new perspective on its role in the historical drama. For now, I will only add that I have found the *Phenomenology* to be uniquely valuable for my process of coming-to-be a matured Spirit capable of interpreting the control and power in our collective hands in the age of Science. I also found the *Phenomenology* to be a terribly misunderstood and misapplied text in the context of the contemporary academic or

intellectual world, where it seems many people run around on the level of Self-Consciousness (desire for recognition) and Reason (external cognitive mapping, whether of cosmos or mind), without the slightest clue as to the Spiritual and Religious dimensions of the Phenomenological Drama, which are often played out unconsciously and often distort the reality of the “objective” scientific practices which are posited as taking place in their care. I have no illusions that my work here, or that any collective work, could establish the *Phenomenology* as a universal ground for spiritual becoming in the age of Science or a necessary prerequisite for a real matured Philosophical Science. In other words, there is a genuine need to open a post-Hegelian space, a space that I intuit through the lens of figures like Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Slavoj Žižek. Recall Žižek’s essential remarks at a key moment of his masterpiece, *Less Than Nothing* (p. 503-4):

“Once we have entered the Freudo-Kierkegaardian world of pure repetition, [...] can we forget about Hegel? [...] Paradoxically and unexpectedly, [this] brings us back to the topic of *Aufhebung*, this time applied to the very relationship between Hegel and his post-Hegelian “repetition”[.] Deleuze once characterised his own thought as an essay in thinking as if Hegel had not existed, repeatedly making the point that Hegel was a philosopher who should be simply ignored, not-worked through. What Deleuze missed was how his own thought of pure repetition only works as a weird sublation of Hegel. In this exemplary last revenge of Hegel, the great Hegelian motif of the path towards truth being part of the truth—of how, in order to arrive at the right choice, one has to begin with the wrong choice—reasserts itself. The point is not so much that we should *not* ignore Hegel, but that we can only afford to ignore him after a long and arduous working-through-Hegel.

The time has thus come to *repeat Hegel*.”

Thus I do think that efforts in this direction, that of establishing *Phenomenology* as a type of “universal working-through”, could provide a great deal of collective insight as our world becomes transformed by the efforts of a (mostly) subjectless scientism. If



there is a single lesson here, it is that Thought and Being are unified as a process, not separated by a Kantian chasm of inner (transcendental) subjects and external (noumenal) objects. Consequently, for Hegel, it is only when Thought raises its notion to virtuous and ethical substance, through real spiritual work towards authoritative leadership of community, won by its own experiential knowledge, that we will have a world where Science has accommodated itself to Spirit, as opposed to our current situation, where a disoriented Spirit must constantly accommodate itself to a form of Science that is (mostly, and conveniently) disinterested in the common day-to-day life of Spirit. With this working-thought, the Thought of Spirit has a better chance of knowing Being in truth, for the simple fact that the truth is not an external thing which already pre-exists or remains unchanged by our development, it is rather something in which our development is implicated as an integral part of the process. No wonder the first great thinkers of the post-Hegelian era bring us face to face with existentialism (Kierkegaard), political-economy (Marx), heights of becoming (Nietzsche), psychological symptoms (Freud), and the peculiarity of being human (Heidegger). In a Žižekian move affirming pure-repetition as a weird sublation of Hegel, this anthology does, I think, help us think of existentialism, political-economy, heights of becoming, psychological symptoms, and the peculiarity of being human, for Spirit today.

Cadell Last

*Cadell Last*

August 19 2022

## Editor's Note

Daniel Garner

Anthologies emerge from the labours of many minds, but if it reads like a juxtaposition of radically distinct voices, the reading experience can be disjointed. At the same time, an anthology betrays itself if it does not allow each individual voice and style to manifest, presenting the editors with a unique challenge. In this collection, we have worked to find a middle ground between a harmonious reading experience and making space for the unique style of each contributor, and our goal has been for the reading experience to not feel like “a *collection* of voices” but rather like “a *community* of people”. All of the contributions are talking *together*, with each building upon the other, but not in a manner that suggests conformity. As editors, our hope is that reading this anthology feels like listening to music, a harmony of parts.

Hegel is a famously difficult philosopher, and there is often no easy way to say what Hegel hoped to share. It is hard to imagine how Hegel's mind worked to be the source of what Alexander Bard calls “The Hegel Event”, but there is no doubt that Hegel's mind was constantly racing from one edge of the universe to the next, trying to gather up everything he glimpsed into texts that could be passed down through the generations. If a climber's goal is to explain to a friend the mountain he or she climbed, little will be captured if the friend brings back to the friend a rock, and if the climber displays a photograph, the image is two-dimensional and itself cannot be climbed. Really *getting* the mountain requires somehow bringing to the friend the experience of climbing itself (perhaps by taking the friend to a smaller mountain nearby), but the experience of climbing will still be unavoidably arduous and exhausting. Similarly, for thinkers to help readers really *get* Hegel, some of Hegel's

difficulty and challenge must be faced. This is inevitable, and as editors it can be hard to judge when reflections on Hegel are as clear and simple as possible (without sacrificing Hegel's philosophy) and when more simplification and clarity might be possible. As editors, we have attempted to maintain this balance, but we also ask readers to not give up when difficulty is encountered. Climbing a mountain is hard, but the view from the summit is not possible at the base.

As with "Events", when it comes to Hegel, instead of moving pieces on a checkerboard, it's as if the board suddenly transforms into chess, and in such a manner that players realise they were never playing checkers in the first place. When essence is changed, everything changes, and that includes the language used to describe everything. "Ontology" and "epistemology", for example, terms which are already difficult and hefty in themselves, suddenly become "ontoepistemology", and terms like "being", "nothing", and "becoming" are rendered meaningless and even dangerous when discussed autonomously, independent of one another. Classic notions of philosophy must suddenly always be submitted to a dialectic, and yet our brains are naturally linear, which means we do not "naturally" think dialectically, which suggests we cannot naturally understand Hegel. It is not impossible, but it is not natural, which is why it is suggested that readers let the works in this anthology "wash over them": if something is difficult to understand, readers shouldn't get stuck and stop, but instead keep moving forward. Up ahead, readers can find themselves suddenly understanding what came before, a comprehension that required advancing in the journey to understand its steps. In this way, the anthology might match the structure of Hegel's *Phenomenology* itself, where it is from Absolute Knowing that the meaning of the whole can be grasped as "always already" present in each and every movement.

Like Hegel's masterpiece, we believe that readers will be rewarded for reading all the essays, and that the whole of the collection will uniquely unveil attributes and

implications for each of its parts. This isn't to say the whole is greater than the parts, but that solos in the middle of a symphony can strike us in ways that an unaccompanied performance cannot. Sometimes a "solo performance" is best, but we believe that, when it comes to Hegel, an anthology of many different voices and concerns is an invaluable approach. This brings to mind a famous passage from *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens, which entails a phrase that almost ended up the title of T.S. Eliot's most famous poem:

"[...] I do love a newspaper. You mightn't think it, but Sloppy is a beautiful reader of a newspaper. He do the Police in different voices."

"We do Hegel in different voices"—the last sentence of Dickens describes what this anthology hopes to accomplish, precisely because Hegel himself seems like a collection of "different voices". This makes sense, seeing as Hegel was the father of the dialectic, which fundamentally requires difference. On this point, a conversation between Shakespeare and God, found in *Everything and Nothing* by Jorge Luis Borges, also comes to mind:

"The story goes that shortly before or after [Shakespeare's] death, when he found himself in the presence of God, he said: 'I who have been so many men in vain want to be one man only, myself.' The voice of God answered him out of a whirlwind: 'Neither am I what I am. I dreamed the world the way you dreamt your plays, dear Shakespeare. You are one of the shapes of my dreams: like me, you are everything and nothing.'"

In Hegel, we find everything and nothing, a collection of voices that can vanish as soon as we try to capture them in a single tone, and thus why we speak Hegel so diversely across these essays. We hope for this anthology to leave readers with the impression that Hegel shares an "image and likeness" with Shakespeare, that Hegel cannot be escaped. Hegel dreamed us, and here we strive to honour him by being the nothing in the dialectic in which he is everything.

## Author Bios, Article Summaries, Acknowledgements

*Phenomenology of Spirit*, Philosophy Portal Class 2022

**Alexander Bard**—is a philosopher, music producer, and a political and religious activist, based in Stockholm, Sweden. Bard has co-authored five books (working on a sixth) with Jan Soderqvist, including “Syntheism—Creating God in the Internet Age” and “Digital Libido—Sex, Power and Violence”, while he is also co-authoring a book with Cadell Last on the dialectical brotherhood between Hegel and Nietzsche.

**Introduction: The Hegel Event**—There is a massive shift in Western Philosophy between Kant and Hegel and we live with the dramatic consequences ever since. Hegel’s process philosophy places project prior to subject and object, thereby dissolving Western dualism into one processual whole. Hegel does so by completing the dialectical method with the concept of negation as the bridge from abstract chaos to concrete order. We ought to honour his impressive achievement by referring to Hegel’s own project as “The Hegel Event”, fully aware that we are now the subjects living with the consequences.

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**Chetan Anand**—is a doctoral researcher at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is currently doing an ethnographic study of a slum in Delhi, exploring questions of state, marginality, and education.’ His research interests in Philosophy lie at the intersection of the contradictions between psychoanalysis and biopolitics.

**Chapter 1: Meditations on Self-Consciousness in Hegel**—This paper is a meditation on thinking the section “Self-Consciousness” of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (POS) through the contradictions of theory and practice. Contradiction between theory and practice is captured through the tendency in theory and practice to develop a totalising relationship with each other, where one completely dominates. This paper then articulates the movement from “Consciousness” to “Self-Consciousness” in POS through knowing the world without relation with the world to knowing the world in relation to it. Hegel’s own relationship with this transition is problematised. It is shown that this contradiction between these two modes of knowing, far from being solved in

Hegel, actually come to the fore in Hegel's writing itself. This contradiction that becomes visible in Hegel subsequently becomes visible in social sciences in 20<sup>th</sup> century sociology and anthropology which Bourdieu's writings and his struggle with philosophy bring out. A way forward from these fissures is developed through thinking Hegel's notion of negativity alongside development of intensive dimension from Kant to Deleuze. Theory then is conceptualised as a way to track this intensive dimension. Intensity, as far as it is separate from both quantity and quality and finds its ground in our ability to think multiplicity, not just through indifference but through an affirmation of the world, is explored as that force that shapes our world without completely becoming present to the world. Thus, this affirmation is an affirmation of the tension between theory and practice without seeking any prior guarantee from either of them. It's an affirmation of the constitutive negative force that constitutes the theory-practice divide itself, and it is then thinking multiplicity in this light and its relationship with politics that is explored. Here, the common critique of Hegel, that dialectics eventually ends up making the world an homogenous entity, is countered by exploring a counter-tendency of dialectics through its constitutive negative dimension, where heterogeneity itself can be the ground of our ability to affirm the world.

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**Quinn Whelehan**—is a student of philosophy as a theoretical, spiritual, and artistic practice. He is interested in bringing Buddhism, Psychoanalysis, and Western Philosophy into dialogue to approach the intimate questions, paradoxes, and possibilities of the digital 21st century.

**Chapter 2: Hegel, Mahayana Buddhism, and the Becoming of Spirit**—This essay brings together Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, with a focus on Nāgārjuna's dialectical form, with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, investigating where they overlap in their emphasis on the negation of fixed abstractions and symbolic death, and where they diverge in relation to contradiction, presuppositions, and overall logical structure. It attempts to highlight that what is absent in Mahayana philosophy and Nāgārjuna's logical form is the dimension of becoming and an understanding of the negation of the negation in its position articulation. It proposes that becoming as the third term in the dichotomies explored in the paper, form-emptiness (Śūnyatā), thought-being, and unity/non-duality-duality (non-duality), is the expression of their living dialectical movement within time. It then examines the deeper implications of understanding non-duality and śūnyatā through the Hegelian axiom of substance as subject (A=B) as the process of becoming and concludes by pointing towards the possibility of a

philosophical "Science of Spirit" suitable for the technological and alien horizon of the 21st century.

"I would like to thank Thiago Leão for inspiring and encouraging my interest in philosophy and for his mentorship over the years. Thank you to Cadell Last for the transformative course and the opportunity to contribute to this Anthology. And a special thank you to my fellow students for the rich and spirited discussions and friendship."

**Connect with Quinn:** tqwheels@gmail.com

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**Dimitri Crooijmans**—is a Tantric Spirit Scientist attempting to apply the method of Spirit Science, in his concrete life, on the level of Sutra and Tantra. In this way, he seeks to broaden and deepen the journey to self-knowing, which is why he draws much inspiration from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as one of his most dearly held spiritual guidebooks.

**Chapter 3: Hegelian Tantra**—This is my attempt at thinking the real of the Sexual-Tantric Realm provided by The New Tantra school from a perspective of a young Spirit working through Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I argue that Hegel's Science of Spirit can provide a useful method accompanying a subject on his pursuit to spiritual self-knowing, or Absolute Knowing. Using psychoanalysis, the paper begins by explaining the importance of both Sutra and Tantra and their distinguishing. It precedes to explicate the Science of Spirit and continues with speculations of my Tantric philosophy, ending with thoughts on the Non-Relation in regards to Tantric spiritual practice and the impasse of the religious layer, of which Spirit Science is the beyond.

"I would like to thank my philosophical teachers, Cadell Last and Alexander Bard; my Tantric teachers, including Sophia Loren, Diesel, Paris, and Konstantin; my Tantric friends, Double Trouble, Pimp Daddy, Tyler Durden, and Kinky Bell; my mother and father, Garrett Paul, Isaac van Son, Demi Al Alfi, and the rest of my family and friends for keeping me going in these exciting, intense, fast-paced, and tumultuous times."

**Connect with Dimitri:** <https://actualspirit.xyz/>

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**Max Macken**—is from Dublin Ireland, graduated from Trinity College Dublin with a philosophy degree in 2021, and is currently studying Data Analysis and Artificial Intelligence. He is particularly interested in the history of Post-Kantian German and French Philosophy, Philosophy of Social and Personal Identity, in particular multiculturalism, and also Philosophy of Technology.

**Chapter 4: Hegel's Critique of Kant**—This paper is about understanding the Kantian origins of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I specifically analyse how Kant solves the problem of Hume's skepticism by arguing in favour of an anti-realist paradigm. I then describe Hegel's reading of Kant's solution in the transcendental deduction which, in turn, shows us how Kant's philosophical limiting of human consciousness inspired Hegel to create the *Phenomenology of Spirit* so that human cognition can, in fact, come to know the Absolute.

"I would like to thank Cadell Last, Daniel Garner, Jason Bernstein, and Amanda Faccioli for reading my essay."

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**Jason Bernstein**—his intellectual background is an unfocused mix of philosophy and graphic design. He lives in Queens, New York and is interested in questions surrounding emergence science, the origin of life, art history, comedy, and the philosophy of failure — among various other unprofitable interests. Thankfully, he's a fairly decent cook.

**Chapter 5: Hegel and the Concept of Realism**—Taking ideas from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, my work traces the way in which the concept of Realism — the general philosophical commitment that a thing exists "out there" relative to the mind — can be understood in light of Hegel's Absolute. I look at the way in which Hegel moves beyond Kant's "noumenal" Realism, where the phenomenal world is separated from the more real noumenal world, by critiquing this very separation of thought and being. The unity of this separation, the Absolute, is then in turn contrasted with the noumenon, or the thing-in-itself, through an analysis of the relationship between truth and knowledge, as well as their developments. Ultimately, I show how Hegel complicates the picture of experience and reality by taking into account time and history, the dissolution of the subject/object distinction, and the co-instantiation of the mind and the world. This complication, however, enigmatically serves to clarify the role we play in reality.



**Connect with Jason:** [jason.pm333@gmail.com](mailto:jason.pm333@gmail.com)

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**Baris A**—a thinker who is cultivating his soul’s garden for a life that’s worth living. He babbles mostly and occasionally utters intelligent sentences.

**Chapter 6: Mutual Recognition**—Recognition is a step in Geist’s journey where the individual human transcends biology and becomes subject and a particular coalescence of the universal. It is one of the most important steps in “becoming” human and enables civilization with all that it brings. In this paper, I discuss Hegel’s recognition from the individual subject’s perspective and explicate how a subject is born using the intersubjective psychoanalytic theory of Jessica Benjamin, who was influenced by Hegel’s theory of recognition. Recognition is one of the areas where psychoanalysis melds with philosophy.

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**Raza Ali**—during the course of completing his undergraduate degree in Political Science and Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto, Raza developed an interest in Slavoj Žižek’s work. Žižek opened up the realms of philosophy and psychoanalysis that added the necessary personal depth he found highly neglected in his institutional academic pursuit. Raza is currently traversing Hegel, Lacan, Deleuze, and McLuhan, studying their thought alongside the practice of modern South Asian and New-Age Western Spirituality, as well as trying to integrate their thought into his own life.

**Chapter 7: Perpetuity of the Letter**—Symbolic language is always ontologically a reflection. As a medium, it is a constant prompt. An utterance is sounded in order to bounce back, in whatever manner it might: in communication, recognition, defiance, etc. While the voice is not merely transactional, language always seems to be so. In our transacting, we inherently perpetuate, so much so that language itself becomes the sole world we trans-act or inter-act from and remain within. In this essay, I attempt to trace “abstraction” through its historical-material becoming, with abstraction being the necessary act for there to be processual knowing. This knowing culminates in the formation of the letter, and it is only with the perpetuation of the letter in symbolic language that the self too perpetuates (which, in my view, is the notion of the absolute in “Absolute Knowing”—the simple notion that finally knows itself as notion and takes itself up as simple).

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**James Wisdom**—is a nationally exhibited and world-renowned fine artist, illustrator, and tattooer. He is currently enjoying a thriving art, illustration, and tattooing practice; he is also an educator, scholar, and author. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a specialisation in oil painting from the American Academy of Art and his Master of Fine Arts degree in studio arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In addition to his artistic interests, James has contributed to various publications such as *Ninth Letter*, *Studio Visit Magazine*, and is a contributor to this Anthology of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Philosophy Portal, 2022).

**Chapter 8: A Black Square**—In this paper, I explore Hegel's notion that Art is complete in-itself because Philosophy has disclosed the for-itself of Art's incompleteness through the becoming Absolute Spirit. I will argue for the validity of this thesis through an analysis of the history of iconoclasm, the devotion to icons, and Malevich's Black Square on a White Surface, a painting that presents to the subject the experience of "non-objectivity" through the artifice of abyssal negativity—a zero-point through which the subject must pass, bringing about the space for something new. The "Spirit is Artist" is Hegel's claim of the becoming of Spirit in the Absolute (death). As Artist, Spirit holds together the contradiction of outward appearance and internal essence dialectically, sublating its identity and winning its truth when it finds itself in dismemberment and loses itself in alienation and absolute otherness. Overcoming this is the power of the subject to face negativity by tarring with the negativity of death, "tearing itself asunder", and going through the process of negating the negation, thus realising itself in its relation to the other by relating itself back into itself in the Absolute Spirit of art.

"I am grateful to the ones who helped make this project possible. My contribution to the Anthology of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* emerged from the spirit collaboration, camaraderie, and friendship of peers I found within the course. I want to acknowledge the following collaborators: Max, your enthusiasm was infectious, and your close readings of Hegel's text proved invaluable. Jason, your wit and deep insights into art and Philosophy were influential to me and are a testament to your brilliance. George, your support and love were always timely and much appreciated. Quinn, your work is incredible, and I cannot wait to see what you come up with next. And, Dimitri, I will not forget your kindness, friendship, and encouragement. You helped me during an especially trying time in my life—I love you, man.

I would like to acknowledge Baris Ari and Raza Ali. They were the other two in my peer review triad. It was a pleasure to read your work and receive feedback. Both of you contributed significantly to the final shape of my piece.

Thank you to the other contributors not mentioned in these acknowledgments. Your contributions are appreciated.

A special thank you to Daniel Garner, who worked tirelessly to complete our collaboration's final editing and offered his genius to help me specifically! And last but not least, Dr. Cadell Last, thank you for this incredible course. This experience has had and continues to have a profound impact on the direction and shape of my spirit as a continual process of becoming substance that is also subject, forever striving for absolute knowing."

**Connect with James:** <https://jameswisdom7.academia.edu/>

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**Alex Ebert**—Alex Ebert is an incidental musician and philosopher (among too many other things, incidentally). His interest in Hegelian philosophy began (unbeknownst to him) more than a decade ago, with his development of a peculiar mathematical function (magnetic zeros). Said function is now the centerpiece of his Hegelian philosophy of sublation (freQ theory), and, for better or worse, serves as his platinum-selling band's name.

**Chapter 9: The Sublation of Mathematics**—While Hegel's *Science of Logic* (1812) is, for many, obscurantist, it should be appreciated that Hegel was forced to describe its central theme of transformation—*sublation*—using entirely novel concepts that we may now recognize as: *The real numbers*, *isomorphism*, and *sinusoidal waves*—none of which had been mathematically established yet. Relegated to a speculative language that preceded the advent of these mathematics, Hegel's *sublation* may have remained a philosophical vaguery. Today, however, with these concepts in view, a reexamination of sublation may provide far more distinct and consequential insight into matters of scientific interest than previously thought.

Comparing Hegel's prophetic descriptions of sublation to the real numbers,  $N \rightarrow \infty$  limits, and isomorphism, *sublation* reveals itself to be not only a supple explication of phase transitions and personal transformation, but a revelation of the emergence of

cartesian space itself. While philosophical tradition has long preoccupied itself with problematizing the dichotomy of *being* to *becoming*, *stasis* to *flux*, and *the one* to *the many*, this revised understanding of Hegel's *sublation* shows each to be an emergent property of its opposite.

"I would like to thank William Jones for the tutelage and mathematical insight (I could not have produced this work without it), William Rupush for the generous hints, Cadell Last and Daniel Garner for the conversations, support, and editing, and Alexander Bard for the nasty arguments. I'm forever indebted."

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**Daniel Garner**—is a writer with his wife Michelle under the pen name O.G. Rose, a pen name consisting of Michelle's maiden, middle, and their shared last name. They spent several years working collaboratively with other artists at Eunoia, a creative community they helped develop. The Garners now live on a farm in Virginia, manage a wedding venue, and are also behind the DLG Pattern Method for teaching piano. A finalist for the UNO Press Lab Prize and Pushcart Nominee, their creative works can be found online at The Write Launch, Allegory Ridge, Iowa Review, The William and Mary Review, Toho Journal, West Trade Review, O: JA&L, Burningword, and Broken Pencil, with additional publications being accessible from their website. Their philosophical work can be found on Amazon in *The Conflict of Mind* and their upcoming *Thoughts*.

**Chapter 10: The Absolute Choice**—Hegel's most famous phrase from *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* might also be his most challenging: "What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational." Is Hegel saying that everything real can be understood rationally? It sounds that way, which makes it easy to then interpret Hegel into an Enlightenment tradition that sees the world as a place growing every year in truth, efficiency, and progress. But Dr. Todd McGowan isn't so sure if the phrase means what it seems, and ultimately this leads to "A Tale of Two Hegels," one which I will call the "Rationalist Hegel" and another I'll call the "Absolute Hegel." In the first, we are led to believe "the true is the rational" ( $A=A$ ) while in the second we glimpse how "the true isn't the rational" ( $A=B$ ). Ultimately, we ourselves must choose in our daily lives how we think truth and rationality relate, and yet the very need to make this choice might suggest something Absolute.

"I would like to thank Dr. Cadell Last for the opportunity to join him as co-editor in this project and for being my friend. Working and thinking alongside Cadell is one of my greatest joys, and he has taught me much not only about philosophy but also about

living up to the challenge of being human. Philosophy and life should never be separated, and in Cadell's life is found wise and wisdom alive."

**Connect with Daniel:** [www.ogrose.com](http://www.ogrose.com)

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**Cadell Last**—is a philosopher with a background in anthropology, history, and complexity studies. After completing his doctoral thesis focused on an attempt to understand evolutionary anthropology in light of contemporary speculative futures of technology singularity — *Global Brain Singularity* — he focused on reviving and reconnecting science to modern (post-Kantian) philosophy, with an emphasis on the work of G.W.F. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, as well as contemporary engagement with the Slovenian School (Žižek, Zupancic, Dolar). This work is presently being extended and expanded through Philosophy Portal. He is also currently working with philosopher and futurist Alexander Bard on *The Negatology*, a book which aims to apply a metaphysical triad of process, event, negativity to contemporary global contradictions of generational dynamics, continental cultural collisions, libidinal/political-economy, sexual difference, meta-paradigms, and more.

**Chapter 11: Necessity of Absolute Knowing**—The chapter Absolute Knowing in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is applied to think through ideological problems of contemporary "New Atheism". In the dominance of New Atheism in the 21st century, we find the emergence of a scientific world that succeeds in thinking complex substance, but still struggles to think about the nature of subjectivity. To be specific, complexity science can obfuscate the position of the subject and the unity of thought and being in the creation of models; the scientific method can be used to test external cognition without self-reflexivity opening a world of untested subjectivity; and secular society with an emphasis on democracy and rational cognition can fall into crises of meaning and authority without obvious solutions within democracy and rational cognition itself. In this application, there is an identification that complexity science must be complemented with an active mediation of the way subjectivity comes to be a simple form of knowing with the immediacy of its being; the scientific method must include within itself the irreducibility of the particular singularity of each historical form of subjectivity; and secular society must press forward into the incompleteness and contradiction of identity-paradox as self-revelation in the historical process itself. Ultimately, the idea is that Hegel's chapter on Absolute Knowing allows us to develop a more sophisticated form of atheism, an atheism that can think about the pain and the process of the subject's coming-to-be in the world, its endless self-experimentation,

and the paradoxical struggles of modern political order. Without a more sophisticated form of atheism, what I will call *Hegelian Atheism*, regression to a form of fundamental religion (which sees itself as the end-point) and hedonist nihilism (which sees itself as the end-point) is unavoidable and inevitable. In other words, without Hegel, we cannot really begin the real work of the 21st century.

“I would like to thank my current mentor, Alexander Bard, who has proven himself to be the connector of generations for the future of spirit and the leader of pathic substance; my co-editor Daniel Garner, for his awe-inspiring perpetual motion and overflowing energy, which provides true mythological shelter in a cold world; the students of Philosophy Portal who are proving themselves to be a force of curiosity and creativity that I know exists in those humans who drive for the overman; as well as all the external supporters of Philosophy Portal, let us be not only a core part of the emerging new world, but leaders of this same emerging new world in the only way possible when surrounded by chaos and complexity: from the standpoint of Absolute Knowing.”

**Connect with Cadell:** <https://philosophyportal.online>

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\*Presentations of each of the above articles can be found on PhilosophyPortal.Online

\*The Google-Group Intellectual Deep Web (IDW) led by Alexander Bard is also an integral part of the work of Philosophy Portal. Request an invitation to this intellectual community by emailing Alexander Bard ([bardissimo@gmail.com](mailto:bardissimo@gmail.com)), Cadell Last ([cadell.last@gmail.com](mailto:cadell.last@gmail.com)), or Dimitri Crooijmans ([dimitricrooijmans@gmail.com](mailto:dimitricrooijmans@gmail.com)).

"Why Hegel? For two reasons: in academia generally there are two orientations fighting for power in philosophy or pure theory, on the one hand there are cognitivists who want to get rid of philosophy in the old sense, and replace it with brain studies and quantum cosmology, science can answer what were once metaphysical questions; and on the other hand there are cultural studies, post-structuralist, deconstructionist, historicism, which is a kind of historical relativism, everything is historically conditioned, so we should not ask what is true, but what discourse is predominating, how do we change our discourse. I think that especially this second orientation is coming to an end. Philosophy in terms of asking the big metaphysical questions is returning, and here I think Hegel matters. I think there is a clear parallel between Hegel's time and our time. Hegel's time was the time of the end of traditional society, the modern world was emerging, but it wasn't yet clear what this new world will be. It was a moment of tradition with great confusions. Our times are similar, it is clear that capitalist modernity is coming to an end, but it is not so clear what is the next thing, the situation is much more open. The point is not to return to Hegel the way he was, but to repeat Hegel, to repeat the same gesture as it were.

By repeating I don't mean doing the same. I mean repeating in the sense of doing what Hegel did, but better than Hegel, as it should be done in new times."

Slavoj Žižek

# Philosophy Portal Books

**AN ALIEN WORLD IS EMERGING.** The 21st century presents human self-consciousness with a qualitatively different environment, largely as a consequence of scientific thinking and action opening global communications and connectivity. In this anthology, a community of Spirit has meditated on the idea that the great idealist philosopher G.W.F Hegel can be used as a starting point for thinking this alien world. Hegel, of course, could not have predicted this world (and nor would he have tried), however, Hegel was well aware that Spirit found itself in a new Scientific age, and that this age would have disorienting consequences for Spirit's capacity to inhabit the world at all. Considering that many contemporary intellectuals relate to the present moment with ideas of crises of authority or value and meaning, it makes sense that starting with Hegel could in many ways bring deeper conceptual clarity and orientation. How does "The Hegel Event" help us to sense-make (1) contemporary problems of the theory-practice divide in the sciences, (2) Westerners increasing interest in Eastern spiritual wisdoms, (3) higher and more complex forms of sexual expression, (4) debates on idealism, materialism and realism, (5) human development post-psychoanalysis, (6) the nature of abstraction in the process of becoming, (7) artistic expression beyond religious icons, (8) the philosophical foundations of mathematics, (9) logic of everyday life, and (10) the dominance of contemporary atheism? Through mediations of the immediacy of these dimensions, we hope to show that it is worth starting with Hegel to sense-make in the 21st century. -Cadell Last

"The collective work *Thinking as 21st Century Hegel: Enter the Alien* is an extraordinary achievement. Instead of interpreting Hegel from a safe historical distance and judging what is still alive in his work, it treats Hegel as our contemporary, as a philosopher whose time has finally come today. And it is a profoundly Communist work: a collective endeavour in which the new picture of Hegel emerges through the interaction of multiple individual interventions. For this reason, the volume should be read (at least) two times, so that one is able to grasp how the meaning of a single text is affected by what precedes and by what follows. It is thus one of those rare works which are "Hegelian" already in its form. *Thinking as 21st Century Hegel* is simply a volume about what thinking means today. So it is not a book for specialists but a book for everyone who seriously wants to think!" -Slavoj Žižek



**"Science, the crown of a world of Spirit,  
is not complete in its beginnings."**

