

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana and the project Hegel's Political Metaphysics cordially invite you to a series of lectures to be given by

Dean Moyar

University Johns Hopkins in Baltimore (USA)

Hegel's Deduction of the Concept of Science

(Tuesday, 28 March 2023 at 7 pm, Faculty of Arts, lec. 426)

Can the Rational Will be Evil?

(Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 6 pm, Vodnik domačija Center)

Realism and Idealism in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

(Thursday, 30 March 2023 at 7 pm, Faculty of Arts, lec. 325)



Dean Moyar is Professor of Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University, where he has worked since completing his PhD in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago in 2002. He has published extensively on classical German philosophy, especially Hegel, and is the author of *Hegel's Value: Justice as the Living Good* and *Hegel's Conscience*. He is currently editing a volume on Moby-Dick for the Oxford Studies in Philosophy and Literature series.

Hegel's Deduction of the Concept of Science

In the introduction to the Science of Logic, Hegel claims both (1) that the Logic should begin without presuppositions, and (2) that he has provided a deduction of the standpoint of Logic in his Phenomenology of Spirit. Against some commentators who think that the Logic program does not need a phenomenological introduction, I argue for a strong reading of the deduction claim as central to Hegel's philosophical endeavors. In what sense is the Phenomenology a necessary precursor of the Logic? And what sort of deduction does it provide? The claim of deduction is modeled on Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories in the Critique of Pure Reason. The central claim of Kant's deduction is that the unity of self-consciousness and the unity of the world of objects (in appearance) reciprocally condition each other. That basic structure provides a good starting point for understanding the structure of the Phenomenology and its relation to the Science of Logic. We can, in the end, turn the question around and ask whether or not the Phenomenology needs the Logic (and the rest of the Encyclopedia), given its success as a comprehensive project in its own right.

Can the Rational Will be Evil?

Evil deeds are a familiar part of human life, yet we struggle to make sense of evil as the activity of a rational being. This is a variant of the problem that Plato addressed in the thesis that no one ever does bad actions willingly. If we judge rationally and we only employ our will when we follow our judgment, we are not really ourselves when we perform evil deeds. This issue became especially pressing for the classical German philosophers who defined the rational will in terms of freedom or autonomy. Immanuel Kant had to modify his original claim that only the moral will is free, for that left him no way to account for our responsibility for evil deeds. J.G. Fichte's idealism appears to follow Plato's line more closely, appearing to deny outright the possibility of a consciously evil will. G.W.F. Hegel opens the door to the self-conscious evil will by aligning evil with the general human capacity for interiority and subjective freedom. I argue that his ability to account for the phenomenon counts in favor of his revolutionary view of rationality, but that it also heralds a crisis for the modern subject. His view tends towards a deflationary account of evil, yet he also shows how modern life tends to place the individual in a position in which they are unable to see their own misdeeds and hypocrisy.

Realism and Idealism in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

The program for Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit is largely determined by the issues that arose in J.G. Fichte 1790s arguments for transcendental idealism. Fichte acknowledged that from the ordinary natural scientific standpoint and the standpoint of action, realism about objects in the world is unavoidable. But he also held that only an idealistic philosophical system is in a position to ground that objectivity in a way that preserve human freedom and morality. Fichte held that all claims about the world and ourselves could be derived from the first principle of the self-positing I, or intellectual intuition. While Hegel initially rejected Fichte's approach, in the Phenomenology he develops and transforms Fichte's method for the purpose of introducing his own scientific system. Hegel's method of the self-testing of shapes of consciousness can be understood as arguing from realism to idealism in a way that preserves the realist understanding of objectivity. Surprisingly, his method also puts Hegel in a better position to establish a close connection between the ground of all objectivity (the I, the absolute concept) and moral freedom.