Hegel, G(eorg) W(ilhelm) F(riedrich) (1770-1831), German idealist philosopher, who became one of the 19th century. Hegel was born in Stuttgart on August 27, 1770, the son of a revenue officer raised in an atmosphere of Protestant Pietism and became thoroughly acquainted with studying at the Stuttgart gymnasia (preparatory school). Encouraged by his father to become a seminarian at the University of Tübingen in 1788. There he developed friendships with the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling. Having completed a course of study decided not to enter the ministry, Hegel became (1793) a private tutor in Berne, Switzerland position in Frankfurt. Two years later his father died, leaving a financial legacy that enabled him to stay in Switzerland.

In 1801 Hegel went to the University of Jena, where he studied, wrote, and eventually became editor of the Bamberger Zeitung in Bavaria. He disliked journalism, however, and for eight years as headmaster of a Gymnasium. During the Nuremberg years Hegel met and children were born to the Hegels, a daughter, who died soon after birth, and two sons, Hegel had fathered an illegitimate son, Ludwig, who eventually came to live with the Hegels. Over a period of several years he published his entire philosophy entitled Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline (1817; trans. 1920), Lectures on the History of Philosophy (1833-36; trans. 1892-96), The Phenomenology of Mind (1807; trans. 1910), one of his most important works. He remained when the city was taken by the French and he was forced to flee. Having exhausted the legacy, he decided not to enter the ministry, Hegel became (1793) a private tutor in Berne, Switzerland position in Frankfurt. Two years later his father died, leaving a financial legacy that enabled him to stay in Switzerland.

The last full-length work published by Hegel was The Philosophy of Right (1821; trans. notes, supplemented by students' notes, were published after his death. Published lectures (1835-38; trans. 1920), Lectures on the History of Philosophy (1833-36; trans. 1892-96) (1832; trans. 1895), and Lectures on the Philosophy of History (1837; trans. 1858). Strinberg also read the works of the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, the French writer Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the philosophers Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Schelling. Although he often disagreed with them, their influence is evident in his writings.

Philosophical Aims

Hegel's aim was to set forth a philosophical system so comprehensive that it would encompass and create a conceptual framework in terms of which both the past and future could be understood. He required nothing short of a full account of reality itself. Thus, Hegel conceived of reality, or the total developmental process of everything that is, as a whole. This reality, or the total developmental process of everything that is, is what is known as the Absolute. According to Hegel, the task of philosophy is to chart the development of Absolute Spirit, which is the sum total of reality, and (2) demonstrating the manner in which the human history; and (3) explicating the teleological nature of the Absolute, that is, the direction in which the Absolute is directed.

Dialectic

Concerning the rational structure of the Absolute, Hegel, following the ancient Greek philosophers, is rational is real and what is real is rational. This must be understood in terms of ultimately be regarded as pure Thought, or Spirit, or Mind, in the process of self-development. The dialectical method involves the notion of the categories of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Although Hegel tended to avoid the use of the concept of the dialectic. The thesis, then, might be an idea or a historical movement within itself incompleteness that gives rise to opposition, or an antithesis, a conflicting position. Concerning the rational structure of the Absolute, Hegel, following the ancient Greek p...
which is most kin to itself, namely, spirit or consciousness. In The Phenomenology of Mind, manifestation from the simplest level of consciousness, through self-consciousness, to Self-Knowledge of the Absolute

The goal of the dialectical cosmic process can be most clearly understood at the level understanding, the Absolute progresses toward full self-knowledge. Indeed, the Absolute human mind's increased understanding of reality, or the Absolute. Hegel analyzed this in terms of three levels: art, religion, and philosophy. Art grasps the Absolute in material sensible forms of beauty. Art is conceptually superseded by religion, which grasps the symbols. The highest religion for Hegel is Christianity, for in Christianity the truth symbolically reflected in the incarnation. Philosophy, however, is conceptually supreme. Once this has been achieved, the Absolute has arrived at full self-consciousness, and the goal. Only at this point did Hegel identify the Absolute with God. ÑGod is God,æ Hegel Philosophy of History

In the process of analyzing the nature of Absolute Spirit, Hegel made significant contributions including the philosophy of history and social ethics. With respect to history, his two freedom. ÑThe only Thought,æ maintained Hegel, Ñwhich Philosophy brings Ò to the conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the world, that the history of the rational process.æ As a rational process, history is a record of the development of human progression from less freedom to greater freedom.

Ethics and Politics

Hegel's social and political views emerge most clearly in his discussion of morality (M the level of morality, right and wrong is a matter of individual conscience. One must, social ethics, for duty, according to Hegel, is not essentially the product of individual the midst of social relationships; thus, the only context in which duty can truly exist in the state one of the individual's highest duties. Ideally, the state is the manifest expression of the ethical spirit. Obedience to this general will is the act of a free a conservative, but he should not be interpreted as sanctioning totalitarianism, for he a by any actual state is morally unacceptable.

Influence

At the time of Hegel's death, he was the most prominent philosopher in Germany. His vie were highly regarded. His followers soon divided into right-wing and left-wing Hegelian right-wing Hegelians offered a conservative interpretation of his work. They emphasized philosophy and Christianity. Politically, they were orthodox. The left-wing Hegelians e politics, many of them became revolutionaries. This historically important left-wing gr Bauer, Friedrich Engels, and Karl Marx. Engels and Marx were particularly influenced by dialectically, but they replaced Hegel's philosophical idealism with materialism. Hegel impact on 19th-century and early 20th-century British philosophy, notably that of Franc philosophers as Josiah Royce, and on Italian philosophy through Benedetto Croce. Hegel the Danish philosopher SØren Kierkegaard. Phenomenology has been influenced by Hegel's extensive and diverse impact of Hegel's ideas on subsequent philosophy is evidence of t extraordinary depth of his thought.

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