

# Some Problems with the Analytic Turn to Hegel

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## Abstract

In this state-of-the-field article, I examine some of the problems plaguing present-day analytic Hegel studies and try to find out what can be done to remedy the situation as scholars collectively (and finally) begin grappling with the metaphysico-logical core of Hegel's thought. In so doing, I go over the various currents of Hegelian interpretation and describe some of the limitations behind the usual analytic approaches which have often tended to downplay key aspects of Hegel's thought, like his dialectical logic, and which have also partly helped create enthusiasm for metaphysically deflationary approaches to Hegel's thought. I then propose three practical directives for the betterment of the field in terms of future research, ones which essentially advocate for the generalized adoption of a more historicist approach to certain matters, one that is not mutually exclusive with the overarching scholarly desire to extract something that is philosophically relevant or contemporarily useful from Hegel's thought, which is what seems to drive analytic Hegel studies in general.

## I. Introduction

Over the last quarter century or so, scholarly interest in the ideas of nineteenth-century German idealist philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, a once dismissed figure in analytic circles since at least the time of Bertrand Russell, has been resurging throughout the anglophone philosophical world. This interest has been, in great part, the result of the publication of certain landmark works in analytic philosophy which contain discernibly “neo-Hegelian” undertones. In this respect, the main standouts are John McDowell's *Mind and World* (1994) and Robert Brandom's *Making it Explicit* (1994), the latter having been described by Richard Rorty, who himself did much to synthesize the analytic and continental philosophical traditions, as “an attempt to usher analytic philosophy from its Kantian to its Hegelian stage” (Rorty, 1997, pp. 8-9). Just as importantly, it was around this time that Terry Pinkard published the more focused monograph *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (1994), which represented a watershed moment in Hegelian exegesis and which came out only a few years after Robert Pippin had published his own similarly groundbreaking *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (1989), whose purpose was to advance an appealing picture of Hegel as a properly post-Kantian, or “non-metaphysical,” thinker, one whose thought was still worth reckoning even after approximately two centuries of philosophical developments. The discussion and interest engendered by these and other works is such that it thus quickly served to upend analytic philosophy's once standard and unflattering picture of Hegel's thought as a futile exercise in metaphysically extravagant and obscurantist system-building.

In a sense, this academic phenomenon is something of an ironic development, for, as Paul Redding notes, “from the start...[analytic philosophy]...had been resolutely *anti-Hegelian* in its conception of both of both philosophical method and content” (Redding, 2020b, p. 559-560, my emphasis). Indeed, according to the usual narrative, analytic philosophy originated as a reaction of

sorts against the metaphysical excesses which appear to constitute the heart of Hegel's philosophy (Hylton, 1993, p. 445). In particular, this would have been justified because, at the time before analytic philosophy's advent, similar ideas were noticeably seeping into the works of then prominent British idealists, and this, in turn, was to the great dismay of Russell and G.E. Moore, who would vociferously oppose them until their influence was eventually weakened, and analytic philosophy could finally begin to impose itself throughout the anglophone philosophical world (and beyond), and which is a movement whose legacy persists today in the way philosophical issues are commonly addressed and presented throughout it.

If one is even somewhat familiar with the main contours and emphases of Hegel's complex and kaleidoscopic philosophical vision, the precise reasons for the analytic tradition's historical disregard and antagonism toward Hegelian thinking are rather predictable. One must not forget, after all, that, beyond the frequent Spirit-talk or the peculiar teleological spin Hegel gave the process of history, much of his mature philosophy is only supposed to make sense within the larger context of its placement in or its connection to a bewilderingly labyrinthine "System." Hegel's system is, in brief, a general system of philosophy whose backbone is also an unusual and outdated form of Aristotelian logic, specifically, one that gladly embraces logical contradictions and assumes an incredibly idiosyncratic understanding of what a dialectic is supposed to be and do.

Through this system, Hegel was then able to advance some rather grandiose-sounding philosophical claims, including his idea that metaphysics can, in the final analysis, be identified with logic itself. Indeed, the central upshot of the "absolute" or "speculative" idealism for which Hegel is best known is the thesis that one can come to know the Absolute, or unconditioned, via the faculty of reason alone. It is because of this that Hegel's well-known dictum, "The rational is real, and the real is rational," is perhaps also the best encapsulation of his philosophy as a whole. It is for this and related reasons that Redding is only right to note that, "Hegel is typically taken as representing a type of philosophy that analytic philosophy assiduously avoids" (Redding, 2011, p. 576).

Of course, *if* Hegel's idealism does come hand in hand with zany or unsavory kinds of metaphysical commitments, as is often legitimately assumed, then perhaps the most proper thing to say is that the analytic tradition's turn to his thought has not been a genuine one thus far. After all, the manner in which Hegel's once glibly dismissible ideas are often presented in today's literature makes them appear abnormally palatable to contemporary philosophical sensibilities, as if possessing the mien of a transhistorical Frankensteinian creation of sorts. Who, after all, could ever have expected that Hegel's often spooky-sounding ideas, even if not truly spooky, could also be put so effectively in conversation with some of the most cutting-edge kinds of analytic philosophical discourse imaginable, as is often the case today? Regardless of where one stands on how much of a problem this may or may not be, the reason this has become possible is because the present-day picture one has of Hegel is also, as Kevin Harrelson puts it, that of a "neo-Kantian 'good Hegel'" (Harrelson, 2012, p. 27), that is, one whose philosophy is entirely devoid of any extravagant metaphysical commitments, *if* it even has a metaphysics to begin with.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, Hegel's recent revival and makeover as a kind of anodyne proto-analytic philosopher is the kind of thing that should engender significant skepticism when it comes to the level of historical accuracy of the picture collectively being painted by analytic Hegel scholars. Even if Hegel's ideas are only being retrofitted on a non-negligible level for the admittedly noble purpose of advancing or aiding contemporary philosophical discussions of a certain kind, or because doing so allows scholars to show readers why Hegel's thought can, in at least some form or other, be seen as relevant today, perhaps to compensate for the historical analytic stigma that has existed against it, none of this serves to quell, but only increase, one's nagging doubts as to the accuracy of the picture presently being painted. Such skepticism, in turn, will persist unless significant changes in the way research on Hegel is generally carried out starts becoming the norm.

## I. Objectives

Beyond offering a state-of-the-field overview of what one might call the “field” of *analytic* Hegel studies, one main objective of this article is practical in nature. This is, to try and figure out *how* this burgeoning field can continue to grow while its scholars can also become more confident that they are in fact approximating themselves to the achievement of what should be their basic and primary collective goal. This goal is not just that a thorough and comprehensive picture of what Hegel’s philosophical views consist in will eventually be painted through the united efforts of his dedicated scholars, but that this picture will be historically accurate as well.

To say the field of analytic Hegel studies is far from achieving this ostensive goal is something of an understatement, for the major interpretive fault lines that presently define the field at large concern some the most basic or fundamental facts regarding Hegel’s views on metaphysics, matters such as whether or not his philosophy involves any traditional sort of metaphysics in the first place. These being the kinds of things that touch on the very heart of Hegel’s thought, in considering its systematicity, it is clear that much how the rest of his philosophy should subsequently be understood is therefore still in the balance. Considering that, beyond this, Hegel was such a pivotal and influential figure in the history of Western philosophy, and that his systematic thought is incredibly wide-ranging as well as exegetically challenging, what I will advocate for here is that present and future scholars analytic Hegel scholars radically reconsider the efficacy of the usual interpretive strategies in dealing with his thought. I say this because some of the present strategies clearly reflect a collective scholarly prioritization of certain objectives which go beyond, and distract from, or even hamper, what should be the field’s sole primary aim, which is to accurately discern what Hegel believed and to understand why he believed such things. After all, as Michael Hardimon has noted, “the point of studying Hegel, like that of studying any other important historical philosopher, is not to come up with radically new and different things to say; rather, it is to deepen our understanding of his view” (Hardimon, 1994, p. 5).

## II. Outline

With all this in mind, I will proceed first by briefly elaborating on what I mean by “analytic” Hegel studies. After that, I will trace out the field’s general trajectory from the standpoint of the unusual order of exegetical priorities it has historically followed, one which started changing only very recently, and which thus makes the present moment something of a critical juncture in determining the field’s prospects going forward. Why I say this will become clear upon my later surveying the field’s three principal interpretive currents. After examining said positions and discussing more generally the tendencies analytic philosophers and scholars display in examining historical figures like Hegel, I will finally spell out three concrete and rather general directives which current and future analytic Hegel scholars should strive to promote and give special heed to so that they may efficiently succeed at eventually approximating themselves to the truth about what it is that Hegel believed, and this in a way that aligns more with the facts of historical reality than with any scholarly projections about who it is one hopes Hegel might be or who one thinks he could or should have been.

## III. What is Meant by Analytic Hegel Studies?

The main purpose of referring to “analytic” Hegel studies is to be able to speak of something which, while greatly overlapping with what one would otherwise call “anglophone” Hegel studies, is also not perfectly coincident with it. It also represents, perhaps, the dominant approach to reading

and interpreting Hegel as found throughout the anglophone world. As such, although what I have in mind as the kind of work carried out analytic Hegel scholars naturally covers a panoply of vastly diverging approaches and opinions about his thought, such work still creates the appearance of a kind of Wittgensteinian family resemblance. More specifically, this is one that mostly concerns how the content of Hegel's ideas is ultimately interpreted and then presented to readers, and its main representatives include not only dedicated scholars, or historians of philosophy, like Pippin and Pinkard, but also other, less traditional, yet still prominent Hegel interpreters or commentators, are Brandom and McDowell.<sup>ii</sup> One can also think of the analytic approach to Hegel more generally in terms of what it is not, for what I have in mind as the obverse to dealing with Hegel in an analytic way, is, predictably enough, dealing with him in a *continental* way.<sup>iii</sup>

#### IV. The Problem with Analytic Hegel Studies' Peculiar Trajectory

Something noteworthy about analytic Hegel studies' short history concerns the general order of exegetical priorities it has followed. In particular, the field has embarked on a rather unusual trajectory in this respect, at least judging by the nature of the research output analytic Hegel scholars have collectively produced over the last three decades or so, work which prominently overemphasizes certain which pertain to Hegel's ethical or social philosophy. These topics are, more specifically, those most connected or connectable to general issues having to do with the themes of normativity and pragmatism, the sociality of reason, conceptual holism, or to very specific present-day matters, like Brandom's own inferentialist project, which treats of matters pertaining to linguistic and mental content in a way that clearly differs from how such issues could ever have been treated two centuries or so ago.

The main problem with the acute nature of the collective scholarly interest in these aspects of Hegel's practical thought is that it has apparently had to come at the rather unfortunate expense of a fuller or more traditional collective scholarly engagement with the core of Hegelian thought itself, that is, with his account of metaphysics and, by extension, logic, both of which also happen to ground much of his practical thought, issues which are only now starting to become fashionable to work on. Is there a reason for this very delayed collective realization? Since analytic Hegel scholars are not a monolithic group, seeing as they work in different continents, belong to different generations, employ different methodologies, and so on, it is difficult, if not downright impossible, to offer a satisfactory answer to this question. One thing does seem certain, however, and that is that the influence of Wilfrid Sellars, author of the classic *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (1956), has likely been a significant factor in accounting for it.<sup>iv</sup>

As Willem DeVries notes, the reason Sellars' work would have been of relevance to the analytic Hegel studies movement in the first place is because, "[i]n trying to bring Anglo-American philosophy from its empiricist phase into a more sophisticated, corrected Kantianism, Sellars moved in substantially Hegelian directions" (DeVries, 2017). In particular, the influential Sellars' attempt to move things in a Hegelian direction would have been justified in the aftermath of his famous and celebrated attack against the so-called Myth of the Given, or the since-discredited position that sense experience alone can provide certainty of the sort needed to serve certain foundational epistemic purposes. As to what would have spurred an interest in looking primarily at the kinds of themes which have ever since the beginning accounted for so much of the research that has been carried out on Hegel, it would lie in the fact that the manner in which Sellars, who referred to Hegel as "that great foe of 'immediacy,'" (Sellars, 1997, p. 14) carried out his own attack against the Myth of the Given shares many parallels with the same ideas or strategies employed by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, an obscure text whose content stands quite apart from the metaphysico-logical core of his philosophy, and possibly from his system altogether.

Sellars' influence would, then, furnish the *Phenomenology of Spirit* with a newfound attractiveness at the outset of a movement that he indirectly and significantly helped get off the ground (without quite being a Hegel fan himself). Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* suddenly had, after all, the ostensive potential to offer some useful insights into matters of contemporary philosophical relevance in what was then also a transitional period of sorts for analytic philosophy more generally, and this thanks, in part, to Sellars himself. Curiously, Hegel's other great standalone work, the much longer and obscurer *Science of Logic* (1812, 1813, 1816, 1831), and which also happens to be his masterpiece, got no similar reputational boost at the outset. It simply continued to be regarded for decades on end the same way it always had, and this likely because much of the bizarreness one associates with Hegelianism in the first place find its basis in that very text. That its lack of contemporary appeal, so to speak, might have led to its relative marginalization at the outset and onwards, or until very recently, is of course, something of a tragic irony.<sup>v</sup> After all, the *Science of Logic*, a work one can think of as the Hegelian analogue to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in terms of its importance, should always have represented analytic Hegel studies' first and main interpretive frontier, considering the field's ostensive purpose is to make sense of Hegel's complex and inescapably systematic philosophy, especially since, as Houlgate has recently put things, "Hegel's philosophy proper begins with his speculative logic, set out in detail in his *Science of Logic*" (Houlgate 2020). The *Science of Logic*'s centrality in this regard was even explicitly noted by Hegel himself on many occasions, to not speak of other scholars,<sup>vi</sup> so it was in no way a secret.

That some version of this sketched-out narrative holds true seems rather hard to deny. Of course, I also do not want to imply with it that all analytic Hegel scholars have subsequently read Hegel through a post- or neo-Sellarsian lens,<sup>vii</sup> nor do I want to say that *all* analytic Hegel scholars have historically and overwhelmingly emphasized the *Phenomenology of Spirit* at the expense of prioritizing his account of metaphysics and its relation to logic, as that would be patently false.<sup>viii</sup> The point, rather, is only to highlight the reality and ironic consequence of analytic Hegel studies' clear "collective" tendency to operate on the basis of considerations that ultimately distract from what should be its only main goal. It is important to bring this to light because the field finds itself at a critical juncture as a result of a recent seismic shift or reversal in its exegetical priorities. one which offers a new opportunity to start afresh, so to speak. More specifically, the field's biggest and most noticeable development from recent years is, as hinted earlier, that the *Science of Logic* has finally become the field's top exegetical priority.<sup>ix</sup>

This last claim, while admittedly debatable on some level, can be said to apply in the case of the most recent work of a few post- or neo-Sellarsians themselves, a group which includes scholars like Redding, and, of course, Pippin himself, who has been at the forefront of this recent and very positive trend reversal for some years. Indeed, Pippin's recent monograph, *Hegel's Realm of Shadows: Logic as Metaphysics in the Science of Logic* (2019) is likely set to shape the debate on the work for years or even decades to come.<sup>x</sup> Similarly, Brandom's own recent monograph, *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology* (2019), while clearly dedicated to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, also notably engages in-depth with important issues concerning Hegel's logic.<sup>xi</sup> In addition, beyond the post- or neo-Sellarsians, it is probably less surprising to hear that many prominent analytic Hegel scholars besides the obvious case of Houlgate, names such as Kreines, Stern, and Yeomans, who have long recognized and stressed the importance of Hegel's metaphysical views, have also been prioritizing the *Science of Logic* over the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in their more recent work on Hegel. Whether or not, then, one can declare in any outright fashion that the *Science of Logic* represents the field's top priority at the moment, the time is clearly ripe for analytic Hegel studies to begin righting the ship.

## V. The Main Currents of Hegelian Interpretation

Seeing that, as a collective, the field of analytic Hegel studies is only finally coming to grips with the *Science of Logic*, it is predictably far from coming to any general substantive agreement regarding how Hegel conceives of both the nature and importance of metaphysics in his philosophy. To the uninitiated about to read of the debate on these issues for the first time, the situation is almost analogous to finding out that the most prominent Marx scholars are currently debating whether or not Karl Marx was an aggressively neoliberal thinker or that the most prominent Thomists are currently debating whether or not St. Thomas Aquinas is perhaps an atheist. The main disagreements which define the field of analytic Hegel studies, after all, concern those aspects of his thought where one imagines there should at least be some unanimity of opinion, questions which include, for instance, whether a traditional metaphysics is central to Hegel's philosophy at all, or whether his idealism can possibly be read as a realism of a naturalist sort, and so on. In particular, as Redding has outlined, there are, broadly speaking, three main currents of Hegelian interpretation when it comes to the central issue of Hegel's relation to metaphysical thought (Redding, 2020a). These are positions which one can view as lying on a spectrum which essentially covers the entire range of possibilities, so one need not even be an "analytic" Hegel scholar to fall under a certain group, particularly when it comes to the extremes.

First, there is, on one end of the spectrum, the relatively outmoded but once prevalent traditional metaphysical view. This is a view which interprets Hegel as "offering a metaphysico-religious view of God *qua* Absolute Spirit, as the ultimate reality that we can come to know through pure thought processes alone" (Redding, 2020a). It is the kind of view exemplified, for instance, by Charles Taylor, as presented in his classic monograph *Hegel* (1975). As James Kreines has noted, what such interpreters see Hegel as doing is, then, "arguing that (1) there really is...a higher non-discursive form of intellect; (2) there really is some highest thing or aspect of reality which can be known only thereby; and (3) we ourselves can achieve just such knowledge of the absolute" (Kreines, 2006, p. 473). The portrait of Hegel painted by such scholars is thus that of a "pre-critical" metaphysician, or one that makes him an ambassador of an especially backwards brand of metaphysics, that is, one involving a *return* to the dogmatic pre-Kantian metaphysics of yore, as would be implied in advocating a teleological and rationalistic "spirit monism" of the sort common attributed to him.

As a result, proponents of this view can only believe that Hegel's philosophy should be deemed highly unattractive by contemporary analytic philosophers of the sort who might otherwise have been inspired to mine his ideas in the search for something "useful" or worthy of a possible appropriation in today's vastly different philosophical climate and historical context. While some important qualifications would have to be made concerning the precise senses in which he considers Hegel to be a pre-critical thinker, the most prominent example of an anglophone scholar who belongs to this dwindling group of Hegel interpreters is Frederick Beiser, who completed his doctorate under the aforementioned Taylor, and whose lucidly-presented context-sensitive scholarship makes for a noticeably rare historicist approach to Hegel which, in the end, also renders his work something quite different from that generally carried out by most anglophone Hegel scholars on either side of the analytic and continental divide. When it comes to how Beiser views the matter of Hegel's philosophical relevance today, he notably claims, as if to imply analytic Hegel scholars tend to misread him in a very significant way, that, "[a] contemporary philosopher has no more reason to study Hegel, it would seem, than he has reason to study Napoleon's strategy at the battle of Jena or the costume of the early romantic age" (Beiser, 2008, p. 6). Beyond Beiser, one can also include Lorenzo Sala as belonging to this group, for he sees Hegel's account of metaphysics as closer to Christian Wolff's than it is to Kant's.

Second, and at the other end of the spectrum, there is the non-metaphysical view of Hegel, a

decidedly deflationary approach to his theoretical philosophy which essentially interprets Hegel as a more critical version of Kant. In particular, the non-metaphysical view, as Redding has put it, primarily views Hegel “as accepting and *extending* Kant’s critique, ultimately turning it against the residual dogmatically metaphysical aspects of Kant’s own philosophy” (Redding, 2020a). Kreines sums up what this implies, noting it means “Hegel’s project is similar to Kant’s attempt to account for the conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects: Hegel focuses on ‘forms of thought’ which are comparable to Kant’s ‘categories’” (Kreines, 2006, p. 467). Philosophers who endorse some version of a non-metaphysical view of Hegel are also some of the field’s most prominent interpreters today. This is a group which could be said to include, after all, not only Brandom and McDowell of the prominent Pittsburgh School, but Pippin and Pinkard as well.

The idea that Hegel’s thought might be considered non-metaphysical is, of course, something that might initially surprise non-specialists who know just the slightest bit about his philosophy. After all, that pure reason can know the Absolute or unconditioned clearly represents one of the more fundamental tenets of Hegel’s philosophy, as mentioned earlier. Beyond this, though, it just seems rather easy to find a litany of passages from any of Hegel’s main texts which would appear to rather flatly contradict, at least on an initial reading, the possibility of any “non-metaphysical” reading of Hegel (one need only open a few pages at random to come up with a few such passages in a matter of minutes). What exactly is it, then, that proponents of such a view can mean by “metaphysics” in saying that Hegel, the philosopher of Spirit, or *Geist*, and he father of absolute or speculative *idealism*, also has a philosophy that is “non-metaphysical” at its core? While Hegel himself offers many definitions of the term metaphysics, under this view, metaphysics, as Pippin put it long ago, is “a priori knowledge of substance” (Pippin, 1989, p. 5), though there recently seems to have been a shift toward more open-ended definitions of the term which better align with Hegel’s idea that metaphysics is identifiable with logic (Pippin, 2017).<sup>xiii</sup> In any case, to read Hegel non-metaphysically will essentially mean two things, one of them being perhaps a bit less expected than the other. More specifically, as Simon Lumsden notes, “Hegel is non-metaphysical...not just because spirit cannot be understood [as a kind of spiritual substance]...but [even] more generally because he is seen as rejecting any idea of the given” (Lumsden, 2008, p. 52). The non-metaphysical interpretive current is, as one might expect, then, where the specter of Sellarsian thought seems to loom largest.<sup>xiiii</sup>

Lastly, there is the third, or “revised” metaphysical view of Hegel, which essentially tries to mediate between these two extremes. It does so by positing that while Hegel’s metaphysics *is* fundamentally important and impossible to deny, it is not as extravagant in nature as it appears to be, as it historically was considered to be up until a few decades ago, before more deflationary readings became standard. In particular, as Redding puts it, “[h]ere one tends to find interpreters attributing to Hegel some type of conceptual realism, sometimes appealing to contemporary analytic metaphysics for the legitimacy of metaphysics conceived as enquiry into the fundamental features or structures of the world itself” (Redding, 2020a). Because this view thus makes a form of conceptual realism lie at the heart of Hegelian idealism, it seems fair to say that, on the interpretive spectrum, the position probably lies a lot closer to the non-metaphysical view than it does to the traditional or strong metaphysical view of Hegel. Representative members of this group include Westphal, Stern, and Houlgate, and, from among the younger generation, Kreines, who is a former student of Pippin’s and who is producing some of the most important recent work in favor of this last view. It should also be no surprise that some scholars, like Brandom, in fact straddle the line between this group and the former.

## VI. On the Clear Tendency to Read Hegel a Certain Way

Peter Van Inwagen has observed that “[a]nalytical philosophers have a particularly collegial relationship with the great philosophers of history” (Van Inwagen, 2006, p. 86). By this he means that historical figures are generally treated by such philosophers or by dedicated scholars of an analytic persuasion less like historical figures and more as if they were possible colleagues down the hall who may or may not have useful arguments to offer when it comes to one’s thinking on a given topic. Perhaps one can also say, beyond this, that such interpreters often work on these figures *primarily* with the view that someday they might be able to appropriate some aspect of their chosen historical figure’s views in a way that serves some personal and obviously contemporary philosophical purpose. I mention this because it seems fairly obvious that this generally pervasive attitude has greatly impacted the field of analytic Hegel studies in a few important and often negative ways. After all, one only need recall how long it took for the *Science of Logic* to become the field’s top exegetical priority, or recall the field’s slow progress and general trends in coming to terms with the core sorts of issues just discussed.<sup>xiv</sup>

Of course, even if this criticism is true, it does not mean that possessing an historically accurate and detailed picture of Hegel’s thought still cannot, technically, become a reality one day if things just keep carrying on as usual, for there has also been much progress in the meantime. However, the most obvious risk in continuing to collectively deal with Hegel, perhaps out of all major thinkers, in any way that remotely resembles what Van Inwagen describes, is that, in the end, it might backfire and lead the field a bit too far astray from reaching its ostensive goal. In particular, this would be because, as Beiser writes, dealing with Hegel in this way inherently distracts from the main goal by incorporating other ones:

The danger of the analytic approach is anachronism. We make Hegel alive and relevant, a useful contributor to our concerns; but that is only because we put our own views into his mouth. What we learn from Hegel is then only what we read into him (Beiser, 2005, p. 5).<sup>xv</sup>

What makes this attitude especially problematic in the case of Hegel studies, however, is the inherent systematicity of his thought, as this fact will always complicate one’s ability to truly or even be confident that what seems contemporarily relevant actually is, unless the meaning of the core of his thought were first somewhat beyond dispute from an interpretive point of view, which is evidently far from the case.

Considering, then, that the field has collectively accepted it is time to begin making proper sense of Hegel’s central views, it would seem that much remains at stake in continuing with the usual analytic-style approaches to dealing with figures from the past, for, when it comes to addressing the nuts and bolts of his philosophy, historical rigor and thematic openness of the sort generally at odds with the motivations behind such approaches becomes all the more imperative. Otherwise, there will always be significant skepticism about the accuracy of the picture being painted, especially if it is a partial one whose fragmentariness and chosen emphases are principally tied to considerations having anything to do with matters of contemporary philosophical relevance. After all, as Steven Nadler writes, “[a]nalytic history of philosophy’s very own goals – understanding what a philosopher did say, could have said, and even should have said – cannot be achieved unless it pays attention to the large picture within which the thesis and arguments it is so interested in are to be situated” (Nadler, 2015, p. 217). In line with this sentiment, analytic Hegel studies as a field should just bite the bullet and change its general or collective *modus operandi*.

## VII. The Importance of Reframing the Analytic Approach to Hegel

For the field of Hegel studies to succeed in properly and most efficiently acquainting itself with the gist of Hegel’s central views and, by extension, with many of his secondary views, scholars should collectively begin to think of the achievement of their ostensive objective as involving a process, one



whose horizon is still very far from view. In practice, this means present and future analytic Hegel scholars should play the long game and become foes of immediacy, so to speak, in the sense that any need or hope to confirm the relevance of Hegel's thought, or to get something contemporarily useful out of it, be temporarily dispensed with entirely, or, at least, put on a backburner of sorts, even if this understandably tantalizing prospect is probably what motivates most analytic Hegel scholars to dedicate themselves to his challenging work in the first place.

I do not say any of this to take sides, then, in the famous debate which pits more historicist approaches against more collegial ones, since the two ways of doing things are not, in my view, mutually exclusive. After all, any advocate of, say, a kind of a collegial or rational reconstruction approach to Hegel can only stand to benefit, in my view, in the wake or presence of more historically-oriented scholarship of the sort that can provide a scholar with a good bird's eye view of what it is that Hegel really believed, or of how his ideas interconnect within his complex system, a real possibility now that understanding the core or center of philosophy has become a top exegetical priority. Indeed, an accurate synoptic vision of things might conceivably be the necessary condition for scholars or philosophers to one day later devise a proper synthesis of Hegelian thought with whatever contemporary philosophical topic she might be interested in, assuming Hegel's insights can indeed be of such use.<sup>xvi</sup>

This hope of a possible synthesis of some sort between authentic Hegelianism and contemporary analytic philosophy is not based on a vacuous kind of "you never know" optimism either. To give but a couple of concrete examples of where Hegel's potential eventual usefulness for analytic philosophical purposes might lie, one can first mention some of the goings-on in the field of metaphysics, where there has been an unexpected "return" to ideas which share clear parallels to those of thinkers such as Aristotle (Correia and Skiles, 2019, p. 642). In particular, as William Simpson, Robert Koons and Nicholas Teh write, a "recent revival in (neo-)Aristotelian philosophy is beginning to transform the landscape of contemporary analytic philosophy" (Simpson, Koons, and Teh, 2018, p. 1). This is worth mentioning because it means Hegel, who was greatly inspired by Aristotle,<sup>xvii</sup> might eventually end up having something to say that could be of contemporary interest to those working within analytic metaphysics.<sup>xviii</sup>

One can say similar things about the realm of philosophical logic and the growing interest in non-classical logics. It is interesting to note, for instance, how Graham Priest, who is perhaps the authority on dialetheism, or the view that there are true contradictions, said in an interview some years ago that he wished he had understood Hegel better since he "always looked at Hegel for inspiration about dialetheism and logic" (Priest, 2014). Surely, then, in conjunction with the previous, this kind of thing should help keep alive the hope that further research into what Hegel had to say, even in those areas where his views seem the most bizarre or philosophically arcane, can indeed end up being of genuine contemporary relevance. As such, regardless of one's motivations or final purposes in dealing with Hegel analytically, it seems there will always be something to lose in first not having a full and detailed picture of Hegel's views whose historical accuracy one can also be confident about.<sup>xix</sup>

### VIII. Concrete Directives for a Proper Analytic Turn to Hegel

Speaking more practically, what I propose for a proper renaissance of analytic Hegel studies are that three simple "directives" be taken seriously *en masse* to help bring forth the kind of research that can best position the field in its ostensive quest to one day possess a historically accurate and thorough portrait of Hegel's thought. The first directive is that there needs to be a much deeper consideration of both the influences and reception of Hegel's thought. The second one is that an

examination of Hegel as a figure with different periods must start becoming more of the norm. Lastly, the third directive is that due diligence start being given to certain specific, even if admittedly peripheral, aspects of Hegel's thought which continue to be mystifyingly downplayed, if not downright ignored, for what seem to be all the wrong reasons. One thing that is important to underline about these directives, whose rationale I will elaborate on in what follows, is that *if* they are taken seriously in a collective fashion, then this should allow for the most fruitful Hegelian engagements with contemporary philosophy possible to take place eventually, even if how or in exactly what ways this may be so remains unpredictable at the moment.

With regard the first directive, I recognize that its content, which demands a deeper scholarly examination of Hegel's influences and reception, makes it sound a bit banal as a suggestion. However, the situation with analytic Hegel studies, where the relevant literature is quite lacking in volume, demands that one make it a separate point, one whose importance cannot be overstated if the field seeks to truly acquaint itself with the real Hegel's ideas. Concerning the specific issue of needing to further explore his influences, one can say, after all, that despite Hegel's immense originality as a thinker, much of what he said also appeared to have come from other sources, and this in a way that does not seem to apply to most other comparably significant philosophers in the history of Western philosophy. Indeed, perhaps one can also go as far as to say that almost *every* single major idea in Hegel appears to have had some important historical precedent (this, at least, is the impression Beiser's context-sensitive work produces, and it makes sense considering the sheer amount and topical diversity of Hegel's countless philosophical contributions).

As such, more work on Hegel's influences is in order, and I am not only referring to the need to examine more closely his connection to more obvious influences like Baruch Spinoza or Kant, or even Aristotle, who was just mentioned, or even to more contemporaneous but generally far less popular ones like F.H. Jacobi, J.G. Fichte, and F.W.J. Schelling (who was Hegel's former roommate), for these connections have at least been dealt with in some depth before, even if more work would clearly be welcome. Rather, what I really want to emphasize is the importance of further exploring Hegel's rather deep links to very distant and even unexpected predecessors, thinkers such as Proclus or Jakob Böhme, for instance, or even William Shakespeare,<sup>xx</sup> figures who are rarely the subjects of any kind of focused or comparative analytic treatments in terms of their connection and influence on Hegel's thought, as well as to others whose thought seems so closely related to Hegel's but where any historical connection to his thought's development remains tenuous or unproven, as is the case with Giambattista Vico. Such work, after all, might be what allows one to understand why Hegel adopted or presented his ideas in a way which often makes them seem so extravagant, unprecedented, or downright puzzling.<sup>xxi</sup>

The same applies to work focusing on Hegel's reception. The relative lack of literature here is especially unfortunate considering the fact Hegel's philosophy prominently dominated all throughout the Prussian academic world for essentially the entire first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, since Hegel's ideas were apparently greatly misunderstood up until recently, seeing as they have now become so contemporarily appealing when the situation was the opposite just a few decades ago, it would seem that looking at how certain major and astute thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard and Ludwig Feuerbach, who was Hegel's student, received, interpreted, critiqued, or revised Hegel's ideas, would be of obvious interest to analytic Hegel scholars. After all, such knowledge might end up saving contemporary analytic Hegel scholars from repeating certain interpretive mistakes made in the past, or from missing out on important critical insights that can help significantly advance certain discussions. In the meantime, scholars, particularly younger ones who do not read in German yet (or other European languages like French or Italian), where they might at least find some good relevant literature, are simply at the mercy of having little to read or work with in this regard, apart from the kind of work which primarily seeks to summarize or provide

an overview of specific decades or entire periods of philosophical developments, like (Beiser, 1987), (Beiser, 2002), (Pinkard, 2002) and (Beiser, 2014).

Similarly, there is a major lacuna in the Anglo-analytic literature when it comes to monographs, or long treatments, which take into account the various different periods of Hegel's dynamic philosophical career, or which consider the way his views on some given issue changed with time, which is what motivates the second directive. The point that Hegel must begin to be treated more often as a thinker who went through different periods (an early Hegel, a mature Hegel, and so on) is especially important to emphasize here because, prior to scholars' recent focus on the *Science of Logic*, Hegel was more or less generally portrayed as a kind of static thinker, so to speak, one whose ideas were best exemplified by the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The field runs the risk of doing the same at this critical juncture, or as it begins coming to grips with the most basic or central aspects of his philosophy, ones which would also appear to require the most stage-setting and contextualization of all, considering how much remains unclear about them. Indeed, when it comes to Hegel's metaphysical and logical ideas, there are already clearly important differences between the way he expresses things in the *Science of Logic* and, say, in the so-called *Lesser Logic* which constitutes Part I of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817, 1827, 1830), and these are not even too far apart in time. As work on the *Science of Logic* becomes more prominent, then, more detailed work focusing on the evolution and changes in Hegel's thought becomes all the more urgent.<sup>xxii</sup>

The third directive, which demands scholars give due diligence to certain important elements of Hegel's thought which are often unfairly downplayed or ignored, can be seen as a sort of corollary to the second directive. At least, this is if one acknowledges what by now should be clear, which is that more attention should be given to the nuances surrounding his views on metaphysics, the dialectical character of his logic, and so on. But since this has already started to happen, one should talk about the various other important, yet relatively peripheral, areas of Hegel's thought that are by and large indefensibly neglected. Hegel's natural philosophy, for instance, which forms an important part of his System, is perhaps the most glaring example of what I have in mind. Similarly, the state of the literature concerning his epistemology has always been something of a wasteland with a notable exception being Kenneth Westphal's work on the subject, e.g., (Westphal, 2003), and this despite the fact that the field's otherwise historically favored *Phenomenology of Spirit* is most accurately described as a work in epistemology.<sup>xxiii</sup>

One could say similar things about Hegel's views on aesthetics and the philosophy of art, but at least a few relevant monographs have been published recently by Pippin (Pippin, 2013), Julia Peters (Peters, 2014) and Lydia Moland (Moland 2019), the latter having had no comparable precedent in the three decades or so that preceded its publication. Even if the last two authors are not analytic Hegel scholars themselves, both works should still be fairly accessible to analytically-oriented philosophers of all stripes, and will hopefully generate a lot more interest in Hegel's views on such issues, views which happen to be among the most important and influential of all time in both aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Beyond this, one should also mention that Hegel notably gave much importance to matters concerning philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, so much that Karl Barth, the giant of twentieth century Protestant theology, went as far as to ask why Hegel had not been considered "the Protestant Aquinas" (Barth 1972, p. 384). Little from present trends in analytic Hegel studies (or even analytic philosophy of religion) would appear to indicate anything remotely similar holds, though.<sup>xxiv</sup> In the end, Hegel, one sees, addressed far too many different topics in-depth, and this observation, alongside the fact of their immeasurable influence on so many later thinkers, makes some of his treatments thereof worthy of more consideration and focused attention than has heretofore been given to them by analytic Hegel scholars.<sup>xxv</sup>

## IX. Closing Remarks

In conclusion, the state of analytic Hegel scholarship finds itself in a rather peculiar situation, one resultant, in great part, from an endemic interpretive culture which has long emphasized things like contemporary philosophical usefulness over historical rigor, and which has only created skepticism about the historical accuracy of the picture currently being painted of Hegel's complex and systematic account of philosophy. At the same time, there is also genuinely growing curiosity about Hegel's views, and the field as a whole is finally accepting that it is time to properly begin examining the core of his systematic thought, which are his views on metaphysics and logic. However, if the field continues emphasizing issues like contemporary relevance, usefulness, and the like, which, I should add, not all scholars emphasize equally, then significant elements of Hegel's philosophy are likely to remain collectively neglected or, if addressed, continue to be interpreted through historically inadequate lenses. An irony which could result from the further perpetuation of such tendencies is that the field's scholars are also likelier to miss out on the possibility of devising a proper future synthesis or fusion of authentic Hegelian ideas with contemporary analytic thought. It behooves the field, then, particularly the younger generation of scholars, to exclusively begin viewing the ostensive search to become better acquainted with the real and historical Hegel at this critical juncture as its first goal.

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<sup>i</sup> This is the kind of thing other scholars like Nathan Brown have implied in somewhat different terms when he notes, for instance, that “Brandom, Pinkard, and Pippin,” arguably the three most prominent representatives of the field analytic Hegel studies, “offer a bowdlerized Hegel, made palatable to the dictates of pragmatic common sense and Habermasian good citizenship” (Brown, 2014, p. 52).

<sup>ii</sup> The analytic label is admittedly less-than-ideal for various reasons. For one, it seems a bit crude to pigeonhole some of the field's representative figures who I have in mind as being “analytic” Hegel scholars *simpliciter*, or without remainder. For instance, consider the case of Pippin, whose overly prominent work on Hegel is so multidimensional and exceptional in part because it even manages to address many of the same themes emphasized by continental scholars, to the point he has notably engaged recently with the work of Slavoj Žižek, who is generally treated like a pariah in analytic circles. One could say much of the same about Terry Pinkard, whose research is similarly wide-ranging and also distinctly historically-oriented in a way that makes what he does seem rather different in kind from the kind of work offered by the more clearly “analytic” neo-Hegelian philosophers such as McDowell and Brandom, who engage with Hegel's thought by directly putting it in dialogue with specific cutting-edge philosophical issues, and who are not, as noted, historians of philosophy in the usual sense either. Lastly, even some, like Crispin Wright, would have an issue with calling someone like McDowell analytic (Wright, 2002). However, despite all these issues, “analytic” is probably the best label available for describing what it is I want to capture. In particular, the reason a Pippin or Pinkard, and *a fortiori* a Brandom or McDowell, can ultimately count as “analytic” Hegel scholars is because, when it comes to their work on Hegel, they manage the feat of making the latter's thought appear “analytically approachable,” borrowing here a useful phrase from Redding's recent work (Redding, 2018). What this means is that, *if* how these scholars read and present Hegel is correct, then philosophers who operate within the broader context of the analytic tradition can only stand to benefit in at least taking a good look at what it is Hegel has to say about a given topic. They manage this for a few reasons, and here one can simply generalize some remarks Gene Flenady has recently made about Pippin's particular “way of reading Hegel,” which he notes possesses the dual virtues of a) “checking Hegel's position against attractive contemporary alternatives” as well as b) “stripping off the familiarity of his language” (Flenady, 2018, p. 421), as this could equally be said about the work of several other Hegel interpreters. If one makes these primarily presentational kinds of features the closest thing analytic Hegel studies has to a threshold or baseline for membership, then, beyond the names just mentioned, which include Redding's, one would also have to include the names of several other prominent anglophone

Hegel scholars such as Stephen Houlgate, Kenneth Westphal, Robert Stern, James Kreines and Chris Yeomans as being among other the key representatives of the field of analytic Hegel studies.

<sup>iii</sup> This would be because continental Hegel studies' most representative scholars, unlike analytic Hegel studies', clearly owe a large debt, whether directly or not, to the Russian-born French philosopher Alexandre Kojève's influential interpretation of Hegel's thought around the mid-twentieth century. Kojève's interpretation is, in particular, one which, among other things, placed the idea of Hegel's master/slave dialectic and the theory of alienation at the center of his thought, and which, in the process, also incorporated Marxist and Heideggerian insights for the purposes of better understanding him. Readings inspired by Kojève's, including those critical of it in a mostly revisionist kind of way, notably spread like wildfire throughout the French intellectual scene for the decades that followed it, collectively shaping, alongside the work of other influential scholars, like the French Jean Hippolyte, the views of several of the most prominent individuals linked to the broader continental tradition, including Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and so on. The legacy of these readings, in turn, can be said to persist today in the interpretations of Hegelian ideas that have been offered more recently by academics such as Judith Butler, Žižek, and, to some extent, Axel Honneth, who often publish their relevant work in the English language, and whose work is quite different from what I have in mind as what falls under "analytic Hegel studies."

<sup>iv</sup> One reason to believe Sellars has a key part of analytic Hegel studies' history is because his thought has clearly influenced many of the most notable figures working in analytic Hegel studies today, and several of these scholars were not only part of the movement from the very beginning, but continue to be active and have often been the ones who set the tone for the rest of the field. Indeed, these interpreters are perhaps the ones whose work has done the most to help make analytic Hegel studies the flourishing field it has become today, as it has served to generate decades of endless discussion and debate. Much of it has also often, but certainly not always, centered around the social and practical themes mentioned, and this often in relation to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in particular. Indeed, Sellars, who was an anti-foundationalist about concepts and viewed them as determined by society in certain rule-governed ways, can be considered, without much controversy, the grandfather of the prominent Pittsburgh Hegelians, or the one represented by Brandom and McDowell. Beyond this, Pippin and Pinkard, who are more traditional Hegel scholars, are perhaps the two most prominent such proponents of clearly post- or neo-Sellarsian readings of Hegel.

<sup>v</sup> One need only imagine how the analytic philosophical community would feel if it were to know that future generations of philosophers would more or less ignore their current interest in, say, zombies or any of the similarly *prima facie* extravagant ideas they often discuss today with the conviction that it is philosophically important, simply because future philosophers might find little in them that seems relevant or attractive, and not because these ideas have been refuted. This sentiment is best summed up by J.M. Fritzman:

Analytic Hegelianism believes that Hegel's metaphysics is too fantastic to be credible. It must be conceded that Hegel's metaphysics departs significantly from untutored common sense on a number of issues – but no more than such philosophically respectable metaphysics as the eliminative materialism of [Paul and Patricia Churchland]..., the modal realism of David Kellogg Lewis..., or the panpsychism of Galen Strawson. Moreover, Hegel's own views can frequently be described as extensions or radicalizations of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. When Hegel's metaphysical views are neglected because they are believed to be too fantastic, it is often because people haven't fully acknowledged how fantastic contemporary metaphysics can be (Fritzman, 2014, pp. 145-6)..

<sup>vi</sup> This includes, for instance, J.M. Findlay, author of the classic *Hegel: A Reexamination* (1958), and the renowned Hegel scholar Quentin Lauer, who despite not being an analytic Hegel scholar, was still quite influential as a general expositor of his thought within the anglophone world. He referred to the work many decades ago as "unquestionably the keystone of the entire Hegelian system" (Lauer, 1977, p. 114).

<sup>vii</sup> Beyond this, even implying Sellars' influence is the *main* reason for which Hegel's *Science of Logic* was historically overlooked would be too facile. The reason for saying this is because, even if an interest in the *Science of Logic* has undoubtedly been lacking over the past three decades or so, and this has partly resulted from the relative boost Sellars' thought gave the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a work worth investigating further, there has still been a distinct awareness of the *Science of Logic's* importance since the very get-go from some of the analytic

Hegel scholars who, curiously enough, have been those most influenced by Sellars. Even if what I say only applies to the smallest handful of scholars, their prominence forces one to be wary of making any hasty generalizations. Pippin, for instance, who, alongside Pinkard, is one of the most prominent of the post- or neo-Sellarsians, has long been adamant about the fundamental importance of the *Science of Logic* for understanding Hegel's practical thought. Indeed, he even dedicated one of the three sections in his aforementioned 1989 text to Hegel's account of logic and recently published an entire monograph on the subject, titled *Hegel's Realm of Shadows: Logic as Metaphysics in the Science of Logic* (2019). Similarly, one must not forget that Pinkard himself, who despite being known for his 1994 landmark text on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and whose 2018 much-needed translation of this hefty text will likely keep his name associated to that work for decades to come, published his first monograph on the subject of Hegel's logic, titled *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility* (1988).

<sup>viii</sup> To claim this would mean, for instance, overlooking the exceptional quality and consistency of Stephen Houlgate's work on Hegel's account logic over the years.

<sup>ix</sup> Indeed, as one of the biggest signs of proof that a major shift with major implications has begun, one can point to a conference whose proceedings have recently been published and which held in 2017 at the University of Pittsburgh, the academic home of Brandom and McDowell, who, as Pittsburgh Hegelians, would be the most obvious examples of philosophers who have valued the *Phenomenology's* importance in an especially high way. For instance, as part of its description, the conference, which was notably titled "Reconsidering Hegel's Logic," explicitly acknowledged the recent past's overemphasis on the *Phenomenology* as a costly one, and it also suggested the need to redress the problem of having given short shrift to the *Science of Logic* in the process:

Most of the recent anglophone interest in Hegel has focused primarily on his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to the neglect of his work on logic, which lies at the heart of his philosophical system. *Reconsidering Hegel's Logic* addresses this neglect by bringing together leading Hegel scholars from around the world to discuss the *Science of Logic* (Conference: Reconsidering Hegel's Logic, 2017).

<sup>x</sup> So, even if a critic like Houlgate, arguably the foremost expert in Hegel's logic, has found issues with Pippin, claiming the latter monograph is "problematic in many ways" (Houlgate, 2019, p. 766) because of how it presents fundamental Hegelian notions like concept, thought, being, and becoming, he is still right to acknowledge its impressive nature as a whole.

<sup>xi</sup> This must be acknowledged even if the way in which Brandom's presents the text's aims as not having anything to do with how one gets to the pure and necessary derivation of the fundamental categories of thinking and being is the kind of thing that has led Houlgate to claim that Brandom's "unorthodox interpretation of Hegel's logic finds no warrant in Hegel's text" (Houlgate, 2020). Whether or not this criticism holds, however, is, again, somewhat beside the point.

<sup>xii</sup> Pippin has recently explained why he finds the label attached to his position as potentially misleading in (Pippin, 2018, p. 366).

<sup>xiii</sup> As should be expected, the anti-metaphysical position's consequently counterintuitive character also makes it the frequent subject of harsh rebukes and direct, if not altogether wholly dismissive, criticisms and argumentation, as opponents will fit it just a bit too deflationary to be believable. Kreines, for instance, refers to the position as "simply unconvincing" (Kreines, 2006, p. 466). Jonathan Shaheen, similarly, claims that "to read Hegel anti-metaphysically is to misread him" (Shaheen, 2018, p. 433). Beiser, perhaps the most vocal critic of this current, has also gone as far as to say that "[n]o one would have protested more stridently against such interpretations... than Hegel himself, who regarded metaphysics as the foundation of philosophy, and the basis of each part of his system" (Beiser, 2005, p. 5).

<sup>xiv</sup> If the field has been quick in any related regard, it has only been in allowing the traditional metaphysical view of Hegel, which was once so dominant because it also appeared somewhat obvious, to just keep falling by the wayside as the two remaining, and more contemporarily appealing positions, continue to grow in popularity.

<sup>xv</sup> Of course, Beiser rightly acknowledges that the opposite problem to such anachronism is that fixing it implies the consequent scholarly need to engage instead in a kind of antiquarianism of the sort which requires that scholars remain motivated enough to want to distill historical truths concerning a given thinker's ideas simply for their own sake, or in some sense apart from any hope that they might also be of contemporary

philosophical interest or relevance (Beiser, 2008, p. 7). To assume an approach more clearly focused on the issue of historical accuracy will necessarily lead to better scholarship on Hegel is also, admittedly, the kind of claim that will raise objections from a few corners, for there are always going to be those who see work in the history of philosophy as ideally being much closer to the activity of doing “regular” philosophy than to that of doing history. For instance, Andrew Bowie, criticizing Beiser and German researchers like him, refers to the kind of historicism I have in mind as “stultifying” (Bowie, 1999, p. 364, n. 14). The extremely polarizing nature of debates concerning the methodological approach a researcher should adopt in investigating a historical figure’s philosophical views is likely familiar to anyone who works on the

<sup>xvi</sup> Empirically speaking, what drives me to believe rethinking things would be for the better of the field is observing what has happened in the more established field of analytic Kant studies, which can serve as a useful precedent and inspiration. It was just a few decades ago, after all, that the field was in a situation similar to that of analytic Hegel studies’ today, where approaches like those employed by Peter Strawson and Jonathan Bennett, from whom the collegial approach to historical figures derives its name, soon began making way for rather sophisticated more historically-oriented traditional scholarship. Nowadays the secondary literature, which covers the wide gamut of topics that makes up the totality of Kant’s (similarly very systematic) thought allows scholars to effectively engage Kant’s ideas with more contemporary ones in the process. Henry Allison, arguably the towering figure in anglophone Kant studies, refers to his methodological approach to Kant, which represents the standard, as analytical-historical (Allison, 2015). This has allowed Kantian, or properly neo-Kantian, views to shape contemporary discussions in ethics and other fields in the best and most appropriate way that they are able to. In the absence of any similar such “dialectical” process transpiring in Hegel’s case, it seems clear that continuing to follow the usual approach will most likely eventually lead scholars to fall under the spell of a “hermeneutic ventriloquism,” to appropriate a phrase from Brandom (Brandom 2002, p. 90), one which could keep analytic Hegel studies from ever reaching its ostensive goal of coming to an accurate collective picture of things, as Hegel’s thought might by then be disfigured beyond recognition.

<sup>xvii</sup> As can be seen from Italian scholar Alfredo Ferrarin’s monograph *Hegel and Aristotle* (2014).

<sup>xviii</sup> Indeed, one can, ironically enough, already see the potential of what might come from continuing to explore Hegel’s Aristotelian connection from the work of two non-metaphysical readers, namely, Pinkard and Pippin themselves, as seen, for instance, in the former’s 2012 *Hegel’s Naturalism* and in the latter’s aforementioned monograph on the *Science of Logic*, which sees Hegel’s views on the logic-ontology connection as a kind of convergence of Kantian and Aristotelian ideas, even if one can still say, as Sala has that, “in Pippin’s “cocktail’ of Aristotle and Kant’ there is too much Kant and not enough metaphysics” (Sala, 2018, p. 432). In any case, it seems something is in the offing here, perhaps something which might even lead to the recrudescence of more pro-metaphysical views of Hegel, as Kreines has suggested (Kreines, 2018, p. 401).

<sup>xix</sup> Nectarios Limnatis notes that Hegel’s prominent dialectical logic has tended to be ignored (Limnatis, 2010, p. 3), and this is perhaps due to the positive role which Hegel’s dialectic grants to the idea of contradiction, which, of course, flies in the face of analytic philosophy’s historically profound connection to classical logic and to its extension, modal logic, which itself shapes much of how analytic metaphysics operates today. But trends indicate a growing interest in non-classical logics (in the context of proof theory and so on). Because of considerations like these, Kreines’ claim that “[t]he most promising directions for future research...will require recognizing that Hegel’s theoretical philosophy includes a metaphysics, and engaging new debates about the specific character of that metaphysics” (Kreines, 2006, p. 466) very much appears true.

<sup>xx</sup> Andrew Cutrofello, who is not an analytic Hegel scholar, and has explored the Shakespeare-Hegel connection, has even recently explored connections between Hegel and William Wordsworth, and this by engaging with the work of both Brandom and the continental Žižek (Cutrofello, 2020). More focused engagements of this type, which cross-pollinate ideas from both the “analytic”/ “continental” divide, are similarly encouraged from analytic Hegel scholars, as Pinkard has been doing with Theodor Adorno recently (Pinkard, 2020).

<sup>xxi</sup> In this respect, it should go without saying that, although the available literature produced by analytic or just anglophone scholars concerning Hegel’s influences is generally very hard to find, there is fortunately a decent amount of work in the non-anglophone, particularly, German, secondary literature on Hegel (Manfred Frank and Dieter Henrich being perhaps the most prominent names when it comes to this kind of work).

<sup>xxii</sup> For instance, in answering the question of whether the relation between Hegel’s logic and Kant’s transcendental logic is one of continuity, which ties to the issue of the merits surrounding the non-metaphysical

view, scholars would benefit from having such literature at their disposal. The answer to this last question seems to hinge on whether the *Phenomenology* should be considered part of Hegel's "System" (Fritzman, 2014, p. 80), which itself is something that is not so clear, and resolving that is the kind of thing that first requires a knowledge of the differences and similarities which defined the various phases making up Hegel's philosophical career and the changes that defined them.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Specifically, Hegel's views on mental content, his response to skepticism, and the issue of his anti-foundationalism should be obvious areas where more scholars interested in extracting something useful should have considered working on for years, but, for some mysterious reason, this simply has not been the case.

<sup>xxiv</sup> These are, curiously enough, the kinds of areas where Robert Williams accuses Beiser himself of surprisingly siding with the non-metaphysical interpretive current when it comes to Hegel's views on such matters, in the sense that Beiser does not include theology as an essential metaphysical topic for understanding Hegel (Williams, 2012, p. 20), which should certainly motivate others to explore the issue further.

<sup>xxv</sup> The field of anglophone Hegel studies in general (including here scholars working in Germany and the like who write in English) has reason to be optimistic in his respect, considering the sophistication of some of the research produced by a few up-and-coming scholars in *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel* (2017) and *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook* (2020), which evinces much promise (even if not all such scholarship is qualifiable as "analytic" per se).

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