

Beiser, Frederick C., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xiv, 425. Paper \$32.99.

This volume on Hegel is one in a long line of Cambridge Companions, each of which is intended as "a reference work for students and non-specialists," as the publisher writes on the back cover. In this respect, the book does not fulfill its purpose. Beiser's edited volume is a collection of fascinating essays, but, with a few exceptions, would be challenging for those not already rather well acquainted with Hegel and eighteenth- to nineteenth-century thought. After Beiser's introduction, the fifteen distinguished contributors (no women among them) offer chapters on a wide variety of themes, ranging from Hegel's biography to his natural philosophy, his aesthetic theory, and his intellectual overlap with religion.

In his introduction and preface, Beiser sets out to limit the scope of the inquiry by clarifying that this volume comes as a kind of sequel to Beiser's earlier collection, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (1993). Pondering the "puzzling" great interest in Hegel (2), Beiser also points out that one of the goals of this book is to highlight Hegel's metaphysics, an aspect of his theory which, according to the editor, most scholars who make use of Hegel have neglected. Indeed, Beiser takes somewhat to task most academic use of Hegel's theory in that it "makes a false image of him" and has "re-created him in our image," a product of reading interests *into* Hegel (5, 9). Beiser implicitly levels these criticisms at least partly at scholars outside of the Philosophy discipline proper. Additionally, Beiser suggests some areas of Hegel scholarship in need of more attention: namely, *Konstellationsforschung* (studies of intellectual networks) as well as Hegel's *Naturphilosophie*. The latter is taken up by multiple contributors in this volume.

Among the book's contributions are a few that would lend themselves especially well to teaching and reading, given their successful and lucid writing as well as organization. For example, Frederick Neuhouser's chapter, "Hegel's Social Philosophy," deftly shows how Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1821) and his conceptions of freedom can relate to issues of citizenship and, further, identity politics. Although it is taken from his own book-length biography of Hegel, Terry Pinkard's "Hegel: A Life" is an appropriate and convenient look at the context that Hegel's biography provides. Edward C. Halper, in "Hegel's Criticism of Newton," treats Hegel's inquiries into physics, explaining Hegel's (re-)reading of Newton and the resulting conceptions of motion and space.

Despite its being surprisingly riddled with typographical errors, Beiser's volume presents illuminating work. The esteemed scholars represented herein interpret and ponder the work of a philosopher whose writing is often considered, at the very least, opaque. Regrettably, however, the interpretations themselves are not always transparent.

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