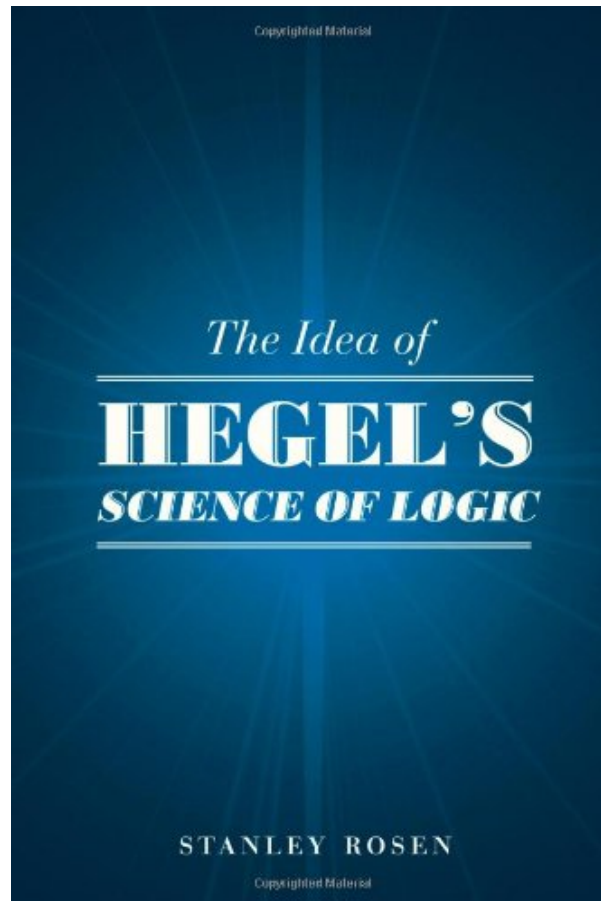


# THE IDEA OF HEGEL'S "SCIENCE OF LOGIC" BY STANLEY ROSEN



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## Review

“This volume will be of enduring interest to students and scholars seeking a lucid companion to Hegel’s most difficult work.”

(J. A. Gauthier Choice)

“Stanley Rosen’s undertaking in The Idea of Hegel’s 'Science of Logic' is an important and unique contribution to philosophical literature. It closes an important circle to his earlier and much-remembered work, *Nihilism*, a book that analyzed the problem announced by its title but was not as ambitious as to suggest a solution—it is precisely this ambition to which this newest book returns.” (Omri Boehm, New School)

“Reflection on Hegel as one of the supreme minds of the philosophic tradition has always been central to the work of Stanley Rosen, but with this study of Hegel’s *Science of Logic* he has produced his definitive account of this formidable treatise, which exhibits the categorical structure of all being as it develops the conceptual fractures of Western philosophy. Lucid, thorough, and historically informed, this study is not merely a commentary but an effort to understand Hegel by rethinking the problems that animate his speculative logic. In exemplary fashion it shows how one can think about philosophy with Hegel’s assistance, and it deserves to be considered Rosen’s magnum opus.” (Richard Velkley, Tulane University)

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Although Hegel considered Science of Logic essential to his philosophy, it has received scant commentary compared with the other three books he published in his lifetime. Here philosopher Stanley Rosen rescues the Science of Logic from obscurity, arguing that its neglect is responsible for contemporary philosophy's fracture into many different and opposed schools of thought. Through deep and careful analysis, Rosen sheds new light on the precise problems that animate Hegel's overlooked book and their tremendous significance to philosophical conceptions of logic and reason.

Rosen's overarching question is how, if at all, rationalism can overcome the split between monism and dualism. Monism—which claims a singular essence for all things—ultimately leads to nihilism, while dualism, which claims multiple, irreducible essences, leads to what Rosen calls “the endless chatter of the history of philosophy.” The Science of Logic, he argues, is the fundamental text to offer a new conception of rationalism that might overcome this philosophical split. Leading readers through Hegel's book from beginning to end, Rosen's argument culminates in a masterful chapter on the Idea in Hegel. By fully appreciating the Science of Logic and situating it properly within Hegel's oeuvre, Rosen in turn provides new tools for wrangling with the conceptual puzzles that have brought so many other philosophers to disaster.

- Sales Rank: #1443380 in Books
- Published on: 2013-11-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.40" w x 6.00" l, 1.45 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 520 pages

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The beginning of a Hegelian golden age?

By John G. Bardis

Is Rosen's book the culmination of a golden age of Hegel interpretation in English, or is it, better, just the beginning of such a golden age?

Without question Hegel's Science of Logic is the greatest work produced by modern philosophy. It had been a largely closed work, but in the past 25 years six major commentaries (that I know of) have come out on it in English.

So Rosen enters an ongoing conversation, and, hopefully, he will initiate further conversation.

His book begins with a few of his introductions followed by comments on Hegel's several introductions, etc. for a hundred pages. All this is understandable and interesting, but it is tedious to have to wade through 100 pages just to get started.

There is then a perfectly decent commentary on the three chapters of the Quality section and the first two chapters of the Quantity section. As far as I know, the best commentary on these chapters is in Clark Butler's *Hegel's Logic* (1996)

Then, although there is a chapter heading for the third chapter of the Quantity section, this chapter is actually skipped completely along with the whole of the Measure section. It is almost as though someone editing the book accidentally misplaced two or three chapters. This material, though, is usually skipped--but usually it will receive at least some comment. The only work that I know of that deals with these chapters is David Gray Carlson's *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic* (2007).

Then Rosen deals with the first section of the Doctrine of Essence. This is the part of the SL that he dealt with in his first Hegel book from 1974. The commentary on the first two chapters is about 100 pages, largely repeating what he wrote in the earlier work. That this commentary is SO long seems to be due to the same editor who misplaced the earlier few chapters. He seems to have forgotten to edit this part all together. So at this point the book is beginning to look questionable. But then the miracle happens.

Rosen devotes two chapters and 40 pages to the Ground chapter of the SL. This is the heart and soul of the whole book. These chapters are worth the price of the book by themselves. These well edited chapters are lively, interesting, and fully engaged with Hegel's text.

Here, by the way, Rosen first introduces his main complaint about the SL. As he expresses it on page 345: "But what is still unexplained (and will be from start to finish) is the particular form or look of the Sache as this existing or appearing thing."

Then there are two chapters and forty pages devoted to the final 6 chapters of the Doctrine of Essence. These also are very interesting and very well written.

In most commentaries the Doctrine of Essence is just skimmed over lightly. But with Rosen this is the most important part of his book--and this is, as far as I know, the best commentary available on the Doctrine of Essence.

Rosen's dealing with the concept/judgment/syllogism is not very interesting. Perhaps he knows TOO much about logic. By far and away the best commentary on these three chapters is in Richard Dien Winfield's Hegel's Science of Logic (2012).

So then Rosen finishes off briefly but competently with the final 6 chapters of the Doctrine of the Concept. The best commentary on these chapters that I know of is in Herbert Marcuse's Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity (1932, ET 1987)

For people who are, so to speak, at ground zero with Hegel, knowing nothing about him, probably the best introduction to the SL would be Robert M. Wallace's Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom, and God (2005).

One suggestion that the conversation about Hegel is just getting off the ground, might be Zizek's recent very big book about Hegel (though not about the SL): Less than Nothing (2012), subtitled "Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism". This might be what Rosen is referring to on page 489 when he writes: "Fairness requires me to balance the Hegelian criticism of postmodernism in the text with the suggestion that the verbal fecundity of postmodernism, with the accompanying dissolution of analytical philosophy, may well be a sign of a forthcoming return to what Hegel would have regarded as a more serious version of philosophy".

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Finally someone is paying due attention to Hegel's Logic.

By Jaime Baldovinos

There are very few people in the US who spend the necessary time to read Hegel's Logic even though Hegel's system is incomprehensible without spending the time reading the Logic, Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Brilliant

By Amit Sen

Brilliant, thorough, deep and incisive (alas) last book from Stanley Rosen.

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