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From the *philosophia naturalis* to *Naturphilosophie*

In the last fifty years, Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* has not only been rediscovered but the interest in this part of Hegel's philosophy has grown stronger and stronger. Nonetheless, the thoughts Hegel delivered in the second part of his *Encyclopaedia* offer us perspectives and themes that are still interesting and even challenging. Indeed, neither the greater exegetical endeavours nor the newer attempts to deal with this part of the Hegelian philosophy have succeed in reaching a perspective or giving an account capable of solving most of, if not all the difficulties. The quest to a thoroughgoing interpretation of Hegel's *Philosophy of nature* is hereby still open. Under these circumstances, my aim will be neither to critique single accounts, nor to give myself an account I would pretentiously consider final and definitive. Rather, I will try to make a few suggestions in the hope of contributing to the common effort to read and re-read this text in order to reconsider and rethink not only the text in itself but also its philosophical and epistemic potential. In particular, I will deal with the problem of the relation between Hegel's project of a philosophy of nature (as it has been accomplished in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia*) and the model of a true treatment of nature in the science of XVIII century – which is part of the cultural background of Hegel's work as well as one of the most well-known targets of his critics. This issue has been usually resolved either with the unjustified prejudice that Hegel would have been unacquainted with the science of his time or with the alleged evidence that, even if he had had some kind of scientific education, he definitely had not understood almost nothing of what he had learned. Now, in contrast to such a biased and unfair interpretation I would discuss two main points. In a first section I will discuss both the philosophical attitude and the philosophical purpose of that book which, in many respects, has been the founding work and the cornerstone of modern science (until the very last XIX century at least), I mean Newton's *Principia mathematica philosophiae naturalis*. Then, in the second section, I will turn my focus on Hegel's project of his *Naturphilosophie* and I will try to make sense of it considering such a project from a point of view which took account of what has been discussed in the first part.

I would like to start with a question: what did it properly mean, to Hegel, to do a philosophy, whose matter shall be 'nature'? The question is likely to