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HEGEL'S *PHENOMENOLOGY*
OF SPIRIT
A Reappraisal

edited by

GARY K. BROWNING

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A REAPPRAISAL

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Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK



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Gary Browning

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GARY K. BROWNING

1. HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT: A REAPPRAISAL

REAPPRAISING HEGEL

Commenting upon Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* involves a process of reappraisal. Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* appraises the claims of consciousness, and these claims are judged ultimately in the light of the achievement of a self-sustaining mode of consciousness. A review of Hegel's phenomenological understanding of consciousness if it is not to be conducted according to external criteria, is bound to track and evaluate Hegel's appraisal of consciousness and, in doing so, will be undertaking a reappraisal of Hegel's assessment of consciousness.

Reappraisal also arises out of an appreciation of the self-consciously historical character of Hegel's philosophical enterprise. Philosophy, for Hegel, evokes the history of philosophy. Past and present philosophies are defined in terms of one another and the wider spiritual world of culture. A recognition of Hegel's historical understanding of the philosophical approach of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* invites a reconsideration of its meaning in relation to the history of philosophy. Again, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has generated a wealth of subsequent scholarly and philosophical commentary and the explanatory force of contemporary readings is enhanced by their reappraisal of previous interpretations.

This volume, which was inspired by a successful Conference, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Reappraisal*, organised by the Hegel Society of Great Britain and staged at Pembroke College, Oxford in 1993, exhibits a variety of forms of reappraisal. The papers delivered at the Conference have generally formed the bases for papers developed at greater length in this book. They adopt individual interpretive strategies conforming to no preconceived model of reappraisal, but they can be seen as undertaking reappraisals in ways which bear upon the processes of reappraisal signalled above. Some contributors re-examine Hegel's entire enterprise in appraising consciousness, while others focus upon specific sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* so that particular Hegelian judgments and transitions are reappraised. Again, relationships between the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's mature system of philoso-

phy and the contemporary cultural context are explored in a number of papers. Contributors also locate and review Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the context of post-Hegelian notions of the history of philosophy. Furthermore all the papers respond to specific interpretations of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The spirit of critical, dialectical engagement with preceding judgments and interpretations is captured in the organisation of this volume, for the papers are paired with Comments which highlight and criticise their lines of argument.

In the next two sections of this Introduction, the individual papers and their accompanying Comments will be discussed. Initially, their reappraisals of Hegel's phenomenological appraisal of consciousness, in respect of their assessment of Hegel's entire phenomenological project and their evaluation of particular shapes of consciousness, will be examined. Subsequently, the standpoints assumed in the papers about the identity of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the history of philosophy, their engagements with previous interpretations and the relations between the papers and their associated Comments will be explored.

REAPPRAISING HEGEL'S APPRAISAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In reviewing Hegel's appraisal of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, commentators confront what Pippin has termed, "This controversy about just what a 'phenomenology of spirit' is supposed to be ..."¹ In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in his later system, Hegel characterised thought and truth as infinite. True infinity, for Hegel, is what is self-limited so that finite elements express the infinite rather than pointing beyond themselves to an unspecifiable beyond.² A metaphorical expression of the true infinite is the circle, in which the finite does not point beyond itself to a supposed distinct destination, but returns to itself in a systematic arc. A metaphorical expression for the systematic character of Hegel's thought, however, neither provides a clear understanding of, nor justifies the truth of his thought. How is the purportedly infinite and self-related character of his thought to be understood?

Harris's paper, "Hegel's Correspondence Theory of Truth" reconsiders the theory of truth with which Hegel operates in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. For Harris, Hegel sees truth as consisting in a correspondence between the knowing mind and the truth about the world it is determined to discover. Inadequate perspectives on truth are seen as being undermined by a lack of correspondence between their claims and their putative objects. A systematic account of truth is traced to the internal movement of consciousness, whereby progressively less discrepant relationships between mind and world are established. In developing his account, Harris distances Hegel from a so-called coherence theory of truth in which partial, relatively incoherent explanations are to be dismissed as failures which must be superseded by a discrete, all-encompassing perspective. For Harris, this misses out on the Hegelian concern to see the concept of truth evolve out of a progressive cognitive involvement with the world.³

Harris argues that unreflected assertions about the world are appraised by

Hegel as in fact making assumptions about things which are neither registered nor explained. For Harris, Hegel's phenomenological perspective entails these unreflected standpoints are neither dismissed as meaningless nor judged invalid, even though their meaning is not fully comprehended until a take on truth is achieved which corresponds completely with its object. This process of cognitive development for Harris is in principle one that is recognisable to the succession of superseded perspectives on truth. Hegel's systematic pursuit of correspondence between knowledge and truth is taken as promoting a charity to irreconcilable disagreements and an acceptance of necessary moments of ignorance within knowledge.

The paper by Bubner appraises the role of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by reviewing its relationship with Hegel's mature system. He concludes by recognising that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has a vital role to play in opening the philosophical system to a recalcitrant contemporary culture. He reconsiders the provenance of the *Phenomenology of Spirit's* standpoint by reviewing Hegel's early writings and their assessment of contemporary culture. The early writings are read as diagnosing contemporary culture as suffering from schisms deriving from post-Enlightenment philosophy. The role of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, for Bubner, is to address these schisms so that systematic philosophy is enabled to find a hearing. Bubner takes the significance of Hegel's philosophising to reside in its historical perspective, which is exhibited in this engagement with contemporary culture. Hegel's system, however, is not seen as being tied to an historical standpoint; its systematic closure supersedes historical contingency.⁴

Jarvis's paper focuses upon a specific section, namely, "The Unhappy Consciousness." Jarvis interrogates Hegel by reviewing the unhappy consciousness in the light of Adorno's critique of what he takes to be the unwarranted closure of Hegel's system. Jarvis reads Adorno as registering that the unmediated character of immediate being resists incorporation into a systematic philosophical comprehension of experience. Adorno, though, is seen as appreciating Hegel's express concern to develop a conceptual system which allows for immediacy and externality. Jarvis himself takes Hegel as construing experience as a series of mediating concepts in which immediacy and otherness are taken as expressions of thought. The unhappy consciousness, for example, is to be understood as an expression of thought divided against itself, in which the self-relation of thought does not override the experience of sheer immediacy.

Duquette's paper, "The Political Significance of Hegel's Concept of Recognition" investigates the dialectic of recognition. The tensions generated in the struggle for recognition, depicted in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, are seen as posing the terms of contradictions which are resolved in Hegel's mature political philosophy. The ethical political community articulated in the *Philosophy of Right* is read as expressing the social and political conditions of mutual, harmonious recognition between persons. These conditions are taken as overcoming the recognitive dissonance rehearsed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Duquette explains how the logic of harmonious recognition underpins

Hegel's account of freedom within the modern state. An intimate relationship is established between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the fundamental concerns of Hegel's mature system. Duquette, however, is not uncritical of Hegel's mature political standpoint. While the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is observed to highlight the interdependence of individuals, and the reciprocity of their claims to be free, Duquette observes that freedom in the *Philosophy of Right* is primarily seen in organic terms which preclude the exercise of genuine freedom on the part of individuals. The power of Hegel's state is taken as overriding and transcending inter-personal and individual freedom.⁵

Bernstein's paper, "Conscience and Transgression: The Persistence of Misrecognition," focuses upon Conscience. In his reading of Hegel and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Bernstein does not see Hegel's ethics as entailing that the individualistic moral standpoint of conscience retreats before a communitarian vision of the spiritual life of a community.⁶ While carefully elaborating the bases of Hegel's critique of conscience, Bernstein suggests an interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which an absolute standpoint is achieved through the situated transgressions of conscience. This positive role attributed to the dissonant activity of conscience allows for a reading of Hegel highlighting the tragic expressiveness of individuality.

Rose's paper is characteristically engaging and thoughtful. It counterposes a reading of Hegel, in which he is seen as accommodating the complex, mediated character of thought and spiritual life, to a postmodern critique of modernity in which the deconstruction of dualities, such as subjectivity and objectivity, reflects a narrow preoccupation with abstractions of the "understanding." Rose sees Hegel as recognising that patterns of disharmony are not to be reduced to a series of repetitive, closed oppositions. She highlights the "comic" character of Hegel's reading of the contradictions of thought in which there is always a middle ground in which misrecognitions meet.⁷ Hegel's subtle, "open" treatment of ethical life is seen as providing the basis for a comprehensive understanding of its conditions.

Flay's paper, "Rupture, Closure and Dialectic," advances a convincing case that Hegel's thinking is not closed to attitudes and standpoints distinct from his own. *The Phenomenology of Spirit* itself is read as an "opening" to the mature system; an opening which is warranted by the contemporary turn of thought, setting consciousness apart from natural and spiritual settings. While Flay reads Hegel's system as open to cultural forms of dissonance, this openness is nonetheless seen as being explained and closed by the systematic account of thought given in the *Logic*. The closing of this circle, however, is not taken as overriding the opening, just as the infinite does not exclude the finite.

REAPPRAISAL: THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* remarked that to engage in the history of philosophy is at the same time to engage in philosophy.⁸ Equally for Hegel to philosophise presupposes the history of philosophy. Hegel's

conception of the reciprocity between philosophy and the history of philosophy has subsequently been endorsed by philosophers as diverse as Marcuse, Oakeshott, MacIntyre and Rorty.⁹ The appearance and the fate of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* testify to the ties between philosophy and its history. Hegel in the text explicitly theorises about past and contemporary philosophical standpoints. Subsequent philosophers have also defined their positions in relation to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and numberless philosophical commentaries have been devoted to interpreting its passages. The papers in this volume all develop their reappraisals by reflecting on the character of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a work in the history of philosophy, and engage with interpretations of its status as a work in the history of philosophy. The fact that an interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* develops its interpretation in the light of other historic interpretations is reflected in the composition of this volume in that the various pieces are paired with Comments which engage with their argumentative standpoints.

The interplay between Harris and Westphal emphasises how interpretations of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* engage with other interpretations so that enlightenment is a mediated, dialectical achievement of reappraisal. Harris's paper takes issue at points with Westphal's published work on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and Westphal's Comment in criticising Harris's understanding of sense certainty nicely focuses the reader's attention on its meaning. What unites the standpoints of Harris and Westphal is their mutual agreement that Hegel operates with a correspondence theory of truth, which is concerned to establish the agreement of truth with knowledge. Along the way, both Harris and Westphal offer critical perspectives on subsequent philosophical standpoints, such as the coherence theory of truth adopted by British Idealists and the acquaintance theory of knowledge assumed by critics of the coherence theory of truth.¹⁰

Bubner's paper appraises the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by locating it within its contemporary intellectual and cultural context, and Hegel's own early writings. A subtle survey of scholarship into the historical context of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* identifies its association with contemporary writings such as Reinhold's *Elements of Phenomenology*.¹¹ The critical return on Bubner's exploration of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*'s explanation of its own cultural context, resides in the role he sees it playing in establishing the viability of Hegel's system. The mature system, on this reading, demands a preparatory work to render its perspective acceptable in the context of a recalcitrant contemporary culture. Bubner's reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, therefore, does not explain it as a propaedeutic for non-philosophical consciousness. His interpretation signals the dependence of the philosophical standpoint on a suitable preparation of non-philosophical states of awareness for the reception and viability of its standpoint. At the end of the day, though, and in an explicit contrast with Heidegger, Bubner argues for the atemporality of the absolute philosophical perspective in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Tudor in his Comment on Bubner's piece endorses its main critical perspective. He relates Bubner's account of dialectical development in the

Phenomenology of Spirit to the relationship Plato establishes between critique of phenomenal forms of understanding and philosophical understanding. He interrogates, however, some of the implications of Bubner's characterisation of Hegel's standpoint. Bubner's reading of Hegel's notion of the explanatory power of philosophy is observed to compromise potentially the idea of an immanent phenomenological critique. This critical discussion at once re-delivers the reader into a reappraisal of the appraisal of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It questions whether the development of the forms of consciousness is determined by the force of their internal contradictions or if philosophy supplies an external critique. It also raises questions about the designated character of philosophy as atemporal, given the intimacy of the relationship Bubner perceives as obtaining between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and contemporary culture.

Jarvis's paper, "The 'Unhappy Consciousness' and Conscious Unhappiness: On Adorno's Critique of Hegel and the Idea of an Hegelian Critique of Adorno," and Bernstein's accompanying Comment, "Being Hegelian: Reply to Jarvis," interpret the *Phenomenology of Spirit* within an on-going philosophical tradition. Jarvis's reading of Adorno is informed by an appreciation of Hegel. Adorno's separation of thought from being is not seen as a mere repudiation of Hegel. Adorno is taken as recognising the mediated character of Hegel's speculative identity, in his identification of non-identity as other than a simple rehearsal of immediate, non-speculative identity. Adorno's non-identity is seen as bearing witness to Hegel's understanding of identity as involving the unity of identity and non-identity. Adorno's non-identity is seen as a way of breaking off in thought to register the conditioned character of thought: the separation of thought and being. This conditioned character, in turn, is taken as acknowledging alienated human labour and the given in nature.

This Hegelianised account of Adorno is matched by an interpretation of Hegel which is informed by a reading of Adorno. Hegel's phenomenological appraisal of unhappy consciousness is interrogated in the light of Adorno's recognition of the conditioned character of thought. Jarvis maintains an interpretation of Hegel in which mediation is read as opening up a prospect of the immediate. The unhappy consciousness is not seen as merely projecting a fantasy of its alienated consciousness, and recognition of the mediated status of its "beyond" does not obliterate its immediacy.

Jarvis, then, conducts a reappraisal of the philosophies of Hegel and Adorno by reviewing them in the light of one another. Bernstein's Comment on Jarvis's paper runs with a distinct understanding of how a philosophy must be interpreted in terms of the historical cultural context in which it is framed. He challenges the assumptions conditioning Jarvis's reading of Hegel and Adorno. For Bernstein, Adorno's assessment of Hegel turns upon the very particular context of the twentieth century. A reading of Hegel in the shadow of Auschwitz and the desiccation of twentieth century ethical life is taken as lending itself to critique and the exploration of semblances of otherness, rather than the immanent identification of *Sittlichkeit* which Hegel himself recognized

in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

Bernstein's paper, "Conscience and Transgression: The Persistence of Misrecognition" interprets the role of conscience in Hegel's thought by reappraising the relationship of Hegel to a number of philosophical positions. *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is taken as recognising and criticising a formal and abstract mode of Kantian conscientiousness in several passages. Bernstein also relates this critique to contemporary abstract moral theories, such as those constructed by Rawls and Habermas. Bernstein, though, does not see Hegel as merely rejecting individual conscientiousness. Rather, Hegel is interpreted as attributing a positive role to conscience in its tragic, expressive dimension. Hegel is taken as envisioning social recognition as being realized through transgressive conscience. Hegel's treatment of conscience and Kantian moral philosophy is thereby reappraised.¹²

Finlayson's Comment, "Beyond the Antigone Complex: A Reply to Jay Bernstein" emphasises the adventurousness of Bernstein's reappraisal of Hegel. He casts doubt upon the success of Bernstein's reading of Hegel, however, by suggesting its understatement of the synoptic, constitutive roles of speculation and Spirit in Hegel's philosophy. He also appraises Bernstein's identification of the reappearances of Antigone at points in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as misidentifications, and rehearses Jarvis's suggestion that a reorientation to the Kant-Hegel relationship would be fruitful for further inquiry.

Rose's paper, "The Comedy of Hegel and the *Trauerspiel* of Modern Philosophy" reappraises Hegel by relating him to the contemporary world of postmodern philosophy's "aberrated mourning." Postmodern philosophy is indicted for mistaking the nature of Hegel's philosophy. A postmodern misreading of Hegel, for Rose, misconceives the movement of Hegel's dialectic as taking place through dualistic oppositions giving way to new terms. In contrast, Rose takes dialectical movement as the dynamic rhythm of a series of complex mediated oppositions, whereby otherness is not opposed to an independent subject, but is refracted through the comic misperceptions of selves relating to other selves' misperceptions. Rose's reading of Hegel has a critical edge in its decisive rejection of three aspects of a postmodern reading of Spirit. She rejects the notion of Spirit as being distinct from matter; she denies the idea of a spiritual teleological destiny and she does not accept that law is to play the fundamental role in spiritual ethical life. For Rose, a sympathetic reappraisal of Hegel holds out the prospect of a renewal of political life, in which a dualistic juxtaposition of subjective rights and communal law and the frenetic individualism of postmodernism, can be superseded.

Jarvis's comment on Rose's paper, "Idle Tears: A Response to Gillian Rose," stands back from the piece to locate it in the broader sweep of Rose's critical engagement with Hegel. He testifies to the force of her reappraisal of Hegel, especially in its reading of Hegel's system as accommodating difference. Jarvis, however, interrogates the meaning of the "we" expressed in Rose's work, which is taken as posing problems similar to those arising out of the assumed unity between author and reader entertained in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Jarvis intimates an alternative interpretive strategy in reading Hegel in which another

trail in the history of philosophy would be followed by re-exploring the Kant-Hegel relationship.

Flay and Burbidge agree on the significance of rupture within Hegel's thought. Burbidge acknowledges the insight of Flay's perspective by observing the omnipresence of rupture in Hegel's system. The sense of a dynamic open-ended system, and a Hegelian openness to non-philosophical experience is reinforced. In explaining how Hegel's system embraces both closure and openness, Flay invokes the history of philosophy, identifying the dynamic of the transformations of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* with the maieutic dialectic of Plato. This invocation of the dialectic of Plato's early dialogues, however, runs counter to Hegel's own estimation of the superiority of Plato's later dialectic to that of the earlier destructive model.¹³ Flay's location of the appearance of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* within a distinct intellectual, cultural context lends itself to a reading which highlights the historicity of Hegel's philosophising. Burbidge endorses this historical reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.¹⁴ He takes the absolute perspective of absolute knowledge to preclude any intellectual resting place, for he interprets Hegel as envisaging that nature will once more rupture this sense of completeness. The Christian religion in its metaphorical expression of loss and redemption is seen as a powerful statement of Hegel's philosophy.

Duquette's piece, "The Political Significance of Hegel's Concept of *Recognition*" reviews the relationship between the process of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Hegel's mature political philosophy in the light of subsequent interpretive commentary. Duquette distances himself from interpretations of the process of recognition which highlight anticipations of proletarian emancipation in the developmental labour of the slave in the aftermath of submission to the master. In so doing, Duquette shows himself to be aware of the pitfalls of reading Hegel backwards from the standpoint of later philosophical and social interests.¹⁵ In aligning the *Philosophy of Right* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Duquette also distinguishes his reading of Hegel from interpretations which construe Hegel's political thought as detachable from the overall direction of his metaphysics.¹⁶ Again, Duquette in his reading of Hegel's resolution of the problems of recognition, runs counter to current orthodoxy in Hegelian scholarship by interpreting Hegel's account of freedom primarily in non-individualistic terms. In my Comment, "Recognising the Politics of Recognition," I suggest that Duquette's discussion overlooks a number of moral and social standpoints and practices in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right*, which bear upon Hegel's perception of social recognition and political freedom. In particular, a closer consideration of the section on morality in the *Philosophy of Right* is projected as rendering Hegel's account of freedom consonant with a respect for individuality and moral agency.

Overall, these papers and their companion Comments, undertake reappraisals of Hegel and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in ways which are sympathetic to Hegel's own project of reappraisal, as it is developed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. They reflect and re-examine Hegel's identification of truth with the

reflexive awareness of consciousness, and understand the history of philosophy as a medium for reinterpreting the perceptions of individual, historic thinkers.

All the contributions reconsider the meaning and validity of an appraisal of consciousness. In the papers and their accompanying Comments, Hegel's thought is related to philosophical predecessors like Plato and Kant, while the meaning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is explored by a critical engagement with the subsequent philosophical perspectives of Adorno, postmodern philosophy, Marxists and Heidegger. At the same time, the conditional, mediated character of any interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is exhibited directly in this volume by the incorporation of Comments on the papers, which show how interpretations are themselves moments in an on-going process of reappraisal. The papers and their Comments do not subscribe to an Hegelian orthodoxy; Hegel's ethical and political standpoints are interpreted differently by the contributors. Bernstein highlights the role of transgression whereas Duquette sees the Hegelian state as transcending the individual. The relationship between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its cultural context receives distinct treatments, for instance, in the papers of Bubner and Flay. What all the papers express, however, is the continued relevance of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to contemporary philosophical and political debate, when it is reappraised in the spirit of Hegel.

NOTES

1. R. Pippin, "You Can't Get There From Here: Transition Problems in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*," F. Beiser ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 53.
2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenologie des Geistes, Werke 3*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970). For a lively English translation, see G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by Sir James Baillie, (London and New York: George, Allen and Unwin, 1971), p.247. For concise, perceptive commentary on Hegel's conception of infinity see T. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 360.
3. Harris takes Plato to be the inspiration for this correspondence theory of truth. For distinct treatments of the relationships between Hegel and Plato's metaphysics and epistemologies, see the following. M. Rosen, *Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). G.K. Browning, "Transitions to and from Nature in Hegel and Plato," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, no.26, Autumn/Winter, 1992. J.N. Findlay, "Hegelianism and Platonism," in J.J. O'Malley, K.W. Algozin and F.G. Weiss (eds.), *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).
4. Bubner distinguishes his interpretation of this relation between philosophy and history in Hegel from that of Heidegger. See R. Bubner, *Dialektik und Wissenschaft*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962).
5. Kenneth Westphal suggests a similarly nuanced reading of the relationship between the community and the individual in Hegel's social ethics in his article, "The Basic Context and Structure of Hegel" *Philosophy of Right* in F.C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1993), p. 236–237. See also, H. Brod, *Hegel's Philosophy of Politics – Idealism, Politics and Identity*, (San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1992).
7. For a concise alternative treatment of Hegel's organicism, see *Ibid.*, pp. 236, and G.K. Browning, "Plato and Hegel: Reason, Redemption and Political Theory," in *History of Political Thought*, Vol. VIII (3), 1987, pp. 377–393.

8. G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1892, Vol.1. p.6.
9. See H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, (London, Routledge Kegan and Paul: 1941) and M. Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). For a discussion of Rorty and Macintyre and the relationship between Hegel's approach and recent "historicist" tendencies in philosophy, see the article, Robert Stern, "Hegel and the New Historicism," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, nos. 21/22, 1990.
10. For a revisionist treatment of the British Idealists, which sees them as developing something like contemporary, non-metaphysical views of Hegel see, Robert Stern, "British Hegelianism: A Non-Metaphysical View," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, No. 31, Spring/Summer 1995.
11. K.L. Reinhold, *Elemente der Phänomenologie oder Erläuterung des rationalen Realismus durch seine Anwendung auf die Erscheinungen in Beytrage zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustands der Philosophie beym Anfang* (d. 19. Jh., Heft 4: 1802).
12. This is a decidedly revisionist account of Hegel's ethics and of his treatment of Kantian ethics. For a more traditional account in which Hegel is seen as dissolving ethics into sociology see W.H. Walsh, *Hegelian Ethics*, (London and New York: Macmillan, 1969).
13. For an account of Hegel's appreciation of Plato's dialectic see chapter 1 in G.K. Browning, *Plato and Hegel: Two Modes of Philosophising about Politics* (New York: Garland Press, 1991).
14. A treatment of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* which sees it as primarily a vehicle for aiding non-philosophical forms of consciousness can be found in I. Soll, *An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics*, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1969).
15. An example of such a tendentious reading of Hegel is A. Kojeve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. J.H. Nichols, (New York: Basic Books, 1960). A classic statement of the constant but necessary revision of the past in the light of changing cultures and values is to be found in R.G. Collingwood, "Epilegomena," *The Idea of History*, edited with an Introduction by Jan Van Der Dussen, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
16. A non-metaphysical account of Hegel's political theory is given in Z.A. Pelczynski, "Introduction," *Hegel's Political Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964). See also the discussion in the opening chapter of M. Tunick, *Hegel's Political Philosophy – Interpreting the Practice of Legal Punishment*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

2. HEGEL'S CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

“The world,” said Wittgenstein, “is the totality of *facts*, not of *things*.” According to the “correspondence theory,” therefore, “the truth” will be the totality of assertions that state “the facts.” In Hegel’s mature theory of “truth,” this is not “philosophical truth” at all, but the ideal limit of “correct statement.”

“Philosophical truth,” however – like Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* – is a rather special subset of “the truly assertible facts.” It is the set that contains all of the true assertions about the logical structure of human cognitive experience. Thus, it is a set of “logical facts”; and if we are to know *scientifically*, what “human knowledge” is, we must be able to state these “facts” *correctly*. Hence Hegel’s theory of “truth” is not independent of his theory of “correctness.” He has a “correspondence theory” of “truth”; but “Truth” is a property of assertions about “knowledge,” not of assertions about “the world.” For this reason, the theory of “truth” becomes a complex and interesting topic in Hegel’s view, and not the boringly simple matter already disposed of in the formal definition of “correctness.” What is *called* “the correspondence theory” does not deserve the honorific name of “theory” at all. It is a formal logical truth that can be stated in a single sentence. Only in Hegel’s theory of “experience” does “correspondence” become, for the first time, *interesting*.

John McCumber¹ is quite right that Hegel did not conceive of the theory of “philosophical truth” – or of “logic” – as consisting of simple “assertions.” What happens in our cognitive commerce with the world – both in logic, and in “experience” – is that truth-concepts evolve (or develop). If we state our truth-concept as the assertion of a “correspondence” of thought and thing, then the seemingly straightforward statement reveals a life of its own. Definitional assertions do occur in “experience” – because they enforce themselves upon our minds as “necessary.” But the proposition that is thus formulated is a “speculative” one. It moves itself; and we keep trying to fasten it down by improving the statement to make it more adequate. This quest for “adequacy” eventually involves recognizable contradictions; and ideological “parties” form on opposite sides of the *Entzweiung*. Speculative philosophy is concerned with the overcoming of these experienced contradictions; and “philosophical logic” is the theory of the “conceptual motion” that produces and resolves them.

Philosophy is *needed* precisely because the *correspondence* of “truth” and “world” *must* be maintained. So “logic” (if it can be completed) does become a set of “true assertions.”

The one thing that Hegel is *not*, is a “coherence theorist of truth.” The “coherence theory” was (of course) invented by thinkers who thought of themselves as “Hegelians.” But they invented it because they wanted to be “holists,” and to maintain with Hegel that “Truth is the whole,” without accepting Hegel’s *method*. The “coherence theorists” hated the dialectic. Hegel, on the other hand, was inspired by Plato to invent the dialectical method precisely in order to be able to maintain the correspondence between knowledge and its object, at all levels of “experience.” As a “correspondence theorist,” he is unique, not only because he admits “levels of experience” but because “truth” is for him, not simply the climax of the investigation of facts, but also the foundation of the theory of *values*. For this reason, he needs to demonstrate the correspondence of concept and object in both directions, and independently.

In his “Science of experience” (i.e. the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) “correspondence” is the logical structure of the “speculative concept” of “Experience” itself. The ways in which our thinking can correspond with “the world” (in Wittgenstein’s sense of “everything that is the case”) are laid out serially – starting not with the philosophical “protocol sentences” of the Vienna Circle, in any of its many protocols, but rather with the pre-philosophical certainties of G.E. Moore (such as “this is a hand”); and ending with the “recollection” of the highest mode of Experience (that of the community which knows itself as the “*incarnation* of God,” and therefore as the “absolute knowing” of “the world”). The “series” is a dialectically *necessary* one, because each new level is born from *our* logical observation of how and why the previous level reached a limit and broke down; and the justification of our empirical knowledge (in spite of all the successive breakdowns) is provided by the fact that the consciousness which knows the identity of the self-consciously reconciled community with the all-creative power of God, belongs to an embodied philosopher whose knowledge is necessarily comprehended in a moment of sense-certainty that can still stretch out a hand just as Moore did. Every moment of the conceptual *movement* is preserved, and shown to be “necessary” because the moving concept closes into a circle.

The evolution of Hegel’s concept of Truth as correspondence begins with the simple experience that Russell called “knowledge by acquaintance.” But “we,” the philosophical observers, know from the first moment that we cannot have any “absolute knowledge” in this mode, because “the whole world” is an object of our “acquaintance” only as an absolute alternation of Night and Day (and as an immense variety of things and qualities, often transient to the point of evanescence, in the daylight). We know, therefore, that we must follow “the leading of language”; but before we move on, we do first let our finite world of direct acquaintance crystallize into the cognitive method of “ostensive definition” because the moment when our “real object” can be *pointed at* belongs to every stage of the evolution of the concept of truth as correspondence. We *must*

move on, because the consciousness that is satisfied with this "knowledge by acquaintance" is pre-philosophical (and even pre-literate, as in the paradigm example of the peasant-wife who has a world of "acquaintances" which she knows by name, or by "descriptions" that can be ostensibly completed: "boy-Martin," "girl-Ursel," cows "Lisa," "spotted one," "black one," etc.).²

We could never make a philosopher out of the peasant-wife. But we could exhibit the inadequacy of her truth criterion to her, by asking her to point out that very important acquaintance of hers, the dead brother who is with God. She will point "above the bright blue sky"; but even she knows that she is helpless. Her counterpart in Hegel's aphorism about her – the speculative philosopher – *can* point to Plato or Spinoza if asked to do so. But when (s)he points to the books on her table, it is like pointing to the photograph produced by an electron microscope. The object pointed at is insufficient to verify the concept; now it is the whole "experience" that verifies itself. Electron microscopes and cloud-chambers can only be successfully constructed under the guidance of the theories that their observations help to confirm. In this kind of confirmation the relation of "concept" to "experience" has been transformed. It has become circular, so that we cannot say any longer what is "subjective" and what "objective." The terms change sides readily according to the context of our questions and observations; and that is just what will happen to the peasant-wife's "heaven and earth" in Hegel's "science of experience."

According to Hegel's doctrine, the evolution of "consciousness" through which the peasant-wife's world of acquaintance is inverted into a "pure concept" in which God, heaven and her dead brother become the first and best known things, while her cows become the last and least known things, is not generally noticed at all by the ordinary unphilosophical mind. Speaking more precisely (and less arrogantly) the inversion is not noticed by the non-speculative mind, in which it occurs. But the speculative philosopher – the one who has transcended the naive realism of "common sense" from the start, and who knows (because of Kant's achievement) that "the world" is a "concept" and "experience" is its motion of development, can "observe" what happens as (s)he comes to be and to know what (s)he is in truth, and can put the movement together in its logical order.

Hegel describes the movement in some rather dense and difficult paragraphs of his Introduction; and the question may be raised whether his description of the transition to a new shape of "consciousness" applies to consciousness as simple, or to consciousness as reflexive.³ But this is a false alternative, because the analysis applies at both levels. The transition to a new concept both of truth and of the world happens to the observed consciousness⁴ simply and blindly. It blunders about (like Augustine, for instance) until it finds what it needs. Augustine moved from "Scepticism" to "faith"⁵ with a *leap*; and one can, in ordinary experience, become a sceptic through dissatisfaction with almost any position.

It is only for us, as speculative observers, that the evolutionary *progression* is apparent; and that is because we have the concept of "experience" – i.e., we understand the interpretive "identity" of the truth-concept and the object-

world from the beginning. But if the progression did not *happen* (at the level of simple world- or object-consciousness) we could never discover it, and thread the motions together logically in our reflective “observation.”

We begin with the peasant wife, and with Thomas Reid, her common-sensical champion in Hegel’s time.⁶ Her criterion of truth is the correspondence of the name with the *Sache* (the concrete fact) that she can point at. This is sensible truth as “correctness.” The *Bauersfrau* points in space and time; and (on the side of the world) the moments or objects that she points at are necessarily elements in a continuum. Similarly, her “names” are elements in a common universe of discourse. She must actually use “thing” and “property” words to identify her *Sachen*: my “house,” your “tree,” Lisa, the *best* cow, the *spotted* one, etc. This knowledge by acquaintance is only *possible* in an objective universe of nows and thens, heres and theres, and a conceptual universe of thing-concepts. The peasant-wife makes the transition from Sense-Certainty to Perception and back again continually and spontaneously without any consciousness of changing her ground.

The common-sense philosophers who take over from her with their explicit *concept* of a world of definable “things” in space and time behave in the same way. But they deceive themselves more systematically, pointing sometimes at the thing as “objective” and the properties as “subjective,” and sometimes doing the opposite, depending on what pressures of argument they are exposed to. That “*everything* is ‘in itself’ the totality of what it is *for everything else*” is the result that we observe here. With this we arrive in the world of Understanding. But *we* are not tormented by Eddington’s problem of “two tables,” because (unlike the Understanding that we are observing) we know that “force” and “utterance” are mutually necessary and mutually equivalent. We can also see that because of the conceptually necessary duplication of force as soliciting and solicited (i.e., its duplication as free mind and necessary order) the “world” of understandable necessity must invert itself into the world of living freedom. (To show that that is what the text asserts is a complex problem. But the “movement” itself is simple.)

In the next step – the observation of “life” in its world – we have to “stand in for the Concept.” In the “free self” of our observation theoretical consciousness has disappeared. The transition here *has to be* a “thought-experiment.” It is only in a “thought-experiment” that we can observe “life” as an objective *Gestalt*. No singular consciousness actually experiences the logical transition from “understandable necessity” to “self-conscious freedom,” because every active self necessarily *finds* itself immediately in the world. The transition from Understanding to Life is only validated as a fact of “experience” later on in our Science (at the level of “absolute spirit” – i.e., in the evolution of total cultures). In the philosophical history of our cultural world the transition from Understanding to Life as Free Desire is exhibited in the contrast between the culture of ancient Egypt and that of ancient Greece.

We can observe the evolution of theoretical consciousness equally well in classical Greece or in post-Renaissance Europe.⁷ But if we look for Free Desire as the concept of “the human truth” in the modern era we do not find

“correspondence” but only falsification and perversion. Thus Hobbes recognizes the fulfilment of desire as the *goal* of the self; but what emerges from *his* “truth for self-consciousness” is an arbitrary sovereign will that is *artificially* made to “stand for right reason.” The proper logical and *natural* evolution of our selfish desire to be “the measure of all things,” is in Greek political experience; the contradiction encountered in finite experience as a bad infinite dominated by natural need, is resolved by an educational advance to the spiritual “desire for another self,” i.e., for a higher kind of selfhood of one’s own. It was the Sophists who first articulated the self-contradictory consciousness of human life as a “restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death.” But that was only when the ideal selfhood of “life in the *Volk*” was in the process of breaking down.

The *political Gestalt* of Infinite Life as the “human truth” we shall only reach in “true Spirit” (where the free self-consciousness identifies totally with its “ethical substance,” i.e. with the City as a “spiritual thing” in a world of similar “things”). For the moment (in the evolution of singular consciousness), “Life as Desire” is a thought-experiment that remains external to the sequence of properly instantiated *Gestalten*; and the actual “experience” of the finite self-consciousness that wants to be “the measure of all things” takes place in the cultural world that falls *between* Protagoras and Hobbes. Eteocles and Polyneices (whom we shall meet again in “True Spirit”) are a perfect paradigm of the “first experience” (the “struggle to the death”). But a couple of barons who have turned aside on their journey to the Crusade to carve out fiefs in the Morea (medieval Greece) will serve equally well; and what follows this “first experience,” belongs all of it to the world of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*, rather than to the world between Homer and Sophocles.

The “first experience” confirms the truth that the “measure of all things” is mortal; and that, when dead, the desiring self measures nothing. The self that is to be a free measure, must have an associate self who consents to be the instrument through which the desired measure is imposed on the world. The serf is important, because he is the one who first learns the *objective* measure of things. But we must not make the Hobbesian mistake of supposing that this makes him the rational partner. On the contrary, he has the measure of his failure to be a true “self” in his lord. The speculative truth is that Lord and Bondsman are partners in *one* self-consciousness. This splitting of self-consciousness into a “spirit” with unequal members is the first step towards the freedom of “True Spirit,” and ultimately of “Conscience.” The Stoic takes the next step by insisting that in thought we are all free; and the Sceptic adds that in practice what this means is that all of our thinking is equally arbitrary, since it is at the mercy of an uncomprehended, bad infinite process for all of its content.

The two sides of the divided self-consciousness become sides of a properly singular self in the Unhappy Consciousness. This unity is “unhappy” because the measure of truth now belongs to the “Unchangeable Consciousness” in the world of pure thought. The changeable world can never have any identical proportion to this, so the “truth” of “what truly is” is simply lost. We retain

only the *hope* of regaining it beyond the pale of death, together with the assurance of an external “counsellor” that, in its total cycle of sin, repentance and silent devotion, our unhappy will “corresponds” to God’s.

This mediated certainty of identity with the will of God is only a “representation” of Reason, because the three terms (finite self, God and mediator) are separately displayed. The two opposites become united in Descartes as their “middle.” With the *Cogito* we have the “Concept” of Reason as the certainty of the knowing self that it is “all reality.” The thinking self-certainty of Descartes unfolds into the evident fact that “God is”; and this same “rational” certainty finds itself “instinctively” (i.e. as “induction” on the basis of perceived resemblance) in Bacon.

But “for us” what is born with our “thinking self-certainty” is the subjective idealism of Kant and Fichte. We begin our “Reason” chapter at the end of Reason’s evolution. Hegel’s fifth chapter begins with “the Category” that is only explicitly reached in its last movement, because we must have the “result” in our minds, if we are to grasp its identity with its “process.” Reason is simply the inversion of “faith” (as seen in the Unhappy Consciousness). In Chapter V the knowing self identifies with its “Unchangeable” side, and reverts to the Stoical moment of the antithesis of free thought. The nemesis of this reversion is the rebirth of “formalism.” Descartes has nothing but the mathematical knowledge of the Understanding from first to last; and the Baconian “instinct” of observation moves from useful discoveries to theoretical constructs that are increasingly empty and useless.

The theoretical journey of Reason ends with the absurdity of trying to observe the “capacities” of the mind in the skull. The sallies that Hegel quotes so aptly from Lichtenberg should not make us forget – as we usually do – that Phrenology continued to be the only observational science of the mind that the nineteenth century had, and that some of the best intellects of the age clung desperately to their faith in the objective correspondence of bone and character, long after Hegel was dead. But the transition to the view that what mind *does* is what truly corresponds to what it *is*, is where the identification of Reason with “thinghood” logically leads. The “thing” that Reason is, is the *law* that it *legislates* for itself; and first it decrees its own “pleasure” (*Lust*). As Hegel’s reference to the *Faust* fragment indicates, this transition is from “gray theory” to “life’s golden tree.” But Faust’s “pleasure” with Gretchen brings them both to social grief; and we can observe the emergence of the “result” – a rational commitment to the universal “Law of the Heart” – in Gretchen’s musings after the scene “At the Well.”⁹ Finally, social necessity is completely accepted and we reach the socially committed Virtue that sees itself as opposed to universal self-seeking. At this point the original truth-criterion of Faust’s new life, has been “comprehensively” inverted.

When we admit that all action – no matter how “virtuous” its motivation may be – is also self-seeking; and that any rational activity which appears to others to be self-seeking does in fact accomplish some public benefit, we have arrived at Real Individuality. This is the “Category” of Reason itself, the *Sache selbst* of Rationality. In its individual shape it is simply the two principles of

general utility and private happiness perfectly harmonized. The "truth" of singular Reason is the enlightened gospel of Eudaemonism; and the community of these Real Individuals is an "animal kingdom of the Spirit" in which, like the angels of Aquinas (or the monads of Leibniz, who is distinctly echoed here), every individual is a different species unto herself.

The "movement" of Observing Reason was all downhill. Rational inquiry by the method of empirical induction – which is identified as "the instinct of Reason" in Hegel's *Logic*¹⁰ – can only come face to face with the badness of its own logic, and the impossibility of achieving *real* knowledge on the basis of a nominalist ontology. On the other hand, the movement of practical Reason in its self-actualization has so far been positively progressive; but now we hit a brick wall. The rational individual belongs logically to the universal community of humanity; but now we discover that (contrary to what Kant and Fichte taught) the incarnate Category can give no laws for the universal human society of Reason at all. Hegel's account is here very truncated. But any reader of Plato's dialogues knows why "truthtelling" is not *always* rational; and even the universal marketplace (which is clearly implicit in the harmony of social utility with individual fulfilment, or "happiness") cannot be rationally established because we cannot decide by pure Reason whether human society should be communist or privately acquisitive. If we leave the rational individuals free to create a plurality of societies, then we find that (by reference to some appropriate social ideal) the individual can justify any principle (s)he wants to hold. Thus we have come back, finally, to "Pleasure and Necessity"; and this shows us that the individual cannot *make* laws. (S)he must *find* them. The original "laws" of universal humanity are the "laws of nature."

These instinctively rational "laws of nature," being the laws of *human* nature, are also "laws of freedom." It is not the "real individual" who is "free," but the substantial community in which the "free self" is *recognized as an equal*. This we have known (logically) since the beginning of Chapter IV, where it was needed for the right interpretation of self-conscious nature as "Desire." But now we have arrived at the point where "Spirit" exists in its *truth* (instead of in the distorted Roman-Medieval form of a hierarchy of *unequal* recognition). This "truth" of freedom is *immediate*. It is a direct and simple identity of nature and freedom, which exists in the individual as a culturally molded *pathos*, a rational "intuition" that unfolds in adult life as the display of "character." *Nature* gives this "truth" its rational "sides." Boys grow up in the family to found a new family of their own, in which they have their "pleasure" (but not illegitimately, like Faust). But their rational freedom lies in the will to put that "pleasure" behind them, and commit themselves to make and uphold the City's laws (even unto death). Girls, on the other hand, grow up to leave their families, and run another family (ethically, and usually with some "pleasure" because their natural desire is satisfied).¹¹ But their rational freedom is in devotion to the family as an "ethical substance" on its own account (the community of living and dead members); and this piety is of fundamental importance in two ways. First, it provides the only direct access to the "ethical substance" in its universality, because all Greeks are reconciled in death; and secondly, it gives

to all citizens – who equally owe their civil community an absolute ethical loyalty “unto death” – the recognition of the spiritual (or ideal) “individuality” that they gain through the sublation of their natural (or real) one.

For the Greeks (whom we are now observing) the *Antigone* portrayed this truth intuitively as the tragic collision that must not happen. For us, the play shows why the collision was bound to happen. The military genius must one day arise who thinks only of his family interest. Then there will no longer be “spiritual things” in an ethical substance, but only rational atoms in an ethical void. This came to pass in the Roman Empire. Here, for more than two hundred years, a universal “condition of law” endured – and Gibbon declared “without hesitation” that “... the period that elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus ...” (96–180 AD) was the one “... during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous.”¹² But this “condition of right” meant the abolition of communal freedom and the repression of the natural freedom of Self-consciousness. So it was equally a “condition of wrong.” The implicit negative became explicit in the “year of the four Emperors” (68–9 AD). But the Stoic concept of universal recognition prevailed until with Commodus the rule of the naked sword began. Caracalla made the citizens of every city equal citizens of Rome. But the reality of life inside the Empire was by then almost as unstably anarchic as life beyond the borders; and quite soon the border itself was to vanish.

The Empire, with its alien law, was the first phase of the World-Spirit’s “Unhappy Consciousness” – the Unchangeable Roman Law as Judge. With the conversion of Constantine we enter the second phase – the “relation to the Shaped Unchangeable.” In the world of *Bildung*, the Universal Church (as vicegerent of the Saviour in Heaven, the human *shape* of the Unchangeable) now has the “cultural” task of “forming” all natural individuals for a spiritual destiny. Through Luther’s work (but also through Catholic Augustinians like Jansenius and Pascal) the Church molds us all into the inward consciousness of Faith (the “third phase” of Unhappy Consciousness, when salvation is actually experienced inwardly). The explicit emergence of individual Reason as self-conscious Insight begins later and takes longer. Hegel finds its perfect *Gestalt* in Goethe’s translation of *Rameau’s Nephew*, which had only been out for a year or two when he took up his pen.

The communal “work” of this general “culture” is national sovereignty; and the perfect *Gestalt* of the world in which Reason knows itself as the *Sache selbst* (the harmony of private and public utility or welfare) is the enlightened despotism of the *Ancien Régime*.¹³ This work itself was overthrown by the development of individual culture to the “absolute” level of the critical *Sache selbst* – or the embodied “Category” as universal rational insight. The Enlighteners proclaimed as their “truth” that “humanity is naturally good”; and in their “frenzy of self-conceit” they taught that the whole structure both of the Faith, and of secular authority, was a conspiracy of perverted insight. How there could logically *be* any such perverse insight they did not stop to consider; and so the fate of individuated rationality in its actual embodiment is to make itself into a skull upon the guillotine. Once again we hit the wall – and a lot

harder this time.

But now at last the "truth" of human experience is grasped properly. It is not the political community of the living that can realize the human truth fully, but Antigone's religious community of the living and the dead. Heaven cannot literally be transplanted to Earth, but it can be comprehended as the spiritual world that we ourselves make in the here and now. The movement towards this "truth" is through the Kantian understanding of experience as the meeting point of two "worlds," the noumenal and the phenomenal. Hegel gives a very complex, but to my mind entirely convincing demonstration of the incoherence of the postulated noumenal world; and all of the "projections" of practical Reason collapse into the Self of Conscience. Our philosophical guide takes care to let us see that all of the absurdities and follies of the embodied Category are still present in Conscience. But Conscience is the "real individuality" that must be recognized and treated with absolute respect. It reaches its own perfect Concept as the Beautiful Soul. Like the indignant Law of the Heart (from which it differs because it now embodies its own "world") the Beautiful Soul judges all who are not creatively free harshly. The "world" that it embodies is still a noumenal one, the dream world of a "magical idealist" like Novalis. The Hard Heart must "break"; it must recognize the "evil" of its own dreaming inaction, and the necessity of the selfish moment in all action. In this way "moral judgement" passes over into "historical comprehension"; and the Beautiful Soul becomes the philosophical historian.

"Forgiveness" is, of course, the climax of Christian ethics; and as the "Spirit" that exists *within and between* all members of the universal community of Reason, the all-merciful God is the "Concept" that we need in order to comprehend and reintegrate all of the "God-Shapes" into which earlier communities had projected the identity of their members with one another and with Nature. There is no need for us here to go through our whole journey again on the side of the absolute identity of Substance and Subject which has now emerged. What *does* matter is for us to see that the philosophical historian is the absolute model of all scientific inquiry. Comprehension presupposes reconciliation. In the human sciences we have a perfect paradigm case at hand in William James. The "block Universe" which he criticized was only a coherentist perversion of Hegel's view; but when he stigmatized the Hegelian Absolute as a "moral holiday" he was at least in the right ball park. The Absolute is not a "holiday" however; it is only the clearing of the way for scientific observation. If James himself wants to study a murderer (to decide whether (s)he is legally insane) he must forget his own revulsion from the crime, and try to understand how the crime came about "from inside."

The introspective psychology of William James fits Hegel's model of "self-understanding in the other" perfectly. But Hegel's speculative theory claims that "Spirit is self-cognition in *absolute* otherness" (Miller, § 26); and this means that his theory comprehends *all* kinds of scientific observation. I shall not press Hegel's claim here beyond the limits of practical common sense – because I think that only those who are deeply versed in a given science can say anything non-trivial about the theoretical bearings of its Hegelian "humaniza-

tion.” But it is clear that the whole ethics of scientific inquiry can (and should) be organized in the context of Hegel’s concept of “absolute knowledge.” The ethics involved is not *produced* by that systematic concept, but discovered piecemeal by the common sense of the investigators. Systematically, it can only be “observed” like everything else in the “Science of experience.”

The importance of a systematic organization of the “shapes of truth” in the Hegelian way is twofold. First it teaches us to expect irreconcilable disagreements about which we simply have to be charitable. For it belongs to the logic of action that there are two sides to every question – and there may well appear to be far more than two, when the question itself contains confusion. Secondly, the logical structure behind this active experience is the concept of “absolute teleology,” which tells us that *all* knowledge necessarily contains the moment of ignorance. The philosophical completion of our knowledge of how we can know the world teaches us that all “scientific” knowledge is an *act* of socially validated interpretation; and further that every active project is a voyage into the unknown where what we have done reveals (both to us and to others) an *unexpected* aspect, unforeseen and unforeseeable. Indeed, it must reveal at least two such aspects (an *Entzweiung*), and it normally reveals many. For that is how “absolute teleology” conceptually unifies necessity and freedom. The knowledge of necessity is the active condition of freedom; and the experience of freedom is necessarily the experience of uncertainty, the experience of the unknown.¹⁴ We are now aware that even the world of gravity and mechanics, which Hegel (like Newton and Kant) assigned confidently to the Understanding (with its categories derived directly from perception) is not a realm of simple and immediate correspondence between “force” and “manifestation.” So, for us, every “experiment” is now an act of social Reason with all the risks attendant upon its “unknown” side. There are physical experiments that we can design, but which many are bound to feel that we must not do – consider, for example, the experimental duplication of “solar fusion.” That obvious truth will suffice here to prove that the concept of Spirit does have its applications over the whole range of “absolute otherness.”

Hegel’s science of experience shows us how we have come to the recognition that “the rational is actual.” I do not need here to expound the other side of his theory of truth: the demonstration that the actual is rational. Here Truth – the rational that has recognized its own actuality – becomes a value standard. For this purpose, it must first be expounded as a conceptual system; we must understand, for instance, that “absolute teleology” is the climactic concept, after which there is only the theory of the process and method through which self-cognitive life becomes humane. After that, the philosophical “truth” can be used to interpret the actual world in an evaluative way. Thus, for example, Hegel’s concept of “the State” is *actual*; but we have to put “moments” together in thought that are scattered in experience. No *single* State in Hegel’s world is perfectly “rational”; and “rational families” are never perfect.

I shall end with an example of how the evaluative aspect of Hegel’s concept of experience has become more important since his time. Kenneth Westphal foolishly opines that Hegel’s extended treatment of scientific observation in

biology and natural history "... is irrelevant to the main purposes of the *Phenomenology*."¹⁵ The fact that the human knower is embodied, and that "Life" is the first category of the "Absolute Idea," shows how mistaken this view is. But what is even more important is the formulation of a concept of the "ecological balance" in these pages. Hegel's natural philosophy was Aristotelian, not proto-Darwinian; so he did not formulate the concept as we would. But it is here that he identifies the Earth as the "universal individual." The living earth is the material ground of all life, and hence the material context of all rational activity, including scientific activity. Mortal peril is something that Hegel's philosophy shows us we cannot avoid. But the mortal peril of the Earth itself, is an "absolute limit" beyond which all truth – even the formal truth of nominalist discussions – loses its meaning. For this reason, Hegel's philosophy of nature – which an earlier generation of students thought they could afford to dismiss as a historical curiosity – urgently needs to be reconceived upon the evolutionary foundation that now dominates all of our science; and the fact that Hegel developed an evolutionary theory of "truth as correspondence" is what makes this crucially necessary reconstruction possible.

NOTES

1. *The Company of Words*, (Evanston: Northwestern, 1993), chapter 2.
2. See the "Aphorisms from the Wastebook," *Werke*, T.W-A II, 540; *Independent Journal of Philosophy*, III, 1979, 1.
3. K.R. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), chapter 7.
4. When it does happen, for it need not, since every *Gestalt* of truth can find the energy to defend its own circular fortress of assumptions as resolutely as G.E. Moore and the peasant-wife.
5. I use "faith" as a general category that comprehends both the Unhappy Consciousness and Faith proper; and for this reason I always use capital letters for the two phases that Hegel himself distinguishes.
6. Compare Miller § 558, though no one is there named.
7. The comprehension of our world is a historical *spiral* so that Hegel's argument moves over the same ground several times; and the concept of the order of Nature as a living "Infinite" is a moment of *present* experience, so that the evolution of "Consciousness" (in the first three chapters) does not need to be interpreted *historically* at all. For these reasons, the complex relation of the concept of experience to the *history* of our social consciousness has confused everybody (in some measure), ever since Haym claimed (falsely) in 1857 that Hegel was himself confused about it.
8. This is not quite correct because the crusading barons belong, willy-nilly, to the world of *Bildung*. The Unhappy Consciousness dictates the form of all their public statements. Whatever their private ambitions may be, they must acknowledge that the "last judgement" of what they achieve lies not with themselves, but with "the Unchangeable." The *simple* judgement of unequal recognition regarding human destiny belongs to the world of Pericles (before the death of Socrates and the advent of Stoicism).
9. *Faust Fragment*, lines 1879–88 (or *Faust: Part I*, lines 3577–86).
10. See the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, § 190 Addition.
11. Hegel's belief that Antigone's sophism about a unique obligation to her brother formed part of Greek family ethics is an empirical error on his part; but his argument does not need it – as I have shown by simply leaving it out. In any case, it has nothing to do with modern ethics, or with any supposed peculiar bond between Hegel and his sister. His sister Christiane may

perhaps have been peculiarly attached to him. But if this was so, that was just an aspect of her personal psychological disorder – and that is how Hegel himself saw it.

12. *Decline and Fall*, Chapter 3 (Everyman ed. I, 78; for the “long period of two hundred and twenty years” see p. 72).
13. The dialectical motion of *Bildung* is too complex to go into here. But there are two errors to be avoided, an old one that infects our translations (and most commentaries); and a new one invented by Westphal. First, the sides of the “estranged Spirit” are not “noble and base consciousness” (or patricians and plebs, so to speak). They are properly the “noblemindedness” (of public service) and the “contemptuousness” (of Enlightened Insight). Secondly, there is no hopeful “republicanism” here (as Westphal supposes, 1989, p. 281, n. 201). Only the Ancien Régime is discussed; and then the “Republic” of Robespierre. Hegel’s own “hopes” cannot come into the “science of experience,” because that can only *recollect* the history of Spirit; and all the evidence shows that Hegel was so far committed to “epistemological realism” that his hopes were pinned to the Napoleonic order, not to any Republic. There is a certain kinship of Hegel’s book with the Eroica symphony. But he began it *after* 1804; and no comment upon the book’s implicit “dedication” was needed until he began thinking of a second edition in 1831.
14. Terry Pinkard (*Hegel’s Dialectic*, p. 91) remarks that “Hegel’s concept of true teleology is empirically vacuous.” This is perhaps the most radical (intelligent) mistake ever made in Hegel interpretation. But (as usual with radical mistakes that are not simply stupid) it is valuable. For (like Yorick’s skull for the phrenologist) it directs us clearly to look for a new path of interpretation altogether.
15. 1989, p. 276, n. 113. (It must be acknowledged that Hegel’s concern about the rebirth of “formalism” in the philosophy of Nature caused his discussion to overflow beyond all reasonable proportions. But Westphal’s reaction is too brutally simplistic.)

3. HARRIS, HEGEL, AND THE TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH

Harris's reflections on Hegel's correspondence theory of truth are rich and suggestive. We agree about many important, if controversial, points: Hegel relied on coherence as an important element in justification, he did not hold a coherence theory of the nature of truth, he is a realist, he holds a correspondence theory of the nature of truth, 'truth as correspondence' is crucial to Hegel's view of philosophical truth, and human beings attain truth as a social and historical enterprise.¹

Three questions should be distinguished: (1) What is the nature of truth? (2) Is it possible for us to attain any truth? (3) What reflections are required for us to recognize that we have attained a proper account of truth and its human possibility? Most of Harris's essay summarizes how Hegel's *Phenomenology* answers the third question; it thus surveys his forthcoming commentary, *Hegel's Ladder*.² I have had the privilege and good fortune to read his commentary in its penultimate draft. Harris identifies Hegel's profuse sources and magnificently reconstructs his philosophical/historical basis of modern culture. While I think somewhat differently than Harris about the structure of Hegel's epistemological argument in the *Phenomenology*,³ brief sketches cannot be assessed precisely because they are synoptic. The proof of any such overview – both its justification and its test – can only be found in the detailed reconstructions they summarize.⁴

However, Harris says enough about truth in "Hegel's Correspondence Theory of Truth" to see that his answer to the first question is too cursory. Consequently he doesn't recognize the philosophical issues obscuring the second question, nor the subtlety of Hegel's response to it. Harris states:

"Philosophical truth" ... is a rather special subset of "the truly assertable facts." It is the set that contains all of the true assertions about the logical structure of human cognitive experience. Thus, it is a set of "logical facts"; and if we are to know *scientifically*, what "human knowledge" is, we must be able to state these "facts" *correctly*. Hence Hegel's theory of "truth" is not independent of his theory of "correctness." He has a "correspondence theory" of "truth"; but "Truth" is a property of assertions about "knowledge," not of assertions about "the world." For this reason, the theory of

“truth” becomes a complex and interesting topic in Hegel’s view, and not the boringly simple matter already disposed of in the formal definition of “correctness.” What is *called* “the correspondence theory” does not deserve the honorific name of “theory” at all. It is a formal logical truth that can be stated in a single sentence. Only in Hegel’s theory of “experience” does “correspondence” become, for the first time, *interesting*.⁵

On Harris’s view, Hegel’s account of experience makes the correspondence notion of truth interesting because the reflections necessary for recognizing our attaining the truth about knowledge (question 3) are complexly based in social history. Harris is even more dismissive than Kant about the correspondence theory of truth as a trivial nominal definition (question 1).⁶ Harris has forgotten the historical and philosophical significance of its development. Hegel notes that what may be simple to a later generation may have required great acumen to develop, and against Kant Hegel extols the supreme value of the correspondence conception of truth.⁷ Aristotle said that, “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false; while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.”⁸ Aristotle’s pellucid statement of the correspondence theory of truth required enormous effort and acuity on Plato’s part to develop an account of statements and their ascription of characteristics (rightly or wrongly) to particular objects or events. Only by developing the rudiments of what we now call semantics could Plato respond to the towering figure of Parmenides, who had argued (all on the same grounds) that false assertion, change, and pluralism were impossible.⁹ We may now readily understand the correspondence notion of truth and the elementary semantics it involves, but that doesn’t make it trivial – or uncontroversial.¹⁰

The semantic background to the correspondence notion of truth is worth recalling because semantics played a crucial role, both in Hegel’s time and our own, in obscuring question 2, whether we can attain the truth.¹¹ Hegel himself indicates the main issue in *The Encyclopedia Logic*:

Thinking it over *changes* something in the way in which the content initially is in sensation, intuition, or representation; thus only *through the mediation* of an alteration does the *true* nature of the *object* come into consciousness. (§22)

When we think about something, what results is the product of our thinking. ... On the other hand, we also view the universal, the laws, as the opposite of something merely subjective, and we recognize in them what is essential, genuine, and objective about things. In order to experience what is true in things, mere attention is not enough; on the contrary, our subjective activity, which transforms what is immediately before us, is involved. Now at first glance this seems utterly perverse and to run counter to the proper purpose of cognition. But one can say equally well that the conviction of every age has been that the substantial is reached only through the reworking the immediate by our thinking about it. Most notably, only in modern times

have doubts been raised against this and has the distinction been seized upon between the products of our thinking and what things are in themselves. It has been said that the in-itself of things is altogether different from what we make of them. The standpoint of this separation has been validated especially by the Critical Philosophy, against the conviction of the entire previous world which took for granted the agreement between the matter [itself] and thought. The central concern of modern philosophy turns on this antithesis. But the natural belief of humanity is that this antithesis has no truth. ... The business of philosophy consists only in bringing into consciousness explicitly what people have held to be valid about thought from time immemorial. (§22 *Zusatz*)¹²

Hegel recognizes that human knowledge is active rather than passive; knowledge is a production, not merely a present. That seems perverse, for an active cognition would seem not to reveal, but to obscure the genuine characteristics of its supposed objects.¹³ Kant affirmed the activity of human cognition in his account of our forms of intuition and their role in our discursive form of knowledge, and this entailed skepticism about things in themselves. Some of Kant's immediate critics dismissed his account of forms of intuition but latched onto his hints that our discursive forms of judgment are tied to discourse, to our language.¹⁴ Hamann's infamous meta-critique of reason aimed to show that human language is divinely inspired and is far too metaphorical to afford a critique of *pure* reason.¹⁵ Herder developed a linguistically based philosophy of mind coupled with a socio-historical account of language. The result was a social relativism strongly opposed to the Enlightenment.¹⁶ The British Idealists emphasized the mutual interdependence of our judgments about particular objects, and denied that truth could consist in the correspondence of our beliefs or judgments to reality because no such correspondence could be identified.¹⁷ In opposition to the British idealists, Russell, Schlick, and Ayer rejected skepticism, holism, and relativism by affirming passive, aconceptual "knowledge by acquaintance." They thought they could accommodate the whole of sound common sense and genuine science solely on that cognitively pristine basis. The so-called breakdown of the distinction between "observation" and "theoretical" language put paid to that hope,¹⁸ and pushed later positivists and post-positivists toward relativism. Hegel points out that this whole controversy rests on a false dichotomy: an astute activist account of human knowledge can be compatible with, indeed, even can require, realism about the objects of knowledge.¹⁹ Understanding how this is so requires a careful account of the self-critical structure of consciousness and of the productive role of mutual criticism within a social account of knowledge.²⁰

Harris, I regret, doesn't fully appreciate the philosophical context of the issues about truth and knowledge Hegel addresses, nor the subtlety and profundity of his solution to them. This is reflected in Harris's shifting account of "immediate knowledge." "Immediacy" is said in many senses. Reid is indeed a philosophical compatriot of the peasant wife of Hegel's *Wastebook* aphor-

isms.²¹ While close to Moore's common sense certainties,²² their ideas about knowledge are significantly different from Russell's view of "knowledge by acquaintance."²³ Russell officially eschewed concepts altogether; Reid (rightly) insisted on their essential role in identifying particular objects of knowledge.²⁴ The peasant wife and Moore could (and perhaps would) agree with Reid if we asked them judiciously. Hegel's argument can't begin with both views at once; his immediate philosophical quarry is Hume, Jacobi, Russell, and self-styled common sense philosophers who disavow the cognitive necessity of their conceptual and linguistic (and hence social) resources.²⁵ "Knowledge by acquaintance" is intended to abstract from one's literary and linguistic competence for the purpose of carefully inspecting one's sensory experience in order to check the truth of one's ideas or statements (whether common sense or scientific).²⁶ In opposition to this, Hegel adopted and defended (on quite different grounds) the Kantian dictum that intuitions without conceptions are blind. In this regard, the moment of "immediacy" corresponding to immediate or sense consciousness in Hegel's final chapter on absolute knowledge is not the same as the "knowledge by acquaintance" Hegel criticizes in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology*.²⁷

I also fear that Harris inadvertently begs the question against some of Hegel's most important philosophical adversaries by insisting that any consciousness satisfied with "knowledge by acquaintance" is "pre-philosophical" and that the "... speculative philosopher ... has transcended the naive realism of 'common sense' from the start."²⁸ If the "evolutionary progression" of Hegel's argument is only apparent to "speculative observers" who understand "from the beginning" the "interpretive 'identity' of the truth-concept and the object-world,"²⁹ then Hegel's ladder cannot be the exoteric initiation Hegel fully recognizes is required for legitimate proof, especially proof of something so controversial as absolute speculative knowledge.³⁰

To miss the significance of Hegel's refutation of "knowledge by acquaintance" is to miss much of Hegel's most subtle, important, and timely epistemological reflection. Anyone pondering our contrasting reconstructions of Hegel's issues, strategy, and argument will find that most of those differences stem from our disagreement about the nature of "sense certainty," the philosophical significance of Hegel's critique of it, and the extent to which Hegel can and does go to avoid begging the question against, while nevertheless critically evaluating, his philosophical opponents.³¹

NOTES

1. I have argued independently for these views in *Hegel's Epistemological Realism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989; hereafter "HER"). Harris and I thus disagree with Robert Pippin's *Hegel's Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Harris presented his disagreements in "The Problem of Kant" (*Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 19 [1989], pp. 18–27); I presented mine in "Hegel, Idealism, and Robert Pippin" (*International Philosophical Quarterly* 33 No. 3 [1993], pp. 263–72). Pippin's responses are published with our comments. Recently I found another predecessor who recognized Hegel's realism: J.E. Turner, *A Theory of Direct Realism* (New York: Macmillan, 1925). In ch. 19, titled "Hegelian Realism," Turner points out

- that the question about evidence of Hegel's realism isn't whether there is any, but rather where to stop cataloging its bounty (*ibid.*, pp. 256–57). Michael Rosen notes in passing, as if it were obvious, that Hegel was “one of the most epistemologically realistic philosophers who ever drew breath” (“Modernism and the Two Traditions in Philosophy,” in: D. Bell & W. Vossenkuhl, eds., *Wissenschaft und Subjektivität: Der Wiener Kreis und die Philosophie 20. Jahrhunderts/Science and Subjectivity: The Vienna Circle and 20th Century Philosophy* [Berlin: Akademie, 1992], pp. 258–81; p. 272 note 27). At the 13th Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America (“Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature,” Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., Sept. 31–Oct. 2, 1994), Errol E. Harris remarked that he has maintained for 60 years that Hegel is a realist. He first presented such an interpretation of Hegel in print in “The Philosophy of Nature in Hegel's System” (*Review of Metaphysics* 3 No. 2 [1949], pp. 213–28), in which he (rightly) argues against the (Bradleian) view that Hegel reduces nature to our experience of it. In separate conversations at that meeting, both he and Henry Harris insisted that the crucial point is to clarify Hegel's use of the terms “idealism” and “realism,” which would then resolve the controversy. I have attempted the needed documentation and clarification of Hegel's use of the relevant terms in *HER* pp. 140–45.
2. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997, 2 vols.
 3. I reconstruct the structure of Hegel's epistemological argument in *HER* ch. 11, where I also note that Hegel's epistemological argument is only one among several important strands of argument in the *Phenomenology*.
 4. *HER* reconstructs in detail Hegel's aim and method in the *Phenomenology*. I am writing a second volume which reconstructs in detail the first leg of Hegel's substantive argument in the Consciousness section, along the lines sketched in *HER* (pp. 158–60). Part I of that volume reconstructs the internal criticism of Kant's transcendental idealism which Hegel needs, which he recognized, but which he did not spell out. Hegel's internal critique and determinate negation of Kant's idealism provides two independent sources of confirmation of Hegel's realism. I sketch one of those sources in “On Hegel's Early Critique of Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*” (forthcoming in the proceedings of the 13th Annual Meeting of the Hegel Society of America, Stephen Houlgate, ed., *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature*, [Albany: SUNY Press, 1977]).
 5. “Hegel's Correspondence Theory of Truth,” *supra* pp. 11–22, p. 11. All subsequent references to Harris are to this article.
 6. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* A58=B82–83.
 7. “The single individual must also pass through the formative stages of universal spirit so far as their content is concerned, but as shapes which spirit has already left behind, as stages on a way that has been made level with toil. Thus, as far as factual information is concerned, we find that what in former ages engaged the attention of men of mature mind, has been reduced to the level of facts, exercises, and even games for children ...” (*Hegel: Gesammelte Werke* [Frankfurt/M: Meiner, 1968–; hereafter “*GW*”] IX p. 25.1–5; Miller, tr., *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1977], p. 16). (Line numbers of *GW* are indicated by decimals.) On the value of the correspondence definition of truth, see *Wissenschaft der Logik* II (*GW* XII p. 26.4–9; Miller, tr., *Hegel's Science of Logic* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969], p. 593).
 8. *Metaphysics* 1011b26f., cf. *Categories* 4a10–4b19, 14b12–23, *De Interpretatione* 16a10–19; Aquinas, *De Veritate* Q1 A1, *Summa Contra Gentiles* Bk. I Ch. 59.
 9. Plato, *Theaetetus* 188e–189a, *Sophist* 240d, 260c–263d.
 10. See P. Horwich, *Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
 11. Here I recast some points from *HER*, pp. 62–64, 67.
 12. Geraets, Suchting, & Harris, trs., (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991); emended. The whole *Zusatz* deserves careful reading, especially in regard to the current influence of Richard Rorty.
 13. Hegel raises these same issues when discussing the metaphors of knowledge as an “instrument” or a “medium” in his Introduction to the *Phenomenology* (*GW* IX pp. 53.1–54.20; Miller, pp. 46–47). See *HER* ch. 1.
 14. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A83=B109, A314=B370–71, A352; *Prolegomena* §§30, 39 (*Kants Gesammelte Schriften* [Berlin: G. Reimer, now DeGruyter, 1902–], IV pp. 312, 323).

15. See F.C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1987), ch. 1, and Robert Butts, "The Grammar of Reason: Hamann's Challenge to Kant" (*Synthese* 75 [1988], pp. 251–83).
16. See Beiser, *op. cit.*, ch. 5.
17. See, e.g., Brand Blanchard, *The Nature of Thought* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940), vol. II ch. 25 §21, ch. 26 §§2, 8, 13, 16 (excerpted in: E. Nagel & R. Brandt, eds., *Meaning and Knowledge* [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965], pp. 139–52).
18. I discuss this development in the paradigm case of Carnap in *HER* ch. 4.
19. Hegel insists on this point again in the very important remark, "Vom Begriff im Allgemeinen," in the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (*GW* XII pp. 23.29–24.20; Miller, pp. 590–91), and in the 1825 Berlin *Phänomenologie* (M.J. Petry, ed., *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* [Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978] III, pp. 286–91). The significance of Hegel's point was brought into focus for me by F.L. Will, "The Concern About Truth" (in: G.W. Roberts, ed., *The Bertrand Russell Memorial Volume* [London: George Allen & Unwin, New York: Humanities Press, 1979], pp. 264–84.) Will's recent book, *Beyond Deduction* (London: Routledge, 1988), is indispensable, especially for hegelians interested in epistemology.
20. For a brief account, see my "Hegel's Solution to the Dilemma of the Criterion" (*The History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5 No. 2 [1988], pp. 173–88). The full account, including a reconstruction of Hegel's doctrine of "determinate negation," is given in *HER*.
21. "We begin with the peasant wife, and with Thomas Reid, her commonsensical champion in Hegel's time" (Harris, p. 14).
22. "... starting ... with the pre-philosophical certainties of G. E. Moore ..." (Harris, p. 12).
23. "The evolution of Hegel's concept of Truth as correspondence begins with the simple experience that Russell called 'knowledge by acquaintance'" (Harris, p. 12).
24. B. Brody, ed., *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1969), Essay II §XIV (p. 212) and §XXI (p. 302). Reid's view wouldn't face skeptical problems about correctly identifying objects of knowledge until confronted with semantic and evidential holism.
25. This must be his initial target because at the outset of Hegel's phenomenological investigation of the reality of knowledge, there are no reasons to warrant any noetically complex or mediated form of knowledge (*GW* IX p. 63.4–5; Miller, p. 58). Unfortunately, Harris not only shifts indiscriminately from Reid's, Moore's, and the peasant wife's common sense to Russell's (*et al*) philosophically pristine "knowledge by acquaintance," at one point he conflates them: "She [the peasant wife] must actually use 'thing' and 'property' words to identify her *Sachen*: my 'house,' your 'tree' ... etc.. This knowledge by acquaintance ..." (Harris, p. 14). I discuss Jacobi's views in "Hegel's Attitude Toward Jacobi in the 'Third Attitude of Thought Toward Objectivity'" (*The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 27 No. 1 [1989], pp. 135–156).
26. Though Harris states that "... 'knowledge by acquaintance' is pre-philosophical (and even pre-literate, ...)" (Harris, p. 13), this is a mis-statement. In correspondence he assures me that he meant that knowledge by acquaintance can be pre-literate, not that it necessarily is.
27. *Pace* Harris, who states that the final form of consciousness "is necessarily comprehended in a moment of sense-certainty [*sic*] that can still stretch out a hand just as Moore did" (Harris, p. 12); reach out a hand, yes, *just as* Moore did, no. In the final chapter Hegel explicitly mentions something like sense-certainty only twice. The first time he plainly does not endorse it, he only indicates that the *object* of knowledge has a moment "corresponding to immediate knowledge," *viz.*, the moment of determinate being at a particular time and place (*GW* IX p. 422.29–30; Miller, p. 480). The second time may sound like he endorses "sense-certainty": "Science contains within itself the necessity to externalize [*entäussern*] from itself the form of the pure concept, and the transition of the concept into *consciousness*. Thus the self-knowing spirit, because it grasps its concept, is the immediate identity with itself that, in its difference, is the *certainty of the immediate*, or the *sense-consciousness*, – the beginning from which we started; this release of itself from the form of itself is the highest freedom and certainty of its knowledge of itself" (*GW* IX p. 432.31–37, my tr.; Miller, p. 491). However, Hegel explicitly states that this sense-consciousness involves "certainty of the immediate." This is not necessarily the same as the "immediate certainty" of some object. Hegel in fact begins by distinguishing the noetic and ontological versions of "immediate knowledge," *viz.*, "... immediate knowledge, knowledge of

- the immediate or of what is" (*GW IX* p. 63.5–6, my tr.; Miller, p. 58). The ontological "immediacy" initially at issue concerns the *object* as a particular thing at a particular time and place. This is consonant with Hegel's stress throughout the final chapter on the "being here and now" of sensible things which makes the transition to the *Logic* possible. Hegel's concern there is ontological; he doesn't revert to the naive and mistaken epistemological view he so soundly refuted in *Sense Certainty*. (This also holds of ¶1558; cf. Harris, note 6.)
28. Harris, pp. 12, 13. Hegel the speculative philosopher must have transcended aconceptual sense-certainty or else he couldn't compose his analysis or write his book. However, the question is whether "we" not-yet-Hegelian readers must begin there, too. If so, then Hegel commits the cardinal hegelian sin of begging the question. Harris refers to we readers *cum* phenomenological observers when he states, "We *must* move on, because the consciousness that is satisfied with 'knowledge by acquaintance' is pre-philosophical ..." (Harris, p. 2). The advocates of "knowledge by acquaintance" intended precisely thereby to dispense with everything Hegel regarded as "philosophical." Hegel must show that this verificationist device for clearing supposed metaphysical slums is in principle untenable on its own grounds; he can't justify his – or our – moving on simply because he won't get what he wants on that basis.
29. Harris, pp. 13–14.
30. "... the individual has the right to demand that science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint, should show him this standpoint within himself. His right is based on his absolute independence, which he is conscious of possessing in every phase of his knowledge ..." (*GW IX* p. 23.3–5; Miller, pp. 14–15). On the crucial role of the issue of question-begging in Hegel's shift away from Schelling's intuitionism and in his method in the *Phenomenology*, see *HER* p. 10f. and ch. 7.
31. I wish to thank Professor Harris for inviting this comment; we have corresponded sufficiently for my remarks not to surprise him. I wish also to correct a couple misimpressions. I did not say that Hegel's discussion of life is irrelevant to Hegel's main epistemological argument in the *Phenomenology* (Harris, pp. 20–21). On the contrary, my reconstruction stresses Hegel's theses (defended in "Lord and Bondsman") that biological needs involve classification and entail realism about objects meeting those needs, that the natural world is not constituted at will (also a lesson in realism), and that self-consciousness is dependent upon, though not reducible to, organic life (*HER* pp. 157, 160–61). I do maintain that Hegel is not entitled to provide an extended positive account of biological explanation prior to his justification of absolute knowledge. (Harris disagrees with me about this more specific point.) Second, the "false alternative" concerning whether Hegel's account of the transitions between forms of consciousness "applies to consciousness as simple, or to consciousness as reflexive" is not to be found in *HER*, ch. 7, which he cites in this connection (Harris, p. 13). I stress Hegel's view that consciousness is inherently reflexive. Hegel's account of the transitions between forms of consciousness must hold *within* observed forms of consciousness for Hegel's internal criticism to be effective, and it must also hold from the vantage of "our" observation for it to be informative. Harris also mistook my denial of the "serial" character of the *Phenomenology* (in his review of *HER* in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 22 No 4 [1992], pp. 512–34, p. 513). I agree with him entirely that there must be a single over-arching argument in the *Phenomenology* in order for Hegel's book to succeed; there must be a single cumulative, if complex, argument presented "for us" observers if Hegel's book is to be a proof or justification of anything. What I denied (or meant to deny) was that there is a single cumulative series within the observed forms of consciousness, whereby each turns into its successor. (I think Harris disagrees with me about this, too.) Once misunderstandings and a few genuine differences are cleared up, I think it will emerge that our interpretations of Hegel complement, far more than they compete with, each other.

4. HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF PHENOMENOLOGY

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In order to shed light on the origins of Hegel's concept of phenomenology, I will begin by considering some of his first essays.

The irretrievable loss of the ancient Greeks' sense of freedom and political unity must have had the most profound meaning for Hegel and his Tübingen friends Schelling and Hölderlin. The fragmented age in which they lived seemed far removed from that all-encompassing spirit which had animated the "genius of nations" "from the days of the past." The "power of unification" they demanded from life had "disappeared from the lives of men" altogether, as Hegel was to lament in one of his early notes. This insight into the modern world's inherent lack of unity is the axis around which much of his early thinking turns.

The leitmotif of Hegel's juvenile writings is religion, and his first, main concern is to rethink religion against the backdrop of Kant's moral philosophy. For the young Hegel, religion revealed a state of "positivity," of unquestioning submission to authority and blind adherence to doctrine. According to this understanding, positive religion stands diametrically opposed to religion rooted in practical reason's concept of morality. The limits of an ideal of religion based on morality become blatant, however, when theology, in its turn, appropriates Kant's concept of practical reason, together with his doctrine of postulates, to reinforce its authority and produces a particularly *intractable form of orthodoxy*. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Tübingen's divinity students could point to actual instances of how religion becomes distorted at the hands of a "priesthood" which "poses as reason," as the unknown author of the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* (1796 or 1797), polemically puts it.¹ It is important to understand the terms of this reversal.

The Enlightenment's critique of religion, aimed at purging superstition's historical content from the rational core of "natural" religion, loses its cutting edge when confronted with a theology which also claims to be grounded in reason and is, therefore, equipped to defend itself against the possibility of critique. As a weapon of critique, the concept of positivity is only effective to the extent it confronts such problems of appropriation head-on. In the

revisions to the introductory sections of the manuscript, known to us as the *Positivity of the Christian Religion*, Hegel develops a more acute methodological awareness to deal with these problems.² Hegel's insight, in the second *Preface*, that religion takes on different forms according to the spirit of the times it serves, is intended to prohibit defining the positivity of religion by means of the abstract universality of the Enlightenment's concepts of human nature. These "simple" concepts, which exclude all particularity and difference, have become "important only in recent times" and are the culmination of a "long series of stages in cultural development, extending over centuries." But because they "fix" the results of this same cultural development and, thereby, transform all "variations in national or individual manners, customs and opinions" into "accidents, prejudices and errors," universal concepts themselves foster positivity. Over the years, however, enlightened critique has become so "empty" and "wearisome," that a "need" has arisen to recover the *relative naturalness and necessity* of religion's historical forms constituting the objects of enlightened critique.⁴ According to Hegel, a positive religion can be appropriate to a given time and, in this way, completely natural for the people who believe in it. Only when "another mood awakens," only when the spirit of the age "begins to have a sense of itself and to demand freedom in and for itself," does the true positivity of a religion manifest itself to those who now have an "ideal of humanity hovering" before their minds which corresponds to their newly won sense of freedom.⁵

The revised *Preface* to the *Positivity* essay, briefly discussed above, was written a few months before Hegel moved to Jena to embark on the first stage of his academic career. Although its central concern is still the problem of religion, this short text comes close to an understanding of philosophy which will inform subsequent essays. The *Fragment of a System*, written during the same period, maintains, however, "Philosophy has to give way to religion."⁶ For only religion can raise us above reflection and its biased standpoints of thinking to the level of spirit; that is, only religion can dissolve the obdurate antithesis of finite and infinite, produced by reflection, in infinite life. Later on in the essay, however, Hegel concedes that religion *per se* is not absolutely necessary, and characterizes it as "any elevation of the finite to the infinite."⁷ The advantage of religion over other forms of unity, for example, the "most perfect integration" of the "happy people" of ancient Greece, consists in the correspondence religion has with the given historical situation. Where "integration with the age" is impossible or would result in a false peace based on accommodation, the intervention of that philosophy, capable of elevating the pure ego completely above the totality of everything finite, is certainly not inferior to religion. Hegel had in mind Fichte's principle of *Tathandlung*, the first positing act of the absolute ego, which, as far as the distortions produced by reflection are concerned, compares favorably to religion's power of reconciliation.⁸

The exact point can be located, however, where Hegel's insights into religion overtly display their true philosophical force. As sketched out above, Hegel's historical understanding of positivity grew out of his critique of the enlightened

critique of religion and the parallel ways, alluded to but not worked out in the *System Fragment*, in which religion and philosophy correspond to the needs of the time and can be viewed from the perspective of historical contingency. At the very beginning of the essay *Faith and Knowledge* (1802),⁹ both sides of the parallel merge together in a philosophical explanation of transformations which Hegel now sees as taking place within philosophy itself. "Culture has raised this latest era so far above the ancient antithesis of reason and faith, of philosophy and positive religion that this opposition of faith and knowledge has acquired quite a different meaning and has now been transposed into the sphere of philosophy itself."¹⁰ Hegel briefly evokes the hypocrisy of theological orthodoxy and the ever-more vacuous, ever-more abstract critique of positive religion, in order to account for the levelling of all differences, the increasing indistinguishability among traditional fronts, as a manifestation of the age and the work of culture. What is decisive here, is that Hegel has now come to see philosophy as entering into these transformations and as understanding itself historically. In this way, he sets the stage for a more complex and nuanced interpretation of philosophy, an interpretation which he conceives as being carried out by philosophy within the framework of its own historicity.

This new understanding of philosophy seems to have inspired the early work of the Jena years. It will be shown below how Hegel's first critical essays take shape around a philosophical task from which, in the course of the system's formation, the conception for a "phenomenology of spirit" will eventually arise. The following inquiry, however, does not promise either a seamless historical or philological reconstruction of the path this development took.¹¹ Given the incompleteness of what has come down to us from Hegel's early writings, such detective work would be in vain, anyway.¹² Rather, the focus of this essay is the question of the systematic meaning of Hegel's concept of phenomenology, as far as it can be explained by his early development leading up to the work of 1807, and evolving from the problem as formulated in the Jena essays.

In what follows, the main interest is the *genesis of Hegel's concept of phenomenology*. In the light of the general question, *What is phenomenology*, I will begin by first considering philosophy's preparatory function as critique, and then, by way of contrast, highlight the logical character of philosophy's self-realization in speculation. Against the backdrop of this difference between philosophy as critique and philosophy as speculation, it will be possible to determine more precisely the systematic meaning of the *Phenomenology*, its function and methodological structure.¹³

PHILOSOPHY AS CRITIQUE

What is striking about even a cursory reading of Hegel's first published essay, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801), is that the concept of *cultural formation* [*Bildung*] is given a peculiarly negative cast¹⁴ and is closely linked to the phenomenon of *disseverance* [*Entzweiung*].¹⁵ At first glance, this association is anything but obvious; for why should

philosophy feel compelled to object to and to polemicize against the culture of its time instead of simply accepting it as a preparatory stage played out on a non-philosophical level. The relation between general, intellectual culture and philosophy, however, is by no means arbitrary or unproblematic. In the culture at large, philosophy finds the “building blocks” of its future system as well as the obstacles to its self-realization as system. To capture the two sides of this ambivalent relation, Hegel coined the expression “the need for philosophy.” The given historical conditions are such that they elicit philosophy, but not in the sense of a teleology directed toward bringing forth one more specific form of philosophy. Rather, the age expresses its need for philosophy negatively, as an emerging rupture between what already seems to exist and what, in fact, does not yet exist.

When the profusion of philosophic systems no longer provides any real satisfaction, and the longing for the one true philosophy has become all the more intense, the cultural realm lays the groundwork for philosophy by offering surrogates which only *seem* to respond to the need for philosophy. The age has, indeed, produced an abundance of systems during the short period from Kant to Reinhold, and from Fichte to Schelling. This pell-mell pursuit, however, to create new systems, can never actually gratify the need for philosophy. In fact, the philosophic activity of the age is the real obstacle to the fulfillment of this need. Hegel’s paradoxical diagnosis is twofold: it distinguishes between the given historical conditions underlying the spirit of the age, and *the one* philosophy which he provisionally characterizes by the necessity that it form a system and be based on the principle of speculation. Thus, for Hegel, in “an age which has so many philosophic systems lying behind it,” the first response to the admitted need for philosophy finds its expression precisely in this disjunction in which the heightened intellectual and spiritual culture of the age, with its affinity for philosophy, is not identified either with any one of these received systems and entrenched schools of thought, or with the unified idea of philosophy. The one true philosophy is still to come!

What more precisely does Hegel find so problematic about *Bildung*? *Bildung* is the crystallization of a way of thinking about the world in which reflection and understanding have become dominant. Reflection tends to create uniformity by reducing the infinite multiplicity of being to fixed, one-dimensional determinations of understanding and, thus, renders every finite being as valid for understanding as the next. The interconnections reflection establishes in this way consist in the purely formal process of bringing one thought determination into relation with another. The network of ensuing relations, generated by reflection, rests on nothing more substantial than that the determinations stand in relation to one another. In this way, they are deprived of their independent existence, and their genuine content is transformed into the terms of the relations created by reflection. The thoroughgoing differences, engendered by reflection, paradoxically also empower reflection to promote unity in the realm of understanding. Reflection’s integration of thought determinations only camouflages the real differences, and its semblance of unity fixes the underlying disavowance all the more as it progresses. Dissev-

erance is perpetuated precisely because it has disappeared from direct view behind the fake unity created by what was, in fact, only reflection's simulated sublation of disseverance.

When *Bildung*, under the sway of understanding and reflection, determines the conditions of an entire age, life becomes alienated from itself;¹⁶ for the natural separations, inherent in all living processes, are not counterbalanced by any true unifying principle. The relation of disseverance and unification is itself distorted. Disseverance first appears within *Bildung* veiled in the semblance of unity created by reflection, and beneath this veil the individual separations, caused by disseverance, coalesce into a rupture within the spirit of the age. In this situation, the need for philosophy makes itself felt in that the false unity created by *Bildung* must be replaced by genuine unification. Reason, in its striving toward the unconditioned, is called upon to free the oppositions from the understanding's fixed totality of limitations. This can only mean that reflection's domination has to be undermined, and that polemical fronts have been established in opposition to the cultural world.

It is not, however, simply a question of substituting existing thought structures with new systems proclaimed by the age to be more rational and more genuinely philosophical. To be able to see through the structures erected by contemporary philosophy, it is imperative to refrain from making systematic statements about philosophy which might alter the scene. In fact, Hegel intentionally begins his career as philosophical writer with *critical* essays, whereas his contemporaries try to outdo one another with more powerful, more totalizing new systems. The crucial insight, which secured Hegel's theoretical superiority and, down to the present, still lends fascination to his genealogical reconstruction of the history of philosophy, does not consist in a loftier, more all-encompassing philosophical principle, but rather in making apparent the relationships of dependency prevailing between philosophy and the spirit of the age.

PHILOSOPHY'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE AGE OF REFLECTION

Kant, Fichte and Jacobi are the most emblematic representatives of what Hegel called *Reflexionsphilosophie*. Reinhold, however, who was the first to point out the synergistic relationship between philosophy and its historical moment, should be counted as no less symptomatic.¹⁷ For Hegel, Reinhold's *Beyträge* only "swim in the needs of the age." What was really required was a well-grounded theory which would account for philosophy's relationship to the prevailing historical conditions. Only such a theory would be able to prepare the way for a philosophy truly up to the task of meeting the needs of the age. In order to understand the loss of importance Reinhold suffered, in stark contrast to the prominence he enjoyed among his contemporaries, and why, in particular, his writings after 1800 sank into oblivion, it is necessary to look at the devastating effect Hegel's critique in the *Difference* essay had on Reinhold's future standing in the history of philosophy.

Reinhold's intention in the *Beyträge* was to survey the current philosophical

landscape at the beginning of the nineteenth century by working through and amplifying doxographic knowledge from a historical perspective. It is hard to see how any real progress in philosophy could have been achieved in this way. For, on the one hand, the project of bringing together and preserving various viewpoints falls squarely within the purview of culture where any new viewpoint will be regarded indifferently as just one among others. On the other hand, the principle Reinhold took over from Bardili's logic, thinking *qua* thinking abstracted from its application to real knowledge, is only another manifestation of a culture already in the grip of understanding and reflection.¹⁸ Reinhold's entire undertaking of bringing the current, historical situation to the attention of philosophical consciousness, together with the "discovery" of yet another viewpoint of philosophical abstraction, becomes reintegrated into the current, historical moment and, through this self-historicizing, contributes to reaffirming and reconstituting the dominant culture.

Given the eclipse of an authentic speculative principle by reflection, it is not surprising that the various careers made in *Reflexionsphilosophie* were sustained not so much by reason as by "luck" and an "instinctive inclination" of the age, which did not find satisfaction in the creation of a definitive system, but in continuing to feel drawn to certain token appearances of philosophy. What was sought after in these appearances was more a matter of hoping to find something rather than actually finding it.¹⁹ The outward signs mirror philosophy's failure to intervene in the actuality of the historical moment. Such an intervention would have allowed philosophy to overcome its "unfree" side given through the culture of the age.

Reflection having long since established its primacy in the cultural realm, thus encroached on the philosophical realm. In a number of passages in the *Difference* essay, Hegel depicts the skewed relation between reflection and speculation as one of "tyranny" and "alienation."²⁰ This means that the finite side of the relation maintains its domination at the cost of the infinite side and prevents the unity of both sides. The subjection of speculation to reflection results in systems which are inconsistent and incomplete, as epitomized for Hegel in the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte.²¹ The principle of culture, gaining entry into the realm of philosophy, becomes absolute in these systems, and disseverance is driven to its utmost extremes.²² Hegel summarizes this development in the conclusion of his essay, *Faith and Knowledge*, when he writes "the external possibility directly arises for the true philosophy to emerge out of this [completed] culture, to destroy the absoluteness of its finite elements and, at the same time, present itself as perfected appearance."²³

In order to arrive at a more concrete understanding of Hegel's concept of philosophy, which has thus far only emerged thetically, it is necessary to turn to the concept of *philosophical critique*, as he develops it in his first published contribution to the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*. The essay, *Concerning the Essence of Philosophical Critique in general and its Relation to the Present State of Philosophy in particular*, begins as follows: "Critique, in whatever division of art or science it is carried out, calls for a criterion which is just as independent of the one who judges as of what is judged: not derived from individual

phenomena, nor from the subject's particularity, rather from the eternal and immutable archetype of the subject matter itself."²⁴ If philosophical critique does not want "for all of eternity to set subjectivity against subjectivity," then "the idea of philosophy itself [must be] the condition and presupposition." The idea, therefore, is not contingent; it is defined in this context as the Absolute, and there can only be *one* unified idea because there are not many philosophies. Solely in reference to this idea, is it possible to evaluate modern philosophy's degenerate forms and its various, inadequate systems which have arisen in the course of reflection's cultural formation. Critique consists in measuring these results of reflection against the idea of true philosophy.

Criticism of philosophy's finite, historical forms is not identical to philosophy, however far removed it is from the level of what is being criticized. The idea of philosophy is always presupposed by the very activity of criticism and never realized by the philosophical standpoints constituting the objects of criticism. For this reason, it is just as important for philosophy "to recognize the multiplicity of spirit's reflexes, each of which must have its own sphere, as what is deficient and inferior about them."²⁵ By the same token, it is necessary to study disseverance's most acute forms in the sequence that the philosophy of reflection makes them absolute.²⁶ Conversely, it is also necessary to prepare specifically for *philosophy's emergence in its own age*.

What is imperative is that philosophy as critique actively confronts its own historical reality. For this reason, philosophy refrains, at first, from claiming to be just another system. Instead, it serves as a standard by which to judge the claims and pretensions of already existing systems. At this *preliminary* stage, philosophy attempts to lay hold of and sort out the multiplicity of its own limitations. It must comprehend its finite, contingent forms and "refute the limitation of the form [arising] out of its own genuine inclination."²⁷ Philosophy develops a *consciousness of the age* by becoming the direct object of its own critical inquiries; this means, philosophy strives to recognize itself in the already existing structures and thought formations and, with the idea of true philosophy always in view, to plot out, by means of critique, the entire field of its limitations.

Critique is the form of reflection in which true philosophy first steps into its time in order to sublimate the prevailing historical conditions for itself. The relation of history and system becomes a legitimate concern for philosophy so long as critique has already worked through the historical, raw material of spirit.²⁸ This is why *critique is not yet speculation*. As Hegel writes in the *Essence of Critique*: "It must be necessarily believed that such knowledge is possible, if we are to expect critique to have a genuine effect, not merely the negative [effect] of destroying all limitations, but of paving the way for the emergence of true philosophy."²⁹

What Hegel here describes as the negative and positive function of critique foreshadows the passage in the *Introduction* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where he defines the task of preparation as freeing science (and that means philosophy in its "unfolded and developed truth") from the character of being "merely an empty appearance of knowing." In order to combat the appearance

of being untrue knowledge, it is not sufficient that science merely gives an assertion of its superiority over other modes of knowledge. It must turn against its own appearance and bring to bear a scientific "exposition of phenomenological knowledge."³⁰ The method appropriate to this exposition Hegel characterizes as a critically examining "way of *relating science to phenomenal knowledge*."³¹ The logical structure of this mode of examination will be dealt with later on in this essay. I have here only suggested how Hegel understands the task of phenomenology.

For Hegel, philosophy as critique is *preparation* for genuine philosophical knowledge. The rather vague concept of preparation, however, must be defined in an adequately systematic way. Preparation is never carried out from a standpoint external to philosophy, but always works from within philosophy. It consists in a critical attitude by which philosophy establishes itself alongside other modes of knowledge. If, according to this explanation, critique does not exactly extend to the inner sanctum of philosophy, then at least it can be said that in some sense critique is itself already philosophy. For without the ideal of true philosophizing, presupposed from the beginning, critique will not be able to fulfill its function. The question arises, however, what more of substance can be achieved, if philosophy, in its capacity as critique, has already developed a speculative point of view. In short, what is the relation between philosophy and its preparatory function as critique, and how do we account for this relation? The answer to this question will now help to specify the systematic meaning of phenomenology. The analysis of its structure will be discussed at the end of this essay.

LOGIC OR PHENOMENOLOGY

The letter Hegel wrote Schelling on November 2, 1800, is generally cited as evidence for the turn in Hegel's thinking in which he begins to translate the themes of his early writings into the form of a system. "In the course of my scientific education, which began with the more subordinate needs of man, I was driven toward science, and the ideal of my youth had to be transformed into the form of reflection and, at the same time, into a system."³² During the following years, in addition to the critical essays, Hegel drafted the initial version of his system comprising logic and metaphysics. In 1807, however, he came out with the first part of a system of sciences called the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Needless to say, this raises problems which go far beyond the scope of historical, genetic concerns. The conundrum presented us by the *Phenomenology* of 1807, is to understand, on the one hand, how systematic philosophy realizes itself in speculation by beginning its career as phenomenology, and then, on the other, how to distinguish between philosophy's speculative and critical functions. This is closely connected to the question: does philosophy first come into itself as critique or as speculation?

In philosophy, reason is directed toward itself, deals only with itself and comes to know itself. In this unity of subject and object, arising from reason's self-reflection, philosophy is speculation and has reconciled the rigid opposi-

tions produced by external reflection. In the *Difference* essay, Hegel understands reason's mediation of the oppositions created by reflection to be philosophy's appropriate activity, and he goes so far as to define *logic* as reason's apprehension of itself.³³ Hegel, however, is here reacting to contemporary debates and does not directly identify logic with philosophy. Only in conjunction with Reinhold's reworking of the "rational realism" of Bardili's logic, does he refer to logic as being the testing ground for philosophy's speculative principle. Bardili's implied identification of logic with metaphysics was meant to cure the subjectivist reductionism of transcendental philosophy, and Reinhold, armed with weapons supplied by Bardili, waged his own battle against what he saw as the culmination of the principle of subjective idealism in a mere semblance of the Absolute – Fichte's and Schelling's "speculative philodoxy."

Hegel recognized, however, that Reinhold, in having based his whole approach to logic on the abstraction of thinking from its application, started out from unseen premises and was blind to the formal oppositions created by this abstraction. Only when logic is rightly understood can the truth of speculation first be proven; for logic must from the outset already have determined whether the antitheses created by understanding have actually been overcome or are only assumed to be so. The critique of Bardili and Reinhold offers a first glimpse of the project Hegel will tackle ten years later in the *Science of Logic*. In the *Difference* essay, however, he obviously still models what is essentially positive knowledge of the Absolute on Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* and his postulate of transcendental intuition. In the later texts of the Jena period, Hegel takes the first, decisive steps toward realizing his own conception of the Absolute.

Speculation comes into its own by *comprehending* by means of logic what the *truth of reflection* is. Since this truth does not yet directly correspond to reflection's thinking as understanding, since reflection as understanding does not recognize itself as reflection, or reflect upon itself when it reflects, speculation destroys the false forms of unities reflection as understanding creates. When reflection gives up the semblance of creating unity, upon which its fundamental antitheses tacitly rest, it establishes true unity capable of including antitheses and becomes reason. The apprehending of reflection's truth thus constitutes reflection's own self-understanding in that the insight into the origin of its derivative, finite forms results from its own activities. Reflection's turning back on itself to illuminate its inner nature constitutes logic's real concern.

To be sure, this description of the role Hegel assigns logic in the dialectical transition from reflection to speculation is anything but self-explanatory. Karl Rosenkranz in his biography, *Hegels Leben*, however, preserved an important excerpt from Hegel's Jena lectures (winter semester 1802), which makes this transition less opaque. The argument is as follows: philosophy, as the science of truth, recognizes that "infinite knowing or speculation," in which philosophy must move, stands opposed to "finite knowing or reflection." In the latter, philosophy recognizes only the abstraction of the former and, in opposition to

both, sees nothing final, something untrue. "Thus, the objective concern of true logic is this: to display the *forms of finitude* and not simply gathered together empirically, rather as they arise from reason, but being robbed of reason by the understanding, they appear only in their finitude. – Hence, understanding's efforts to *imitate* reason in the creation of identity must be set forth, showing how understanding's copying can give rise only to *formal identity*. And in order to recognize the imitative character of understanding, we must always keep the original [*Urbild*] that it copies, the expression of reason itself, before our eyes. – *Finally*, we must sublimate the forms of understanding themselves by *reason*, [we must show] what meaning and content these finite forms of knowing have for reason. Reason's way of knowing, so far as it appertains to logic, will therefore be reason's *negative* knowing. – I think that, inasmuch as it fixes the finite forms as such, logic can serve as an introduction to philosophy only from this speculative side, where it knows reflection completely and clears it from the path, so that it does not put any obstacles in the way of speculation and, at the same time, keeps the *image of the Absolute* as a mirror reflection so that we become familiar with it."³⁴

In order for reason to comprehend understanding's finite character it must undermine the certainty understanding has in its reflective powers and, at the same time, clear the way for speculation. Reason accomplishes this task by bringing understanding's finite forms of thought into close proximity to their archetype. By making a complete survey of all forms reduced by reflection to mere finite appearances of the Absolute, reason simultaneously throws back, in a mirror image, an imitation of the infinite, the Absolute. Reflection's forms are understood as self-subsisting semblances of unity³⁵ which only, in fact, mimic the unity created by reason and are confined within a formal antithesis overlooked by reflection. It, thus, becomes possible to raise understanding to its truth in reason by translating the antithesis, persisting in the semblance of unity established by reflection, into the antithesis prevailing in the relation between the real unity and its copy. Because the former is no longer a genuine antithesis, it ceases to be an obstacle for speculation.

In other words, reflection, as the source of false forms of unity, and understanding, as the source of finite forms of thought, are brought into relation with reason. Reason shows that the totality of the connections it creates among understanding's finite forms is not one point of reference among others, rather, it constitutes understanding's highest level of unity, and conversely, reason in this way also exposes understanding's self-subsisting forms to be mere abstractions. The two sides of Hegel's proof, the creation of genuine unity and the negation of understanding's finite forms of thought, represent the process by which reflection is carried over into speculation. The "thinking of thinking,"³⁶ however, is the self-movement of logic's thought determinations. The characterization of logic as the speculative introduction to philosophy refers to the elevation of finite thought to infinite thought as the first moment of the scientific system and the first of philosophy's accomplishments. It is important to note that Hegel obviously at this stage still uses the concept of introduction in a non-technical sense, and it should not, therefore,

be invested with the meaning of the more developed concept of introduction which will take shape in connection with the later, formalized system.

The *Science of Logic* similarly accounts for the advance made by speculation's elevation of thinking to the "loftier" sphere of reason by the seemingly "retrograde step" of aggravating the antinomies generated among reflective understanding's determinations. The *Logic* also maintains that so long as understanding has "taken possession" of philosophy, it directly recoils from becoming enmeshed in contradiction and attempts to gain ground against reason by imposing common-sense viewpoints and the "opinions" of every-day consciousness.³⁷ "But when these prejudices are carried over into the sphere of reason,...then they are errors the refutation of which throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe is *philosophy*, or rather as they bar the entrance to philosophy, must be discarded at its portals."³⁸

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCIENTIFIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The ambivalence expressed in the passage just quoted is important for our question as to whether speculative philosophy, in the entirety of its system, consists in nothing more than the refutation of errors arising from reflection's entrenched standpoint, or whether reflection's views, prejudices and opinions *obstruct philosophy* and, therefore, must be eradicated beforehand. The further question thus arises, when does philosophy really begin as itself? The formulation of the problem in the *Logic* alludes to the *Phenomenology* and occurs in the same context where Hegel attributes opinions and prejudices to the special character of "phenomenological consciousness." The alternatives, however, to refute errors by means of philosophy or to discard prejudices at the "portals" of philosophy, both contain a residue of an unresolved problem which must be dealt with in the context of the reciprocal differentiation between phenomenology and logic. I will return, therefore, to the question posed earlier and attempt to bring it together with the original problem, philosophy as critique.

As we have seen, *Reflexionsphilosophie* took shape within a general process of cultural formation and governed the thought of the age. In contrast, philosophy as critique had the task of preparing the way for the emergence of an authentic, speculative system. This advance work of critique was essential because reflection had not only permeated common-sense attitudes of every-day consciousness, but also the very principles upon which contemporary philosophy had built its systems. In these historical circumstances, the spiritual need for philosophy calls for speculation to provide genuine insight into the structure of reflection. This need for true philosophy can only be satisfied by logic, the thinking of thinking, with which philosophical science as system begins.

Logic, however, does not concern itself with every-day understanding, its prejudices and opinions behind which reflection conceals itself.³⁹ For logic, which thinks speculatively, only those prejudices are pertinent which have worked their way into the sphere of reason, where it is then logic's function to expose and refute them as errors resulting from reflection's ubiquitous

influence. The superior science demonstrates to understanding reason's importance and, in the process, simply destroys the pretensions to science understanding so arrogantly flaunts. In this way, logic knocks down what ordinary thinking, in total independence from science and its role in science, believes itself to be.⁴⁰ For speculation, consciousness' dubious claims to autonomy constitute an obstruction and, accordingly, speculation maintains only a negative attitude toward consciousness.

For unscientific consciousness this imbalance is obviously less precarious than it is for science, since the former can get along without the latter but not the other way around. Only at the risk of remaining abstract and undermining its own scientific principles, can philosophy conceal the asymmetry of this relation. It is, therefore, in the interest of its own self-realization that philosophy educates prescientific consciousness to the point where it can gain entry to the level of science. Should consciousness in its autonomy continue to be problematic for science, then only because it demands to be initiated into the mysteries of science itself.⁴¹

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* seems to encourage such an understanding. It is usually read either as the path science maps out for consciousness in science or as an introduction to science which is meant to persuade consciousness of the necessity of attaining a philosophical standpoint.⁴² To read the *Phenomenology* in this way, however, gives rise to certain difficulties, if it assumes an indifferent coexistence between science, which is not concerned with consciousness' lack of scientific knowledge, and consciousness, which is predisposed toward science and requires only to be shown the way. This description does not take into account the decisive role a phenomenological explanation of consciousness plays not only in consciousness' own coming into science and its taking possession of an already independently established philosophical standpoint, but in obtaining this standpoint at all and, thus, in the coming-to-be of science.

It is important to see that Hegel describes the relation between unscientific consciousness and science as an antithesis in which each side appears to the other as "the inversion of truth,"⁴³ so that without further consideration a decision about the truth or untruth of either side would be, at this stage, almost impossible or reached only by chance. Ordinary thinking, in its absolute independence from science, must be taken seriously as a rival power which is left unconvinced when science, for its own purposes, sublates the untruth of the other side of the antithesis. In the face of the competing power of consciousness' independent positions and claims to knowledge, any attempt to steer consciousness to the level of absolute knowledge would be inappropriate or at best arbitrary. For this would assume, on the one hand, a philosophical standpoint which has not yet been established in its truth, and, on the other, a willing, "malleable" consciousness which is already predisposed to science. Instead, the actual *antithetical relation* between science and consciousness' prescientific positions must be dismantled, for the antithesis is artificial.⁴⁴ So long as science and consciousness can only see the inversion of the truth in each other, an illusion prevails which completely misdirects all of scientific philosophy's efforts. Philosophy must defend itself against this illusion and divest

consciousness' opposing positions of their autonomous power by making them manifestations of itself; that is, philosophy must *confront* the illusion and force consciousness to relinquish its positions, not, however, in order to raise consciousness to the level of philosophy, but to insure the possibility of philosophy *tout court*.

The way opens up for philosophy as soon as the opposition between consciousness and science, first confronting philosophy, begins to abate on its own accord. That the pretensions and claims with which consciousness reproaches science gradually subside is not because science, for the sake of pacifying consciousness, has paid tribute to them by acknowledging that they are justified. On the contrary, it is the proof of philosophy's superiority as a science that it knows how to impute to prescientific consciousness the *doubt* it raises with regard to the legitimacy of its claims against science. The "thoroughgoing doubt," the "despair,"⁴⁵ experienced by ordinary understanding and consciousness thus becomes the same process described, in regard to philosophical science, as the phenomenological "preparation" which first establishes spirit's true standpoint.⁴⁶

Up to now, philosophy has manifested itself as critique, that is, as a critical confrontation with an illusory antithesis in which philosophy stands over against consciousness as an opponent. At this stage in the development of science's relation to consciousness, the need for an adequate method becomes urgent.⁴⁷

THE STRUCTURE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

By emphasizing how phenomenology confronts unscientific consciousness at each stage of its development and, thus, simultaneously helps philosophy come into its own right, I have raised more questions concerning concrete analyses of the *Phenomenology* than can be adequately answered. For the purposes of this essay, however, it is important to discuss in more detail what has been generally referred to as the positions of ordinary understanding and prephilosophical, unscientific consciousness. For Hegel, the medium of philosophy is spirit. The forms of consciousness which compete with philosophy must be defined, therefore, by corresponding categories. In the realm of spirit, whatever stands in opposition to philosophy must be a manifestation of spirit, and one in which spirit appears in a specific mode of untruth. If, from an ontological perspective, the forms consciousness assumes in opposition to philosophy are regarded as manifestations of spirit's unmediated or incomplete existence, then they can also be regarded as becoming preliminarily integrated into spirit's realized, concrete existence of total self-mediation in which philosophy first moves freely.

Spirit, however, in the totality of its abstract forms of appearance, is also *consciousness*. It, therefore, subsumes all the different, individual shapes taken on by ordinary understanding, common sense and culture, as well as the entire spectrum of corresponding philosophical viewpoints arising from inadequately realized systems and their symbiotic relation to the prevailing intellectual level

of cultural formation.⁴⁸ In the *Philosophy of Spirit*, as carried out in the context of the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel offers a structural analysis which construes consciousness as being always knowledge of something, that is, consciousness of an object and consciousness of itself. This analysis is clearly at odds with the function the concept of consciousness has in phenomenology.⁴⁹ In a phenomenology of spirit, what the truth of consciousness is, should not be positively stated, as is the case in the *Encyclopaedia*; for this assumes that all differences between consciousness and spirit have been worked through and are already thoroughly integrated into spirit's absolute standpoint. For the purposes of phenomenological inquiry, concrete proof must be given for all the successive, individual shapes consciousness assumes, even the false knowledge of itself derived from its uncritical and uncriticized self-understanding. In order to attain the level in which a science of spirit can be realized, consciousness must, therefore, shed its abstract appearances of being something other than spirit and abandon the putative autonomy of its phenomenal existence in favor of finding its real existence in spirit.⁵⁰

If the contrast just drawn between the concept of consciousness and its phenomenological function turns out to be valid, important methodological problems emerge in conjunction with phenomenology. It is easy, however, to overlook these problems, especially if the main focus is the wealth of material supplied in the *Phenomenology*, and the concern is to think through this material immanently. This has been the starting point for traditional interpretations, and the source of fascination the *Phenomenology* exerts on its readers. As critique, however, the method appropriate to phenomenology can not, at first, be put on a par with speculative method which finds its model expression in logic. Then again, how can such a distinction be adequately drawn, when scientific philosophy is itself engaged in speculation?⁵¹ The solution to this problem is usually sought for in correspondences between logical and phenomenological structures. If the aim is to refashion the *Phenomenology's* general framework after the *Logic*, what comes first to mind is the "Doctrine of Essence," which starts out with the transitional category of Being constituting the Other of reflection.⁵² This is plausible given that phenomenology does seem to move within the sphere where "being-in-itself" and "being-for-self" are united. It becomes obvious, however, to formulate the problem in this way can not account for the difficulties which arise in the concrete application of such determinations within the *Phenomenology*. Although Hegel indeed brings the realm of consciousness' individual shapes, in the sense of their abstract appearances, in relation to spirit's realm of truth, this contributes little to pinpointing what is specifically characteristic about the method intrinsic to phenomenology.

A more successful approach would be to focus in on the idea of a phenomenological *preparation* for science. From this perspective, the importance of what we expect phenomenology to achieve will lie in an on-going critique of consciousness' seemingly autonomous standpoints and in exposing the bogus nature of the opposition between science and consciousness. This goal can only be realized when consciousness' various opinions and levels of

self-understanding are taken seriously and given a hearing,⁵³ whereas it is up to speculation to destroy both aspects by leaving them to perish as reason strives toward systematic knowledge.

In order for critique to fulfill its function, it must first be conceded that each of consciousness' individual, phenomenal shapes actually understands itself as a totality and as constituting the truth. As the *Phenomenology* progresses, the focal point undergoes a radical shift in perspective. The philosopher becomes directly engaged in a dialogue with the various phenomenological standpoints consciousness assumes. It is now *our* reflection as observer which inquires into consciousness' self-understanding, that is, the for-it of consciousness is examined, as to what it is in-itself and what its truth is for us.

From the perspective of real knowledge, the "for-it" means *certainty*, and the "in-itself," *truth*, while the incongruence of certainty and truth is crystallized in the concept of *opinion*. Insight into this incongruence constitutes consciousness' *experience* of itself. Experience means knowledge is brought to bear upon consciousness from the outside and indicates that consciousness must accordingly modify its present understanding of itself. Consciousness has to realize that what it took to be the truth and independent being of things is, in fact, nothing other than the objects of its own reflection; this is, however, very different from what consciousness originally believed about the nature of objects and its relation to them. In experiencing the loss of the object's being-in-itself, consciousness corrects its former opinions and achieves an integration of truth and certainty and, in terms of the *Phenomenology's* overall development, this means consciousness has advanced in its own self-knowledge. What first was the "for-it" of consciousness has now to be understood as "for us or in-itself," and the further insight resulting from this methodological maneuver must be reintegrated into the for-it of consciousness.

The insights consciousness gains in this way, however, are always immediately *forgotten*,⁵⁴ and consciousness must, once again, move between certainty and truth. In improving and correcting its previous knowledge, consciousness suffers a loss at the next stage of its development. In the language of consciousness this is to be described as nothing more than reestablishing its standpoint in all its immediacy, and the phenomenological method must once again deal with a similar problem translated into the terms of a higher level of awareness. From the side of phenomenology, self-certain opinions about the truth must give way to reflection. This move helps clarify for us the relation between consciousness and science by showing that it is consciousness' experiences which rectify the discrepancies between what the truth in itself is and what consciousness believes it to be. This process is resumed so long as consciousness is able to adopt new standpoints as a consequence of having forgotten its previous experiences. The process, however, is not open-ended. It comes to a halt the moment certainty and truth coincide, and consciousness has no other objects to fall back upon other than itself.⁵⁵ At this last stage in the development of the *Phenomenology*, the refutation of consciousness' standpoint is carried out by consciousness itself, and it ushers in the moment of absolute knowledge. Since there is no longer a consciousness to be

distinguished from philosophy, philosophical science can now begin as itself unhindered.

The function of method in the *Phenomenology* is to impute to consciousness, whose authority was initially granted on the basis of certainty and the bare assertion of truth,⁵⁶ the form of reflection originally practiced by the phenomenological observer. Consciousness, thus, carries out the process of reflection originally introduced by phenomenology and, in its turn, reflection is integrated step-by-step into the opposing standpoint. Reflection sheds the role of being something external to consciousness, as the two seemingly conflicting standpoints of phenomenological observer and consciousness gradually merge together to form an identity of perspective. The observer's standpoint, however, exists only in its opposition to the successive standpoints assumed by consciousness and, conversely, the internal standpoints of consciousness come into view only in opposition to the observer's external standpoint. In this way, philosophical science emerges on the scene thoroughly implicated in what first appears to be an antithetical relation between consciousness and observer.

The truth of phenomenology, however, is that it is not really a standpoint at all; rather, it is the disguised mode by which philosophy prepares the way for its emergence as a true science of spirit. Phenomenology finally rids itself of the appearance of being a standpoint the closer consciousness and observer come to actually forming an identity. Once the standpoints have entirely disappeared into each other, there is only one standpoint left over, that of absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge, however, is no longer a standpoint. It is the first moment in which philosophy begins to realize itself as genuine system.⁵⁷

If the phenomenological standpoint does not have any independent truth of its own and acquires meaning only in opposition to consciousness, then consciousness' standpoint is no less dependent on phenomenology for the truth of its existence and, taken in isolation, is merely the expression of inflated opinions and self-aggrandizing claims. That consciousness has not yet carried out reflection for itself indicates the for-it of consciousness has not yet been mediated. It is only a form which can be indiscriminately adopted by any content whatsoever, whereas consciousness' given form can be held to be certain regardless of its content. Consciousness' certainty of all things is paid for by the empty, indeterminate *otherness* of all its knowledge. This indeterminate knowledge, coupled with the form of mere certainty, results in consciousness' standpoints becoming dogmatic. When consciousness, however, takes over the function of reflection previously performed by the phenomenological observer, and reflects for itself over the truth of its own experiences, it realizes that they were always laid out in the form of reflection. With this insight, consciousness prevails against the obdurateness of its standpoints, undermines its fixed, abstract appearances, and becomes what it is – reflection.

By means of reflection, the mode of thinking peculiar to consciousness, philosophy confronts consciousness on its own terrain of cultural formation and reveals that reflection is the hidden motor force behind the entire progression of shapes consciousness assumes. Confronted with the truth of its own reflective nature, consciousness can no longer sustain its standpoints. The

phenomenological critique of consciousness' individual shapes is the course philosophy pursues in helping consciousness, incapable of self-knowledge, to be what it is, namely, reflection. For only reflection can open up the possibility for philosophy to be what it is, namely, speculation. Under the rubric of phenomenology, speculation manifests itself as reflection; for only as reflection can it have an effect on current thought and reduce the illusion, as it prevails in consciousness' thinking and its standpoints, to a manifestation of itself. Freedom from illusion is for this reason tantamount to saying that *without the explicit connection to prevailing thought or the spirit of the times, philosophy is incapable of defining itself*.⁵⁸ It is this insight which Hegel realizes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Translated by
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NOTES

1. *The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism*, trans. D.I. Behler, *Philosophy of German Idealism*, ed. E. Behler (New York: SUNY, 1987), 161-163; *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus, G.W.F. Hegel Werke*, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), vol. I, 234-36. Above all, G.C. Storr, professor of theology at the University of Tübingen during Hegel's time there, is intended as the main target of the author's polemics. See Schelling's letter to Hegel from the beginning of January 1795, and Hegel's reply at the end of January, as well as Schelling's letter of February 4, 1795; *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1969) vol. I, 13f, 16f, 21. (For the English translation of all of Hegel's letters see *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. C. Butler and C. Seiler (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1984).) For further insight see also the first *Zusatz* (supplement), written in the winter of 1795-96, to the *Positivität der christlichen Religion, Werke I*, 192f.
2. The identity of the author of the *Oldest Systematic Program* is still disputed. Franz Rosenkranz, the discoverer of the fragmented manuscript, maintained that Schelling was the author, but that the text was written in Hegel's hand. For our purposes, the question as to whether it was Schelling or Hegel can remain open; in the light of the letters, it is obvious that both shared the same contempt for theological sophistry. For further discussion see *Das älteste Systemprogramm. Studien zur Frühgeschichte des Idealismus*, ed. R. Bubner, *Hegel-Studien* (Bonn 1973) Beiheft 9.
3. *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T.M. Knox, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 167-181; *Werke I*, 217-229. The revisions to the *Preface* of the *Positivity* essay were written September 24, 1800.
4. *Ibid.*, 168; *Werke I*, 217-18.
5. *Ibid.*, 170, 172; *Werke I*, 221, 222.
6. *Ibid.*, 170; *Werke I*, 220.
7. *Systemfragment von 1800, Werke I*, 419-427, 422; *Fragment of a System* (1800), *Early Theological Writings*, 309-319, 313 (my translation, CGR).
8. *Ibid.*, 317; *Werke I* 425.
9. *Ibid.*, 318-19; *Werke I*, 425-27.
10. *Glauben und Wissen oder Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Formen als Kantische, Jacobische und Fichtesche Philosophie, Werke II*, 287-432; *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. W. Cerf and H.S. Harris, (Albany: SUNY, 1977).
11. *Ibid.*, 57, (translation modified); *Werke II*, 287.
12. We have O. Pöggeler's on-going research to thank for uncovering the circumstances surrounding the writing of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and presenting all available philological evidence

- as the key to its structural articulation. See among others of Pöggeler's works, *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes*, (Freiburg: Alber, 1993).
12. In this connection, however, it is worth pointing out that Reinhold's "Phänomenologie" is largely ignored and, if one is allowed to speculate, most likely prompted Hegel's choice of title: K.L. Reinhold, *Elemente der Phänomenologie oder Erläuterung des rationalen Realismus durch seine Anwendung auf die Erscheinungen*, in *Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht des Zustands der Philosophie beym Anfang d. 19. Jh.*, Heft 4, (1802). [*Elements of Phenomenology or the Explanation of Rational Realism by means of Its Application to Phenomena*, in *Contributions toward a More Facile Overview of the State of Philosophy at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*.]
 13. For a good standard work on the *Phenomenology* see W. Marx, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: Its Point and Purpose*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975). In my opinion, the most important new work on the *Phenomenology* to appear in English is T. Pinkard's *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
 14. *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and W. Cerf, (Albany: SUNY, 1977) 89ff., 101, 177, 192–93; *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*, *Werke* II, 20ff., 33f., 119, 136. In the light of Herder's concept of *Bildung*, understood as the education of mankind up to its own humanity through the realization of reason and freedom, Hegel's use of the word is indeed curious. To my knowledge, only Fichte in his *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, gives the word *Bildung* a similar, negative emphasis: *Fichtes Werke*, (Berlin, 1971), vol. 1, 284–85; *Science of Knowledge*, trans. P. Heath and J.Lachs, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 251.
 15. Translator's note: The German noun *Entzweiung* comes from the verb *entzwei*, which literally means divide or split in two halves, sunder, separate, bifurcate, disunite, and in the extended sense of to turn people against each other or to sow dissension. Hegel's use of *Entzweiung* has been rendered in English by various translators as "bifurcation" (Benhabib) "diremption" (Surber), "dichotomy" (Harris). According to S. Benhabib, "*Entzweiung* is particularly important in the context of Hegel's early diagnosis of modernity and civil society as conditions of division, separation and alienation," (H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. S. Benhabib, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987] 336).
 16. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel formulates the concept of *Bildung* in much the same way and creates an historical parallel between the Enlightenment and the ancient sophist movement with which, according to Hegel, the "principle of modernity" begins; *Werke* XVIII, 404, 409ff., see also 435. For a similar analogy see the *Vorrede zu Hinrichs Religionsphilosophie* (1821), *Werke* XI, 60f.
 17. As is well known, the outward "occasion" for the *Difference* essay was the first installment of Reinhold's *Contributions to a More Facile Overview of the State of Philosophy at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (1801). For the most part, later acquaintance with the *Beyträge* has been limited to Hegel's commentary. As a result, the tendency is to accept sight unseen Hegel's critical assessment. The later installments of the *Beyträge* (*Hefte* 1–6, 1801–3) remain by and large unknown. The tenor of Hegel's own essay is comparable to Reinhold's consideration of the historical situation in that Reinhold surveys the various philosophical systems of the age, their rise and fall, as well as describes the advent of the need for true philosophy. (In this connection, *Some Thoughts about Philosophical Systems in general and the Science of Knowledge in particular* is especially pertinent. The *Preface* for this installment of the *Beyträge* is dated March 30, 1801, and as the note in the *Difference* essay attests, was known to Hegel [*Difference* essay, 178–79; *Werke* II, 120].) In the face of Reinhold's lumping together of Schelling's and Fichte's systems in the name of Bardili's logic and his condemnation of both as "speculative philodoxy," Hegel, who was at this time a dyed-in-the-wool Schelling supporter and an equally adamant Fichte critic, felt directly called upon to account for the "difference" between the two systems (*Ibid.*, 79–80, 82, 174–75; *Werke* II, 9, 12, 116). Hegel also knew of Reinhold's article, *The Spirit of the Age as the Spirit of Philosophy*, published in Wieland's (Reinhold's father-in-law) journal *Neuer Teutscher Merkur* (March 1801, n. 3, pp. 167–93), (*Ibid.*, 178–79, *Werke* II, 120). As H.S. Harris has observed, this essay had a preliminary note which announced that it consisted of "fragments from a treatise" included in the *second volume* of the *Beyträge*. The "treatise" (*Beyträge* II, 104–

- 40) was entitled: "On Autonomy as the Principle of the *Practical Philosophy* of the Kantian School – and of the *Whole Philosophy* of the School of Fichte and Schelling," (see Harris' note *Difference* essay, 178). Hegel alludes to both works. In the *Spirit* essay, Reinhold explains speculation in terms of the age's general tendency toward "egotism" and "impeity." Concealed behind the concept of transcendental philosophy and the mere semblance of speculation of Fichte's and Schelling's systems is only the interest of "philosophers going by the name Peter and Paul" in the free despotism of their individual egos. Reinhold voices similar objections in the *Beyträge* (for example, *Heft* I, 153f; *Heft* 2, 58). Hegel repudiates the moralizing calumny, but concedes Reinhold's point that the various forms philosophy takes on are determined by historical circumstances. From the perspective of the history of philosophy, there is, at any rate, a good deal more in common between Reinhold and Hegel of 1801, than the widely accepted view that Hegel's inspiration for the *Difference* essay was completely original. Hegel's polemics have contributed to an unfair picture of Reinhold's accomplishments.
18. *Difference* essay, 187, 192; *Werke* II, 130f., 136. Compare also *Wesen der Kritik*, *Werke* II, 179f.
 19. *Ibid.*, 82, 114; *Werke* II, 12f., 47; see also *Wesen der Kritik* *Werke* II, 181f.
 20. *Ibid.*, 115, 121f., 125; *Werke* II, 48, 53f., 59f; *Faith and Knowledge*, 60ff., 143, 183; *Werke* II, 293ff., 383, 425.
 21. Reinhold proclaimed that transcendental philosophy had come to an end by declaring himself to be for "rational realism" (i.e., Bardili's *Outline for the First Logic, Purged from the Errors of Previous Logics, Kant's in particular; not a Critique, rather a Medicina Mentis Primarily Useful for Germany's Critical Philosophy* (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1800). Reinhold in following Bardili also criticizes Kant and Fichte and points to failings in both which Hegel takes over as his own. See in particular Reinhold's *Ideas for a Heautogony or Natural History of the Pure Absolute Ego [Ichheit]*, *Called Pure Reason* in *Heft* I of the *Beyträge*.
 22. *Difference* essay, 101–2; *Werke* II, 34; *Faith and Knowledge*, 56–57, 61–62, 189; *Werke* II, 289, 295f., 430. Compare *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 15–16; *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, *Werke* III, 31–32. See also Reinhold's *Key to Philodoxy in general and to the So-called Speculative in particular* in *Heft* IV of the *Beyträge*, 186, (*Foreword* from March 21, 1802).
 23. *Faith and Knowledge*, 189 (translation modified); *Werke* II, 431.
 24. *Werke* II, 171ff.
 25. *Ibid.*, 175.
 26. *Ibid.*, 181f.
 27. *Ibid.*, 175.
 28. O. Pöggeler's approach to understanding the philosophical task of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is obviously influenced by Heidegger. This orientation manifests itself when Pöggeler maintains that Hegel places experience and the problem of history "at the center of metaphysics" so that "truth itself can be seen as historical and thus, in a certain way, also as 'a goal to be aspired to' [Streben] and as 'problematical,'" (*Hegels Jenaer Systemkonzeption*, in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* (1963/64) 316f., 311, 308). This interpretation, however, fails to realize that Hegel, in according the problem of history a place in his system, is by no means interested in making truth dependent on history and, therefore, contingent. Rather, for Hegel, it is a question of endeavoring to comprehend such dependency in all its forms in order to rescue the truth of the one, atemporal philosophy from the influence of history and those inadequacies that undermined the viability of *Reflexionsphilosophie*, which was itself shaped by the spirit of the times. (See, for example, the *Phenomenology* 486–87; *Werke* III, 584–85.) In his reading of the *Introduction* to the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger, because he failed to distinguish sufficiently between phenomenology and logic and, thus, excluded from consideration the function phenomenology has in Hegel's system (*Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung in Holzwege* [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980] 111–204), treats phenomenal spirit as if it were a manifestation of the Absolute. For English translation of Heidegger's essay, see *Hegel's Concept of Experience*, trans. J.G. Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
 29. *Werke* II, 185.
 30. *Phenomenology*, 48–49, see also 15–16; *Werke* III, 72, 30–31.
 31. *Ibid.*, 52; *Werke* III, 75.

32. *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Bd. I, 59.
33. *Difference* essay, 87, 88, 96–97; *Werke* II, 17, 19, 28.
34. See *Introduction* to Harris and Cerf's translation of *Faith and Knowledge*, 9–10, where the entire excerpt is quoted (translation modified); Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, (Berlin 1844; reprint, Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges, 1969) 190f. Omitted here is the reference to the three-tiered structure of logic.
35. Compare *Faith and Knowledge*, 170–171; *Werke* II, 413–14; and also *Difference* essay, 90; *Werke* II, 23f.
36. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences, Logic*, trans. W. Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) §19.
37. *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Atlantic Highlands: 1990) 45–46; *Werke* V, 38.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Difference* essay, 98ff; *Werke* II, 30ff. See also Hegel's Krug review first published in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, January 1802, under the title *Wie der gemeine Menschenverstand die Philosophie nehme, dargestellt an den Werken des Herrn Krug*, *Werke* II, 188ff.
40. *Phenomenology*, 14–15, 49; *Werke* III, 29–30, 72.
41. *Ibid.*, 7–8, 14–15; *Werke* III, 19–20, 29–30.
42. In his *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik*, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, second edition 1975), H.F. Fulda extensively argues this thesis in its systematic implications while, at the same time, maintaining an understanding of the *Phenomenology*, based on the later *Logic* and *Encyclopaedia*, as proof for the necessity of a standpoint biased toward philosophical science. See *Science of Logic*, 48–49; *Werke* V, 42–43; and also *Encyclopaedia*, remark §25.
43. *Phenomenology*, 15, 49–50; *Werke* III, 30, 72–73.
44. Compare *Jenenser Realphilosophie* I. ed. J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1931–32) 266, Anmerkung II to the fragment “*Die Wissenschaft*.”
45. *Phenomenology* 49–50; *Werke* III, 72. – The idea is already contained in Hegel's *Habilitation's* theses of 1801: “VI. Idea est synthesis infiniti et finiti et philosophia omnis est in ideis. VII. Philosophia critica caret ideis et imperfecta est Scepticismi forma” (Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, 158f.). In the *Difference* essay, Hegel similarly calls one variety of philosophy, “genuine scepticism,” which does not actually fulfill the need for philosophy (*Difference* essay, 193–94; *Werke* II, 136–37). See also the essay, *Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie*, *Werke* II, especially 239f., 249, 224, 228, as well as the *Encyclopaedia*, §78, and remark §81.
46. *Phenomenology*, 20; *Werke* III, 38.
47. *Ibid.*, 56; *Werke* III, 80.
48. Compare, for example, the *Encyclopaedia*, remark §415.
49. This can already be observed in the chapter “*Phänomenologie des Geistes oder Wissenschaft des Bewußtseins*” from Hegel's Nürnberg *Philosophische Propädeutik* (1809), *Werke* IV, 111; *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 55. (The English translation does not retain the chapter heading, “Phenomenology of Spirit or Science of Consciousness.”)
50. Compare *Phenomenology*, 56–57; *Werke* III, 80–81.
51. H.F. Fulda's closely reasoned argumentation attempts to address this paradox. For the most part, he bases his argument on the famous statement at the end of the *Phenomenology* that for every one of science's abstract moments there is a corresponding, individual shape of manifest spirit (*Phenomenology*, 491; *Werke* III, 589). In a comparison with speculative logic, Fulda tries to get to the root of the logic specific to the *Phenomenology* through a more concrete understanding of the *Phenomenology's* techniques and methodological form. All told, this results in a subtle interpretation of the concept of correspondence (Fulda, *Zur Logik der Phänomenologie von 1807*, in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3, 1966). – Fulda's line of reasoning concerning the *Phenomenology's* formal structure seems to me to be on the right track. The question is, however, whether it is legitimate to base such an interpretation on a formulaic and synoptic statement as encapsulated in the sentence drawn from the last chapter of the *Phenomenology*. – It is not by chance that what is still by far the best grounded attempt to track down behind every individual shape of the *Phenomenology* a corresponding moment in the

- Logic* comes up against its limits after the *Phenomenology's* third chapter. See W. Purpus, *Zur Dialektik des Bewußtseins nach Hegel* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1908).
52. *Logic*, Bk. II, 390; *Werke* VI, 13. See also *Encyclopaedia* §414.
 53. For further insight see R. Wiehl, *Der Sinn der sinnlichen Gewißheit*, in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3 (Bonn 1966).
 54. *Phenomenology*, 64–5, 71, 102–3, 141; *Werke* III, 90, 98, 134–5, 180.
 55. Compare *Jenenser Realphilosophie* I, 267.
 56. *Phenomenology*, 141; *Werke* III, 180.
 57. It is important to guard against the standard sceptical objection to “absolute knowledge” as being an endpoint which Hegel dogmatically presupposes from the beginning of the *Phenomenology*. For a detailed discussion of this problem see my essay *What is Critical Theory?*, in R. Bubner, *Essays in Hermeneutics and Critical Theory*, trans. E. Matthews, (New York: Columbia Press, 1988).
 58. For further consideration of Hegel's insight, see my essay *Philosophy Is Its Time Comprehended in Thought*, which first appeared as a contribution to the Gadamer-Festschrift (*Hermeneutik und Dialektik* I [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970]), and is translated in *Essays in Hermeneutics and Critical Theory*, 37–61.

5. COMMENT: RÜDIGER BUBNER:
“HEGEL’S CONCEPT OF PHENOMENOLOGY”

Fortunately, Bubner’s masterly account of the origins of Hegel’s concept of phenomenology leaves very little to be said. I would, however, like to bring out one or two points which Bubner would probably accept but which he does not make explicit; and I would like to question a certain emphasis which I think I detect in his exposition.

First, we should note that Bubner is talking about phenomenology in the broad sense exemplified in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. He is not talking about phenomenology more narrowly understood as that phase of Subjective Spirit in which consciousness posits its own content as existing as an object independently of itself. The latter is, of course, phenomenology as we find it developed in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* and which is an integral part of Hegel’s mature system. For Bubner, phenomenology in the earlier sense is not part of the mature system but rather a preparation for it. It is, he suggests, best regarded as “philosophy as critique,” a sort of ground-clearing operation in which the certainties of understanding and reflection as manifest in the ‘natural consciousness’ are demolished and the way is prepared for philosophy as such to come into its own. As Bubner puts it: “the need for philosophy makes itself felt in that the false unity created by *Bildung* must be replaced by genuine unification. Reason, in its striving toward the unconditioned, is called upon to free the oppositions from the understanding’s fixed totality of limitations.”

It is not entirely clear whether Bubner is claiming that this is how Hegel himself understood the task of phenomenology when he was writing *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e. whether he already had a formed picture of his mature system in mind and thought of his phenomenology as being a preface to it. However, this is not a point of any great importance. It is more important to be clear about how Bubner understands the role of “philosophy as critique” and its relation to philosophy as speculation, for it seems to me that there is a slight tension here.

Although Bubner does not mention Plato by name, much of what he says suggests that he thinks of Hegel’s phenomenology in Platonic terms. Just as, for Plato, the world of phenomena is nothing but a copy or image of the intelligible

realm of Ideas, so for Hegel (according to Bubner), the forms of thought established by understanding are "... mere finite appearances of the Absolute." And just as, for Plato, it is the task of dialectic to undermine the false certainties of phenomenal cognition in all its forms (including mathematics), so for Hegel, it is the task of reason to expose "... understanding's self-subsisting forms to be mere abstractions." However, these forms are not, for that reason, simply discarded as being worthless. "In the culture at large, ..." Bubner tells us, "philosophy finds the 'building blocks' of its future system as well as the obstacles to its self-realization as system." Philosophy as critique dissolves the seeming self-subsistence of these "building blocks," but their negation is a determinate negation (*Phen.* 79), and they therefore retain some "meaning and content ... for reason." Every-day consciousness is, in this sense, raised to the level of philosophy.

For many readers of Hegel, the Platonic – or should it be Socratic? – character of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is best exemplified in the dialectic he outlines in his "Introduction." Here he writes: "Whatever is confined within the limits of a natural life cannot by its own efforts go beyond its immediate existence; but it is driven beyond it by something else, and this uprooting entails its death." However, Hegel goes on to claim that consciousness is an exception, because, unlike other natural phenomena, it is its own notion (*Begriff*). "Hence," he says, "... it is something that goes beyond limits, and since these limits are its own, it is something that goes beyond itself (*Phen.* 80)." It is clear that by "consciousness" Hegel means "self-consciousness," but this is a quibble that does not affect his main point. His main point is that consciousness finds within itself the criteria by which it conducts its critique of itself. There is, in other words, a dialectic which "consciousness exercises on itself (*Phen.* 86)" and which drives it beyond itself until it eventually comes to rest in absolute knowledge. In short, it is self-driven and does not require "something else" to drive it beyond itself. Such, at least, is the view that many readers of Hegel come away with.

However, Bubner offers a rather different account of the matter. He bases this account particularly on the *Difference* essay and on the essay, *Concerning the Essence of Philosophical Critique etc.* Here we find (Bubner tells us) that it is not consciousness itself which, by its own inner dialectic, generates the idea of philosophy; rather, it is philosophy which brings to the critique of consciousness its own criterion. Speaking of the various forms of thought which have arisen "... in the course of reflection's cultural formation ...," Bubner says: "Critique consists in measuring these results of reflection against the idea of true philosophy." And a couple of lines later: "The idea of philosophy is always presupposed by the activity of criticism." So what we have, in philosophy as critique, is a confrontation between philosophy and the ordinary or natural consciousness to which philosophy brings its own criterion of criticism and consequently emerges as the victor, with consciousness as the vanquished.

This impression is strengthened by some of Bubner's remarks in the last two sections of his essay. He insists that, for Hegel, the relation between ordinary consciousness and science is an "antithesis" in which each side appears to the

other as "the inversion of truth." This antithesis is, however, illusory and, Bubner tells us, "philosophy must *confront* the illusion and force consciousness to relinquish its positions, not, however, in order to raise consciousness to the level of philosophy, but to insure the possibility of philosophy *tout court*." It follows, for Bubner, that the course along which "philosophy as critique" drives the ordinary or natural consciousness is indeed the "path of despair," for it ends in the total destruction of the ordinary consciousness and its replacement by philosophy as speculation. Or rather, as Bubner puts it, "... there is no longer a consciousness to be distinguished from philosophy." This could mean that the content of consciousness has been philosophised and is thus preserved, though no longer in its "natural" state. But the context suggests that, for Bubner, the natural consciousness is not, in fact, raised to the level of philosophy but that it is simply cast aside and replaced by its antithesis, philosophy as speculation.

Whatever (we may ask) has happened to "immanent critique" as an essential characteristic of Hegel's early concept of phenomenology?

It may well be that Bubner did not intend to create the impression I have, rightly or wrongly, detected in his essay. It may also be that, between the *Difference* essay and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel developed his position in a way that Bubner has not made absolutely clear. Expounding Hegel is, in any case, a hideously complicated business, and it is impossible to say everything at once. I make the case that I have made only because it points to a certain amount of unease I had in reading what is otherwise an excellent piece of analysis. On the whole, Bubner is to be congratulated.

One final observation. Most philosophers in the Anglo-Saxon analytical tradition have (it must be confessed) not raised their thinking to the level of reason. They have not broken through to the realm of speculative philosophy, and they therefore still find themselves enmeshed in the maze of understanding and reflection. They consequently find Hegel puzzling and, indeed, a little bit frightening. It has to be said that Bubner's exposition is unlikely to set their minds at rest. They will, for instance, remark (perhaps with irritation) that the passive voice conceals many obscurities. Thus, with regard to one of the passages quoted above, "Reason ... is called upon to ... etc," they will ask: who, exactly, is doing the "calling"? I, for one, am irresistibly reminded of Glendower's: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep." And Harry Hotspur's reply: "Why, so can I, or so can any man/But will they come when you do call for them?" There are, in short, altogether too many metaphysical entities at work, and your average Anglo-Saxon analytical philosopher will, as likely as not, insist that talk of this kind has more to do with poetry than philosophy. But then, we may ask, is it any the worse for that?

SIMON JARVIS

6. THE “UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS” AND CONSCIOUS UNHAPPINESS

On Adorno’s critique of Hegel
and the idea of an Hegelian critique of Adorno

HEGEL’S *PHENOMENOLOGY* TODAY

In the early sections of *The Difference between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, Hegel offered some advice on how not to write the history of philosophy. The collector of philosophical opinions translates philosophy “... to the plane of information. Information is concerned with alien objects.”¹ Yet a scarcely less inert relation to previous work in philosophy is implied if it is taken as a series of faltering steps towards the invention of a perfected thought-technique which would spare truth the labour of error. In these circumstances, “The preceding philosophical systems would at all times be nothing but practice studies for the big brains.”² Research on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has occasionally resembled both an aggregation of inert philological objects and a series of intellectual workouts. But either fate may be preferable to its relegation to the honourable oblivion of *Gedankendichtung*, “conceptual poetry.” The phrase “Hegel-specialist” has an oxymoronic ring to it; but the separation of faculties which governs this need for experts cannot be wished away. A stuffed replica of the *Phenomenology*, or even a requirement that all philosophers should speak Hegelian, can hardly today provide more than philosophical kitsch. Hegel’s philosophical compositions continue mutely to reproach the graceless cerebration sometimes conducted in their name, but they are still worse served by what Hegel referred to as “... the conceit that will not argue”³ These considerations also apply to the content of interpretations of the *Phenomenology* itself and of Hegel’s thought in general. Some recent readings have emphasized Hegel’s Kantian and Fichtean inheritance to the point where it might almost be thought that what is distinctively interesting about Hegel has vanished altogether.⁴ But such readings represent a fair response not merely to any idea that Hegel kindly allows us to have back intact the dogmatic metaphysics harshly prohibited by Kant, but also to interpretations which forget that Hegel’s critique of epistemology proceeds immanently and epistemologically rather than being shot from a pistol.

Discussion of the “unhappy consciousness” might stand as an epitome for these oppositions in Hegel-reception. At one extreme lies Walter Kaufmann’s suggestion that “Hegel evidently wanted to get some ideas about medieval Christianity off his chest...”;⁵ but more nuanced readings of the presence of a phenomenology of religious consciousness in this passage are not lacking, above all the monograph by Wahl⁶ and Hyppolite’s discussion in his commentary.⁷ On the other hand, Eugen Fink insists that the unhappiness of unhappy consciousness remains (in Heideggerian terms) an ontological dissatisfaction, to which all merely ontic unhappiness is simply contingent,⁸ and commentators such as Robert Pippin⁹ have in different ways polemicized against readings (notably Kojève’s¹⁰ and Garaudy’s,¹¹ and, allegedly, those of Marcuse,¹² Lukács,¹³ and Adorno¹⁴) which too quickly take the whole self-consciousness section of the *Phenomenology* as a lurch into anthropology or social history oblivious of epistemological questions.

The reception of Hegel’s work is not accidental to the question of its truth. Self-consciousness is supposed as unhappy consciousness to experience, although not to have completed once and for all, the collapse of any attempt to establish a fixed opposition between immanence and transcendence. This sublation repeatedly falls into fixed opposition again – sometimes within individual readings – in the understandable anxiety of expositors of the unhappy consciousness finally to establish its “status.” On the one hand, truth as the aggregate of warranted certainties, struggling to do justice to the social, historical and religious reference of this passage but ultimately unable to regard such reference as more than contingent resonance; on the other, false concretion blinded by its premature truncation of the concept. Yet the least Hegelian response to this gulf would be a smart “both/and” presented as a result. Rather than attempting to consider the whole reception-history, I shall concentrate on a single life’s work which I take to be both critical and exemplary for the possibility of a contemporary Hegelianism which would be more than either practice studies for the big brains or a dead replication of Hegelian rhetoric: the thought of Theodor Adorno.

HEGEL CONTRA ADORNO?

Most Hegelians are likely to be less persuaded by Adorno’s critique of Hegel than by Hegel’s critique of Adorno. But if there is to be an Hegelian critique of Adorno, it cannot be satisfactorily performed in the perfunctory manner sometimes on offer. Single formulations are snatched from their context and summarily dispatched; but it is no more adequate to treat “the whole is the false” as an epitome of Adorno’s thinking than it is to treat “the true is the whole” as the result of Hegel’s. Elsewhere critical theory is assigned to the catch-all category of Marxism: a recent commentary on Hegel’s *Logic* can refer in a single breath to the Hegel-interpretations of “... Marx, Engels, Lenin, Adorno, Marcuse, etc.”¹⁵ Less crude, but still too quick, is the referral of critical theory to particular sections of the *Phenomenology*. For one reader a proleptic critique of Marcuse’s work is given in Hegel’s account of “the fury of

disappearance",¹⁶ for another Adorno is a twentieth-century J.F. Fries whose work is already criticized under "The law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit."¹⁷ Yet this procedure is unsatisfactory less because it overestimates than because it abridges the depth and range of a possible Hegelian critique of critical theory. This much is evident from the more testing questions implied by the work of (amongst others) Gillian Rose and Michael Theunissen. Rose's characterization of Adorno as a neo-Fichtean in *Hegel contra Sociology* makes clear that no single episode in Hegel's thought will suffice neatly to dispatch Adorno.¹⁸ Hegel, as Rose points out, scarcely regards the critical exposition of Kant and Fichte as a simple result but rather as a task to which thought repeatedly returns.¹⁹ Rose's speculative comparison of Adorno with Fichte adumbrates, if it cannot there execute, a reading in which Hegel's confrontation with Adorno would be articulated through the whole range of both thinkers' work. Similarly the interest of Michael Theunissen's repeated encounters with Adorno lies in his refusal simply to dispose of Adorno from above.²⁰ Instead Theunissen's emphasis on the relation between immanence and transcendence allows social-critical and epistemological moments of critical theory to be considered in their continual mutual relatedness. As with Rose's criticism, Theunissen implies that there is a lapse into pre-Hegelian patterns in Adorno's thinking. Theunissen's remark that Adorno ends up by treating the non-identical as a kind of Absolute²¹ directly recalls Hegel's remark in the *Differenzschrift* that for Kant "... non-identity is raised to an absolute principle."²²

AIMS OF THIS PAPER: SPECULATIVE AND ABSTRACT IDENTITY

In this paper I want to consider some aspects of the relation between Hegel and critical theory by confronting Adorno's critique of Hegel with Hegel's account of the "unhappy consciousness." Although Adorno never offers a complete exegesis of the "unhappy consciousness," it remains pivotal to his lifelong engagement with Hegel, both because of its key role in preparing for the idealism thesis, the idea of the identity of thought and being, and because of just that ambiguity of status which commentators have sometimes laboured to remove as though labouring on an alien object. It will be recalled that for Hegel self-consciousness is brought in its experience of unhappy diremption to the certainty (not yet to the truth)²³ of the identity of thought and being, and, equally, of immanence and transcendence. This certainty is won through an account of the experience of self-consciousness which is addressed as much to Kant and Fichte as to a phenomenology of Christian religious consciousness. Indeed one of the episode's primary achievements is to show – in less sharpshooting fashion than the earlier essay *Faith and Knowledge* – how all distinction between immanence and transcendence posited as absolute, whether by faith or by knowledge, ends in its own collapse. Adorno's unhappy recalcitrance to the certainty which follows on this collapse cannot be placed in abstract opposition to a Hegel who would supposedly cheerfully accept it. Reason's certainty is as yet *only* certainty. What is true in spirit – spirit's truth

to reason's certainty²⁴ – is its return to the experience of that division which it comprehends and without which there can be no comprehension. Hegel himself insisted that “[N]othing is *known* that is not in *experience*”²⁵ and in such a way as to make clear the faith in knowledge as well as the knowledge in faith.²⁶ Adorno's insistence on divided experience cannot be fully expounded if it is taken as a simple decapitation of the speculative or as a mere faith in radical externality alone. The Adorno whose work I wish both to defend and to criticize here – since discipleship is no more to the point in Adorno's than in Hegel's case – is not one who has in any simple way “lapsed” “back” into pre-systematic faith in the non-identical; nor even one the trajectory of whose work can fully be described as a sceptical shuttling back and forth *between* Kant and Hegel. Rather, Adorno's thought aims from within what Adorno takes to be true in the concept of speculation itself against its premature petrification into a schema. It was precisely in realizing that the speculative identity of identity and non-identity had to be multiply articulated rather than abstractly stated that Hegel considered himself to have done more than the earlier Schelling.²⁷ What is “speculative” in speculative identity, what makes it speculative and not abstract identity, is precisely its restless return to the experience of division. Speculation which does not itself wish to become a merely uplifting injunction to identity is returned to that restlessness which Hegel continued to insist upon as a moment of the Absolute.²⁸ It is usually remembered that unhappy consciousness is restless self-consciousness. But what is as often forgotten is that what powers this restlessness is precisely the attempt of self-consciousness to fix itself, to become a real actuality amongst other real actualities.²⁹ It is vain to tell unhappy consciousness to pull itself together since it is just by trying to pull *itself* together that it falls apart. I would like to keep this in mind as I turn to think about the relation between Adorno's conscious unhappiness and Hegel's account of unhappy consciousness.

SPECULATION AND CRITICISM

Adorno's engagement with Hegel is a deeply and consciously self-divided one. To begin the work of comprehending rather than formally refuting it, it is first necessary to have understood how indispensable is Hegel to Adorno's sense of the persisting possibility of philosophy. Adorno's criticism of the identity of thought and being cannot be assimilated to criticisms proceeding from a radically anti-speculative perspective. Adorno rejects invocations of unthought being, of absolute immediacy, as a false concretion which must in any case end in formalism.³⁰ Rather he takes as central for Hegel the insight that there can no more be mediation without something to mediate than pure immediacy can be presented without mediating it.³¹ Hegel's work is for Adorno uniquely rich in concrete reference.³² But Hegel is not taken to have leapt into this concretion simply by discarding a supposed Kantian or Fichtean formalism, let alone by a retreat to dogmatic metaphysics. Hegel is hyperbolically said to have gone beyond Fichte only by “outdoing” him, by becoming more Fichtean than Fichte.³³ Adorno pointedly dissents from accounts presenting Hegel's Fichte

as always mediated through Schelling.³⁴ He does not as is sometimes thought mistake Hegel's critique of the Fichtean "ought" as wishing to establish a priority of theoretical over practical reason.³⁵ Indeed he insists that whereas in Kant critique remains critique of reason, in Hegel the critique of reason is simultaneously a critique of the real.³⁶ Just where Adorno might most be expected to supply reflex dissent – towards the speculative identity of the actual and the rational – he can point out the significance of this speculative identity as criticism of the separation of law from ethics.³⁷ Even the speculative identity of the actual and the possible is recognized as no mere sinking of the possible into the actual.³⁸ Adorno's Hegel-reception sets itself against both methodologizing attempts to rescue useful procedures from Hegel's supposedly contingent content and sociologizing attempts to salvage "relevant" "insights" from obsolete speculation.³⁹ Adorno continued to insist that it was only Hegel's understanding of speculative identity which allowed his work its unprecedented immersion in political history.⁴⁰ Yet he also remembered what is more often forgotten, that any attempt to take this insight as a reason for dealing with speculative identity as the real or first or founding or authentically philosophical problem in Hegel's work would for just that reason soon find itself dealing not with speculative identity at all but only with its bare schema.⁴¹ What is speculative in speculative, as against abstract identity, is the experience of diremption. Accordingly Adorno confronts rather than evading just those aspects of Hegel's thought which have occasioned most hostility or embarrassment in the left-Hegelian tradition; it is in this spirit that Hegel's remarks about the corporation and the police can be taken as witness to his refusal to conceal the antagonistic character of modern society.⁴²

NON-CONTRADICTION AND PHILOSOPHICAL FORM

These motifs in Adorno's reception of Hegel need to be borne in mind when considering the criticism which Adorno none the less wishes to make of the identity of thought and being. On the one hand, Adorno repeatedly resists claims of successfully completed access to pure immediacy, to a being *radically* external to or prior to thought.⁴³ On the other he insists that "Formal logic cannot be thought without "something." Logic cannot be cleansed of this "metalogical rudiment,"⁴⁴ and an aversion to any idea of philosophy as an organon which seeks to know before it knows remains critical for his work throughout his career.⁴⁵ Adorno explicitly dissents from any view of Hegel's speculation as a reckless disregard for the limits of the possibility of knowledge;⁴⁶ and he frequently refers approvingly to Hegel's analysis of limitation and the "ought" in the *Science of Logic*.⁴⁷ It might seem that, taken together, these critical positions would imply the centrality of the identity of thought and being to his work. And yet Adorno's presentation of the limitedness of thinking consciously displays a series of contradictions: indeed the question of insoluble recalcitrance to thinking is perennially bound up for Adorno with the question of the law of non-contradiction. Fichte and Hegel are taken as consistent in pointing to the inconsistency of any Kantian in-itself.⁴⁸ Adorno

applauds Hegel's resistance to any idea of denying knowledge in order to make room for faith.⁴⁹ Yet Adorno claims that Kant's admitted inconsistency had the merit of "... bearing witness to the irreducibility of the empirical to spirit."⁵⁰ Elsewhere the "Kantian discontinuities" are taken to "... register the very moment of non-identity that is an indispensable part of [Hegel's] own conception of the philosophy of identity."⁵¹ Adorno could scarcely be further from regarding Hegel's philosophy as identitarian from start to finish. He takes as definitive for Hegel the idea that "... everything is inherently contradictory ...,"⁵² the refusal of any *vernunftgläubig* insistence that "... there is nothing that is contradictory ...,"⁵³ and the idea that "*Speculative thinking* consists solely in the fact that thought holds fast contradiction, and in it, its own self, but does not allow itself to be dominated by it as in ordinary thinking, where its determinations are resolved by contradiction only into other determinations or into nothing."⁵⁴ For Adorno it is Hegel who first allows contradiction to be thought other than as mere contingency.⁵⁵ The objection to the capacity of Hegel's thought to do justice to the non-identical is not a simply external one. Adorno does not confine himself to comparing isolated claims but attempts to consider the truth or untruth of whole authorships. The systematic coherence of Hegel's philosophical composition is for Adorno what affords his thought its unprecedented and since unmatched concretion and awareness of contradiction. Yet Adorno believes that this coherence is belied by just that contradictoriness whose presentation it enables. Conversely Kant's thought lapses into faith where it allows itself to rest in an invocation of that which we cannot know yet must be able to think. Yet this discontinuity as a moment of form is taken to bear witness to the unreconciled contradictoriness which Hegel's thought-form, against its own insight, would give the impression of having reconciled.

CLOSURE AND RUPTURE

This idea of philosophical form is a point at which Adorno's own reflections break off. An analysis of Hegel which is in general relentlessly dialectical comes to rest in the idea of Hegel's system as a closed context of immanence; the metaphor of Hegel's system as "closed" is one of the few characterizations of it from which Adorno rarely wavers.⁵⁶ Consequently the task of a thinking which "would do justice to" the non-identical is imagined through metaphors of rupture or of breaking open this supposed closure: without forgetting that it is Hegel's supposedly closed systematic coherence that first enables non-identity to appear as a real rather than a merely apparent moment. Hence Adorno's organization of *Negative Dialectics* as displaying its own contradictory impulses towards and against system.⁵⁷ Readings which take Adorno's position as a mere lapse into faith in pure transcendence abridge the scope of this work in advance. Restless discontent with all inert opposition between immanence and transcendence marks Adorno's scarcely less than Hegel's thought. This is testified to by his refusal to turn the idea of immanent critique into a principle or method; ultimately immanent critique must become external too.⁵⁸ Yet it

must become external by persisting with immanent critique until it breaks through⁵⁹ or unseals⁶⁰ the context of immanence. Immanent and transcendent, inside and outside, open and closed, are not for Adorno to be endorsed as fixed or natural oppositions; but the thought and language with which the wish to be "beyond" could be addressed is apparently for Adorno trapped "this side." This is the significance of the contrast between Adorno's invocation of philosophical language as "... a language in opposition to language ..." ⁶¹ and Hegel's insistence that "... the unutterable ... far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant and untrue ..." ⁶² Adorno is surely right to insist that Hegel's idea of philosophical language is not to be identified with *Tractatus*-type injunctions to silence in the face of the ineffable; ⁶³ and yet the difference is more than one of emphasis. Not all thinking is "thinking in names" for Hegel, ⁶⁴ and few philosophers have done more to insist on the cognitive import of social, religious and aesthetic practices. Yet philosophy will bring such cognition to nameable thoughts; whereas for Adorno such naming, in accordance with a Benjaminian metaphor, remains spellbound by the closed totality of thought and society alike; in the meantime philosophical language's own breakages, scars and ruptures are to bear witness to what cannot directly be named. Adorno once unhelpfully remarked that the distinction between his thought and Hegel's lay less in individual disagreements than in the intentions [*Absicht*] of their respective bodies of work. ⁶⁵ The irony would not have been lost on Hegel for whom pure intentionality is just that which never can be purely expressed. ⁶⁶ I shall argue later that this contrast in Adorno's and Hegel's relation to language is bound up with Adorno's insistence upon an irreducibly idiosyncratic moment in experience.

THE DUAL THESIS OF SOCIAL TOTALIZATION

What then is the closed totality that we are inside of and attempting to break out of? The celebrity of Adorno's aphorism on this subject has concealed the complexity of his reflection upon it. Adorno recognizes that from the first the Hegelian concept of totality was no abstract hypostatization of the law of non-contradiction by which a multiple world would be coerced into formal identity. ⁶⁷ Instead he takes it as a necessary corollary of a critical exposition of merely particular interests ⁶⁸ and their scientific counterpart, a division of intellectual labour considered as the given or natural organization of aggregated knowledge. ⁶⁹ For Adorno the truth-moment of Hegel's emphasis on totality has been falsified by the self-totalizing society for which, he believes, this category has since come to apologize. Adorno's understanding of Hegel's category of totality, it will be clear, requires constant reference to his own social thought. One of the most striking discontinuities in Adorno's social theory – because it concerns such a pivotal moment in Adorno's thought – is its dual thesis about society. On the one hand we are told that society is now a closed totality and that true thinking and good action would only be possible on the condition of a breakout, ⁷⁰ on the other that society is not yet, but is rapidly approaching, the condition of a closed totality, a condition which the remain-

ing specific qualitative difference of thinking must resist.⁷¹ The contradiction is not merely contingent. It reflects the thesis that society is not an example which can be subsumed under thinking, but is rather indissociable from the framework for subsumption.⁷² Society is said to be known in the collapse of misrecognition of it.⁷³ Theunissen's reminder that, for Hegel, "Society is only comprehensible as a totality if totality is not taken as society ..." is valuable here.⁷⁴ If spirit is "deciphered" as society, if the labour of the concept is "translated" as universal social labour,⁷⁵ Hegel's Absolute really would be that simple swallowing-up of practical into theoretical reason which Adorno insists that it is not. Adorno is after all no more enthusiastic than Hegel about any idea of a priority of practice over theory.⁷⁶

THE LABOUR OF THE CONCEPT

What then is the force of Adorno's understanding of the relation between work and nature and of the linked question of the relation between activity and passivity in Hegel's thought? Once more Adorno's understanding is to be distinguished from that of many other left Hegelians. Since Marx's remark that the outstanding achievement of the *Phenomenology* was to have grasped man as the product of his own labour⁷⁷ many readers have had eyes only for the labour of the concept.⁷⁸ But the movement of the concept happens to the concept as much as being made by it, as Adorno's own emphasis on the experience of the concept in "Erfahrungsgehalt" makes clear.⁷⁹ The movement of the *Phenomenology* is not merely the relentless extension of a synthetic grasp over particularity but one which, long before Quine, suspends the finality of any distinction between analyticity and syntheticity. Adorno seizes on this in his remark that "No matter how much Hegel the Fichtean emphasizes the idea of "positing," of generation through spirit, no matter how thoroughly active and practical his concept of development is, he is at the same time passive in his respect for the specific, comprehending which means nothing other than obeying its own concept."⁸⁰ Yet elsewhere Adorno presents activity and passivity as formally bifurcated within the *Phenomenology*: the movement of natural consciousness to absolute knowing is activity,⁸¹ whilst the pure observation of the phenomenological "we" is purely passive.⁸² Such a schema foreshortens the way in which the whole course of the *Phenomenology* is no less the articulation of the speculative identity of activity and passivity than it is that of the speculative identity of subject and object. The consequence is that Adorno can redeploy Marx's insistence in the *Critique of Gotha Programme* that nature as much as labour is the source of all wealth as though it yielded a critique of Hegel.⁸³ Adorno admits that for Hegel there can no more be mediation without immediacy than there can be pure immediacy without mediation,⁸⁴ but claims that there is an imbalance in these terms for which Hegel's formulation cannot account. For Adorno it is more radically the case that there can be no mediation without a moment of immediacy than it is that apparent immediacy is already mediated.⁸⁵ This is why the dictum that "... to think is to think something ..." is a pivot of Adorno's thought⁸⁶ whilst the idea

that "... to think something is to think ..." is regarded as merely tautological.⁸⁷ Despite Adorno's qualification⁸⁸ the charge is effectively that Hegel "... juggles things until the given gives the illusion of having been produced by spirit ..."⁸⁹

THE ALIEN GIFT

Such an invocation of givenness may seem surprising in view of the heading chosen for one central section of *Negative Dialectics*, "Objekt kein Gegebenes," "The object not a given."⁹⁰ Adorno takes pains to distinguish his thesis of an imbalance in the relations between immediacy and mediation from any assertion of successfully completed access to pure immediacy.⁹¹ What Adorno named the "priority of the object" is admitted to be absurd as an abstract assertion;⁹² once more philosophical form stands in for a truth that "would be" realized on the condition of the collapse of untruth. The priority of the object could not be reached by some subtraction of the subjective moment from cognition;⁹³ instead its truth for Adorno lies in the demise of the subject which works at knowing it.⁹⁴ It is startling to compare these formulations from *Negative Dialectics* with critical remarks which Adorno made thirty years earlier about Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is said to become

a critic of [Hegel's] system because consciousness, as consciousness of an existence that is not deducible from itself, establishes itself as the ultimate contradiction of his idealism...consciousness must have pulled itself free from all external being by a moment of "infinite resignation"; through choice and decisiveness, it must have freely posited every content in order finally, in the face of the semblance of its own omnipotence, to surrender its own omnipotence and, foundering, to purify itself of the guilt it acquired in having supposed itself autonomous.⁹⁵

A hair's breadth separates Adorno from what he would here criticize as Kierkegaardian "sacrifice." The critique of Kierkegaard is of some importance to Adorno because Kierkegaard exhibits the difficulties incident to any critique of Hegel in favour of a non-identical moment, including a materialist critique. The danger, as Adorno sees it, is not so much a relapse into Kantianism as a relapse into dogmatism. Adorno concedes that the sacrificial motif here presented is not a simple regression to theological positivity on Kierkegaard's part but an immanent attempt to break out of systematized negativity: "It is not the symbolic, objective completion of sacrifice that is decisive for Kierkegaard, but rather, that with each sacrifice the autonomy of thought be destroyed by determinations of thought."⁹⁶ The significance of Hegel's account of the "unhappy consciousness" for this invocation of a moment of givenness attainable only by a subject which gives up its whole self is clear. Adorno described the intention of a negative dialectic as "ungeschmälerte Entäußerung,"⁹⁷ a possible translation of which is "undiminished self-relinquishment"; in the first of his three essays on Hegel, "Aspekte," Adorno approvingly links Hegel's concept of self-relinquishment or externalization, *Entäußerung*, with

his "... critique of a "vain" and deluded subjectivity existing for itself..."⁹⁸ Relinquishment here is to be more than Kierkegaard's supposed sacrifice which like the self-sacrificing renunciation of the unhappy consciousness is not relinquishment at all but aims at establishing self-consciousness as a persisting individuality amongst other individualities. In such sacrifice, for Hegel, "Consciousness feels itself thereby as this individual and does not allow itself to be deceived by the illusion of its renunciation, since the truth is that it has not given itself up."⁹⁹ For Hegel the apparent renunciation of unhappy consciousness is only a further attempt by self-consciousness to preserve itself as an independent actuality amongst other actualities.¹⁰⁰ Its actual self-relinquishment would come only with the apparent mania of the idealism thesis: the identity of thought and being is by no means the mastery of thought over being. Yet this thesis is the nodal point of Adorno's recalcitrance to Hegel.

Does Adorno's exemplary composition of relinquishment then remain renunciation, sacrifice? Let us return in pursuit of this question to Adorno's thesis that society is intelligible only in the collapse of our misrecognitions of it. From one point of view the thesis is a highly Hegelian one. Intersubjectivity would for Hegel certainly not be an actuality amongst other actualities which could as it were be turned into a thing and known from outside; even the absolute is not absolutely separate from its history of conditionedness; the *Logic* may be that sphere in which human interests are hushed, but their voluble articulation in the *Phenomenology* which leads up to it is not simply silenced, as Hegel's continued work on a new edition of the *Phenomenology* just before his death indicates. Adorno's thesis is a prophylactic against that thinking which forgets what it lives off and misrepresents itself as an unconditioned. The thesis is never hypostatized, but once the form of Adorno's thought must continually testify to it, it turns into a truncation of the possibility of comprehending society. Thought does break off in witness to the violence done in the division of intellectual and manual labour. Just as the "Kantian discontinuities" are said to "testify" or "bear witness" to the real contradictoriness whose importance first became thematic with Hegel, so the breaking-off of Adorno's thought in the as yet unredeemed thesis of the priority of the object is to bear witness to what thought lives off. At the break thought gives thanks for this alien gift¹⁰¹ both of its own capacities and powers and of what is given to those capacities and powers;¹⁰² it gives thanks by breaking off in the use of those powers and so bearing witness to a non-identical which is at once alienated human labour and also the given moment of nature. This is thought *devoted to* not thinking away its own conditions. Hegel's account of the unhappy consciousness is deeply mistaken if it is thought of only as saying that what seems given is in fact produced. That insight is indeed central to Hegel's account: where self-consciousness posits its situation as one in which it merely *finds* itself as though in pure contingency it is to be reminded of how it has posited this finding,¹⁰³ and similarly that its act of renunciation is *its act*.¹⁰⁴ But what seems produced is also given. Here we can see the inadequacy to the experience of unhappy consciousness of any idea that "Epistemology juggles things until the given gives the illusion of having been produced by spirit,"¹⁰⁵

an inadequacy which Adorno himself goes on to recognize.¹⁰⁶ The course of the *Phenomenology*, as Adorno himself insisted,¹⁰⁷ is always double: not only a progress by which what seems merely contingent is shown to be mediated by spirit's activity, but also a regress by which whatever seems self-made is shown its dependence on something not immediately reducible to it.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

A short passage from the central section of *Negative Dialectics* under the heading "Suffering physical" crystallizes some of these difficulties:

The somatic moment in cognition survives as its restlessness, what sets cognition in motion and reproduces itself, unpacified, within cognition's progress. Unhappy consciousness is no blind vanity of the spirit but inherent in spirit as the only authentic dignity which spirit received in its separation from the body.¹⁰⁸

Spirit's "separation from the body" here refers both to the division of intellectual and manual labour and to the mind/body dualism which Adorno in Sohn-Rethelian fashion takes as accompanying this division. The passage is not a direct interpretation of Hegel's account of the "unhappy consciousness" but an allusive and oblique approach to it. The invocation of *Würde*, dignity, refers us to Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*.¹⁰⁹ The dignity of the Kantian legal person is taken as false in so far as it rests on the conversion both of the somatic moment of the person and of the alienated labour of other persons into things with a mere price. The only "authentic," non-apologetic dignity of the person would be one which remembers the means by which the personified end can live: both how it lives off the labour of others and how it lives off all those corporeal moments including the somatic moment of cognition which have been turned into mere things. We are returned once more to the obligation for thought to bear witness to what it lives off by collapsing in the attempt to subsume it. Like the sacrifice made by unhappy consciousness, the anticipated foundering of subsumption is intended to bear witness to the "irreducibly" "given" "moment" in reality,¹¹⁰ but also in fact aims at establishing the individual experience of self-consciousness as *an* actuality amongst other actualities. The hoped-for collapse of subsumption is to do justice to the non-identical moment in the subject as much as to the non-identical moment in the object.¹¹¹ This is why Adorno can here and in his theory of the artwork invoke an "authentic dignity" which he elsewhere derides as blue mist;¹¹² and why he can regard his critique of Kant's supposed failure to admit that the transcendental subject is always also an empirical subject as also applicable to Hegel.¹¹³ Adorno will agree with Hegel that I cannot say what I merely mean;¹¹⁴ that individuality is bound up in supra-individual categories.¹¹⁵ Rather philosophical form is to bear witness to the non-identity of individual experience by pushing the attempt fully to comprehend it to the point where it collapses or where it must break off. Physical pain is to be testified to; it cannot

be thought. Hegel's effort to think pain is taken as thinking pain away by converting it to division.¹¹⁶

ANTAGONISM AND RECONCILIATION

At the last, but not from start to finish, Adorno's thought comes to rest in the idea of restless testimony to its own conditionedness. Thought insists on its own conditionedness in order to bear witness to what it lives off; but whenever this insistence comes to rest it blocks comprehension of the conditions to which it would do justice. This is the reason for Adorno's partially short-circuited relation to political history and political economy, in which the political is perennially collapsed into the social. Hence the philosophy of history becomes a dynamic more than a dialectic, and one by which Odysseus is already proleptic of Auschwitz.¹¹⁷ Adorno was viscerally sensitive to falsely hypostatized oppositions between essence and appearance; it is because he takes as his model for his notion of ideology Hegel's logic of essence and appearance in the greater *Logic*¹¹⁸ that he understands ideology – the ideology of unconditioned thinking included – as more than *mere* illusion.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless the thesis that society is real antagonism and that co-operation is unreal semblance is left in peace more often than most.¹²⁰ When it is left in peace we are left waiting for the truth-moment in ideology to be “redeemed” and for the “spell” of social compulsion to be “broken” by “naming” it.¹²¹ Such metaphors are not incorrectly described as “mythisch-magisch” by Theunissen.¹²² They are aimed against premature declarations of completed reconciliation in the face of persisting antagonism; and at reminding enlightened reason that its own mythical history persists within it. Adorno was so far from being content with the simple utopian deferral sometimes attributed to him that he could insist on the paradox that “Utopia is blocked off by possibility, never by immediate actuality. That is why it seems abstract in the face of current circumstances.”¹²³ The thesis of real antagonism and semblant co-operation returns this insight to a language of postponed redemption. Yet this stance is not to be reproached by some kind of happy or businesslike consciousness which externally knows better or which wants to make a fresh start right away on the brick-by-brick construction of the edifice of communicative rationality.¹²⁴ Any contemporary articulation of the speculative must owe more to Adorno's own philosophical form and content – to his insight into the persistence of division in speculative identity – than to any other thinker since Hegel. Speculative identity can never be invoked as a purely external standard by which to judge those who fall short of it. If it could, it would refute itself by falling apart into prescription and description. Gone prescriptive, it can only offer the exhortation – at once redundant and, for all its advertised toughness, sentimental – to “become what you are.” If the corollary of thought as witness to its own conditionedness is a collapse of the political into the social, the corollary of thought which forgets its own conditionedness is an inability to relate political theory to social experience. Speculative identity which does not remain a critical project as much as it articulates an actuality is no longer speculative at all but merely the

subsumption of practical under theoretical reason. And this must matter to the comprehension of *Sollen*. Foreshortenings of that comprehension which turn it into an instrument for silencing critical theory of society must miss their aim. It is because Adorno's work is persistently alive both in form and content to these considerations that it is of such significance for the idea of a contemporary Hegelianism despite its often deep differences from Hegel.

NOTES

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, tr. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 85.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
3. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller, p. 41.
4. See in particular Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: the satisfactions of self-consciousness* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1991).
5. Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 156; quoted in Joseph Flay, *Hegel's Quest for Certainty* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), p. 313.
6. Jean Wahl, *Le malheur de conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: PUF, 1981).
7. Jean Hyppolite, *The Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. Samuel Chernaik and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1974), pp. 190–215.
8. Eugen Fink, *Hegel: Phänomenologische Interpretationen der »Phänomenologie des Geistes«* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977), pp. 179–201.
9. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, pp. 143–71.
10. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 11–34, 49–56, 61–76.
11. Roger Garaudy, *La Pensée de Hegel* (Paris: Bordas, 1966), p. 59.
12. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, 2nd edn., (London: Routledge, 1955), pp. 91–120.
13. Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the relations between dialectics and economics*, tr. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975).
14. Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, tr. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993); *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975); "Subject and object" in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. by Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1982), pp. 497–511.
15. Rinaldi, *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic* (1993), p. 312n.
16. Rolf Ahlers, "The overcoming of critical theory in the Hegelian unity of theory and praxis," *Clio* 8 (1) (1978), 71–96, p. 82.
17. Richard Dien Winfield, *Freedom and Modernity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), p. 195n.
18. Gillian Rose, *Hegel contra Sociology* (London: Athlone, 1981), pp. 31–33; see also *The Broken Middle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 8–10.
19. As Rose points out: *Hegel contra Sociology*, p. 185.
20. Michael Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), pp. 3–37; "Negativität bei Adorno" in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, ed. Ludwig von Friedeburg and Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 41–65; *Gesellschaft und Geschichte. Zur Kritik der kritischen Theorie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969).
21. Theunissen, "Negativität bei Adorno," pp. 57–58.
22. *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 81. For further discussions of Adorno's critique of Hegel, see Ute Guzzoni, "Hegels "Unwahrheit." Zu Adornos Hegel-Kritik," *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (1975), 242–46; Carsten Schlüter, *Adornos Kritik der apologetischen Vernunft* (2 vols, Würzburg: Königshausen u. Neumann, 1987), vol. 2.
23. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 141.
24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, p. 487. Hegel's words are also quoted with reference to Adorno's Hegel-reception by Anke Thyen, *Negative Dialektik und Erfahrung. Zur Rationalität des Nichtidentischen bei Adorno* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), p. 166.
26. "...it must be said that nothing is *known* which is not in *experience* or, as it is expressed, that is not *felt to be true*, not given as an *inwardly revealed* eternal verity, as something sacred that is *believed*, or whatever other expressions have just been used." *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 487.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.
28. See, for example, *Science of Logic*, tr. A.V. Miller, p. 842.
29. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, pp. 131–32.
30. *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975) [ND], pp. 82–83n.; *Negative Dialectics*, tr. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), p. 75n [Ashton]. Quotations from ND are given in my translation; references to Ashton's version are supplied for convenience.
31. *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974) [DS], p. 58. *Hegel: Three Studies*, tr. Shierry Weber NicholSEN (Cambridge: Mass.: MIT Press, 1993) [H], p. 59. Quotations are from NicholSEN's version.
32. DS, p. 14; H, p. 7.
33. DS, p. 18; H, p. 12.
34. DS, pp. 10–11; H, p. 3. It is interesting that Richard Kroner is here credited with this insight given the frequency with which Kroner is reproached for representing the history of German idealism as a single straight line.
35. DS, p. 34; H, p. 30.
36. DS, p. 73; H, p. 77.
37. DS, p. 48; H, p. 46.
38. DS, p. 80; H, pp. 84–85. For striking evidence of the influence of this thesis on Adorno's thinking see ND, p. 66; Ashton, pp. 56–57.
39. DS, pp. 10–11; H, pp. 2–3.
40. DS, pp. 12–13; H, p. 5.
41. Compare Adorno's characterization of experience as the "animating contradiction...of absolute truth": DS, p. 53; H, p. 54.
42. DS, pp. 33–34; H, pp. 29–30.
43. ND, pp. 85–86; Ashton, pp. 77–78.
44. ND, p. 138.
45. See, for example, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).
46. DS, p. 17; H, p. 11.
47. See, for example, *Minima Moralia*, tr. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 128.
48. DS, p. 17; H, p. 11.
49. DS, p. 65; H, p. 67.
50. DS, pp. 20–21; H, p. 15.
51. DS, p. 17; H, p. 11. It should not be imagined that in naming Hegel's a philosophy of identity Adorno is confusing it with Schelling's early philosophy of identity: cf. DS, p. 15; H, p. 8.
52. *Science of Logic*, tr. A.V. Miller, p. 439.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 440–41.
55. ND, p. 156; Ashton, p. 153.
56. ND, pp. 37–38; Ashton, p. 27.
57. Rüdiger Bubner points out the aptness of Friedrich Schlegel's aphorism: "It is equally fatal to spirit to have a system and to have none. It will therefore simply have to decide to combine the two." Bubner, "Adornos Negative Dialektik" in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, pp. 35–65, p. 35.
58. ND, p. 149; Ashton, p. 145.
59. ND, p. 10; Ashton, p. xx.
60. ND, p. 21; Ashton, p. 10.
61. DS, p. 93; H, p. 100. ND, pp. 114–15; Ashton, pp. 108–9.
62. *Hegel's Logic*, tr. William Wallace (Oxford: OUP, 1975), p. 31.
63. DS, p. 94; H, p. 101.

64. Cf. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, tr. William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: OUP, 1971), pp. 220-21.
65. ND, p. 150; Ashton, p. 147.
66. *Phenomenology*, p. 66.
67. Cf. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, tr. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 106.
68. DS, p. 71; H, p. 74.
69. DS, p. 60; H, p. 62.
70. ND, p. 241; Ashton, p. 243.
71. See, for example, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 53.
72. The sources for this thesis, apart from the obvious debt to Marx, include Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour* (London: Macmillan, 1979).
73. ND, p. 198; Ashton, p. 198.
74. Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist*, p. 5.
75. DS, p. 23; H, p. 18.
76. ND, pp. 146-47; Ashton, p. 143.
77. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, tr. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 385-86.
78. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 48: "die Anstrengung des Begriffs," rendered by Miller, *Phenomenology*, p. 35, as "the strenuous effort of the Notion."
79. DS, pp. 53-83; H, pp. 53-88.
80. DS, pp. 13-14; H, p. 7.
81. DS, p. 26; H, p. 21.
82. DS, p. 27; H, p. 22.
83. DS, pp. 28-29; H, pp. 23-24. See also ND, pp. 179-80; Ashton, pp. 177-78.
84. DS, p. 58; H, p. 59.
85. ND, p. 173; Ashton, p. 171. *Vermittlung* is in general variously mistranslated by Ashton as "transmission" or "indirectness" rather than "mediation."
86. ND, p. 139; Ashton, p. 135.
87. ND, p. 173; Ashton, p. 171.
88. DS, p. 31; H, p. 26.
89. DS, pp. 30-31; H, p. 26.
90. ND, pp. 187-90; Ashton, pp. 186-89 (as "The object not a datum.")
91. *Ibid.*
92. ND, p. 186; Ashton, p. 185.
93. ND, p. 187; Ashton, p. 187.
94. ND, pp. 189-90; Ashton, p. 189.
95. Adorno, *Kierkegaard*, p. 107.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
97. ND, p. 24; Ashton, p. 13.
98. DS, p. 52; H, p. 50.
99. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 134.
100. A point which is especially strongly brought out by Liebrucks's reading: Bruno Liebrucks, *Sprache und Bewußtsein*, vol. 5, *Die zweite Revolution der Denkungsart: Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1970), pp. 103-9.
101. "Eine fremde Gabe": cf. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 166; cf. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 133.
102. *Phänomenologie*, pp. 65-66; *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, pp. 135-36.
103. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 132.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
105. DS, pp. 30-31; H, p. 26.
106. DS, p. 31; H, p. 26.
107. ND, p. 160; Ashton, p. 157.
108. ND, p. 203; Ashton, p. 203.

109. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 102.
110. For an invocation of such a given *moment*, cf. DS, p. 17; H, p.11.
111. ND, pp. 178–80; Ashton, pp. 176–78.
112. DS, p. 32; H, p. 28.
113. DS, pp. 20–22; H, pp. 15–17.
114. *Phenomenology*, tr. Miller, p. 66.
115. ND, pp. 163–64; Ashton, pp. 161–62.
116. ND, p. 203; Ashton, p. 203. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, tr. William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: OUP, 1971), pp. 15–16.
117. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. John Cumming (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 45: “Aboriginal myth already contains the aspect of deception which triumphs in the fraudulence of Fascism yet imputes the same practice of lies to the Enlightenment.”
118. Cf. especially the account of *Schein*, illusory being: *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, tr. Miller, pp. 395–99.
119. Cf., for example, *Ästhetische Theorie*, pp. 345–47.
120. ND, p. 22; Ashton, pp. 10–11.
121. ND, p. 149, p. 161; Ashton, p. 145, p. 158.
122. Theunissen, “Negativität bei Adorno,” pp. 51–52.
123. ND, p. 66; Ashton, p. 57.
124. Cf. Claudia Rademacher, *Versöhnung oder Verständigung? Kritik der Habermasschen Adorno-Revision* (Lüneburg: zu Klampen, 1993).

7. BEING HEGELIAN:
REPLY TO SIMON JARVIS

SEPARATING AND IDENTIFYING HEGEL AND ADORNO

In his account of the Hegel–Adorno relationship in “The ‘Unhappy Consciousness’ and Conscious Unhappiness,” Simon Jarvis underlines the thesis that whatever his critique of Hegel and however he departs from Hegel, Adorno accepts the rudiments of Hegelian idealism and speculation whilst providing a reading of Hegel that does not retreat before the standards his philosophy sets. Adorno is an objective idealist to the extent to which he denies there is a philosophical “first,” be it mind or nature, subject or object: there can be no mediation without “something” which is mediated, and no presentation of pure immediacy without its mediations. Even more significantly, Adorno’s project aims at “speculative identities” that are the product of dialectically working through experiences of diremption. If these ideas represent the inner core of Hegelianism, and I do not wish here to contest Jarvis’ claim that they do, then there is at least a *prima facie* case for construing Adorno as an orthodox, authentic Hegelian; and, in part, that is a large component of the elaboration of the Hegel–Adorno relationship which Jarvis offers. Yet, at the end of the day, Jarvis proffers a version of the most standard criticism of Adorno – “that he ends up treating the non-identical as a kind of Absolute” – whilst implicitly defending Hegel against the Adornoian charge that when the claim of “system” itself appears in a Hegel text, say as Absolute Knowing (in the *Phenomenology*) or as Absolute Idea (in the *Logic*), then his dialectic falls back into identitarian thought in which the object is reduced to what makes it commensurable with the self-preserving, labouring subject – subjective idealism after all. What is peculiar here is that Jarvis seems unpuzzled by this turn of events: why should an orthodox Hegelian criticise a Hegel whose concrete dialectic and conception of speculation is affirmed and defended at every juncture, and assert a position concerning the non-identical that all too easily can be construed as pre-Hegelian, and certainly represents a foreshortening and rupture of the unrelievable dialectic between subject and object?

The simple answer to these questions is that Hegel and Adorno write from different historical positions: Adorno’s thought is mediated by the existence

and achievement of Hegel's philosophy (as Hegel's, trivially, could not be); that the philosophical culture against which Hegel posed his speculations was differently formed and contoured than the one Adorno discovers himself in; and that hence Adorno is faced by a question that prohibits his thought being directly compared with Hegel's, as if they were two portraits of the same face hanging next to one another on the wall, namely: "What is involved in being an Hegelian now? What is it to remain loyal to the claim of Hegelian speculation after Hegel, after Marx, after nearly two centuries of brutal history?"

Because Jarvis eschews this question, his accounting of the relationship between Hegel and Adorno is unhegelian and thereby unadornoian: he refuses the transformations of subject and substance that engender that different concrete experiences of diremption that condition the two philosophies. It is these concrete experiences of diremption that require the different *emphases* that make the presentation of Adornoian speculation distinct from Hegelian speculation. There is all the difference in the world to writing in the wake of the triumph and terror of the French Revolution as compared to writing in the wake of the horror of Auschwitz. If Auschwitz is not as exemplary for our time as the French Revolution was for Hegel's Europe, it nonetheless represents a disfiguring of history that is quite unlike the moment of the "The Terror." When Adorno hyperbolically totalises modernity as identitarian, his is not making a merely rhetorical shift in his discourse; he is remembering Auschwitz. For a moment, but not accidentally or incidentally, social substance very nearly became *pure* subject; that experience, which is processually continuous with the history begetting it, and thereby becomes continuous with the liberal political culture that preceded and succeeded the Holocaust, literally traumatises Adorno's speculative presentation. Jarvis' dialectic of unhappy consciousness and conscious unhappiness, which offers legitimacy only to the logic of the former, refuses trauma, forgets Auschwitz. Since trauma just is event without the experience of it (and effect without the event precipitating it), which is to say, trauma is a work of forgetting incurred when events cannot be experienced, then it could be said that Jarvis traumatically represses the trauma that Adornoian speculation aims to provide the experience of.¹

MEASURING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN: THINGS IN THEMSELVES, FOR EXAMPLE

While Adorno routinely reiterates the Hegelian critique of Kant, he cannot halt at this critique because Kant's idealism must "appear" differently to us than it did to Hegel. For Hegel, the problem of Kantian idealism was its remnant transcendent realism, its espousal of a transcendence incommensurable with human subjectivity. The problem of the status of things in themselves, whether directly or indirectly, as in the Postulates of Pure Practical Reason that ground belief in God and the immortality of the soul, were for Hegel misrecognitions (dissemblances) of the unrecoverable obligations to others which were first reified in the procedural formalism of the Categorical Imperative. What hence becomes philosophically primary for Hegel is reveal-

ing the self-defeating character of Kant's vestigial realism; a revealing which demonstrates Kantian morality to be a form of the unhappy consciousness.

For Adorno, the Enlightenment drive toward immanence, the drive to realise idealism, has historically been all too successful. Our problem is thus the opposite of Hegel's: we have lost sight of the moment of transcendence, of the "something" without which our mediations would be mere mirrors of our eviscerated subjectivities. The thing-in-itself thus *becomes* what is to be salvaged.

What survives in Kant, in the alleged mistake of his apologia for the thing-in-itself – the mistake which the logic of consistency from Maimon on could so triumphantly demonstrate – is the memory of the element which balks at that the logic: the memory of nonidentity. This is why Kant, who surely did not misconceive the consistency of his critics, protested against them and would rather convict himself of dogmatism than absolutise identity (from whose meaning, as Hegel was quick to recognise, the reference to something nonidentical is inalienable).²

If something important about immanent transcendence is provided by the dogmatics of the thing-in-itself, if, that is, even immanent transcendence can only be expressed philosophically in a dogmatic manner, as a breaking out of the circle of the logic of the understanding, this would be because we have no "rational" access to a logic that is not that of the understanding (*Verstand*). Hegel's transformation of Kantian "Reason" into Spirit presupposes the philosophical and cultural availability of Reason (*Vernunft*). Adorno implicitly denies that we possess such access; hence what transcends the logic of the understanding (the logic of identity thinking) is available only via memory and not in the misrepresentation of Spirit as Reason.

Since Adorno is writing in the absence of Kantian Reason as a philosophical and cultural fact, then he must refuse Hegel's transformation of Reason into Spirit without denying the experiential process through which this transformation takes place. The process, as Adorno's parenthetical remark underlines, succeeds only so long as it can remain neutral about the rational availability of what transcends the understanding. (For Hegel and Adorno, the understanding is a part of Reason, while Reason itself is a misrepresentation of Spirit.) This neutrality systematically collapses at the terminus of dialectical progress. Hence, it is just at those places that Adorno raises his most emphatic criticisms of Hegel. The lapse of Reason is read back into Hegel, thus making the claims of Spirit, Absolute Knowing, and the like, *malgre lui*, those of the understanding, identitarian. This reading salvages Hegel and Hegelianism since without those criticisms Hegel's philosophy would become, in accordance with its own comprehension of the relation between history and philosophy, an anachronism.

SPECULATION AND THE GIFT

For Hegel Reason's central misrepresentation of substance is the presentation of it as God. In the "Meditations on Metaphysics" section of *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno tracks the penultimate discussion of the "Spirit" chapter of the *Phenomenology*, only now the frame of the analysis of Kant's Postulates of Pure Practical Reason is demythologisation and Auschwitz rather than Enlightenment and the French Revolution. While for Hegel the postulation of God and the immortality of the soul is a "dissembling" of ethical finitude on the part of moral consciousness, for Adorno those postulates are a recognition of "necessary semblance," necessary as providing, after Auschwitz, a "semblance of otherness."³ This reveals *Negative Dialectics* tracking subject becoming substance, only now substance as Spirit is not located in ethical life; rather substance/otherness is preserved as the material inscription of semblant otherness, as art. Hence, the speculative proposition animating Adorno's project, his conception of subject and substance, is "philosophy and art are one," with the dialectic of substance becoming subject the matter of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*.

After Auschwitz, after the collapse of Reason and the drying up of ethical life, substance comes to reside in the semblances of art, semblances that are "a promise of nonsemblance."⁴ Jarvis reverses Adorno's argument: it is not because "thought insists on its own conditionedness in order to bear witness to what it lives off" that Adorno short-circuits political history and political economy. Rather it is because, hyperbolically, the political has collapsed into the social that the promise or potentialities of substantial life come to be located in art.⁵ And while it is true that "physical pain (as remnant otherness in existence) is to be testified to" and not thought, it does, finally, come to be thought as the expressive moment of art; all expression in (authentic) art works is an expression of human suffering.⁶ *Aesthetic Theory* is Adorno's attempt to speculatively think the non-identical rather than merely witnessing it. To suggest that Adorno offers only a moment of witness is to deflate art's "breaking through," its "alien gift" to the status of a mere appendage to real, everyday praxis.

Jarvis may want to argue against this defence of Adorno that there is more "rose," more "reason" in the political culture of contemporary liberalism than Adorno allows or acknowledges. This may or may not be the case; even if it were, however, it would leave unexplained the continuities and discontinuities connecting the history of modern liberalism to the holocaust on the one hand and the red thread of facism that works through the history of the present century on the other. Our history is not sufficiently transparent to fully vindicate a judgment like Adorno's on it or his consequent locating of our traumatic (experienceless) experiences of diremption. He thus "risks" a reading of modernity as identitarian without a concrete, non-illusory socio-political other in order not to further betray its victims. His risky, speculative discourse is one exemplary way of being Hegelian now.

NOTES

1. One central idea that Adorno appropriates from Walter Benjamin is that it is not just ethical life that goes underground with the coming of modernity, but, more radically, the experiences that would make up the difficult texture of ethical life are radically disturbed, wither and are destroyed by the structures of late Capitalism. Hence, while for Hegel the historical experiences of diremption needed to be gathered up by the philosopher, for Adorno the task of the modern philosopher or artist (Proust or Beckett, for example) is to transform the absence of experience (the shock experience of that which cannot be experienced in the full sense) into experience. I make a start at exploring this issue in "Disenchanted Time: The Death of Experience in Benjamin and James" (forthcoming). For a useful historical analysis of the development of the new science of forgetting (the science of traumatic subjectivity, as it were) see Ian Hacking, "Memoro-Politics, Trauma and the Soul," in *History of the Human Sciences* 7/2 (May 1994), pp. 29-52.
2. T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 290-1.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 393, 402. The discussion of Kant's Postulates extends right through the "Meditations on Metaphysics" from section 6 to section 11.
4. *Ibid*, p. 405.
5. Jarvis' accusation that "philosophy of history becomes a dynamic more than a dialectic, and one by which Odysseus is already proleptic of Auschwitz" sorely misreads *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It does not possess a philosophy of history at all. Rather, it contends that after Kant-Hegel, history itself becomes more a dynamic than dialectic through the pursuance of Enlightenment demythologisation. As a consequence, Enlightenment becomes mythical, ie, a practice of the understanding not reason. The statement connecting myth (Odysseus) and Enlightenment is not historical but speculative, about their conceptual entwinement. If it presents a history, it is the history of the present.
6. T.W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), e.g., pp. 57, 161.

8. CONSCIENCE AND TRANSGRESSION: THE EXEMPLARITY OF TRAGIC ACTION

CRIME AND METHOD

The aim of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to provide its reader with a “ladder” to the standpoint of science, showing him “this standpoint within himself” (p. 26).¹ By the standpoint of science, the standpoint of absolute knowing, I understand a perspective in which human cognition has no absolute limits or barriers, in which no items and types of items, most notably Kant’s things in themselves, are intrinsically or a priori external to human cognition. Hegel is only attempting to provide a ladder to this standpoint because he believes that no demonstration or deduction of it is possible. Hegel’s denial of the possibility of demonstration is premised on a simple logical insight: if what is presupposed as external to reason and cognition – material objects, other persons, language, social practices, history – are in fact *constitutive* conditions of them, then a position whose premises are weaker than what it seeks to demonstrate, as for example one might attempt to explicate the possibility of linguistic meaning only through reference to elaborate structures of intention, must necessarily fail. Hence, Hegel’s initially puzzling formula that states that the “aether” of knowing is “pure self-recognition in absolute otherness” (p. 26), is designedly anti-Kantian: we only come to apperceptive self-awareness, what for Kant is pure or transcendental self-consciousness, through cognition of things in themselves, the very things access to which Kant denies as a condition of apperception.

Now as modern agents the ultimate barrier to our self-recognition in absolute otherness is formed by our understanding of ourselves as autonomous moral beings. If we are autonomous, then nothing on heaven or earth can tell us what is right other than our conscience; but then *my* conscience cannot be an absolute touchstone of rightness if yours is too. If I uphold the dictates of my conscience, then I cannot recognise myself in your conscientious claims. Conversely, if I surrender my conscience to the dictates of yours then I surrender my pure self-recognition; I become your moral beast or slave. These paradoxes of conscience are familiar. What I want to begin elaborating here is that the notion of conscience remains, despite appearances to the contrary,

utterly fundamental to Hegel's project both ethically and methodologically.

Consider: In the *Phenomenology* the standpoint of mutual recognition and hence of Spirit, which for Hegel is *sui generis* and non-derivable from any other standpoint, is established on three occasions: at the beginning of the discussion of self-consciousness (pp. 175–177), in the transition from reason to Spirit (pp. 435–437), and at the end of the Chapter on Spirit in the mutual recognition of conscientious selves (pp. 670–671). Only the last of these, the mutual recognition that confession and forgiveness are, is itself phenomenological, a conversion or turning of consciousness. The other two transitions happen behind the back of natural consciousness. Hence, unless the last transition can be made good, unless there is a path of experience through which we can pass, then the first two remain explanatory devices detached from the experiences they are intended to explain. In saying this, I mean to suggest that Hegel's "ladder" is not a neutral argumentative medium, but rather attains its effectivity through its elaboration of the notion of experience (*Erfahrung*) documented in the Introduction (pp. 78, 86–7). But our willingness to rationally trust this concept of experience itself remains unfulfilled until the space of conscience is defended. Hence, the notion of conscience is integral to both the achievement of self-recognition in otherness, it is what gets recognised, and to founding the kind of metaphysical insight that recognition makes possible.

Secondly, there is an assumption in the literature that Hegel is a communitarian and, more to the point, that all obligations are *sittlich* – Bradleyan "my station and its duties." But if for Hegel we are free and self-determining, then not all obligations can be *sittlich* in character; to believe that would involve adding only a level of reflexivity to the *sittlich* obligations of the kind found in the Greek *polis* and ignoring the formation of individuality and self-consciousness that is the medium of Spirit's coming to self-consciousness. My anxiety about ascribing to Hegel a notion of obligation as restrictedly *sittlich* is doubled by the fact Hegel's three paradigms of ethical action – Jesus, Antigone and Socrates – all provide a model of such action as one of, to use a modern turn of phrase, civil disobedience.

Finally, there is a methodological problem underwriting the construal of obligation as *sittlich* and the dismissal of the model of civil disobedience, viz., that Hegel's dialectical procedure is to embed a form of consciousness or a conceptual standpoint in a wider and deeper, more adequate, form of consciousness or conceptual standpoint. Hence, methodologically, the highest individualistic standpoint in both the *Phenomenology* and the *The Philosophy of Right*, conscience, is shown to be grounded in spirit or ethical life. In itself, that move seems to me benign and correct. My question is, does the fact of that grounding, the fact that one can only be a conscientious self within a community of conscientious selves, entail the *disappearance* of conscience – the suppression of conscientious action and its replacement by *sittlich* constituted forms of action? Of course, the features of conscience that lead it to realise itself only within a community of conscientious selves equally means that conscience itself changes its meaning from its initial self-understanding.

My question is whether that change of meaning eliminates anything that is recognizable by us as conscientious action or not? Some commentators on the *Phenomenology* do think that its ultimate community is a community of conscience, and it is the idea of such a community that forms the connection between the chapters on Spirit and Religion – alas, given the nature of the ambitions of the *Phenomenology*, little is made of this fact.² Most commentators on *The Philosophy of Right*, not surprisingly, read that work as requiring us to permanently give up the standpoint of conscience in order to enter into the ethical life of family, civil society and state. And what Hegel says about conscientious objectors – Quakers, Anabaptists and Jews – appears to support that conviction.³ On the reading of Hegel I wish to begin articulating here, such a reading falsely conflates issues of grounding with issues of ethical action. Even within the state, we must I think consider ourselves conscientious agents, ready to act disobediently if our wholly secular conscience so dictates.

Fundamental to all three of these points is the view that there is a systematic connection between Hegel's views on ethical action and his views about attaining the standpoint of science, with the notion of conscience as, somehow, the connecting thread. For this claim to even begin to look plausible, I need to introduce a hypothesis and a problem with it. Here is the hypothesis: The secret core of Hegel's philosophical anthropology, metaphysics and ethical thought is the trope of the "causality of fate." The structure of this movement is first displayed in his "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate." It is posed in opposition to the belief that a crime (trespass or transgression) is best understood, Kantianly, as a particular act defying an abstract, wholly independent, universal injunction ("Do not kill!"). This latter conception entails that the wrongness of an act involves a failure of correspondence between it or the motive for it and the external norm, entailing thereby that both act and law, in virtue of their mutual and necessary logical indifference to one another, must remain permanently opposed. If universal and particular inhabit different domains, then an act that fails to correspond to the universal is forever wrong, forever outside the universal and moral, hence forever beyond forgiveness. Positivity is hence the reification of both universal and particular. It is the permanence of this opposition which makes punishment appear external and contingent with respect to the act of wrongdoing – after all punishment belongs to the same domain of particularity as the act – and, thereby, only an act of revenge. For Hegel it is the logical or ontological duality between universal and particular, Kantianly the duality between noumena and phenomena, universalistic moral law and particular acts and inclinations, that is the source of the difficulty. If universal and particular are going to matter to one another, be mutually determining, then they must inhabit the same logical or ontological space – a thought which is obviously of Aristotelian inspiration. Hence Hegel moves from a subsumptive to a mereological model where, very crudely, the universal becomes "life," and persons and acts its particular parts.

Punishment represented as fate is of a quite different kind. In fate, punishment is a hostile power, an individual thing, in which universal and

particular are united in the sense that in it there is no cleavage between command and its execution; there is such a cleavage, however, when law is in question, because the law is only a rule, something thought, and needs an opposite, a reality, from which it acquires its force. In the hostile power of fate, universal is not severed from particular in the way in which law, as a universal, is opposed to man or his inclinations as the particular... The trespasser intended to have to do (away) with another's life, but he has only destroyed his own, for life is not different from life... In his arrogance he has destroyed indeed, but only the friendliness of life; he has perverted life into an enemy. It is the deed itself which has *created a law* (emphasis mine) whose domination now comes on the scene; this law is the unification, in the concept, of the equality between the injured, apparently alien, life and the trespasser's own forfeited life. It is now for the first time that the injured life appears as a hostile power against the trespasser and maltreats him as he has maltreated the other. Hence punishment as fate is the equal reaction of the trespasser's own deed, of a power which he himself has armed, of an enemy made an enemy by himself.

Axel Honneth has correctly pointed out that the real difficulty Hegel has with this model is not the concept of life, it will be cashed out in terms of intersubjectivity, ethical life and Spirit, but its intransigent focus on criminality.⁵ How can criminality be a model for consciousness formation in general, for it is that which is required if the model of the causality of fate is going to be the model for ethical life in general? I am going to presuppose for this occasion that some version of the mutual recognition thesis can be vindicated since my question relates to the persistence of misrecognition rather than the establishment of the constitutive role of recognitional structures.

To understand Hegel's strategy involves two steps. Firstly, *pace* Habermas and Honneth, Hegel realised from the beginning that the causality of fate could be general only if criminality was not co-extensive with moral wrongdoing or acting from vicious or cruel motives; of course, to be criminal actions must be transgressive, law-breaking, creating a new law, setting oneself against others – an act of separation potentiating loss of self and world; but not every such performance in which those transpire is done in order to injure and harm.⁶ Even in “The Spirit of Christianity,” Hegel contends that transgressive action can be morally blameless and motivationally “innocent”: “But fate has a more extended domain than punishment has. It is aroused even by *guilt without crime*, and hence it is implicitly stricter than punishment. Its strictness often seems to pass over into the most crying injustice when it makes its appearance, more terrible than ever, over against the most exalted form of guilt, the guilt of innocence.”⁷ The precise reference and scope of “guilt without crime” and the “guilt of innocence” is difficult to determine since Hegel's discussion here runs through early christianity, Greek ethical life and the modern “beautiful soul” in an indiscriminate manner. Nonetheless, I would hazard that the first term refers to the heroes and heroines of Greek tragedy, like Oedipus; and that the second term refers to Jesus, who is depicted along the lines of the “beautiful soul.”

Whatever the historical reference, however, the core of Hegel's argument turns on his reinscription of the notion of "guilt." How can there be guilt without crime, innocent guilt? The "guilt" in question in the types of cases Hegel is considering is not legal or moral guilt, guilt in the Kantian sense, since the action is by definition innocent, but guilt in the literal sense of the German word *Schuld*, denoting responsibility and indebtedness. Hegel's move here is decisive, for he will want from henceforth to regard *all* guilt, including moral and legal guilt, as species of *Schuld* in this sense; it is this which the notions of life and fate are meant to bring about and it is this which forms the core of his critique of positivity. One can be systematically responsible for the unintended consequences of one's action if there are systematic and significant ways in which one's agency itself is bound to their object; one's indebtedness to the ethical life of the community as making possible one's agency elaborates just such systematic and significant connections.

Further, I want to suggest, if consciousness-formation occurs in line with this model, then paradigmatically recognition, mutual recognition, recognition of self in otherness, is recognition of responsibility and indebtedness. Since this form of recognition occurs as a consequence of trespass and suffering, suffering as a consequence of trespass, then it is tragic recognition. Tragic recognition is the paradigmatic form in which "recognising and coming to be recognised" occurs, that is, through which the process of recognition occurs, the turning of consciousness from "self-centred being-for-self" (p. 780) to the standpoint of its immersion in united life. If this is correct, then Hegel's methodological term of art, "experience," in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, must be thematised as tragic recognition.

If recognition is first tragic recognition, then *a fortiori*, Hegel's model for human action must be tragic action. And this is the larger claim I want to begin pursuing here. I believe that commentators have consistently misread the Spirit chapter of the *Phenomenology*. Its fundamental strategy and point by means of which Spirit becomes self-conscious of itself as Spirit, is to generalise the model of tragic action. In structural terms, this is to say that its strategy is to show that the original struggle for recognition between Antigone (who is the Greek embodiment of the moment of slavery, representing the claims of individuality and individual life) and Creon (who represents the moment of mastery and hence universality) is resolved at the end of the chapter only when each self contains both moments. In order for this to occur, then the universal must be recognised as a matter of recognitional structures, and individuality transformed into transgressive action. This can only occur if the logic of social action Hegel employs has transgressive action, in a variety of forms, as a constitutive component. I have come to think of this logic of social action in terms of a *continuum* that runs from habitual or routine or utterly socially bound forms of human action (which, because habitual and routine, Hegel regards as non-action: Ismene is the model here), to innocent trespass (say, unintentionally insulting a friend), to individuation through the transgressive appropriation of existing social rules, to creative transgression, that is, the explicit re-formation of existing rules and practices, through to actual criminal

misdeeds. In each of these except the first, there is an incursion against united life, a fracturing or tearing of our life together which fatefully affects both transgressor and the one transgressed against. In order for an individual to be a locus for speech and action, autonomous, she must be capable of acting beyond or in excess of already established social rules, hence transgressively. If transgression is denied, then social agents become marionettes, dolls in the house of society or, like Ismene, a stone. What I want to call Hegel's "continuum hypothesis" entails that one cannot possess an adequate conception of individuality, and hence freedom, without at the same time acknowledging the necessity and thus goodness of transgressive action, which Hegel denominates both in the section on conscience (p. 660) and at the end of the Religion chapter as "evil." Hence his peculiar claim that "Evil is the same as Goodness" (p. 780).

THE "GUILT CONTEXT" OF EXPERIENCE

Hegel's attempt to ground this account of action, tragic action and the continuum hypothesis, turns on his treatment of conscience. The conscientious self is a successor to Kantian moral consciousness – hence its role in my account as making good the original argument concerning the causality of fate in the "Spirit of Christianity." Eliminating details, Hegel's and conscience's argument against Kant turns on the presumption that Kant's insistence on a permanent gap between *Willkür* (the executive will) and *Wille* (really, the moral law itself as the principle of the will) introduces a suppressed transcendent realism – an ultimate, external matter of fact that is the criterion of (here, moral) truth – into Kant's moral theory. This realism entails, as transcendent realism always does (brains in vat, etc.), scepticism: we do not know if anyone ever has acted in accordance with the motive of duty; a thought that Hegel plays out in terms of "duplicity and dissemblance," ie, those strategies through which Kantian agents simultaneously bind themselves to and act on the basis of a moral norm from which they remain a priori separated. The ground of this a priori separation, and the real focus of Hegel's argument from his earliest writings, is Kant's theory of radical evil, which I read as the thesis that *Willkür* has a permanent propensity to favour the claims and desires of inclination as opposed to the claims of the moral law. Kant's proof: unless our *Willkür* possessed this propensity, we would be Holy Wills; if we were Holy Wills we would never act wrongly, and hence what was morally correct, rational, would not appear as an "ought." Only the assumption of radical evil holds *Willkür* and *Wille* a priori apart, forcing *Willkür* to simultaneously affirm and deny its unity with *Wille*.⁸

Conscience, in contrast, is the denial of this a priori separation; if *Wille* is a reification of the activities of *Willkür*, then conscience is just passionate and motivationally charged *Willkür*: in order for anything to be good or valuable, a duty, it must be selected, taken as a value by me. This, of course, is Kant's own definition of *Willkür*: "*Willkür* is of a wholly unique nature in that an incentive can determine the will to an action only insofar as the individual has

incorporated it into his maxim (has made it into the general rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself); only thus can an incentive, whatever it may be, co-exist with the absolute spontaneity of *Willkür* (ie, freedom).”⁹ The “I take,” “I select and incorporate into my will” must accompany all my volitions or the motives, goods and values in question would not be motives, goods or values for me. There can be no ultimate, transcendent criterion of value, say the moral law, since even that criterion would have to be apperceptively taken to be a criterion. Belief in ultimate criteria is necessarily realist and sceptical. Hence, any attempt to circumvent the demand of apperception would deny our moral autonomy. Hegel nowhere disputes this theses. What he denies is that volitional apperception itself makes a maxim of action into a duty, which is the entailment constitutive of conscience in its original appearance.

Hegel’s argument against conscience, running from p. 641 to p. 658, critically elaborates his analytic of significant action;¹⁰ it contains originally four and eventually five points. In context, this analytic is presented as a series of antinomies in the strong conception of conscience. Hence, each moment of the analytic forces a re-adjustment to the meaning of conscience, transforming it step by step from a form of moral certainty into a complex self-relation enmeshed in a very specific kind of community which it hence comes to define. For the sake of brevity, I am here extrapolating the analytic from its context in the transformation of conscience.

Firstly (p. 642), in order to know what is right absolutely at time T conscience would have to know the complete circumstances of action – the full set of its past conditions, its present connections with other matters, its future consequences. This is impossible, hence all knowledge of circumstance is burdened with opacity, and thus is necessarily fallible. Call this “moral fallibilism.” Secondly (pp. 647–649), and here I change the running order of Hegel’s argument, for reasons that we all know, the meaning of an action cannot be rigidly determined by the intention of the agent. Agents are not privileged with respect to the meaning of their actions. Naive intentionalist accounts of action presuppose this; but for it to wash there would have to be a “private language” of action, as it were. Meaning extends beyond the control of the agent and hence all actions are open to plural interpretations of their meaning. Call this “interpretive pluralism.”

Thirdly (pp. 643–646), if moral fallibilism and interpretive pluralism hold, then it follows that no choice nor the action it engenders can be beyond deliberative reproach even, and indeed especially from those most affected by it. I can deliberate well, and it still be the case that, given what occurs, the action turns out wrong. This, however, is not an untoward accident, something altogether extrinsic to the nature of moral choice itself. Rather, the contingencies and complexities of action, which Hegel raises in the consideration of moral fallibilism and interpretive pluralism, are constitutive of what acting involves in a complex social world containing a *plurality* of other determinate selves. To want to eliminate complexity and plurality from consideration as belonging to action is to generate a conception of moral action on the model of a social world that is causally transparent with inhabitants that are, for all

intents and purposes, identical with oneself. It is this which standard accounts which bind responsibility to the intentional contents of action involves.

In a complex world, the only way in which our deliberations could be beyond reproach, and hence a priori morally justifiable to those affected by them, would be if there was some criterion independent of the deliberation that made it a good one. But any such criterion would have to be formal or procedural. But any formalism or proceduralism will fall afoul firstly of the correspondence problem, and secondly of the application problem, viz, that the meaning of a norm remains indeterminate apart from the case to which it is applied. Roughly, what these problems point to is that no deliberative procedure itself can span the gap between individual and universal, being for self and being for others. Indeed, to want that gap spanned is to want to remove all contingency from ethical life, to want the moment of individuality to be immediately universal – just by thinking! Hence, conscience seeks to morally bind the self to others, engendering moral universality, without the mediations of either action or communication. Hegel denies that full prospective justification for choices and actions is possible; full prospective justification for our actions necessarily requires transcendent realist standards. So even conscience, which pretends to put formal criteria aside, is nonetheless formalist and realist, entangling itself in the same disemblances and duplicities as deformed Kantian moral thought (p. 643, p. 648). The want of and claim for prospective justification entails what Hegel calls “the beautiful soul.”

If the first two familiar thoughts provide Hegel with his fundamental ammunition against conscience, it is this third point which is central. Textually, it reveals conscience as a form of stoical self-consciousness, so adumbrating the sceptical denouement of the beautiful soul. Philosophically, it reveals both how Hegel wishes to deny the identity of individual and universal – they may “belong together” in the sense of depending on one another, but they are *independent* moments (which will support the Hegelian notion of “otherness”) – and how conscience is a version of “clean hands” morality. That is, only if Hegel is indeed claiming that no action can be beyond deliberative reproach can anything like my conception of transgressive action go through. Finally, historically, it is the desire for a conception of moral worth beyond deliberative reproach that stands near the centre of Kantian moral and political thought, in Kant, Habermas and Rawls. The Moral Law, Habermas’ Principle D, and rationality for Rawls all involve placing a person beyond blame or reproach. Principle D states: “Only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all concerned in their capacity as participants in practical dialogue.” Although Seyla Benhabib weakens the consent requirement, the result is the same: “The core intuition behind modern universalisability procedures is not that everybody could or would agree to the same set of principles, but that these principles have been adopted as a result of a procedure, whether of moral reasoning or public debate, which we are ready to deem “reasonable and fair.” It is not the *result* of the process of moral judgment alone that counts but the *process* for the attainment of such judgment which plays a role in its validity, and I would say, moral worth.”¹¹ Similarly,

Rawls: "... we have the guiding principle that a rational individual is always to act so that he need never blame himself no matter how things finally transpire."¹² What these passages make abundantly clear is that liberal ethical thought is constituted by its stoical desire to place the worth of self and community beyond reproach or blame, to make the good will unconditionally good. What these differing accounts share is the desire to insulate choice, rationality and the moral worth of the individual from contingency and so history. To imagine that such insulation is possible is to believe that conscientious rationality is available here and now, which is to say, that choice and rationality can be time and space indifferent.

Given fallibilism, pluralism and overlapping commitments, how is such indifference possible? How can the rationality and hence the meaning of action be wholly independent of context and consequence? If, for example, past insensitivity is liable to blame, why not (innocent) past ignorance? If things go badly, if, for example, delivering humanitarian aid becomes a way of furthering ethnic cleansing, then do the unequivocally good intentions of the UN make their actions blameless?¹³ Is what Benjamin called "the guilt context of the living" to be simply dissolved by good intentions?¹⁴ How can there be an unequivocal barrier between culpable and non-culpable ignorance? More to the point, what other moral purpose is served by looking for such a barrier other than to find relief from responsibility through disavowing entanglement and complicity? This is not to deny that Principle D may be a procedure worth having and that Rawls' principle is not good advice; they are, plausibly enough, principles for conscientious action. What does need to be denied is that moral validity and moral worth can be *secured* by following these principles.

Fourthly, if an action is not rigidly connected to the agent performing it by means of agent-intentionality, then agents must be "in" their deeds otherwise, and equally they must be related to others in a manner different from that which the intentional model inscribes. Hegel argues that, other than their intentional description through which acts are identified and individuated, they equally possess an expressive dimension: acts express and embody the agent performing them. My actions are apperceptively mine in a double register: they are intentionally mine in that I am responsible for what occurs through them, and they are expressively mine in that who I am is reflexively bound to the actions I perform. In this context Hegel contends that saying something is my duty is not descriptive of it but expressive of my relation to it, an expression which provides me with a moral standing distinct from the moral quality of the act I perform. Register one, the intentional scope of actions, captures notions of praise, blame and responsibility and is subject to contingency; register two, their expressive character, denotes that actions reveal the agent, that the agent is existentially determined as being the person she is through her actions. Actions are here – as they are for Arendt – doubly disclosive: revealing a meaning (what justice, equality, fairness, cruelty, etc. is here) and who the agent is. That actions are disclosive, which, N.B., is simply a corollary of the thesis that the actual meaning of norms and principles is provided through their application in concrete situations, gives substance to what Hegel means by

“creating law,” and simultaneously provides the basis for his linking of freedom with Aristotelian immanence: particular acts bring “universals” into being. Universals are products of creative action, not antecedent givens which can be applied to ground their moral worth.

Briefly, Hegel gets to this result along the following path (pp. 650–653). The moral truth of actions is determined outside apperceptive self-awareness. But that undeniable fact cannot displace my moral autonomy: that I take myself to be acting in accordance with demands of a universalistic moral understanding and that determining what such an understanding demands here and now must be routed through my apperceptive take on it entails that moral reality involves more than that certain acts and act-types be done. If acting conscientiously is how I take a stand upon the meaning of my action and so on myself, if part of what is at issue for me in any action I perform is my self-relation to it, then the moment of universality reaches existence when my action is *recognised* as being done by me as a conscientious agent; hence, conscientious action, which is morally autonomous action, depends upon the existence of a community of mutually recognising conscientious agents. The generality of mutual recognition of one another as conscientious individuals displaces the universality of principle, choice and acts. Principles and virtues refer to different features of action: the former to their intentional content, and the latter to their reflexive expressive scope. Agents and their actions are *both* at issue in ethical action, but differently. That actions have a distinct expressive content explains why acting conscientiously can be regarded as admirable even when we disagree about the worth of the act itself.

Hegel works through this claim by contrasting two possibilities of conscience that arise as a consequence of individuals coming to accept these four points: first is a community of agents, who, say by means of reflective equilibrium or the deployment of principle D, generate a body of principles to guide their conduct that they all mutually recognise as binding because they recognise one another as autonomous and conscientious agents as specified by their deliberative procedures. (Good procedures make good neighbours. Rawls’ veil of ignorance is but a formal device for making its denizens conscientious agents.) This is the moral substance behind the standpoint of judging consciousness. Judging consciousness is opposed by acting consciousness who justifies her refusal to co-operate in roughly these terms (pp. 660–662): “Let’s grant the analytic of moral action (fallibilism, interpretive pluralism, reproachability and expressivity). What is true about my actions with respect to others, must be true with respect to my relation to them as well. If I cannot ever fully justify my actions to others, then I can never fully (prospectively) justify them to myself either. Hence, I can only sustain my moral autonomy as a project of constant action and revision, an endless project of perfecting my autonomy in which any achieved state must be regarded as only a state or stage or step or stair, which I am forever beyond. In this way the claim to universality is only itself ever a moment, say, the moment of action itself. But I can never be fully in that action, be identified with it since to concede that would suppress the apperceptive moment which gave point and purchase to my action in the first

instance.” Viewed in wholly negative terms, where the self refuses to be identified with any of her actions, this is co-extensive with the position of the romantic ironist, which Hegel always interprets as itself co-extensive with Fichtean self-positing, “loosing and binding” its relations to others in an ad hoc because merely private way. In its positive version, where the self finds or discovers, ever and again, that it no longer knows if its beliefs and principles are really its own, and hence seeks to validate itself and them once more, this is a perfectionism of autonomy. This self-understanding arises once acting consciousness realises the “hypocrisy” of attempting to remove herself and hence her status as a conscientious agent from the empirical consequences of her doings (p. 662). Hence, what the negative version of this fails to acknowledge, is that apperceptive loosening, identifying self-consciousness with its capacity for negativity, is only a moment in the process through which the community is bound. Ironic consciousness will become a perfectionism of autonomy by coming to recognise her dependence on the community that her reflective denial of the expressivity thesis voids.

The final struggle for recognition between judging and acting consciousness completes Spirit. The first, judging consciousness, is clearly an autonomous Creon-figure; the latter, acting consciousness, is plainly an autonomous Antigone-figure. The struggle here is not between liberals and communitarians, since the Creon-figure is a left-liberal communitarian. The question is whether consciousness-formation through tragic action stops with the arrival of the left-liberal community, with, let’s call it, normative justice, or whether Hegel thinks that with modernity the tragic understanding of action becomes itself universal; let’s call this “justice as critique.” Ironically, most readings of Hegel tacitly identify his position with that of judging consciousness. Clearly, the reconciliation between judging and acting consciousness would entail tragic action becoming universal. Hence the vindication of the Antigone-figure would be the generalisation of tragic action. We must note here that acting consciousness is regarded by judging consciousness as evil because bound to the path of transgressive action; the demonstration that such evil is unsurpassable and hence good forms the fifth element in the analytic of moral action. It is equally the ground of the reproachability thesis.¹⁵

THE (RE)BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

Only against the background of the analytic of action that follows on from his unlocking of the antinomies of conscience can Hegel’s attempt to generalise the Greek model of tragic action, and hence the full weight of the deployment of *Antigone*, be appreciated. In order to comprehend the full measure of this appropriation a somewhat wider canvas is required.

While adopting the Greek tragedy model of combined innocence and transgression is a first step toward generalising criminality – consciousness-formation through transgression – it is not sufficient on its own because what paradigmatically constitutes possible tragic circumstances in the Greek setting was simply any circumstances in which “being good falls short of sufficiency for

living well, on account of an undeserved reversal.”¹⁶ Martha Nussbaum has deciphered four basic types of tragic structure: tragedy of impeded action, tragedy of involuntary action, tragedy of ethical dilemma, and tragedy of eroded character.¹⁷ Not all of these types of structure are consistent with Hegel’s desire to employ tragic action as a model for ethical action. While all tragedy concerns noble characters suffering a reversal of fortune, Hegel, like Aristotle, is initially drawn to the second and third types since in the first action, which is at the centre of Hegel’s interest, is withdrawn, while in the fourth the innocence criterion is abrogated. In the middle two types, on the contrary, “the hero’s nobility ‘shines through’ in calamity, and... his or her unshaken disposition to do the best is a source of honour, even if he is not, finally, *eudaimon*.”¹⁸ Yet, as Hegel came to see it, even the model of Oedipus was unsatisfactory precisely because his action was involuntary, and hence not a case of ethical action at all.

Finally, only the tragedy of ethical dilemma remains of import, but even here Hegel was not satisfied for insofar as an ethical dilemma truly involves a clash of duties, as in *Agamemnon*, it is a “comic spectacle,” which as regards its content “is the same as that between passion and duty” (p. 465). Hegel’s ground for calling such conflicts comic, viz, that they involve “the contradiction of an Absolute that is opposed to itself” (*ibid.*), may sound suspiciously harmonising and simplistic. However, his point is not the sanguine one that there cannot be actions involving irrevocable and terrible losses, but the simple logical thought that an action cannot *be* both necessary and not necessary at the same time. At the concrete level, this amounts to the anti-existentialist thesis that I cannot have two duties of absolutely equal weight for if this were the case, then the choice between them would be sheer caprice, requiring a radical, ungrounded choice, and hence not a choice at all. If there existed a real conflict of duties, then there could be no reason for following one as opposed to the other. But the idea of a duty is precisely that of a reason of action; which is why Hegel sees no difference between duty-duty conflict and passion-duty conflict: they both image self-cancelling structures of reasons for action. Agreeing with Hegel here does not entail believing that all goods and all duties must be perfectly consistent, that is, compose an unproblematic set; nor does it entail that it might be extremely difficult to know what our duty is; nor finally, that what we truly believe to be our duty is not. All these conclusions follow directly from the analytic of moral action.

What Hegel came to realise by the time of the *Phenomenology* is that it is not the simple innocence/transgression structure itself that does the work, but only that structure in a setting that directly raises categorial issues. And only the complementarity model, the division of individuality and universality into distinct spheres or domains (family and polis respectively), does this. Thus *Antigone* became paradigmatic of tragic *action* for Hegel because in it the circumstances of tragic conflict are categorial – individuality versus universality – thereby explicating how Greek ethical life could simultaneously appear beautiful (complete, whole and unified) and yet structurally, categorially, entail tragic conflict. Thus what *Antigone* adumbrates is the structural conflict

between the moments of apperception and universality. This adumbration is deep in that in the transgressive deed (the burial of Polynices), and in it alone, these categorially separate but complementary domains are conflictually united: “The equal essentiality of both and their indifferent existence alongside each other means that they are without a self. In the *deed* they exist as beings with a self [i.e., exist now as components of a self], but with a diverse self; and this contradicts the unity of the self, and constitutes their unrighteousness and necessary destruction” (p. 472). Hegel is here making more than one point. First, he is claiming that insofar as the moments of universality and individuality inhabit different domains or spheres they exclude anything like what we would recognise as a self, reducing the person to a function or role. And it is this that he finds wanting in the Greek notion of “character,” which he, correctly, reads as a displacement of apperception, entailing thus a disconnection or detachment of persons from their own choices and doings (pp. 466, 472). There can be no “ownness” here because there is no self.

Secondly, Antigone’s transgressive deed, by bringing the two orders into relation, is what makes or gives Antigone a self, individuates her from out of the functional structures (institutionally embodied in family and state) of individuality and universality. Transgressive action is the route to individuation for Hegel while non-action, that is action in which there is no entanglement and difficulty at the categorial level, hence action which is merely that which accords with a given role or position, means nothing (because nothing concerning the self is at stake in doing it): “Innocence [= non-transgressive action here] ... is merely non-action, like the mere being of a stone, not even that of a child” (p468). In transgressive action the self appears as itself because it is taking a stand on itself, choosing itself in contradistinction to indifferent universality: “...the action is itself this splitting into two, this affirming itself for itself and the establishing over against itself of an alien external reality” (*ibid.*). Individuality is relational, a work of individuating through negation. Antigone can attain to individuality only through placing herself against the polis; her human separateness thus achieved through establishing a determinate negative relation to the polis. Individuality and universality, separateness and connectedness, are not complementary forms, but what Hegel would term “logical” aspects of self and action that reciprocally condition one another.

For Hegel, Antigone’s deed is almost paradigmatic for significant ethical action in general. Only “almost” because the circumstances that made her action necessary did not flow from her and her individual relation to her society but from its structural arbitrariness, that is, from the allocation of essential aspects of human activity into wholly separate domains on the basis of naturally given, bodily characteristics—which for Hegel is a triumph of (natural) “immediacy” over (spiritual) mediation (pp. 451, 459, 468, 475–6). For this reason, however paradigmatic Antigone’s deed is, it does not solve the motivational question for the innocence/transgression structure; hence that structure has not yet been shown to be constitutive of significant human action as such. It is just this, I am claiming, that is the crux of the argument in the consideration of conscience. What Hegel comes to appreciate here is that his

oldest foe, the apperception thesis, which he now identifies with negativity, death, etc, permits and demands just this routinisation of transgression once it is seen as a moment in ethical life and not a uniquely individualist metaphysical construct, as in Kant and the romantics, forever opposing ethical life. However, if Hegel can routinise transgression in this way, then the fundamental notion of mutual recognition must be that of tragic recognition.

Now it may be argued at this juncture that the programme of generalising and making modern the notions of tragic action and tragic recognition is bound to fail because they are irrevocably tied to their Greek origin. If we recall the path we have traversed to here, we will discover that the sorts of concern that underlie this objection have already been answered. Firstly, the contingent error (*harmartia*) or ignorance that is central to Aristotle's understanding of the downfall of the hero has been replaced by Hegel by the first three elements of his analytic of moral action: epistemic fallibilism, reproachability and interpretive pluralism. If Hegel is right in believing that only a fallacious notion of moral certainty could avoid these elements, then they must be constitutive parts of our moral epistemology.

The second and third objections must be taken together because one, slightly complex thought answers both. While Hegel is not a stoic thinker, it is equally the case that his notion of tragic loss, the reversal of fortune, does not involve a loss of *eudaimonia*. Hegel does, of course, take the lack of happiness and material well-being as frustrating self-realisation, and to this degree his views are at one with Aristotle. But he tends to consider the way in which considerations concerning happiness and well-being are connected and integrated into self-realisation as a question about social structures and institutions, that is, as matters that concern justice and right, and thence remain separate from considerations of ethical action. What then could we lose through tragic action if not our happiness? This brings us immediately to the third objection. Notoriously, Aristotle says in the *Poetics* that tragedy represents "one action which is whole and complete and has beginning, middle and end" (1459a19-20). Let us ignore the problem that the wholeness at issue here seems to more properly belong to works of art rather than actions. What we want to know is how does the one action criterion fit with tragedy; without a connection there the notion of tragic action disappears – even for the Greeks.

Rüdiger Bittner has argued that if there is an answer to this question, it must lie in what Aristotle says at 1450a16-20: "Tragedy is a representation not of individuals, but of an action and life, and happiness and the unhappiness is in the action, and the aim an action and not a quality; people have some quality according to the traits of character, but they are happy or the opposite according to the actions." Aristotle's thought here seems to be that in tragedy, individuals act well according to their "qualities," that is, their moral character. But it is not their moral character that is in question in tragic action; and this is consistent with what we have already acknowledged, namely, that the nobility of tragic figures holds and even shines through the course of their misfortunes. So, it must be an individual's *eudaimonia* that is at issue, and that in one action (eg, burying Polynices) their entire life *qua* its constitutive happiness is staked,

whether lost or, by chance, saved.

We have agreed already there is a problem with *eudaimonia*; and I am prepared to agree that Aristotle is fudging the difference between dramatic unity and human action in the one action requirement. Hegel would see the fudge as falling afoul of the interpretive pluralism thesis. There is, however, a further objection to be lodged: we moderns are too dispersed and fragmented as persons for our lives as whole to be lost or saved in one action. So Bittner:

What is childish [in Aristotle] is the supposition that a human life can be gathered into the one action, can be exposed in its totality to happiness and destruction, can be felled or saved in one stroke... (T)ragedy is built around it (one action) to its detriment. It makes for false dramatisation. We have learnt, from the theatre and otherwise, that we are dispersed beings. We are too fragmentary for tragedy; and “fragmentary” is not even the word, since it suggests a deficiency. In fact the totality of the tragic hero is not something we lack, it is an illusion. There is no such thing as one’s all that could be put at stake. The decision in tragedy is void: we do not stand nor do we fall because, unlike the towering hero, we are many places. Tragedy errs.¹⁹

This is dramatic and lyrical, but unconvincing. I confess that it is impossible for me to recognise myself or most of the people I know in Bittner’s postmodern, nominalist inspired words concerning dispersal and fragmentation. Considering candidates that might match his description I find only cases of commodity-crazed distraction, media-induced dispersal or, worst of all, anomie produced terror and flight (into things and media culture). And maybe all this is too painfully common and familiar; but it is not the source of an objection to Aristotle and tragic action.

Nonetheless, a weaker version of Bittner’s thesis is probably available. Let us accept first that although we all can suffer terrible misfortunes, and these can affect our happiness permanently, they are almost never directly connected with significant courses of action. Secondly, our lives do not possess organic or intrinsic unity; their synchronic unity is constructed around sustaining a complex set of commitments to a variety of intrinsic and instrumental goods (love, work, friendship, value orientations, etc), and diachronically through narrative reflection and production. Both synchronic fit and diachronic unity in part depend on social possibilities outside our control, and typically therefore neither fit nor unity is ever complete or determinate. From these two thoughts it looks at least possible to conclude that what unities our lives have are relative and not absolute, and thus that there could not be one action in which our “all” was at stake.

Both the second and third objections are answered by the expressivity thesis (the fourth in the analytic of moral action). What the civil disobedient perfectionist stakes in her conscientious action is *herself*, that is her standing as an autonomous subject both for herself and for others. She is related to her action, in it, in a manner quite different from the way in which Oedipus or Agamemnon are related to theirs. Their actions bring about a train of events

which, with either “necessity or plausibility (for the most part)” (1450b30), bring about their ruin, the loss of the things they most value. Plot is for Aristotle the “heart and soul” (1450b38-9) of tragedy because through it is established the connection between the action and the downfall; hence, the reversals of fortune and recognitions, *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis*, that move us to pity and fear are creatures of plot. Such things happen, and well-told tales with plots possessing a tragic structure can still inspire us. They are, however, not at the centre of our self-understanding because it is not our *eudaimonia* that pulls together, determines, our fate. In choosing wrongly, say in choosing career over family commitments, to divorce, to stand by a value commitment, what I might gain or lose is myself, my standing for myself as worthy or worthless. In choosing conscientiously, in Hegel’s sense, I am choosing myself, taking a stand upon myself, declaring who I am. Only through actions in which I stake myself in this way can I recognise myself and be recognised, which is why non-action, habitual or routine action, leaves me empty, with no more being than that of a stone (and not even a child). If the opportunities or occasions for tragic action are rare, or better, if our actions are rarely required to bear the full burden of our self-evaluations, this does not entail that the form of self-understanding implied by the model of conscientious action is not intrinsic to modern subjectivities. Pace Sartre, however, my conscientious choosings are not self-certifying; which is how fallibilism, reproachability and interpretive pluralism turn the expressive, and thereby reflexive, element of action into a temporal adventure.

In an oblique sense, Hegel believes, this is what actually occurs in *Antigone*, with the Greek structures and self-understandings obtruding or blocking, and so making impossible, an appropriate understanding of the action (even and especially for the characters themselves). As I argued above, what makes *Antigone* exemplary for Hegel is also what makes it untypical of tragedy in general, and hence unGreek. Antigone’s deed makes the moments of individuality (apperception) and universality (community) come to be focused on the question of who she is in relation to the community to which she belongs. In staking herself she also, in the same deed and at the same time, questions the community, what or who it is in relation to its members. Although acting on a pre-existing, albeit “unwritten” law, the claim and the meaning of that law is transfigured in the moment that it is posed against the laws of the city. It is no longer just the law requiring the burial of the dead in order to preserve their individuality against the operations of natural decay and disintegration, giving Polynice’s life and death spiritual significance; her deed makes a general claim for the individual against the partial universality of the *polis* that can find no space for her. The duty of preserving Polynice’s individuality becomes a vehicle whereby her individuality is staked, and hence individuality in general is at stake in a manner that ethical life as a whole cannot recognise. Her deed, according to Hegel, makes her both inside and outside the polis in a manner that does not pertain to the other Greek heroes and heroines. By her deed, Hegel states, she “gives up the specific quality of ethical life, of being the simple certainty of immediate truth,” (p. 468); in giving up the specific quality or

specificity (*Bestimmtheit*) of ethical life, she departs from and simultaneously dissolves the simple certainty (*einfache Gewissheit*) that constitutes Greek ethical life. As a consequence, she both is and is not a member of that community; but equally, that community both is and is not at one with itself. Antigone's transgressive deed changes the meaning of individuality, gives it an accent and claim that it did not and could not have in accordance with available concepts and practices.

Antigone's deed is, contingently, expressive, a specific concatenation of circumstances giving it an expressive dimension for which there are no corresponding Greek terms or concepts through which it can be recognised as that. Sophocles cannot be our authority on the meaning of this action. Hegel is unequivocal on this matter. Firstly, and above all, Hegel's critique of Greek ethical life denies to it a sense of individuality in the modern sense: "Self-consciousness within the nation descends from the universal only as far down as mere particularity, and not down to the single individuality which posits an exclusive self, an actual existence which in its action is negative towards itself" (p468). Hegel's distinction between particularity (*Besonderheit*) and individuality (*Individualität*) – terms which to here I have been using interchangeably – corresponds broadly to the distinction between persons who just are their station and its duties, and persons who seek to do something with social roles and stations in order that they might become theirs, expressions of them. With the idea of actions being "negative" toward the self, Hegel has in mind the thought that, generally, actions can take on meanings that stand opposed to he or she who does them, hence that meaning is not determined either by the character of the agent or by the scripts and rules that legislate actions for persons filling determinate stations. The meaning of transgressive action is hence neither "necessary" nor "plausible," what happens for the most part, a series of determinate consequences, in Aristotle's sense. No narrative, whose plot is its meaning, could be a meaning for us. The relation between an action and the fate of the individual for Aristotle is, essentially, causal: actions set in train a series of events that lead to the downfall of the hero. For Hegel this is but an image or metaphor for the causality of fate. An expressivist conception of the meaning of action replaces Aristotelian causality; through action meanings and selves are revealed, claiming recognition. Through her deed, Antigone reveals both a new meaning, an unbound claim to individuality as requiring recognition, and stakes herself on that meaning claim. Unless that meaning is acknowledged as valid *she* cannot be recognised. In her action her very self is staked, won or lost. It is, hence, the connection between the negativity of action and its being expressive that provides the ontological backing for the "one action" thesis.

It is the negativity of action that must entail the expressivist thesis if there is going to be a relation between action and self at all. It is via the negativity of action that we should understand Hegel's talk about splitting and division, both in the sense in which in action self-consciousness becomes divided from itself, becomes other to itself, hence not self-contained or simple or at one with itself; and how the self becomes divided from its social world in that it is not

merely a part of that whole, but in a relation to it – it is a world for a subject. So self-conscious subjects *have* an “object” world, a world opposed to them and with which they must continually relate themselves, and are simultaneously *in* it. So, for example, Hegel states that the deed of self-consciousness (Antigone’s deed) “initiates the division of itself into itself as the active principle (*Thatige*), and into the reality over against it, a reality which, for it, is negative” (p. 468).

Antigone, unknown even to herself, is the first expressive subject; her transgressive act individuates her, gives her a self in the midst of a world that knows nothing of individuality or expression. Her action can have this consequence because its very character calls into question an entire framework of meaning that knows universality and particularity but not individuality. If this is right, then we must reverse Bittner’s claim about tragedy and modernity. If tragic action requires that a self stake its all, then the Greeks did not truly have a tragic conception of action or self since for them there was no such self. Of course, they knew about misfortune and the depths of human vulnerability to contingency. They knew a life could be brought low through blameless ignorance such that everything that a person valued – family, position, power to act and affect the world, wealth – could be taken from them. So they could lose their *eudaimonia*. No matter how *eudaimonia* is understood, however, it does not encompass a sense of self where one’s very standing as a self, both for oneself and for other, can be staked, and in the staking won or lost. To be a self is an achievement, not a given. This the Greeks did not know. Only with the claims of conscience does the dim outline of tragic action and a tragic conception of self begin to emerge.²⁰

NOTES

1. All references in the text are to the paragraph number in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
2. See, for example, Joseph C. Flay, *Hegel’s Quest for Certainty*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 224–5.
3. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 270n (p. 295).
4. *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*, trans T.M. Knox, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, pp. 228–9).
5. “Moral Development and Social Struggle: Hegel’s Early Social-Philosophical Doctrines.” in A. Honneth, et al. (eds), *Cultural-Political Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, (London and Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 212.
6. The claim that Hegel logicises the causality of fate once he discovers modern political economy is a running theme in Habermas’ work that is presumptively to justify his turn to communicative action. For the relevant passages in Habermas and a critique of his view that communicative action can pick up the fundamentals of the causality of fate see my “The Causality of Fate: Modernity and Modernism in Habermas,” *Praxis International* 8/4 (Jan 1989), pp. 418–422.
7. Op cit, pp. 232–3.
8. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T.M. Greene and H.H. Hudson, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), pp. 27–34. For an excellent discussion of Kant’s argument, see Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ch.8.
9. *Ibid*, p. 19; and for a discussion of this thesis, see Allison, *ibid*, pp. 39–41.

10. The only commentator I am aware of who has seen the discussion of conscience as providing a theory of action is Benjamin C. Sax, "Active Individuality and the Language of Confession: The Figure of the Beautiful Soul in *Lehrjahre* and the *Phanomenologie*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21/4 (1983), pp. 437–466.
11. *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1992), p. 37. For Habermas' own discussion of Principle D, see his *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nicholsen, (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press), pp. 76–109.
12. *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 422. For a pertinent discussion of this, see Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 112–14.
13. The most prominent defender of the reproachability thesis, although he fallaciously confuses it with the different question of the overridingness of moral requirements, is Bernard Williams. See, for example, his *Moral Luck*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), ch.2.
14. "Fate and Character," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. E. Jephcott, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), p. 308.
15. In putting the matter this way, I mean to leave open the question as to whether or not the reproachability thesis can be read out of the paragraphs where I have located it. If not, then I would need to concede it as simply a logical inference to be drawn from the conjunction of moral fallibilism and interpretive pluralism. Without the reproachability thesis the introduction of expressivity and community is unnecessary, since without it the need to distinguish the moral standing of the agent from the moral value of the acts she performs remains unnecessary. Hence, what I think we must affirm is that Hegel means to urge something like the reproachability thesis as the obvious consequence of defeating the strong version of conscience.
16. Martha Nussbaum, "Tragedy and Self-Sufficiency: Plato and Aristotle on Fear and Pity," in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, edited by Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 283.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 283–4.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
19. Rudiger Bittner, "One Action," in Rorty (ed), *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, op cit, pp. 108–9.
20. I continue this analysis of Hegel's conception of conscience and transgressive action in "Evil and Forgiveness: Hegel's Poetics of Action," in Richard Eldridge (ed), *Beyond Representation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 34–65.

9. BEYOND THE ANTIGONE COMPLEX
A REPLY TO JAY BERNSTEIN

In his exposition of “Conscience and Transgression” Jay Bernstein presents Hegel’s theory of ethical life as a poetics of action. Against the Kantians, Rawls and Habermas, on the one hand, who, it is claimed, want to secure the validity of moral actions from all deliberative reproach, and against communitarians, on the other, who take the domain of moral action to be exhausted by customs, practices and obedience to positive law, Bernstein insists on the ineliminable moment of “conscience” and of *transgressive* action as the *sine qua non* of all recognition. Only by *breaking rules* can individual self-consciousness crystallise out of ethical life and not be submerged by it. For Hegel, in the *Phenomenology* and afterwards, the figure of Antigone is emblematic of the ethical role of conscience. On Bernstein’s reading, “Antigone’s deed is almost paradigmatic for significant ethical action in general.” (p. 91) I will come to the interpretative question of whether this thesis is Hegel’s own after first adumbrating and offering criticisms of the position which is advanced in his name.

Bernstein develops his claim about the paradigmatic nature of Antigone’s deed in terms of an analytic of action. His central move is to link conscience with the structure of Kantian “apperception.” Only because I *put myself at stake* when I act ethically, do I recognise this act *as mine*. My act is thus an inchoate and emergent self-expression which first tells me and announces to others who I am. Bernstein links this originary apperceptive/expressive act to the notion of guilt/indebtedness/responsibility which is germane to Greek tragedy and the model for Hegel’s theory of ethical life. The crucial point here is that the notion of ethical responsibility which follows from this apperceptive model of action implicates us in a network of actions and contexts of action which extends far beyond the scope of my prior deliberations and intentions. Mindful of the Heideggerian overtones of the term, I shall call this model of self-hood *authenticity* because it is so close to the Greek term *ἀυθεντης* which means deed/crime (especially murder) *by one’s own hand*. Authenticity is supposed to forge a link between “conscience”, the inner source of transgressive/creative action, and community, which acknowledges my emergent self-hood. The universality of moral action, concludes Bernstein, is nothing more than recognition of such action by a community; indeed the “generality of

mutual recognition as conscientious individuals displaces the universality of principles, choices and acts.” (p. 88)

Let me begin with what looks like a minor flaw, but one which is, I think, a major cause for concern. If there is an analogy between Kantian apperception and ethical action, then it must go all the way down. Now, in the first Critique Kant only argues successfully that “the “I think” *must be able* to accompany all my representations” (B 132 my emphasis) Analogously the “I take/I act” *must be able* to accompany all my actions. The analogy thus only implies the *necessity of the possibility* of the self-ascription of actions. Practical apperception entails not that I *do* take my actions to be mine, but that I *can*. Bernstein ignores Kant’s point that apperception is a formal albeit irreducible, feature of consciousness and ontologises it. “The “I take,” “I select and incorporate into my will” *must accompany* all my volitions...” (p. 85) Quite apart from making supposedly *immediate* ethical action look very deliberate and reflective indeed, this ontologisation seems to smuggle a great deal of “modern” self-hood (i.e. modern because independent of any particular contents or self-understanding) into the ingredients of an individual self-consciousness which was only supposed to emerge through ethical action and the ensuing struggle for and realisation of communal recognition.

This transformation of formal apperception into an *authentic* self-relation is followed by an ontologisation of responsibility and recognition. With regard to the former, Bernstein claims that my actions are apperceptively mine because 1. they reflect my intentions and 2. they express who I am, and that the second criterion is clinching. In the section entitled “The Good and Conscience” in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel does indeed deny that responsibility for an action can rest on intention, and for two good reasons. 1. I may delude myself as to my intentions. 2. Since mere intentions are ultimately private, I may brazenly, and with impunity, deny that a particular action **a** reflects my intentions, even when I am aware that I in fact intended **a**. Because intention is in Hegel’s terms a “formal right,” i.e. a *merely subjective* perspective on an action, it cannot furnish a reliable, publicly accessible criterion of imputability. The only reliable such criterion, according to Hegel, is provided by the cognitive competence of the agent – not what the agent claims actually to have had in mind at the time of the action, but that which he should have, or could be expected to have, borne in mind. In other words, ethical responsibility rests on the recognition of the subject qua rational, knowing subject, an “honour,” according to Hegel, which punishment duly confers. It is because of the component of *cognition* in *re-cognition* that other knowers and agents can tap into my self-understanding and can confirm or deny my agency or responsibility. That is, they too can gauge whether or not, or to what degree, I am responsible for a particular action. If we downplay the propinquity between *cognition* and *re-cognition* then the concept of a community comprising mutually recognising subjects comes to lean too heavily on the immediacy and spontaneity of action. To me this looks if not suspiciously pre-modern, then suspiciously like Rousseau’s proto-Romantic hellenism of the First and Second Discourses.

I now want to turn to the interpretative question. Bernstein reads Hegel

against the grain and I wish neither to challenge this approach nor simply to list what he leaves out. Rather I want to plead the case of something important which, if not lost, then is downgraded in Bernstein's interpretation of Hegel, namely, the moment of reflection. I agree that the section on Conscience is a crucial moment in the development of the *Phenomenology* for it represents the complete elaboration of the relation of recognition, when the "I" becomes "we" and the "we" "I." Yet the end of the sixth chapter, Spirit, is not the end of the *Phenomenology* which raises the question, what are we to make of the rest? In the following two chapters Hegel proceeds to hone and refine the relation of recognition in the progressively more 'universal' and 'transparent' media of religion and science respectively. The *home* of mutual recognition may be *spirit*, (that is ethical-life or in Hegel's later terminology "objective spirit") but its *telos* is *knowing*.

The following considerations also persuade me not only that Hegel did not tie his theory of ethical-life so closely to the figure of Antigone, but that he was right not to. It is true that, throughout his writings after 1807, Hegel cannot find praise enough for Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* – "one of the most sublime and in every way excellent works of art of all times" – and that he calls Antigone herself – "the heavenly Antigone, the most magnificent figure who ever appeared on earth."¹ He even calls Sophoclean tragedy, "... the eternal model of the concept of the ethical ..." and *Antigone* "... the absolute example of tragedy ..."², which is strong evidence in favour of Bernstein's reading. However, Hegel is referring to a particular feature of Sophocles' play, namely that the collision between Antigone and Creon which it dramatises perfectly conforms to the logical structure of *Reflexion-in-sich*. In other words both Creon and Antigone are equally right, and both have immanent grounds for acknowledging the right of the other; Antigone because she is a citizen of Thebes and Creon because he is a blood relation of Antigone. Yet they both fail to do so. Neither Antigone nor Creon comes to the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the other's right, until it is too late; in this they err and from this they suffer. We, however, the chorus, the audience and modern readers of Sophocles are in a position to see both sides of the tragedy in the ethical.

Though Hegel forebears direct criticism of Antigone there are many remarks which suggest that hers is a life and a work which we (modern ethical agents) must eventually reject. Antigone has an intuitive awareness of the ethical but is not conscious of its objective existence

because the law of the family is an implicit, inner essence, which is not exposed to the daylight of consciousness, but remains an inner feeling and the divine element that is exempt from an existence in the real world.³

Antigone's world is the private and cryptic world of nature and immediacy. Her crime is not the modern crime of civil disobedience – the calculated transgression of State laws, but that of blind obedience, the uncalculated adherence to familial (or divine) law. In another vocabulary, her transgression is *conventional*, because it is oriented according to (or rather against) norms,

not *post-conventional*, calling those norms themselves into question. Civil disobedience is by definition *post-conventional*. Thus I doubt whether Antigone's predicament is analogous to ours and whether her *hamartia* (error of judgement) can be reduced to the moral fallibilism, interpretative pluralism and overlapping commitments, in short, to the constitutive opacity of action *per se*.

Hegel's view of Antigone is more ambivalent. The curious dual occurrence of Greek *Sittlichkeit* in the *Phenomenology* testifies to his uncertainty as to whether or not Greek ethical life could yet provide a feasible model for the modern world. In one of the most moving passages of the *Phenomenology* Hegel reluctantly rejects this possibility. The gods have flown, the ethical world is "lost," works of art no longer have the spiritual power to move us; they are like fine fruit already picked from the tree.

But just as the girl who offers us the plucked fruits is more than the nature which directly provides them ... so too the spirit of the fate ... is more than the ethical life and the actuality of the people for it is the internalisation (memory) of the spirit which is only externalised in the latter.⁴

Hegel's critique of Antigone also holds true also for the "unGreek" individual conscience, which she prefigures. "Conscience" does indeed make a claim for the individual against duty and against the state, but it is the claim of the fanatic, of the "moral genius" convinced of the divinity of its inner voice, but unable to articulate it rationally.⁵ Nature is cryptic. Immediacy can be unreliable. Too much opacity, as many Greek heroes find to their cost when consulting the oracle, can be fatal. It is not for nothing that Hegel praises Hamlet, in some ways the paradigm of modern, reflective *inaction*, for his hesitation. He is "more prudent, more reasoned and thorough" than those who act upon laws whose origin they merely trust but do not know.⁶ Thus, unlike Bernstein, I think that Hegel did not go so far as to consider Antigone's deed of conscientious transgression to be a model for *all ethical action*, no more than he understood Greek tragedy to be a feasible model for modern ethical life.

Finally Bernstein's worry that, if all obligations are ethical then, "... that would involve adding only a level of reflexivity to the *sittlich* obligations of the Greek *polis*," the worry that reflection would not release but reinforce the dogmatism of current and given norms, does not seem to me to capture the complexity of the problem. Roughly speaking this is how Hegel tries to solve the problem he sets himself in the *Natural Law Essay*, by forcing reflection and ancient ethical life into the straight-jacket of *in-difference*. The problem which Hegel soon recognised but never adequately addressed, is that reflection does not merely supervene on customs and practices it intervenes; it tears the fabric of ethical life. The process has an up side and a down side. The up side is that the institutional and historical growth of reflection which Hegel always designates as a "subjective principle" carves out a space for the realisation of individual subjectivity; the down side is that it strips the self-evidence from given norms, decenters world-views, weakens social-cohesion and so on. As I

see it, Hegel's concession, that *the memory of ethical life is more than the loss*, amounts to the claim that an ethical life which embodies the moment of reflection is indeed the telos of spirit, and that the net gains in freedom outweigh the inevitable destruction of community and tradition. If so, then it seems to me that is Hegel less concerned with the fate of individuality and spontaneity in modern ethical life, with the fact that ethical action may be reduced to banalistic conformism, than he is conversely worried that a modern culture must pay for the increase in freedom, which ensues when the principle of subjective reflection strikes root in ethical life, with the destruction of the kind of substantive shared values typified by the literary representatives of fifth Century Athens. And the problem goes deeper than Hegel thinks. For he continually overestimates the extent to which reason, and the positive laws of the rational state, can make good the damage. It is not enough to adduce dialectical images like the spear which inflicts the wound, but also heals it, and knowledge which brings the fall but also the principle of redemption. We (modern, rational, moral agents) are like children who have learnt how to make a fish soup out of a gold-fish bowl, but the knowledge which enabled us to do this will never allow us to reverse the process or make good the damage.

If Hegel has an answer to Bernstein's question (does the acknowledgement that individual self-consciousness is grounded in community lead to the disappearance of "conscience"?), then it lies in his Aesthetics where he discusses the prospects, in the modern world, for the spontaneous and creative production not of ethical deeds but of art works. Notoriously Hegel states that, "... art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation, a thing of the past."⁷ Part of what Hegel means by this is the trivial point that art has ceased to have the social and ritual function, which it enjoyed as a specifically religious form of representation. Nowadays, no matter how excellent the portrayal of Christ or Mary, "... its no use, – we no longer genuflect."⁸ The implication is that, though art is a spent force socially, it can persist in a more private, cerebral and peripheral capacity. Yet Hegel is making a much bolder claim. Thought and reflection have become so predominant in modern life, he goes on to argue, that artists are continually constrained to give opinions and to pass aesthetic judgements. These habits are not only "unfavourable" to the production of artworks but, "... infect and seduce the artist into putting more thoughts into his works ..."⁹ thus making the works more abstract and self-conscious. The rise of aesthetics and the decline of art go hand in hand.

If there is an analogy between artistic production and ethical actions like Antigone's in the modern world then Hegel's answer to Bernstein's question is "yes"; modernity entails the sublation of "conscience" as the repository of emergent world-historical individuality. Deeds of "conscience" like Antigone's have become a thing of the past. Moreover it is a fairly sanguine "yes." Ismene's innocence, her non-action, was unworthy, because it was based on the heteronomous fear of punishment. By contrast Hamlet, the hesitant, cerebral, modern hero of reflective inactivity is praised for making his deed the product of his autonomous reason. We can no longer be like Antigone, we can merely reflect upon the significance of her fate, just as we can no longer merely live

ethical-life, but as reflective individuals, must also deliberate it, in order to uphold the elusive moment of the rational in the real.

NOTES

1. Lectures on Aesthetics, *G.W.F. Hegel Werke* 14, eds. (Frankfurt: Moldenauer & Michel, S.T.W., 1986), p. 60, Lectures on the Philosophy of History, *Werke* 18, p. 509.
2. Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, *Werke* 17, p. 133.
3. *Phenomenology of Spirit* tr. Miller, (Oxford: O.U.P., 1977), p. 274, *Werke* 3, p. 330.
4. *Ibid.* Miller, p. 455–6, *Werke* p. 548.
5. Miller, p. 397. *Werke* p. 481.
6. Miller. p. 446, *Werke* p. 538.
7. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, tr. Bosanquet, (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 13, *Werke* 13, p. 25.
8. *Werke* 13, p. 142.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

10. THE COMEDY OF HEGEL AND THE *TRAUERSPIEL*
OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY¹

The general ground for comedy is therefore a world in which man as subject or person has made himself completely master of everything that counts to him otherwise than the essential content of what he wills and accomplishes, a world whose purposes are therefore destroyed because of their unsubstantiality. Nothing can be done, for example, to help a democratic nation where the citizens are self-seeking, quarrelsome, frivolous, bumptious, without faith or knowledge, garrulous, boastful and ineffectual: such a nation destroys itself by its own folly.

Hegel is keen to distinguish the merely *laughable* from *the comical* in the sequel to this passage from page one thousand, one hundred and ninety-nine of the English translation of his *Aesthetics*². We may laugh at any contrast between subjective caprice and insubstantial action, while vice and evil are not in themselves comic: "There is also the laughter of derision, scorn, despair, etc. On the other hand, the comical as such implies an infinite light-heartedness and confidence felt by someone raised altogether above his own inner contradiction and not bitter or miserable in it at all; this is the bliss and ease of a man who, being sure of himself, can bear the frustrations of his aims and achievements."³ (Is this condition of serenity, I wonder, attained by effort or by grace?) In comedy, "the ruling principle is the contingency and caprice of subjective life" whose nullity and self-destructive folly displays the abused actuality of substantial life.⁴ The aberration of the passions that rage in the human heart are drawn from "the aberrations of the democracy out of which the old faith and morals have vanished" (as Hegel describes Aristophanes's comedies).⁵ While in tragedy the powers which oppose each other as pathos in individuals are hostile, in comedy, "they are revealed directly as inwardly self-dissolving."⁶ Comedy, as much as tragedy, is always *divine comedy*: "the Divine here in its community, as the substance and aim of human individuality, brought into existence as something concrete, summoned into action and put in movement."⁷

In the work of mourning and the search for *the new ethics*, in which philosophy is currently engaged in the wake of the perceived demise of Marxism and, equally, of the disgrace of Heidegger's Nazism, the comedy of Hegel (by which I mean *not* what Hegel says about comedy but *the movement of the Absolute as comedy*) is, nevertheless, once again being ignored and maligned by the neo-nihilism and antinomianism which continue – but at increasingly crippling cost – to evade their inner self-perficient impulse.⁸ As a result, mourning *cannot work*: it remains melancholia;⁹ it remains *aberrated not inaugurated*;¹⁰ pathos of the concept in the place of its logos. Instead of producing a work, this self-inhibited mourning produces a play, the *Trauerspiel*, the interminable mourning play and lament, of post-modernity.

The urgency and currency of this search for a *new ethics* – for an ethics, that is, without grounds, principle, transcendence or utopia – should not be allowed to obscure the way in which the fate of modern philosophy is hereby repeated. For, since Kant, philosophy has nurtured its unease with the modern diremption of law and ethics, arising from the mismatch between the discourse of individual rights and the systematic actualities of power and domination, by fixating on external statements of Hegel's argument with Kant and of Marx's argument with Hegel. Philosophy since Kant has never achieved a freely mobile and genuinely critical relationship to Hegel's thinking, nor, *a fortiori*, to the inversions structuring modern subjectivity and ethical substance in which it embroils itself more blindly and deeply with the totalizing invocation of metaphysics overcome.

In a lecture which he delivered recently at the University of Warwick (April 1993) entitled "Spectres of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International," Derrida set out to complete the work of mourning for Marxism: what he accomplishes, however, is *the aberration of mourning* for the spirit, the spectre, of Heidegger. Taking as his text the first paragrah of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*:

A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Derrida turns the metaphor of "the spectre" of Communism into licence for the idea and operation of what he names "the spirit of Marxism": the ghost of Communism will finally be laid to rest if this spirit – dare one say this *essence*? – of Marxism is retrieved from the rubble of old Europe, before the fresh rubble, accruing daily in a new Europe that is dying not to be born, submerges us all.

What is the shape of this spirit? Could it be the spirit of Marxism *as a method*, which Lukacs reclaimed from Marxism as dogma in his foundational essay from 1919, "What is Orthodox Marxism?"¹¹ On the contrary! Opposed to any such archi-teleological and pneumatological notion of spirit, Derrida's use of the discourse and metaphor of spirit captures the *heterogenous-originary*

spirit, which, he has argued elsewhere, that Heidegger developed by way of otherwise mute expiation for his lapse into the metaphysics of spirit and subjectivity (*sic*) in the *Rectoral Address*.¹² In the “note” to *De l'esprit*, Derrida reduces (in the Husserlian sense of *epoche*, the transcendental bracketing of the whole world, including ourselves and our thinking) Heidegger's imputed heterogenous origin to the event of promise, the promise of promises, archi-promise, prior, he claims, to “all the testaments, all the promises, all the events, all the laws and assignments which are our very memory.”¹³ This reduction is said to radicalize the Heideggerian *question* with its residual overtone of Enlightenment rationality.

Indeed it does: for what is prior to memory, law, event, assignment, but the covenant between God and His chosen people – the Hebrews – which is the origin both of their sacred and of their historical relationship? And what is promised – the promise of promises, originary *and* deferred – but the Messiah? This Messianic spirit of Marxism has been reborn into a *holy family*: it is the offspring of the Heideggerian origin reduced to archi-promise and of deconstruction defined as justice in terms borrowed – with equal trepidation on Derrida's part as evinced in his Heideggerian borrowing – from Walter Benjamin's Messianic political theology of divine and law-founding violence.¹⁴

The body of Marxism arrayed in its shroud may finally rest in peace, for its vital spirit, its anima, has been thoroughly etherealized and floats in a heaven of archi-original Messianic justice. But wait! – the resurrection of the dead *in their flesh* was a dogma developed for the Hebrews, who could not conceive in Hebrew of the immortality of the Greek soul – *psyche* – separated from the Greek body – *soma*. Language to the Hebrews was physical: the idea of an eternity without body not bliss but unimaginable torture. Let us therefore tarry with those bleached bones; for as we seek to pay them their last respects, they seem to be rearranging themselves in an articulate and urgent configuration.

In distancing himself from Althusser's legacy, what did Derrida assert was discardable as the body of Marxism, and why? Class structure, class consciousness and class struggle, the party, the laws of capitalist accumulation, the theory of value, human practical activity. In effect, each and every component of Marx's theory as it strains towards practice was said to be an index of bourgeois culture: dialectical materialism, the iron laws of necessity, present mirror-images of the rigidities of logocentrism; and they were realized not in proletarian revolution but in the fate of the modern state – in Stalinism, in Fascism and in Nazism.

To eschew this index, Derrida adopts the idea of divine law abolishing violence and develops the claim that deconstruction is the origin, in effect, the measure, of ungroundable justice,¹⁵ from Benjamin's last great *Trauerspiel* or mourning play: the thirty-six “Theses on the Philosophy of History.”¹⁶ The essay by Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” which Derrida deconstructs to its originary, divine, law-abolishing violence,¹⁷ rests on the philosophy of law developed in Benjamin's greatest work, *The Origin of German Trauerspiel*.¹⁸ This philosophy of law – of all human and positive law as fallen, violent and unredeemable – leads seamlessly from Benjamin's exposition of Counter-

Reformation mourning plays, of baroque Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, in this early work, to the Judaic Messianism of the final theses, in which all the features of baroque *Trauerspiel* are attributed to the failure of Social Democracy to oppose Fascism – “the enemy has not ceased to be victorious” – by a *counter-state of emergency*, which would suspend all law and history as it erupts: total, bloodless violence is to assuage and redeem all the partial and bloody violence of history. These are Benjamin’s terms combusted to an eschatological originary on Derrida’s ignition.

This is no work of mourning: it remains baroque melancholia immersed in the world of soulless and unredeemed bodies, which affords a vision that is far more disturbing than the salvific distillation of disembodied “spirit” or “spectre.” For if all human law is sheer violence, if there is no positive or symbolic law to be acknowledged – the law that decrees the absence of the other, the necessity of relinquishing the dead one, returning from devastating inner grief to the law of the everyday and of relationships, old and new, with those who live – then there can be *no work*, no exploring of the legacy of ambivalence, working through the contradictory emotions aroused by bereavement. Instead, the remains of the dead one will be incorporated into the soul of the one who cannot mourn and will manifest themselves in some all too physical symptom, the allegory of incomplete mourning in its desolate hyper-reality.

This is *aberrated*, not *inaugurated* mourning: it suits the case of Heidegger, who never mourned, who never spoke about his Nazism or about the Nazi genocide of six million Jews. However, where Marxism is concerned, far from rescuing some quintessential spirit, this approach reduces Marxism (in the ordinary sense of diminution, not in the philosophical sense of abstention) to a sub-rational pseudo-Messianism, while disqualifying both critical reflection and political practice. It is a counsel of hopelessness which extols Messianic hope.

All this stems from the *logophobic* ethos of Derrida’s thinking (pardon my neologism). Desperate for expiation and for ethics, he nevertheless desires to avoid *at all costs* renewing the question (yes, the *question*), which Marx himself posed and from which his thinking, young and old, proceeded: “How do we stand in relation to the Hegelian dialectic?”¹⁹ Only our taking on the burden of posing this question anew would permit us to investigate the possibility of an ethics which does not remain naive and ignorant of its historical and political presuppositions and hence of its likely outcomes. Such an ethics requires a comprehensive account of substance and subject, of modernity and subjectivity; an account, that is, of the modern fate of ethical life: of the institutional and individual inversions of meaning in the modern state and society, where increase in subjective freedom is accompanied by decrease in objective freedom, where the discourses of individual rights distract from the actualities of power and domination.

Once the question of the relation to the Hegelian dialectic has been posed anew

for our time, two responses to this question need to be distinguished: *the one that I have been developing so far*, which has discerned the relation to the Hegelian dialectic on the part of a post-modern consciousness that restricts its operation to *the dialectical oppositions of the Understanding*, and proceeds dualistically and deconstructively; and the one that I have also been insinuating, which comprehends the dualisms and deconstructions of the first response as the dynamic movement of a political history which can be expounded speculatively out of the broken middle. The response encountered so far is tragic in the sense of the baroque mourning play, *aberrated* mourning; the response to be developed further here will be comic – the comedy of absolute spirit, *inaugurated* mourning.

Let us continue to chase spirits back into their bodies, back into the history of their development, in order to comprehend their law and their anarchy and to complete the work of mourning. Re-incarnated, put back into their bodies, as it were, “spectres” in Marx, “ghosts” in Heidegger, join up with class conflict in the former and with heterogeneous-originary iterable violence in the latter which deconstruction owns as its primordial and hence undeconstructable justice.

“Spirit” in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* never leaves its body. Yet the response to Hegel’s dialectic which is characteristic of dualistic and deconstructive Understanding purveys *three massive misunderstandings* concerning “spirit” in Hegel: first, “spirit” is understood to mean “breath” (*pneuma*) in opposition to matter, and to be teleological and final; second, this ascendancy of “spirit” over its other, “matter,” indicates the ruse of *reason*, or, rather, its sheer bloody-mindedness in its general privilege over, and suppression of, all its Others; third, *law* in the *Phenomenology* is imperial, with the moment of *The Antigone* providing the excess which breaks out of the *Phenomenology* – woman breaching both the closed circuit of the patriarchal community and of Hegel’s watertight system.

Well, what a comedy of caricatures and errors! And I, in turn, must join this comedy of type-casting in order to insinuate *the absolute comedy*: for I must represent and hence misrepresent to you the modality and meaning of the *Phenomenology* – its “spirit” as much as its grievous fate.

Let me then shoot from a pistol: first, *spirit* in the *Phenomenology* means *the drama of misrecognition* which ensues at every stage and transition of the work – a ceaseless comedy, according to which our aims and outcomes constantly mismatch each other, and provoke yet another revised aim, action and discordant outcome. Second, *reason*, therefore, is comic, full of surprises, of unanticipated happenings, so that comprehension is always provisional and preliminary. This is the meaning of *Bildung*, of formation or education, which is intrinsic to the phenomenological process. Third, *the law* is no longer that of Greek ethical life; it is no longer tragic. Antigone stakes her life as the individuated pathos of substantial life in collision with itself: she presents part of its truth and she acknowledges the part of that truth *which exceeds her*. By contrast, modern law is that of *legal status*, where those with subjective rights and subjective ends deceive themselves and others that they act for the

universal when they care only for their own interests. This is *the spiritual-animal kingdom*: it is comic, not in the sense of frank joviality or careless gaiety and self-mockery, but in the sense of bitter and repugnant intrigue by individuals who deceive others by seeming to share their interests and whose real interest is without substance. These modern comic characters are unmasked by others and not by their own self-dissolving inwardness of humour.²⁰

Now all this requires detailed exposition: I could show how the struggle for recognition between lord and bondsman issues in the education of the bondsman through his experience of fear both of the absolute master – death – and of the relative master – the lord. The bondsman is able to overcome both kinds of fear by risking his life and by working, by acknowledging the plasticity of the world and hence the otherness of the lord, of matter, of himself, while the lord only discovers his dependence on the bondsman. The outcome of this is not, however, the triumph of the bondsman (nor the working class in its relation to the bourgeoisie, as has been erroneously extrapolated to Marx) but *the internalization of the struggle* between lord and bondsman in *the status of the legal person*. Individuals, defined abstractly as legal persons, lose their relation to desire, work and otherness, their own and that of others. Legal persons understand themselves to be confronting “the world” in unstable attempts to maintain a stoical or sceptical relation to it, when “the world” has itself been compacted and projected out of the misrecognition of work, desire and engaged otherness. This alienation of “the world” and subsequent abjection of the self result in the unhappy consciousness.

The *Phenomenology* continues to explore the misadventures of the self-consciousness of the legal person in its various misunderstandings of otherness as *the world*: “Virtue and the way of the world,” “the spiritual-animal kingdom and deceit.” These are some of Hegel’s comic sub-sectional titles, which introduce phenomenological explorations of the hypertrophy of subjective life concomitant with modern, individual freedom of rights, on the migration of ethical substance (objective freedom) into the hapless subject.

Now in presenting phenomenology schematically and topically like this, I am, of course, giving you *the results*, not the experience, process or *Bildung* of self-consciousness as it comes up against, again and again, its own positing of “the world,” discovering outcomes the inverse of what it intended. Seeking pleasure, for example, self-consciousness encounters necessity, “the grave of life.” And I wish to conclude on the terrain of *results* by drawing out three which support my argument that *inaugurated* mourning requires the relation to law that is presented by *the comedy of absolute spirit* as found in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*.

First, then, far from absorbing otherness back into self-consciousness or subjectivity (Fichte’s position which Hegel designed the *Phenomenology* to oppose), the presentation of otherness has a motility which the post-modern gesture towards otherness is unable to conceive. For the separation out of otherness as such is derived from the failure of mutual recognition on the part of two self-consciousnesses who encounter each other and refuse to recognize the other as itself a self-relation: the other is never simply other, but an

implicated self-relation. This applies to oneself as other and, equally, to any opposing self-consciousness: my relation to myself is mediated by what I recognize or refuse to recognize in your relation to yourself; while your self-relation depends on what you recognize of my relation to myself. *We are both equally enraged and invested*, and to fix our relation in domination or dependence is unstable and reversible, to fix it as “the world” is to attempt to avoid these reverses. All dualistic relations to “the other,” to “the world” are attempts to quieten and deny the broken middle, the third term which arises out of misrecognition of desire, of work, of my and of your self-relation mediated by the self-relation of the other.

Second, this dialectic of misrecognition between two self-consciousnesses yields the meaning of *the law* that is inseparable from the meaning of *Bildung* (education, formation, cultivation), inseparable from the processes by which self-consciousness comes to learn its investment in denying the actuality of itself and other as always already engaged in some structure of recognition or misrecognition, in some triune (triple) relation to its own otherness and to the self-relating of the other. This is the meaning of *spirit* in Hegel, that short-hand term for the threefold state of the misrecognizing parties. The law, therefore, is not *the superior term* which suppresses the local and contingent, nor is it *the symbolic* which catches every child in the closed circuit of its patriarchal embrace. The law is the failing towards or away from mutual recognition, the triune relationship, the middle, formed or deformed by reciprocal self-relations.

The law, therefore, in its actuality means full mutual recognition, “spirit” or ethical life, but it can only be approached phenomenologically as it appears to us, modern legal persons, by expounding its dualistic reductions, when it is posited as modern legal status – the law of subjective rights separated from the law of the modern state. There is no word in the *Phenomenology* which appears in section titles as much as *the law* in all its various historical adventures – *the comedy of misrecognition*.

Thirdly and finally, to conclude by taking the subtitle of the Conference on *Modernism* for which this paper was first prepared: “Politics, poetics, practice,” I would say that it is this *poetics of law*, where the worlds of recognition are tragic (*The Antigone*) or comic (the modern hypertrophy of the subjective life), which would permit us *to rediscover politics*: to work through the mourning required by the disasters of modernity, to acknowledge them as body by returning the spirit of misrecognition to its trinity of full mutual recognition, instead of lamenting those disasters as the universal “spirit” of metaphysics, of the logocentric West. For if “spirit” is understood dualistically, then “nation,” “race,” “ethnicity” can only be equally beholden to the contaminations (*sic*) of that same metaphysics of subjectivity, as Derrida argues. It cannot see them as the ruse of pseudo-practices which, once again, demonize self-relating otherness as “the world.” Given the anxiety produced by the self-opposition of subject to its substance, by the modern evasion of mutual recognition attendant on the separation of subjective rights from the law of the modern state, intensified by the individualism of post-modernity, to rediscover politics we

need to reconfigure the broken middle, not to deconstruct static dualisms. As a propaedeutic to politics, I offer *the comedy of absolute spirit* as *inaugurated mourning*: the recognition of our failures of full mutual recognition, of the law which has induced our proud and deadly dualisms, of the triune law – implicit but actual – which is always at stake.

This comic approach – I cannot resist the provocation – would also offer a deeper and more drastic alternative to the current sacralizing, commercializing and elevating into *raison d'état* as well as Providential anti-reason of the Holocaust in America and Israel.

NOTES

1. This paper was originally prepared for the Conference on *Modernism: Politics, Poetics, Practice*, King's College, Cambridge, July, 1993.
2. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press), vol. II tr. amended.
3. *Ibid.*, 1200.
4. *Ibid.*, 1180, 1202.
5. *Ibid.*, 1163.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 1162.
8. I refer here to Nietzsche's argument that "*complete nihilism* is the necessary consequence of the ideals entertained hitherto"; it involves the active transvaluating of values as opposed to passive and incomplete nihilism, "its forms: we live in the midst of it." (See *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, [New York: Vintage, 1968], Book One: *European Nihilism*, secs. 22,28).
9. I employ here Freud's distinction between "Mourning and Melancholia" (See *The Penguin Freud Library*, vol.11 *On Metapsychology*, [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984], 245–68.)
10. For *aberrated mourning*, see Laurence A. Rickels, *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts*, (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1988); for *inaugurated mourning*, compare the inaugurated eschatology of John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, (London: SPCK, 1982).
11. This subsequently became the opening essay of *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1923), trans. Rodney Livingstone, (London: Merlin, 1971), pp. 1–26.
12. See *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
14. See "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" in *Cardozo Law Review*, "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice" (vol. 11 July-Aug. 1990, no. 5–6), 919–1045.
15. *Ibid.*, 919–73.
16. 1940 "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, (London: Collins, 1973), pp. 255–66.
17. *Cardozo Law Review* (vol. 11 1990), 973–1039.
18. 1928, trans. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, John Osborne, (London: New Left Books, 1977).
19. *Glas* remains Derrida's most sustained engagement with Hegel's thought, but not from the perspective of the relation between Marx and the Hegelian dialectic (see *Glas* (1974), trans. John P. Leavey, Jr, and Richard Rand, [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986]).
20. See Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 11 1234–6.

11. IDLE TEARS A RESPONSE TO GILLIAN ROSE

The following response takes some questions prompted by Rose's paper as a starting point for a discussion of her work in general. I propose to repay the wit, imagination and intelligence of Rose's paper with a gift of one-sided and near-sighted objections.¹ I wish to discuss four topics in particular: the relation between philosophy and the human and social sciences in Rose's work; the relation between the existential and the legal-political; the return of pathos to logos; and the separation of speculative from dialectical thinking.

Against new ethics, "... an ethics without grounds, principle, transcendence or utopia ...," Rose investigates the possibility of "... an ethics which does not remain naive and ignorant of its historical and political presuppositions and hence of its likely outcomes ...". This wholly admirable aim prompts reflection on the relationship between thinking and knowing in Rose's work. New ethics decants from a tradition in which the gulf between thinking and knowing is taken to be unbridgeable but is nevertheless to be leapt over.² The leap lands in ersatz concretion, extra-worldly cosmology, epochal history. Its concomitant ethics are a love of unknowing. Hegel has his own leap, however, for there is no learning to swim without getting your feet wet. We cannot "know before we know," and philosophy may not restrict itself to epistemology.³ So the speculative essays already push towards an *Encyclopaedia*: scandalously, Hegel tries single-handedly to overcome the division of intellectual labour. It is what is most really Hegelian about Rose's work that she too risks herself against this division, rather than "cashing out" Hegel's "claims" for the special use of departments of knowing-before-we-know. There is little contemporary academic work even comparable in its courage to Rose's, which makes criticism more rather than less needful.

Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* felt itself bound to provide a philosophy of nature as well as a logic and a philosophy of spirit. Rose's *Broken Middle* works out her distinctive philosophical preoccupations through a series of readings. Although Rose has distanced her thought from Adorno's, her Hegelianism continues to share something, at least, with his.⁴ That Hegel writes an encyclopaedia of the philosophical sciences where Rose writes readings across the breakages of the divided human and social sciences already implicitly

concedes that whilst "... philosophy and natural science," for example, "have been impoverishingly rent apart ... the need alone will not glue them back together."⁵ For Rose, too much emphasis upon the second clause would be an attempt to fix a division of intellectual labour as "the world." Yet needs do not guarantee their own satisfaction, and what Hegel called "... the need of philosophy ..." is no exception.⁶

This becomes an especially pressing problem in relation to the critique of political economy. Rose's wholly truthful protest against Derrida's evacuated Marxism as new ethics of justice lists what he would discard: "Class structure, class consciousness and class struggle, the party, the laws of capitalist accumulation, the theory of value, human practical activity." Against not just this spectral Deconstructive International but also analytical Marxism, economic Marxism, Marxism-Leninism, Marxism as a method, Rose insists on the pervasive importance for Marx's thought of Hegel's speculative comprehension of any abstract antithesis between prescription and description. Her own relation to the content evacuated by Derrida, however, remains unspecified. Of course this is not like a gap which could just be filled up. The relation cannot be made specifiable by converting such content into "sociological objects," objects which would abstractly recapitulate the split between prescription and description.⁷

How fully can social experience be recognized through the speculative comprehension of sociology? If the comprehension of sociology is undertaken from above, it will no longer be what alone can justify it, a "rebellion of experience against empiricism,"⁸ but, against its own intention, an insulating grid (whether monist, dualist, triune, or fourfold matters little) or abstract refutation of empiricism by which experience would always already have been recognized. Few philosophers are in general so *little* liable to such a charge as Rose; few have shown so forcibly just how abstract appeals to concrete experience can become. I fully share Rose's conviction that emphatically to do justice to experience and to the possibility of new experience requires more philosophical artifice, not more dumb pointing to what is "just out there." Artless "programmes" for adding up divided intellectual labour find what they hope to combine coming apart at the seams. It is precisely Rose's insistence on the speculative which affords her work its immersion in social and political history. Yet sometimes this insistence can block, rather than liberate, discrimination.

Let me develop this point in relation to one of its aspects. Who are "we" in Rose's work? The "we" that sounds in Rose's written voice is not the pseudo-community of gentle readers or of professional peers. It is not covertly a class term, nor is it the proxy universal, the class of justified revolutionists. Rose's "we" is speculative, comprehensive and consciously broken. A simple taboo on the pronoun, her work can see, would not get rid of the problem, which is not a terminological one. Rose is driven to speak for a speculative *we* because she scorns self-exculpatory fixtures of the distinction between dominators and victims. Sacralizing and identifying with the victim prepares for further sacrifice, not for the end of violence. Yet this speculative *we* cannot be all-

seeing. It is equivocally both actual and possible, and neither. This is the zero point at which the existential and legal-political moments, whose diremption is so carefully configured by Rose, converge. If we are exhorted to riskful recognition and misrecognition, to "... resume reflexively what we always do: to know, to misknow and yet to grow ...,"⁹ are the risks the same for all? In this "drama" some play the part of persons whilst others feel themselves to be stage properties. "Lose to win" is the song of the derivatives trader as well as of the courageous and magnanimous spirit. For so long as the former sponsors the latter, "risk" and "speculation" will cast a financial shadow.

What then is the tendency of Rose's own ethic of knowing? She would coax modern or post-modern melancholy out of its defensive incuriosity. The cure is the same for melancholia of method and melancholy proper. Self-fantacists self-imprisoned in "semi-experience" are to be unspelled by showing them how their bonds are not fate but a work.¹⁰ Love's riskful work would mean letting go of fixed and consoling pathos. "Never try to hold on to anything ...," Rose appears to counsel us, with Martha Graham. Happiness would be to be won (if at all) only upon renouncing it as a goal or supposed possession. How unblinkingly unsentimental this is on one side, how stoical on the other! It may be questioned whether love is love without a moment of needy fixation, without its part-infantile demand for the unconditional. Love is more and less than mature intersubjective recognition. Abjection, melancholy, the whole repertoire by which people get stuck and get themselves stuck: these are no more "all our own work" than is physical pain itself. To such objectified "misrecognitions" as compulsive neurosis and mass unemployment the term scarcely does justice. Their fixation, the way in which they are experienced as external compulsion, is real as surely as it is not absolute. "The world" has partially fixed itself, and this is the element of truth in dumb discontent.

"It would be equally fruitless from a scientific and a therapeutic point of view to contradict a patient who brings these accusations against his ego. He must surely be right in some way and be describing something that is as it seems to him to be. Indeed, we must at once confirm some of his statements without reservation. He really is as lacking in interest and as incapable of love and achievement as he says When the melancholic in his heightened self-criticism describes himself as petty, egoistic, dishonest, lacking in independence, one whose sole aim has been to hide the weaknesses of his own nature, it may be, so far as we know, that he has come pretty near to understanding himself; we only wonder why a man has to be ill before he can be accessible to a truth of this kind ..."¹¹ And yet it may sometimes be the case that a man must be ill before he can understand this. Melancholia is not the opposite of self-knowledge; its cries cannot be set down to deluded evasion of the work of anxiety. One seventeenth-century expression for sinking into melancholy was "taking thought": "Soto died of thought in Florida."¹² Nor is self-knowledge sure to improve health. On the contrary, it is not certain that there has ever yet been any happiness at all quite free of self-deception. Of one category of patients who attempted to rid themselves of delusive libido-fixations Freud remarked that "... [a]ll of them, it might be said, meet with the fate of the little

tree in the Grimms' fairy tale, which wished it had different leaves. From the hygienic point of view – which, to be sure – he justly concedes – “is not the only one to be taken into account – one could only wish for them that they had continued to be as undeveloped, as inferior and as useless as they were before they fell ill.”¹³

From a Rosean viewpoint the sources of these doubts may be sadly familiar. Are not all these the complaints of a well-known pathos of method, trapped in unhappy dualism, unable or unwilling to count to three? How could these objections specify their *own* ground without falling into a relation to experience which would be less rather than more discriminating and flexible than Rose's? I want, as might be expected, to dissent from Rose's increasingly emphatic opposition between speculative and dialectical thinking.¹⁴ Part of the “... freely mobile and genuinely critical relationship to Hegel's thinking ...” which Rose advocates might involve a different kind of emphasis upon Hegel's relationship to Kant and to scepticism. Hegel argues that there are still dogmatic presuppositions in the way the critical suspension of the antithesis between dogmatism and scepticism is formulated. To this extent speculation, as Rose indicates, is a re-reading of critical thinking rather than its sheer overcoming.¹⁵ Hegel can also characterize his rational “divine comedy” as a sceptical “way of despair,”¹⁶ and one contemporary reported that Hegel began his first official Collegium on Logic in Jena at the end of 1801 by quoting the inscription over hell gate: “Abandon all hope you that enter here”: “God, faith, redemption, immortality, as they were formerly established in my mind, could not be combined with the new doctrine, but rather seemed to contradict it ... I wept most bitter tears.”¹⁷ Rose repeatedly argues that critiques of Hegel relapse to Kantian or sceptical positions. Whenever Hegel is primarily pitted *against* Kant and whenever the chief failing of critiques or evasions of Hegel is understood as a relapse to Kant or to scepticism, the danger of dogmatism is starkly foregrounded. Relinquishment guaranteeing a return is not relinquishment, nor can any guarantee of self-perficiency be issued to scepticism. Speculative thinking which suspends its own relation to dialectic – upon whatever political, professional, educative or therapeutic occasion – is, to just that extent, dogmatic.

As I began by indicating, this label, and these remarks, would clearly be inadequate as a *description* of Rose's work, nor could I make them without what I have learnt from it. They are aimed against one kind of reading of it and against whatever in Rose's own work confirms such a reading.

NOTES

1. For a corrective, cf. S. Jarvis, Review of Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle* in *Bulletin of the Hegel-Society of Great Britain* 27 (Spring/Summer 1994). For the source of my title, cf. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Poems and Plays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 173. This paper was written early in 1995.
2. Martin Heidegger, “What calls for thinking?” in *Basic Writings*, ed. D.F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1977), pp. 345–67, p. 349.
3. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, tr. William Wallace (Oxford: Univ. Press, 1975), p. 14.

4. Rose's most extended recent reading of Adorno is "From Speculative to Dialectical Thinking: Hegel and Adorno" in *Judaism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 53-63. See also *Hegel contra Sociology* (London: Athlone, 1981), pp. 31-33; *The Broken Middle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 5, pp. 8-9.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 263.
6. G.W.F. Hegel, "The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy," ed. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 89.
7. Rose, *Hegel contra Sociology*, pp. 1-47.
8. Adorno, *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Soziologie 1967-8* (Zürich: H. Mayer Nachfolger, 1973), p. 56.
9. *The Broken Middle*, p. 310.
10. For "semi-experience" cf. Rose, *Love's Work* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1995), p. 97.
11. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *On Metapsychology. The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp. 247-68, p. 255.
12. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (London, 1614), p. 871.
13. Sigmund Freud, "Types of onset of neurosis," in *On Psychopathology: Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety and Other Works*, ed. Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 115-27, pp. 122-23.
14. Cf. Rose, "From Speculative to Dialectical Thinking," *passim*.
15. *Hegel contra Sociology*, p. 185.
16. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Univ. Press, 1977), p. 49.
17. G. Nicolin, *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970), report no. 49; quoted in H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801-1806)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. xxxi.

12. THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF *RECOGNITION*

There has been much debate regarding interpretation of the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Among the issues discussed in various commentaries, two that are particularly interesting and important are: (a) the question of the social and historical vs psychological significance of the concept of recognition which appears in Chapter 4 of Hegel's *Phenomenology* and (b) the status of the dialectic of lordship and bondage for understanding the nature of the reconciliation of self-consciousness in the realm of objective spirit. Both of these topics have been widely discussed and one could not pretend to do justice to them in the space of this paper. Our particular interest here is to discuss the political significance of Hegel's concept of recognition, specifically by exploring its connection to Hegel's overtly political works, especially the *Philosophy of Right* with its articulation of the Idea of the state. However, before proceeding directly to that task, I will begin with some comments on the two issues I just mentioned, as they are relevant to my topic on the political significance of recognition.

In an essay entitled "Notes on Hegel's 'Lordship and Bondage'" George Armstrong Kelly cautions the reader of the *Phenomenology* against oversimplifying Hegel's concept of recognition.¹ There are two oversimplifications in particular that he worries about: (1) reducing the significance of *Anerkennung* to a social and political reading, and (2) (in Kelly's words) "the master-slave relationship is made an unqualified device for clarifying the progress of human history." (191) The first mistake is avoided by seeing, in addition to the social "angle," the "pattern of psychological domination and servitude within the individual ego." (195) According to Kelly, "The problem of lordship and bondage is essentially Platonic in foundation, because the primal cleavage in both the history of society and the history of the ego is at stake. The two primordial egos in the struggle that will lead to mastery and slavery are also locked within themselves." (199) The internal aspects of lordship and bondage are found in the struggle for self-awareness between self and other within the Ego, e.g., in terms of appetition vs spiritual self-regard, opposed faculties in the ego that once awakened must be brought into harmony. As Kelly puts it in his book *Idealism, Politics and History*², "man remits the tensions of his being upon

the world of fellow beings and is himself changed in the process. This relationship furnishes the bridge between psychology and history.” (334)

The second mistake, which is taking the master-slave relationship systematically as a “regulative idea” for understanding the further development of recognition in freedom and self-consciousness, occurs in Marxist appropriations of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, in particular Alexander Kojève’s reading as presented in his Sorbonne lectures. According to Kelly, in Kojève’s reading “the future belongs to the once-terrorized producer, progressively liberated by the spiritualized quality of his own labor....Effectively, the slave releases history from nature, and it is the slave’s satisfaction that will bring history to a close.” (193) There are two points made against Kojève’s reading: (1) “the slave-master dialectic is appropriate only to a certain stage of consciousness for Hegel” and (2) “both principles [master and slave] are equally vital in the progress of the spirit towards its destiny.” (214) As regards Kelly’s first point, Kojève himself recognizes that to consider the *origins* of self-consciousness it is necessary to take into account the “autonomy and dependence of Self-Consciousness, of Mastery and Slavery.”³ However, in the very next sentence he makes the typical Marxian move from genesis to essence: “If the human being is begotten only in and by the fight that ends in the relation between Master and Slave, the progressive realization and revelation of this being can themselves be effected only in terms of this fundamental social relation...history must be the history of the interaction between Mastery and Slavery: the historical ‘dialectic’ is the ‘dialectic’ of Master and Slave.” (4) Accordingly, the end of history is the final “dialectical overcoming” of the interaction of master and slave in a community of mutual recognition, but it is clear that for Kojève this *Aufhebung* is understood primarily in terms of the self-overcoming of the slave. George Kelly’s response to this seems eminently reasonable: “Slavery cannot found the right of political communities any more than it can account for the free personality.... Even though ‘only through the slave’s becoming free can the master be completely free,’ the Hegelian future will unfold out of their joint endeavors.” (“Notes,” 215)

While Kelly’s distinction between the historical and psychological dimensions of the struggle for recognition are helpful, his claim about non-reducibility of one to the other can be sustained only if an additional distinction is made between the idea of intersubjective recognition itself and the various forms of struggle for recognition that occur, either internal to the ego or externally between a plurality of egos. This distinction has been formulated quite nicely by Robert Williams, in his book entitled *Recognition*, as a distinction between *eidetics*, “an exploration of meaning at the general level of ontology,” which “brackets determinate factual questions,” and *empirics* which “studies the general eidetic structures in their concrete determinate actualization.”⁴ In the first several paragraphs of the section “The Dependence and Independence of Self-consciousness” Hegel articulates the generic meaning of recognition by focussing on: “(1) the doubling of consciousness, (2) the double-significations of the moments of recognition, and (3) the two basic stages of recognition, conflict and opposition, and the overcoming of such in mutual

reconciliation and releasement.” (147) Subsequently, in the life and death struggle that results in the master-slave relation, Hegel provides a determinate form (*Gestalt*) of the realization of the concept of recognition, albeit in a defective mode that expresses unequal non-reciprocal recognition. This scenario of risking life in warfare with one side submitting to forced labor and the other dominant party enjoying the fruits of that labor, and the resulting dialectical reversal in the positions of dependence and independence, is only the *beginning* of the exploration of the possibilities of realization of recognition. As such, it cannot serve as any sort of paradigm for reciprocal recognition and true reconciliation. Accordingly, the historical form that provides the adequate expression for the concept of recognition must be located at a more developed stage of social and political life. I suggest we look specifically to Hegel's Idea of the state and its approximation in the modern nation-state as the resolution of the historic struggle for recognition. Before turning directly to the state, I begin with a general discussion of recognition and self-determination.

I

History, according to Hegel, develops in virtue of the “power of the negative” within Reason. The struggles and turmoils of world history are due to the fact that Reason is continually at war with itself, and yet these conflicts are eventually resolved and transcended through Reason's ability to synthesize the moments of its struggle with itself, to cancel and preserve (*aufheben*) its internal oppositions. While from the point of view of world history these negations and oppositions manifest themselves externally in the conflicts between peoples, there is what one might call a “transcendental” basis for these struggles in the very nature of what is required for the attaining of self-consciousness, whether for a human individual or for a nation-state.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel locates the basis of the struggle for recognition in the master/slave conflict, a conflict in which the historical themes of dominance and obedience, dependence and independence, etc., are philosophically introduced.⁵ Although the master/slave dialectic, taken literally, is appropriate only to the earliest stages of self-consciousness and is in this sense a pre-ethical world phenomenon, it nonetheless sets the main problematic for the dissonance of self-consciousness. As Judith Shklar has put it, “Master and slave are, above all, paradigmatic, a manifestation of a universal principle of order....It expresses the essential character not only of all relationships of superiority and inferiority, but of a pervasive dualism. Mind and body, spirit and matter, theory and practice, contemplation and action, all exhibit the necessity of ruling and subordination which originates in the very constitution of the universe.”⁶ While Shklar's couching this point in terms of the rubric “master/slave” is somewhat misleading, the main point is, I believe, still valid, if we emphasize the symbolic function of this paradigm.

According to Hegel, the relationship between self and otherness is the fundamental defining characteristic of human awareness and activity, being rooted as it is in the emotion of desire for objects as well as estrangement from

those objects, which is part of the primordial human experience of the world. In the master/slave dialectic, the striving to overcome the alienation which consciousness experiences between itself and its otherness or externality is brought into the social context. The basic problem for consciousness is the overcoming of its otherness, or, to put it positively, its basic goal is to achieve integration with itself. The otherness that consciousness experiences as a barrier to its goal is the external reality it confronts in both its natural and social world. While this otherness prevents individual consciousness from becoming free and independent, the overcoming of otherness cannot be accomplished merely by abolishing it altogether. There must be a reconciliation between self and other such that consciousness is ultimately able to “universalize” itself and thereby overcome its oppositions, without destroying the polarity in which the opposition is generated. Let me summarize how the master/slave relation leads to a sort of provisional, incomplete resolution of the struggle for recognition between distinct self-consciousnesses.

In the relationship of lordship and bondage, the slave through work and discipline (motivated by fear of dying at the hands of the Master), transforms his subservience into a mastery over his environment, and thus achieves a measure of independence. Moreover, in objectifying himself in his environment through his labor the slave in effect realizes himself, with his transformed environment serving as a reflection of his inherently self-realizing activity. To be sure, this is a limited accomplishment. It remains incomplete because self-consciousness remains fragmented, i.e., the objectification through labor that the slave experiences does not coincide with the self-recognition experienced by the master whose sense of self is not through labor but through power over the slave and enjoyment of the fruit of the slave’s labor. As Hegel states it, “... the subservient consciousness as such finds these two moments fall apart – the moment of itself as independent object, and the moment of this object as a mode of consciousness, and so its own proper reality.”⁷ Thus, consciousness must move on through the stages of Stoicism, Skepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness. It is not until the section of the *Phenomenology* entitled “Objective Spirit: the ethical order” that the full universalization of self-consciousness is in principle to be met with. Here we find a stage of human existence in which “all men work freely, serving not the needs of an individual master but the needs of the whole community, and subject only to the discipline of reason.”⁸ This mode of ethical life also eventually disintegrates, as is expressed in the conflict between human and divine law and the tragic fate which is the outcome of this conflict illustrated in the story of Antigone. However, the ethical life which Hegel describes here is still in its immediacy and is therefore at a level of abstractness that falls short of the mediation of subjectivity and universality which is provided ultimately, for Hegel, in the modern state. Before I proceed to examine the nature of political reconciliation it will be helpful to investigate in more detail the self-consciousness and freedom that is provided in ethical life generally, for it is the ethical life of the modern state which purportedly provides a solution to human conflict arising from the struggle for recognition.

In his essay entitled *Natural Law* (1802–03) Hegel attempted to provide a philosophical solution to the opposition between legality, the sphere of enforcement of sanctions, and morality, the sphere of conscience and autonomy. In opposition to the view of Fichte that legality and morality are sharply divided, and against his “rational state” in which, as Hegel saw it, the positive law of the state is used for coercing its citizens into obedience, Hegel posits the “absolute ethical life” in which particular individuals are related to an ethical totality as organs are to the body. Criticizing Fichte, Hegel argues that “the ethical order posited according to relations alone, or externality and coercion understood as totality, is self-cancelling.”⁹ According to Hegel, it is contradictory to attempt to mediate individual freedom to the concept of universal freedom via coercion, since coercion is in its concept posited as external to freedom. “But a freedom for which something is genuinely external and alien is no freedom... but freedom is just the opposite; nothing is external for it, so that for it no coercion is possible.” (89) In the “absolute ethical life” coercion is excluded since legality and morality form a unity that is embraced in the organic life of the ethical totality. In this ethical totality the individual, although not subject to coercion, can be overcome by death which is the “absolute subjugator,” and “the individual proves his unity with the people unmistakably through the danger of death alone.” (93) In effect, through the virtue of patriotic courage individuals in the absolute ethical life find freedom in subjection.

In order to understand Hegel’s position we need to look more closely at the concept of freedom with which he operates. According to Hegel,

We must completely reject the view of freedom whereby freedom is supposedly a choice between opposed entities, so that if +A and –A are given, freedom consists in selecting *either* +A *or* –A and is absolutely bound to this *either-or*. Anything like this possibility of choice is wholly an empirical freedom which is one with empirical common necessity, and wholly inseparable from it. Freedom is rather the negation or ideality of the opposites, as much of +A as of –A, the abstraction of the possibility that neither of them *is*. (89)

The discussion of this freedom as the “ideality of the opposites” in the subsequent paragraphs of Hegel’s text is highly abstract and often quite obscure, but I will attempt to render what I believe is Hegel’s meaning. To begin with, although coercion can have no inherent reality, since freedom transcends all opposition and externality, the particular individual, in virtue of his particularity, is subject to an infinite number of possible specific limitations in choosing and acting. On the other hand, this individual, in virtue of his individuality, is the “indifference” (identity) of his specific determinations, an indifference which is “infinitely negative” since it involves the open possibility of his cancelling those determinations that serve to limit him. Through “infinite negation,” i.e., willing and acting, the particular individual transcends all of his determinations both positive and negative, and this is due to the dialectical

relation which holds between the negative and positive polarities, since in the very process of affirming an alternative its negation is already implied as a negative presence. While negation may sometimes appear to the individual in the form of an alien power standing over him, he nonetheless remains free even in the face of the threat of coercion because of his ability to negate his positive and negative determinations both together. "By negating +A as well as -A, he is subdued but not coerced." (91)

In other words, because freedom is an infinitely negative absolute the individual can always rise above his given determinations, death being the only absolute subjugator. Through the uniting (positively or negatively) of his opposed determinations and becoming the indifference point of this opposition (identity-in-difference?), and thus bringing externality within the compass of his specific determinations, the particular individual is subsumed under the true concept of individuality. "Thus there is freedom in subjection because subjection bears purely on the cancellation of a determination, not simply one side of a determination, but the determination posited positively as well as negatively, subjectively as well as objectively; and so, considered in itself, freedom keeps itself purely negative." (91)¹⁰

What I think Hegel is developing in these pages of the *Natural Law* essay is the basis for a theory of freedom as subjection to the totality of ethical life, a subjection which dialectically unifies the self-determination of the particular individual as a member of ethical life with the self-determined totality of ethical life as a whole. To see this we must appeal to the dialectic of self-determination which is, I believe, implied in Hegel's discussion here. This dialectic involves the relation between an individual's positive determinations, the limitations (negative determinations) which are placed upon these, and the power of negation to transform both into a unity.

Let me provide an illustration. If I decide to learn a new language I can count on my present language skills, and other related abilities, as positive determinations which allow me the possibility of actually beginning to learn another language. On the other hand, my present inability to communicate in the new language constitutes a limitation upon the possible uses of my resources. Now this limitation cannot be avoided or escaped, but rather must be internalized, so to speak, if I really wish to learn another language. The internalization of this limitation takes place through the effort which I bring to bear in the learning situation – the limitation becomes in a unique way my own, something which is taken up by me. Moreover, in exerting effort to overcome the limitation I must cancel certain of my positive determinations by delimiting myself, thus translating my natural or given limitations into self-imposed limitations. In other words, in order to learn a new language I transform my present inability to communicate in that language (the limitation as a negative presence) by accepting certain self-imposed limitations, say in the form of restricted activity, such that I can have the time and means to actually learn the language. Thus, in delimiting myself I am able to transform both my positive and negative determinations into a higher determination, in this case the self-determined actualization of my capability to utilize a new language.

The dialectic of self-determination is, for Hegel, inherent in the very structure of freedom, indeed in the life of the concrete individual *per se*. In the master/slave dialectic we saw how self-determination operates in a rudimentary way. The slave gains a measure of independence in his subjugation out of fear of death. In a way, the master represents death as the absolute subjugator, since it is through fear of the master, of the death that he can impose, that the slave in his acquiescence and subservience is placed into a social context of work and discipline. Yet despite, or more properly because of, this subjection the slave is able to attain a measure of independence by internalizing and overcoming those limitations which must be dealt with if he is to produce efficiently. However, the slave's self-determination is incomplete because of the asymmetry that remains in his relation to the master. This accomplishment is limited and incomplete because self-consciousness is still fragmented, i.e., the objectification through labor that the slave experiences does not coincide with the consciousness of the master for whom the slave is still a slave. Only in a realm of ethical life can self-determination be fully self-conscious to the extent that universal freedom is reflected in the life of each individual member of society. The sketch Hegel provides in the essay I have been examining is of course an early one and in it ethical life is conceived of as embodied in the people or *Volk*, rather than in the modern nation-state with its particular configuration of social and political institutions. It is to the latter that we must now turn in order to see how these fundamental dialectical considerations take shape in the "solution" to the struggle for recognition in self-consciousness.

II

According to Hegel, "... only in the state does man have a rational existence ..." since the state is the realization of ethical life.¹¹ This ethical life in the state consists in the "... unity of the universal and the subjective will." (94-95)¹² The universal will is contained in the Idea of freedom as its essence, but when considered apart from the subjective will can be thought of only abstractly or indeterminately. Considered apart from the subjective or particular will, the universal will is "... the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires, and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever."¹³ In other words, the universal will is that moment in the Idea of freedom where willing is thought of as a state of absolutely unrestrained volition, unfettered by any particular circumstances or limitations whatsoever – the pure form of willing. The subjective will, on the other hand, is the principle of activity and realization that involves "differentiation, determination, and positing of a determinacy as a content and object." (par. 6, p. 22) The unity of both the moments of abstract universality (the will in-itself) and subjectivity or particularity (the will for-itself) is the concrete universal or individuality (the will in-and-for-itself). According to Hegel, preservation of the distinction of these two moments in the unity (identity-in-difference) between universal and

particular will is what produces the self-consciousness of the state.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, the conceptual transition from universality to particularity to individuality (concrete universal) is exemplified in the social context in the transition from Abstract Right to Morality to Ethical Life. In the realm of Abstract Right, the will remains in its immediacy as an abstract universal which is expressed in personality and the universal right to possession of external things in property. In the realm of Morality, the will is no longer merely “in-itself,” as restricted to the determinate characteristics of legal personality, but becomes free “for-itself,” i.e., it will reflected into itself so as to produce a self-consciousness of the will’s infinity. The will is expressed, initially, in inner conviction and subsequently in purpose, intention, and conviction. As opposed to the merely juridical person, for the moral agent primary value is put on subjective recognition of principles or ideals that stand higher than positive law. At this stage, universality of such law is viewed as something inherently different from subjectivity, the will’s inward convictions and actions, and so in its isolation from a system of objectively recognized legal rules the subject remains “... abstract, restricted, and formal.” (par. 108, p. 76) Because the subject is intrinsically a social being who needs association with others in order to institutionalize the universal maxims of morality, maxims that cover all people, it is only in the realm of Ethical Life that the universal and the subjective will come into a unity; and this occurs by way of the objectification of the will in the institutions of the Family, Civil Society, and the State. Here, acting out of conscience and acting in regard to universal law coalesce such that

the self-will of the individual has vanished altogether with his private conscience... he recognizes as the end which moves him to act the universal which is itself unmoved but is disclosed in its specific determinations as rationality actualized. He knows that his own dignity and the whole stability of his particular ends are grounded in this same universal, and it is therein that he actually attains these. (par. 152, p. 109)

To see more clearly how the universalization of self-consciousness takes place in the community of Ethical Life we can examine briefly its three moments.

In the realm of Ethical Life the moments of universality, particularity, and individuality are represented respectively in the institutions of the Family, Civil Society, and the State. The Family is “... ethical mind in its natural or immediate phase ...” and is characterized by love or the feeling of unity in which one is not conscious of oneself as an independent person but only as a member of the family unit to which one is bound. (par. 157, p. 110) In Civil Society we move from “... the ethical idea still in its concept, ...” where consciousness of the whole or totality is focal, to the “... determination of particularity ...” where the satisfaction of subjective needs and desires is given free reign. (par. 181–182, pp. 122–23) However, despite the pursuit of private or selfish ends in relatively unrestricted social and economic activity, univers-

ality is implicit in the differentiation of particular needs insofar as the welfare of an individual in society is intrinsically bound up with that of others, since each requires another in some way to effectively engage in reciprocal activities like commerce, trade, etc. (par. 183, p. 123) Since this interdependence is not self-conscious but exists only in abstraction from the individual pursuit of need satisfaction, here particularity and universality are only externally related.

Only through the political constitution of the State can universality and particularity be welded together into a real unity. The self-consciousness of this unity is expressed in the recognition on the part of each citizen that the full meaning of one's actual freedom is found in the objective laws and institutions provided by the State. The aspect of identity comes to the fore in the recognition that individual citizens give to the ethical laws such that they "... do not live as private persons for their own ends alone, but in the very act of willing these they will the universal in the light of the universal, and their activity is consciously aimed at none but the universal end." (par. 260, p. 161) The aspect of differentiation, on the other hand, is found in "... the right of individuals to their *particular* satisfaction, ..." a right which is maintained in Civil Society. Thus, according to Hegel, "... the universal must be furthered, but subjectivity on the other hand must attain its full and living development. It is only when both these moments subsist in their strength that the state can be regarded as articulated and genuinely organized." (par. 260 add., p. 280)

In distinguishing the role of subjectivity in Ethical Life from that of universality embodied in laws and institutions the former should not be thought of as a mere indeterminate abstract freedom, such as that found in the realms of Abstract Right and Morality. Rather, subjectivity must be defined within the social, political and economic context in which it operates, particularly with respect to the duties and obligations involved in Ethical Life as a whole. The "bond of duty" appears as restrictive on the particular will only insofar as it adheres merely to its own self-will. However, when duty is seen as the realization of the will then the individual finds liberation from "mere natural impulse" as the basic motivation of an action as well as liberation from "indeterminate subjectivity" which cannot produce a clear view of proper action. "In duty the individual acquires his substantive freedom." (par. 149, p. 107)

The "bond of duty," however, cannot involve being coerced into obeying the laws of the State. "Common place thinking often has the impression that force holds the state together, but in fact its only bond is the sense of order which everybody possesses." (par. 268 add., p. 282) This "sense of order" is not provided by the objective institutions of the State alone but results also from the conscious recognition by individuals of the unity between their rights and duties. Since a person's rights exist only within the context of an objective community of Ethical Life, the freedom which the rights articulate cannot be separate from restrictions on freedom which are expressed in duties to others and to the state as a whole. As Hegel states it, "... in this identity of the universal will with the particular will, right and duty coalesce, and by being in the ethical order a man has rights insofar as he has duties, and duties insofar as he has

rights.” (par. 155, p. 109)

This interpenetration of the universal with the particular will is what produces the self-consciousness of the nation-state considered as an organic (internally differentiated and interrelated) totality or concrete spiritual individual. This is a result of particular individuals consciously pursuing the universal ends of the State, not out of external or mechanical conformity to law, but in the free development of personal individuality and the expression of its unique subjectivity. However, in contrast with particular human individuals, the nation-state as a whole constitutes a higher form of individuality which is manifested in its activity in the life processes of history. In other words, for Hegel the nation-state can be said to manifest a personality and a self-consciousness of its inherent nature and goals, indeed a self-awareness of everything which is implicit in its concept, and is thus able to act rationally and in accordance with its self-awareness. The nation-state is a “spiritual individual,” the true historical individual, precisely because of the level of realization of self-consciousness that it actualizes. (*LPWH*, 96–97, 103) The development of the perfected nation-state is the end or goal of history because it provides an optimal level of realization of self-consciousness, a more comprehensive level of realization of freedom than mere natural individuals, or other forms of human organization, can produce.

Does this mean that the dialectic of dominance and servitude, which originates in the master-slave relation, is totally overcome in the Ethical Life of the modern nation-state? To address this question let us look at the relation of commanding and obeying as it operates in the context of the state. According to Hegel, “The struggle for recognition and the subjugation under a master are the phenomena in which the social life of people emerges.”¹⁴ Given that the nation-state is a self-conscious “spiritual individual,” and that the basis of self-conscious individuality is the desire for recognition along with the struggle that this brings, it is only natural that Hegel would conclude that “... the origin of the state is domination on the one hand, instinctive obedience on the other.”¹⁵ However, while this may be the origin of the state historically, it cannot be the essence of the rational concept of the state in which the opposition of freedom and necessity is overcome. Nevertheless, the distinction between commanding and obeying is captured in the political constitution of the state, that organ through which the freedom of the state is ultimately realized and made rational in the organization of powers. “The state as an abstraction only acquires life and reality through the constitution; but as it does so, a difference arises between those who command and those who obey, those who rule and those who are ruled.” (*LPWH*, 116)¹⁶

What this suggests is that just as in the self-consciousness of the particular individual the appetites must be subordinated to and transformed by the rational will in order for actions to be free, so in the self-consciousness of the state the inclinations of the subjective will as a whole must be subsumed under the rationality inherent in the idea of the state in order for it to realize its Freedom. While Hegel himself remarks that “... obedience seems incompatible with freedom, and those who command would seem to be doing the opposite of

what is required by the very basis of the state, the concept of freedom," he acknowledges that the distinction between commanding and obeying is necessary to the functioning of the state and that it is a "... form of compulsion, an external necessity which actually conflicts with freedom in the abstract sense." (116) Given the necessity of the distinction between commanding and obeying, Hegel says that the obedience required should be kept to a minimum, as well as care given regarding arbitrariness in issuing commands, and that the necessity of any given commands should be determined largely by the will of the citizens as a whole. (117)

Now in one sense the relation of dominance and subservience has not been overcome in the rational state insofar as the distinction between commanding and obeying is necessarily retained. However, dialectical *conflict* has been overcome in that the struggle for recognition has been resolved through a reconciliation of opposites. The interpenetration of the particular will and the universal will requires that the particular subject or citizen finds his or her subjectivity fully realized in the laws and institutions of the political state, while these structures only get their "life" through subjective acknowledgement. The principle of *Aufhebung*, of cancelling opposition by raising the differences to a higher level, is at work here in a way quite advanced from the master-slave relation, such that the subject's self-determination is complete in reflecting the freedom of the totality of Ethical Life. What distinguishes the mediation of self and otherness provided in the state is the ultimate harmonization of social life in which the struggle for recognition is finally overcome, as is implied in the idea that all the subjects of the state consciously see their aims and goals summed up in its political constitution.

Interestingly, the very concept of the "subject of the State" includes a double meaning that captures the reconciliation provided in the political constitution of the State. On the one hand, it suggests the idea of *subjection* to a higher power, in this case the power of social reason as objectified in the laws and institutions of the political state; for Hegel, in the monarchy, executive, and legislature. On the other hand, it refers to the seat of *subjectivity* in the nation-state as a whole, that is, the consciousness of particular citizens. The relation between dominance and obedience, between rulers and subjects, manifests itself in the State in the distinction between its laws and institutions, including the commands and sanctions they embody along with those offices responsible for imposing them, and those who are commanded to obey, including those individuals who represent the State's institutions when considered in their capacity as private citizens. This distinction implies that restrictions are set up by those in command upon the subjects of the State and that these subjects actually view these restrictions as putting limitations on their activity, otherwise the sense of submission to authority implied in the notion of obedience is lost. However, in order for this imposition of restrictions to be compatible with the reconciliation of particular and universal they must be taken up by the citizen-subject in a certain manner such that one does not view the limitations that one faces as merely externally imposed.

In accordance with the "dialectical negativity" inherent in the very concept

of freedom, i.e., the manner in which positive determinations (abilities, capacities, etc.) are negated (limited, impressed upon) by externality, the citizen of the State must take up and internalize its restrictions and thereby transcend them. This is done when the citizen comes to see these restrictions as self-imposed limitations, which when confronted serve to transform one's particular natural determinations into higher and more universalized ones. In effect, the citizen utilizes the restrictions imposed upon oneself to self-determine oneself as an objective being in such a way that the universal will is reflected or mirrored in one's own particular life. It is in this way that the citizen, in providing the self-consciousness for the totality of Ethical Life, radiates the subjectivity of the State as a whole.

It is important to see that the relation of the citizen to the State is not one of identification in any simple manner. It is not a matter of internalizing any particular ideology, but rather of participating in a common activity. The citizen who identifies with the Ethical Life of his or her community is like someone who in pursuing a particular vocation must accept its demands and requirements in order to become a true participant. We should not take this resemblance to the domain of *techne* too strictly, however, for contributing to the activity of Ethical Life is not just an instrumental relation but is one that has intrinsic value. Here the subject participates much as one does as a user of a particular language: in order to communicate one is bound by the rules of usage, but one also can choose to communicate what one wishes and add to the wealth of meaning in this common social project. It is in this context that one achieves social recognition.

According to Hegel, the consciousness that both the universal and particular interest of the citizen is contained and preserved in the interest of the State is found in what is called "political sentiment" and "genuine patriotism." Here, although in the relation of ruler and subject the State appears in one sense as an "other" to the subject, "... this very other is immediately not an other in my eyes, and in being conscious of this fact, I am free." (*PhR*, par. 268, p. 164) Moreover, "... it is out of this consciousness, which during life's daily round stands the test in all circumstances, that there subsequently arises the readiness for extraordinary exertions." (*Ibid*) In other words, the citizen is willing to make sacrifices in order to maintain the individuality and stability of the state, and this willingness is manifested in courage, the spiritual character of which lies in the substantial tie that it effects between the state and its citizens. "The intrinsic worth of courage as a disposition of mind is to be found in the genuine, absolute, final end, the sovereignty of the state. The work of courage is to actualize this final end, and the means to this end is the sacrifice of personal actuality." (par. 328, p. 211) One might add here that there is an implicit parallel between, on the one hand, the disposition for courage in the citizen and, on the other, work and discipline out of fear of death exhibited in the slave. In both cases there is the recognition of death as the ultimate subjugator and that in the face of death one can be subdued but not coerced. But, of course, the motives and situation of the slave and citizen are quite different. The citizen is concerned with more than survival, as is manifested in

his or her political allegiance and the opportunities for its expression. Moreover, in the case of citizens of the modern state there is reciprocal recognition that each recognizes the other as a being for itself, that each posits the other as it posits itself. This universal positing is only possible in the context of the social and political institutions of the state.

To summarize, the actuality of the true State (the perfection of a State in accordance with its Idea) consists in the unity of the particular with the universal, and the dynamism of this unity which preserves internal differences is the "infinite negativity" (potency for overcoming) that characterizes freedom, as both rational self-determination and universal self-consciousness. It is in terms of these factors that the state can be seen for Hegel as providing a reconciliation in the historic struggle for recognition that characterizes the development of self-consciousness. The state provides the actualization of ethical life in the articulation of community as the I that is a we, and we that is an I.

III

In recent years there has been a growing perception that Hegel's social and political philosophy is basically pluralistic, somewhat liberal, and essentially compatible with republican aspirations.¹⁷ This is a long way from what was for a time the popularized version of Hegel's position as authoritarian, and even fascist and totalitarian.¹⁸ However, while Hegel now has been salvaged from the myth of his "totalitarianism," a new tendency has emerged which tends to portray Hegel's political theory as essentially democratic, and even socialistic.¹⁹ Moreover, the idea that politics must be essentially participatory is taken as the logical conclusion of Hegel's view of universal freedom as the defining characteristic of the truly rational state.

It is not my intent to directly refute this recent view of Hegel's concept of politics, but I do wish to examine his conception of institutionalized freedom independently in order to show that even on the more modest claims of Hegel's "pluralism" there are some difficulties in viewing his conception of the state as participatory. If I am successful in this task, then the stronger claims about Hegel's democratism will, in effect, be shown to be implausible. The focus of my discussion is the distinction between the "civic" and "political" conceptions of freedom in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and the implications of this distinction for what it means to be a participating citizen in the polity. Moreover, I will indicate how this bears on the issue of political recognition.

It will be helpful to begin with a characterization of freedom in a broad philosophical sense, as Hegel understands it.²⁰ For Hegel, freedom essentially involves three basic features: reason, self-consciousness, and self-determination. The rationality of freedom is a fairly complex idea but it can be articulated most succinctly as the way in which the particular motives and interests involved in willing an action are made complementary to universal principles of thought. Hegel himself puts this in terms of the formula the "... unity of the particular and the universal." The basic idea is that concrete freedom is not

simple liberty, or merely unrestricted or uncoerced activity based solely on individual needs and interests, on the one hand; but, on the other hand, neither is freedom a purely formal affair where one wills solely in terms of universal laws, or, as Kant had put it, purely out of a sense of duty and respect for law itself. In Hegel's view, the principles guiding both egoism and altruism must somehow consistently together govern free activity, and when one of the two principles predominates to the exclusion of the other freedom is only abstract.

The second feature of freedom, self-consciousness, is the manner in which the two principles of freedom are articulated in actuality. Hegel distinguishes between implicit and explicit manifestations of freedom. Freedom is merely implicit when the particular quality of an action stands out while its universal character is suppressed, as, for example, when service to one's country motivated by the desire for personal reward is taken as a purely individual accomplishment without comparable regard for the common good it serves. Indeed, such personal success may be taken as a result simply of one's own individual initiative without recognition that the very role one takes on is made possible only in the context of the wider social structures already present. The freedom to act becomes explicit, and thereby self-conscious, when recognition of the universal conditions and implications of action obtains along with the nature of its particular origin and impetus. As we will see later, in Hegel's social scheme there are a variety of levels at which this "synthesis" of the two principles can occur. Moreover, self-consciousness in the social order is never an "all or nothing" situation but, rather, exhibits a continuum in the development from implicitness to explicitness of freedom.

The third feature of freedom, self-determination, is directly related to the second insofar as to determine oneself freely requires a certain dynamic between the inner impetus of action and the external conditions which circumscribe the possibilities of action. Action does not occur in a vacuum but only in the context of a particular situation which involves both possibilities and limitations. A free action is neither unlimited nor totally constrained, rather it involves choices of means and ends from a range of possibilities. At the same time, however, the free action has a self-transcending quality such that its accomplishment results in an expansion of the range of possibilities due to the overcoming of certain limitations. Put simply, the result of a free action is the further qualitative increase in the capacity for acting.

As is clear, the three features of freedom are closely interconnected, so they are best conceived as three angles from which to consider the same basic phenomenon. Moreover, concrete freedom is always in the world and never merely a subjective state of mind.

In considering the fabric of the social order Hegel distinguishes between civil society and the political state and, correspondingly, between civic and political freedom. Civil society is the sphere comprising the System of Needs, or economic market, the Administration of Justice which applies law and protects property, the Police (*Polizei*) or public authority which prevents crime but also oversees the System of Needs and intervenes when necessary to protect public welfare, and Corporations which are voluntary associations arising out of the

common interest of its members for promoting economic and social life. I will discuss each of these in turn as they relate to civic freedom.

Hegel characterizes civil society overall as governed by the principle of particularity, which means that generally civil society is a sphere of the pursuit of private interest. This is most obvious in the System of Needs which Hegel conceives of in a manner similar to Adam Smith. Here individuals have the liberty to acquire property, enter into exchange relations and other contractual relations, and generally make various choices in a setting of market competition. Although the principle of universality, of concern with the social whole and common good, is not typically a conscious feature of action in this arena, there is an implicit universalization taking place through the formation of a matrix of interdependencies as a result of social interaction. Similar to Smith's notion of the "invisible hand," economic activity motivated by individual interest inevitably produces results beneficial to the productivity and growth of the society overall. Of course, this does not exclude having basic rules and guidelines for human behavior, and for Hegel the Administration of Justice is precisely the institution for overseeing these. Here freedom of action is enhanced by giving systematic attention to behavior in accordance with public law, which focusses on the universality of relationships.

However, unlike Smith, Hegel also introduces a further element of social regulation with the Police or public authority, the tasks of which include promoting the public welfare through such things as price regulation, control of acquisition of property, and providing aid to the economically disadvantaged. This is a quite "visible hand" in the social scheme and enhances the degree to which the universal concern with common interest is addressed in civil society. As such, this institution promotes freedom by ensuring that the members of society as a whole who all have an interest in pursuing their own good also have the opportunities and conditions to make effective choices in pursuing this good. Still, as Rousseau would point out, this shows concern for the distributive good of society but not for the common good understood as a substantial unifying ethical bond.

The Corporation, for Hegel, is in a way the most important institution of civil society in that it is here for the first time that ordinary citizens freely pursue common goals that, to a degree, transcend private interest. Although the model for this organization was the medieval guild, it has a broader significance in encompassing a variety of associations, economic, religious, professional, and regional (e.g., the incorporated township). Overall, the members of Corporations come largely from what Hegel calls the "business class" of civil society which encompasses the areas of craftsmanship, manufacture, and trade. Hegel says that here "... a selfish purpose, directed toward its particular self-interest, apprehends and evinces itself at the same time as universal; and a member of civil society is in virtue of his own particular skill a member of a Corporation, whose universal purpose is thus wholly concrete and no wider in scope than the purpose involved in business, its proper task and interest." (par. 251, p. 152) In effect, there is a certain bonding that occurs among the members of a Corporation, rooted in the pursuit of self-interests

held in common but also rising above mere concern with mere self-interest. This results from the fact that not only does the Corporation look after these common interests and protect its members against particular contingencies, but it also “educates” its members into a group consciousness. Because the member of a Corporation “... is actively concerned in promoting the comparatively disinterested end of this whole, ...” (par. 253, p. 153) there is a special social status connected to such membership. As Hegel says, “[U]nless he is a member of an authorized corporation (and it is by being authorized that an association becomes a Corporation), an individual is without rank or dignity, his isolation reduces his business to mere self-seeking, and his livelihood and satisfaction become insecure.” (par. 253 zu, p. 153)

The Corporation is significant for freedom in the way that it manifests reason, self-consciousness, and self-determination in activity. Here the exercise of one’s skill and ability and pursuit of livelihood becomes rational because the principle of universality is made explicit in the pursuit of the determinate common good of the association itself. Moreover, the self-consciousness of this universality is manifested in the allegiance of the member to the group and a willingness to make certain sacrifices for the promotion of its organization. In this respect, Hegel likens the Corporation to the Family and holds that these two institutions are the “ethical roots” of civil society. Unlike the Family, however, the Corporation is not a natural unity but wholly artificial one composed of members who retain personal independence and a level of self-determination absent in family interaction.

Hegel refers to the awareness that one is actively engaged in determining both one’s own interests and place in society as well as the goals of society as a whole and their furtherance as “subjective freedom.” For Hegel, civil society generally is important for the ways in which it promotes subjective freedom, although as we have seen it is never an unrestricted freedom. Indeed, we might say that the quality of subjective freedom manifested in the Corporation is, in addition to the other institutions of civil society, especially possible only because self-determination is enhanced in the Corporation precisely through the special integrating function it performs.

Whereas civil society is governed primarily by the principle of particularity, the political state is governed by the principle of universality, which means that the institutional functions in this arena are systematically geared toward the common good of the social totality. These institutions are found in the political constitution which Hegel sees as comprising a Legislature, Executive, and Crown.

According to Hegel, “... [t]he state is absolutely rational inasmuch as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self-consciousness once that consciousness has been raised to consciousness of universality. This substantial unity is an absolute end in itself, in which freedom comes into its supreme right.” (par. 258, pp. 155–56). Accordingly, freedom becomes objective, as distinct from simply subjective, when membership in the state becomes the ultimate goal of its citizens. This does not occur at the expense of subjective freedom, however, since personal individuality and its

particular interests must "... pass over of their own accord into the interests of the universal, ..." and "... through the co-operation of particular knowing and willing, ..." the universal end is consciously aimed at. (par. 260, pp. 160–61) Put another way, "... my obligation to what is substantive is at the same time the embodiment of my particular freedom. This means that in the state duty and right are united in one and the same relation." (par. 261, p. 161)

The crucial question to be asked of Hegel is how this unity of particularity and universality can actually be achieved in the particular institutions of the political state. The answer is in the way that the political constitution rationally organizes the elements of the state into an organic self-related process such that "... each of these powers is in itself the totality of the constitution, because each contains the other moments and has them effective in itself." (par. 272, p. 174) In other words, each of the constitutional powers serves to integrate particularity and universality in a complementary way. For example, the legislature, through deputies representing various social classes, determines and establishes the universal through lawmaking; the executive subsumes the particular under the universal through application of laws to specific situations; and the monarch is a symbol of the overall self-determination and unity of the state, singularity as a synthesis of particularity and universality, in giving ultimate voice to the decisions of the state.

The constitution of the state epitomizes the reason, self-consciousness, and self-determination of freedom. However, it is clear that at this level we are no longer speaking of the freedom of individual action but rather of the freedom exhibited in political institutions themselves and their processes. Self-consciousness, for example, is not here a psychological feature of particular persons but refers instead to the reflexive character of constitutional government in the higher authority of the political state. In a sense, the freedom of individual action, which is the concern of civil society, has been transcended at the level of political state which is concerned with the freedom of the social order itself considered as a rational, self-conscious, and self-determining individual.

The transcending character of the political state is evidenced in Hegel's criticism of the sovereignty of the people and of universal suffrage. Hegel holds that the "sovereignty of the people" when opposed to the sovereignty of the monarch is a confused idea based on treating the people as an abstract and formless mass. (par. 279 zu, pp. 182–83) When people have political significance through institutional organization then sovereignty is "the personality of the whole," and expressed in the person of the monarch. Moreover, the idea "... that every single person should share in deliberating and deciding on matters of political concern ..." is "superficial thinking," for again the rational form of the state is due to its organization into *groups*. "The member of a state is a member of such a group, i.e., of a social class, and it is only as characterized in this objective way that he comes under consideration when we are dealing with the state." (par. 308 zu, p. 200) Thus, as participators in the social order individuals are restricted to being members of social classes and Corporations, the officials of these latter being chosen "... by a mixture of popular election by those

interested with appointment and ratification by higher authority.” (par. 288, p. 189) Within the business class, the deputies to the legislative estates are appointed “... by the society as a society... ,” i.e., by the Corporations and other “circles of association.” (par. 308, p. 200) Deputies are “representatives” in an “... organic, rational sense ...” by representing not atomistic individual interests but the “... essential spheres of society and its large-scale interests.” (par. 311 zu, p. 202) In Hegel’s view, popular suffrage leads to electoral indifference and thereby to domination of politics by special interest groups.

So where do we find the realization of the important principle of subjective freedom in the political domain? According to Hegel, the Estates bring into existence “... the moment of subjective formal freedom, the public consciousness as an empirical universal ...” and in this way are a mediating organ between civil society and the political state. Of course, what this means is that Corporate interests, as represented in the Estates, come into play in the deliberations involving lawmaking. But what about the subjective freedom of the ordinary citizen? How is he or she to display political virtue, which Hegel says is “... the willing of the absolute end in terms of thought ...”? (par. 257 zu, p. 155) Here Hegel speaks of “public opinion” as linking “... the substantive and the true ...” with “... the purely particular and private opinions of the Many ...” (par. 316, p. 204). He is referring to the deliberations of the Estates Assemblies being open to the public and subject to wider debate and discussion through free speech and a free press. However, public opinion is a “standing self-contradiction” in combining the essential and the inessential, i.e., personal and private conviction with rational universality. Accordingly, “... to be independent of public opinion is the first formal condition of achieving anything great or rational whether in life or in science.” (par. 318, p. 205) While Hegel does recognize its educative effect upon the masses, public opinion, due to its tendency towards particularism, appears to serve more as a means of catharsis for the masses rather than as serious input into the political process.

The so-called “universal class” of civil servants that comprises the bureaucracy of the executive is in a way actually the harbinger of political virtue at the level of the political state. Appointed by the crown on the basis of merit and ability, presumably these individuals find their subjective satisfaction only in the “... dutiful discharge of their public functions ...,” (par. 294 zu, p. 191) which includes along with general executive functions the powers of the judiciary and the police (and the middle class which constitutes the executive is also specifically represented in the Estates). For Hegel, it is the executive which forms the true “... link between universal and particular interests.” (Ibid) Political sentiment or general patriotism among the populace is basically the trust that the interests of the individual are preserved in the interests pursued by the supreme authorities of the state.

What are we to conclude, therefore, about the nature of political freedom for Hegel? First, *political* freedom is not possessed by the citizens of the social order as such but rather by groups and institutions which, because of their organization and integrating function, are able to make more explicit the

reason, self-consciousness, and self-determination of freedom. Second, political participation strictly speaking is reserved for the elite who hold offices in these groups and institutions, particularly the constitutionally supreme authorities. Third, freedom in its most substantial sense is ultimately a characteristic most truly attributed to the social order itself as functioning totality. It is precisely the organic conception of the state that leads to these results, despite the pluralism of institutions Hegel promotes, and which will pose difficulties for those who think that political freedom is, or ought to be, most properly an attribute of individuals and their actions, rather than of social and political institutions.²¹

For Hegel, the historic struggle for recognition is resolved in the modern nation-state because it is here that the ethical life of community is actualized. As we have seen, this has both a social and a political dimension. In the domain of civil society, individual liberty is maximized consistent with the liberty of others, and this experience of social liberty stands in contrast to the structure of traditional societies where individual choice is severely restricted due to the demands of social hierarchy. In this context, the individual is in modern society regarded as a person whose subjectivity is respected and, accordingly, given a significant field of free action within the boundaries set by law. At minimum, to be *recognized* for Hegel is to have the status of membership in a society of free persons who give expression to their personality by means of institutions such as private property, contract, etc.

In the domain of the political state, freedom is found in the activities of citizenship proper, whether this be in serving among the supreme authorities of the state or in membership in corporations, those organizations which provide the link between civil society and the strictly political institutions. Citizenship in the fullest sense is actualized where, at various levels, individuals participate either in ruling or in decision-making related to the tasks of ruling and lawmaking, even if it be only a matter of selecting representatives to the legislative bodies. Recognition in the political sense means having political status in either being a member of a Corporation or a participant in the executive or administrative functions of government. In any case, it is the institutions of civil society and the political state that provide the context for citizen recognition, where in the coalescence of rights and duties the individual rises above the opposition of command and obedience that is the origin of historical conflict.

IV

Thus far I have attempted to elucidate how it is that for Hegel the state is the end or goal of history by offering an analysis of how it is that the state provides an ultimate resolution in the historic struggle for recognition. However, there is still an aspect of the self-consciousness of the state which has not directly been touched on, namely the relation of states to one another. Given that the struggle for recognition continues to be carried out internationally, the thesis that the state provides an ultimate solution to this struggle may seem to be

vitiated when in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel claims that “since the sovereignty of a state is the principle of its relations to others, states are to that extent in a state of nature in relation to each other.” (par. 333) Nevertheless, I believe that with only slight qualification the thesis about recognition that I have been attempting to clarify can be upheld.

We have seen how the spiritual life of the state manifests itself in freedom, which is its infinite negativity. This infinite negativity is a function of the “power of the universal,” the potential for reflection-into-self which is essential to the ongoing dynamic of dialectical development. The state in effecting an identity-in-difference between particularity and universality provides a unity between the finite, characteristic of particularity, and the infinite, which is captured in universality. This is why for Hegel the state itself is “inherently infinite.” In addition, the unity of finite and infinite is expressed in the individuality or singularity of the state, which is found in the manner in which its differences are articulated and incorporated into an organic like whole. Because the free self-conscious individuality of the state does not abolish negation but only transforms it, this negation must still manifest itself, and it does so in the awareness of the state of its autonomy vis-a-vis other states. As Hegel puts it, “... the negative relation of the state to itself is embodied in the world as the relation of the state to another and as if the negative were something external ... but in fact this relation is that moment in the state which is most supremely its own, the state’s actual infinity as the ideality of everything finite within it.” (par. 323) Thus, just as the individuality and self-consciousness of the particular human being requires a relation to an “other” in order to gain its recognition (as in the master/slave relation), so too a state requires otherness for the maintenance of its individuality and self-consciousness. Also, just as the encounter between natural individuals leads to a struggle for recognition, likewise the encounter between states leads to conflict and war. However, whereas the struggle between human individuals finds its resolution in the state, the struggle between states has no ultimate resolution for Hegel.

Although international law arises in the relation between states, the principles of autonomy and sovereignty of the state require that states remain in a “state of nature” with respect to one another. Thus, “... their rights are actualized only in their particular wills and not in a universal will with constitutional powers over them. This universal proviso of international law therefore does not go beyond an ought-to-be.” (par. 333, p. 213) Hegel is clear that although world history is ultimately not the result of might or blind destiny, but a product of the necessity of Reason, it cannot produce a world-state such as, e.g. Kant’s League of Nations. (And after all, if the World-Spirit were to produce through reconciliation a world-state with free self-conscious individuality, where would it find its “other” in which it could receive recognition and manifest its infinite negativity?) Because of the historical finitude of particular nation-states their relations to one another are ultimately manifest in external contingency. It is only in the higher universal mind of world-history that there is an ultimate “court of judgement” of particular states. “It is only the right of world-mind which is absolute without qualifica-

tion." (par. 30 zu, p. 34)²²

What is entailed by this circumstance is that insofar as the struggle for recognition continues to take place between sovereign states in world history there is no ultimate, i.e., final or decisive solution to this struggle. However, a state's achieving self-conscious individuality does provide an internal resolution of this struggle which, as far as Hegel can tell, is not likely to be replicated at any higher level of international consciousness. The reconciliation that the state provides is optimal, not because it brings historical struggle to an end, but because it is the only solution which accords with the principle of self-conscious individuality. The reason that there is no comparable reconciliation beyond the state is not because of some defect or deficiency in the solution that it does provide, but rather precisely because of its success, of the very nature of the independence which has been produced. The nation-state is the ultimately free, self-conscious, concrete individual, which is why it is for Hegel the true historical individual.

However, even this clarified version of my interpretation of Hegel's claim about the state may seem to conflict with another important distinction, that between the realms of Objective Spirit, which includes society, politics and history, and Absolute Spirit, which includes Art, Religion and Philosophy. In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel says that

But the spirit which thinks universal history, stripping off at the same time those limitations of the several national minds and its own temporal restrictions, lays hold of its concrete universality, and rises to apprehend the absolute mind, as the eternally actual truth in which the contemplative reason enjoys freedom, while the necessity of nature and the necessity of hisdtory are only ministrant to its revelation and the vessels of its honour.²³

Here, in the realm of Absolute Spirit, mind finds itself in contemplation of itself, transcending the dialectics of nature and finite mind, and hence the contingency and irrationality to which these finite realms are subject.

Nevertheless, Hegel is no less clear that the Absolute Idea must remain actually immanent in history as well as teleologically transcendent of it. Absolute Spirit, as a higher realm of self-consciousness above that of Objective Spirit, and which is the absolute final stage of the self-realization of Spirit in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, is not something which comes to actualization at some point in history posterior to the state or apart from the state. The state is the highest realization of Spirit in historical life, but because it is tied to nature and temporality it is still subject to contingency and irrationality. Absolute Spirit transcends these exigencies because its viewpoint is not of something finite but rather is of the infinite and the eternal. But even the eternal presence of Absolute Spirit in thought cannot provide total reconciliation for humans. Spirit is eternally self-differentiating, and for this reason there must be an identity-in-difference between Objective and Absolute Spirit. This relation is manifested in the reciprocal relation of state and church, and in the inseparability of social ethics and religious faith, which are

dialectically connected. (Ibid, par. 552, pp. 283–284)²⁴ Because of the dialectical relationship between the finite and the infinite Hegel can claim that “only in this environment, i.e., within the state, can art and religion exist.” (LPWH, 95) The state, therefore, is the end or goal of history precisely because in its achieving of a freedom which is adequate to its Concept or Idea, and thus in conformity with Reason, it provides the highest historical realization of the Absolute. However, at the level of World Spirit, there is no such reconciliation since the relation between the spirit of an epoch and its other is one that extends into the future. The historical other to Spirit can only be its own as yet undetermined possibilities. Here we do not find recognition but only ambiguity, since the future remains itself uncertain and open-ended.

NOTES

1. G.A. Kelly, “Notes on Hegel’s ‘Lordship and Bondage’” in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Alasdair McIntyre (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), pp. 189–217.
2. G.A. Kelly, *Idealism, Politics, and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 334.
3. Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 9.
4. Robert Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), p. 144.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), pp. 234–240.
6. Judith N Shklar, *Freedom and Independence: A Study of the Political Ideas of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Mind*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 60–61.
7. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 242.
8. Richard Norman, *Hegel’s Phenomenology: A Philosophical Introduction*. (London: Sussex University Press, 1976), p. 54.
9. G.W.F. Hegel, *Natural Law*. Trans. by T.M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), p. 88.
10. The distinction between uniting opposed determinations positively or uniting them negatively can be seen in the continuation of the passage just quoted. “Or, since the cancelling can itself be grasped and expressed positively by reflection, the cancellation of both sides of the determination appears accordingly as the completely equal positing of the determined on both sides. Applied to punishment, for example, this means that retribution alone is rational in it; for by retribution the crime is subjugated. A state of affairs +A brought about by the crime is complemented by the bringing about of –A, and so both are annihilated. Or, looked at positively, with the state of affairs +A there is linked for the criminal the opposite side –A, and both are brought about equally, while the crime had brought about one only. Thus the punishment is the restoration of freedom and the criminal has remained, or rather been made, free, just as the punisher has acted rationally and freely. In this, its specific character, punishment is thus something in itself truly infinite and absolute, revered and feared on its own account.” (pp. 91–92). See also the *Philosophy of Right* (cited below) where Hegel argues that punishment is the “right” of the criminal (par. 96–103).
11. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 94. Hereafter cited as LPWH.
12. For Hegel’s discussion of the dialectic of universality and particularity with reference to the state in his *Logic* see paragraph 198 of the 1830 edition of the *Encyclopedia*. In the 1978 printing of the Wallace translation see pp. 264–65.
13. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 21. Hereafter cited as PhR.

14. G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1990), par. 335, p. 221.
15. *Reason in History*, trans. R.S. Hartmann (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Inc., 1953), p. 60.
16. Hegel here also notes that, "The first determination of all within the state is the distinction between rulers and ruled" (116)
17. Cf. Z.A. Pelczynski, "The Hegelian conception of the state," in *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Z.A. Pelczynski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 1–29. Also by the same author, "Political community and individual freedom in Hegel's philosophy of the state," in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, ed. Z.A. Pelczynski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 55–76.
18. Cf. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies* Vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).
19. Cf. Jay Drydyk, "Hegel's Politics: Liberal or Democratic?" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (March 1986), pp. 99–122. Also, David MacGregor, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).
20. In the following several paragraphs I am summarizing the material from Hegel's Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*.
21. I believe that Marx's *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'* can be understood in large part as a critique of the objectification of freedom in the form of political institutions standing over the individual person. Marx's criticism of monarchy from the standpoint of democracy, and his call for sovereignty of the people as against the sovereignty of the state, give expression to his concern that rational freedom be manifested universally in all citizens. While Marx may have been misguided in a number of ways in his critique of the state in Hegel, still he seems to have latched onto a weakness in Hegel's view of political freedom. As Marx put it, "... [t]he question whether all as individuals should share in deliberating and deciding on political matters of general concern is a question that arises from the separation of the political state and civil society." (Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, tr. Annette Jolin & Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 118.) In a way, the separation of political state and civil society is Hegel's strength and weakness: a strength insofar as it allows for the identifying of the universal goals of politics as transcending egoism and self-interest; a weakness in that it seems to put the state formally out of reach of the vast majority of citizens. In the end, whether we emphasize the strength or the weakness of Hegel's conception of freedom most likely will depend on our view of the extent of human possibility as we look to the human condition in our historical experience.
22. See also pp. 216, 234, 279, 297, and *LPWH* pp. 92, 124.
23. *Hegel's 'Philosophy of Mind': Being Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), par. 552, p. 282.
24. See also *LWPH*, pp. 103–111.

13. RECOGNISING THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

Duquette's paper, "The Political Significance of Hegel's Concept of *Recognition*" relates Hegel's mature political thought to the struggle for recognition played out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's mature conception of an ethical political community is seen as reconciling the tensions exemplified in the recognitive trials of self-consciousness set out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Duquette sees the ethical ties of citizenship, which Hegel envisages rational modern citizens as recognising, as answering the dilemmas of misrecognition evident in the asymmetry of the relations between master and slave set out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

While Duquette's paper establishes a relationship between Hegel's mature political philosophy and the dialectic of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the character of this relationship is not fully explored. An examination of the context of the dialectic of recognition in the overall drama of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* would have made clear that there is continuity between the process of recognition and other forms of consciousness examined in the work. These connections between the process of recognition and other forms of consciousness signal ways in which the process of recognition is relevant to the *Philosophy of Right*.¹ Moreover, the nature of the *Philosophy of Right*'s response to the dialectic of recognition demands a closer analysis of the inter-relationship between its various sections than that undertaken in Duquette's paper, in which there is a concentration upon the institutions of the political state and civil society. Again, Duquette does not explore the use of the concept of recognition in the *Philosophy of Right*. If the significance of the overall arguments of the *Philosophy of Right* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is recognised, then Duquette's implicit critique of Hegel's account of political freedom demands some reconsideration.²

In analysing the process of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Duquette avoids a constrictive reading of the master slave dialectic which bedevils marxist and neo-marxist accounts of Hegel's political and social thought.³ Duquette rightly sees more in this dialectic of recognition than liberation of the slave through the developmental qualities of his labour. He also perceptively signals its relevance for Hegel's mature political thought. He somewhat underplays, however, the way in which recognition is a central

theme of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and hence how Hegel's political theorising is intimately connected with an account of consciousness and the role of social recognition in its development.

Duquette's paper switches rather abruptly from the master slave dialectic to the world of political and social interaction elaborated in the *Philosophy of Right*. The dialectic of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is part of an overall dialectical argument in which consciousness confronts and overcomes the tensions generated by the series of its own activities. For Hegel, the freedom of thought, coeval with consciousness, underpins all of its expressions; its commerce with objects and other subjects, and appraisals of its own expressions. The unity and self-mediating character of thought, however, is misrecognised as a series of dualisms, which, while attesting to the strains of conscious existence, abstract from the internality of the relations between and within modes of consciousness. The process of knowing and the truth to which it is aligned, the self who is conscious and its consciousness, the philosophical perspective and the unphilosophical consciousness and the individual self and a world of other selves, are all aspects of consciousness which if set rigidly apart from one another will dissemble the unity and mediated harmony of thought. From this perspective, the dialectic of recognition plays an important part in the development of consciousness. It plays a dramatic role in establishing that the self of self-consciousness recognises and understands itself in knowing and acting upon reality. As Pinkard has recently observed, this process of recognition makes the inter-subjective, social dimension of consciousness a conceptual necessity.⁴

The dialectic of recognition establishes the necessarily social perspective of self-consciousness, and thereby renders explicit the partial, abstract character of the previous explorations of consciousness, which did not recognise their social character. Subsequent to the dialectic of recognition, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* contains a series of shapes of consciousness which are explicitly social in character. There is the recognition that truth, the object of consciousness, expresses an inter-subjective, social framework of reason. This pivotal role of the dialectic of recognition, in the trajectory of the *Phenomenology of Spirit's* investigations, confirms its significance for the *Philosophy of Right*. The ethical, inter-subjective order of reason expressed in Hegel's rational political community is one in which all citizens recognise themselves and one another as free rational agents. This way of seeing politics is distinct, but the perspective is flagged in the latter stages of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The dialectic of recognition does not end the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The "highway of despair" contains a succession of further internally incoherent representations of consciousness, which nonetheless testify to its necessarily social character⁵. The immediately succeeding modes of self-consciousness, stoicism, scepticism and the unhappy consciousness signal the truth of social reason, but they are undermined by internal divisions and abstractions.

The section on Reason in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has a direct relevance for Duquette's assessment of the *Philosophy of Right*. Duquette suggests that Hegel's political state has a "transcending character" and that freedom is

attributed to "... the social order itself as a functioning totality ...".⁶ In the phenomenological investigation of Reason, following an discussion of theoretical reason, Hegel puts the spotlight on social forms of practical reason which assume an individualistic standpoint. Negatively, the individualistic pleasure seeker, the romantic who follows his heart, the abstract moraliser either pronouncing laws or appraising action, and the discrete social actors composing an animal community, give way because they cannot generate a universal content for the will accommodating a plurality of mutually recognising individuals. But the very power of Hegel's dialectical study of these self-destructive individualistic perspectives, where the striving for selflessness turns inexorably into a precious form of selfishness, testifies to his sensitivity to the demands and power of individualism.⁷ The succeeding section on Spirit, makes clear that the truth of self-consciousness and reality resides in an ethical community in which individuals can feel at home.⁸ Once again, however, Hegel's subtle evocation of the misadventures of conscience, emphasise that an ethical home for self-consciousness, while precluding agonistic moral athleticism, must accommodate individual conscientiousness.⁹ Hegel's recognition of the force of individualism signals the partiality of Duquette's reading of his political thought.

Hegel's mature political philosophy is intimately connected to his account of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Indeed, the general argumentative course of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which the dialectic of recognition plays a vital role, establishes that an individual can only feel at home and express his freedom, in an ethical political community. Recognition of this connection between Hegel's conception of the political and his general understanding of consciousness and human beings, confirms that Hegel's political thought must be considered in relation to his wider philosophising, and not as the detachable concern entertained by some commentators.¹⁰

The connections between Hegel's mature political philosophy and the dialectic of recognition were recognised by Hegel himself. The *Philosophy of Right* is presented as articulating the rational conditions of objective spirit. Spirit itself is the focus of the third part of the mature system, which examines the forms of human life which develop freedom and prepare an absolute perspective. In the course of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, Hegel includes a section entitled "Phenomenology of Spirit," which rehearses the dialectic of recognition involving the master and slave. The remarks within the section make clear that the rational political community Hegel sketches in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, which is elaborated in the *Philosophy of Right*, is an express response to the problems of misrecognition depicted in the master-slave dialectic.¹¹ Evidence of the intimacy of the relations between Hegel's mature political philosophy and the dialectic of recognition played out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is exhibited in Hegel's discussion of contract in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel's account of contract, as Haddock has observed in his "Hegel's Critique of the Theory of Social Contract," carries a philosophical burden in that it makes explicit the presupposition of mutual recognition for the holding of property and rights of the person.¹² Indeed, the rest of the *Philosophy of Right* can be

seen as furnishing the institutional and conventional requirements of a society of mutually recognising selves.

In his assessment of Hegel's mature political philosophy, Duquette casts doubt on a prevalent contemporary reading of it as implicitly democratic. In his critique of this interpretation, Duquette suggests that freedom for Hegel is a characteristic of the social order as a totality, rather than an attribute of individuals and their actions.¹³ Duquette is perceptive in observing how the limited and corporate character of political representation in Hegel's political philosophy precludes its identification as democratic. Hegel, however, considers that his rational political community accommodates the aspirations of individuality. The section on morality warrants considered reading. One of its outcomes, which replicates the lesson of Reason as lawgiver narrated in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is that an individual's self-enclosed conscience cannot generate a viable ethical world for itself. Another outcome, however, is that the individual conscience is seen as an indispensable achievement of the modern world¹⁴. While individuals in Hegel's state do not busy themselves with politics, they are nonetheless envisaged as conscientiously aligning themselves with its laws and practices. They are enabled to do so by having a number of civil freedoms; of religion, speech and political participation. The effectiveness of political participation in Hegel's state is, no doubt, limited, just as it is in contemporary western political states where bureaucratic party machines predominate. A reading of the *Philosophy of Right*, however, which identifies its provenance in the dilemmas of recognition diagnosed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, discerns Hegel's concern to make the freedom of a rational state immanent within, rather than transcend, the thought and activity of individuals.

NOTES

1. Kelly in the article cited by Duquette emphasises the importance of locating the dialectic of recognition within the overall context of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. See G.A. Kelly, "Notes on Hegel's 'Lordship and Bondage,'" in A. MacIntyre (ed.) *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), p. 191.
2. The implicit critique of Hegel's account of political freedom becomes explicit in footnote 21 of Duquette's piece where Marx's critique of Hegel's conception of political freedom is endorsed. D. Duquette, "The Political Significance of Hegel's Concept of *Recognition*," in G. Browning, (ed.), *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Reappraisal*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), p. 141.
3. See for instance, A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980). Interestingly, to my knowledge, Marx himself never explicitly addresses the master slave dialectic, though there are metaphorical allusions to it in the *Grundrisse*.
4. T. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 54.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by Sir James Baillie, (London and New York: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), p.135.
6. D. Duquette, 'The Political Significance of Hegel's Concept of *Recognition*,' pp. 135, 137.
7. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes, Werke 3*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pps. 263–323.
8. *Ibid.* pp. 324–358.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 441–494. See also the article by J. Bernstein in this volume which points up the significance of transgressive conscience.
10. See the discussion of this issue in the opening pages of H. Brod, *Hegel's Philosophy of Politics – Idealism, Identity and Modernity* (Oxford and Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), pps. 1–3.
11. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, translated by William Wallace, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 172.
12. B. Haddock, “Hegel’s Critique of the Theory of Social Contract,” in D. Boucher and P. Kelly, (eds.), *The Social Contract From Hobbes to Rawls*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 155.
13. D. Duquette, “The Political Significance of Hegel’s Concept of *Recognition*,” p. 137.
14. G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1995), p. 140.

14. RUPTURE, CLOSURE, AND DIALECTIC

INTRODUCTION

The general intent of this paper is to examine Hegel's preoccupation with the question of beginnings. To anticipate, in Hegel's view every account in respect to its beginning – indeed, everything in respect to its beginning – is both immediate and mediated. All things therefore begin having already begun; all things begin *in medias res*. But if all things begin having already begun, all things begin as a *rupture* of one sort or another.¹

This is clear with respect to the *Science of Logic* in both the original 1812 edition and in the final revisions of 1832 where Hegel discusses at length the problematic nature of the beginning of the Logic as both mediated and immediate. As mediated, there is presupposition and therefore an opening in the beginning, denying closure. On the other hand, the reason for the necessity of immediacy is that there must be a certain closure to the system. This closure is described by Hegel in various ways, but the most direct is his insistence, appearing again in both the 1812 and the 1832 editions, that a science be closed.

The essential requirement for the science of logic is not so much that the beginning be a pure immediacy, but rather that the whole of the science be within itself [*in sich selbst*] a circle in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first.²

This necessity of both rupture and closure puts the problematic of beginnings for Hegel into clear focus: system, in order to be system, must involve closure; but because of the nature of beginnings, system must also involve rupture. A judicious view of the texts shows that Hegel is not willing to give up either thesis.³ Consequently, if the system is to be viable, the rupture cannot efface the closure; but if the system is to begin, the closure must not efface the rupture. Rupture and closure must co-exist. Hegel's concern with beginning, then, is a concern with how legitimately to initiate the system without either ignoring or effacing rupture, and without pre-empting the possibility of closure.⁴

In Parts One and Two I will establish Hegel's clear awareness of rupture and of the part it plays in the system. If we examine the Preface and Introduction to the *Science of Logic*⁵ and to the *Phenomenology* of 1807⁶ we will find Hegel discussing a series of ruptures – indeed a circle of ruptures – which begins with a rupture at the beginning of the *Science of Logic*. There is first this rupture in the system as system, instantiated in the necessary reference by the *Logic* back to the *Phenomenology*. Behind this, there is a rupture in the *Phenomenology* itself in its own mediated beginnings, a rupture rooted in the immediate experience of natural consciousness. Behind this second rupture there is a third, a rupture in the contemporary *Zeitgeist* as it is instantiated in the natural attitude of natural consciousness. This rupture takes the form of the loss in natural consciousness of traditional certitude, a loss brought about by the incursion of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy on this natural, everyday consciousness. If we reflect back to the first rupture noted – that at the beginning of the *Logic* – and put it into the context of this causal chain of ruptures, we see that philosophy in fact experiences a self-caused rupture. This self-caused rupture is due to philosophy's own effects on the *Zeitgeist* as internalized by natural consciousness at the end of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth centuries.

In Part Three I will argue that this problem of ruptured and rupturing beginnings, taken together with the closure required by system, necessitates Hegel's commitment to a "maieutic" dialectic; for only such a dialectic can recognize and deal with both the mediated and the immediate nature of beginnings.⁷

Three philological remarks are called for before continuing. First, there has been much debate about the relationship between the *Phenomenology* and the system itself as outlined in the *Encyclopedia*, the first part of which is worked out in detail in the *Science of Logic*. At the end of his life, Hegel had just revised his *Science of Logic* and had begun to revise the *Phenomenology* of 1807. I will show that in the revised *Logic* of 1832, he still insists, as he did in the original 1812 edition, that the proper beginning and necessary presupposition for the system of philosophical sciences is the *Phenomenology* of 1807. On the other hand, however much he might have decided to change the *Phenomenology*, in the revisions he completed to the Preface he is equally insistent on this same relationship; and this vision of the whole, I will argue, was present in the 1807 edition as well. The *Phenomenology* must therefore be considered the indisputable presupposition for the *Logic*, regardless of the problems this may cause.⁸ This philological issue is important here because, if one ignores or refuses this relationship between the *Phenomenology* and the rest of the system, one misses this conjunction of closure and rupture and is led to infer a set of one-sided claims to closure as final.⁹

Second, there is the question of the science of the phenomenology of spirit which appears in the system of the *Encyclopedia*. Hegel cannot be thinking of this, certainly not in 1812. Furthermore, any later reference to this science of the phenomenology of spirit is most unlikely, if possible at all; for the phenomenology of spirit section of the *Encyclopedia* does absolutely none of

the work which is ascribed to a Phenomenology of Spirit in SL. The former is an account of a philosophical science which follows the philosophical science of anthropology and precedes the philosophical science of psychology. The science of the pure concept – the science of logic – is long finished by this point in the system, with the philosophical sciences of nature coming between the philosophical science of logic and the philosophical sciences of spirit. Thus, there is clear justification for a claim that what we have is a link between the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the Logic.

Finally, it could be argued that it is the Jena Logic and not the later Logic that Hegel had in mind when he wrote of a Logic in the *Phenomenology* of 1807. Whether or not it is true that Hegel had in mind the Jena Logic, my argument will be that, systemically considered, and in view of Hegel's repeated claims in both editions of the later Logic that the *Phenomenology* functions in the way I am arguing, the relation to the Jena Logic is of no immediate relevance. In other words, it is possible (though I doubt it to be the case) that Hegel intended to append this to the work he had already accomplished. But even if he did, he went on, five years after the publication of the *Phenomenology*, to write the *Science of Logic*, and in that work he makes explicit reference to its relationship to the *Phenomenology*.

THE RUPTURE IN THE LOGIC

Hegel's preoccupation with the question of how to begin is notorious. In what is perhaps the most extreme case, the *Science of Logic* takes up the question not only in its Prefaces and Introduction, but also in the very beginning of the body of the work itself – The Doctrine of Being – with the section titled “With What Must Science Begin?” There, already having begun with his introductory remarks and now making the actual beginning of the *Logic* with the “Doctrine of Being,” Hegel proceeds to ask the question of how he is to do what he is already actually doing. Hegel is therefore not discussing “beginning” in an introductory way, but discussing it as the beginning itself.

But there is a further complication here, for Hegel must now distinguish between this ambiguous beginning of the *Science of Logic* itself¹⁰ and a prior beginning that has brought him to the beginning of the *Science of Logic*. The beginning of the *Science of Logic*, and thus the beginning of the system proper, is at once both an absolute and pure beginning – an immediate beginning – and also a result – a mediated beginning; the *Logic* begins with its own proper beginning in logical form, but this beginning has been prepared by another, i.e., by the beginning constituted by the course of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The beginning [of the *Science of Logic*] is logical [and immediate] in that it is to be made in the element of thought that is free and for itself, in *pure knowing*. [The beginning of the *Logic*] is *mediated* because pure knowing is the ultimate, absolute truth of *consciousness* In ... logic, the presupposition [and thus the mediated beginning] is that which has proved itself to be

the result of that phenomenological consideration – the idea as pure knowledge.¹¹

This same view of the beginning of the Logic was present in the *Phenomenology* of 1807. At the end the chapter on “Absolute Knowing” Hegel announces – and this is the only place he asserts this – that the goal of a phenomenology of spirit has now been reached (i.e., the overcoming of the consciousness-object opposition).¹² The consequence of reaching this goal is that science proper (i.e., the science of logic) can now begin. The language used in this paragraph is perfectly compatible with the language of the 1812 and 1832 editions of the Logic, cited above. In addition, in the Preface Hegel describes the same relationship between the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*.¹³

Hence, as I suggested in my introductory remarks, in spite of the necessity for closure in the system of philosophy as a science, there is an inescapable rupture in that system in the form of a reference back to a work – the *Phenomenology* of 1807 – presupposed by the system proper. The beginning is a beginning only by not being *only* a beginning. Consequently, the mediated beginning necessarily presupposed by the immediate beginning of the system proper entails an opening in the system which latter is nevertheless closed.

There are many ways of seeing this, but Hegel himself was quite clear that whatever it means it does *not* mean the failure of system. In opposition to a frequent and traditional critique which uses this rupture or something like it as the basis for a refutation of Hegel’s claim to system, Hegel’s view of this opening or rupture is that it is an inescapable aspect of systematic philosophy. Hegel’s concern is not to explain how that rupture is only apparent or can be repaired; rather, I shall now argue, he attempts to show how and why the rupture is necessary and, far from inhibiting the closure of the system, actually makes it possible.

RUPTURE IN THE *PHENOMENOLOGY* AND IN NATURAL CONSCIOUSNESS

If we turn to the *Phenomenology* – to this rupture constituting the beginning of the *Logic* – and look for its own beginning, we find it not in the opening chapter on “sense-certainty,” but in the Preface; for it is the Preface, followed by the Introduction, which actually initiates the *Phenomenology*.¹⁴ This beginning opens with a reflection on itself, i.e., with a discussion of the nature of prefaces as beginnings. Hegel begins this Preface not, as is often claimed, with an attack on prefaces one of which he then nevertheless proceeds to write, but rather with a critique of *certain ways of interpreting the function of prefaces*. His argument in the first three paragraphs establishes only that a Preface is merely a preface, a beginning, and not something that can give one the essence and ultimate truth of the work being prefaced.¹⁵

Thus the Preface or the beginning of the beginning emerges self-reflexively by addressing itself as an issue.¹⁶ But these first three paragraphs look at the nature of a preface only in a negative way. What does it mean in a positive sense to say that the Preface to the *Phenomenology* as a beginning is only a

beginning? What sort of a beginning is it?

Hegel establishes in ¶4 that the beginning is a *rupture* in the form of an *interruption*, a break in the midst of things. The rupturing interruption occurs as an “emergence [*Herausarbeiten*] from the immediacy of substantial life” in the process of “enculturation [*Bildung*]”¹⁷. The Preface to the *Phenomenology* begins, then, by leading us out of immediate, unreflective life toward the real subject matter of the *Phenomenology* [*in die Erfahrung der Sache selbst hineinführt*]. What mediates this “beginning in the strict sense of the word” is thus a rupture in the immediacy of our lives in the natural attitude or, in Hegel’s terms, a rupture in natural consciousness. Hence the mediation for the Preface, i.e., for the beginning of philosophy, is the immediacy of non-philosophical existence as interrupted.¹⁸

The rupture in the beginning of the *Logic*, then, has led us to the *Phenomenology*; and the beginning of the latter reveals its own rupture, leading back to the immediacy of natural consciousness or the natural attitude. But whence this rupture in the immediacy of ordinary, everyday life? This question must be raised since this immediacy, like all immediacy, must itself involve mediation.

¶¶6-25 explicitly discuss a certain historical mediation inherent in the immediacy of contemporary natural existence, leading to the discussion in ¶26 of the demands which natural consciousness is justified in placing on systematic philosophy, demands that will necessitate a method of maieutic dialectic.

There are essentially three elements in the breaking of existential immediacy: (1) Hegel’s claims for the legitimacy of absolute idealism as a science; (2) the appeals to feeling made by the romantics and the misplaced, dogmatic claims of intuitionistic absolute idealism; and (3) the character of the existential immediacy in which the substantial life of the times is being lived.

To begin with this last element, what has happened in everyday life, according to Hegel, is that the new claims of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy have intruded on the traditional understanding of life, bringing a strangeness and a rupturing to the settled understandings inherent in ordinary life. This intrusion has occurred in a violent way, demanding that individuals make a leap to another way of understanding. Presently, then,

it is clear that spirit is now beyond [*über... hinaus*] the substantial life it formerly led in the element of thought, beyond [*über*] the immediacy of its belief or faith [*seines Glaubens*], beyond [*über*] the satisfaction and security of the certainty that consciousness then had, of its reconciliation with the essential being, and of that being’s universal presence both within and without.¹⁹

Here the rupture appears within ordinary life as it is pushed by romanticism and intuitionistic absolute idealism to go beyond the traditional way of understanding life and events in general. This sets up the strangeness which, we shall see in a moment, activates the memory of natural consciousness and

leads natural consciousness to seek what is now missing, namely, the comfort of the traditional thoughts.

But this is not all there is to this primary rupture. The spirit of the time places individuals even beyond this beyond, not once removed, but twice removed.

[Spirit] has not only gone beyond all this into the other extreme [*Er ist nicht nur darüber hinausgegangen in das andere Extrem*] of an insubstantial reflection of itself into itself, but beyond that too [*auch über diese*]... Spirit has not only lost [*verloren*] its essential life; it is also conscious of this loss [*Verlustes*], and of the finitude that is its own content.²⁰

The loss is present – the absence of meaningful presence is itself present – and this has a radical alienating effect on natural consciousness and thus within the *Zeitgeist*.²¹ The rupture is intensified: the individual in the natural attitude is involved in acts of spiritual self-violence. He turns away from himself, confesses wickedness, despises himself, and demands a recovery of the traditional sense of “solid and substantial being”²².

And what is proposed by the philosophy of the time in response to this chaos and to the demand for the renewal of a substantial life? Philosophy proposes to meet this need, not by carefully thinking through the problem as Hegel intends to do, but by

suppressing the differentiations of the concept [*den unterscheidenden Begriff unterdrücken*] and restoring the *feeling* of essential being [*das Gefühl des Wesens herstellen*]; in short, by providing edification rather than insight [*nicht sowohl Einsicht als Erbauung gewähren*].²³

Proposing to close by suppressing what has been opened in this rupture, the response made by the prevailing philosophy is for more violence. This is the anatomy of the ultimate rupture constituting the *context* in the *Zeitgeist*, the context in which the *Phenomenology* is to begin as the beginning “in a strict sense” of the system of philosophy as a science.

In ¶11, after summarizing his characterization of this rupture in life, Hegel argues that

it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a transition to a new period [*eine Zeit der Geburt und des Übergangs zu einer neuen Periode*]. Spirit has broken [*gebrochen*] with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge [*versenken*] [that world it previously inhabited and imagined] in the past and in the labour of [spirit's] own transformation [*seiner Umgestaltung*]... But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks [*abbricht*] the gradualness of merely quantitative growth – there is a qualitative leap [*ein qualitativer Sprung*], and the child is born – so likewise the spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving [*löst... auf*] bit by

bit the structure of its previous world [*vorhergehenden Welt*]... [This disintegration] of the whole is interrupted [*unterbrochen*] by the dawn [*durch den Aufgang*], which, a sudden flash [*ein Blitz*], all at once [*in einem Male*] sets forth the features of the new world.²⁴

In the midst of the rupturing there is an interruption, *ein Blitz*, an instantaneous emergence of the new in its general features.

But there is also incompleteness in this new time. In ¶12 Hegel makes clear that his beginning of the new time, like all beginnings, is only a beginning.

But this new world is no more a complete actuality [*eine vollkommene Wirklichkeit*] than is a new-born child; it is essential to keep this in mind....²⁵

The rupture is not immediately repaired; and while the new epoch does not come from nowhere, yet it is not simply a smooth development from out of the past, a smooth raising of consciousness. The beginning of beginnings must look both backward and forward and thus is a true *interruption* of the diachronous.

In ¶13 Hegel indicates that it is memory [*Erinnerung*] that triggers the actual awareness of the rupture in the traditional *Weltauschaung*. The

... wealth of our previous existence [*vorhergehenden Daseins*] is present [*gegenwärtig*] to consciousness in memory [*Erinnerung*]. Consciousness misses in the newly emerging shape its former range and specificity of content, and even more the articulation of form whereby distinctions are securely defined, and stand arrayed in their fixed relations.²⁶

This lack of intelligibility focuses the interruption in the world of the natural consciousness. Because of this, natural consciousness can

... justly demand that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding...; [for] what is intelligible is what is already familiar and common to science and the unscientific consciousness alike, through which [unscientific consciousness] is able to enter directly [into science].²⁷

The source of this call to philosophy to deal with the interruption caused by the absorption of the new philosophy by natural consciousness is therefore natural consciousness itself, not philosophy. What constitutes the rupture and therefore the need for a new beginning are two demands on the part of natural consciousness: first, having recalled that it has shared in the past a common knowledge with philosophical consciousness, ordinary consciousness demands that it be able to build on this; second, because science is science only in so far as it can be understood by all – is exoteric – this first demand must be satisfied by science itself.

Thus, what stands in the rupture – a ruptured natural consciousness with its memory of its past as a shared knowledge with philosophy – is the proximate cause for a new beginning and thus for the determinate form of the problem for

a new beginning. Hegel is therefore clearly aware that the beginning is a beginning standing in a rupture, in a fissure, not some absolute beginning *ex nihilo*. The beginning is a problem for Hegel because the immediacy of the new birth must be explicitly mediated with its genesis and gestation without destroying what gives it immediacy, namely its newness for both natural and philosophical consciousness.

There is an ontological dialectic here between rupture and continuity. The rupture emerges out of the continuity as an opposite which has been produced by this continuity itself. That is to say, the diachronic play within the synchronicity of the intelligibility wrought by pre-Kantian philosophy has developed the synchronous intelligibility in such a way that that intelligibility has ruptured itself. The diachronous is the source of a rupture in the synchronous. But it is the nature of the synchronous itself that has been, in turn, the source of rupture in the diachronous; for the self-mediation of the historical-philosophical dialogue in its rupturing comes in the form of an interruption in both philosophy and natural consciousness, a rupture within the continuity of the systematic understanding of reality. The rupture is something which has emerged from within natural consciousness as a process of self-mediation within the immediacy of life.

This sets up an interplay between philosophical and natural consciousness. On the side of natural consciousness, it is proper to criticize science because as it now stands (with romanticism and intuitionistic absolute idealism) the beginning is abstract and demands a leap which cannot be made by all. There is an esotericism in philosophy and this must be eliminated since science must not be esoteric, but rather must be exoteric. However, on the side of philosophical consciousness there is an equally just demand that it be allowed to develop out of this abstract beginning; therefore, it would be unjust for natural consciousness to reject such a project.

This is the context for the astonishing program outlined in ¶26, on which I have commented extensively elsewhere.²⁸ Although it is a familiar passage, I quote it here in full since it is now to be read in the context of the arguments for the nature and necessity of rupture, and the latter's co-existence with closure.

Pure self-recognition in absolute otherness, this aether *as such*, is the ground and soil of science or *knowledge in general*. The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this *element*.... Science on its part requires that self-consciousness should have raised itself into this aether in order to be able to live... with science and in science. Conversely, the individual has the right [*Recht*] to demand that science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint, should show him this standpoint within himself. [The] right [of the individual] is based on his absolute independence, which he is conscious of possessing in every phase of his knowledge; for in each one, whether recognized by science or not, and whatever the content may be, the individual is the absolute form, i.e. he is the *immediate certainty* of himself and, if this expression be preferred, he is therefore unconditioned *being*.... Let science be in its own

self [*an ihr selbst*] what it may[;] relative to immediate self-consciousness[, where science has its ultimate beginnings, science] presents itself as inverted or perverse [*als ein Verkehrtes*]; or, because this [natural] self-consciousness has the principle of its actual existence [*Wirklichkeit*] in the certainty of itself, science appears to it not to be actual, since [natural] self-consciousness exists on its own account [*für sich*] outside of science. Science must therefore unite this element of the self-certainty [of natural consciousness] with itself, or rather show [natural consciousness] *that* and *how* this element [of certainty belonging to natural consciousness] belongs to [science].²⁹

The fissure, the rupture, is in the life of the natural attitude; it has been caused by an interruption – originating in philosophy itself – of the continuity and *Heimlichkeit* which has heretofore been the property of this life of the natural attitude. It is therefore the responsibility of philosophy, as science, to begin by addressing this rupture to which it has contributed, and by transforming or offering a ladder to the natural consciousness which will bring natural consciousness to the domain of philosophical science, i.e., to the ultimate *cause* of the rupture. Science must show *its* right to claims of certainty, which claims must satisfy natural consciousness or that which has been ruptured. Philosophy must show the natural consciousness that the standpoint of science is within natural consciousness itself, i.e., that the absolute standpoint belongs to natural consciousness and can be justified in terms that the natural consciousness can understand.

The Preface has consequently shown us that the beginning of the closed system of philosophical sciences is the following. We must begin in a rupture, which rupture is itself that beginning. That beginning and what follows from it must be such that we begin as philosophers or from the standpoint of philosophical consciousness, but also in such a way that we begin as well from natural consciousness. Philosophy cannot, with justification, force itself on natural consciousness; this has been the mistake of romanticism and post-kantian, intuitionistic absolute idealism. This arrogance of force has been, for the most part, present in the tradition in general. The only justified procedure, Hegel has here argued, is for philosophy to demonstrate, in terms acceptable and accessible to natural consciousness, that philosophy is not, in fact, perverse [*verkehrt*]. Rather, philosophy's standpoint and content are to be shown to exist in some way or other in natural consciousness itself. The absolute but mediated beginning of systematic philosophy – the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – therefore begins by opening itself, by making philosophy vulnerable, to this rupture in the life of the natural attitude.

THE MAIEUTIC DIALECTIC

From ¶48 to the end of the Preface Hegel takes up the question of the method by which these demands of natural consciousness can be met while at the same time preserving philosophy as a scientific endeavor.³⁰ The maieutic character of the method, and the reasoning behind its maieutic character, are made clear

from the beginning. We are going to satisfy the demands made by natural consciousness and thematize the “inner life and self-movement” of the experience of consciousness; for scientific cognition [*wissenschaftliche Erkennen*]

... demands surrender [*übergeben*] to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing [*auszusprechen*] its inner necessity.³¹

The reason for this demand to surrender is clear: philosophy must confront the original rupture in natural consciousness in the latter’s own terms, or else be esoteric and only a set of dogmatic assertions. But this is the essence of the maieutic dialectic: to begin with what is claimed by another and examine the claim in the other’s own terms. Only in this way can we satisfy the demands, made explicit in ¶26, and resulting from the ruptures occurring because of the nature of beginnings. The circle of ruptures must be faced on its own terms. There is here no thesis generated by Hegel which is then going to be defended or subjected to proof in opposition to the natural attitude. The philosopher is to submit his questioning to the position of the natural consciousness.

The consequence of this submission is that

... we learn by [philosophical] experience that we meant something [in expressing the nature of experience in terms of natural consciousness] other than we meant to mean [*die Meinung erfährt, daß es anders gemeint ist, als sie meinte*]; and this correction of our meaning compels our knowing to go back to the proposition, and understand it in some other way.³²

That is to say, in true maieutic form the position of natural consciousness is to be permitted to prove or disprove its own theses, and thus to be self-mediating out of the rupture of its own immediacy.

In the Introduction, Hegel addresses the method in more detail. After criticizing Kant’s way of proceeding, he turns again to the rights of the natural attitude and the position defended in the Preface concerning the need for philosophy to show that it has a right to maintain itself. He reminds us that if we merely insist on the position of philosophy against the natural awareness of natural consciousness, “one bare assurance is worth just as much as another.”³³

The whole of the succeeding paragraph, which contains the famous phrase describing what is now to occur as “the way of despair” for one in the natural attitude, further marks the methodology of the *Phenomenology* as that of maieutic dialectic.

Consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself... Consequently, we do not need to import criteria, or to make use of our own bright ideas and thoughts during the course of the inquiry; it is precisely when we leave these aside that we succeed in contemplating the matter in hand as it is *in and for itself*.³⁴

When Hegel remarks that, since this is to be our methodology “any contribution by us is superfluous,... [and] all that is left for us to do is simply to look on,”³⁵ he is therefore not denying that there is a method. Looking on, letting the proffered theses test themselves, (*speculari, spectare, skeptomai*) is precisely the nature of the method of maieutic dialectic. It is a method through which one inserts oneself into the subject-matter, in the present case into the rupture in natural consciousness caused by philosophy itself. This insertion or surrender or looking-on is not an abandonment of method; rather it *is* the method and has strict conditions under which it operates. The conditions amount to a discipline in which we observe and hold together the progress made by the self-examining natural consciousness.

What is at work is a classical *elenchos*. The philosopher’s contribution is limited to insuring

that in every case the result of an untrue mode of knowledge must not be allowed to run away into an empty nothing, but must necessarily be grasped as the nothing *of that from which it results* – a result which contains what was true in the preceding knowledge.³⁶

Accordingly, the maieutic dialectic employed here has two moments from the perspective of the philosopher in dialogue with natural consciousness. The first is one of observing and bringing to a self-determining test a certain thesis either offered by the natural attitude or which follows from what has been offered by the natural attitude. The second is one of bringing to some determinate conclusion the results of this self-testing, and of moving the analysis on to a new stage in which the determinate results of the self-test serve to form a new thesis.

In this way the beginning of the beginning of systematic philosophy is constituted in an embrace of what ruptures it – the rupture in natural consciousness – and proceeds by allowing the latter to mediate itself. If, then, the *Phenomenology* successfully brings us to the absolute standpoint – which Hegel claims it does – the rupture in the system at the beginning of the *Science of Logic* will have been mediated into a closure; for the absolute standpoint which mediates the beginning of the system proper has resulted from the self-mediated closure of the natural attitude itself.

THE EQUIPRIMORDIALITY OF RUPTURE AND CLOSURE

The problematic of this paper has been to address Hegel’s concern with beginnings. The concern was rooted in the question of the co-existence of rupture and closure in the system. I have argued that the position Hegel outlines for us is one in which, recognizing the need for both closure and rupture in system, he demonstrates the necessity of a maieutic dialectical method.

When embraced in this method, the closure of the system does not efface the ruptures; for Hegel’s philosophy conscientiously opens itself up to the other.

There are two questions concerning whether or not closure effaces the ruptures: (1) Does the systematic attainment of the absolute standpoint, which brings us to and thus mediates the immediate beginning of closed system, efface the “original” rupture in the system, i.e., the one occurring at the beginning of the *Logic*? (2) Does the system itself, i.e., the contents of the logic and of the philosophical sciences of nature and spirit, efface this primary rupture?

To the first, the answer is “No.” The systematic course of the *Phenomenology* does not consist in showing that all standpoints of the natural consciousness are inauthentic, false, or to be rejected wholesale, thereby removing the rupture in the system by absorbing or reducing the standpoint of the natural attitude. Rather, it only shows that none of the standpoints considered before the standpoint of absolute knowing – the standpoint constituting the immediate beginning of the system – give us knowledge of what knowledge is. The question is not, for instance, whether or not perceptual knowledge or religious faith is valid in its own right; it is, rather, whether or not perceptual knowledge or religious knowledge reveals the nature of knowledge as such and thus is itself the absolute standpoint. The same is the case for all other standpoints.³⁷

The mediated beginning of the system lies in achieving the standpoint of the system by showing to the natural attitude of natural consciousness itself that the standpoint of philosophy (1) occurs *within* the general standpoint of natural consciousness and (2) is justified in a way acceptable to natural certainty. The closure achieved at the end of the *Phenomenology* is one through which philosophy is enabled to begin as systematic philosophy because it has demonstrated to natural consciousness that philosophy is a fundamental element of natural consciousness, i.e., that philosophy functions to reveal the ground and content of the intelligibility available to natural consciousness. The systematic progress of the *Phenomenology*, far from effacing the rupture, reveals the integrity of the rupture.

In turn, it is this very unity of thought and being, reached in the absolute standpoint, that underlies the philosophical claims which in the first place ruptured the natural consciousness of this *Zeitgeist*. This rupture remains therefore, even with the closure of the system; for the rupture has to be recognized and addressed before the system can begin, and that recognition and address remain forever an aspect of the closed system. In Hegel’s view, the ladder cannot be thrown away. That is to say, a comprehension of just what the categories of the system are all about – and this is what has mystified natural consciousness and caused its original alienation from philosophy – depends upon recognizing that they are constitutive of the ontological structure existent *within* the various relations of natural consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit. But to comprehend this depends upon retaining the rupturing journey of the *Phenomenology*.

There is a negative response to the second question as well: Does the system itself efface the rupture? As the categories of the system show, rupture itself is central to what-is. Hegel’s metaphysics (meaning by this his whole system outlined in the *Encyclopedia*) is a metaphysics which shows how identity is difference, necessity is contingency, essence is existence, universal is particular,

and, perhaps most importantly, that the “is” (the idea as the true) and the “ought” (the idea as the good) cannot coalesce in a simple identity or reduction. These “contradictions” continue to appear throughout the philosophical sciences of nature and spirit in ways peculiar to the domain of each science. The contradictory co-existence of rupture and closure which constitutes the *form* of the system of scientific philosophy is fully present in the *content* of the system in the ontological dialectic constituting both the absolute idea at the end of the science of logic and the absolute as philosophy at the end of the system as a whole.

But what of the other side: Does the rupture make impossible the closure of the system? The answer to this question is also in the negative; for the very possibility of closure – of justified claims for closure – depends upon confronting the ruptures which mediatedly begin the system. In fact, as I have just argued, the ruptures, and the ontological dialectic in the relation between rupture and closure, are reflected in the system itself. Perfect, pure closure would be the constitution of reality by pure, indeterminate being and would forbid rupture of any sort. But, as Hegel shows already in his discussion of the first three categories of the *Logic*, rupture cannot be excluded. The attempt to do so with the category ‘pure being’ necessitates the at first unacceptable inclusion of nothing in being. In order to save the goal of closure, Hegel shows, it is necessary to understand being as becoming, as determinate being, and thus as being which incorporates nothing or non-being into itself in the form of determinacy.³⁸ And with determinacy the equiprimordiality of difference and identity is established. Thus, from within the system itself, rupture and closure are made equally primordial and are shown necessarily to co-exist. Rupture itself is constitutive of the closure which is demonstrated (in abstract form) in the *Science of Logic* in that the absolute idea is nothing other than the ontological dialectic itself. At the conclusion of the whole of the system of philosophical sciences there is also this unity of rupture and closure; for absolute spirit is philosophy and philosophy is the history of philosophy, i.e., the historical-philosophical dialogue of which Hegel is a part.³⁹

Those who would try to force Hegel into choosing between rupture and closure, and thus force him to lose either way so far as the truth is concerned, simply have not taken account of this unification and preservation of absolute difference made possible by the unfolding of an ontological dialectic through a methodological dialectic. These critics are all philosophers of the understanding; for, according to Hegel, rupture, closure, and dialectic are all three required if one is to capture the ultimate nature of what-is.

NOTES

1. The term “rupture” is used in order to put into stark contrast the two aspects of a beginning on which Hegel focuses. Certainly, one form of mediation could involve only the famous *Aufheben*, in which the mediation serves only to transform and raise something to a “higher” level. But to have that is to have mediation take precedence over immediacy, and that, it is clear, Hegel will not do. There are also clear breaks, for example in the “surrender” [*Aufgeben*] to reason at the end of “Unhappy Consciousness,” the “reversal” [*Umkehrung*] which carries us from reason to

spirit, the “reconciliation” which resolves the problematic of conscience, and the “compulsion” (*Drängen*) which moves us from religion to absolute knowing. But most importantly, there is the “resolve” [*Entschluß*] to which Hegel resorts in order to sort out the radical ambiguities in which we are caught with the demands for both immediacy and mediation (WL32, 56; compare WL12, 34, where it is put negatively: “*Man muß zugeben*”). See note 5 for full references to these editions.

2. WL12, 35; WL32, 57. However contradictory to claims of openness and rupture, this circle metaphor and the claims for immediacy entail closure. For Hegel’s view on this matter as it concerns the system as a whole, compare *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* §§ 15, 17, 573, 574. The themes include those of a circle of circles, self-thinking thought, and the unity of absolute spirit. This constant in bringing together rupture and closure cannot be ignored. See note 3, below.
3. There is no justification in *forcing* Hegel to give up or to give priority to one of these theses for the sake of “consistency.” Contradiction and ambiguity in Hegel is not a sign of “inconsistency,” but usually a sign that one is perhaps near to some truth. Nonetheless, most interpretations of Hegel do this, and it is this, I think, which is at the heart of criticisms that Hegel has absorbed the particular or effaced difference. These criticisms, as they usually stand, are unsupportable in any justified way.
4. There is also, of course, the question of closure and rupture concerning the end or result. For some discussion of some aspects of this, see my “Hegel, Heidegger, Derrida: Retrieval as Reconstruction, Destruction, Deconstruction,” in *Ethics and Danger*, Arleen B. Dallery and Charles E. Scott (eds), (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 199–213.
5. Both the 1812–16 and the 1832 editions of the *Science of Logic* have been consulted. Since the only passages from the Logic relevant to the present essay come from Part I of the *Science of Logic*, reference will be to *Wissenschaft der Logik*, [Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 11], hrsg. von Friedrich Hogemann und Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1978) for the 1812 edition, hereafter abbreviated as WL12; and to *Wissenschaft der Logik*, [Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 21], hrsg. von Friedrich Hogemann und Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1985) for the 1832 edition, hereafter abbreviated as WL32. If there is any significant difference between the original edition and the 1832 version, it is noted in the text. English translation: *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, translated by A.V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities Press, 1969). Hereafter abbreviated as SL. I have usually followed this translation except where the 1812 edition differs from the 1832 edition and also in a few cases where I have some disagreement with Miller’s translation.
6. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 9], hrsg. von Wolfgang Bonsiepen und Beinhart Heede (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1980). Reference is to the 1807 edition, hereafter abbreviated as PhG. If a change was made in the 1832 editing by Hegel, and I thought it significant, the 1832 version has been appropriately noted. English translation: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Hereafter abbreviated as PhS. I have usually followed this translation except in a few cases where changes have been made without notice.
7. This maieutic dialectic is the dialectical method of the early Socratic dialogues of Plato and must be clearly distinguished from the method recommended to the young Socrates by Parmenides in *The Parmenides*, as well as the other versions of dialectic discussed in various contexts by Plato. That recommended by Parmenides was later developed by Aristotle and then in medieval philosophy, and was taken over by Kant. But no version of dialectic other than the maieutic will meet the conditions required by Hegel. For a discussion of this in the context of the *Science of Logic*, see my “Hegel’s *Science of Logic*: Ironies of the Understanding” in George DiGiovanni (ed.), *Essays on Hegel’s Logic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 153–69. For a discussion of the general problem, see my *Hegel’s Quest for Certainty* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) and “The Dialectic of Irony and the Irony of Dialectic,” *Owl of Minerva* 25 (1994) 209–14.
8. I have tried to work out some of these difficulties in my *Hegel’s Quest for Certainty*.
9. Another classical problem in Hegel – that of the relation between system and method – is here also broached. If I am right about this problem of beginnings, then if the opposition between

- system and method is seen as the basis for a negative critique of Hegel, the critique is misplaced. Among a host of other question affected by the discussion of beginnings is the challenge to Hegel in the form of William Desmond's critique of self-mediation. Again, if I am right, then self-mediation does not end inevitably with the erasure of radical otherness. This issue will be taken up tangentially at the end of the present essay.
10. This ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*, *Doppelsinnigkeit*) reflects, internal to the system itself, the ruptured nature of beginnings, now not pointing backwards to the mediating beginning of the immediate beginning, but rather forwards to the system itself in its closure. Throughout his work unresolved ambiguity – but not ambivalence – is at the heart of the matter. The relation between this ambiguity and the general problem of beginnings is worth a separate essay. In my view it is also at the heart of Desmond's own authentic ambivalence about Hegel's dialectic in contrast to Desmond's own "metaxological" position.
 11. WL32, 54–55; SL, 68. This precise passage from "With What Must Science Begin" did not appear in the 1812 edition. However, the matter of the immediacy and the mediation of the beginning is taken up in essentially the same spirit at the beginning of this section in the 1812 edition and continues for the first two pages. See WL12, 33–34.
 12. PhG, 431–32; PhS, 490–91.
 13. PhG, 22–24; PhS, 14–16. The revisions made here in the 1832 edition do not significantly change the original view of 1807. This passage will be discussed in more detail below. See also the Introduction, PhG, 56; PhS, 50.
 14. When the Preface was written is of no concern here. The question is one of system, and it is the Preface that begins the mediated introduction to the introduction to the system.
 15. Hegel writes that a beginning is only a beginning; however, "when this activity [proper to a Preface, namely that of stating aims and results and the relationship of a philosophical work to other philosophical works,] is taken for more than the mere beginnings of cognition, when it is allowed to pass for actual cognition, then it should be reckoned as no more than a device for evading the real issue. . . ." [emphases mine] (PhG 10; PhS 2) Compare also the discussion in the first paragraph of the Preface concerning what is "appropriate" and what is "inappropriate." PhG, 9; PhS, 1. The same sort of claim is made in the *Logic*. See Preface, WL12, 7; SL, 27; WL32, 12; SL, 33; and Introduction, WL12, 15; SL, 43; WL32, 27; SL, 43.
 16. It should be noted also that, as in the *Logic*, Hegel begins the *Phenomenology* proper by addressing beginnings. "The knowledge or knowing which is at the start or is immediately our object cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself, a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply *is*. Our approach to the object must also be *immediate* or *receptive*; we must alter nothing in the object as it presents itself. In apprehending it, we must refrain from trying to comprehend it." (PhG, 63; PhS, 58)
 17. PhG, 11; PhS, 3. As noted elsewhere in this essay, there is a complexity to Hegel's treatment such that *both* immediate or natural consciousness *and* certain inadequate philosophical consciousnesses are being addressed. Furthermore, both natural consciousness and the historical-philosophical dialogue are at issue. But in this and other passages which I am discussing concerning the way in which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* itself presupposes an interruption in natural consciousness, Hegel is clear that he is discussing the latter, addressed in the present passage as "the immediacy of substantial life [*Unmittelbarkeit des substantiellen Lebens*]. Compare also the passage already cited, PhG, 22–24; PhS, 14–16, where the standpoints of natural consciousness are compared with the standpoint of science.
 18. Compare the discussion in the *Logic* concerning mediated and immediate beginnings in the system, cited above, note 9. There is, of course, another rupture, a rupture in the historical-philosophical dialogue to which Hegel belongs. This complicates the situation of rupture and closure, but in no way reverses anything I am going to claim about this rupture in natural consciousness. For a further discussion of the historical-philosophical dialogue in this respect, see my *Hegel's Quest for Certainty*.
 19. PhG, 12; PhS, 4.
 20. *Ibid.*
 21. It is this consciousness of alienation that comes into contradiction with the memory of traditional philosophical discussions. "Turning away from the empty husks, and confessing that

- it lies in wickedness, [natural consciousness] despises itself for so doing, and now demands from philosophy, not so much *knowledge* of what it *is*, as the recovery through its agency of that lost sense of solid and substantial being." (*Ibid.*)
22. *Ibid.*
 23. PhG, 13; PhS, 4.
 24. PhG, 14–15; PhS, 6.
 25. PhG, 15; PhS, 7.
 26. *Ibid.*
 27. PhG, 15–16; PhS, 7–8.
 28. See my *Hegel's Quest for Certainty*.
 29. PhG, 22–23; PhS, 14–15.
 30. What can be said here, of course, is only anticipatory. So we remain true to the nature of a Preface or Introduction. See PhG, 41; PhS, 35.
 31. PhG, 39; PhS, 32.
 32. PhG, 44; PhS, 39.
 33. PhG, 55; PhS, 49.
 34. PhG, 59; PhS, 53–54.
 35. PhG, 59; PhS, 54.
 36. PhG, 61; PhS, 56.
 37. Thus, what is at work here is only what is at work with every question, regardless of what it is. If there is to be an answer to a specific question, the response must be to that specific question and to no other. Hegel does not begin by assuming the absolute standpoint; he begins by assuming the *question* of the absolute standpoint. See my discussion of this in *Hegel's Quest for Certainty*.
 38. For a full discussion of this, see my "Hegel's *Science of Logic*: Ironies of the Understanding."
 39. As I have argued elsewhere, the so-called "end of philosophy" claimed by Hegel is *only* a completion up to his own time in history. Hegel does not make any claims for any absolute end to history. See my "The History of Philosophy and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*," in *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*, edited by Joseph O'Malley, et al, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975) 194–236.

15. ON RUPTURE, CLOSURE AND DIALECTIC

In a Remark to his discussion of Real Measure, Hegel writes:

It is said: There are no leaps in nature: and ordinary thinking, when it has to grasp a coming-to-be or a ceasing-to-be, fancies it has done so by representing it as a *gradual* emergence or disappearance. But we have seen that the alterations of being are in general not only the transition of one magnitude into another, but a transition from quality into quantity and *vice versa*, a becoming-other which is an interruption (*Abbrechen*) of gradualness and the production of something qualitatively different from the reality. Water in cooling does not become hard little by little, gradually reaching the consistency of ice after having passed through the consistency of paste, but is hard all at once. It can remain quite fluid even at freezing point if it is standing undisturbed, and then a slight shock will bring it into the solid state.¹

Rupture or interruption, then, is not simply a peculiarity of Hegel's method, as Joe Flay has shown in his wise and thoughtful discussion. It is characteristic of the world as such. Indeed, Friedrich Engels goes so far as to say that this law – the law of the transformation of quantity into quality and *vice versa* – is not an a priori principle of philosophy, but is rather abstracted from the history of nature and human society.²

When one turns back to the *Phenomenology* from this perspective, one recognizes that – beside the great ruptures in natural consciousness leading to philosophy, and in absolute knowing leading to logic – there are a number of smaller ruptures. Indeed, at each stage of the development towards its conclusion there is a rupture: what appears to be a gradual advance produces a shift to something qualitatively new: from sense certainty to perception; from understanding to life and self-consciousness; from the romantic exaltation of the heart to the development of virtuous character; from the reign of terror to self-certain morality. Rupture is an essential moment of the dialectic. And the ruptures on which Flay concentrates are of critical significance, not because they are ruptures, but rather because they break into a stage that has attained a comprehensive and all-encompassing completeness. In other words, they

interrupt a system that has achieved closure.

The natural self-confidence of the Enlightenment, convinced of the goodness of human nature and the progress of human reason, had broken apart in the French Revolution and its aftermath. When the *Phenomenology* develops to the point where it can define absolute knowing, it collapses into a new immediacy. Pure rational thought explores its concepts and categories until it has fully defined the constituents of its own method, and this either collapses again into a simple immediacy of thinking or is ruptured by nature – a reality quite other than thought. Nature becomes most integrated into a coherent body in an organism that reproduces itself and so lives beyond its own death; but that is transformed into a simple, spiritual self. So at each point where closure is achieved a new rupture intervenes, catapulting the mediated result into a new beginning. The gradual quantitative development is transformed into a qualitative novelty.

But does this also apply at the end of the whole system, where Absolute Spirit achieves its apotheosis in philosophy? What kind of new beginning would occur at this point, where time is taken up into eternity? Does closure here finally silence rupture?

This question leads us to the heart of Hegel's philosophy. And it is a heart that has lain hidden beneath the veil of his obscure language and the deception practiced by his frequent use of the adjective "absolute."³ For what it reveals is that closure in Hegel's system *is* rupture – they are not opposites in tension; and that philosophy while always striving to comprehend reality in pure thought, never escapes the ravages of time.

This has been all too often missed because commentators have stopped at the title of the last chapter of the *Phenomenology* without thinking through what it says. In its English version, that title – "Absolute Knowledge" – appears to refer to some content that is fully grasped. Such a reading appears confirmed by the Introduction, where the goal set by Hegel is the integration of certainty and truth: "We are certain of what is true when we know absolutely."

In German, however, *Wissen* is an infinitive – a verbal noun – and it retains its verbal force. We should read it as "knowing" rather than "knowledge." Once we make that shift we realise that many of the claims Hegel has been investigating in course of his work are absolute claims to knowing: we know absolutely when we simply sense; we know absolutely when we are sceptical; we know absolutely when enlightenment rejects the superstitions of faith. In each case that claim to absoluteness is ruptured.

Which makes it all the more peculiar if, at the end of it all, Hegel makes an absolute claim that is only a variation on those that have already failed. In fact, when one looks closely, he does not. As much a master of irony as Socrates, he produces a significant twist.⁴ For he refers back to the beautiful soul, and the beautiful soul is the one who in supreme self-confidence acts out of its own integrity only to come under severe judgement; self-confidence and judgement are pushed to the extreme where both of them rupture and together collapse into a new immediacy. The traditional reading thinks that what is important here is the final reconciliation, forgetting that Hegel always said you cannot

have the result apart from the the process that leads to it. In other words, what is important for absolute knowing is the whole process – the process of rupturing. Indeed, the absolute mode of knowing is just this process. If we can use the language of Peirce, it is the experience of discovering that one is fallible. What is absolute is a self-correcting dynamic that discovers how and why what was held to be true is not the truth.

Hegel turns to Christian religion as evidence that rupture is integral to the cosmos, for it describes a God who, in supreme self-confidence, eternally creates a world, only to have it rupture into evil. That rupture triggers a whole cycle of ruptures that constitute reconciliation. The dynamic of progress through rupture is built into the fabric of the universe.

Once we read absolute knowing in this light we can recognize the architectonic of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The whole book illustrates the final chapter. At each stage the rupturing of a self-confident claim simply exemplifies in a limited perspective the dynamic of absolute knowing. Gradually spirit becomes more aware of the significance of that dynamic: through the attack on simple faith, the self-destruction of terror, the duplicity of morality. In the end it acknowledges that it is this pattern of rupture, not whatever content is affirmed, that constitutes the only way of knowing that is not relative – that “... is valid in all respects, without limitation,” and is opposed “to what is valid only comparatively, i.e. in some particular respect.”⁵

In other words, closure *is* rupture.

Absolute Idea, or the non-relative integration of concept and reality, is also nothing but the dynamic of a method that converts any starting point into its opposite and then humbly learns that it must start anew.

However that leaves the crucial question: what about absolute spirit? What about the final achievement of philosophy? Does not closure silence rupture in the end?⁶ Here we are led into the thorny thicket of how to interpret the final three paragraphs of the *Encyclopedia*, with their three syllogisms.⁷ If the pattern of closure as rupture is consistent throughout Hegel, these final three moves will reproduce in reality the method anticipated in the logic and embodied in all knowing. First, nature ruptures thought, the final achievement of philosophy; then spirit reflects on this rupture, bringing it to the stage of imperfect cognition; finally thought grasps how the centrality of rupture requires both nature and spirit.

Does that mean, however, that once the final syllogism is concluded there will be no more rupture? Not at all. For the achievement of thought in the third syllogism only sets it up once again for rupture. In 1830 Hegel referred to the three paragraphs as the “further development” once philosophy achieves its goal. In other words, when understanding completes its job, nature will once more rupture its completeness. Spirit’s pilgrimage through space and time will always incorporate the cycle of natural rupture, spiritual reflection, logical understanding, and rupture once more.

So, as Engels recognized, the first law of dialectic is rupture, and that rupture is the work of nature. The irony for Hegel lies in the fact that he so subtly concealed the inversion of meaning he introduced that, for ever after, people

read him as advocating not a self-destroying and self-correcting dynamic, but a static system of closure.

NOTES

1. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968), ff. 21, 368: 1–12, compare in the first edition 11, 219: 10–22; *Science of Logic*, tr. Miller. (London and New York: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), 370; tr. Johnston and Struthers (London & New York, 1929), 1, 389. An *exposition de texte* of the whole chapter on Real Measure is a constituent of my *Real Process: How Logic and Chemistry combine in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, (Toronto: Toronto Press, 1996).
2. F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1954), 83.
3. To my reading, Hegel uses the noun “absolute” in his mature works only when referring to Spinoza or Schelling. I suspect the use of the term stems from Kant; see note 5 below.
4. With this twist Hegel “shows the incongruity of an outcome contrary to what was, or might have been, expected, recognizing this not in the form of sarcasm, but as the *nondeliberate emergence* of a meaning different from and often the direct opposite of the meaning intended.” This quotation comes from Joe Flay’s “Hegel’s *Science of Logic*: Ironies of the Understanding,” in *Essays on Hegel’s Logic*, ed. G. di Giovanni, (Albany: SUNY, 1990, 157). See also his “The Dialectic of Irony and the Irony of Dialectic,” *The Owl of Minerva*, XXV 2, Spring 1994, 209–214.
5. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 381, 382. Too many people have overlooked Kant’s discussion of this term in the *Critique* B 380–382. It is particularly revealing about what Hegel means when he talks about absolute knowing, idea or spirit.
6. This is the claim of S. Houlgate; see his “A Reply to John Burbidge,” *Essays on Hegel’s Logic*, ed. G. di Giovanni, (Albany: SUNY, 1990), 183–189.
7. The authoritative discussion of these texts is that of T.F. Geraets, “Les Trois lectures philosophiques de l’Encyclopédie ou la réalisation du concept de la philosophie chez Hegel,” *Hegel-Studien*, X, 1975, 231–254.

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