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Notes and Commentary:

RECENT HEGEL LITERATURE: General Surveys and the Young Hegel

by James Schmidt

It is now evident that the so-called *Hegeljahre* of 1970 — the 200th anniversary of Hegel's birth — was only the start of a decade of Hegel. Over the last 10 years a flood of commentaries on various aspects of Hegel's thought have appeared, critical editions of his works have been published, and new translations of his works have been ventured. This review can make no claim to be comprehensive. In an attempt to provide some rough sense of the current status of research on Hegel, and most especially on the question of the role his social and political thought plays in his philosophy, a few of the many commentaries and some of the more important new editions and translations have been selected for examination.

It is impossible to work one's way through even this limited portion of the Hegel literature without some degree of agreement with a paradox noted by Charles Taylor at the conclusion of the more substantial of his two studies of Hegel.¹ While the level of interest in Hegel's work has perhaps never been greater, Hegel's ontology itself, in Taylor's words, "is quite dead." While we are more informed about the exact status of Hegel's project at the various points of its development thanks to a series of critical editions that have given us far more material than was available previously from the period of the Jena System, the Heidelberg and Berlin Encyclopedias and the Berlin lectures on the *Philosophy of Right*, we are still left with a situation where, in Taylor's words again, "no one actually believes his central ontological thesis, that the universe is posited by a Spirit whose essence is rational necessity" (538).

Stated this baldly, there is something clearly amiss in Taylor's characterization of the present attitude toward Hegel, although rectifying the judgment only makes matters worse. It is not so much that no one believes that "the universe is posited by a Spirit whose essence is rational necessity" as that it is not even clear if anyone can now believe that Hegel himself believed anything so straightforward (though perhaps outlandish). While Hegel's immediate heirs in the 1840s were left with a rough sense of what he was saying, and hence free to agree or disagree, and while the subsequent tradition of Marxian-influenced Hegel interpretation had its stock Hegel in whom rational kernel could be separated from mystical shell, we lack an equally clear and coherent — if misguided — sense of how to characterize Hegel. We have the ability to modify any simple statement of what Hegel was in fact doing into virtual incoherence; we have a sense of what is misguided as a characterization of Hegel's thought; but beyond accounts of Hegel's thought as a certain type of intention, historically situated within a certain peculiar context, there is little one can offer as a general characterization without an almost instantaneous sense of doing violence to his thought. The major critical achievement of the recent work on Hegel has been at last to free Hegel from the various traditions of Hegelianism (right, left, British, or Neo-Marxian) in which he had been placed. But what emerges from this critique of corrupting traditions is less a coherent body of thought than a network of tensions, a set of intentions that strike us as incommensurable, and a series of summaries that can only be looked upon with an immediate sense of their inadequacy.

*This is the first of three article-length reviews on recent Hegel literature. Subsequent reviews will deal with texts and commentaries concerned with the Jena period and with the *Rechtsphilosophie*.

1. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge University Press, 1975).

General Surveys: Plant, Rosen and Taylor

To make this dilemma more palpable, a preliminary look at three of the better attempts at characterizing Hegel's project which have appeared in the last decade is in order. Charles Taylor's *Hegel* initially appears to be the most conventional of the three, structured generally along the lines of John Findlay's earlier *Hegel: A Re-Examination* and sharing the same general sensibility. Both have as their goal an exposition of Hegel's mature system which is free of unnecessary jargon and which stresses that a commitment to a discursive exposition of the structures of empirical reality lies at the heart of Hegel's work. Hegel's discussion of nature, the state, history, art, religion and the history of philosophy are juxtaposed to an examination of the categorical structure developed in both the *Science of Logic* and the *Logic of the Encyclopedia*. Likewise, both Taylor and Findlay preface their discussion of the system with an account of the *Phenomenology*, arguing that despite the subsequent immersion of a discipline termed phenomenology within the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, the *Phenomenology* of 1806 continues to play an important role as prolegomenon to the system proper.

There are, of course, major differences in the two accounts — differences that in part suggest the altered climate in which Hegel is now read. The discussion of the two logics looms slightly larger in Taylor's account, and the *Philosophy of Nature*, a sympathetic exposition of which played an important role in Findlay's influential rehabilitation of Hegel, is polished off rather quickly by Taylor as "a somewhat more derivative work" of a thinker who never shared the same concern with *Naturphilosophie* which could be found in his contemporary Schelling (351). Hegel's political and social thought, on the other hand, receives a good deal more emphasis in Taylor's account, which argues that it is this dimension of Hegel that is most significant today. Taylor's other book on Hegel, *Hegel and Modern Society*,² reinforces this evaluation: in editing and rearranging his longer work for a more general audience, Taylor deletes his discussion of Hegel's logic, the *Phenomenology* and Hegel's views on nature, art, religion, and philosophy in order to stress again the significance of Hegel's examination of politics and society.³

The altered climate that separates Taylor's book from Findlay's becomes even clearer when one contrasts the discussions with which each book opens. Findlay's introduction is devoted to an attempt to salvage Hegel's sense of the dialectic from the distortions that had been introduced by a previous generation of English Hegel interpretation. The point of this discussion is to indicate how unrigid, how open to the particularity of its specific subject matter Hegel's dialectical method in fact was. Taylor, in contrast, is concerned with situating Hegel's philosophy within its historical epoch, and by drawing on Isaiah Berlin's discussion of J.G. Herder and "expressivism"⁴ he seeks to demonstrate that the point of Hegel's conception of "self-positing spirit" can only be appreciated if one realizes the moral and political dimensions it encompasses: the reconciliation of an "expressive" conception of human nature (Herder and the *Sturm und Drang*) with the commitment to a radical conception of freedom and moral autonomy that is the legacy of Kant and Fichte (13, 29, 33).

2. Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

3. *Hegel and Modern Society* contains no new material, although at times the compression of the argument of the larger book makes matters clearer. Both books, it should be noted, erroneously refer to Hegel's essay on natural law as an unpublished theoretical work (*Hegel*, p. 574; *Hegel and Modern Society*, p. 173). The essay, in fact, was published in 1802. All future references to Taylor will be to the larger of the two books.

4. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (New York, 1976).

Taylor's book thus surveys Hegel's system and concludes that Hegel is best read today as a *political* and *social* thinker rather than as a *systematic* philosopher. Conversely, Raymond Plant's *Hegel*⁵ is a study of Hegel that initially appeared in an English series of books on important political theorists and whose major thrust is to demonstrate the extent to which Hegel's "political thought" cannot be restricted to those writings conventionally designated as being about politics: *The Philosophy of Right* and the various essays collected by George Lasson and partially translated in the edition of *Hegel's Political Writings* edited by Z.A. Pelczynski.⁶ Beginning with an account of Hegel's general system, Taylor reaches the conclusion that what remains of relevance in Hegel today is a conception of politics and society, while Plant, beginning from an attempt to elucidate Hegel's political and social thought, denies Pelczynski's claim that these writings can be understood and appreciated "without having come to terms with Hegel's metaphysics"⁷ and argues instead that "the whole of Hegel's work has a social and a political dimension" and that "his whole philosophy... was a response to certain problems in social and political experience" (9).

In examining the way in which Hegel responded to this experience, pride of place in Plant's account goes to Hegel's writings from the Berne, Frankfurt and Jena periods (1792-1807), with Hegel's writing after the *Phenomenology* occupying a little under a third of the book. Even within this concluding discussion, little attention is paid to the *Science of Logic* — although Plant does, for reasons which in light of recent research now seem questionable, devote considerable attention to the Jena logic⁸ — and the discussion of the *Philosophy of Right* is considerably weaker than the earlier sections of the book. The point, however, of the closing chapters of Plant's study is intentionally not that of providing an account either of Hegel's mature system or of his later views about the specific institutions necessary for the creation of a rational political order. Rather, what ties Plant's book together into a coherent and extremely readable whole is an effort to understand the way in which Hegel came to see in philosophical reflection a means to a reconciliation with political and social disruption which he felt, in the wake of the French Revolution's self-consumption in the Terror, could not be attained on the level of political practice.

Plant's neglect of the *Science of Logic* and Taylor's conclusion that Hegel's ontology can serve no longer as the basis for a contemporary appreciation of Hegel's significance stand in sharp contrast to the role given to Hegel's logic in Stanley Rosen's *G. W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom*,⁹ a rather dense book that deserves close scrutiny. Almost uniquely in recent studies of Hegel, Rosen gives primacy to the *Science of Logic*, arguing that "Hegel is first and foremost a logician and not a philosopher of history, a political thinker, a theologian, or a *Lebens-*

5. Raymond Plant, *Hegel* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973).

6. Hegel, *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig, 1923), partially translated by T.M. Knox and Z.A. Pelczynski, eds., *Hegel's Political Writings* (Oxford, 1964). Knox has subsequently translated the natural law essay and the *System der Sittlichkeit*. Both will be discussed in the sequel to this article.

7. *Hegel's Political Writings*, p. 131; George Armstrong Kelly has also strongly objected to this claim. See his *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis* (Princeton, 1978), p. 8.

8. Hoffmeister's 1932 edition (*Jenaer Realphilosophie I*) dated the manuscripts from 1802, i.e., at the start of the Jena period. H. Kimmerle's study of the manuscripts, "Zu Chronologie von Hegel's Jenaer Schriften," in *Hegel-Studien* 4 (1967), pp. 125-176, now dates them from no earlier than 1804. Hence, they represent a later stage in Hegel's thinking about logic than Plant assumed and are not the systematic key to the entire Jena period. On Hegel's Jena logics, see J.H. Trede, "Hegels frühe Logik (1801-1803-04)," *Hegel-Studien* 7 (1972).

9. Stanley Rosen, *G. W.F. Hegel. An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

philosoph," and goes so far as to reverse the usual pecking order and employ the *Science of Logic* as an interpretive key to the *Phenomenology*. But one should not conclude that Rosen is completely indifferent to the political dimension in Hegel's thought on which Taylor and Plant have focused, since his claim about the primacy of logic in Hegel continues, "Of course, as a logician, he is all of these and more" (xiii). The main burden of Rosen's account is the redeeming of this "of course," and Rosen is at great pains to stress that Hegel must be seen as responding not simply to the immediate social and political problems made apparent by the fate of the French Revolution, but rather as taking the French Revolution as a starting point for a complex examination of the more fundamental problems of the relation between ancients and moderns (5). So far, there is little in Rosen's reading that is exceptional: Plant and Taylor, for instance, see Hegel's grappling with the French Revolution as part of the broader question of how the ideals of the ancient politics can be recaptured on the terrain of the modern social and economic order. Likewise, Joachim Ritter and Manfred Riedel have documented in even more detail the extent to which Hegel's political thought must be seen as an attempt to revitalize the traditional Aristotelian conception of politics in a world where the separations between household and *polis*, and private and public spheres, which rest at the heart of Aristotle's *Politics*, have been shattered with the emergence of a market in which private needs are pursued outside of the household in exchange with others.¹⁰ What is unique in Rosen's reading is the insistence that it is a *conceptual resolution* of the battle between ancients and moderns that is at stake and that the reconciliation is achieved not within Hegel's practical philosophy but rather within his *Logic*.

At the center of Rosen's argument is an interpretation of nihilism as the fundamental crisis facing modern philosophy which resembles on the level of metaphysics an argument that his teacher Leo Strauss developed on the plane of practical philosophy.¹¹ As a consequence of the break with the ancient conception of nature and the substitution of a program for the domination of nature through a conception of reason modelled on calculation and best exemplified by Descartes, modern philosophy gains practical mastery at the price of a loss of an understanding of its own foundations. This loss, in turn, comes to a particularly clear consciousness in the work of Kant and Fichte (6-11, 2-60, 92-104). Paralleling this inability of theoretical reason to obtain clarity about its grounds is the moral nihilism whose cultural manifestations Hegel explores in the *Phenomenology's* discussion of the self-estrangement wrought by the Enlightenment (193-202). Rosen argues that the crisis

10. Joachim Ritter, "Hegel und die französische Revolution" (1956), now in Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik* (Frankfurt, 1969) — a basic and important study. A translation of this is in progress. Manfred Riedel, *Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt, 1969) and *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat: Grundproblem und Struktur der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* (Neuwied, 1970).

11. There are also parallels to Husserl, who was also a major influence on Strauss. The discussion in Strauss' *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1953) should be supplemented by Wilhelm Hennis' similar account, "Politik und praktische Philosophie," now in *Politik und praktische Philosophie: Schriften zur politischen Theorie* (Stuttgart, 1963), an essay of importance for Habermas' discussion in "The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy," now in *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel (Boston, 1973). The weakness of this sort of account — which rests on the hypostatizing of a single "classical doctrine" and then proceeds to measure "modernity" in terms of deviations from this norm — cannot be discussed here. But see J.G.A. Pocock, "Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Ancients and Moderns," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 2:3 (1978), pp. 93-109, who discusses the failings of this sort of dichotomy of "ancients and moderns" for Florentine republican theory. Habermas' discussion also falters rather badly on Machiavelli.

visible in Kant and Fichte and made more tangible in the disaster of the French Revolution provides the impetus for a productive renewal of the main themes of classical Greek philosophy which reach their culmination in Plato and Aristotle. Thus, Hegel's primary response to the crisis of his age is to be sought not on the domain of politics or practical philosophy, which Rosen argues Hegel continually subordinates to philosophy just as Aristotle subordinated practice to theory, but rather on the level of Hegel's theoretical philosophy proper, the *Logic*. The rough correspondence of the concerns of the first part of the *Logic* (the Doctrine of Being) to the traditional themes that occupy philosophy from the time of the Greeks to the advent of modern science and the concerns of the second part (the Doctrine of Essence) to the period from Spinoza to Schelling provides a key to the comprehension of the complexity of Hegel's own project as set forth in the Doctrine of the Concept at the conclusion of the *Logic*: "Hegel's completion of modern philosophy is at the same time a return to the debates within classical thought. . . . Hegel is able to correct Kant and Fichte by the process of correcting Plato and Aristotle" (25).

The achievement of the *Logic*, then, is to have overcome the dilemma that modern thought faces when the substantial ground on which it claims to stand is rendered unknowable by the restriction of its concept of reason to calculation. By reinterpreting this loss of "deeper meaning" as the positive experience of a liberation from the illusion that meaning is to be sought on some "deeper" level Hegel manages to overcome both classical and modern dilemmas (108-110). Similarly, the *Phenomenology's* overcoming of the dilemma of moral nihilism rests on the elucidation of a logic inherent in the process of nihilism itself, which leads us from the mad chatter of Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* to Rousseau's withdrawal and turning inward of culture, a turning that reaches its culmination in Kant's moral philosophy and sets the stage for Hegel's own project (194-195, 198-199). The problem that Rosen finds still persisting in Hegel's solution is that despite his demonstration that the dichotomy of essence and appearance represents not a disjuncture bridgeable only through some inexplicable leap from one state to another but rather a dichotomy supported by a persisting presence that can be rendered self-conscious through reflection, no claims can be made that there is a necessary order in which this presence will be made manifest (pp. 113-114). To state this is to question whether there is any clear order of succession within the *Logic's* categories, and to raise this question is in turn to risk falling back into a bifurcation between an essential logical system that is always present as a basic structure and the various contingent ways in which this structure can be realized (113-114).

Hence, even in a study which is by far the most sympathetic to Hegel's ontological concerns, there is a perception that on a rather basic level something is amiss in Hegel's system. The problem is eventually reformulated at the conclusion of Rosen's work as the question of whether it is possible for Hegel to claim to have dispensed entirely with intellectual intuition (*noesis*) of determinate form. Against this doctrine of intuition, which Rosen sees present in a modified form in Kant and Fichte as well as in Plato and Aristotle, Hegel advances the argument that discursive thought (*dianoia*) alone is sufficient and that intuition is either "empty of all determinate content, or it expresses the immediate and therefore incomplete element of form as a separate, non-dialectical abstraction. In both cases it is associated with sensuous images rather than with intelligible structure" (270). In response, Rosen argues that Hegel's attempt to do without an intuition of form — the linchpin of his attempt to overcome the fragmentation of systematic philosophy into a series of discursive elaborations based on separate acts of intuition of the sort one encounters with Fichte's posing of the

intuition of identity and non-identity as distinct acts — invariably produces a series of paradoxes, which culminate in the introduction of equally serious bifurcations into Hegel's discursive account. Hence, Hegel himself is left in a situation where the connections between particular cases of negative, discursive activity cannot be successfully combined with the complete account of the whole which Hegel claims to have achieved (271-280).

A similar dilemma is posed by Raymond Plant in his concluding discussion of the degree to which Hegel's project of finding, through philosophy, the reconciliation with reality that could overcome the sense of separation and alienation that marked such contemporaries as Schiller and Hölderlin and which was reflected in the works of those thinkers such as Ferguson, Smith and Steuart, who Plant takes to be the major influences on Hegel's political and social thought. Plant sees three basic contradictions in Hegel's account of this reconciliation, the first of which turns on an antagonism between his concept of necessity and the notion of reconciliation itself. Arguing that the notion of necessity here employed can be taken neither analytically nor synthetically, Rosen likens Hegel's notion to what Wittgenstein calls context-dependent relations of loose entailment.¹² But Plant goes on to argue that this interpretation is not adequate to cover all of Hegel's examples of necessary connections between states of affairs, since typically the most important transformations which Hegel must demonstrate as necessary cut across cultural or social contexts, and would thus breach the contexts on which they would be dependent given the Wittgensteinian reformulation. For example, Hegel's account of the necessity of the modern state must show that it is in some way the culmination of a whole series of political forms, beginning with Asiatic patriarchal despotism and stretching through the polis, the Roman empire, and the medieval order to the modern state. The only context Hegel can find to tie these disparate cases together, Plant argues, is the movement of the Idea itself as elaborated in the *Logic*. But a recourse of this sort would violate the essential principle that underlies Hegel's conception of reconciliation: the abolition of all transcendental otherness and the end of recourses to a level somehow "deeper" than history itself (187-190). The moment when Hegel must drag distinctions from the *Logic* into the *Philosophy of Right* in order to show the necessity of institutions such as a hereditary monarchy is the very moment when, in Marx's words, the *Philosophy of Right* becomes a parenthesis within the *Logic*.¹³

Likewise there is, in Plant's eyes, another sort of antagonism which frustrates Hegel's program for reconciliation: a tension between the general claim that Hegel makes to have "cancelled and preserved" an earlier mode of life or thought and the specific empirical detail that needs to be elaborated to make this cancelling and preserving convincing. In discussions of political institutions, for instance, Hegel insists against Fichte that it is not necessary to spell out such details as what attributes a passport must have.¹⁴ However, if one is to be at all convinced that the modern state does indeed cancel and preserve the earlier political forms, then some indication of rather specific details — for instance, how the subjectivity first expressed in Christianity is to be incorporated into a political constitution — is needed. But it is precisely at points such as these that Hegel is forced into such apparently arbitrary

12. Plant, p. 187, which refers in turn to P. Nowell Smith, *Ethics* (London, 1962). John Searle's notion of "institutional facts" would also seem to be relevant here; see *Speech Acts* (Cambridge, 1969).

13. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State," in *Early Writings*, ed. Q. Hoare (New York, 1975), pp. 73-74.

14. *Rechtsphilosophie*, Preface, Knox trans. p. 11.

constructions as the notoriously unconvincing argument for a hereditary monarch, which, as already noted, can be sustained only with a further leap into the *Logic* (191-192).

Finally, there is a third problem Plant sees in Hegel's notion of reconciliation: if one indeed takes seriously Hegel's claim that the general characterization which his philosophy provides can be tested against reality to show that it is in fact embodied in some essential fashion, then it is quite likely that the result will be less a reconciliation with reality than an even greater sense of the discord between the ideals of reason and the actual state of affairs. While this tension is not as intrinsic to Hegel's argument as the first two, its empirical force cannot be denied. The young Marx sensed that the state indeed embodied freedom leads directly, as Plant argues, to the demand that reality itself must be transformed in a direction that will permit this philosophical claim to be abolished by being actually realized. The goal of reconciliation thus gives way to a demand for the very political practice that Hegel had, in Plant's account, earlier abandoned (192-196).

Finally, Charles Taylor's critique of Hegel's ontology draws on certain themes also developed by Rosen but pushes his conclusions in a direction that would seem, if coherent, to provide a warrant for both his and Plant's stress, against Rosen, that Hegel's significance today must be sought in his political and social thought rather than his ontology proper. The tendency noted by Rosen for Hegel's efforts at overcoming those ruptures which intuition introduces into ontology to fall prey to another variety of the disease he is fighting — in the form of a separation between particular discursive accounts and the completed discursive account — is posed by Taylor in terms of a failure to have two sorts of dialectics mesh properly. Taylor distinguishes between two general paths which Hegel's dialectics take: one descending, the other ascending. The burden of the ascending dialectic is that of showing that finite reality cannot be understood unless more and more comprehensive interrelations are posited. Hence the contradictions in and between finite entities are exploded until we reach the point where it is shown that if finite things are to exist, then they must be "dependent on and posited by *Geist*." An example of this general course of argument can be found in the *Philosophies of Nature and Spirit* in the *Encyclopedia*. The descending dialectic, in contrast, beings from the standpoint of *Geist* and argues that "if cosmic subjectivity is to be, then the furniture of the world must be of a certain sort." This type of argument may be found, Taylor argues, in both of the logics. Hence, within the *Encyclopedia* we do not simply have two merely circular or redundant dialectics, but rather a demonstration that not only do finite objects require *Geist*, *Geist* itself requires finite objects. Thus, "finite reality is shown to be not just contingently given, but to be there in fulfillment of a plan, whose articulations are determined by rational necessity" (99). To rephrase the relation in Rosen's terms, both types of dialectics are needed since (1) a descending dialectic alone will give us only a formal requirement that certain types of entities must exist, without showing us that determinate entities of the specific sort we have to deal with in the world must exist, and (2) an ascending dialectic alone will remain forever dependent on the contingent starting point from which we proceed, and thus will not have successfully overcome the contingency and nihilism that marks intuition.¹⁵

Taylor's critique parts company with Rosen in his discussion of a central ambiguity in Hegel's concept of contradiction.¹⁶ Taylor argues that Hegel's dialectics are driven

15. In light of his rather hostile review of Taylor in *Hegel-Studien* 12 (1977), pp. 245-249, I assume Rosen would deny the correspondence.

16. Cf. also Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 83-84.

by two different sorts of contradictions: contradictions between an implicit purpose and a set of circumstances that are inadequate for the realization of the purpose — a type of contradiction found paradigmatically in Hegel's historical accounts — and contradictions between a standard which we know has been met and various conceptions of this standard which terminate in an argument that cannot account for the standard's being met — a type of contradiction found paradigmatically in the *Logic*. Both types of contradictions can be used to illuminate one another, just as the ascending and descending dialectics illuminate one another (131-132).

Both types of contradiction, however, suffer from problems that prevent them from successfully driving the ascending and descending dialectics on which the proof of the rational necessity of the world hangs. Both involve a juxtaposition of a general claim — be it an implicit purpose or a given standard — with some particular action or statement. Both may be started without a full comprehension of the *telos* towards which the dialectic will be driven: the purposes and institutions of the historical dialectics will be reformulated in the course of the argument and even within the conceptual dialectic one need only have some general features of the standard to start with, not a complete discursive elaboration of the standard. But one must have in Hegel's view some type of irrefutably established purpose or standard on hand at the start, and Hegel's failure in Taylor's reading can be seen as a failure to have secured adequate starting points in either of the two demonstrations of the system Taylor examines in detail: the mixture of historical and conceptual analysis which drives the ascending account of the *Phenomenology*, a work that Taylor argues is to be seen as a general introduction to the closed circle of the *Encyclopedia*, and the pure descending dialectic of the *Logic*.

Taylor finds the opening arguments of the *Phenomenology* the most successful of Hegel's efforts to locate an indubitable starting point.¹⁷ Consciousness' claim to possess true knowledge represents an implicit purpose that consciousness pursues, but demonstrations of a failure to attain this knowledge — for instance, the failure of consciousness' claim that the "here" and the "now" of sense certainty represent the fullest and richest sort of knowledge — do not lead to an abandonment of the quest for knowledge, since the statement that *we know* that knowledge is impossible would be a flagrant contradiction. Hence, we have at the start of this ascending dialectic the sort of "realized standard" which is needed if we are to follow a series of contradictions that have something more than historical contingency at their basis (135-136). But this is not true of arguments of the latter part of the *Phenomenology*. Once one has moved from the dialectic of consciousness to the subsequent discussions of self-consciousness, reason, spirit, religion and absolute knowledge, "we can see that the first three chapters are much too weak and sketchy to support the rich superstructure of historical and anthropological interpretation that Hegel has erected" (220). These later discussions are convincing not because they rely on the indubitable standard that the claim of knowledge represents, but because, like good historical accounts, they "fit" the materials discussed and provide a coherent narrative (217). But this is to claim for them only the rank of persuasive hermeneutic or interpretive dialectics, which is not enough to establish the claim of rational necessity.

The burden of Hegel's argument thus falls on the *Logic*, which eschews any attempt at articulating an implicit purpose and instead makes use purely of the conceptual sort of dialectic. The problem here is the reverse of that of the *Phenomenology*: while Taylor feels that once the stage of "Infinity" is reached the argument of the *Logic* does

17. See also his more complete discussion "The Opening Arguments of the *Phenomenology*," in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. MacIntyre (Garden City, N.Y., 1972).

indeed take the form of a deepening of our understanding of what is implied by a conceptual standard to which we are irrevocably committed, the opening parts of the *Logic* are considerably less convincing.¹⁸ The stage of Infinity is reached by demonstrating that determinate being (*Dasein*) is racked with the contradiction that if being is to exist, it must exist in the form of finite determinate being, while at the same time determinate being contains within itself a negation that forces its demise. The category of Infinity, "the immortal, self-subsistent system of mortal dependent finite beings," is thus required if we are to move beyond the level of passing finite beings. But it is unclear how convincing this step in fact is, or if the unfolding of an ontology which might be plausible on the level of fairly complex types of beings — living beings — who are preserved through some network of relations which spreads beyond the individuals can be convincingly demonstrated on the abstract level of such simple forms of being (346-349). We would seem to be left again with an interpretation that makes a certain amount of sense as an interpretation of human historical life, but this would be to transform Hegel's argument into a hermeneutic of social life rather than to remain loyal to its claim to be a strict ontological proof.

From this summary, it should be evident that while the analyses offered by Plant, Rosen and Taylor are at one in pointing to serious problems with Hegel's ontology, there are important distinctions among their arguments. While it would be of no little account to pursue these differences further with the end of either reconciling them or evaluating them more critically than has been attempted thus far, the concerns of this review point in a different direction. What is most immediately striking is the curious fact that despite the apparently serious charges each author brings against Hegel, all three are at one in proclaiming that Hegel's thought retains a great contemporary relevance.

Rosen's conclusions about what is now to be done with Hegel's project are in some ways the most astounding, simply because it is difficult to see why he should continue to argue for the persisting significance of Hegel's project. There is no mistaking the significance given to Hegel's project by Rosen: "Our way to the future," he writes, "if *there is a future for philosophy*, lies through the reassimilation of Hegel" (265). Hegel retains a claim on our attention because of the degree to which his project for a philosophical interpretation of formal logic remains a valid project. Hegel may perhaps have provided "the wrong interpretation," Rosen states, "But I know of no better ones now in currency" (263). After this evaluation, it is strange indeed to find that the only plausible suggestion for a path beyond Hegel's impasse would seem to side-step what Rosen has argued is the heart of the project. Rosen's suggestion that Hegel's rejection of intuition in favor of dialectic can perhaps be overcome "through the assimilation of intuition into conceptual thinking" (273), if read as a proposal for future lines of development rather than as a demonstration that there is no way out of Hegel's dilemma, would seem to make sense only as a move back to a pre-Hegelian position of the sort represented by Aristotle — a move that Rosen seems to reject (275) — or an adoption of a standpoint, such as that of Husserl in the *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, which has nothing to do with Hegel's project. If it is difficult to read Rosen's suggestion as anything other than an indication of the radical and irresolvable contradiction at the heart of Hegel's logic, it is even more difficult to understand how it can be read as such in light of the continued allegiance to Hegel's project which the study manifests.

18. Cf. Gadamer, p. 87, who has little problem with the transition from *Werden* to *Dasein*, but argues that the transition from *Sein* and *Nichts* to *Werden* cannot be adequately "dialectical" since *Sein* and *Nichts* are such impoverished categories in the first place.

Similar problems emerge in making sense out of Raymond Plant's evaluation of Hegel's significance. After having demonstrated that a Wittgensteinian reading of Hegel only shows up more seriously the degree to which what is really central and original in Hegel's argument cannot be adequately glossed by a category like "loose entailment" since the types of connections Hegel wishes to draw are specifically context independent, we suddenly find an argument that perhaps an ordinary language reading of Hegel does make sense. "Hegel certainly failed to provide a unified grasp of experience, but his struggle and failure to do so are instructive. . . . A more sceptical approach, more concerned to elucidate types of experience from within, might well succeed where Hegel failed. Such an approach, transposed into our own present day idioms of thought, has a great deal in common with the intimations in Wittgenstein's later work, intimations which have perhaps been followed furthest by Peter Winch" (202). The notion of elaborating the implicit presuppositions of various forms of social action which one finds at the heart of Winch's approach may or may not be appealing as an alternative, but it is hardly clear what is gained by claiming that it approximates an intention unique to Hegel or even especially well developed in his philosophy of history. Plant goes on to argue, "Hegel went beyond Wittgenstein, and was surely correct in doing so, in connecting up the realization of specific human powers and capacities with living in and participating in particular modes of experience. In the idiom of contemporary philosophy this demand would come to an attempt to show how different language games presuppose and develop different kinds of human powers" (205). Again it is difficult to see in what way Hegel is a particularly unique thinker in proposing this type of approach if indeed such a proposal can be read out of his work at all. It is as if having questioned the validity of the claim of transcultural rationality that lies at the heart of Hegel's approach to history and politics, Plant was attempting to reinstate Hegel's claim to our attention not on anything he was unique or innovative in suggesting, but rather on points that could have been found in virtually any of Hegel's contemporaries. We hardly need to read Hegel to learn that powers and situations are related in curious ways, and if that is all Hegel has to tell us, it is not clear why time might not better be spent with Wilhelm von Humboldt, who develops the point more explicitly and tests it with considerably greater specificity.¹⁹

Indeed, Charles Taylor's study of Hegel closes with the suggestion that what is unique to Hegel — the claim that *Geist* could achieve complete self-clarity — may be the very point that closes him off from that legacy that is most provocative for us today — the "expressive" tradition of Herder, Hölderlin and von Humboldt (569-570). As has been seen, Taylor sees in Hegel's project an effort to reconcile "expressivist" and Kantian conceptions of the nature of man. This double allegiance produces a complex relation with the prevailing tendencies of his age. Hegel could thus share certain aspects of the Romantic critique of a society dominated by a utilitarian calculus while at the same time argue against the Romantics' tendency to locate the cause of this state of affairs in the inadequacy of reason itself and look instead for a means of transforming society in either art (Schiller, Schlegel) or religion (Schleiermacher, Novalis). Instead, Hegel argued that both Romanticism and the Enlightenment had reduced reason to *Verstand*, the one to disparage it, the other to promote it as the universal organizational structure of reasonable institutions. Hegel could hope for an implicit reconciliation of expressive yearning with modern utilitarian society because he felt that the disruptive experience of modern civil society would nevertheless

19. See, for instance, the elaboration of the linkage of powers in Herder's sense and language in Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development*, trans. G.C. Buck and F.A. Raven (Philadelphia, 1972).

engender a more comprehensive and diversified milieu. Civil society represented for him the standpoint of "reflection" or "essence" — a division between individual activities that seem to proceed out of purely individual motives and that network of universal laws in which they are in fact immersed, a network that can be comprehended by Reason and whose comprehension forced the emergence of more and more inclusive structures (543). Yet both the lack of conviction carried by the ontological warrant for this faith and the empirical course of history have made this sanguine hope less believable. As a result, we have a society that has reconciled Romantic yearning and Enlightenment calculation in a far less rational form than Hegel would have desired: society is enlightened and utilitarian in its public facade, romantic and yearning in its private life (541). Hegel is thus robbed either of his difference from Romanticism, as in the left-Hegelian solution of converting Hegel into the basis for a radical anthropology, or is reconciled with the established public elements of modern society at the price of making a mockery of his pleas for a rational state.

Yet Taylor too argues that there is a continued relevance of Hegel for modern thought. The dilemma that faces the modern world is, according to him, "not unlike that of Hegel and the Romantic age. We need to combine the seemingly incombinate. . . . We need at once freedom and post-industrial *Sittlichkeit*." And in this attempt at synthesis, Hegel remains "a giant" (461). But from Taylor's own argument it would seem that Hegel's ability to believe that these two needs were merely 'seemingly incombinate' rested upon assumptions that seriously tilted the balance of his system against its expressivist elements and into an alliance with those very tendencies that have made a mockery of his hopes. Thus, just as he could not join the Romantic rejection of civil society because he perceived that it contained, in spite of the devastation it might wreak on the social fabric, a tendency towards a more diversified and conscious sort of social unity, so too he felt that the Romantic stress on the inadequacy of reason in the face of the ambiguities of expression could likewise be answered by an appeal to a reason that would no longer carry with it the deadening mechanical divisions of *Verstand*. But to hold out for total self-clarity against the expressivist tendency was to seal his fate. "As his solution fades, his far-reaching claims on behalf of conceptual thought separate him from Herder's heirs in our day [e.g., Polanyi, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger] for whom the unreflective experiences of our situation can never be fully explicated, and seem to align him with those for whom the problem should never have been posed" (569).²⁰

What is disturbing about these three general accounts is that they have not gone far enough in either their attempt to describe the linkages between Hegel's social theory and his more general ontology or in the elaboration of their critique of the deficiencies of his thought. For Plant and Taylor, the failure to do the former explains the somewhat unconvincing results of their studies: despite grave problems in his ontology, Hegel is said to remain a vital and relevant social theorist. The critique of the ontology comes politely to a halt in the face of his social thought, which once detached from his ontology is allowed an afterlife despite the demise of the Hegelian system as a whole. The price for this afterlife, however, is the reduction of his social thought to a few rather general and conventional notions that could have been found in any of a half-dozen other thinkers of the same period.

Rosen's book is even more frustrating in that the claim that Hegel qua logician is "a philosopher of history, a political thinker, a theologian. . . a *Lebensphilosoph*" and more is never fully redeemed. The link between Hegel's ontology and his political and

20. See also Gadamer, pp. 92-95, for a similar argument.

social thought is discussed only in passing. At the close of the book he argues that Hegel's pretension to have remedied the bifurcation between individual and world which marks both Greek and Christian views of the best life and hence to have found a way in which man may be "at home" in the world ends in failure. "In the Greek tradition," Rosen writes in an admitted oversimplification, "man achieves perfection by an extinction of practice in theory, whereas in the Christian tradition, perfection amounts to the assimilation of theory into practice." Hence Hegel's overcoming of alienation must have at its heart a reconciliation between the demands of theory and of practice. But this is precisely where Hegel fails: "Hegel requires us to find 'reason in history,' or to reconcile ourselves to the concrete historical present as the presence of eternity. This doctrine can be interpreted in one of two ways. Either Hegel means that 19th-century Prussia incarnates the divine *Logos*, or he means that the sage is now able to reconcile himself fully to political life, which is in general, and not in its contingent Prussian form alone, the one and only medium of complete satisfaction." The first point is, as Rosen admits, clearly absurd and, contrary to his claim, is hardly given "substantial support" by the relevant texts.²¹ The second solution, in Rosen's view, only serves to preserve the disjuncture between theory and practice that Hegel had sought to resolve: "The sage's 'reconciliation' to actuality is equivalent to the Platonic realization that the just city is historically impossible." Nor can a solution be found, Rosen feels, in arguing that somehow the sage may find satisfaction in the recognition of this impossibility, since that would serve only to provide "the most radical evidence of the difference between the few and the many." We are left with the recognition that a certain alienation from political life is unavoidable, just as a difference between the sage-like few and the many cannot be bridged (280-283).

One could conceivably posit this position as an *alternative* to Hegel's argument and provide arguments for its merits, but to deduce it as the sole existing alternative to the ludicrous notion that Hegel is defending the rationality of the existent Prussian state is too much of a sleight of hand. The real task at hand should be one of asking *what* precisely is the relation between politics and ontology in Hegel such that he can pose those ambiguous equations between rationality and reality which so troubled the commentators of his day and ours. Once that is done more adequately than has been the case in any of these studies, we might be in a better position to come to terms with Hegel's social thought.

Theology, Politics and Philosophy in the Young Hegel

A first step in understanding the nature of Hegel's mature writing on politics and ontology involves understanding the character of the project which occupied him *before* he began his systematic writings on philosophy and politics in the Jena period. The writings from the period before 1801 have long been the subject of scrutiny and the more detailed studies to be discussed here go a long way towards remedying some of the defects of the general studies of Taylor, Plant and Rosen in dealing with this material.

Rosen's general stance towards the writings before 1801 consists in ignoring them. "It seems to be clearly inappropriate," he argues, "to base the study of a philosopher's ripe teaching on impressions garnered from the study of fragments composed by a boy scarcely out of his teens" (3). While he does not deny the value of intellectual biographies, his classification of Harris' study of Hegel's early development as one of that class of "extremely good books . . . written to defend what strikes me as erroneous

21. The most detailed discussion is that of Rolf K. Hocevar, *Hegel und die preussische Staat* (Munich, 1973).

theses about the significance of Hegel's early writings" (4) hardly makes it seem likely that he would expect to revise his own interpretation in light of even "good" books on how Hegel first came to pose his project. We are left with a problem of evaluating Rosen's characterization of Hegel's intentions: while the argument that Hegel is by no means simply responding to a set of immediate political issues but rather is at the same time attempting to bring to resolution a set of theoretical problems inherited from Greek thought is certainly plausible, Rosen appears unwilling to specify the way in which the so-called "quarrel between ancients and moderns" was transmitted to the young Hegel.²² Likewise, his use of Hegel's lectures on the *History of Philosophy* as a way of introducing the central theme of Hegel's encounter with Plato and Aristotle points to an interesting biographical problem: how and why does the history of philosophy become a significant area of study for Hegel within the relatively short period of time that separates the expressed disavowal of the historical dimension of philosophy in the essay on the *Difference between Fichte and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801) and the first lectures on the history of philosophy at Jena in 1805? But Rosen's discussion does not go beyond a suggestion of what would have to be done to establish this point.²³

The suspicion that a reduction of Hegel's thought to a response to his times will blind us to the broader context in which his work must be inserted is certainly justified in light of the extremes to which disciples of approaches such as that represented by Quentin Skinner in the history of ideas have gone in disavowing the import of philosophical structures for the understanding of political theory. But the proper response would seem to be not a retreat to the argument that there is a "philosophical independence" to Hegel's thought that biography can only distort (4) but rather an embracing of the less dogmatic sort of *philosophische Entwicklungsgeschichte* that Dieter Henrich has embarked upon. Such an approach sees a philosopher's thought not only as a completed set of statements for analysis but also as an "answer to particular ways of posing a question." What such an approach gives us is a sense of the questions *Hegel* was asking and hence provides an insight into the ways in which a particular set of concerns was shaped and reshaped in response to differing sets of theoretical and historical contexts.

Such a study is helpful not merely as a check against Rosen's tendency to dismiss problems of intellectual biography as beside the point; it also provides a way of avoiding the equally problematic sort of history of ideas that Taylor provides at the start of his study. Taylor's discussion of the "Aims of a New Epoch" is reminiscent of the sort of "unit-ideas" approach to the history of ideas in which abstract proper nouns battle each other over a number of pages to a smashing finish that Skinner and others, whatever their own excesses, have managed at least to make considerably less plausible as a strategy of research.²⁴ The problem with a presentation like Taylor's which poses "Expressivism" and "radical freedom" as alternatives to "the main stream of radical Enlightenment" imported from England and France is that it substitutes a ready-made

22. Oddly, the sole reference he offers on the "quarrel" is R.F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns* (St. Louis, 1961), a study of the quarrel in England originally published in 1936, which is neither very relevant to the matter at hand nor, even on its own terms, an entirely adequate account; see Hans Baron's discussion, "Querelle of Ancients and Moderns," *Journal of the History of Ideas* XX:1 (1959).

23. It is doubtful, however, that anyone will be able to do much better until a critical edition of the lectures on the *History of Philosophy* appears. At present, there is simply no way of determining what stems from the Berlin lecture cycles and what stems from the Jena period.

24. Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8 (1969), pp. 3-53.

set of classifications for the more difficult task of working out precisely how a thinker appropriates traditions that are rarely transmitted on the level of abstractions such as these, but rather come already mediated and compromised in various more concrete constellations of influences. The juxtaposition of Herder's expressivism and Kant's radical freedom tells us relatively little about the actual way in which *Hegel* came to formulate his project. In his early years he was far more influenced by the sort of moral psychology represented by Christian Garve, the Rousseau of *Emile*, and Adam Ferguson than by Kant's transcendental moral philosophy. When the second critique did come to be as important for him as *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, it is clear that at least initially he saw it as a means of recapturing the sort of expressive unity the polis represented.²⁵ In other words, if one poses the dilemma the young Hegel faces — or, even more vaguely, the “aim of the epoch” — as that of unifying Greek expressivism and Kantian freedom, one misses the paradox that much of what is important in Hegel's early development is a process of finding out that indeed Kant and the Greeks cannot be reconciled. The decisive points that have to be developed with regard to the young Hegel then are: (1) the remarkable affinity he seemed to have for thinkers who cannot be mapped onto the dichotomy between expressivism and freedom which Taylor posits, (2) the complex path which led to a recognition on his part that the concepts which he has inherited from this tradition were hopelessly inadequate to the tasks he had set, and (3) the ambiguous fashion in which the lessons of his early struggles are assimilated into his later work. While Taylor's conclusions about the ambivalence Hegel had towards both the Enlightenment and towards Romanticism do suggest a number of important paradoxes in the subsequent career of Hegelianism, a reading back of this ambivalence into the earliest phase of Hegel's development buys Taylor's account symmetry and the expense of accuracy.

Raymond Plant's analysis of this period is, in contrast, by far the most adequate discussion of the young Hegel in these or any of the other general introductions now available. Plant sees Hegel's earliest writings — those written while he was still a Gymnasium student in Stuttgart — as a response to the disordered state of a Germany divided along religious, political, and social lines. In exploring this disorder Hegel made use of the two tropes which were more or less common coin among others of his generation: the image of Greece as a harmonious community — an image that took aesthetic expression in the writings of Winckelman, Lessing and Schiller — and the contrasting image of the social disintegration wrought by the diversion of labor in commercial society which was analyzed, among others, by Adam Ferguson. Seeking a solution for this disorder in his writing from his seminary days in Tübingen within the domain of what Plant terms “civil theology,” Hegel explored “the characteristics of folk religion in order to derive some indication of the sort of religious reforms that it would be necessary to carry out in Germany in order to recapture anything resembling the wholeness of Greek life” (32). While it is questionable whether Hegel ever saw his project as that of suggesting “religious reforms” Plant does show very successfully how Hegel's project is directed towards social and political concerns rather than points of theological dogma (32), how its conception of moral action is far more interested in dimensions which would be characterized in Kant as heteronomy rather than with autonomous transcendental freedom (33), and how it is by and large indifferent to the theoretical side of philosophy (35).

25. The point is developed by H.S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 6, 19, 38, 107-108, 175, 187, and is also the main valid point in J.M. Ripalda's rather problematic study, *The Divided Nation* (Assen, 1977).

This general approach to the writings from the Tübingen, Berne, and Frankfurt periods places Plant in explicit opposition to two earlier studies of the manuscripts by Georg Lukacs²⁶ and Walter Kaufmann. Both are emphatic that the term "theological" should not be attached to these writings. Lukacs argues that "the belief in Hegel's 'theological' period" is a "legend created and fostered by the reactionary apologists of imperialism" such as Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the targets of his later *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* — a book that undoubtedly marks the nadir of his career. Kaufmann likewise argues that they should more appropriately be called "anti-theological manuscripts."²⁷ The problem with both readings is that neither author seems to feel it worth the bother to look at what in fact were the themes being treated within German theology at the close of the 18th century. Judging from Dieter Henrich's and H.S. Harris' work on the atmosphere of the Tübingen seminary at the time Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin studied there, Plant's general attitude seems to be far more promising.²⁸ Rather than sniffing out every negative reference to Christianity, it seems more sensible to approach these writings with the recognition that while it was never Hegel's intention to prepare for a career in the ministry, he did seem to feel that study at the seminary would permit a confrontation with themes in classical literature and philosophy that had been of concern to him throughout his Gymnasium days.

Harris and Henrich have shown in their studies that Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin were exposed not merely to the dogmatic theology associated with G.C. Storr and J.F. Flatt, but were also acquainted with the rationalist approach of H.E.G. Paulus — a former student at Tübingen who by 1793 had achieved a considerable reputation at Jena — and Immanuel Dietz, the "Kantian enraged" tutor at the seminary whose private discussions with students consisted of a relentless criticism of all forms of theological dogmatism. Even though Dietz left the seminary to embark on a career in medicine shortly after Hegel entered (in any case, before Hegel became interested in the type of critical theology Dietz espoused) the legacy of Dietz, which grew considerably after his death while treating typhus patients in 1796, was preserved at the seminary by instructors such as his close friend F.G. Süsskind. What is decisive for Hegel's subsequent development is that both the tradition represented by Storr and that represented by Dietz made use of the critical tools Kant had provided, the former to show that reason alone was inadequate as an instrument for theology and hence a reliance on revelation was necessary, the latter to show that the moral dimension of religion can be constructed on the basis of autonomous reason alone. That Storr could cite the letter of Kant's epistemology against what was taken by Dietz and Süsskind — as well as Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling — to be the spirit of his moral philosophy prompted on Hegel's part an interpretation of Christianity that would focus on the weak point of Storr's approach — his use of history — and show either that Christ's message itself contained no dogmatic or "positive" components and was rather simply a statement of the truths of practical reason, or that what is positive in Christianity must be tied up with the historical personality of Christ and the specific situation in which his message was promulgated. Here we have *in nuce* the project that was to occupy Hegel down to at least 1801.

26. Georg Lukacs, *The Young Hegel*, trans. R. Livingston (London, 1975).

27. Kaufmann, "The Young Hegel and Religion," now in *Hegel*, ed. MacIntyre, a collection that includes Kaufmann's appropriately nasty deflation of Karl Popper's outrageous discussion of Hegel in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, "The Hegel Myth and its Method."

28. Harris, *Hegel's Development*, pp. 57-153, and Henrich, *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 41-72; an earlier version may be found in English in *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, ed. D. Christensen (The Hague, 1970).

While Plant's general discussion is commensurate with the more detailed studies of Harris and Henrich thus far, and hence integrates Hegel's writings from the Tübingen, Berne, and Frankfurt periods far more closely into the corpus of his later work than has been the case in earlier general studies, his account of the transformation of the project itself is open to criticism. Plant sees two tendencies at work in Hegel's writings during this period. On the one hand, there is a steady process of secularization that marks the writings as one advances from the *Life of Jesus* of 1795 through the fragments from 1795-1796 entitled by Nohl "The Positivity of Christian Religion," to the final series of fragments from 1798-1800 titled by Nohl "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate." By the time of the completion of the *Life of Jesus*, Plant argues, Hegel had already begun to move from a "totally religious analysis of the contemporary malaise to one which unites his religious preoccupations with an analysis in wholly secular terms of German social and political conditions." Plant concludes, "In a sense. . . *Das Leben Jesus* was outmoded almost as soon as it was written in that it seemed to presuppose that a folk religion could be seen as the total solution to the problem" (45). The essay on the "Positivity of Christian Religion" concentrates on the neglected historical and social dimension, relating the rise of Christianity to the "deep bifurcations produced in Roman social experience" and thus views Christianity not as the cause of human estrangement but rather as a symptom of a more fundamental social and political transformation (49-50). This new emphasis led, according to Plant, to an even deeper confrontation with the socio-economic dimension that underlay religious alienation, a confrontation which took the form of the detailed commentary on James Stewart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, which Karl Rosenkranz claims Hegel wrote in 1799.²⁹ As a result of this confrontation with a thinker who stresses the mechanisms which lead from pastoral to agrarian to commercial societies, a new dimension enters Hegel's thought, "the notion of a rationally discernable *development* in history" (57). With this new dimension comes a "remarkable change" (56) in Hegel's attitude towards modernity. "The modern world was no longer seen in such a jaundiced light but was regarded by Hegel as embodying certain values and principles and actualizing certain human powers and capacities that could not find realization in the Ancient world. The present began to be looked upon as part of man's *fate*: there could be no sense in trying to go back to more ancient types of social, political and religious organization" (65).

Accompanying this process of secularization is a related second tendency that leads from active opposition to the present order to a reconciliation with the present. Plant argues that even before the turn toward political and social analysis represented by the "Positivity of Christianity," Hegel had been actively interested in contemporary politics, seeing the French Revolution during his student days in Tübingen as "an attempt to restore a closely knit community on the Greek model," an interpretation that he shared with his fellow students Hölderlin and Schelling (51). Indeed Plant claims that Hegel's ideal during this period was that of a "radically democratic" political order in which individuals directly administered all aspects of public life (53).³⁰ But by the end of the 1790s Hegel's enthusiasm for the French Revolution had dampened with the events after 9 Thermidor 1794, and like the Schiller of the

29. Karl Rosenkranz, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (Berlin, 1844). Reprinted Darmstadt, 1969, p. 85.

30. This is hardly the case. Hegel's political ideal was that of a representative republic; direct democracy was seen by him to be possible only within small sorts of communities, which marked early Christianity. For a discussion, see R.K. Hocevar, *Stände und Repräsentation beim jungen Hegel* (Munich, 1968).

Aesthetic Letters, he had moved to a position where the world was to be "comprehended" rather than criticized. At the heart of the *Aesthetic Letters*, as in the work of Steuart, was the notion of a positive direction to history. Although the present might be an age of dismemberment, the period of fragmentation was necessary if the full powers of the human species were to be developed (72-75).³¹ With this insight gained and with the troubling example of Hölderlin's madness at hand as a warning of the dangers of a resolute position to modernity,³² Hegel turned after 1807 to an effort to reconcile himself to the rationality of the present (77-78).

However much one admires the forcefulness with which Plant elaborates this account, there is unfortunately a good deal questionable in it as can be seen by opposing it to H.S. Harris' far more extensive discussion of the writings on Christianity and to Otto Pöggeler's discussion of the relation between revolution and philosophy in the early work of Hegel. Harris strikes me as having provided a more convincing account of why Hegel could not complete the manuscripts, an account that throws into question Plant's discussion of the tendency towards secularization, while Pöggeler's somewhat more restricted account of Hegel's changing evaluation of the practical mission of his philosophy opens some lines of question with regard to the thesis about Hegel's growing disillusionment with political change and subsequent shift to a stance of philosophical "reconciliation."

The merit of *Towards the Sunlight*, the first volume of H.S. Harris' *Hegel's Development*, lies in its having brought coherence to the series of fragments and drafts that remain as a testimony to the theoretical struggles of Hegel's first 30 years. Harris' argument gives primacy to the so-called "Tübingen Essay" of 1793 ("Religion ist eine. . .") as the preliminary sketch that gives order to the diverse series of inquiries that follow over the next eight years. The essay, which Harris translates in an appendix to his book, sketches in concise form a program of research that is intended to study the relation between "folk religions" of the sort Hegel associated with ancient Greece, and the "positive," "objective" sort of religion that modern Christianity represents. Harris argues that the three canons that Hegel sets out toward the close of the essay as characterizing a folk religion — "I. Its doctrines must be grounded on universal Reason. II. Fancy, heart, and sensibility must not thereby go empty away. III. It must be so constituted that all the needs of life — the public affairs of the state are tied in with it" — serve as a rough outline of his subsequent work in Berne and Frankfurt.

By posing these three canons as the basis for a coherent project, Harris is able to avoid some of the problems of Plant's approach, which is unconvincing in its argument that Hegel's inquiries became more secular and historical after 1795. It is now apparent that Hegel's focus was historical and social from the start. In his very first weeks in Berne he was busy reading histories of the sort represented by Gibbon, Humean, Raynal, and Schiller (157-158), and indeed similar habits in his reading can

31. G.A. Kelly has also discussed Hegel's debts to Schiller, in a different fashion, in "Social Understanding and Social Therapy in Schiller and Hegel," now in *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis*.

32. Plant, like other commentators, has a tendency to play down Hölderlin's significance as a philosopher and to simplify his poetic project into a diffuse species of German Grecomania. He was a good deal more significant as a *theoretical* influence on Hegel than Plant lets on — see Henrich's discussion in *Hegel im Kontext*, pp. 9-40, trans. by C. Hamlin in *Idealistic Studies* II:2 (1972), pp. 151-173 — and as a poet was not simply fleeing to Greece but, much like Hegel, was exploring the tensions between what Löwith has termed "bourgeois Christian society" and antiquity. For a discussion of his poetry that is sensitive to this dimension and devoid of a romantic treatment of the causes of his madness, see Michael Hamburger's essay in *Contraries: Studies in German Literature* (New York, 1970), pp. 3-42.

be traced back to Stuttgart.³³ Nor was there ever, as Plant seems to suggest at times, a sense in Hegel that one could go back to ancient Greece. His historical sense of the uniqueness and ambiguity of the Greek experience was such that, in Harris' words, "Even when he penned his first eulogy to the Greek spirit, Hegel already realized that it was self-doomed" (134). In Harris' reading, by the time he set out to write the *Life of Jesus*, Hegel was already quite aware that all he was going to be able to do was to demonstrate that Christianity satisfied the first canon of a folk religion, a project far more restricted than the "religious solution" to political crises that Plant sees in the piece. Through a critical reading of Biblical texts elements of positivity could be removed and the rational core of the doctrine exposed, but because of a contrast between Socrates and Jesus which Hegel had completed before the writing of the *Life of Jesus* (185-186), it was already clear to Hegel that there would be considerably more difficulty in bringing Christianity into line with the next two canons. Hence the *Life of Jesus* was not so much "obsolete before it was written," as Plant claims, but rather only the first step of a project whose other stages would be marked by increasingly difficult problems.

Plant's suggestion that the essay now known as "The Positivity of Christian Religion" stems from a recognition that the "purely religious" solution of the *Life of Jesus* is not enough and that the "neglected" historical and social dimension must now be examined is also open to question on the basis of Harris' approach. As Harris argues, it seems more reasonable to assume that the essay forms a complement to the *Life of Jesus*, both of them having as their end an examination of how far Christianity is capable of advancing morality, the former focusing on Christ's teachings, the latter essay beginning with the conclusions of the former — that Jesus' doctrine lacked positive elements — and tracing out how Christianity was transformed into a positive religion with authoritative powers over believers. Just as the earlier essay seeks to remove positive elements from Christian doctrine, so the latter essay is concerned with the question of the appropriate relations between church and civil society and seeks to remove positive and authoritative elements from the present-day religious order. Both essays are fairly commensurable with an examination of the ability of Christianity to serve as a rational, non-positive religion, the requirement of the first canon (207-208).

Plant sees an even more severe break between the writings on the "Positivity of Christian Religion" and the Frankfurt fragments known as "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate." In an argument explicitly indebted to (but not identical with) Paul Chamley's work on Hegel's debts to the English political economist James Steuart, Plant argues that Hegel's reading of Steuart in 1799 introduced "something which has hitherto been lacking in Hegel's thought, namely the notion of a rationally discernable development in history, a development which, once comprehended, would change the attitude of people towards their social environment" (57). It is this encounter with Steuart, coupled with Hegel's reading of Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*, which forever closes off the possibility of a return to the polis and leads to an acceptance of the modern, commercially based society as the fate of modern man. We have already questioned whether it is correct to claim that Hegel ever had any illusions about reviving the polis in anything like its original form. At the same time it is worth asking if the reading of Steuart indeed convinced Hegel that the general project of the Tübingen essay, the testing of Christianity against the canons of folk religion, needed to be radically recast. Such a step would involve the recognition that the polis could no longer serve even as a counter-image of contemporary society, as a means of outlining

33. See the appendix in Ripalda's study, which lists books Hegel read while in Stuttgart.

tension and divisions.

The actual evidence of what resulted from Hegel's encounter with Steuart's *Inquiry* is scant. The commentary Hegel is said to have written has been lost and the most extensive description of its contents remains that of Rosenkranz: "All of Hegel's reflections about the nature of civil society and labor, about the division of labor and capital (*Vermögen*) among the classes (*Stände*), about poor relief and the police, taxes, etc., were concentrated finally in a running commentary on *Steuarts Staatswissenschaft* which he wrote between February 19 and May 16, 1799, and which is still intact. It contains many impressive views on politics and history and fine remarks. Stewart was an advocate of the mercantile system. With noble pathos, with a wealth of interesting examples, Hegel fought against what was dead in it as he strove to save the heart (*Gemüt*) of man amidst the competition and mechanism of labor and commerce."³⁴ Harris' evaluation of the significance of the manuscript is the most modest. Seeing no radical break in the Frankfurt period (259) he argues that the turn to Steuart was a logical progression in Hegel's movement through the three canons of folk religion. The interest in political economy comes as a result of an effort to understand what remains once one is in a situation where the "living spirit of the State dies" (435). Steuart's analysis of the relation between man and economy thus provides him with "the problem of the sundering of human nature in its starkest form" (436), but this had been a problem that was before his eyes from the very start of his project.

Considerably more importance is given to the manuscript by Lukacs, who argues that the turn to the study of political economy is triggered not by any organic progression within Hegel's own research plan but rather by a disillusionment with Jacobin politics and a need to engage the basis of politics on an even more fundamental level (40). In Frankfurt Hegel undergoes, according to Lukacs, a profound personal crisis (101-104) and is forced to examine for the first time "the place of the individual, *of man in civil society*" (98).³⁵ While Lukacs' discussion of the economic dimension which underlies Hegel's early social theory is on a far higher level than his attacks on the "apologists for imperialism," some serious problems of omission and commission plague his account. His analysis of Hegel's use of Steuart is vitiated by his persistent lack of sympathy with any aspect of Hegel's civil theology. Hence Lukacs seems to find it a paradox that Hegel can turn from his study of Steuart to write "The Spirit of Christianity" (171-172) and his exegesis of that work is a rather breathless race through the manuscript separating moments of "idealistic mysticism" from Hegel's true insights. It is not until the Jena period that Hegel makes, in Lukacs' eyes, a proper use of his economic lessons from the Frankfurt period, although there is little in Lukacs' account, aside from an undocumented presumption that Hegel must have read Adam Smith at this point and hence must have had the category of labor — which is so central to his later works — already developed, to indicate exactly what lessons Hegel was able to draw from his studies in this period.

Lukacs is not helped in these matters by an almost rabid disposition towards commentaries on Hegel ventured by anyone other than the strange trio "Marx, Lenin and Stalin." Rosenkranz' summary is flogged as "jejune" and "uncomprehending," and special venom is directed at the last line of the passage quoted above. "In the last sentence Rosenkranz claims that Hegel sought to save man's soul amidst the mechanism of capitalist society. This would suggest that Hegel's thoughts were running on similar lines to those of the reactionary [a favorite and much abused word

34. Rosenkranz, p. 86; for another translation see Harris, p. 435. Rosenkranz misspells James Steuart's name.

35. Harris questions whether such a crisis in fact took place, pp. 258-270.

in Lukacs' book] Romantics. In view of Hegel's later development and the general character of what we have seen of his political and social attitudes, this sounds highly improbable" (171). There is little one can do here except express amazement at Lukacs' utter inability to read, even at a moment when what he could have read would have supported his own cause. Rosenkranz explicitly claims that Hegel opposed Steuart's embracing of mercantilism and seems to have argued that if man's heart and disposition are to be saved, it will have to be through the media of exchange and labor. Is this not a fair approximation of Hegel's subsequent stance in the *Jena System Entwürfe*, where he argues that cultivation (*Bildung*) of a general will is possible only through the means of a submission to the fate of abstract labor and exchange?³⁶ There is little of the Romantics here; if Rosenkranz is correct, and is not as is generally his tendency reading back Hegel's later position, we would seem to have evidence that indeed Lukacs may have been correct in claiming that Smith's views had already begun to win Hegel over.

Paul Chamley's treatment of these matters — a treatment that, as has been noted, influenced that of Plant — is much more tempered and restrained, but still problematic in that he seems reluctant to confront the letter of Rosenkranz' account. Rather than trying to fill out the contours of what Hegel would have likely *attacked* in Steuart — one must remember that Hegel's other great lost commentary of this period, on Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten*, was likewise devoted to a work that Hegel admired but by this time had explicitly rejected — he is concerned with tracing what in Steuart might have influenced Hegel. As in all questions of tracing influences, the path is fraught with difficulties. His 1963 study *Economie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel*,³⁷ although welcome as the first serious study of that relationship, is ultimately frustrating in that the discussion remains for the most part on the level of rather vague comparisons of the general positions of Steuart and Hegel and a subsequent drawing up of "correspondences." Thus, we are told that Steuart's "*Die Vernunft kann nie mit gesunder Vernunft im Widerspruch sein...*" carries an anticipation of Hegel's famous "*Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig*" (109) — a rather unconvincing attempt to reduce Hegel's ontological claim to Steuart's imperative to act with prudence. At another point it is noted that Steuart's (*translator's*) "*Aufhebung*" parallels Hegel's (118). Likewise, other possible influences are not at times taken into consideration — the developmental theory which both Chamley and Plant see as the major impact Steuart must have had on Hegel was, as Ronald Meek has demonstrated,³⁸ a rather common trope of Enlightenment social theory and could have been found in a number of other individuals Hegel read in Stuttgart: e.g., Garve, Ferguson, Iselin, Meiners. At other times, Chamley's attributions of influence are simply erroneous: Steuart is conjectured

36. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke 6: Jenaer Systementwürfe I* (Hamburg, 1975), pp. 325-326. Marcuse distorts the argument in his discussion in *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1960), p. 79: "The tone and pathos of the descriptions point strikingly to Marx's *Capital*. It is not surprising to note that Hegel's manuscript breaks off with this picture, as if he was terrified by what his analysis of the commodity-producing society disclosed." This is unworthy of Marcuse; the tone and pathos are apparent only to a reader more interested in finding lines pointing to *Capital* than in understanding Hegel. The manuscript breaks off only after the category of legal personhood has been introduced as a result of the *Abstumpfen* of human faculties, which Hegel (following Adam Smith's account in the *Wealth of Nations*) had described.

37. Paris, 1963. Subsequent citations will be made in the text.

38. Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1976); for the German context, see also Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley, 1975).

to have influenced Kant's notion of "unsociable sociability" since Kant, unlike Adam Smith, gives the notion a developmental aspect. Putting aside the adequacy of Chamley's interpretation of Smith, this overlooks the more obvious (and explicitly cited in other contexts) influence of Mandeville on Kant, and Mandeville, it should be recalled, explicitly outlined how unsociable sociability could lead to social development. Finally, Chamley proposes that the term *Gemüt*, which Rosenkranz uses in his summary, is in fact a term employed by Steuart's translators to designate man's instinctive intellectual faculties. But again, the correspondence of Steuart's term with Hegel's usages of the term point to no influence; Chamley seems unaware that Hegel was using the term *Gemüt* in this same general sense in the Tübingen essay — that is, before the Steuart commentary.

Chamley's article of two years later, "Les origines de la pensée économique de Hegel"³⁹ develops in more detail the one crucial chronological account of the 1963 book, the study of the specific impact of Steuart during Hegel's Frankfurt period. Chamley here argues that the major "economic" influence on Hegel before 1797 was John Locke, specifically the discussion of property in Chapter V of the *Second Treatise*. The treatment of property as an externalization of man's own activity which Locke develops in this section has as its counterpart in Chamley's view a critique of unfree forms in which labor is externalized, forms that carry with them a self-alienation (226-227). Chamley argues that this bifurcation is transposed into Hegel's early discussion of religion as the dichotomy of subjective and objective religion in the Tübingen Essay. While Chamley sees a later shift in the ideal Hegel posits from a Hellenistic lyricism to a less abstract ideal of republican virtue in the Berne writings, he argues that Hegel's economic views remain essentially the same. "The idea is always that man produces in self-externalization, and that he recovers only that which is freely produced" (228). In Berne the true labor is the political labor of the republic, and throughout the Berne period economic analyses are consistently subordinated to political discussions of the public good (229).

Chamley sees in the writings of the Frankfurt period "a profound contrast: it is not excessive to speak of a rupture" (235). Six changes in Hegel's thought are seen as particularly decisive: (1) an enlargement of his scope of inquiry to include material from the Old Testament (the so-called *Geist des Judentums* fragment), (2) a study of historical processes in light of economic development, and a related rooting of the source of the state in the economy, (3) a shift in emphasis from political to economic labor as the most crucial category of activity, (4) a conception of nature which is less tinged by a Rousseauian conception of the earth as a gentle provider — nature now can take on hostile characteristics, (5) a change in the evaluation of Greek religion from its being a "folk religion" to a "Natur-religion," (6) a change in attitude towards religious alienation that no longer sees it as the predominant phenomenon but rather treats it as an "epiphenomenon of servitude" (232-234).

Unfortunately Chamley fails to discuss all of these points, developing in this article a case only for the first and fourth, and citing his earlier book as evidence for the other four arguments. This is rather unconvincing: points two and three seem to overstress how "economic" the post-1799 Hegel in fact is — *where* is the state ever said to be rooted in the economy? and *when* does Hegel ever abandon a stress on politics as the highest form of activity within that sphere which is eventually denoted "Objective Spirit"? There may be a shift of emphasis here, a shift perhaps related to the sixth point, but little contradicts Harris' thesis that in working out the consequences of the

39. *Hegel-Studien* 3 (1965), pp. 225-261.

other two canons of folk religion Hegel was of course forced to look more closely now at economic and social phenomena. This can hardly be claimed a "rupture" in his thought.

Those points that Chamley does develop — the extension in the scope of Hegel's argument to include the Old Testament and the shift in the image of nature — are likewise not unequivocally evidence of Steuart's impact, although here the argument is interesting enough to develop. The evidence for the first claim appears to be very strong on first glance. In the fourth chapter of the first book of the *Inquiry*, Steuart makes use of the example of Jacob and his family as evidence for the general proposition that "The subordination of children to their parents, and of servants to their masters, seems to be the most rational origin of society and government." The case of Jacob demonstrates the role which a patriarchal organization of society plays in carrying out the transition from the state of savagery in which men live off the "spontaneous fruits of the earth" to life in society, which is said, later in the book, to preserve itself through the progressive multiplication of reciprocal bonds of dependence.⁴⁰ Hegel's discussion of the passage of the Jewish people from a pastoral to an agricultural society is viewed by Chamley as an appropriation of Steuart's basic argument with a substitution of Abraham for the role of "statesman" or "steward" here played by Jacob (241).

There is one fairly obvious problem here that Chamley explicitly acknowledges: however much Steuart's use of the Jews as an example of a primitive form of social organization making the shift to a pastoral form of subsistence serves as an example for Hegel, the degree to which Hegel's account *differs* from Steuart's cannot help but be striking. The crux of the matter is that Abraham is not Jacob. However much the latter may be a model for the Steuartian statesman, it is clear that Abraham is a much more complex figure who in effect *reverses* the course of history, taking his people out of a pastoral form of subsistence and back into the wilderness. Chamley's invocation of Hegel's later concept of *Heroenrecht* from the *Philosophy of Right* points in the direction that an explanation of Hegel's puzzling approach to Abraham might have to proceed (241-242), but it hardly deals with the problem adequately.

The invocation of the right of heroes to found states in the *Philosophy of Right* is only a distant echo of Hegel's more immediate concern throughout the period of the Frankfurt and Jena writings with the puzzling figures of mythical founders of cities, invoked at crucial points of both Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Machiavelli's *Prince* and given ample examination in the discussion of Lycurgus which Steuart inserts into the course of his argument in the *Inquiry*.⁴¹ This segment of the *Inquiry* could not but have caught Hegel's attention since it replayed all of the themes he had been familiar with since his Stuttgart days. Lycurgus' Republic, dubbed by Steuart as the "most perfect plan of political economy. . . anywhere to be met with either in ancient or modern times" was made possible by a skillful use of the "voice of Divinity" in the founding of a state. This same notion, that religious symbolism is crucial for the establishment of a lasting political order, had been broached in Rousseau's discussions of the Great Legislator and the function of civic religion which Hegel had been acquainted with since Gymnasium and more implicitly in the list of figures — Moses, Cyrus and Theseus — summoned by Machiavelli in his "Exhortation to Restore Italy to Liberty and Free Her from the Barbarians" at the close of the *Prince*.

40. Steuart, *Inquiry*, Book I, iv, xviii.

41. *Ibid.*, II, xiv. The praise for Lycurgus drew a sharp attack from the reviewers of the *Inquiry* in *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review*; see Andrew Skinner's note in his edition of the *Inquiry* (Chicago, 1966), p. 218.

Hegel seems to have had little admiration for Lycurgus — in that he shared the general tendency of German classicism as against the received tradition of holding Athens higher than the rival models of the Roman Republic and Sparta. As early as the Tübingen Essay, Theseus' name had been evoked and subsequently crossed out to be replaced by the phrase "the greatest men," as an example of someone who realized "that man does not know what religion is."⁴² Presumably those who *understand* religion see beyond the positive features that threaten to turn men away from politics through the proliferation of privatistic sects and instead realize that the authentic function of religion is that of serving as a means of tying men together into a community that rests on a religious order that is public, rational and suitably satisfactory to the demands of heart, fancy and sense; in short, they see religion according to the dictates of Hegel's folk religion. Abraham represents a Theseus who fails to give his people a religion sufficiently public or appealing to heart, fancy or sense. To that extent, Chamley's notion that here we see a "perverse" sort of *Heroenrecht* at work may be valid. But what an account like Chamley's misses is the extent to which Hegel had by 1799 fleshed out in more detail the mythical founding accounts to include elements that run parallel to at least some of the material that is claimed to be derived from Steuart. My argument then is not, like Chamley's or Plant's, that Hegel lacked an account of social evolution before his reading of Steuart. Rather the point is, as Harris has suggested, that Hegel *did* have a fairly complex notion of what is involved in the founding of states and although the fundamentals of this theory have a strong classical cast to them, the general theory proved able to absorb at least some of the more concrete details Steuart was talking about.

Harris has given by far the most adequate reconstruction of the tacit theory of culture that Hegel was employing by 1798 (the date is crucial since it puts the theory before the explicit confrontation with Steuart), the date when Harris claims the crucial "conjunction of spirit and fate" first makes itself manifest in Hegel's writings (272). From the time of the Tübingen Essay onward the figure of Theseus had been used to mark the transition from natural communities such as tribes and clans to the artificial community of the city. Such a breach is essential in the preservation of the predominantly Aristotelian thrust of Hegel's conception of politics. The *polis* for both Hegel and Aristotle represented a step beyond the level of simple subsistence — a step which involved an entry into a realm of conscious human agency. The figure of Theseus is fundamental here mainly because of the role attributed him, in both the accounts in Thucydides and Plutarch, of combining the various clans into a *polis* by creating a civic religion which gives all the various lesser deities a function to play. How basic this vision of a civic religion which ties together the various gods of the household and the clan was to Hegel's thinking about politics can be appreciated by noting how persistent the themes are in his work. In the *Natural Law* essay, even after the project elaborated in the Tübingen Essay had been abandoned, we still see him employing the characteristic trope of a struggle for reconciliation between the civic religion and the household religion at the center of his account of the "tragedy in the realm of *Sittlichkeit*." Even later, one finds the juxtaposition at the heart of his interpretation of the *Antigone* in his *Phenomenology*.

What is new in the writings after 1798 is nothing which can be attributed simply to the addition of a "historical" dimension. Rather, what is involved is a productive coupling of the theme of the catastrophic beginning of human history shared by Plato, Polybius, Vico and others with metaphors derived from the various founding myths. When Hegel

42. Harris trans., p. 488.

was engaged in his first studies of folk religion, Harris argues, "he could not yet say why the history of the Jews begins with Abraham rather than Noah, or the history of the Greeks with Theseus and Lycurgus rather than with Deucalion. We have, so far, found reason to speak of distinctive attitudes to fate, but not of distinct fates. We have identified, perhaps, the beginning of universal history in the breach of the 'State of nature' produced by some cataclysmic manifestation of the might of nature herself, but not the beginning of any particular history. . . . The genuine spiritual self-awareness of a 'people' (*Volk*) does not begin with their spontaneous reaction to this breach. It begins only when they deliberately adopt towards other *peoples* the attitude which they have reactively adopted towards the revealed might of universal fate. Thus the involuntary breach (which usually produces what Hegel calls a state of need [*Not*]) generates the possibility of a voluntary breach (which Hegel generally uses the word *Trennung* to refer to); and the character and manner of that voluntary breach, if it occurs, determines a 'fate' that is peculiar to the spirit that makes the breach" (273-274). Through a subtle modification of two of the basic topoi of classical approaches to history — the myths of founders and the myths of a cataclysm standing at the start of history — Hegel produces nothing less than a peculiar hermeneutic of political culture which seeks to comprehend the fashion in which polities react against one another in terms of an original stance struck against nature at the moment of a departure from a simple continuity of natural life processes. Now it is of course possible to find traces of Steuart here, just as it now becomes clear why Hegel would eventually have to come to terms with modern natural law theories of the departure from the state of nature. But all of these attempts to relate Hegel to more conventional ways of exploring the nexus between man, nature, and politics remain beside the point. They fail to grasp what is most bizarre about Hegel's own civil theology by assuming that it is not complex enough to be able to absorb accounts derived from political economy about the relation between man and nature into its own terms. To find breaks or ruptures here or to treat the program of the Tübingen Fragment as a hangover from seminary days which Hegel gradually got over is to underestimate both the audacity of Hegel's theologico-political treatises — to revert to Walter Benjamin's title, which here becomes singularly appropriate — and the staying power of this remarkable vision of the nature of political life.

We are now in a position to examine more closely the second of the two transformations which Plant sees in Hegel's thought during this period, the movement from a position of resolute opposition to the established political order to a position of resigned acceptance of the fate which faces modern man in a fragmented world, a resignation which is expressed by the quest of philosophy to come to reconciliation with the world as it is, rather than to attempt to transform it. As evidence of the earlier attitude, Plant makes reference to the politically charged atmosphere of the Tübingen Seminary (51), where, as has been shown in the more detailed discussion of Harris, the considerable interest in the French Revolution held by those students in Hegel's circle found expression in reading of French political newspapers, the formation of various political clubs, and the propagation of any number of suitably revolutionary slogans and passwords. It was this politically engaged attitude which Plant feels subsequently influenced Hegel's study in Berne of the social and economic basis which permitted the Berne aristocracy to maintain power, a study which was eventually to produce Hegel's first publication, the anonymous translation of and commentary on J.J. Cart's letters criticizing the dominance of the German speaking canton of Berne over the French speaking Vaud. Likewise, the letter of April 16, 1795, which Hegel sent from Berne to Schelling, who remained in Tübingen completing his studies, in addition to making

some preliminary observations on the Berne social structure, goes on to hail the role Kantian philosophy will play in the transformation of German politics. "Philosophy... will demonstrate the rights of man and the political order will not be able to withstand the onslaught of new ideas," Plant states, summarizing Hegel's argument and quoting directly from Hegel's letter Plant concludes, "He states quite categorically: 'I await a revolution in Germany'" (52). Plant feels that at this point Hegel's politics were equally unmistakable, "He is committed to a view of social and political life which is radically democratic, praising a constitution which allows men to: '...obey self-given laws, to follow self-chosen leader in peace time and self-chosen generals in war, to carry out plans in whose formulations one had had one's share'" (53).⁴³

Plant sees a profound alteration in Hegel's attitude at the close of the Frankfurt period. As a result of his own work on folk religion which had convinced him that the Greek experience" is reinforced (72-73). Hegel's sense of the practical mission of the deterioration of the French Revolution into Terror and, more immediately, the impact of his own direct experience of the destruction which resulted from the French occupation of areas around Mainz, "the lesson which Hegel appears to have learned from Stuart, namely that there could be no returning to anything remotely resembling Greek experience" is reinforced (72-73). Hegel's sense of the practical mission of philosophy shifts, no longer is it intended to transform the world by pointing out what ought to be the case, rather it must grasp what concretely exists. In Plant's words, "The need was, as Hegel began to see it at this time, for a comprehensive grasp of experience which, by enabling a man to have a very firm insight into the nature of the world confronting him, would change his view on that world so that it would no longer appear as a source of estrangement" (75). Nothing perhaps documents this apparent transformation more forcefully than the introduction to the fragmentary political work known now as *The German Constitution* where it would seem, as Otto Pöggeler puts it, that the "Owl of Minerva" has already begun to speak. "The thoughts of this essay can have no other aim or effect, when published, save that of promoting the understanding of what is, and therefore a calmer outlook and a moderately tolerant attitude alike in words and in actual conduct. For it is not what is that makes us irascible and resentful, but the fact that it is not as it ought to be. But if we recognize that it is as it must be, i.e., that it is not arbitrariness and chance that make it what it is, then we also recognize that it is as it ought to be." Nothing could be further from the program for philosophy outlined in the letter to Schelling, where it is hoped that "With the broadening of the ideas which show how something should be, the indolence of those who confer eternity on everything just as it is will vanish."⁴⁴ From an attempt at critical confrontation we have seemingly come to a stance of resigned reconciliation before fate.

Plant's point here is a good deal stronger than his claim about a gradual secularizing of Hegel's approach, but because of his reliance on the secularization thesis as an explanation of why Hegel is driven towards this position of resigned reconciliation with fate, a rather complex and nuanced transformation is made considerably more cut and dried than is in fact the case. Here it seems best to develop a few lines of the argument posed in a series of lectures by Otto Pöggeler now published as "Philosophie und Revolution beim jungen Hegel."⁴⁵

43. Plant is quoting Nohl, ed., *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (Tübingen, 1907), p. 223.

44. *Political Writings*, p. 145.

45. *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. J. Hoffmeister and R. Flechsigg (Hamburg, 1952-1960), I:11 (letters will be cited by volume and letter number).

Pöggeler's concern here is literally that stated in the title; he does not enter into the question of Hegel's changing attitudes towards the French Revolution but rather poses the more general problem of Hegel's attitude towards "revolution" *per se*, his use of the term in his own early writings, and the function which he saw performed by philosophy in an age of revolution. The starting point, once again, is Hegel's series of letters to Schelling, but it is the considerable service of Pöggeler to have restored more of the political context to Hegel's observations about France, Germany, and the problem of revolution than is the case in Plant's quoting one of the more inflammatory passages ("I await a revolution in Germany") out of context. If we look now more carefully at the series of letters Hegel and Schelling exchanged, aided by a few of Harris' observations on the personal tensions between the two young men which were also present throughout this exchange, a bit clearer sense of Hegel's political position emerges.

Hegel's first letter to Schelling, written on Christmas Eve 1794, begins by praising the essay by Schelling on mythology which had recently appeared in H.E.G. Paulus' important journal *Memorabilien*. Hegel complains about his own failure to bring any of his own work to completion — an obvious sore point in the face of the easy success which seems to have fallen to the younger Schelling. He goes on to note that he has met C.E. Oelsner, an important publicist who had written a series of articles in *Minerva*, a "historico-politico" journal published in Berlin and Hamburg from 1792 onwards which played an important role in disseminating information about the French Revolution in Germany. Like Hegel, Pöggeler explains, Oelsner was a Jacobin who remained faithful to the general ideals of the revolution even after the revolution itself seemed to have turned against them. His own diagnosis of the situation was remarkably similar to that eventually taken up by Hegel in the *Phenomenology* and repeated in various places afterwards: abstract reasoning has premeated all of the atoms of civil society, bringing about a situation where either a voluntary reform of society takes place to bring it in line with the dictates of reason, or revolutionary upheaval is suffered (27-28).⁴⁶ What would appear to have been lacking in the French Revolution was a parallel "Reformation," a "religio-philosophico concretization of the principle of freedom. . . ." (13) which could have served as a check on the disintegrative tendencies of political revolution. Hegel's letter concludes with his first expression of disenchantment over events in France, noting the guillotining of Carrier and stating that his trial "has revealed the total ignominy of the Robespierrists."⁴⁷

Schelling's response of January 6, 1795, is oblivious to these political concerns, and expresses amazement that Hegel is still worrying about theology. The essay on mythology which Hegel had praised is belittled, and described as a type of work which he is no longer interested in. He proclaims that he now "lives and moves" only within Kantian philosophy, and in a remark which, as Harris points out could not but have cut Hegel deeply, asks, "Who can entomb himself in the dust of antiquity, when his *own* time is in motion every instant, sweeping him along with it?" He gives a brief outline of the argument of his own essay, "Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie Ueberhaupt."⁴⁸

Hegel's rejoinder of late January reinforced the one area of Schelling's letter where there could be agreement, noting that he was not surprised by Schelling's report that Kantian methods had now been adopted by the orthodox theologians at Tübingen as a way of shoring up theological dogma. "The orthodoxy will not be disturbed," he writes,

46. Oelsner, as Pöggeler points out, also seems to have influenced Hegel's reading of Rousseau's notion of general will. See p. 28.

47. *Briefe* 1:6.

48. *Briefe* 1:7; see Harris, pp. 186-188.

"so long as its progression is combined with worldly advantages and woven through the whole state." A few digs at Fichte, who Schelling had praised, are slipped in, hitting at points which could not but have won Schelling's reluctant agreement; the extent to which Fichte's *Critique of Revelation* reopens the door to orthodoxy is stressed in particular. Hegel requests a copy of Schelling's article on the form of philosophy and closes with a rather out of place invocation of an old slogan from the seminary: "Let reason and freedom remain our watchword and the invisible church our rallying point."⁴⁹

Schelling's response, dated February 4, picks up this theme and appears to try to make amends, dredging up more metaphors from seminary days, agreeing with Hegel's evaluation of Fichte, and then going on to outline the major features of his own system, which he claims to be Spinozist in inspiration. This outline and the essay on the form of philosophy appear to have given Hegel any number of bad nights, resulting in a curious series of notes which Harris discusses in detail, and which convey the unusual picture of Hegel totally out of his depth. It is apparent that Hegel is baffled by the new philosophical terminology which is now the rage in Tübingen, that isolated in Berne he appears to have few resources in dealing with it, and that the most he can make of it is a translation of Schelling's system into the terms of his own moral psychology.⁵⁰

It is in light of these notes that the rather outlandish claims Hegel makes for philosophy and revolution in his letter of April 16 to Schelling, a letter which plays such a major role in Plant's discussion of the young Hegel's attitude towards revolution, is best understood. The letter itself begins as previously noted with a discussion of class relations in Berne; in light of the rest of the letters we now can see more clearly that Hegel is maintaining the same stance of his earlier letters: Schelling, however avant-garde he may be in philosophy, is being given yet another lecture on politics by the elder Hegel. He then hails Schelling's work as "the most important revolution in the system of ideas in all of Germany" and goes on, "From the Kantian system and its highest completion I await a revolution in Germany which starts from principles that are already there and merely require to be worked over and to be applied to all our knowledge. An esoteric philosophy, to be sure, will always remain — the idea of God as the absolute ego will belong to that. . . ." Comments on the way in which religion and politics serve the cause of despotism follow, and Hegel then sketches the program for a critical role for philosophy which has been quoted above.⁵¹

Placed back in context, "I await a revolution in Germany" loses a good deal of its fire. "Revolution" has here been displaced from the political to the intellectual realm — Schelling's philosophy, it should be noted, is a "revolution" in the "system of ideas" in Germany. This philosophical revolution had, of course, a crucial political role in Hegel's reflections on practical philosophy at this point but the center of gravity remained the theologico-political program of "Reformation" at which he labored. The critical elaboration and development of already present notions of what *ought to be* in a fashion which will shake loose individuals from an immersion in what simply *is* manages to marry Schelling's philosophical concerns with Hegel's more practical work on folk religion. Indeed, if one remembers that while these letters were being exchanged Hegel was writing his *Life of Jesus*, one can see how the program sketched here would match the intentions of that work rather nicely: critical philosophy reinterprets familiar Biblical texts in a way which will highlight the need for political and moral reform.

49. *Briefe* I:8.

50. *Briefe* I:10; see Harris, pp. 190-194. Hegel may also have drawn on Hölderlin's critique of the new philosophical fashions in his letter to Hegel of Jan. 26, 1795. *Briefe* I:9.

51. *Briefe* I:11.

Thus, faced at the start of the series of letters with the justifiable sense of despair at the younger Schelling's abandonment of the very line of work that Hegel was (unsuccessfully) trying to bring to order, by the end of the exchange Hegel had managed to reground his own project in terms that would be more philosophically presentable than the rather conventional set of assumptions about the status of moral psychology that he had taken with him from his studies in the seminary.

I have gone into this set of letters at such length because it illustrates the difficulties which plague too simple an attribution of revolutionary intentions to Hegel in the years after his departure from the seminary. From his very first days in Berne he was immensely better informed about the political situation in France than most of his classmates (one letter asks if French newspapers are still banned in Tübingen, suggesting that even if they can be obtained there, it is clear that there is much easier access to news in Berne).⁵² And, once we become clearer about what forms of government Hegel was in fact advocating in his early writings, it becomes evident that he was in no sense betraying an earlier and more radical position. It is important that we not use terms like "radical democrat" as carelessly as Plant appears to: in the very passage which Plant is citing as an example of his radical democratic leanings, Hegel specifically uses the term "*Republic*" as a way of designating that political order in which individuals live under self-made laws.⁵³ As early as the essays on "The Positivity of Christianity," it was clear that Hegel did not feel that the direct type of participation which one found in ancient Christian religious communities could be extended to the political realm: from the start *representation* played a major role in his political thought, from the start he did not ignore the aristocratic character of the Athenian *polis*, and from the start he seems to have been swayed by Plato's stress on the importance of integrating a number of distinct estates together as the basis for the *polis*.⁵⁴ To call any of this evidence of a commitment to radical democracy is to confuse terms mercilessly and to measure an older Hegel against a position he never held.

We must not, however, ignore the extent to which Hegel's early position does nevertheless differ from that which is adopted in the essay on the German Constitution. Two major shifts should be highlighted. First of all, as has already been mentioned, by the time of the *German Constitution*, it would appear that Hegel has revised his conception of the function of practical philosophy. No longer is the goal of philosophy that of developing the immanent ought which is already present in society, rather its function is to show us how that which is "is as it ought to be." Secondly, the discussion of the "essence of the state" with which the *German Constitution* opens differs markedly from the ideal of the *polis* that infused his earlier writings. Hegel's "essential state" would appear to be the classical liberal state, or at least the minimal sort of state which is deduced in social contract theories. It is defined simply as a union of individuals "for the common defense of the totality of their property. . . ." Running through a list of what aspects are irrelevant to this essence of the state we find such matters as: the specific form in which public authority is realized, the regularization of civil codes and the administration of justice, specific arrangements about how individual estates participate in the political process, the form of administration of the state in general and more specifically the existence of even distribution of taxation, the degree to which the citizens are united by *ethos*, culture and language (*Sitten, Bildung, Sprache*), and the

52. *Briefe* I:6.

53. See Nohl, *op.cit.*, p. 223. Translated into English by T.M. Knox, *Early Theological Writings* (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 156. Hegel refers to Montesquieu's analysis of republics in the *Spirit of the Laws* III:3.

54. Harris, pp. 425-426.

degree of religious uniformity.⁵⁵ The integrated polis indeed seems far removed from this conception of the political order.

Any number of commentators have noted this problem, although few accounts have been impressive. Z.A. Pelczynski's effort to translate Hegel's concept of the state "into a language which contemporary political and social theorists will understand" simply ignores Hegel's earlier discussion of the nature of the political order and takes the *German Constitution* to be an overly simple model, akin to the Hobbesian state, which is subsequently abandoned once Hegel becomes aware of its limitations and rehabilitates the Greek conception of politics in his Jena period.⁵⁶ Pöggeler does a bit better here, noting that indeed one must look upon the *German Constitution* as an anomaly in Hegel's political thought, and not as his starting point, but this is not developed. He describes the *German Constitution* as an extreme swing of the pendulum of Hegel's thought: it marks the highwater mark of a "practical Machiavellianism" which Hegel would abandon in the Aristotle-tinged writings of his Jena period.⁵⁷ But this is to leave the *German Constitution* as simply an anomaly which, however, is not the case, since a parallel tension can be seen even earlier in Hegel's writings.

It is important to remember that at the very moment when Hegel seems to rely most on the model of Greek civic religion as the keystone in his ideal political order, one can find analyses of the relationship between church and state which resemble nothing so much as Mendelssohn and Lessing's writing on toleration. The heart of the essay "The Positivity of Christian Religion" is a distinction between ecclesiastical and political contracts (*Vertrag der Kirche; Vertrag mit dem Staate*) which would put Kant's discussion of the difference between church and state in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* to shame. While it is possible, Hegel argues, for an individual in civil society to "subject his will to the general will and regard the latter as his law," a contract about matters of *faith* is viewed by him as simply a contradiction in terms. The church can rest on nothing other than "a general uniformity in faith" and this uniformity cannot simply be the creation of a general contract.⁵⁸ This view, which seems so foreign from the Tübingen Essay's invocation of the intertwining of religion and politics that lay at the heart of the Greek *polis*, is in turn followed by a later fragment which appears to return once more to an embracing of the polis. In a fragment of his commentary on Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* from 1798 which Rosenkranz has preserved, Hegel writes, "... if the principle of the state is a complete whole, the church and state cannot possibly be distinct. What in the former is intellectualized and authoritative in the latter is the very same as living, presented in fantasy. The whole of the church is thus only a fragment if men are totally smashed into particular state-men and particular church-men."⁵⁹

This set of apparently contradictory statements has likewise caused a good deal of consternation among Hegel commentators without particularly distinguished results. Lukacs simply rages once again against Rosenkranz, arguing that the discussion of church and state relations could not, or course, have been a central part of Hegel's discussion (we must remember that Lukacs' Hegel is forever trying to become Marx but failing; with this in mind it is fairly easy for Lukacs to determine what is and is not

55. *Political Writings*, pp. 153-161.

56. Z.A. Pelczynski, "The Hegelian Conception of the State," in *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Pelczynski (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 1-5.

57. Pöggeler, p. 59; see also Pöggeler's important essay, "Hegel et Machiavel, Renaissance italienne et idealisme allemand," in *Archives de philosophie* 41:3 (1978), pp. 435-467.

58. *Early Theological Writings*, pp. 118-119.

59. *Werke I* (Frankfurt, 1971), p. 444.

plausible for Hegel to be doing at any point without ever actually having to engage the texts on a serious level) and must have been afforded so much attention by Rosenkranz "because the problem was dear to his own heart. . ." (147). When Lukacs does deign to talk about what has actually been preserved rather than what must have been overlooked, he has little illuminating to contribute. With respect to the passage quoted above he simply states, "Even in later life Hegel never worked out a correct view of the relations between church and state, but he never went so far as to advocate this kind of reactionary [the word appears again, like clockwork!] theocracy" (149).

Although Avineri offers a number of helpful observations on the distinction between church and state,⁶⁰ it is Harris who has constructed the most generally satisfying account of these parallel tensions between what for lack of a better set of terms we shall call Hegel's "Hellenic" and "modern" conceptions of politics and religion. His argument, in brief, is as follows: in both sets of writings it is important to distinguish between cases when Hegel is arguing on the level of present-day "reflective" thought and when he is moving on a deeper level, eventually crystallized in the conception of *life* elaborated in the Frankfurt period. The distinction between the two levels emerges most clearly with the discussion of church and state in the *Positivity* essay. Because Christianity is a type of religion which is fundamentally *private*, it can come to play a public role only after it has completed its transformation into a positive authoritative religion. Once this has been done, it can enter the public arena, but at the price of being one of the leading agencies of despotism and repression. Once one recognizes that what Hegel is dealing with at the close of the *Positivity* essay is Christianity as it *now exists*, one can understand the insistence on a separation between church and state of the Enlightenment variety. It is a remedial measure, designed to detach the positive dogmas of Christianity from the absolutist state. It is not, however, a stopping point for Hegel's own reflection, since he remains loyal to the critique of Enlightenment pretensions which form a major part of the Tübingen Essay's survey of trends within current theology. Enlightenment is incapable of pushing its argument far enough and does not move beyond this simple remedial position to a more profound understanding of the relation between religion and politics. Hegel's own efforts can thus be viewed as an exploration of that realm more fundamental than reflection. By the time of the critique of Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* he had come to see what this movement beyond reflection in fact entailed: it involved him in an ultimate rejection of the sort of categorical distinction which Kant drew between the ecclesiastical order and the political order in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Hegel's ultimate formulation, Harris argues, distinguishes on the level of reflection between the state, a system of negative freedoms and civil rights, and the church, a non-coercive union of the faithful. Any other set of arrangements leads to despotism. On the level of "life," however, Hegel is claimed to distinguish between a more complex order of social groupings: 1) the state of necessity (*Not*), a situation where brute power and compulsive law reigns, 2) the level of moral freedom, where a self-willed authority rules in a non-compulsive fashion, 3) the level of love, a situation in which considerations of authority and compacts are totally irrelevant, and finally, 4) the level of religion proper, "where the felt union is itself the object of aesthetic awareness for the group, and the direct focus of the common activity" (414). Harris concludes, "... we can escape from this reflective level only if the original *Trennung* between Church and State can somehow be healed. For authority has no place in religion; but it cannot be banished from life. Life has to maintain itself against a background of natural necessity; the organism must exert force

60. Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 31-33.

in a great many ways in order to live. . . . A free people must have a constitution as well as a religion; and only when the two together form a living whole will authority cease to be a problem at the religious level" (415-416).

Harris' discussion of *The German Constitution* draws heavily on this distinction between reflection and life as a means of explaining the apparently anomalous conception of the state with which the essay opens. He explicitly notes a parallel in the pattern of the argument of *The Positivity of Christian Religion* and *The German Constitution*; in each one he finds "a negative, critical analysis, followed by a positive, reconstructive one" (464). And further, just as the separation of state and church in the former essay was a separation on the level of reflection, which still left open the need for an integration of a less "positive" level of fantasy, so also in the latter essay the explicit distinction between the state and other parts of life must be seen against the background of Hegel's more general theory of culture. The "liberal" separation of church and state, a separation of the sort that could be seen in the policies of Joseph II of Austria, is only the "negative side" of Hegel's treatment of the function of religion, since Harris feels that Hegel "cherished the hope that the liberal policies of Joseph II would make it possible for some equally enlightened successor to establish a national Church within which both Protestants and Catholics could worship side by side, conscious of their community at the level of *Phantasie* and mutually respectful or even sympathetically appreciative of their differences at the level of *Verstand*" (473, cf. 454). Hence the "concept of the state" with which the essay opens is hardly indicative of Hegel's views on the essential structures of political life.

Indeed, it is important to note the particular sense which the term "*Begriff*" has for Hegel at this period of his development. A reader familiar only with Hegel's later usage would expect the discussion of the "*Begriff des Staats*" to provide the basic categorical structure on which the subsequent development of the essay should rest. But his usage of *Begriff*, in which the concept is taken to mean the concrete particularity itself, a particularity capable of unfolding and developing new distinctions and new content, is not present in Hegel's thinking before the end of the Jena period. *Begriff* during the Frankfurt period had a usage closer to that of Kant; it designated an external universal and stood opposite the spontaneous active unity brought about by love on the level of life itself. While "*Begreifen ist Beherrschen*," "only in love does one achieve unity with the object; it does not dominate and is not dominated. . . ." ⁶¹ Life and love, and not the *Begriff*, occupy the center of gravity of Hegel's system at this point.

Hence, the opening argument of the *German Constitution* must be understood as a battle on the level of reflection. "Between events and the free interpretation of them," Hegel argues, men have inserted "a mass of concepts and aims and require what happens to correspond with them." ⁶² Because concepts are external to reality, it is possible to be faced with the sort of situation that now rules in Germany: an antiquated conception of Germany as a state is clung to, even in the face of the obvious fact that Germany is a state no longer. ⁶³ Likewise, an ideal conception of what Germany should be is brought into opposition to the real situation in Germany, occluding an insight into the actual state of affairs. Against these inadequate concepts, Hegel attempts to frame a more accurate concept of what minimal criteria a state must satisfy. It is in the face of these minimal criteria that he attempts to demonstrate the obvious fact that has escaped reflection: Germany is a state no

61. *Werke* I:239-243; Harris, pp. 291-295, 318; cf. *Early Theoretical Writings*, p. 278.

62. *Political Writings*, p. 145.

63. Cf. Hans Maier's discussion, "Hegels Schrift über Reichsverfassung," now in *Politische Wissenschaft in Deutschland* (Munich, 1969), pp. 52-69.

longer. But when Hegel speaks of reconciliation here, it is not a reconciliation to the *concept* — as would be the case after the completion of the *Phenomenology* — but more simply a reconciliation to the political *history* that now confronts Germany as its peculiar fate.

It is this history which is the concern of the bulk of the essay. The argument here may be sketched more quickly. From the birth of the Empire the German constitution had been essentially private rather than public law, a set of arrangements which protected the rights of individual *Bürger*s. Before the wars of religion and before the growth of Imperial cities and the “*bürgerliche* sensibility” that marked their residents, “princes, dukes, and lords could regard one another more easily as a whole and accordingly could act as a whole.” But with the advance of “culture and industry,” the two forces which elsewhere in Europe give rise to the modern state, Germany is shattered into a mass of particulars. “The debacle of the religious disruption was exceptionally serious in Germany because the political bond was not so loose in any other country. . . with the loss of the religious tie, it was not only the innermost link between men that was snapped, but almost the only link. . . .”⁶⁴ Hence the significance of the call for a Theseus to give Germany a new constitution with which the essay closes: what Germany needs is both a legal order (on the level of reflection) that will not simply be the “fictional state” (*Gedankenstaat*) which collapsed in the face of France, and some way of healing the diremption which lay on the level of the very mores of German life.

It is possible now to come to an understanding of the full complexity of transformation which occurs in Hegel’s attitude towards the political order during the period of his time in Tübingen, Berne and Frankfurt. Plant’s picture of a gradual secularizing of Hegel’s thinking and a gradual resignation in the face of a fate which cannot be outwitted must be modified. On the level of Hegel’s general attitude towards practical philosophy, what appears to take place is *not* an abandonment of the classical model, but rather a remarkable *Hellenizing* of his thought. Beginning from a standpoint which takes Kant’s second Critique as a virtually unproblematic starting point, he comes — *negatively* through the impact of Fichte’s writings, which demonstrate the way in which the absolute “ought” can duplicate in philosophy the Terror of the abstract state of the French Revolution, and *positively*, through the influence of Hölderlin’s thinking — to a conception of practical philosophy which roots moral conduct no longer on pure freedom but rather on a recognition of fate. Against the abstract power of the categorical imperative, Hegel opts for a conception of “the causality of fate” as a *particular* punishment, meted out by the Eumenides unleashed by the trespassers’ act.⁶⁵

Conversely, when we look at Hegel’s attitude towards the actual *institutions* which are seen as embodying the *public* content of his practical philosophy, one would at first appear to find a *de-Hellenization*, a renunciation of the *polis* for the neutral state. But the closer investigation of this domain of Hegel’s thought leads to a less univocal characterization. From the start Hegel had used the polis as a counter-image to present day reality, and not as a concrete blueprint. It is one of those perspectives which, in Adorno’s words, “displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light.”⁶⁶

64. *Political Writings*, pp. 189-190; the locus of the discussion here is the problem of the relationship between civic virtue and particular interests, and *not*, as Avineri suggests, the question of whether Germany can be modernized (pp. 54ff). His concerns, in short, are not so foreign from those *topoi* of republican theory that J.G.A. Pocock has analyzed in *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, 1975), as one might first assume.

65. *Early Theological Writings*, pp. 228-234.

66. *Minima Moralia*, No. 153.

The fleshing out of *what* particular institutions were appropriate for a political order is a task which is by no means exhaustively treated in any of the writings of the early period. Certainly there are provisional notions which remain fairly constant — the idea that any modern political order will of necessity be representative, for instance — but what is lacking is an elucidation of a political order commensurate with the dictates of Hegel's practical philosophy in the same way that Kant's *Rechtslehre* provides us with a political order that mirrors certain of the structural features of his ethical theory or, more to the point, the way in which Aristotle's *Politics* takes up the themes elaborated in his *Ethics*. Hence we cannot in fact say very much about Hegel's ideal polity during this period beyond the recording of what general features he might be said to admire or detest in political societies of his time, indicating how he responded to certain important events, or at most lifting out of his more immediate publicist writings a few notions about how states should be organized. But none of this is the sort of systematically elaborated political philosophy that one begins to find in the Jena system. The foundation upon which he would erect his political edifice — the practical philosophy that would serve as a basis — was in too fluid a condition to enable him to venture the task of building upon it. And the provisional and transitory character of this foundation would not be overcome until the *Phenomenology*, even if he was convinced at times during the earlier years in Jena that in fact he was ready to elaborate his politics.

Before turning to writing of that period and commentaries dealing with Hegel's years in Jena, one last bit of business remains to be transacted: José Maria Ripalda's *The Divided Nation — The Roots of a Bourgeois Thinker: G. W. F. Hegel*. While his topic is a worthy one — Hegel's relation to various strains in the German Enlightenment, the book itself is a mess. At least one problem is not the author's fault: he has been served rather poorly by translators and publisher. The translation is remarkably ungrammatical and at times lapses from English to German (e.g., we run across *theorie* [78], *Bibliographie* [209] and *Mythologie* [137]). At other points it is literal to the point of ridiculousness: Hegel's *unglückliches Bewusstsein* becomes the "hapless consciousness" (105), and Kant is credited with writing a "metaphysic of Customs" (195), a rendering that makes a mockery of Kant's insistence at the start of the *Metaphysik der Sitten* that *Sitten* should not be taken in its literal etymological sense as custom but rather in its more general sense of morality.⁶⁷

It is less clear who is to blame for the failure to give the book even the most cursory of proofreadings. Misspellings abound and commas seem to have been randomly distributed throughout the book — certainly they provide little guidance to the reader. Indeed, the typographical errors in the book at times reach the level of grand comedy. In the course of a discussion of the reaction of Hegel to the French Revolution while he was in the Tübingen Seminary, we are told, "No one contributed more than Kant to arouse this scatological enthusiasm" (121). That passage alone may be worth the price of the book.

Most of the other things which make this book such a misery to read, however, must be attributed to Ripalda. He has a taste for remarkable metaphors: "The force of modern subjectivity dishevels the affected hair style of 18th century and summons the contradictory content of the Enlightenment before its own tribunal," (68) surely takes the cake, although "In his mature years Marx renounced the humanistic bla-bla-bla of alienation. . ." (158) also has its charms. This is coupled with an eagerness to drag various "bourgeois" thinkers before the blow-dryer of history to receive their just

67. Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Introduction, *Akademie-Ausgabe*, p. 216.

comeuppance. Hence, Adam Ferguson is claimed to be "typically bourgeois" (are we then to assume that it was common for Scottish bourgeoisie to have ties linking them to the clan organization of the highlands, ties that "typically" estranged them from the commercial society of Edinburgh?), to have a "naïve and elitist" mentality and to have been prevented by his "ethical mentality" from having followed up his penetrating empirical insights with "a critique of capitalist society" (are we to assume that the Edinburgh in 1766 had a capitalist society to criticize?). Hence he remained "ignorant of the implacable mechanisms that he conjured up in the name of Spirit and Humanity" (31) (are we to assume that Ripalda has somehow stumbled onto a lost Ferguson text which includes terms like Humanity and Spirit?). A few pages later Max Weber's hands are slapped for his "belief" in capitalist rationality by recalling how it led to the extermination of seven million Jews and the destruction of Vietnam (37). One looks in vain for the slightest evidence that Weber's manifest ambivalence towards rationalization has reached Ripalda. Conversely, "revolutionaries" get off easier. Lenin's "Concerning the National Pride of the Great-Russians" is hailed as "a document of a new revolutionary nationalism" tied to Renaissance and Enlightenment traditions. "... the horror of the Leninist Machiavellianism," we are told in the completion of the analogy, "arises from a defamatory intention similar to that which persecuted Machiavelli himself" (185) — surely a subtle point, one would have assumed the "horror" that greets Lenin's Machiavellianism had more to do with its later consequences than with a repetition of the desire to get in a few more licks at Niccolò.

These surface annoyances aside — after a while one learns to cease relying on the habitual expectation that punctuation in a book has something to do with its meaning, chuckling over typos provides needed relief from the wilder metaphors, and with a strong enough stomach one can make it through the non-sensical politics which infest the diatribes — the problem with the book basically comes down to Ripalda's effort to turn a fairly responsible article on Hegel's indebtedness to the Enlightenment philosopher Christian Garve in the formation of his early views about politics and culture⁶⁸ into a book which purports to treat Hegel as "nothing but a small element in a process, of which the Enlightenment is only an episode: the process of Capitalism" (5). Somewhere between these two poles — Hegel and Garve and the March of Capitalism, the more genuinely interesting point — the fate of the concept of the "divided nation" — is lost. Hegel's almost total failure to consider in his later philosophy the function which nationality and nationalism (as opposed to the neutral state) could play in world history has been duly noted by a number of authors. Ripalda's tracing of the early discussion of Garve's views on literature in Hegel's Stuttgart writings suggests an interesting tack to take on the question. By focusing on the role "nation" and "nationality" played in the period before the fateful coupling of nation and state, and by trying to account for the indifference in which Hegel holds considerations such as common language or culture in *The German Constitution*, Ripalda would have had a theme worth developing.

What we find instead is an expansion of his earlier discussion of Garve and Hegel (15-70), which remains of interest in light of the enormous impact Garve — virtually ignored in most discussions of Hegel's early period — had not only on Hegel, but also on German Enlightenment thinking in general. Ripalda has also provided an extensive bibliography that lists those books and journals that Hegel is believed to have read during the Stuttgart period. But once the discussion of Garve's impact on Hegel during the Stuttgart period is terminated, the book rapidly loses its focus, rushing

68. It is perhaps a measure of the chaos that reigns in the book that the bibliography gives the wrong citation for even this article! It appeared in *Hegel-Studien* 8 (1973), pp. 91-118.

through discussions of Hegel's Berne, Frankfurt, and Jena periods that contribute little to the existing literature.

The linking of Hegel to capital is remarkably heavy handed, partaking of what Raymond Williams has termed the "epochal" tendency in cruder strains of Marxian historiography. Economic periods and intellectual epochs are lined up side by side, with little more mediation between them than the paste required to splice together the pages of an overly abstract history of ideas with the pages of an economic history. Ripalda, for instance, moves within two paragraphs from a discussion of the limits imposed on philosophy by "the relatively modest stage of development which the new form of production possessed" — an explanation that ignores Marx's more complex account of the relation between intellectual and material production as crystalized in the *Grundrisse* fragment on Greek art — to the following parade of reflexive verbs and abstract nouns: "From Wolff to Garve, the Enlightenment is withdrawing itself more and more from Rationalism. But in reality Enlightenment maintained itself at the fringes of the atmosphere of Rationalism in order to breath" (38-39). This account, which imparts self-movement to the most abstract intellectual constructs while simultaneously striking materialist poses, will have most readers, before too many pages have passed, screaming "Air! Air!" themselves.

ADORNO'S "STRATEGY OF HIBERNATION"

by Tetsuo Kogawa

"All culture after Auschwitz, including its urgent critique, is garbage. While restoring itself after the things that happened without resistance in its own countryside, culture has turned entirely into the ideology it had been potentially."¹

— T. W. Adorno

Despite its widespread reputation, Adorno's remark is unclear. What is "garbage"? Is it a metaphor for ideology? He would not use such a cheap metaphor. As Adorno and Horkheimer had argued earlier: "The development toward total integration" produced a culture industry as a mechanism of totalitarian administration.² In the era of fully developed capitalism, cultural institutions and mass media have become absorbed by multinational corporations and local or national governments that generously subsidize them. Today, cultural control and administration are much more important than economic operations. Indeed, economic operations cannot effectively function unless they are preceded by cultural efforts.

The destruction of culture as an autonomous sphere was not a sudden accident of National Socialism, but the result of basic tendencies in bourgeois society that had long been antagonistic even toward its own literature. "The claim that Hitler has destroyed German culture is no more than an advertising stunt of those who want to

1. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York, 1973), p. 367.

2. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, "Preface to the New Edition" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York, 1972), p. x.