

# Hegel and the Problem of the Multiplicity of Conflicting Philosophies

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HEGEL AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MULTIPLICITY OF CONFLICTING  
PHILOSOPHIES

By

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## Abstract

# HEGEL AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MULTIPLICITY OF CONFLICTING PHILOSOPHIES

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Marquette University, 2017

As Hegel notes in his long Introduction to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, the problem of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies presents a particularly urgent problem to the very discipline of philosophy itself. For, from the viewpoint of what Hegel would refer to as “ordinary consciousness”, the fact that there are so many different philosophies which seem constantly to disagree can only lead to one conclusion: philosophy itself is a futile enterprise.

Hegel, perhaps more than any previous philosopher, was sensitive to this charge of futility levelled against philosophy. In response, he provided an explanatory account of the multiplicity of philosophies. This dissertation seeks to explicate Hegel’s effort in this regard.

Hegel’s basic argument is that the multiplicity of philosophies is to be explained as expressions of the dialectical and polymorphic development of the mind. The mind advances through stages, each one of which is capable of expressing itself in some determinate philosophy. Insofar as this is the case, however, philosophy can be shown to be not merely a haphazard succession of conflicting viewpoints but rather the manifestation of the mind in its historical development.

The chapters of this dissertation each examine crucial elements to Hegel’s overall theory of the development of the mind. They also demonstrate how Hegel thereby explains the very emergence of, and intelligible correlations among, the various philosophies.

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## Introduction

Despite the grandeur that might justly be ascribed to the collective achievement of the philosophers, from its inception philosophy has been hounded by a particularly vexatious problem, one which continually threatens to undermine belief in the very viability of philosophy as a discipline. That problem is the history and ongoing existence of a multiplicity of conflicting philosophies.

Few philosophers have been as sensitive to the problem presented to philosophy by the existence of a multiplicity of conflicting philosophies as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.<sup>1</sup> The primary task of the present dissertation will be to recover and explicate Hegel's explanatory account of philosophical differences.

Regarding Hegel's effort to explain philosophical differences, it is likely to be asked: why does the existence of philosophical differences constitute a problem worthy of the sustained philosophical examination Hegel devotes to it? Why, indeed, should it be a major philosophical concern that there exists a multiplicity of philosophies and philosophers seem constantly to disagree? Granting the reasonableness of such questions, the rest of the present introductory chapter will be directed towards clarifying in greater detail the case for why the problem of philosophical differences is a fundamental problem

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<sup>1</sup> There will, of course, be ample occasion in this dissertation to discuss at length many of the vast number of instances in which Hegel discusses the problem of philosophical differences. In order to give an initial indication of the topic's significance, however, it would be worth pointing out that his first published work, the *Differenzschrift* (*DZ*), not only takes as its overriding theme a clarification of the *difference* between Fichte and Schelling's respective philosophical systems, but begins with a section entitled "Historical View of Philosophical Systems" whose opening line states "An age which has so many philosophical systems lying behind it in its past must apparently arrive at the same indifference which life acquires after it has tried all forms" (*DZ* 86). The effort to address the indifference and a sense of futility experienced in the face of the history of ongoing and seemingly incessant philosophical dispute is thus operative from the outset of Hegel's philosophical career. It might be added further that in only the second paragraph of the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*PhG*) we are alerted to the fact that that work will be expressly concerned to dispel the naïve preconceptions of merely "conventional opinion" on the fact and nature of the "diversity of philosophical systems" (*PhG* 2).

calling for a thoroughgoing philosophical explanation. Fortunately, Hegel himself provides a rather strong case for why the problem of philosophical conflict demands the kind of sustained philosophical response which he devotes to it. Thus, the rest of this Introduction will unpack and expand upon the most relevant set of points Hegel makes in motivating the significance of both the problem of philosophical conflict and his response to it. In pursuing this task the following points will be established:

- 1) The perennial character of philosophical differences has provided the basis for a particularly damning criticism of philosophy as a meaningful practice.
- 2) The aforementioned damning critique levelled against philosophy has become enormously exacerbated by certain unprecedented social and cultural developments in modernity, the result of which has been an increasing marginalization of philosophy's cultural status.
- 3) From philosophy's inception philosophers have been fundamentally motivated by the desire to respond to the challenge of intellectual conflict.
- 4) Developing an explanatory account of the existence of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies such as is found in Hegel is necessary for the attainment of the level of self-knowledge required to solve the problems that philosophy has set for itself.

A fifth section of this Introduction will be dedicated to clarifying more precisely the actual goals of the dissertation itself.

Let us proceed to section 1 in order to begin to establish why the problem of philosophical differences is itself a major philosophical problem.

### *1. The Conflict of Philosophies Revealing the Futility of Philosophy*

Exactly why is the existence of a multiplicity of conflicting philosophies itself a major philosophical problem? Hegel addresses this question in myriad ways throughout his corpus. One of his most direct and sustained response to this question occurs in the



Prefatory Note as well as Introduction to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (*LHP*). It should be noted that in these sections of the *LHP* Hegel often provides a surrogate voice to the viewpoint of “common sense” or “ordinary consciousness”<sup>2</sup>. For, it is ordinary consciousness that is most distinctly troubled by the ongoing existence of a multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. Why should this be so?

The answer, according to Hegel, is that when confronted with the history of philosophy ordinary consciousness derives a singularly demoralizing lesson, to wit: “from the History of Philosophy a proof of the futility of the science is mainly derived” (*LHP* xliv). Upon examining – however cursorily – the history of philosophy, ordinary consciousness concludes that the science of philosophy itself is futile. Why does ordinary consciousness draw this dispiriting conclusion?

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<sup>2</sup> Although this nest of related terms – “ordinary conception,” “ordinary consciousness,” “common sense” and so on – which typically translate the German phrase “*gesunder Menschenverstand*” plays a very important role in Hegel’s larger philosophical project, Hegel nevertheless does not always make clear the specific meaning he wishes to ascribe to them. Thus, while a more detailed treatment of the meaning and role of these terms will be delayed until a subsequent chapter, it would still be useful to give a very brief summary indication as to their general import. In general, these terms refer to an orientation or form of consciousness that is pre-philosophical and pre-scientific. One aspect among others that marks the transition from a pre-scientific form of consciousness to a more properly scientific or philosophical form is that, upon this transition, universal determinations become ever more explicitly objectified *for* consciousness. Thus, for example, in charting some of the most significant cultural and political shifts that preceded and conditioned the emergence of philosophy in Greece, Hegel notes how, in introducing his notion of universal law to the Greeks, Solon thus brought “to the ordinary conception for the first time this same universal in the form of universality” (*LHP I* 161). The implication being that in the sphere of law prior to Solon the universal was not present to the Greek ordinary consciousness “in the form of universality,” which is to say, it was not yet *for* the Greek ordinary consciousness *as* universal; it was at best implicit in such consciousness. Thus, a major deficiency of ordinary consciousness for Hegel is that it fails to grasp things according to their proper universality. Such a shortcoming is, as will be discussed, especially pernicious insofar as ordinary consciousness spontaneously arrogates to itself the task of adjudicating the value and intelligibility of, among other things, philosophy and its history. For, as a result of its limited or non-universal horizon, ordinary consciousness is strictly speaking unable to discern the universal principle organizing the multiplicity of philosophies. Finally, it should be noted that pre-scientific orientations or forms of consciousness including ordinary consciousness can be and in fact are operative within highly advanced scientific cultures including Hegel’s and our own. In fact, as will also be discussed, pre-philosophical ordinary consciousness can be operative in those who would otherwise consider themselves to be philosophers.

On Hegel's account, the basis for ordinary consciousness's charge of futility against philosophy lies in the apparently quite desolate cumulative result of the history of philosophy with its incessant conflicts and disputes. For, when looked at merely from the "superficial view" of ordinary consciousness, according to Hegel,

The whole history of philosophy becomes a battlefield covered with the bones of the dead; it is a kingdom not merely formed of dead and lifeless individuals, but of refuted and spiritually dead systems, since each has killed the other. (*LHP I* 16-7)

For ordinary consciousness the history of philosophy reveals that the different philosophies have collectively nullified one another leaving in their wake nothing but a senseless tableau of intellectual corpses. Upon witnessing such a scene the conclusion that ordinary consciousness draws is that philosophy is a futile enterprise and that all philosophers "have erred, because they have been contradicted by others" (*LHP I* 16).

Clearly, this damning indictment against philosophy is of major concern. Insofar as ordinary consciousness represents the form of consciousness most commonly operative amongst people in a given culture, the ongoing history of perpetual philosophical conflict and dispute presents a significant problem for the cultural viability of philosophy. For, due to that ongoing history of conflict the ordinary consciousness inhabited by the majority of people in a given culture will be convinced of the futility of the practice of philosophy as a whole.

Indeed, the charge that the history of philosophy reveals the futility of philosophy is an issue of serious importance on a variety of fronts, not the least of which is the effect it has on prospective philosophers. As Hegel states, "[T]his diversity in philosophical systems is far from being a merely evasive plea. It has far more weight as a genuine

ground of argument against the zeal which philosophy requires” (*LHP I 16*). Hegel is here calling attention to the discouraging effect the perpetual and unresolved disputes among philosophers can have upon the desire to pursue philosophy at all, especially among beginners. For, it seems reasonable enough to expect that few people would be especially inclined to practice a discipline whose cumulative result is commonly held to be little more than a particularly grisly intellectual No Man’s Land.

Thus, a first indication as to why the problem of philosophical differences is of major philosophical importance is that the history of philosophical differences and conflicts provides the basis for the charge levelled by ordinary consciousness that philosophy is a futile endeavor. The dissemination or otherwise common acceptance of this charge, moreover, is likely to enervate the serious dedication that is required to learn the discipline of philosophy.

## 2. *Intensifications in Modernity of the Charge of Futility Levelled Against Philosophy*

Philosophers themselves have long been aware of how the incessant and apparently irresolvable conflicts among philosophies frequently undermines the patience and zeal necessary to undertake the difficult labor of learning to philosophize. In fact, philosophers themselves have taken measures to overcome this problem and admonish those contemplating practicing philosophy not to become discouraged by the apparent futility of the philosophical endeavor.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, despite the severity of the charge of futility brought against it by ordinary consciousness, philosophy has managed to survive

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Diogenes Laertius reporting Stoics like Chrysippus and Posidonius were already declaring “one should not give up philosophy because of disagreement [among the philosophers] since by this argument one would give up one’s whole life” (*Hellenistic Philosophy 202*).

and even experience periods of significant cultural prestige and influence. Thus, it might be asked why the problem of philosophical differences calls for the kind of sophisticated and comprehensive response that Hegel develops and which this dissertation will seek to explicate.

For, it is true that the problem of philosophical differences and conflict has continually threatened to undermine belief in the worthwhileness of philosophy. Philosophers have likewise been keenly aware of this problem and have attempted to respond to it. Why should it now be of such special concern that nothing short of the monumental effort of Hegel to respond to it will any longer suffice? In order to address this question it will be useful again to note some important points Hegel makes in the early sections of the *LHP*.

### 2.1 *Futility and the Presentation of the History of Philosophy*

A first factor contributing to the intensification of the charge of the futility of philosophy, according to Hegel, is the manner in which the history of philosophy has often come to be presented. For Hegel, “the view very usually taken of the history of philosophy [...] ascribes to it the narration of a number of philosophical opinions as they have arisen and manifested themselves in time” (*LHP I* 11). The history of philosophy is thus very often reduced to an “accumulation of opinions” and the only relation that is acknowledged among these various opinions is their “contingency in time-succession” (*LHP* 11). Plato said this; then, Aristotle held this opinion; then, came Plotinus who affirmed this, and so on. Yet, “What could be more useless than to learn a string of bald opinions, and what more unimportant?” (*LHP I* 12)

To be sure, since Hegel's time the task of providing a more critical and scientific account of the history of philosophy has been taken up by a number of highly sophisticated and erudite philosophers and historians. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Hegel is expressing the viewpoint of ordinary consciousness. When ordinary consciousness *confronts* the history of philosophy the basic lesson it draws is that philosophy is futile. Hegel is now identifying the manner in which ordinary consciousness commonly *presents* the history of philosophy, namely, as a more or less haphazard succession and agglomeration of opinions or even "senseless follies" (*LHP I* 11).<sup>4</sup> The result is that by being exposed to such histories of philosophy, ordinary consciousness finds itself all the more confirmed in its negative view of philosophy. Indeed, even the "erudite investigation" into the history of philosophy, when it fails to do more than give an "enumeration of various opinions," can actually reach a point of diminishing returns (*LHP I* 11). For the excavation and mere enumeration of an ever increasing number of conflicting viewpoints can often simply provide fuel to the flames of perdition into which ordinary consciousness would just as soon see works of the philosophers cast.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hegel is clear that to grasp the intelligibility immanent in the history of multiplicity of philosophies demands that the historian transcend the viewpoint of mere ordinary consciousness: "[A]s in so many histories of Philosophy, there is presented to the vision devoid of idea, only a disarranged collection of opinions. To make you acquainted with this Idea, and consequently to *explain* [emphasis mine] the manifestations, is the business of the history of Philosophy [...] Since the observer must bring with him the Concept of the subject in order to see it in its phenomenal aspect and in order to object the object faithfully to view, we need not wonder at there being so many dull histories of Philosophy in which the succession of its systems are represented simply as a number of opinions, errors and freaks of thought. They are freaks of thought which, indeed, have been devised with a great pretension of acuteness and of mental exertion, and with everything else which can be said in admiration of what is merely formal. But, considering the absence of philosophic mind in such historians as these, how should they be able to comprehend and represent the content, which is reasoned thought?" (*LHP I* 31)

<sup>5</sup> The allusion here is of course to the famous passage from the end of Hume's *Enquiry* regarding the futility of at least certain types of philosophical inquiry.

In summary, an initial factor which Hegel identifies as responsible for intensifying the charge of futility levelled against philosophy is the increased awareness, both within and without academic philosophy, of the sheer number of different philosophies that have emerged throughout history, combined with the tendency in ordinary consciousness to present the history of these differences as a mere haphazard succession of opinions. The effect of this is to produce an even greater strain on the cultural viability of philosophy than in previous times.

## 2.2 *The Futility of Philosophy in Modern Culture*

A second and more significant factor that has increased the pressure on philosophy to demonstrate that it is not a futile endeavor is the major cultural shifts that have occurred in the rise of modernity. Hegel of course lived during the period in which modernity was coming into full swing. As a deeply sensitive and insightful observer of his time he was keenly aware of the rapid changes in interests and values that were taking hold in modern European cultures. Thus, for example, in his Inaugural Address delivered at the University of Heidelberg in 1816, after referring to philosophy as an “almost dead science,” Hegel indicates what has been responsible for placing philosophy in such a dire state:

The necessities of the time have accorded to the petty interests of everyday life such overwhelming attention: the deep interests of actuality and the strife respecting these have engrossed all the powers and forces of the mind – and also the necessary means – to so great an extent, that no place has been left to the higher inward life, the intellectual operations of the purer sort; and the better

natures have thus been stunted in their growth, and in great measure sacrificed.

(*LHP I xli*)

On Hegel's view, the realm of mere "actuality", the realm that does not pause to question and discern the complex principles that govern the actualities that happen to exist, or, in other words, the realm of petty political and economic interest, has arrogated to itself the lion's share of the intellectual powers and "practical" resources available in modern culture (*LHP I xlii*). As a result, the patient cultivation of the life of the mind necessary for the proper practice of philosophizing has been thoroughly neglected.

To be sure, this is an only too familiar narrative of the deleterious effects which many of the major cultural shifts in modernity have wrought upon philosophy. Philosophy demands a sustained withdrawal from the mere practical interests or "externalities" of the immediately present moment (*LHP I xliii*). The unremitting demand of the constantly expanding market economy for short-term results and immediate practical application as conditions for any significant investment of resources has led to the rapidly decreasing cultural, not to say, economic, standing of philosophy. The further question as pertains to this dissertation, however, concerns precisely what role the problem of philosophical differences has played in this progressive consignment of philosophy to cultural irrelevance. In order to respond adequately to this query it will be necessary to take note of one of the most significant cultural developments in modernity: the emergence of modern science.

### *2.2.1 The Futility of Philosophy and Modern Science*

Hegel indicates his sensitivity to the problem posed to philosophy by the emergence of modern science when he notes that in the "European countries in which the

sciences and the cultivation of the understanding have been prosecuted with zeal and with respect, Philosophy, excepting in name, has sunk from memory” (*LHP I* xlii). Without entering at present into an examination of the merits of Hegel’s larger critical appraisal of modern science, however, it can still be observed what it is about modern science, especially as it has come to be viewed by ordinary consciousness, which casts philosophy in a particularly unfavorable light.

The peculiar characteristic of modern science that is so damaging to the relative value of philosophy, at least from the viewpoint of ordinary consciousness, is the success of science in routinely and methodically overcoming initial conflicts and disagreements and arriving at more or less universal agreement over its various problems.<sup>6</sup> As is often the case, Galileo can be used to illustrate this point. Prior to Galileo, philosophers notoriously disagreed over whether or not heavier bodies fell faster than lighter bodies. Galileo, however, deliberately prescind from the principles traditionally invoked by philosophers to explain kinematic and dynamic motion. Instead, on the basis of empirical investigations he generated a hypothesis which he proceeded to test and verify by means of an ingenious series of techniques. Thus, by applying what has come to be called the “scientific method” Galileo was able entirely to eschew the ancient and hitherto futile debates among the philosophers and proceed rigorously to a single, verified answer to the question of the nature of the free fall.

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of this kind of view of the difference between philosophy and science, of course, abound. Cf. A.C. Crombie in his otherwise quite sophisticated study, *Medieval and Early Modern Science, vol. 1: Science in the Middle Ages: V-XIII Centuries*: “The art of understanding the scientific thought of the past is for the same reason no less delicate, but its terms of reference are made somewhat different from those of philosophy because of a characteristic possessed preeminently by science, though also to some extent shared by history. Unlike other disciplines dealing with the world, *the solutions to problems in science, past and present, can be judged by criteria that are in most cases objective, universally accepted, and stable from one period to the next*” [emphases mine] (2).



For ordinary consciousness, the discovery of the law of the free fall provides an all-encompassing image: modern science triumphantly succeeding in settling questions that had previously been the source of much futile controversy among philosophers.<sup>7</sup> Thus, as a result of the unprecedented success and influence of modern science, philosophy has come to be viewed as *not* a science or source of “real” knowledge precisely to the degree that it is ever embroiled in the same unresolved and seemingly fruitless disputes. Unlike pre-modern times, then, ordinary consciousness now possesses a rather compelling phenomenon to which it can appeal in order to vindicate its perennial charge of futility against philosophy. The task of developing a scientific account of why there should exist a multiplicity of philosophies which find themselves in constant disagreement has thus become exceedingly more exigent.

### 2.3 *Summary of Preceding Points*

The charge of futility levelled against philosophy by ordinary consciousness has intensified enormously in the modern period due to a confluence of changes, both cultural and otherwise. One problem stems simply from the manner in which the history of philosophy is often conceived and presented, namely, as a more or less haphazard

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<sup>7</sup> Voltaire was of course at the forefront of promulgating this view of the history of philosophy vis-à-vis the emergent modern science. Cf. Crombie: “Led by Voltaire the Rationalists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century discounted any possibility of a connection between medieval philosophy and the triumph of scientific reason which they located in the period of Galileo, Harvey, Descartes and Newton” (*Medieval and Early Modern Science* 3-4). Cf. Peter Gay: “‘True philosophy,’ wrote Voltaire [...] ‘began to shine on men only with the end of the sixteenth century’ – with Galileo” (*The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* 228). More proximate to Hegel was the influence of the German philosopher, G.E. Schulze. As Hegel notes in his early and important essay, “On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy”, Schulze locates the “subjective source” of his skeptical view of philosophy in the fact that philosophers “are in constant contradiction with one another [...] and every new effort to endow this cognition with the stability of science comes to grief; [...] then the conclusion can be drawn with considerable plausibility that at the basis of the quest for cognition of this kind [...] there must lie an unachievable goal, and an illusion shared by all who work for it” (*Between Hegel and Kant* 314). Importantly, Schulze contrasts the futility of all hitherto philosophy which grounds his skeptical doubt with the success of modern physics and astronomy “which now set all reasonable urge to doubt at defiance” (*Between Hegel and Kant* 322).

succession of distinct positions or arguments with no discernible set of principles governing their relations and process of unfolding. A second factor is the socio-economic changes in modernity whose increasingly unquestioned demands for immediate practical results undermine the zeal necessary to undertake the kind of sustained reflection and withdrawal from immediate practical concerns required to cultivate a truly philosophical consciousness. Lastly, there is the emergence of modern science and the technologies to which it has given rise whose apparent success at routinely solving the various problems they encounter casts such an unfavorable light on philosophy which seems ever to be embroiled in the same old controversy and confusions. These are three major factors motivating the significance of Hegel's effort to provide an explanatory account of philosophical differences.

### 3. *Historical Responses to the Problem of Philosophical Differences*

In order to establish more firmly the significance of the problem of philosophical differences along with its enormously increased significance in modernity it will be useful briefly to examine how intellectual and philosophical conflict has motivated philosophy throughout its history. An exhaustive treatment of the history of philosophical responses to the problem of intellectual and philosophical conflict extends well beyond the scope of the present work. Instead, Hegel's treatment of four important historical instances of philosophical response to intellectual and philosophical conflict will be discussed:

- 1) The Socratic response to the emergence of intellectual and moral discord in the ancient Greek world.
- 2) The Skeptical response to the proliferation of conflicting philosophies that immediately succeeded the Socratic effort.

- 3) The Early Modern and Enlightenment response to the incessant disputations among the philosophical schools.

The Socratic response to the problem of intellectual and moral conflict in ancient Greece will be discussed because it shows how philosophy itself emerged in great measure as a response to this problem. The Skeptical response is worth mentioning because it is perhaps the first instance in which the charge of futility is levelled against philosophy as a whole due to the constant conflict among the various philosophies. The Early Modern and Enlightenment response is worth discussing because Hegel himself comes on the scene at perhaps the zenith of the Enlightenment's violent rejection of the notoriously disputatious Scholastic tradition. As such it will prove extremely useful in understanding Hegel's own effort at responding to the problem of philosophical differences to compare and contrast it with that of the Early Modern and Enlightenment thinkers.

### *3.1 The Problem of Disagreement in Ancient Greece*

For Hegel, philosophy is fundamentally concerned with the sublation of an apparently contradictory or irreconcilable manifold of elements into higher, more universal unity.<sup>8</sup> Thus, according to Hegel, "with Thales we, properly speaking, begin the History of Philosophy"<sup>9</sup> (*LHP I* 171). For, Thales was the first to attempt to reduce the

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<sup>8</sup> A point that will become increasingly important to develop, however, is that, for Hegel, the differences obtaining among the multiplicity of apparently conflicting elements are not simply inexplicably "given" but have in fact been posited in and through Spirit. Consequently, for Hegel, in the last analysis, the ultimate philosophical task of the sublation of apparently conflicting multiplicity into unity is inextricably linked with the task of discerning the self-differentiating movement of Spirit in and through which that multiplicity has been constituted – hence, the essentiality of discerning the genesis of the conflicting philosophies for the full coming to fruition of philosophy itself.

<sup>9</sup> At this point it would be well worth noting that, for Hegel, philosophy properly so-called emerges specifically in ancient Greece and its historical development is confined more or less strictly to western societies and cultures. Thus, in the *LHP* Hegel states "Philosophy proper commences in the West" (99). Unless otherwise indicated, and for the mere sake of exegetical convenience, I will retain Hegel's restricted scope when referring to philosophy and especially to its historical development. Needless to say, Hegel's restriction is disturbingly Eurocentric. Equally needless to say, traditions of philosophy that did not historically emerge in the West are now recognized and practiced all over the globe. Thus, without

“conflict of an endless quantity” of cosmological principles operative in the pre-philosophical Homeric universe to a “simple unity” or “universal.”<sup>10</sup> Thales, as the first philosopher, however, was evidently searching on the largely speculative or metaphysical level for the unifying principle operative in and governing the distinct and apparently conflicting elements constitutive of the entire cosmos. Yet, along with an enduring speculative interest, what especially motivated the emergence and continued development of philosophy in Greece was the search for the principle of unity within the specifically intellectual and moral sphere.

On Hegel’s showing, the period in ancient Greece immediately preceding the emergence of philosophy was marked by a fundamental breakdown of intellectual and moral agreement and cohesion. An especially important development that led to intellectual and spiritual conflict in Greece was the ongoing displacement of large portions of the Greek population whether as the result of Persian military incursions in Asia Minor, the colonial and mercantile expansion of major Greek city-states like Athens, or increased internal economic and political differentiation within the city-states themselves.<sup>11</sup> Prior to these geographical and cultural shifts, as Michael Forster points out, Greek Ethical Life was, for Hegel, characterized by “complete and automatic

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question, a comparative study of the role of intellectual and philosophical conflict in the historical genesis of non-Western philosophical traditions could prove highly instructive in terms of challenging, confirming or otherwise qualifying Hegel’s more general account of how philosophy itself emerges and develops. Such an enterprise, however, falls well outside the scope of the present project.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. The “Skepticism” Essay: “Diogenes Laertius remarks on it in his own way, saying that some people name Homer as the founder of skepticism, because he spoke of the same things differently in different relationships” (*Between Kant and Hegel* 322)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hegel: “According to Thucydides, the Ionic colonies in Asia Minor and the islands proceeded principally from Athens, because the Athenians, on account of the over-population of Attica, migrated there. We find the greatest activity of Greek life on the coasts of Asia Minor, in the Greek islands, and then towards the West of Magna Graecia; we see amongst these people, through their internal political activity and their intercourse with foreigners, the existence of a diversity and variety in their relations, whereby narrowness of vision is done away with and the universal rises in its place” (*LHP I* 169).

agreement on fundamental principles” (*Hegel and Skepticism* 76). Forster states further that, for Hegel, “it is only by going beyond the confines of their own communities and considering views of alien communities that individuals can come to recognize the actuality or even possibility of conflicts between fundamental principles” (*Hegel and Skepticism* 76).

Through being exposed to a multiplicity of distinct cultures, the Greeks gradually discovered the relativity of their own customs and common sense.<sup>12</sup> The shock of discovering the relativity of ethical customs and common sense created a crisis that eventually called forth a pair of distinct but related intellectual and spiritual responses: the Sophistic and the Socratic responses, respectively.<sup>13</sup>

Hegel’s overall estimation of the Sophists is far from merely critical.<sup>14</sup> The intellectual attitude expressed and cultivated by the Sophists was, for Hegel, an important

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The natural man has no consciousness of the presence of opposites; he lives quite unconsciously in his own particular way, in conformity with the morality of his town, without ever having reflected on the fact that he practices this morality. If he then comes into a foreign land, he is much surprised, for through encountering the opposite he for the first time experiences the fact that he has these customs, and he immediately arrives at the uncertainty as to whether his point of view or the opposite is wrong” (*LHP II* 355); “What counts for the race as absolutely One and the same, and as fixed, eternal and everywhere constituted in the same way, time wrenches away from it; most commonly [what does this is] the increasing range of acquaintance with alien peoples under the pressure of natural necessity” (*Between Kant and Hegel* 333).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Just because this [Ionian] world of beauty which raised itself into a higher kind of culture went to pieces, Philosophy arose” (*LHP I* 155). The first sections of Forster’s book treat at length Hegel’s account of the breakdown of the spontaneous unanimity of ethical customs in Greece that preceded the emergence of philosophy. Bruno Snell, in his classic, *The Discovery of the Mind*, provides an independent but complementary account of this same process. Worth noting, also, is that, for Hegel, the Greek discovery of the relativity of common sense is, in the last analysis, an entirely salutary, not to say, necessary, development since it serves as a prelude to the eventual discovery or recognition on the part of Mind that the laws, customs and so forth that govern it are in fact its own productions and (self-) determinations. The recognition on the part of Mind that it is self-determining is coincident with its recognition of itself as intrinsically free. Cf. Hegel: “If we say that consciousness of freedom is connected with the appearance of Philosophy, this principle must be a fundamental one with those with whom Philosophy begins; a people having this consciousness of freedom founds its existence on that principle seeing that the laws and the whole circumstances of the people are based only on the Concept that Mind forms of itself, and in the categories which it has” (*LHP I* 95).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. in particular chapter 2 of *LHP I*: “First Period, Second Division: From the Sophists to the Socratics”

cultural development; in fact, it was a necessary precondition for the emergence of philosophy. For, as a result of their familiarity with a plurality of cultural and ethical customs, the Sophists were able to detach themselves from an unquestioned commitment to the validity of any particular common sense view. They were consequently ready to consider a multiplicity of positions or viewpoints on a given matter.<sup>15</sup> Speaking of the Sophists' much reputed eloquence, Hegel thus states,

The particular characteristic of eloquence is to show the manifold points of view existing in a thing, and to give force to those which harmonize with what appears to me to be most useful; it thus is the art of putting forward various points of view in the concrete case, and placing others in the shade.<sup>16</sup> (*LHP I 358*)

Indeed, for Hegel, this familiarity with and willingness to consider a multiplicity of viewpoints represents a stage in which thought begins to pass from the "particular to the universal" (*LHP I 365*). As such, the cultured detachment of the Sophists represents an important preliminary stage through which consciousness must pass on its way to becoming at home in the universal determinations proper to philosophy.

The limitation of the Sophists according to Hegel, however, was that despite their detachment from the content of any particular common sense, they nevertheless failed to pursue and discern the universal principle that would organize and sublimate these relative viewpoints into a higher, more concrete unity. Instead, the Sophists left it to the more or

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The Sophists thus knew that on this basis nothing was secure, because the power of thought treated everything dialectically. That is the formal culture which they had and imparted, for their acquaintanceship with so many points of view shook what was morality in Greece (the religion, duties, and laws, unconsciously exercised), since through its limited content, that came into collision with what was different" (*LHP I 369-70*).

<sup>16</sup> By contrast, Hegel notes, "the uncultivated man finds it unpleasant to associate with people who know how to grasp and express every point of view with ease" (*LHP I 359*).

less arbitrary inclinations of the individual to select from among the plurality of conflicting views which they brought forth for consideration. Thus, Hegel states, “to the Sophists the satisfaction of the individual himself was now made ultimate”<sup>17</sup> (*LHP I 370-1*). Not only was this offensive to traditional culture,<sup>18</sup> more importantly it failed actually to satisfy the philosophical impulse to sublimate multiplicity into unity. It was left to Socrates and Plato to take up the more properly philosophical task of searching out the universal principle permeating and governing the multiplicity of conflicting common senses operative in Greece.

### *3.2 The Socratic Response to the Problem of Disagreement and the Birth of Philosophy*

The Socratic effort and achievement is well known, but it is worth emphasizing the significance of the role intellectual and moral disagreement had in motivating it. Socrates and Plato after him were dissatisfied with the Sophistic response to the discovery of the relativity of common sense. Rather than being content to allocate all normative intellectual and moral criteria to the particular inclinations of the individual will, Socrates and Plato chose to pursue the task of searching out universal normative criteria that would transcend the relativity of common sense viewpoints.<sup>19</sup>

Several dialogues, such as the *Meno* and *Euthyphro*, explicitly identify and attempt to respond to the problem of intellectual and moral disagreement. It is the

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. Hegel “Thus the Sophists are reproached for countenancing personal affections, private interests, etc. This proceeds directly from the nature of their culture, which, because it places ready various points of view, makes it depend on the pleasure of the subject alone which shall prevail, that is, if fixed principles do not determine” (*LHP I 371*)

<sup>18</sup> C. Hegel: “For because the Sophists wandered about the towns, and thus youths, deserting fathers and friends, followed them in view of improving themselves through their intercourse with them, they drew upon themselves much envy and ill-will – for everything new is hated” (*LHP I 360*).

<sup>19</sup> “In this regard Socrates is opposed to the Sophists, for the proposition that man is the measure of all things, to them still comprehends particular ends, while to Socrates the universal brought forth through free thought is thereby expressed in objective fashion.” (*LHP I 406*).

dialogue form itself, however, which perhaps most profoundly bears witness to Plato's keen and subtle awareness of the problem of intellectual and moral conflict, not to mention the difficulty of responding to it effectively. For the dialogues portray the dramatic encounter of a multiplicity of often radically conflicting viewpoints, but to that extent they themselves manifest a distinct sensitivity to the existence of such conflict. As Hegel notes, "[In] the dialogues of Plato... the divergency of opinions which comes out is examined, and a conclusion arrived at as to the truth; or, if the result is negative, the whole process of knowledge is what is seen in Plato" (*LHP II* 12-13). Within the dialogues, then, the conflict between the viewpoints articulated by the interlocutors is either resolved through the discovery of a higher, more comprehensive viewpoint, or at least brought into clearer focus through the production of an *aporia*. Thus, for Hegel, the dialogue form itself manifests the awareness on Plato's part of the problem of intellectual and moral conflict.<sup>20</sup>

As evidenced by both the content and form of the Platonic dialogues, philosophy from its inception has been motivated by the exigency to respond to and in some way overcome the problem of intellectual and moral conflict. Socrates and Plato responded to the problem of intellectual and moral conflict by searching for universal principles that would transcend the limited or relative horizons of the conflicting common senses operative in ancient Greece as well as overcome the relativism of the Sophists.

As far as the present dissertation is concerned, however, what is of especial importance regarding the Socratic breakthrough into the realm of universal intellectual

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<sup>20</sup> Hegel, however, ultimately finds the dialogue form to be philosophically deficient since it does not permit of a fully systematic development and presentation of the ideas treated therein. Cf. Hegel: "The philosophical culture of Plato, like the general scientific culture of his time, was not yet ripe for really scientific work" (*LHP II* 17).



and moral principles is that, despite its monumental impact on subsequent philosophical and scientific thought, it nevertheless decidedly did *not* resolve or otherwise overcome the problem of intellectual and moral conflict. Rather, *the problem would now be transposed into the history of the conflicting philosophies themselves*. As Hegel notes, “The most varied schools and principles proceeded from the doctrine of Socrates”<sup>21</sup> (*LHP I* 449). Indeed, disputes emerged about the very nature of the universal principles or forms themselves: what they were, where or how they existed, whether or not they existed at all, and so on. Thus, the Socratic search for the universal ironically gave rise to a splintering into several different schools each with a *particular conception of the universal*.

### 3.3 *The Skeptics*

The ancient Skeptics mark an important occurrence in the history of responses to philosophical differences. The Socratic search for the universal did not succeed in overcoming the problem of intellectual differences; rather, the entire problem was transposed into the history of the conflicting philosophies. The Skeptics were perhaps the first to level the charge of futility against philosophy specifically on the basis of the discord obtaining among the philosophies themselves. Thus, as Hegel notes, the “Later Tropes” of Sextus Empiricus, the very first trope invoked in order to induce the desired skeptical attitude of “suspended judgment” (*ataraxia*) is the diversitude in opinions” (*LHP II* 357). Sextus, as Hegel notes,

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<sup>21</sup>. Although there will be occasion to discuss this at much greater length later on, it is worth mentioning that, for Hegel, the ultimate inadequacy of the Socratic and Platonic endeavor does not mean that it was merely futile and contributed nothing to the task of responding adequately to the problem of intellectual, moral and now philosophical conflict.

Adduce[s] the manifold nature of dogmas, and from this the conclusion is drawn that the one has just as much support as the other. Philosophers and others still make copious use of this sceptical trope, which is consequently in great favor: on account of the diversitude in philosophies, the say, Philosophy has no value, and truth is unattainable because men have thought about it in ways so contradictory. This diversitude in philosophic opinion is said to be an invincible weapon against Philosophy. (*LHP II* 357-8)

For what appears to be the first time, at least to any sustained and methodical degree, the Sceptics cite the conflicting views of the philosophers as grounds for denying the viability of philosophy.

Worth noting, however, is that, similar to the Sophists with their cultured detachment from commitment to any particular common sense, Hegel is far from merely critical of the ancient Sceptical inculcation of suspended judgment with respect to the conflicting philosophies. For Hegel, the ability to detach or abstract from the immediate attachment to a particular viewpoint or position is an essential moment on the way to a more properly philosophical, which is to say, universal, viewpoint. Not surprisingly, however, for Hegel, the merely detached or abstract universality of the Sceptical consciousness is inadequate since, among other things, it takes all particular determinations – including the philosophies themselves – and merely abstracts from them, rather than demonstrating the laws in and through they have emerged and thereby determining them concretely.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Sceptical self-consciousness, however, is this divided consciousness to which on the one hand motion is a confusion of its content it is this movement which annuls for itself all things, in which what is offered to it is quite contingent and indifferent; it acts according to laws which are not held by it to be true, and is a perfectly empiric existence. On another side its simple thought is the immovability of self-

### 3.4 *The Early Modern and Enlightenment Response to Philosophical Disagreement*

Perhaps the key difference that separates the Early Modern and Enlightenment response to intellectual and philosophical differences from that of the Ancients is the fact that the Early Modern and Enlightenment thinkers could and did increasingly appeal to the unprecedented successes of modern science and its routine overcoming of disagreements as grounds for denouncing philosophy, at least as had been hitherto practiced, as a fundamentally futile enterprise. Since the immediately received philosophical tradition – Scholasticism – was so utterly characterized by incessant and seemingly fruitless disputations while, simultaneously, the new science appeared to hold out the promise of doing away once for all with the entirety of the old Scholastic confusions and controversies, there emerged the new conviction that all traditional learning should be left behind to make room for the full flowering of the new science. Tradition, history and even “mere” nature, beset as they had hitherto been by incessant conflict or even a war of all against all, were thus to be shed like dead skin or else mastered and possessed by the new scientific techniques.

This new attitude towards the history of intellectual and philosophical differences emergent in this period lasts right up until the time of Hegel, and of course beyond.<sup>23</sup> Hegel’s own response to the history of intellectual and philosophical conflict, however, is notably different from than that of the Early Modern and Enlightenment thinkers that

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identity, but its reality, its unity with itself is something that is perfectly empty, and the actual filling in is any content that one chooses. As this simplicity, and at the same time pure confusion, Scepticism is in fact the wholly self-abrogating consciousness” (*LHP II* 371).

<sup>23</sup> In *The Anatomy of Misremembering*, Cyril O’Regan chronicles how this kind of historical amnesia promoted by the Enlightenment, of which Hegel was an early critic, has continued into the present.

precede him. It will thus be worth recalling some of the more salient views put forward by these prior thinkers in order better to understand and appreciate Hegel's contribution.

### 3.4.1 *Montaigne*

Montaigne explicitly revives the Skeptical charge of the futility of philosophy based upon the conflicts obtaining among the philosophies (*Essays* 318ff.). Indeed, in an argument that will be a major point of interest for Descartes, Montaigne states that since there is no philosophical position that has not been subject to dispute, all the philosophies are dubious and as good as false. Montaigne also revives the older Sophistic insight into the relativity of common sense viewpoints as a further basis for denying the viability of philosophy. Just as the Greek colonial expansion helped precipitate the discovery of the relativity of common sense, Montaigne specifically cites the discovery of the vastly different customs and traditions among the people of the New World as providing unmistakable evidence of the relativity of common sense including, if not especially, the philosophies that had been assimilated into the common heritage of Europe (*Essays* 150-9). Montaigne, however, does not align himself with the emerging view that the new science will be able to succeed where philosophy had previously failed. Instead he counsels a certain kind of detached or perhaps ironic cultural conservatism in which one maintains the views of one's tradition while simultaneously acknowledging the validity of conflicting views.

### 3.4.2 *Bacon*

Bacon, setting the tone for so many of his successors, maintained a "polemical attitude towards scholastic methods as they had hitherto existed" (LHP III 44). Especially

noteworthy is that of the Four Idols of the mind that he lists and critiques in the *Novum Organon*, the entire fourth Idol – the Idols of the Theater – specifically deals with the problem of philosophical differences. Bacon states, “the Idols of the Theatre are not innate, nor do they steal into the understanding secretly, but are plainly impressed and received into the mind from the play-books of philosophical systems and the perverted rules of demonstration” (*Novum Organon* LXII) In contrast to this “theater” or ceaseless parade of conflicting philosophical systems and Scholastic disputations, Bacon of course famously advocates the “experimental method.” Through the application of the experimental method the history of all the conflicting philosophies will become obsolete and a new era will be ushered in. In conclusion to his discussion of the Four Idols, Bacon thus writes,

So much concerning the several classes of Idols, and their equipage: all of which must be renounced and put away with a fixed and solemn determination, and the understanding thoroughly freed and cleansed; the entrance into the kingdom of man, founded on the sciences, being not much other than the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, whereinto none may enter except as a little child (*Novum Organon* LXVIII).

Despite their shared antipathy for the disputatious Scholastics, Bacon differs from Montaigne in thus advocating for the embrace and vigorous development of the new science. For the new science promises, among other things, to extirpate once for all the nefarious influence of the Idols of the Theater or, in other words, the problem of philosophical differences.

### 3.4.3 *Descartes*

Treatment of Descartes is usually confined to discussion of his method, his first application of that method in the *Meditations* in which he deduces the *Cogito*, or his subsequent proof for the existence of God. It is worth recalling, however, that the primary motivating factor for Descartes in the development of his method was the fact that philosophers are in constant conflict and disagreement. In an explicit invocation of Montaigne's skeptical argument mentioned above, Descartes affirms that since there is no issue that the philosophers have treated which has not been subject to dispute, all of the historical philosophical teachings are doubtful and to that extent worthless (*Discourse 5*). Descartes, however, is not content with the skeptical detachment of Montaigne and instead launches a quest for an indubitable foundation upon which to erect all philosophical and scientific knowledge. Descartes thus sets about constructing a method that will not be susceptible to doubt and, therefore, to disagreement or dispute.

Importantly, Descartes identifies the influence of mere nature and tradition as the underlying cause for all the disputes and confusions among the philosophers. The teachings of the philosophers are like the tangled streets of ancient cities or the confused agglomeration of laws and statutes characteristic of traditional jurisprudence. They have all emerged haphazardly in accordance with the non-rational whims of custom and natural process. Accordingly, the first step in the Cartesian method is to raze the whole edifice of previous learning by submitting it in one fell swoop to universal doubt (*Discourse 6-9*). Thus, perhaps even more emphatically than Bacon, Descartes calls for

jettisoning all previous learning consisting as it has of such futile conflict and dispute and erecting a whole new edifice of knowledge based on the method of the new science.<sup>24</sup>

#### 3.4.4 Locke

Importantly, Locke's epistemology is constructed with a view to responding to the disputes and extravagancies of the Scholastics. Locke develops the position that was already articulated by Montaigne and which will be taken up again by Hume and Kant, namely, that it is essential to establish the limits of human knowledge in order preemptively to circumvent the vain and futile speculations of the philosophers generally since such activity has given rise to so much controversy and violence.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in the Introduction to *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke states that a primary motivation for the work is to establish

The grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted somewhere or other with such assurance and confidence, that he that shall take a view of opinions of mankind, observe their opposition, and at the same time consider the fondness and devotion wherewith they are embraced, the resolution and eagerness wherewith they are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing

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<sup>24</sup> Importantly, Descartes could appeal not only to the success of Galileo in overcoming disputes about the nature of the free fall but also to his own success in resolving ancient puzzles in geometry.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Greg Forster, *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus*: "The *Essay* devotes a great deal of attention to a critique of the scholastics [...] The scholastics saw themselves as engaged in an ongoing project to construct a comprehensive body of Christian knowledge. For Locke, the scholastics represented a serious obstacle to moral consensus because of their convictions that they possessed a special, privileged access to knowledge, in that they were the only ones who understood the enormous and extremely complex body of thought they had built up over the previous four centuries. Locke had to refute this claim in order to build a moral consensus, which is based on the premise that no one has special access to knowledge [...] Locke proved that the scholastic body of thought was not the achievement the scholastics held it to be [...] he showed that, because of the limits of the human mind, no one could possibly claim to achieve the kind of knowledge the scholastics claimed to have achieved" (71).

as truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it [...] It is therefore worth while to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge, and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have not certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent and moderate our persuasions.

Hegel famously critiques the Locke's and Kant's respective attempts to establish the limits of knowledge on strictly phenomenological grounds. Yet, it is important to note that motivating the development of Locke's position is the desire to respond to intellectual and philosophical differences and conflict.

Worth noting as well is the reason why Locke rejects the position of the Rationalists who argued in favor of innate ideas. Locke's argument is, as Hegel points out, that with respect to the putatively innate ideas "universal consent is not to be found" (*LHP III* 301). Locke's point here is that if such ideas were in fact innate then they would automatically generate universal consensus; yet, as a matter of empirical fact, no such consensus is to be found; therefore, the ideas are not innate.<sup>26</sup> Locke thus appeals to philosophical conflict as a further reason for rejecting the Rationalist and Scholastic ideal of science as a deductive system proceeding from self-evident first principles. Along with his rejection of at least certain aspects of the more Rationalist ideal of knowledge espoused by Descartes, however, Locke nevertheless continues the line of Early Modern

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Locke: "[T]his argument of universal consent, which is made use of to prove innate principles, seems to be me a demonstration that there are none such because there none to which all mankind give an universal assent" (*Essay* Book I, Chapter 1, section 4 of).



and Enlightenment thinkers who seek to move beyond or at least marginalize the disputatious Scholastic tradition in favor of the new science.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.4.5 Hume

Hume also sets out to determine the limits of human knowledge. He pursues his effort, moreover, in order to diffuse the philosophical disputes and subsequent violence that seem to erupt as result of philosophers and theologians claiming knowledge of realities which as a matter of fact lie beyond human ken.<sup>28</sup> Thus, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, immediately after articulating his basic distinction between impressions and ideas, Hume states that a primary purpose for drawing such a distinction will be the quashing of philosophical discord:

Here, therefore, is a proposition, which not only seems, in itself, simple and intelligible, but, if a proper use were made of it, might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them [...] When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* [...] By bringing ideas into so clear a light we may reasonably hope to remove all dispute, which may arise, concerning their nature and reality.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: “Locke’s great epistemological contribution to philosophy is a conception of human knowledge suitable for the experimental science of his day, one that in natural philosophy at least will replace the old, Aristotelian conception.”

<sup>28</sup> Gay: “David Hume denounced Scholasticism as ‘false philosophy’ and ‘spurious erudition’; the philosophers of the Middle Ages, he charged, ‘were universally infected with superstition and sophistry’” (*The Enlightenment* 227). Cf. Hume’s “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm” for his account of how the superstition of which he accuses the Scholastics gives rise to overt violence.

Along with his deflationary epistemology, Hume also makes use of the same argument adopted by the ancient Skeptics as well as Montaigne in order to quell the pretensions of the philosophers regarding moral questions. As Hegel notes, “Hume, like the sceptics of former days, appeals to the various opinions of various nations: amongst different nations and in different times various standards of right have been held” (*LHP III* 373).

Hume is thus clearly motivated by the problem of intellectual and philosophical differences. He is to be distinguished from many of his contemporary Enlightenment thinkers, however, in being far less sanguine than they regarding the possibility of such differences being definitively overcome through the advance of scientific technique. Similar to Montaigne, he seems to advocate a detached acceptance of the “common rules of reason, morality, and prudence” of the culture in which he happens to find himself as the surest way of overcoming or at least avoiding intellectual and philosophical conflict (“Of Superstition and Sophistry”).

#### 3.4.6 Kant

Kant continues along the trajectory of Montaigne, Locke, Hume, et al. for whom a chief task of philosophy was to establish the limits of knowledge in order thereby to circumvent the conflict and violence that seems to arise from speculation about realities that lie beyond human ken. The underlying assumption to this deflationary effort seems to be that since such disputes, by definition, do not admit of any possibility of rational resolution, they can only be resolved through some form of violence, be it intellectual, military or otherwise. Thus, Kant’s famous phrase early in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that he needed to “deny knowledge in order to make room for faith” can be understood as

directed primarily against the excessive speculation not only of the Rationalists but also the disputatious Scholastics and indeed ultimately against the entirety of the confused philosophers (*CPR* Bxxx).

Kant contributes something new, however, to the response to the problem of philosophical differences by subjecting it to a dialectical critique. Thus, the Transcendental Dialectic is dedicated to revealing the source of the confusion and conflicts among the philosophers and, in turn, to revealing how such disputes can be resolved or, rather, dissolved. As Hegel points out, one of Kant's crucial points is that confusion and conflict among philosophers arises from applying the finite categories of the Understanding to the realm of infinite or unconditioned: "If [...] for the determination of the infinite we employ these categories which are applicable only to phenomena, we entangle ourselves in false arguments (paralogisms) and in contradictions (antinomies)" (*LHP III* 445).

Thus, for Kant, philosophical conflict emerges from the illicit extension of the categories beyond the realm of possible experience. Accordingly, the solution to the problem of philosophical differences lies largely in the recognition of the futility of reason in its quest to grasp the unconditioned by means of the categories of the Understanding. It is true that, for Kant, reason spontaneously is driven beyond the realm of possible experience in search of the unconditioned. Yet, this spontaneous desire of the unconditioned immanent in reason can be educated and made aware of the futility of its metaphysical aspiration. Such recognition on the part of reason can circumvent the

quixotic and potentially violent quest of the philosophers to settle questions regarding the nature of the unconditioned in-itself.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.5 *Summary of Preceding Section*

From the inception of philosophy, philosophers have been concerned to respond to the problem of intellectual and philosophical conflict and disagreement. The Socratic effort was fundamentally motivated by the desire to respond to the discovery on the part of the ancient Greeks of the relativity of their customs and common sense by discerning and promulgating a universal principle that would transcend such relativity. Importantly, however, the problem of pre-philosophical intellectual conflict was not thereby transcended or overcome but was rather transposed into the ongoing history of conflicting philosophies. The ancient Skeptics took such conflict and disagreement among the philosophers as evidence of the futility of philosophy and thus became perhaps the first group to level such a charge against the entire discipline of philosophy. The early Modern and Enlightenment thinkers turned to promoting or attempting to justify the legitimacy of the emergent science with its promise of generating universal intellectual consensus not to say progressive technological mastery over nature. Several of these thinkers also sought to delimit the proper scope of possible human scientific knowledge in order thereby to circumvent the tendency among philosophers to engage in the kind of futile

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<sup>29</sup> In critiquing Scholastic and other pre-modern philosophies, Kant, like his predecessors, is also concerned to help usher in the new science. As Heiner Bielefeldt notes, “With his systematic criticism of dogmatic metaphysics, Kant attempts to define the scope and limitations of objectifying human cognition in order to foster epistemological and methodological clarity in the sciences. Hence the critical refutation of the dogmatic metaphysics that ignores the limits of the human understanding and thereby undermines the integrity of scientific research” (*Symbolic Representation in Kant’s Practical Philosophy* 10).

metaphysical speculations that seem invariably lead to conflict and dispute and ultimately to overt violence.

We thus return to the original factor motivating the significance of providing an explanatory account of philosophical differences, namely, philosophical multiplicity and conflict is thought to provide sufficient evidence for the futility of philosophy. Such a demoralizing critique of philosophy, as it turns out, becomes more or less programmatic among Early Modern and Enlightenment philosophers themselves. Significantly, the Early Modern and Enlightenment philosophers, unlike their skeptical forbears, could appeal to the new science and its attendant technologies as providing eminent justification for their own deflationary critique of the erstwhile pretensions of philosophy. For, in contrast to philosophy, these institutions seemed to hold out the promise of a truly effective and progressive resolution to intellectual disputes.

Hegel comes on the scene as this new orientation towards philosophy and its apparent futility was beginning to reach the height of its intensity. His response to the problem of philosophical differences, however, stands in marked contrast to that of his immediate predecessors.<sup>30</sup> Unlike them, Hegel asks a set of new and more radical questions, namely, “What is the source of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies? Why do they exist in the first place? What are the laws governing their emergence, differentiation and development?” Providing a response to these questions constitutes, for

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<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, at one point Hegel turns the charge of futility against those very philosophers who would establish the limits of knowledge and thereby ostensibly save philosophy from embroiling itself in futile speculation: “The talk about the limitations of human thought is futile” (*LHP I 73*). Cf. Hegel: “The man who speaks of the *merely* finite, or *merely* human reason, and the limits to mere reason, lies against the Spirit, for the Spirit as infinite and universal, as self-comprehension, comprehends itself not in a ‘merely’ nor in limits, nor in the finite as such. It has nothing to do with this, for it comprehends itself within itself alone, in its infinitude” (*LHP I 74*).

Hegel at least, a necessary step towards responding effectively to the charge of futility levelled against philosophy.

#### 4. *Self-knowledge and Philosophical Differences*

A final factor motivating the significance of pursuing an explanatory account of philosophical differences is more directly concerned with the internal efforts of philosophy itself. For Hegel, the multiple philosophies are expressions of different forms of the mind.<sup>31</sup> The different philosophies thus manifest differentiations within the mind itself. The history of philosophy with its successive emergence of distinct and conflicting philosophies is therefore the history of the mind's own ongoing self-differentiation.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that the mind itself is responsible for the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies is no small matter; rather, it is fraught with consequences for the actual practice of philosophy. For Hegel, the history of philosophy as the history of the mind's self-differentiation is thus the history of the mind's development and ultimate coming-to-itself.<sup>33</sup> The stages that are traversed by the mind in the course of its development,

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Through knowledge, Mind makes manifest a distinction between knowledge and that which is; this knowledge is thus what produces a new form of development. The new forms at first are only special modes of knowledge, and it is thus that a new Philosophy is produced" (*LHP I 55*).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Hegel: "But those who believe the principle of diversity to be one absolutely fixed, do not know its nature or its dialectic; the manifold or diverse is in a state of flux; it must really be conceived of as in the process of development, and as but a passing moment. Philosophy in its concrete Idea is the activity of development in revealing differences which it contains within itself; these difference are thoughts, for we are now speaking of development in Thought" (*LHP I 34*); "A complete form of thought such as is here presented, is a Philosophy [...] But everything hangs on this: these forms are nothing else the original distinctions in the Idea itself, which is what it is only in them [...] The manifold character of the principles which appear, is, however, not accidental, but necessary: the different forms constitute an integral part of the whole form" (*LHP I 34-5*); "The Concept in its reality freely emits its determinations from itself" (*LHP I 108*).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The development of Mind lies in the fact that its going forth and separation constitutes its coming to itself. This being-at-home-with-self, or coming-to-self of Mind may be described as its complete and highest end. Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are the struggles for Mind to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself; it is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able thus to find itself and return to itself. Only in this manner does Mind attain its freedom, for that is free which is not connected with or dependent on another. True self-possession and satisfaction are only to be found in

however, are not simply discarded upon its completion. Rather, the mind retains the lower stages of development within itself as differentiated moments of the complete whole.<sup>34</sup> For Hegel, moreover, the end of philosophy is the mind's knowledge of itself.<sup>35</sup> What this means is that a *conditio sine qua non* of the mind's self-knowledge is *the knowledge of how it itself has and continues to be the source of conflicting philosophies*. Stated negatively, unless one can provide an explanatory account of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies one will *eo ipso* lack the self-knowledge which is the goal of all philosophy. For, the various philosophies are themselves but expressions of the mind's own self-differentiation. Thus, full self-knowledge demands knowledge of the mind *precisely as* the source of the multiplicity of philosophies.

The different stages of development of the mind also call forth or posit different philosophical questions and problematics. Prior to the emergence of such forms of the mind certain philosophical problematics simply do not become explicitly thematized for the mind.<sup>36</sup> For example, according to Hegel, it was only with the development of a later

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this, and in nothing else but Thought does Mind attain this freedom" (*LHP I 23*); "Thus the Idea as concrete in itself, and self-developing, is an organic system and a totality which contains a multitude of stages and of moments in development. Philosophy has now become for itself the apprehension of this development; and as conceiving Thought, is itself this development in Thought" (*LHP I 27*).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Hegel speaking of latest developments in philosophy, states "To this the World-mind [*Weltgeist*] has come, and each state has its own form in the true system of Philosophy; nothing is lost, all principles are preserved, since Philosophy in its final aspect is the totality of forms" (*LHP III 546*); "the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself. The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof; it is the product and result of those that preceded it" (*LHP III 552-3*); "[T]he history of Philosophy has not do with what is gone, but with the living present" (*LHP I 39*); "From this it follows – since the progress of development is equivalent to further determination, and this means further immersion in and fuller grasp of the Idea itself – that the latest, most modern and newest philosophy is the most developed, richest and deepest. In that philosophy everything which at first seems to be past and gone must be preserved and retained, and it must itself be a mirror of the whole history" (*LHP I 41*).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The final end is to think the Absolute as Mind" (*LHP I 108*); "The activity of the Mind is to know itself" and "as Mind I am only in so far as I know myself" (*LHP III 32*).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. "We must know in ancient philosophy there is before us a definite stage in the development of thought, and in it those forms and necessities of Mind which lie within the limits of that stage alone are brought into existence. There slumber in the Mind of modern times ideas more profound which requires for their awakening other surroundings and another present than the abstract, dim, grey thought of olden times.

form of the mind that the modern problematic of distinguishing and reconciling the realms of subjectivity and objectivity was explicitly posited as a problem.<sup>37</sup> Thus, like the philosophies themselves, philosophical problematics do not simply emerge haphazardly; rather, they emerge concomitant with the various forms of the mind that also give rise to the different philosophies.

What this fact entails is that in order to make progress towards resolving different philosophical problematics it is ultimately necessary to grasp how they are grounded in certain forms of the mind. For, often problematics that emerge at a certain stages of the mind's development can only be resolved through the attainment of a higher viewpoint. Such resolution can take the form of a solution to the problem. It is also possible, however, that the resolution will involve a dissolution of the problem; that is to say, what appear to be true and perhaps vexing problematics from a lower viewpoint are often revealed to be mere pseudo-problems upon the emergence of a higher viewpoint.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, for Hegel, in order to avoid getting bogged down in continually belaboring pseudo-problems it is ultimately necessary to understand their origin in the self-differentiation of the mind itself. Indeed, for Hegel, in order for philosophy to be able truly to refute the charge of futility, philosophers must reach the level of self-knowledge adequate to the problems which they pose for themselves. Essential to such self-

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In Plato, for instance, questions regarding the nature of freedom, the origin of evil and of sin, providence, etc., do not find their philosophic answer [...] The case is similar with regard to questions regarding the limits of knowledge, the opposition between subjectivity and objectivity which had not yet come up in Plato's age" (*LHP I* 48).

<sup>37</sup> "We thus have really two Ideas, the subjective Ideas as knowledge, and then the substantial and concrete Idea; and the development and perfection of this principle and its coming to the consciousness of Thought, is the subject treated by modern Philosophy" (*LHP I* 106).

<sup>38</sup> This point is returned to in the Appendix vis-à-vis the Paradox of Learning discussed in the Meno and the fact that the solution to this paradox demands that the mind move out of the viewpoint of Representation and into a more speculative view of knowledge and truth.



knowledge will be knowledge of the mind as the source of the philosophical problematics themselves and such self-knowledge goes hand in hand with an explanatory account of philosophical differences.

## 5. *The Goals of this Dissertation*

Before moving on, it will be helpful briefly to clarify the precise set of goals that this dissertation seeks to achieve. Broadly speaking, there are essentially two goals of this dissertation: one exegetical and one systematic.

### 5.1 *The Exegetical Goal*

The exegetical goal is to show that, in writing the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (hereafter, *PhG*), Hegel himself is essentially engaged in pursuing two related goals: 1) demonstrating that, despite appearances to the contrary, there is intelligible unity among the different philosophies in order thereby to refute the charge of futility levelled against philosophy by common sense and 2) mediating the development of self-knowledge within the reader. These two goals are, indeed, related in fundamental ways since, as just discussed, self-knowledge is ultimately dependent upon the mind recognizing itself as the source of the multiplicity of philosophies and that the various philosophies correspond to stages in its own development. Yet, in recognizing this about the multiplicity of philosophies one is thereby able to discern that the multiplicity of philosophies form an intelligible unity since that unity is isomorphic with the unity of the mind itself. Moreover, just as self-knowledge, for Hegel, fundamentally includes knowledge of one's mind as dialectically developing towards ever higher viewpoints, so through such self-knowledge one can discern the dialectical development among the various philosophies.

One is thereby able to recognize that development or progress within philosophy is possible and, in fact, actual and that therefore philosophy is not merely a futile enterprise.

The reason why this exegetical effort is needed is because these two central goals motivating Hegel's effort in the *PhG* have not been articulated with sufficient precision and detail by commentators. This point is readily evidenced by a pair of lacunae in the secondary literature. First, one can study reams of articles and monographs on Hegel's effort in the *PhG* and not come across a single mention of the charge of futility against philosophy and Hegel's insistence on the need to respond to it. Yet, the issue of the potential futility of philosophy was a central concern to Hegel throughout his career beginning with his earliest works.

To mention some notable instances in Hegel's corpus in which he directly treats the problem of philosophical multiplicity and the threat of futility to which it gives rise as well as the need for a response to this threat, the early essay, *On the Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy* (hereafter, "*Skeptizismus*"), discusses at length the charge of futility against philosophy brought by the ancient skeptics due to the fact of philosophical multiplicity and conflict as well as the need for true philosophy to respond to this charge (*Di Giovanni* 313-62). The early essay, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (hereafter, *DZ*), opens by observing that an age with so many philosophical systems lying behind it would seem invariably to give rise to a general sense of indifference or futility with respect to the very viability of philosophy as a meaningful discipline; it then proceeds to discuss the need for responding to this discouragement and disillusion (*DZ* 85ff.). The Introduction to the *LHP* spends over sixty pages discussing the problem of the charge of futility against philosophy as well as the

need to respond to it with a comprehensive theory of development, in general, and of the development of the mind – which would be manifested in the history of philosophy – in particular. The Introduction to *Encyclopedia Logic* (hereafter, *EL*) discusses at length the problem of philosophical multiplicity and the demand to discern the intelligible unity present therein (*EL* 37-9). Finally, in just the second paragraph of the Preface to the *PhG* Hegel announces that a central aim of the work will be to “comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive unfolding of truth” (2).

Second, along with and connected with this first lacuna in the scholarship, another lacuna is strikingly manifested in the fact that countless commentators observe at some point throughout their respective discussions of Hegel that Hegel has been the source of perhaps the most variegated array of conflicting interpretations in the history of philosophy, yet, not a single one of these commentators, as far as I have found, has once mentioned that Hegel himself might provide the very means for explaining this conflict. For, as will be shown throughout the course of this dissertation, the mind, according to Hegel, relates to its object according to the level of development it has attained. The fact that different individuals are operating on different levels of development thus explains why they fall into philosophical disagreement. For, as a result of this discrepancy in levels of development, they will be relating to qualitatively different objects even though perhaps they think they are talking about the same thing. In the case of commentators on Hegel, then, if two commentators are operating on different levels of development, then the object to which each would be referring in speaking or writing of “Hegel” would be qualitatively different. As a result, disagreement between such commentators about, for example, the meaning of “Hegel’s” philosophy would be inevitable.

This basic phenomenon would thus explain the vast panoply of conflicting interpretations of Hegel. For, there are as many possible interpretations of Hegel as there are forms of the mind. As noted, however, no commentator of which I am aware has ever even alluded to the possibility that this would be the way Hegel would explain the philosophical disagreement surrounding his own philosophy. This fact suggests, then, that the nature of Hegel's effort to explain the ground of philosophical multiplicity and conflict has not been adequately understood.

There are thus two major reasons for the current exegetical project of clarifying with greater precision the motivation for, and nature of, Hegel's effort to explain philosophical disagreement. First, scholars have overlooked the role of philosophical disagreement as motivating and specifying the nature of Hegel's effort in myriad of his central works including the *PhG*. Second, scholars have entirely neglected the fact that Hegel provides the means for explaining the disagreements and conflicts which surround his philosophy. Beyond the exegetical goal for this dissertation, however, there is also a modest systematic goal.

## 5.2 *The Systematic Goal*

Hegel is, of course, not only keenly aware of the charge of futility against philosophy; he also provides a response to it. The response which Hegel provides will be discussed throughout the course of this dissertation. As noted, in the most general terms, Hegel explains the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies in terms of the polymorphism of the mind. Different philosophies correspond to and express different developmental forms or stages of the mind. Insofar as two philosophers are operating within different levels of development they will invariably fall into conflict. Still, progress in philosophy

is possible, and philosophy is therefore not futile, inasmuch as development of the mind is possible. For Hegel, such progress does indeed take place, and in the *PhG* he sets out his account of its basic dialectical structure.

The systematic argument of this dissertation is not that Hegel supplies the correct explanation for the multiplicity of philosophies. Rather, it is simply to show that it is an intelligible way to respond to problem of philosophical multiplicity, one worth seriously grappling with.

A further point to make in this respect is that Hegel's effort is also original in both its precision and comprehensiveness. Prior philosophies, most notably Kant's and Fichte's, provided nascent efforts to provide an explanatory account for philosophical disagreement. Their efforts, however, were enormously restricted in comparison to Hegel for at least two reasons.

First, in the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he, indeed, attempts to provide an explanation for the fact of philosophical multiplicity and conflict, Kant only invokes two factors in order to explain the emergence of different philosophies (A310/B366ff.). These two factors are the transcendental categories and empirical intuition or experience. According to Kant, philosophies differ inasmuch as some illicitly employ the categories with respect to putative objects beyond the realm of empirical experience, thus treating them as not merely transcendental but as transcendent categories, while others fail to recognize that the categories are, indeed, valid for objects of empirical experience. Philosophies that illicitly employ the categories beyond the realm of possible experience are rationalist or otherwise dogmatic. Philosophies that

refuse to accept that the categories do, in fact, apply to objects of experience are empiricist.

In comparison to Hegel, the weakness of Kant's transcendental dialectic lies, first of all, in its lack of comprehensiveness. For, through this technique Kant is only able to explain the emergence of just two very general types of philosophy.<sup>39</sup> The history of philosophy, however, is composed of a vast range of positions whose details cannot be exhaustively accounted for merely on appeal to the relative validity and applicability each ascribes to the categories. For example, what explains the difference between the "dogmatism" of Plato versus that of Aristotle since both of them treat of objects beyond what Kant considers to be the bounds of experience?<sup>40</sup> Kant has no way to answer to this question.

Hegel, then, is original in his comprehensiveness and precision. For, Hegel attempts to account for the whole range of philosophies including all of their relevant details.

Hegel also adds an element which is simply not present in Kant's analysis. For, on the basis of Kant's analysis there is no way in which to explain why any given individual might opt to become an empiricist, dogmatist or transcendental idealist. One simply as a matter of fact winds up in one of these positions. By contrast, Hegel can explain why individuals opt for the philosophies which they do. For, individuals adopt certain philosophies according to their level of development. Thus, Hegel can explain *why* there

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<sup>39</sup> Fichte, too, restricts his attempt to explain philosophical disagreement to just two philosophies: dogmatism and idealism. Cf. *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre* pp. 20-5, et passim.

<sup>40</sup> Chapter Four of this dissertation discusses at length Hegel's explanation and critique of the restrictedness of Kant's conception of experience.

is this *whole range* of differing philosophies and *why* individuals *adopt* and *perpetuate* them.

Thus, along with the exegetical goal, the systematic goal of this dissertation is to show that Hegel presents, not necessarily the best, but at least an intelligible response to the problem of philosophical disagreement, a response that is original in its comprehensiveness, precision and explanatory power.

### 5.3 *On the Need for a Detailed Analysis of the PhG*

A final note should be made regarding the space dedicated in this dissertation to examining parts of the *PhG* in detail. As is well known, the *PhG* is a dense and not only systematically but organically ordered text. Thus, in order to understand one part, it is often necessary to explicate several others. Besides this commonly made point, however, there is a further exigence peculiar to this dissertation for examining parts of the *PhG* in such detail. For, as was noted, certain key elements of the very motivation and nature of Hegel's effort in the *PhG* have hitherto gone unnoticed or at least underemphasized. Thus, the detailed analysis of the parts of the *PhG* provided in this dissertation will often depart in small but important ways from the more traditional exegeses of this classic philosophical tome. Thus, despite the fact that some well-trod ground will be covered, this will function at the service of a larger and unique set of goals peculiar to this dissertation.

## 6. *Summary of the Chapter*

To summarize this introductory chapter, let us recall the major factors motivating the significance of recovering and explicating Hegel's response to the problem of

philosophical differences. First, for ordinary consciousness, the ongoing history of philosophical differences provides sufficient grounds for dismissing philosophy as a fundamentally futile enterprise. Second, in modernity the charge of futility levelled against philosophy has been dramatically intensified by the emergence of modern institutions, modern science in particular. For, from the viewpoint of ordinary consciousness in modernity at least, philosophy is to be distinguished from “real” science precisely to the degree that the latter, unlike the former, routinely succeeds in overcoming initial disagreement and conflict to arrive at more or less universal consensus regarding the various problems it sets for itself. Moreover, the practical efficacy of the technologies which have emerged as a result of or alongside modern science contrast rather markedly for ordinary consciousness with the apparently meagre results of philosophical reflection. Third, philosophy from its inception has been concerned to respond to the problem of intellectual and philosophical conflict. Moreover, with the emergence of modernity it was philosophers themselves who increasingly brought, or at least capitulated to, the charge of the futility of philosophy. Yet, it was not until Hegel that the question of generating a science of that history of conflict was first posed. Lastly, the source of the multiplicity of philosophies, for Hegel, lies within the self-differentiation of the mind itself. Thus, attaining the self-knowledge that Hegel identifies as the true end of philosophies demands developing an explanatory account of philosophical differences. Moreover, in order for philosophy to move forward and make genuine progress on the problematics it sets for itself – and thereby be able truly to deny the charge of futility – philosophers must attain the level of self-knowledge involved in explaining philosophical differences.



Given these motivating factors, let us now turn to a critical examination of Hegel's method of explaining philosophical differences.

Chapter I:

### **Hegel's Theory of Development**

Famously, for Hegel, the mind develops. Thus, in order to understand the nature of the mind according to Hegel it is necessary to understand his account of the development of the mind. Yet, in order to understand Hegel's theory of the development of the mind it is necessary to understand Hegel's overall theory of development. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the notion of development figures so heavily throughout his entire corpus, there are only rare instances in which Hegel issues clear and detailed statements about the basic terms and relations constitutive of his overall theory. Chief among these few occasions are the sections in the Introduction to the *LHP* entitled "The Notion of Development" and "The Notion of the Concrete" (20ff.).<sup>41</sup> In these sections Hegel identifies and articulates a closely related series of terms and relations that form the basis of his theory of development. He also employs some instructive images and analogies for aiding in grasping his technical terms and distinctions.

The present chapter will be dedicated to explicating central elements in Hegel's technical account of his theory of development. The *LHP* will provide the basic point of departure for explicating Hegel's larger theory. Other texts in Hegel's corpus will be drawn upon in order to supplement this analysis.

As will quickly become evident, Hegel's theory of development owes an enormous debt to Aristotle. Thus, there will be immediate occasion to examine Hegel's appropriation of key elements of Aristotle. Space does not permit, however, a detailed

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<sup>41</sup> It is of utmost importance that Hegel launches into this rare extended discussion of his explicit *theory of development* precisely in the context of responding to *the problem of philosophical differences*. Thus, for Hegel, as will continue to be discussed throughout the present dissertation, the problem of philosophical differences is inextricably linked to the problem of development.

examination of the Aristotelian science of change; neither does it permit a critical evaluation of the philosophical validity of Hegel's appropriation of Aristotle. Focus will instead be restricted to discussing the specific parts of Aristotle's theory that Hegel means to appropriate and the way in which he happens to appropriate them.

Again, this chapter will be concerned to examine Hegel's overall theory of development, leaving it to the following chapters to work out in detail Hegel's theory of the development of the mind in particular. That being said, there will be several and ever-increasing occasions upon which it will be necessary to discuss elements of Hegel's theory of consciousness. The simple reason for this fact is that, for Hegel, the mind and its development represents the highest and truest instance of the phenomenon of development as such. Thus, in order to explicate Hegel's theory of development in general it will at times be necessary to make recourse to an analysis of what for Hegel is the quintessential instance of development.

The examination of Hegel's theory of development will proceed as follows:

Section 1 will provide an initial examination of the main terms and relations of Aristotle's theory of change which Hegel appropriates for his own theory of development. Again, the analysis will focus strictly on the terms and relations in Aristotle that Hegel explicitly means to appropriate and on the manner in which Hegel intends to appropriate them.

Section 2 will examine an especially helpful analogy Hegel draws between biological development, on the one hand, and the development of the mind, on the other. This part of the examination will demand making greater recourse to discussing Hegel's theory of the mind. In order to avoid introducing too much complexity too soon,

however, the discussion in these sections will not extend into the specifics of Hegel's technical discussion of the development of the mind as it occurs in the *PhG*. Instead, any discussion of the mind in these sections will be restricted to unpacking certain basic structural elements of the mind whose explication will help illuminate Hegel's overall theory of development.

Section 3 will examine Hegel's furtherance of his theory of development through his addition of the "Concept of the Concrete". In particular what will be examined is how when Hegel combines his notion of development with his notion of the concrete he thereby articulates the basic contours of a theory of development that is not only teleological but, as I will call it, "vertically teleological". The full import of Hegel's theory of development as a vertical teleology, or what will eventually be called "sublation", will not become apparent until the next chapter since it is only with the development of consciousness that Hegel's overall theory of development comes into its own. Yet, it will prove useful to unpack some of the basic aspects of this notion of vertical teleology in the discussion of Hegel's theory of development in general.

Section 4 will examine Hegel's basic theory or concept of development as it is manifested in perhaps its quintessential instance, namely, the development of the Concept which turns out to be coincident with the mind itself. An account of the development of the Concept will provide, among other things, a useful point of focus and application for the ideas discussed in the preceding sections.

Having established the basic layout of the chapter let us turn to the first task of examining Hegel's appropriation of central aspects of Aristotle's theory of change.

### 1. *Dunamis and Energeia*

Hegel begins his technical discussion of his notion of development by stating In order to comprehend what development is, what may be called two different states must be distinguished. The first is what is known as capacity, power, what I call being-in-itself (*potentia, dunamis*); the second principle is that of being-for-self, actuality (*actus, energeia*). If we say, for example, that man is by nature rational, we would mean that he has reason only inherently or in embryo: in this sense, reason, understanding, imagination, will are possessed from birth or even in the mother's womb. But while the child only has capacities or the actual possibility of reason, it is just the same as if he had no reason; reason does yet exist in him since he cannot yet do anything rational, and has no rational consciousness. Thus what man is at first implicitly becomes explicit, and it is the same with reason. If, then man has actuality on whatever side, he is actually rational. (*LHP 20-21*)

A great deal of information regarding Hegel's theory of development is packed into this passage. It will be useful to begin by examining the central technical distinction it draws, namely, between being-in-itself versus being-for-itself, and to do that we must first examine the Aristotelian background to the distinction that Hegel explicitly invokes.

Hegel fairly equates his distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself with the Aristotelian distinction potency (*dunamis*) and act (*energeia*). Development then, for Hegel, as for Aristotle, is a matter of actualizing potency. Hegel also employs a standard Aristotelian image of an embryo or seed contrasted with a fully mature organism for illuminating this notion of development. On the Aristotelian account, an acorn is an oak tree *in potency*; that is to say, while it possesses the nature of an oak tree, it has yet to

become fully what it is by nature. In the passage above, Hegel makes a similar point when he speaks of man as rational by nature; but insofar as a man is merely a child “it is as if he had no reason” since he is only potentially rational. It is only through actualizing its potentiality that an acorn becomes a tree, or a child becomes a truly rational being. Thus, in most general terms, development for Hegel consists in the transition from potency to act.

In appropriating the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act to his own distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself, however, Hegel is in fact performing a radical philosophical maneuver. The full extent and import of this maneuver will only be slowly unpacked throughout the course of the present dissertation. Nevertheless, it will be useful to call attention to some of its most fundamental aspects.

The radical character of Hegel’s appropriation of Aristotle in this particular case concerns the fact that it very deliberately alludes to and evokes the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself. Without at present launching into a detailed explication of the complexities of Kant’s doctrine of the thing-in-itself, it is still possible to appeal to fairly well-established aspects of that doctrine in order to generate an initial sense of the radical character of Hegel’s maneuver.

Thus, according to Kant, the thing-in-itself is just that: the thing as it exists truly or actually in-itself.<sup>42</sup> The thing-in-itself is thus to be distinguished from the thing-for-us, which is the thing as it appears in experience insofar as the thing has been subjected to the conditions of possible experience. Moreover, it is only in being subjected to the

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<sup>42</sup> I prescind here from taking any stand on the “two worlds” versus “two aspects” controversy surrounding Kant’s doctrine of the thing-in-itself. For commentary on this issue, see Henry Allison’s *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*.

conditions of possible experience that the thing can become an object of knowledge. Thus, for Kant, we do not know or otherwise experience things as they are in-themselves; rather, we only know or experience them insofar as they appear to us, which is to say, insofar as they have been conditioned by the conditions of possible experience.<sup>43</sup>

In correlating being-in-itself with potency and being-for-itself with act Hegel radically problematizes the neat, if controversial, Kantian distinction between the thing-in-itself and the thing-for-us. For, whereas according to Kant the thing-in-itself is the thing as it really or actually is, for Hegel being-in-itself, at least in the first instance, is not anything at all; it is merely potency.<sup>44</sup> By implication, then, in order to become actual the in-itself must become for-itself. In other words, there is not a ready-made, complete and self-sufficient reality of thing-in-themselves set out over against human knowledge and experience; rather, being-in-itself itself comes to be; it transitions from potency to act. Reality in-itself is thus fundamentally dynamic, for Hegel. The *in-itself* is not reality as it actually is; rather, it is simply potency.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The conditions of possible experience are, of course, the subjective forms of intuition – to wit, space and time – and the transcendental categories: “It is therefore indubitably certain, and not merely possible or even probable, that space and time, as the necessary conditions for all (outer and inner) experience, are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition, in relation to which therefore all objects are mere appearances and not things given for themselves in this way; about these appearances, further much may be said a priori that concerns their form, but nothing whatsoever about the things in themselves that may ground them” (*Critique of Pure Reason* A48-9, B66).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The situation is, more precisely, that if we halt at objects as they are merely in-themselves, then we do not apprehend them in their truth, but in the one-sided form of mere abstraction. Thus, for instance, ‘man-in-himself’ is the child, whose task is not to remain in this abstract and undeveloped [state of being] ‘in-itself,’ but to become *for-himself* what he is initially only *in-himself*, namely, a free and rational essence [...] In the same sense the germ, too, can be regarded as the plant-in-itself. We can see from these examples that all who suppose that what things are in-themselves, or the thing-in-itself in general, is something that is inaccessible to our cognition are very much mistaken” (*EL* 194).

<sup>45</sup> In a striking convergence of insight, Bernard Lonergan suggests a virtually identical conclusion. Thus, regarding the Aristotelian doctrine of the Analogy of Matter (i.e. matter is to form, as the sensible is to the intelligible), Lonergan notes, “One might even say that by anticipation it puts in its proper place and perspective, that of prime matter, what Kant thought was the thing-in-itself” (*Verbum* 155).

### 1.1 *Three Senses in which Reality Transitions from Potency to Act*

Importantly, there are three distinct but closely related senses in which a given reality could be said to transition from in-itself to for-itself, and thus from potency to act. First, a reality such as a flower transitions from a state of in-itself to for-itself inasmuch as what was enclosed in the seed gets unfolded and appears in full display and articulateness – in other words, inasmuch as what is implicit becomes explicit. Indeed, in a further problematization of the Kantian distinction between things-in-themselves and mere appearances, to say that the implicit becomes explicit is just to say that what was hidden or enclosed in potentiality comes to appearance. There is no flower-in-itself lurking behind appearances or our “representations”.<sup>46</sup> The in-itself was merely the seed which, as potential, was no actual flower at all. It is only in becoming explicit, in coming to appear in full, determinate display, that the flower actually exists.<sup>47</sup>

In thereby rendering itself explicit and actual the flower becomes for-itself in a second a sense of the term, as well. For, through this process of self-articulation and self-actualization the flower thus becomes self-*determining*; in other words, it begins act on its own behalf or, indeed, for-itself. For example, it differentiates its various organs and biological functions such as photosynthesis, the Krebs cycle and so on. It also begins to

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<sup>46</sup> Hegel famously criticizes such a notion of the thing-in-itself as a “mountainpeak under snow” (“*Skepticism*” 318). Cf. the Appendix for an extended discussion of Hegel’s critique of the viewpoint of Representation according to which objects are distinct from out “representations” of them.

<sup>47</sup> G.A. Magee gives substantially the same account of Hegel’s maneuver in this respect: “Essentially, what Hegel has done is to interpret the Kantian appearance/thing-in-itself distinction in terms of Aristotle’s distinction between actuality and potentiality. For Aristotle, when something is merely potential its true being is implicit (‘in itself,’ as Hegel puts it). When that potentiality is actualized the being of the thing is manifest (becomes ‘for itself’). To use the classic example, the acorn is the oak tree *in-itself*. Though we might say that the acorn is the oak tree at an early stage of development, it is also legitimate to say that when it is merely an acorn the oak tree *is not*. When the implicitness or potentiality of the oak tree is overcome and the oak tree comes to true manifestation (and, thus, being), we may say that it has become *for itself*” (*The Hegel Dictionary* 120).



exert a degree of control upon its surrounding environment, setting down roots, for example, so that it ceases to be entirely at the mercy of external forces such as wind or erosion. Thus, in an initial sense, the transition from the implicit to the explicit, is a process of coming to appearance, of self-articulation and thus of self-determination or, in other words, of becoming for-oneself.

Third, a reality such as a flower can also be said to transition from in-itself to for-itself inasmuch as it posits or objectifies itself. In one sense, in coming to an articulate or determinate appearance the flower thereby posits itself into existence, for it thereby becomes an actually existing flower. Yet, there is a further sense of self-positing manifested in the plant's *bearing of a fruit in which there is contained a further seed*. For, in producing a seed the plant exemplifies a tendency that Hegel detects to be working throughout reality, namely, an ever-intensifying tendency towards self-positing and self-objectification – in other words, the self becoming explicit *for-self*. In bearing fruit carrying a seed that shares its nature, the plant thus posits itself into existence in a profound way.<sup>48</sup>

This process of self-determination as simultaneously self-objectification also opens up the possibility of a reconciling moment in which the in-itself that has become for-itself ultimately becomes in-and-for-itself. The examination of the precise nature and meaning of this further stage in development must wait until after further preliminary issues have been explored. For now, it is enough to have given an initial description of

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Hegel on these two moments of becoming for-self in the development of the human: "The child is *in itself* a human being; it has reason only *in itself*, it is only the potentiality of reason and freedom, and is therefore free only in accordance with its concept. Now what exists as yet only in itself does not exist in its actuality. The human being who is rational *in himself* must work through the process of self-production both by going out of himself and by educating himself inwardly, in order that he may also become rational *for himself*" (EPR 45).

how Hegel intends to appropriate the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act. Development for Hegel is a transition from potency to act. Such a transition can be described as a movement from being-in-itself to being-for-itself as well as from the implicit to the explicit. Moreover, there are three distinct but intimately related senses in which a given reality transitions from being-in-itself to being-for-itself, from implicit to explicit.

### 1.2 *Brief Clarification of Aristotle's Notion of "Nature"*

In the context of drawing upon the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act, Hegel also draws upon the Aristotelian notion of "nature" in order to articulate his notion of development. While there are several aspects of the specifically Aristotelian notion of nature that extend well beyond the scope of the present work, it will still be useful to give some specification of that notion before continuing with the explication of Hegel's employment of potency and act; the reason being that to different natures correspond different potencies and *eo ipso* different acts.

For Aristotle, nature is an immanent principle of motion and rest.<sup>49</sup> As an immanent principle of *motion*, nature is a dynamic principle of "coming-to-be" or "innate impulse to change" (193b13, 192b18). Thus, as a *dynamic* principle, nature in one sense is potency.<sup>50</sup> As an immanent principle of *rest*, nature is a dynamic impulse as purposive or ordered to an end. Thus, Hegel states in the *PhG*, "Aristotle, too, defines Nature as

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<sup>49</sup> "Of things that exist, some exist by nature, some from other causes. By nature the animals and their parts exist, and the plants and the simple bodies (earth, fire, air, water) – for we say that these and the like exist by nature. All the things mentioned plainly differ from things which are not constituted by nature. For each of them has within itself a principle of motion and of stationariness. (in respect of place, or of growth and decrease, or by way of alteration)" (192b9-15).

<sup>50</sup> "For nature also is in the same genus as potentiality; for it is a principle of movement – not, however, in something else but in the thing itself *qua* itself" (1049b7-10).

purposive activity, purpose is what is immediate and *at rest*” (PhG. 12). As an immanent principle of motion *and* rest nature is a principle dynamically ordered to a proportionate end which, once attained, will give rise to a state of rest which, as will be discussed below, may also be identified as a kind of act.

Nature is evidently teleological for both Aristotle and Hegel.<sup>51</sup> For, nature is an immanent and dynamic principle of motion or change ordered to a proportionate end. It remains unclear, however, how the end of a given nature can be both a state of rest *and* activity. Clarifying this ambiguity will help in understanding how Hegel can appropriate the Aristotelian notion of nature while simultaneously maintaining his own doctrine according to which the end of the development of the mind is an infinite *activity*. The key to clarifying this ambiguity lies in the distinction Aristotle draws between two distinct kinds of act, namely, motion (*kinesis*) and operation (*energeia*).

### 1.2.1 *Kinesis vs. Energeia*

For Aristotle, nature is an immanent principle of motion and rest. Hegel, moreover, clearly means to appropriate this notion of nature for his own theory of development. Yet, a tension arises inasmuch as throughout his corpus Hegel calls attention to the ceaseless *labor* of mind or Spirit and insists that the culminating moment of the mind’s development is not a state of restful inertia but one of vigorous, even infinite, activity. How is it possible, then, to square the Aristotelian account of nature according to which the end of nature is a state of rest with Hegel’s insistence that infinite activity is the proper and culminating end of the mind? An at least partial solution to this

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Hegel: “This notion of end was already recognized by Aristotle, too, and he called this activity the *nature of the thing*” (*Philosophy of Nature* paragraph 245 Z).

difficulty lies in clarifying the Aristotelian distinction between motion (*kinesis*) versus operation (*energeia*).

Bernard Lonergan provides a concise summary of the distinction:

A movement becomes in time; one part succeeds another; and a whole is to be had only in the whole of the time. On the other hand, an operation such as seeing or pleasure does not become in time but rather endures through time; at once it is all that it is to be; at each instant it is completely itself. In a movement one may assign instants in which what now is is not what will later be. In an operation there is no assignable instant in which what is occurring stands in need of something further that will make it specifically complete. A similar contrast occurs in the *Metaphysics*. There is a difference between action (*praxis*) distinct from its end and action coincident with its end. One cannot at once be walking a given distance and have walked it, be being cured and have been cured, be learning something and have learned it. But at once is seeing and has seen, one is understanding and has understood, one is alive and has been alive, one is happy and has been happy. In the former instances there is a difference between action and end, and we have either what is not properly action or, at best, incomplete action – such are movements. In the latter instances action and end are coincident – such are operations (*Verbum*, 112).

For present purposes, the first point to notice is that, in contrast to operations, *the activity of motion is distinct from its end*. Once the end of a motion is reached the activity ceases. For example, one cannot be simultaneously engaging in the activity of walking and have reached the end of one's walk. Aristotle also includes activities such as healing and

learning as instances of “motion” since they, too, are activities which are distinct from their ends. One cannot be both engaging in the activity of learning some topic, for example, and have understood it.

In contrast to motion, Aristotle specifies operation or *energeia*. Operations are *activities which are coincident with their ends*. In the activity of seeing, the end of the activity – to-be-seeing – is coincident with the activity itself – seeing. Similarly, when one understands, the end of the activity – to-be-understanding – is coincident with the act of understanding itself. In other words, upon understanding one does not thereby cease to understand; rather, one is actively understanding. Thus, unlike the case of motion, in operations the attainment of the end of the activity does not entail its cessation; rather, the end and the activity are coincident.

For Aristotle, therefore, the end that is achieved or actualized in and through operations, while it may involve a kind of repose and a release from the strain of effort, nevertheless does not entail the cessation of all activity.<sup>52</sup> Rather, such activities as these which are coincident with their ends are in fact higher or more perfect forms of activity than such actions as motion or mere study prior to understanding. Thus, to the extent that operation is distinguished from motion, we have our first indication as to how to reconcile Hegel’s appropriation of the Aristotelian notion of nature with his own insistence on the infinite activity as the proper end of Spirit. For the “rest” that is attained by a given nature through such operations as living, understanding or happiness is in fact a reposeful activity, and the highest activity is in fact coincident with the profoundest rest.

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<sup>52</sup> Thus, in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle speaks of the “self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness” of the activity of contemplation, which is the highest activity attainable by human nature (983a5-6).

### 1.2.2 *Natures Specify Corresponding Potencies and Acts*

The second aspect of Aristotle's theory of development the clarification of which will help in understanding how it can be reconciled with, and in fact support, Hegel's insistence that the ultimate end of the mind is infinite activity is Aristotle's discussion of how specific natures possess distinct potencies which specify proportionate acts.

Generally speaking, for Aristotle, all natures seek to fulfill their natures; that is to say, they are dynamically oriented towards actualizing what they are initially in potency. As Aristotle says in the *Physics*, "nature in the sense of a coming-to-be proceeds towards nature"; and, again, "the nature is the end or that for the sake of which" (193b13, 194a29).<sup>53</sup> Each nature, moreover, possesses certain potencies which specify the acts that will actualize those potencies. In the *De Anima* Aristotle discusses the nature of the three different kinds of soul – the vegetative, the sensitive and the rational – and hence their potencies as well as the acts proportionate to those potencies. The vegetative soul possesses potencies for nutrition, growth and decay (413a25-34). These potencies when actualized would, strictly speaking, constitute motions. They also contribute to the overall development of the plant or its coming-to-be what it truly is, namely, a fully developed, mature and flourishing living organism. Indeed, Aristotle does at times speak of living itself as a species, not of motion, but of operation.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the potencies possessed by the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul possesses the potency for locomotion and sensation (413b1-5 *et passim.*). As already

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<sup>53</sup> The fact that, for Aristotle, natures *qua* potency act in order to fulfill their natures should be borne in mind when the discussion turns to the 'I = I' or 'I therefore I' of Self-consciousness in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Aristotle: "Being is choiceworthy and lovable for all, and we are insofar as we are actualized, since we are insofar as we live and act" (1168a6-8).

discussed, acts of sensing are operations, and so the sensitive soul when fully actualized would consist in a developed, awake, sensing and flourishing animal.<sup>55</sup>

Aristotle's discussion of the rational soul is of greatest interest for understanding Hegel's theory of development since the potencies characterizing the rational soul are quite remarkable. The rational soul or *Nous* is *potens omnia facere et fieri*: it can make and become all things.<sup>56</sup> In other words, since *Nous* stands in potency to making or becoming all things, its objective horizon is unrestricted – the totality of all things.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the activity proper to *Nous* is the operation of understanding. The operation which would actualize the unrestricted potency of *Nous* can be nothing other than an unrestricted act of understanding. For Aristotle, the unrestricted act of understanding ultimately consists in the divine *Nous*'s self-understanding.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the rational soul is naturally ordered to the end of understanding the divine *Nous* itself and thus to imitate or participate in its unrestricted act of self-understanding or perfect self-knowledge.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Aristotle: "But the waking state is the goal, since the exercise of sense-perception or of thoughts is the goal for all beings to which either of these appertains; inasmuch as these are best, and the goal is what is best" (455b22-24).

<sup>56</sup> "Since in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, a matter which has potentially all the particulars included in the class, a cause which is productive in the sense that makes them all (the latter standing to former, as e.g. an art to its material), these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul. And in fact thought [*Nous*], as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things" (430a10-15)

<sup>57</sup> "Everything is a possible object of thought" (429a18).

<sup>58</sup> "It must be itself that thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of all things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking" (1074b32-34).

<sup>59</sup> "The activity of intellect, which is contemplative, seems both superior in worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its pleasure proper to itself (and this augments the activity), and the self-sufficiency, leisureliness, unweariedness (so far as this is possible for man), and all the other attributes ascribed to the blessed man are evidently those connected with this activity, it follows that this will be the complete happiness of man, if it be allowed a complete term of life (for none of the attributes of happiness is incomplete)" (1177b17-26). Such a contemplation or *theoria* ultimately has the divine *Nous* or God as its object: "For the most divine science is also the most honourable; and this science alone is, in two ways, most divine. For the science which it would be most meet for God to have is a divine science, and so is any science that deals with divine objects; and this science alone has these qualities; for God is thought to be among the causes of all things and to be the first principle, and such a science either God alone can have, or God above all others. All the sciences, indeed, are more necessary than this, but none is better" (983a4-11). Cf. Mure: "As final cause God is the supreme Good, and the essential nature of all things is, according to the

There can be little doubt that Hegel means to appropriate the Aristotelian notion of the rational soul as well as the view that the ultimate end of the rational soul or mind is the perfect and unrestricted activity of self-knowledge. For example, the *PM* opens with a declaration and extended comment upon the Delphic enjoinder to *know thyself* and culminates with a long passage from *Metaphysics XII, 7* on the self-knowledge of the rational and divine *Nous*. Later, in the *PM*, Hegel explicitly identifies his conception of the soul with “the passive *Nous* of Aristotle, which is *potentially* all things” (*PM* 29). In the culminating paragraph of the *PhG*, Hegel asserts that the goal of Spirit’s development is “Absolute Knowing” which he identifies as perfect self-knowledge or “Spirit that knows itself as Spirit” (*PhG* 808). In the Introduction to the *LHP* Hegel asserts that self-knowledge or “this being-at-home-with-self, or coming-to-self of *mind* [*Geist*] may be described as its complete and highest end: it is this alone that it desires and nothing else” (*LHP* 23). In the Aristotle section in the *LHP* Hegel affirms that there is no “higher idealism” than the Aristotelian notion of God as *actus purus* or pure operation and he heaps praise upon “the Absolute of Aristotle, which in its quiescence is at the same time absolute activity” (*LHP II* 143-144).

Thus, we would seem to have at least partially eliminated the difficulty of understanding how Hegel can both appropriate Aristotle’s notions of nature and development while at the same time insisting upon the absolute activity of the mind as its ultimate end. For, while it is true that, for Aristotle, nature is a principle of motion and

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degree of their reality, a tendency, a *nisus*, or a conscious striving to assimilate themselves to the goodness of God, which is one with his intelligence. In philosophic man it may perhaps be even a self-identification” (*Introduction to Hegel* 45). Cf. Ferrarin: “Since Hegel interprets the *noesis noeseos* as the supreme dignity of thinking [...], he understands absolute thinking as active in finitude [...] He therefore concludes that for Aristotle the same relations holds between finite spirit and absolute spirit” (*Hegel and Aristotle* 312).



rest, the culminating act of the fully developed rational nature or soul for Aristotle is both an unrestricted *act* of self-knowledge and a quiescent *reposing* in such knowledge.

For Hegel, then, development, generally speaking, is a transition from potency to act. In the case of the mind, development consists in the transition of the mind from initially a *potentia omnia facere et fieri* to the absolute activity of perfected self-knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Thus, in the “Concept of Development” section of the *LHP*, Hegel asserts, “Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are struggles for Mind to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself” (*LHP* 23).

From this last passage, moreover, we can derive a clearer indication as to how and why Hegel means to appropriate and assimilate the Aristotelian notion of development as a transition from potency to act to his own technical formulation of that process as a transition from being-in-itself to being-for-itself.<sup>61</sup> For, on the Aristotelian account, the proper end of the dynamic development of the rational soul is a sharing in the perfected self-contemplation of the divine *Nous*. In other words, it consists in the full objectification of rational mind for itself; such knowledge of *self* is the complete actualization of its potency for knowledge. Thus, the becoming-for-itself of what it is in-itself just is the complete actualization of the rational soul<sup>62</sup>. Properly grasping Hegel’s

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Hegel’s essentially Aristotelian reinterpretation of the Platonic doctrine of *Anamnesis* as a process of development, or movement from potency to act, implicit to explicit: “The claim in the Platonic philosophy that we *remember* the Ideas means that Ideas are implicitly in the human mind and are not (as the Sophists maintained) something alien that comes to mind from the outside. In any case, this interpretation of cognition as ‘reminiscence’ does not exclude the development of what is *implicit* in the human mind, and this development is nothing but mediation” (*EL* 116). This point will be returned to in the Appendix.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Nature does not bring the *Nous* to consciousness for itself; only man reduplicates himself in such a way that he is the universal that is [present] *for* the universal” (*EL* 57).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The defect of life consists in the fact that it is still only the Idea *in-itself*; cognition, on the contrary, is the Idea only as it *for-itself*, in the same one-sided way. The unity and truth of these two is the Idea *in* and *for itself*, and hence *absolute*. – Up to this point the Idea in its development through its various

view of development as a transition from potency to act and *therefore* as a series of self-objectifications of mind leads us into the next section.

## 2. *Biological Analogy for the Development of Consciousness*

In transitioning from “The Notion of Development” to “The Notion of the Concrete” section of the Introduction to the *LHP*, Hegel provides an analogy intended to illuminate both his notion of development in general and of the mind in particular. The analogy is quite instructive as it sheds light on several central, if occasionally elusive, elements of Hegel’s theory of the mind and its development. It will thus be worthwhile to unpack the analogy in detail in order both to flesh out the immediately forgoing discussion and to prepare the ground for subsequent discussions of Hegel’s notions of development and of the concrete.

The analogy that Hegel draws is that between the biological development of a plant and the development of the mind. Regarding the development of the plant, Hegel states,

Because that which is implicit comes into existence, it certainly passes into change, yet it remains one and the same, for the whole process is dominated by it. The plant, for example, does not lose itself in mere indefinite change. From the germ much is produced when at first nothing was to be seen; but the whole of what is brought forth, if not developed, is yet hidden ideally and contained within

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stages has been *our* object; but from now on, the Idea is its own object. This is the *noesis noeseos*, which was already called the highest form of the Idea by Aristotle” (*EL* 303). Cf. the comparable notion of the mind as a potential totality and as developing through the positing and thus actualizing of that potency in Fichte: “There is initially only one substance, the self; within this one substance, all possible accidents, and so all possible realities, are posited” (*WL* 137). Thus, for Fichte, substance has already become self or subject.

itself. The principle of this projection into existence is that the germ cannot remain merely implicit, but is impelled towards development, since it presents the contradiction of being implicit and yet not desiring to be. But this coming without itself has an end in view; its completion fully reached, and its previously determined end is the fruit or produce of the germ, which causes a return to the first condition. The germ will produce itself alone and manifest what is contained in it, so that it then may return to itself once more thus to renew the unity from which it started. (*LHP I 22*)

Hegel's discussion of the development of the plant of course demonstrates his ongoing appropriation of the Aristotelian notion of development. The germ or seed as possessing the nature of the plant is thus a dynamic potency ordered to an end. All changes and developments within the plant are anticipatorily or implicitly contained in this potency and are governed by the end towards which the germ is impelled, or rather, towards which it impels itself.<sup>63</sup>

Especially worth noting, however, is the end towards which the germ develops. For, there is twofold end, that is to say, a twofold raising of the plant from being-in-itself to being-for-itself: the germ produces both itself *and* its fruit in which another germ is contained. Thus, in one sense, the germ is ordered towards the end of attaining full maturity such that it might "manifest what is contained in it", which is to say, differentiate and construct the various biological organs, process and systems whose

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The buds have the tree within them and contain its entire strength, although they are not yet the tree itself" (*EPR 25*).

successful operation will constitute it as a fully developed organism. Yet, it is also ordered towards the bearing of fruit as its *culminating moment* of development.<sup>64</sup>

To be sure, the processes by which the plant matures and by which it bears fruit constitute a unitary process. For, in order to bear fruit the plant must mature; and in developing itself such that it can bear fruit the plant *eo ipso* matures itself.<sup>65</sup> This overall process of development, moreover, Hegel importantly identifies as a “projection into existence”; it is, in other words, a self-positing of the plant from its germinal potency to its fully actualized maturity. Yet, it is also important to recognize how at its culminating moment of development the plant posits a fruit. For, it is here that Hegel identifies a quite instructive dis-analogy between merely biological development and the development of the mind.

### *2.1 Dis-analogy between Biological Development and the Development of Consciousness*

Regarding the very significant dis-analogy between merely biological development and the development of consciousness as such, Hegel states,

With nature it certainly is true that the subject which commenced and the matter which forms the end are two separate units. The doubling process has apparently the effect of separating into two things that which in content is the same. Thus in animal life the parent and the young are different individuals although their nature is the same. In Mind [*Geist*] it is otherwise: it is consciousness and therefore it is

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Fichte: “the highest and final – the most developed – stage of the organizational force in the individual plant is the seed” (*Foundations of Natural Right* 73).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Aristotle: “Now the product is, in a way the producer in his actualization [*energeia*]; hence the producer is fond of the product, because he loves his own being. This is natural, since what he is potentially is what the product indicates in actualization” (1168a6-9).

free, uniting in itself the beginning and the end. As with the germ in nature, Mind indeed resolves itself back into unity after constituting itself another. But what is in itself becomes for Mind and thus arrives at being for itself. The fruit and seed newly contained within it on the other hand, do not become for the original germ, but for us alone, in the case of Mind both factors not only are implicitly the same in character, but there is a being for the other and at the same time a being for self. That for which the “other” is, is the same as that “other;” and thus alone Mind is at home with itself in its “other.” The development of Mind lies in the fact that its going forth and separation constitutes its coming to itself. (*LHP I 22-23*)

Like the plant, the mind “goes forth” from itself *qua* potency to posit itself as actually existing. It heads towards the end of constituting itself as fully self-differentiated and mature organic unity. Also like the plant, there is a culminating moment in the development of the mind: the positing of an “other”. In the case of the plant, this positing of an “other” is in fact a return to unity with itself inasmuch as the “other” which it posits – the fruit which contains another germ – shares the same nature as the original germ; the original germ, of course, existing now as a fully matured plant. Yet, herein lies the crucial dis-analogy to which Hegel means to draw our attention.

For, the plant achieves a unity or “coming-to-itself” through positing an “other” inasmuch as the “other” shares the same nature with itself. Yet, this self-doubling does not occur *for the plant itself*, but only for “us”, that is to say, we phenomenologists of development and readers of the *LHP*. Once the fruit ripens and falls from the tree, it, along with the seed contained within it, ceases to constitute an aspect of the self-differentiation and self-determination of the plant itself. It now falls outside of the plant

and exists in a relation of mere externality to it. At the culminating moment of its self-differentiation the plant fails to preserve unity with itself. Stated differently, unity is preserved inasmuch as the original plant and the germ contained in fruit share the same nature – yet, that unity is not preserved *for the plant*. For the plant, the germ it has posited now merely stands over against it as something entirely alien and external.

Hegel sharply contrasts this final state of alienation characteristic of merely biological development with the culminating moments of self-differentiation through which the mind develops. Like the germ of a plant, the mind begins in an embryonic state of potency.<sup>66</sup> The mind develops through a process of self-differentiation through which it constitutes its various functions and operations into an organic unity.<sup>67</sup> There is finally a culminating moment in the development of the mind wherein it, like the plant, bears fruit. In other words, consciousness, too, posits an “other”, something distinct from itself, namely, the object of knowledge. Yet, unlike the plant, the mind preserves itself in this difference. For when the mind posits its fruit the object does not thereby fall “outside” of consciousness and stand over against the mind in a merely external relation. Rather, the mind preserves its unity with itself in positing its object such that the distinction that the mind draws between itself and its object remains internal to consciousness.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> “If we say, for example, that man is by nature rational, we would mean that he has reason only inherently or in embryo” (*LHP* 21).

<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Hegel will harshly critique the faculty psychologies of Locke, Kant, Schulze, et al. for failing to recognize the mind as a self-differentiating organic structure. Cf. Hegel: *PM* 5 and *EPR* 35, 53.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The germ of the plant, this sensuously present concept [*Begriff*], closes its development with an actuality like itself, with the production of the seed. The same is true of mind; its development, too, has achieved its goal when the concept [*Begriff*] of the mind has completely actualized itself or, what is the same thing, when mind has attained to complete consciousness of its concept. But this self-contraction-into-one of the beginning with the end, this coming-to-itself of the concept in its actualization, appears in mind in a still more complete form than in the merely living thing; for whereas in the latter the seed produced is not identical with the seed that produced it, in self-knowing mind the product is one and the same as that which produces it” (*PM* 7).

In order to grasp more precisely why Hegel maintains that the object of the mind does not, like the fruit of the plant, fall outside of the mind but rather is preserved as internally constitutive of the mind itself, it will be necessary to discuss two distinct but related aspects of Hegel's larger account of the nature of the mind and its development. First, it will be necessary to examine some general aspects of the object of consciousness, according to Hegel. Second, it will be necessary to discuss some general aspects of Hegel's appeal to phenomenological fact in grounding his account of the nature of consciousness.

## 2.2 *Important General Aspects in Hegel's Account of the Object of Knowledge*

In the *LHP* Hegel specifies in helpful, if still fairly general terms, the nature of the object that the mind posits for itself as the fruit of its self-differentiating development.

That which is in itself must become an object to mankind, must arrive at consciousness, thus becoming for man. What has become an object to him is the same as what he is in himself; through the becoming objective of this implicit being, man first becomes for himself; he is made double, is retained and not changed into another. For example, man is thinking, and thus he thinks out thoughts. In this way it is in thought alone that thought is object; reason produces what is rational: reason is its own object (21).

Initially, rationality exists merely potentially or in-itself. The mind of the child, for example, is potentially rational. Yet, as Hegel indicates here, the mind develops precisely insofar as it manages to objectify its own immanent rationality. As Hegel goes on to note, "All knowledge, and learning, science, and even commerce have no other object than to draw out what is inward or implicit and thus to become objective" (*LHP* 22).

Consciousness develops by becoming rational, but this development is mediated by the ongoing objectification of rationality by and for itself – in other words, through the constitution of a rational object. Like the germ which in developing to maturity finally issues forth an object whose nature corresponds to itself, so the mind through the course of its development produces an object which corresponds to itself:

The human soul does not merely have *natural differences*, it *differentiates itself within itself*, separates its *substantial totality*, its individual world, from itself, sets this over against itself as the subjective. Its aim here is that what the mind is *in itself* should become *for the soul* or for the mind, – that the cosmos contained, *in itself*, within the mind should enter into mind's consciousness (*PM* 86).

The plant produces a fruit containing a seed whose nature corresponds to that of the original germ. Yet, as already discussed, this self-doubling and self-objectification is not preserved within the plant. In contrast, the rational object that rational mind posits for itself remains *for* consciousness.<sup>69</sup> The objects of knowledge, learning and science which the mind posits for itself do not stand over against consciousness as an alien existence like the fruit separated from the plant. Rather, consciousness inhabits that world as its very own; it *recognizes* itself in the object it has posited and the object thus continues to exist *for* it.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Hegel repeatedly notes that it is a testament to the strength of mental, as opposed to merely biological, development that it is able to preserve itself in this uttermost self-differentiation. Cf. “[T]he life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself” (*PhG* 32); “The more intensive is the Mind, the more extensive is it, hence the larger is its embrace. Extension as development, is not dispersion or falling asunder, but a uniting bond which is the more powerful and intense as the expanse of that embraced is greater in extent and richer. In such a case what is greater is the strength of oppositions and of separation; and the greater power overcomes the greater separation” (*LHP I* 28).

<sup>70</sup> Thus we see reaffirmed the important connection between Hegel's notion of the end or goal of the development of consciousness as the production of an object in which consciousness can know and



Thus, we have a first indication as to why Hegel maintains that the object of the mind is different than the fruit of mere biological development, namely, inasmuch as the object, even after being posited into existence, nevertheless remains *for* and thus *in* consciousness.

### 2.3 *Hegel's Appeal to Phenomenological Fact*

There is an important sense in which Hegel is appealing to phenomenological fact in noting that when consciousness posits its object the object does not thereby fall outside of consciousness. Take, for example, the learning of some science like geometry or Newtonian mechanics. In the analogy with a plant, the phase of learning for the student would correspond to the period in which the plant is growing to full maturation. Unlike the plant and its final relation to its fruit, however, when the student has finally learned geometry or Newtonian science the object of knowledge does not at that instant fall “outside” her mind. Rather, in positing its object the mind is *eo ipso* conscious of that object. The fruit of intellectual labor is thus preserved within the mind, and the presence of the object of knowledge in the mind is *given as a phenomenological fact*. Thus, Hegel states, “consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, and on the other, consciousness of itself” (*PhG* 85).

The distinction between the mind and its object, a distinction which the mind itself posits,<sup>71</sup> is preserved within consciousness. As Hegel states, “the essential point to

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recognize itself and the perfect self-contemplation of Aristotle's divine *Nous*. Cf. Hegel: “Though the embryo is indeed *in itself* a human being, it is not so *for itself*; this it only is as cultivated Reason, which made itself into what it is in itself. And that is when it is for the first time actual” (*PhG* 21). “Spirit becomes object because it is just this movement of becoming *other to itself*, i.e. becoming an *object to itself*, and suspending this otherness” (*PhG* 36).

<sup>71</sup> “Consciousness simultaneously distinguishes itself from something, and at the same time relates itself to it, or, as it is said, something exists for consciousness” (*PhG*. 52, sec. 82).

bear in mind throughout the whole investigation is that these two moments, ‘Concept’ and ‘object’, ‘being-for-another’ and ‘being-in-itself’ both fall *within* that knowledge which we are investigating” (*PhG* 84). Again, the distinction that the mind draws between itself and its object but which it preserves within itself is indeed given in consciousness as a phenomenological fact:

[T]he distinction between the in-itself and knowledge is already present in the very *fact* that consciousness knows an object at all. Something is for it the in-itself; and knowledge, or the being of the object for consciousness is, for it, another moment. Upon this distinction, which is present as a fact, the examination rests [Emphases mine]. (*PhG* 85)

Thus, *PhG* Hegel bids heed to the point that he will rearticulate in the *LHP*, namely, that unlike the development of a plant, the mind at its culminating moment of development and self-differentiation preserves itself in this difference such that its object remains *for* it; moreover, this positing, distinguishing and relating is given in consciousness as a phenomenological fact. Indeed, as noted, Hegel identifies this point as “the essential point to bear in mind throughout the whole investigation” of the *PhG*, for it is upon this point that the entire “examination rests”.

A number of difficulties and confusions often emerge surrounding Hegel’s discussion of the immanence of the object of knowledge to consciousness as well as his appeal to phenomenological fact in order to ground his account of the structure of consciousness.<sup>72</sup> While a more thorough treatment of some of these issues will have to wait for subsequent chapters, it would be well to address promptly one of the more salient

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<sup>72</sup> An distinctly misguided interpretation of Hegel’s theory of the nature of the relation between consciousness or the mind and its object by Michael Forster is dealt with at length in the Appendix.

difficulties that tend to arise: the confusion arising from the use of spatial prepositions in describing the relationship of consciousness to its object.

### 2.3.1 *The Problem of Spatial Prepositions Vis-à-vis the Object of Knowledge*

In the earlier section on the difference between motion (*kinesis*) and operation (*energeia*) it was noted that, unlike movements, operations are not temporal realities, at least not in the sense that movements are temporal. Movements occur *over* time; operations endure *through* time. Similarly, operations, unlike movements, are not spatial realities, either. Hegel, due perhaps in large part to his close reading of Aristotle, and especially the *De Anima*, is keenly aware of this aspect of operations. Indeed, in the section on the *De Anima* in the *LHP* Hegel affirms his appreciation and appropriation of Aristotle's account of *energeia* as it applies to acts of sensation and understanding or "thinking", declaring that it contains "many clear and far-reaching glimpses into the Nature of consciousness" (*LHP II* 191). In order to understand more clearly how these "clear and far-reaching" elements in Aristotle's conception of sensation and understanding help clarify what is meant by the immanence of the object of knowledge to consciousness, it will be necessary to examine a few more details of Aristotle's account of the nature of *energeia*.

According to Aristotle, the reality of an act (*energeia*) is received in the patient of the act, as he states: "for it is in the passive factor that the actuality of the active or motive factor is to be realized" (426a4-5) In the case of sensation, the patient of the act is the sense-organ. Thus, for Aristotle, the reality or actuality (*energeia*) of sounding is *in* the

hearing, just as the *energeia* of color(ing) is *in* the seeing.<sup>73</sup> In other words, sense in act is sensed in act.<sup>74</sup> Hearing and sounding, seeing and color, respectively, do not constitute two distinct realities; rather each pair constitutes a single actuality. There is no actual color outside of seeing, just as there is no actual sound outside of hearing.<sup>75</sup> “Subject” and “object” are one in act: ““For the acting-and-being-acted-upon is to be found in the passive, not in the active factor, so also the actuality of the sensible object and that of the sensitive subject are both realized in the latter” (426a9-11).<sup>76</sup>

The further point regarding the use of spatial prepositions to discuss the relation between the object of sensation and the conscious act in which it is experienced is that one must be careful not to imagine or “picture-think” the manner in which an object is thus “in” consciousness.<sup>77</sup> Insofar as sense and sensed are one in act, the object of sensation – the sensed – is “in” the mind since it is one with the conscious operation of sensing. Yet, it is not spatially “in” the organ of sense. The ear is spatially distinct from the guitar amp generating the sound waves, just as the eye is spatially distinct from the painting reflecting the light wavicles. However, sound is not spatially distinct from hearing, nor is color spatially distinct from seeing. Sounding is “in” hearing, and color(ing) is “in” seeing, in the sense that each respective pair constitutes a single reality.

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<sup>73</sup> “Both the sound and hearing so far as it is actual must be found in that which has the faculty of hearing” (426a3-4).

<sup>74</sup> “The activity of the sensible object and that of the sense is one and the same activity” (425b26-7).

<sup>75</sup> There may of course be sound waves or light wavicles outside of or distinct from the ears or eyes, but their actions would of course be motions, not operations. We do not hear sound waves; we hear sound. We do not see light wavicles; we see color. This distinction, moreover, need not presume any vulgar distinction between “primary” and “secondary” qualities as found in much modern philosophy post-Galileo.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Mure: “The perceptible is only and necessarily *actualized* in being perceived: its actual, though not its potential, *esse* is *percipi*. Therefore there can be no inference to the nature of any sort of physical thing in a world supposed indifferent to a subject’s consciousness; Aristotle clearly excludes any naively realist view of the object of the perceptive act” (Mure, 20).

<sup>77</sup> This point is discussed at length in the Appendix vis-à-vis Forster’s interpretation of Hegel’s theory of consciousness or mind.

Hegel accedes to this aspect of Aristotle's "clear and far-reaching" account of the structure of consciousness:

There is a body which sounds and a subject which hears; they are twofold in the aspect they present, but hearing, taken by itself, is intrinsically an activity of both. In like manner, when I have by sense the perception of redness and hardness, my perception is itself red and hard: that is, I find myself determined in that way, even though reflection says that outside of me there is a red, hard thing, and that it and my finger are two; but they are also one, my eye is red and the thing. It is upon this difference and this identity that everything depends; Aristotle demonstrates this in the most emphatic way, and holds firmly to his point. The later distinction of subjective and objective is the reflection of consciousness. (*LHP II* 192)

Thus, for Hegel sense and sensed are one in act. Hegel goes further and clarifies that the *distinction* between "subject" and "object" is only subsequently constituted "reflectively" by and "in" consciousness. In other words, for Hegel, as for Aristotle, the duality between "subject" and "object" is not a primordial or "brute fact" which is simply "given" to consciousness. The distinction is the result of the mind's own deed of positing and distinguishing.

In Aristotle's account, the rational soul is initially a *potentia omnia facere et fieri*: it can make and become all things. As Hegel would say, it is the entire cosmos in-itself.<sup>78</sup> Through its activity, the rational soul both makes things intelligible and becomes one with those things in act. Thus, as with sense and sensed, knower and known are one in

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Ferrarin: "That the world, the universe in itself, is rational, this is the *nous pathetikos*' reads the note of an auditor of Hegel's 1820 class" (*Hegel and Aristotle* 311).

act: “Actual knowledge is identical with its object” (430a20).<sup>79</sup> The actuality of the intelligible, or what Hegel will call the “determinate”, “in” rational consciousness *is* knowledge. Just as there is no sounding “outside” of hearing, there is no intelligibility “outside” of intelligence, no thought outside of thinking; the two are one in act. While the known object may be spatially distinct from one’s body it is not spatially distinct from one’s act of understanding it. Thus, as Hegel indicates, any distinction between knower and known is the result of the “reflection” of consciousness.

A further point to notice regarding the way in which the object of knowledge is “in” consciousness is that, unlike sensation, the intelligibility or determinateness of *all* objects is contained potentially “in” the rational soul. As Aristotle states, referring to the Platonic doctrine of *Anamnesis* according to which the knowledge of all things is “in” the soul and simply needs to be “recollected”: “It was a good idea to call the soul ‘the place of the forms’, though this description holds only of the thinking soul, and even this is the forms only potentially” (429a27-29). Thus, unlike sensation, in principle nothing is “outside” of the scope of the rational soul, for it is a potential totality (*omnia*). As Hegel states,

[W]hat [Aristotle] says of thought is explicitly and absolutely speculative, and is not on the same level with anything else, such as sense-perception  
[...] This fact is moreover involved, that reason is implicitly the true totality.<sup>80</sup> (LHP 2, 200-1)

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Mure: “Fully actual knowledge is identical with what is known, and in this knowing reason knows itself” (*Introduction to Hegel* 41).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Findlay, in his Foreword to the *PhG*: “The mind for Hegel, as for Aristotle, is thus the place of the forms” (ix).

As thus “containing” the totality of all knowledge potentially “within” it, the development of knowledge “in” the rational soul is not a matter of “gaining access” to the “world” “out there”, but of actualizing its own immanent potentiality.<sup>81</sup>

Hegel thus criticizes the common view according to which the “passivity” involved in Aristotle’s account of knowledge is supposed to make the latter an “empiricist” and/or “realist” when compared, for example, to Kant’s critical idealism. As Hegel points out, such “passivity” does not entail a “receptivity” of objects, or their forms, “into” the soul. Rather, the passivity refers simply to the fact that in moving from ignorance to knowledge the soul moves from potency to act and therefore undergoes change:

Thought is implicitly the content of the object of what is thought, and in coming into existence it [i.e. thought] only coincides with itself; but the self-conscious understanding is not merely implicit, but essentially explicit, since it is within itself all things. That is an idealistic way of expressing it and yet they say that Aristotle is an empiricist. The passivity of understanding has therefore here only the sense of potentiality before actuality, and that is the great principle of Aristotle.<sup>82</sup> (*LHP II* 196)

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The actual is not something spatial” (*PhG* 45). Needless to say, the upshot of this position is that spatial distinctions and relations are not primordially given “brute facts” of experience but are constituted in and through the operations of consciousness: “It is the Notion which divides space into its dimensions and determines the connections between and within them” (*PhG*. 45).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Hegel: “With this moment of passivity Aristotle does not fall short of idealism; sensation is always in one aspect passive. That is, however, a false idealism which thinks that the passivity and spontaneity of the mind depend on whether the determination given is from within or from without, as if there were freedom in sense-perception, whereas it is itself a sphere of limitation” (*LHP II* 188). In other words, on Hegel’s reading, for the Kantian there is passivity in cognition insofar as the object is “received” from “outside” the mind, whereas there is spontaneity and thus freedom insofar as the mind can act upon the object it has received on the basis of resources contained *a priori* “within” itself. For Hegel, the point is moot since sensation *tout simple* is the realm of finitude and limitation and thus un-freedom. Again, Hegel’s point is that sensation, like knowledge, is passive, not in the sense of “receiving” an influence from the “external world” or the “thing-in-itself,” but simply in the sense that it moves from potency to act: “The reaction of

Knowledge is thus in the first instance, not a “gaining access” to or “receiving influence” from an object “out there”, but a development of the knower; it is the rational soul in act, for the rational soul is potentially all things.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, according to the Aristotelian identity theory of knowing which Hegel appropriates, just as sense in act is sensed in act, so knower in act is known in act. Moreover, unlike sensation, nothing whatsoever stands “outside” the scope of the rational soul or mind. All knowledge for Aristotle is an actualization of the dynamic potency that is “in” or rather *is* the rational soul or mind itself. All of these points must be borne in mind in order to appreciate what Hegel means when he says that the object of knowledge, unlike the fruit of the plant, is preserved “in” consciousness.<sup>84</sup>

### 3. *The Concept of the Concrete*

From Hegel’s “Concept of Development”, let us turn to his account of the “Concept of the Concrete”. The concept of the concrete, for Hegel, is a continuation of the concept of development. Stated simply, for Hegel, “the concrete is the unity of diverse determinations and principles” (*LHP II* 13). Development, therefore, is a process of concretization, for it entails the positing of diverse elements and the simultaneous

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sense-perception consists therefore in this active receiving into itself of that which is perceived; but this is simply activity in passivity, the spontaneity which abrogates the receptivity in sense-perception. Sense-perception, as made like to itself, has, while appearing to be brought to pass by means of an influence working it, brought to pass the identity of itself and its object” (*LHP II* 189).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Hegel: “A host of other forms used of the intelligence [*Verstand*], that it receives *impressions* from outside, *admits* them, that representations arise through *influences* of the external things as the causes, etc., belong to a categorical standpoint which is not the standpoint of the mind or of philosophical inquiry” (*PM* 173).

<sup>84</sup> Needless to say, failure to bear these points in mind often provides the basis for anxieties that Hegel’s philosophy – not to mention any number of other philosophies – would ultimately consign knowledge to epistemological immanence or to a state of being trapped “in” one’s own mind. This point will be broached again in Chapter Four.



preservation of the unity of those elements. In the specific case of the mind, the mind posits for itself an object; yet, it preserves its unity with itself in this very act of positing.

Furthermore, complete self-knowledge will constitute the highest instance of the concrete, for Hegel, since it will involve the full objective positing of the mind by the mind in a perfected concrete act.<sup>85</sup> For, the mind is initially a potency or something that exists merely in-itself, but “it is its interest that what is in itself should be there for it” (*LHP I 24*). Such a conscious act or operation of objectification in turn “is the retention of these diverse elements within itself,” namely, the mind and the object it has posited for itself; “the act thus is really one, and it is just this unity of differences which is the concrete” (*LHP I 24*).<sup>86</sup>

### 3.1 *Development as Vertical Teleology in Hegel*

In combining his concept of development with his concept of the concrete Hegel adds an important element to his overall theory of development, one that will prove quite useful in understanding his account of the development of the mind. The element that Hegel adds is a discussion of how development is ultimately a cumulative process in which later advances presuppose earlier achievements. Thus, Hegel states

The fruit of development, which comes third, is a result of motion, but inasmuch as it is merely the result of one stage of development, as being the last in this stage, it is both the starting point and the first in order in another such

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The difficulty of the philosophical cognition of mind consists in the fact that here we are no longer dealing with the comparatively abstract, simple logical Idea, but with the most concrete, most developed form achieved by the Idea in its self-actualization” (*PM 3*).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Mure: “Thought which is possessed of its own full nature – philosophic thought – is in essence self-development from abstract to concrete. It is a process upwards, if we hold to the spatial metaphor” (*Introduction to Hegel 128*).

stage...Matter – which as developed has form – constitutes once more the material for a new form...The application of thought to this, supplies it with the form and determination of thought. This action thus further forms the previously formed, gives it additional determinations, makes it more determinate in itself, further developed and more profound. As concrete, this activity is a succession of processes in development which must be represented not as a straight line drawn out into vague infinity, but as a circle returning within itself, which, as periphery, has very many circles, and whose whole is a large number of processes in development turning back within themselves (*LHP I 27*).

Clearly, Hegel is again invoking the Aristotelian context. For, learning is a kind of motion that issues forth a fruit. Such fruit, however, may be enjoyed, and such enjoyment would constitute an operation or *energeia*, for the activity and the end would then be coincident. Thus, the rational mind or nature, like all natures, is an immanent, teleological principle of motion and rest.

Hegel adds a further element, however, one that is certainly anticipated in Aristotle but which still calls forth a further specification on Hegel's part. In effect, Hegel is taking what might be called the "horizontal teleology" of Aristotle and transforming it into a "vertical teleology". By "horizontal teleology" would be meant the process whereby a given nature moves toward an end proportionate to itself and rests in the enjoyment of that end. Thus, for example, a merely biological organism – or "nutritive soul" – will differentiate its various organs such that it can engage in the activities proportionate to its nature, namely, a flourishing biological existence. Such a process of self-differentiation and immanent perfection would constitute an instance of horizontal

teleology since *biological development* would be ordered to the end of *biological activity and fulfillment*.

Hegel's points out, however, that along with the horizontal teleology in which a given nature pursues a proportionate end, development also involves a process whereby a preceding moment of development provides the conditions for the pursuit and attainment of a *higher* end, thus giving rise to vertical teleology.<sup>87</sup>

As Hegel states, the fruit of development of a given level, which is already a certain actualization of the potency immanent in a given nature, can provide the proximate "matter" or potency for a subsequent development. The standard Aristotelian examples which at least suggest this process of vertical teleology are instances in which it is observed how water and earth form the matter for tin as well as copper, while tin and copper when combined in turn form the matter for bronze, which in turn forms the matter for a statue, and so on. In such cases, the initial matter has a proportionate end, namely – at least in the Aristotelian universe – resting in its proper location. Yet, the attainment of each end functions in turn as an instrument for the attainment of a higher end, namely, the production of a beautiful work of art and the contemplative *energeia* by which such beauty is appreciated.<sup>88</sup>

Hegel goes further, however, and points out that there can be instances in which a given phenomenon such as biological organism, or, even more conspicuously, the developing mind, *does not have to wait* for some external factor to bring together the

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<sup>87</sup> Hegel thus refers to the "going forth of *the more perfect from the imperfect*", as in the emergence of higher orders of being from lower orders (*EL* 233). Cf. Mure on the eventual structure of the development of consciousness in the *PhG*: "The principle will be this. Each phase will be a proximate matter to the phase above it. The total concrete attitude of subject to object, the whole unity of the two related terms in which any given phase consists, will become the object or content of the proximate higher phase, which will accordingly exhibit a fresh attitude of the subject to a fresh object" (*Introduction to Hegel* 63).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Aristotle: "matter is a relative thing – for different forms there is different matter" (194b8-9).

matter out of which will emerge a higher form as, for example, the tin and copper must wait for the metalsmith to smelt them into bronze, which in turn must wait for the sculptor to transform it into a work of art, and so on. In contrast, the animal, like the plant, differentiates its biological organs in order that it may pursue its proportionate biological ends.<sup>89</sup> Yet, in achieving that proportionate end, the animal simultaneously *produces through itself* the conditions or matter necessary for the emergence of a wholly new set of operations with their own respective proportionate ends, namely, the operations of sensation. In turn, the processes of sensation which the animal has differentiated and constituted within itself can provide the matter from which intelligent operations might emerge, and so on.

For Hegel, development, properly speaking, should therefore be understood, not as a kind of line extending out into a vague infinity, but as a constant return to, enrichment and elevation of previous achievements through the placing of them in the service of ever higher ends. In other words, nature is a principle of motion and rest not only horizontally but vertically, with each “resting station” serving at least potentially as the instrumental matter for a still higher stage. Indeed, as will soon be discussed at greater length, consciousness goes through a series of these stages in which the achievements of the prior stages form the concrete “matter” for the succeeding stage. Thus, development *as concrete* entails the preservation of the diverse elements of what has gone before, although these previous elements will now function in the service of a higher end.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Hegel: “It is only the living and mental [*Geistig*] which internally bestirs and develops itself” (*LHP I* 27).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Thus the Idea as concrete in itself, and self-developing, is an organic system and a totality which contains a multitude of stages and of moments in development” (*LHP I* 27).

#### 4. *The Concept of Development and the Development of the Concept*

Ultimately, in order to understand Hegel's theory of development it is necessary to clarify what he means by the "Concept".<sup>91</sup> To be sure, the Concept in Hegel has a variety of distinct but related meanings, and as such it is impossible to provide a univocal definition of the term.<sup>92</sup> Present purposes, however, require that an explication of the Concept proceeds only so far as it contributes to understanding Hegel's theory of development.

As a first approximation, Hegel's Concept corresponds closely to Aristotle's "nature".<sup>93</sup> For, the Concept is a principle of motion and rest. Indeed, the Concept just is the very dynamic principle which drives any and all instances of development, including the entirety of universal historical process.<sup>94</sup> As such, it is possible provisionally to distinguish between, on the one hand, *the* Concept as the principle of motion and rest of universal process, including human history, and, on the other hand, the vast multiplicity of more particular concepts which propel and govern the development of the more particular aspects of universal process. The distinction can at best be provisional, however, since it is ultimately the same Concept which operates in and through the particular concepts such that the particular concepts can be rightly be declared to be but

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The movement of the *Concept* is *development*, through which only that is posited which is already implicitly present" (*EL* 237).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Mure: "The term Concept [*Begriff*] can only become clear as its phases develop in the Logic" (*Introduction to Hegel* 137).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Hegel on: "This 'nature' of the Concept, which shows itself in its process to be a development of itself" (*EL* 238).

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Hegel: "As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Concept and the Concept as such is the absolute truth of being" (*SL* 49).

“moments” of the all-embracing Concept.<sup>95</sup> The particular concepts as governing the development of particular aspects of the universal nevertheless function in a generically similar manner to the Concept.<sup>96</sup>

#### 4.1 *The Concept's Tripartite Scheme of Development*

The Concept, and therefore all particular concepts, develops according to a tripartite scheme. First, there is an initial state of undifferentiated unity. This moment could be further specified as the Concept existing in potency, in-itself and implicitly. Second, the Concept negates its initial unity and posits for itself a difference in the form of an object. In positing an object for itself the Concept thereby attains to a degree of actuality and begins to exist explicitly for-itself. Third, there is culminating moment of reconciliation in which the Concept negates the initial negation and overcomes the difference it had posited for itself by sublating it into a higher, differentiated and more concrete unity. At this highest stage, the Concept is fully actualized; indeed, it explicitly recognizes not only its object as manifesting itself but also that it is *responsible* for positing the object; thus, it comes to exist in-and-for-itself. Let us unpack each of these basic moments of the development of the Concept in greater detail.

##### 4.1.1 *The Concept's Initial State of Potency, Implicitness and Indeterminateness*

First, while the Concept's initial state of undifferentiated unity evidently lacks any explicit determinations, Hegel routinely insists that it is not a state of mere lifeless inertia.

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Hegel: “It is false to speak of concepts of diverse sort, for the Concept as such, although concrete, is still essentially *one*, and the moments contained within it must not be considered to be diverse sorts of concepts” (*EL* 245).

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Hegel: “This happens when each particular concept is derived from the self-producing and self-actualizing universal concept or the logical idea” (*PM*, 6)

Rather, it is a fecund state of potency ordered to its ultimate fulfillment and actualization.<sup>97</sup>

Second, the Concept in-itself, while lacking explicit determinacy, nevertheless contains within itself all the objective determinations that it will eventually posit for itself. As Hegel says, reverting to organic analogy, “A plant develops from its germ: the germ already contains the whole plant within itself” (*EL* 237). In similar fashion, the Concept contains all its eventual objective determinations within itself.

Third, while the Concept in-itself constitutes a kind of unity, it is nevertheless unstable and cannot long preserve itself. It is important to see why this is the case. In terms of greatest generality, the reason why the Concept, or any concept, in-itself is unstable is that it contains a *contradiction*. For Hegel, the Concept in-itself, despite its initial unity, nevertheless contains a contradiction, and it is due to this immanent contradiction that Concept is driven beyond its initial state towards its successive stages of development.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4.1.2 *Contradiction as Impelling the Concept's Development*

It might be asked in what, more precisely, the contradiction immanent in the Concept in-itself consists. This question can be answered both from a more strictly logical perspective and from the perspective of concrete experience. To be sure, these two realms – the order of logic and the order of experience – are intimately connected in

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The Concept as such does not abide within itself, without development (as the understanding would have it); on the contrary, being the infinite form, the Concept is totally active” (*EL* 245).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The concrete must become for itself or explicit; as implicit or potential it is only differentiated within itself, not as yet explicitly set forth, but still in a state of unity. The concrete is thus simple, and yet at the same time differentiated. This, its inward contradiction, which is indeed the impelling force in development, brings distinction into being” (*LHP* 25).

Hegel. Indeed, as we will see in Chapter Four, Hegel so generalizes his conception of experience that the logical determinations of thought are recognized to be constitutive of conscious experience.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible, and at times helpful, provisionally to distinguish these two orders.

From a logical perspective the contradiction within the Concept is that between the universal and the particular. For, at its initial stage, the Concept is universal. As Hegel states, “The beginning, the principle, or the Absolute, as at first immediately enunciated, is only the universal” (*PhG* 11). Of course, a traditional view of concepts is that they are indeed universals, but universals which merely *subsume* particular instances “under” them. Hegel’s view of concepts, not to say, of the Concept, is fundamentally opposed to this traditional, subsumptive view of concepts.<sup>100</sup> A very brief comparison and contrast between the traditional view and Hegel’s of concepts, however, will help clarify the nature of the contradiction between the universal and the particular that Hegel affirms to exist within the Concept in-itself.

#### 4.1.3 *Hegel’s Concept of Concept versus the Traditional Concept of Concept*

A first contrast obtains insofar as, for Hegel, the universal is present at the beginning of development, including, as we will, intellectual development, whereas for

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. Hegel: “This concept of philosophy is *the self-thinking* Idea, the knowing truth, the logical with the meaning that it is the universality *verified* in the concrete content as in its actuality. In this way science has returned to its beginning, and the logical is its *result* and the *mental* [*Geistig*]” (*PM* 275).

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Hegel: “When people speak of the Concept, they ordinarily have only abstract universality in mind, and consequently the Concept is usually also defined as a general concept. We speak in this way of the ‘concept’ of colour, or of a plant, or of an animal, and so on; and these concepts are supposed to arise by omitting the particularities through which the various colours, plant, animals, etc., are distinguished from one another, and holding fast to what they have in common. This is the way in which the understanding apprehends the Concept, and the feeling that such concepts are hollow and empty, that they are mere schemata and shows is justified. What is universal about the Concept is indeed not just something common against which the particular stands on its own; instead the universal is what particularizes (specifies) itself, remaining at home with itself in its other, in unclouded clarity” (*EL* 240).



the traditional view, the universal emerges, if it ever emerges, only at the end of a process of logical abstraction. As a result, for the traditional view the universal is dependent upon the particulars whence the former was abstracted.<sup>101</sup>

Second, since for the traditional view the universal emerges as a result the “subjective” activity of abstraction, the universal itself is therefore viewed as something “merely subjective”, an “item” merely “in” the mind, and thus not constitutive of objective reality. This aspect of the traditional view for which Hegel has little patience will become more relevant in later portions of this dissertation. Needless to say, however, for Hegel the Concept *qua* universal is not merely abstracted from an already existent reality “out there”, but instead constitutes that very reality.<sup>102</sup>

Lastly, on the traditional view the universal and particular confront each in an insoluble contradiction. For, by its very definition the universal on this view abstracts from particular differences. As the saying goes, all humans are the same insofar as you abstract from their differences. For Hegel, however, the problem is that a universal which abstracts from differences is not worthy of the name. For, to be universal ultimately means to encompass the universe with all its manifold of particular differences and determinations. It is precisely this fact, namely, that the universal, to be worthy of its name, must not abstract from particularity, but must somehow encompass it, penetrate it

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Instead, the Concept is what truly comes first, and things are what they are through the activity of the Concept that dwells in them and reveals itself in them” (*EL* 241).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Hegel: “It is a mistake to assume that, first of all, there are objects which form the content of our representations, and then our subjective activity comes afterwards to form concepts of them, through the operation of abstraction that we spoke of earlier, and by summarizing what the objects have in common. Instead, the Concept dwells within the things themselves, it is that through which they are what they are” (*EL* 245); “The Concept (or even, if one prefers, subjectivity) and the object are *in-themselves the same*” (*EL* 269); “Philosophy has to do with Ideas and therefore not with what are commonly described as *mere concepts*. On the contrary, it shows that the latter are one-sided and lacking in truth, and that it is the *concept* alone (not what is so often called by that name, but which is merely an abstract determinations of the understanding) which has *actuality*, and in such a way that it gives actuality to itself” (*EPR* 25).

and constitute it, that Hegel sees as responsible for the contradiction obtaining within the Concept in-itself at its initial stage of development.<sup>103</sup>

For, again, the Concept in its initial stage is the universal, but it is the universal in a still abstract form. It is universal since it contains all the differences and determination within itself. Yet, it is abstract since these differences and determinations exist only in potency; they do not yet constitute an objective world with a manifold of concrete, particular determinations.<sup>104</sup> Logically, however, the universal cannot abide this contradiction. For, logically, any universal worthy of the name cannot remain abstract but must become the concrete universal; it must not simply express one aspect common to every instance; rather, it must encompass, penetrate and constitute everything about everything.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. Hegel: “It is a common prejudice that the science of Philosophy deals only with abstractions and empty generalities, and that sense-perception, our empirical self-consciousness, natural instinct, and the feelings of every-day life, lie, on the contrary in the region of the concrete and the self-determined. As a matter of fact, Philosophy is in the region of thought, and has therefore to deal with universals; its content is abstract, but only as to form and element. In itself the Idea is really concrete, for it is the union of different determinations [...] It is the business of Philosophy [...] to show that the Truth or Idea does not consist in empty generalities, but in a universal; and that is within itself the particular and determined” (*LHP I* 24).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Indeed the Concept is *in-itself* already the particular, but the particular is not yet posited in the Concept as such; it is still in transparent unity with the universal there. So [...] the germ of the plant, for instance, already contains the particular: root, branches, leaves, etc., but the particular is here present only *in-itself*, and is posited only when the germ opens up” (*EL* 245).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The immanent development of a science, the *derivation of its entire content* from the simple *concept* – and without such a derivation it certainly does not deserve the name of a philosophical science – has the following distinctive feature. One and the same concept [...] which begins by being abstract (because it is itself the beginning), retains its character yet [at the same time] consolidates its determinations, against through its own exclusive agency, and thereby acquires a concrete content” (*ERP* 317); “The first thing which the expression ‘universality’ suggests to representational thought is an abstract and external universality; but in the case of that universality which has being in and for itself, as defined here, we should think neither of the universality of reflection – i.e. *communality* or *totality* – nor of that *abstract* universality which stands outside and in opposition to the individual, i.e. the abstract identity of the understanding. The universality in question is *concrete* within itself and consequently has being for itself, and it is the substance of the self-consciousness, its immanent generic character or immanent idea; it is the concept of the free will as the *universal which extends beyond* its object, which *permeates its determination* and is identical with itself in this determination. – The universal which has being in and for itself is in general what is called the *rational*, and it can be understood only in this speculative way” (*ERP* 55).

#### 4.1.4 *The Experience of the Concept's Contradiction*

Moving from the logical order to the experiential order will further clarify the nature of the contradiction obtaining within the Concept in-itself. The contradiction between the universal and particular emerges into consciousness, in the first instance, in the experience of need [*Not*] and drive [*Trieb*].<sup>106</sup> These are “the *felt* contradiction, as it occurs *within* the living subject itself” (*EL* 281). Need, drive and desire [*Begierde*] just are the initial experiential manifestations of the logical contradiction between the universal and the particular.<sup>107</sup>

To take the example of the plant, the germ is a kind of universal in that it contains within itself all the determinations that will eventually characterize the whole mature plant. Yet, it contains them merely in abstract potency. They lack, in other words, determinate, concrete existence or actuality. Need and drive just are the felt experience of this lack or contradiction in which the universal is not yet *truly* universal.<sup>108</sup>

Needless to say, need, drive and desire are not merely the experience of this lack, this contradiction, but they are of their nature ordered to an end. Thus, need, drive and

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The subjective Idea is in the first instance an *urge* [*Trieb*]” (*SL* 783).

<sup>107</sup> This point will be discussed at much greater length in Chapter Three.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Everything that is at all is concrete, and hence it is inwardly distinguished and self-opposed. The finitude of things consists in the fact that their immediate way of being does not correspond with what they are in-themselves. For instance, in inorganic nature, acid is at the same time in-itself base, i.e., its being is totally and solely in its relatedness to its other. Hence also, however, acid is not something that persists quietly in the antithesis, but is rather what strives to posit itself as what it is in-itself. *Generally speaking, it is contradiction that moves the world*, and it is ridiculous to say that contradiction cannot be thought. What is correct in this assertion is just that contradiction is not all there is to it, and that contradiction sublates itself by its own doing. Sublated contradiction, however, is not abstract identity, for that is itself only one side of the antithesis” [Emphases mine] (*EL* 187); “The Concept needs no external stimulus for its actualization; *its own nature involves the contradiction* of simplicity and difference, and therefore restlessly impels it to actualize itself, to unfold into actuality the difference which, in the Concept itself, is present only in an ideal manner, i.e., in the contradictory form of undifferentiatedness, and by this sublation of its simplicity as a defect, a one-sidedness, to make itself actually the whole, of which it initially contains only the possibility” [Emphases mine] (*PM* 7).

desire are teleological. As Hegel says, “Need and drive are the readiest examples of purpose” (*EL* 281). As purposive, however, need, drive and desire represent the transition point between the merely in-itself to the for-itself for the Concept. Thus, it will be apposite ourselves to transition to this next stage in the tripartite development of the Concept. Before doing so, let us briefly recall what has been established thus far regarding the Concept as it is in-itself.

#### *4.1.5 Brief Summary of the First Stage of the Concept’s Development*

In its first stage, the Concept in-itself is an abstract, indeterminate, implicit universal. Yet, precisely to that extent it exists in a state of contradiction, since for Hegel to be universal means to encompass, penetrate and constitute the universe in all of its particularity, which is to say, in its totality. This contradiction is experienced in the first instance as need and drive. Need, drive and eventually desire are the positive experience of a lack, they are the Concept’s experience of itself as both universal and not universal, as universal in potency and abstraction, but not yet universal in determinate act and concretion. It is in Hegel’s view of need and drive as experiential manifestations of the Concept’s initial internal contradiction that we see in a more illustrative fashion how the Concept drives itself towards ever higher stages of development.

#### *4.2 The Second Stage of the Concept’s Development*

The second stage of Concept’s development is its becoming for-itself. The Concept for-itself is the Concept in its experience of need and drive, and these as ordered to an end, as purposive, as teleological. Thus, Hegel states, “the Concept that now exists for itself is *purpose*” (*EL* 279). The question that immediately arises here regards what

exactly is the end towards which the Concept drives itself. The deceptively simple answer is that the end towards which the Concepts drives itself is the positing of an existence adequate to itself in order that it might thereby recognize and be at home.<sup>109</sup> The moment of the Concept's existing for-itself corresponds primarily to the moment of positing, whereas the moment of recognition, reconciliation and rest corresponds to the Concept *qua* in-and-for-itself. Let us accordingly focus first on the moment of the Concept's positing.

#### 4.2.1 *The Concept's Self-positing*

In the case of the plant there is a kind of twofold self-positing of an existence adequate to the plant's concept. For, *in concept*, the plant is the fully developed, flourishing plant. Thus, in developing, the plant, driven by perhaps the most primitive form of need and drive,<sup>110</sup> posits the various concrete determinations that together come to constitute its concrete functioning. Upon attaining maturity the plant thereby exists in a way that is adequate to its concept.

Here we have, moreover, a first indication of Hegel's theory of truth. Space does not admit of a lengthy discussion on this point. Briefly, however, we can note that truth for Hegel is a matter of existence becoming adequate to its concept.<sup>111</sup> Thus, a plant that

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The Idea is the *certainty* of the *implicit* identity of this objective world with it. Reason comes to world with absolute faith in its ability to posit this identity and to elevate its certainty into *truth*, and with the drive to *posit* the antithesis [between itself and the world], which is *in-itself* null and void, *for it* as null and void" (EL 295).

<sup>110</sup> Hegel refers to a "*nisus*" even at the level of inorganic nature (PN 45-6).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Truth in philosophy means that the concept corresponds to reality" (EPR, 53); "What is required by the definition of truth, namely, the agreement of the Concept and its object (SL, 595); the definition of truth as agreement of cognition with its object is "a definition of great, indeed of supreme, value" (SL, 593); "The Idea is what is true *in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity*" (EL, 286); "Only when we consider mind in this process of the self-actualization of its concept, do we know it in its truth (*for truth just means agreement of the concept with its actuality*). In its immediacy, mind is not yet true, has not yet made its concept an object for itself, has not yet transformed what is present in it in an immediate way, into something posited by itself, has not yet converted its actuality into an actuality

has become adequate to the concept of a plant is a true plant. Needless to say, Hegel's view of truth thus seems to entail a potentially scandalous inversion of the traditional correspondence theory of truth according to which truth is a matter of the concept becoming adequate to existence or the object. A discussion of the details of this point of controversy, however, will have to wait for Chapters Two through Four.

Along with positing an existence adequate to its concept by developing into a fully mature organism, the correlative end towards which the plant drives itself is the positing of a fruit. This aspect of the plant's process of development reveals instructive aspects about the limitation of the very concept of the plant.

As already discussed, in producing its fruit the plant posits into existence an object whose nature corresponds to itself. Yet, when the plant posits its fruit and it falls to the ground it ceases to function as a concrete determination of the plant. Thus, in one sense the plant, in developing itself to full maturity, has posited for itself an existence adequate to its concept. Yet, in another sense its culminating moment of development points to an insurmountable lack, an incompleteness, an alienation endemic to the very nature of the plant. This intrinsic incompleteness and alienation characteristic of the culminating moment of the plant's self-development thus reveals the intrinsic limitation of its very concept.

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appropriate to its concept" [Emphases mine] (PM, 7). Thus, Michael Forster is misguided in his view that Hegel rejects the "correspondence theory of truth" in favor a view of truth as "enduring communal consensus" (*Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*, 193ff.). The profound aspect of Hegel's conception of truth is not that he rejects the correspondence theory in favor of, say, a "pragmatic" or "enduring communal consensus" view of truth, but rather that he reconceives, or dialectically inverts, the view of correspondence according to which the Concept or Mind learns to conform to the object "out there", and replaces it with a view according to which the object itself progressively becomes adequate to the concept which posits it. Recall, for Hegel, "it is the *concept* alone [...] which has *actuality*, and in such a way that it gives actuality to itself" (ERP 25). Cf. *SL*, 44ff.

The limitation of the concept of a plant – to put it perhaps a bit tautologically – is its finitude. It is of the very nature or concept of a mature plant that its existence be restricted to a rather finite portion of space and time. Moreover, the concrete determinations of a plant are restricted to a very limited range of organs, functions and processes. At best, organisms like plants participate in the spurious infinity of one generation succeeding the next *ad infinitum*. No actually existing plant, however, can be actually infinite, for the concept of a plant is finite.

As such, the concept of a plant is not universal in the most radical sense of the term. It is at best universal in a qualified sense. The concept of a plant, existing as it does in-itself in the germ, does contain all the determinations that will eventually characterize the plant. Yet, the totality of these determinations is intrinsically limited. In other words, the plant is determined throughout or “universally” by its concept. Yet, the concept itself is restricted and nowhere is this restriction more evident than in the fact that at the culminating moment of its own development the plant posits a difference for itself that it cannot preserve within itself. The abstract genus preserves itself in this difference, but not the concrete, actual plant.

It is otherwise, however, with the concept of mind. The concept of mind posits for itself an existence adequate to itself by developing out of itself a fully mature, rational adult. At the culminating point of its development the mind posits a fruit in analogous fashion to the plant. The difference, however, is that mind preserves itself in this difference. The ultimate reason for this is that the concept of mind is infinite, unrestricted: *potentia omnia facere et fieri*.

The important point to note is that since we have learned that need and drive and their higher manifestations are what drive the development of any given concept, the development of the mind must be driven by an unrestricted or infinite desire. Hegel will also refer to this desire as a desire for the Absolute or even Absolute desire. It is a desire for the absolute or unconditioned, not in the sense of that which lacks conditions, but for the totality of conditions – in other words, the infinite, the concrete universal, everything about everything.<sup>112</sup>

Thus, the concept of mind seeks to rest in an existent mind that has posited for itself an absolute, infinite universe. As such, the Concept reveals itself to be the mind.<sup>113</sup> It is ultimately mind from beginning to end that has driven the totality of universal process.<sup>114</sup> Noting this fact, however, immediately raises questions regarding the proper way to interpret mind in its most radical sense. For, as concretely existing, mind only appears at the last stages of universal historical development. Thus, it becomes unclear in what sense Hegel could mean that mind nevertheless has driven the entirety of universal

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. Hegel: “[The Concept] is therefore not only the highest *force* or rather the *sole* and absolute *force* of reason, but also its supreme and sole *urge* to find and cognize *itself by means of itself in everything*” (SL 826). Cf. also the *DZ* in which Hegel already speaks of the aim of philosophy as involving a state in which “the split between the Absolute and the totality of limitations vanishes” (90).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Hegel: “It is the Concept, that nature of the subject-matter, that moves onwards and develops, and this movement is equally the activity of cognition. The eternal Idea, the Idea that is in and for itself, eternally remains active, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute mind” (PM 276).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Mind is always Idea; but initially it is only the *concept* of the Idea, or the Idea in its indeterminacy, in the most abstract mode of reality, i.e. in the mode of being. In the beginning we have only the wholly universal, undeveloped determination of mind, not yet its particularity; this we obtain only when we pass from one thing to something else, for the particular contains a One and an Other; but it is just at the beginning that we have not yet made this transition. The reality of mind is, therefore, initially still a wholly universal, not particularized reality; the development of this reality will be completed only by the entire philosophy of mind” (PM 20-1); “Mind, it is true, *is* already mind at the beginning, but it does not yet know that it is” (PM 21).



process from beginning to end.<sup>115</sup> For example, is mind God?<sup>116</sup> Does He providentially work throughout all of universal historical process, directing things to their ultimate completion?<sup>117</sup> Yet, if He himself, being mind,<sup>118</sup> is not actual until the end of this process, how could He be directing it from the beginning? These are all questions that would lead into a discussion of Hegel's philosophy of religion, a topic which falls well outside of the scope of this dissertation. For now it will be sufficient to summarize what has been covered regarding the Concept in its moment as for-itself.

#### 4.2.2 *Brief Summary of the Concept in its Second Stage of Development*

*Qua* for-itself, the Concept is, in the first instance, a species of need and drive which is itself the felt contradiction of being at once universal yet lacking concrete existence and determination and thus *not* being universal in a more radical sense. The concept of *mind* is the only properly universal and infinite drive or desire. It thus drives itself to posit for itself a universe adequate to its own universality and infinity. In this sense, what is for-itself – the concept of mind *qua* universal and infinite desire – become *for-itself*, that is to say, it becomes objective for-itself what it is in-itself, namely, the unrestricted, infinite totality of concrete determinations. Once this moment is achieved

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are the struggles for Mind to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself" (*LHP I* 23)

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind" (*SL* 50).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Hegel: "When we say that the world is governed by Providence, this implies that, being predetermined in and for itself, purpose is what is at work generally, so that what is to come corresponds to what was previously known and willed. In any case, the interpretation of the world as determined by necessity, and the faith in a divine Providence, do not have to be considered reciprocally exclusive at all. What underlies divine Providence at the level of thought will soon provide to the *Concept*" (*EL* 222).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Hegel: "God, because he is mind..." (*PM* 24).

the conditions are thereby set for the ultimate moment of development when the Concept, which is to say, the mind, becomes in-and-for-itself.

#### 4.3 *The Third Stage of the Concept's Development*

The final moment of the development of the Concept is the becoming of mind in-and-for-itself. As noted, this moment entails the Concept positing for itself an existence that is adequate to what it is in itself. It also entails that the Concept recognizes the objective existence it has posited as indeed itself. The Concept must finally overcome the semblance or illusion that the objective reality of which it is aware and which it inhabits is something other than its own self.<sup>119</sup> For, at the for-itself stage the Concept does gradually succeed in positing an objective existence adequate to itself. Yet, at this stage the Concept does not recognize this fact. Rather, it takes the objective universe which it has posited for itself as something alien and found “out there” and thus standing over-against it.

In other words, while still in the merely for-itself stage the Concept is in a position analogous to that of the plant after it has posited its fruit. Like the plant, the Concept has posited an objectivity for itself. Yet, unlike the plant, the object that the Concept has posited for itself does not ultimately fall “outside” it. The Concept, however,

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Hegel: “But in the realizing of the purpose of what happens *in-itself* is that the *one-sided subjectivity* is sublated, along with the semblance of an objective independence standing over against it. In taking hold of the means, *the Concept* posits itself as the essence of the object” (EL 285); “It is within its own process that the Idea produces that illusion for itself; it posits an other confronting itself, and its actions consists in sublating this illusion” (EL 286); “The semblance of mind’s being mediated by an Other is sublated by the mind itself, since mind has, so to speak, the sovereign ingratitude of sublating, or mediating, that by which it seems to be mediated, of reducing it to something subsisting only through mind and in this way making itself completely independent” (PM 15).

does not yet know this.<sup>120</sup> As Hegel will repeatedly note, the Concept forgets the path of its development and that of its object and so takes the object as it appears immediately to it, namely, as a kind of brute fact standing over-against it. It takes the object, in other words, to stand in a relation to it like that of the fruits relationship to the plant. The Concept overcomes this illusion through a two-pronged recognition.

First, the Concept recognizes that the object it has posited for itself is not in fact “outside” of it, not something different or other than it which stands over-against it. It recognizes instead that the object is constitutive of its very self as mind. Second, in the same moment the Concept also recognizes that it itself has posited this objective existence. It takes *responsibility* for its deed and thus recognizes itself for what it is: a world-constituting, universal totality.

In achieving these culminating moments of recognition the Concept thus comes to exist in-and-for-itself. It knows itself and its world and recognizes them for what they are. It is at home with itself and thus attains to that elevated rest which is at once an infinite activity. The Concept thereby has also become the Truth, for it has posited an existence adequate to itself. It is true both in the sense of a perfect correspondence between Concept and existence, thought and being, and in the sense of being absolute or unconditioned, for the existence that the Concept has posited for itself is the concrete universal which encompasses, penetrates and constitutes all particular determinations. As Hegel states, “The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Finite cognition does not yet know itself as the activity of the Concept” (EL 296); “Finite cognition presupposes the *distinct* as something found already in being and standing over and against it” (EL 296).

consuming itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is” (*PhG* 11).

As a final note regarding this culminating moment of development, it can be noted that insofar as something succeeds in positing an existence adequate to its concept it becomes Idea, and the absolute or infinite Concept, when it posits an existence adequate to itself, becomes Absolute Idea. Hegel often appears to use Concept, Idea and Mind interchangeably, but Idea refers more specifically the Concept as realized in existence.<sup>121</sup>

## 5. *Summary of the Chapter*

It is now time to turn from Hegel’s general theory of development to his theory of the development of consciousness in particular. Before doing that, however, it will be useful to summarize the major points of Hegel’s theory examined thus far.

First, Hegel’s theory of development owes a major debt to a number of core Aristotelian notions. Foremost among these notions would be 1) the distinctions between potency and act 2) the teleological conception of nature(s), 3) the rational nature or mind as a *potens omni facere et fieri* and 4) the view that the highest end and *energeia* is the perfection of self-knowledge. Thus, for Hegel all development is a transition from

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. Michael Inwood in *A Hegel Dictionary*: “*Idee* in Hegel has a variety of applications and significances. This reflects the complexity of his notion of a concept: The concept is an initial plan (in a seed), an inner determining force (the soul, both literal and metaphorical, of a body), a normative ideal, a conceptual system and the cognizing I. The significance of the contrasting term (‘reality’, ‘objectivity’, etc.), and of the ‘realization’ of the concept, varies accordingly” (*The Hegel Dictionary*); “An idea is the full realization or actualization of a concept [...]: an idea is thus true or the truth” (*The Hegel Dictionary*). Cf. Hegel: “The Idea is what is true *in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity*” (*EL* 286); “The Idea is the adequate Concept, that which is objectively true, or the *true as such*” (*SL*, 755); “Mind is the infinite Idea” (*PM* 22); “The *Concept* of mind has its *reality* in the mind. That this reality be *knowledge* of the absolute Idea and thus in identity with the Concept, involves the necessary aspect that the *implicitly* free intelligence be in its actuality liberated to its concept, in order to be the *shape* worthy of the Concept” (*PM* 257).

potency to act.<sup>122</sup> Yet, as Hegel learned from Aristotle, acts can either be motions or operations. Operations are acts which are coincident with their ends. Thus, the attainment of the end of certain natures entails a continual activity that does not occur over time but endures through time. Moreover, since the rational nature is a potential positing and understanding of all things, the fulfillment of its nature would be the nothing less than a perfected grasp of the totality of all things which would itself be identical with perfected self-knowledge.

Hegel's employment of the analogy and dis-analogy of the biological development of the plant to illuminate the development of consciousness was also instructive. Hegel notices even in plant life the teleological tendency towards self-differentiation which culminates in a moment of positing in which what is in-itself seeks to become for-itself. Thus, the plant differentiates its various organs, thereby bringing itself to full maturation, and in a final instance bears fruit. Yet, in this final moment of development the plant fails to preserve its identity with itself: the fruit falls outside plant and takes up a merely external relation over-against it. The relation between the fruit and the plant is not concrete. In contrast, in the final moment of development of the mind – the positing of the object of knowledge – is a concrete *energeia* in which the various moments are preserved within the act itself. For, on the Aristotelian identity theory of knowledge, knower and known are one in act.

Indeed, each new stage in the development of the mind with its proportionate object will in turn provide the concrete material conditions out of which a subsequent

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<sup>122</sup> Indeed, it must already be emphasized that the Hegel identifies the distinction between potency and act and the mind's developmental transition from one as the explanatory ground for the multiplicity of philosophies. As Hegel states: "The whole variation in the development of the world in history is found on this difference [i.e. between potency and act, the implicit and the explicit]" (*LHP*, 21).

stage will emerge. The term “vertical teleology” was introduced to describe this process whereby the attainment of lower ends comes to serve as instruments for the attainment of still higher ends.

The discussion of the development of the Concept helped to clarify further details of Hegel’s concept of development. It was noted how development *qua* transition from potency to act can be further specified as a transition from the in-itself, to the for-itself, to the in-and-for-itself.

Having established these fundamental points regarding Hegel’s overall theory of development, we are now prepared to examine in closer detail Hegel’s account of the development of the mind itself.

## Chapter II

### Consciousness

Hegel's account of the polymorphic development of the mind in the *PhG* provides the basis upon which he explains the emergence, and critiques the multiplicity, of conflicting philosophies. In moving to an examination of this account we thus enter into the heart of this dissertation.

The present chapter will consist of three main sections each of which will examine one of the three sections of "Consciousness", the opening chapter of the *PhG*. The names of these sections of Consciousness are: "Sense-certainty", "Perception" and "Force and Understanding".

The first section of this chapter will track Hegel's phenomenology of the experience of Sense-certainty as a form of the mind. The details of Hegel's analysis are quite complex and often require extended examination and commentary. Still, the overriding goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate how Hegel provides an explanatory account for the fact of philosophical multiplicity and conflict. Thus, a special effort will be made to draw out more precisely just how Hegel's phenomenology of Sense-certainty in fact provides the means for explaining the very existence of determinate philosophical positions.

As will be shown, one philosophical position the existence of which is explained in and through Hegel's phenomenology of Sense-certainty turns out to be that of the naïve realism/skepticism manifested in the thought of Hegel's contemporary, G.E. Schulze. It is worth noting that, starting perhaps with Jean Hyppolite's *The Genesis and*

*Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, there has been a tendency among commentators to view the initial stages of Hegel's analysis of Sense-certainty as providing an explanatory account of the nature and emergence of the Parmenidean philosophy, particularly its conception of Being.<sup>123</sup> There is perhaps some warrant to this view given 1) that there seems to be correlation between the immediate Being which is the initial object of Sense-certainty and the indeterminate Being analyzed at the beginning of Hegel's *Science of Logic (SL)*, and 2) that the Being analyzed at the beginning of the *SL* would seem to correspond to the Parmenidean conception of Being. Still, it will hopefully become clear that the philosophy whose emergence is explained via the phenomenology of Sense-certainty much more closely corresponds to the naïve realism typified by Schulze.<sup>124</sup>

The next section of this chapter will examine Perception. A particular philosophical position which is provided with an at least initial explanation in Perception is the distinction between *appearance* and *reality*. To be sure, this fundamental distinction in the history of philosophy will receive an even fuller explanation in the subsequent section of the *PhG*, Force and Understanding. Nevertheless, important

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<sup>123</sup> As will be discussed at length in the Appendix, Michael Forster locates the historical reference of Sense-certainty even further back, specifically, in ancient Persian Zoroastrianism. It will be shown that Forster's argument in this context is misguided.

<sup>124</sup> See Hyppolite's *The Genesis and Structure* 88-93. Cf. *SL* 82ff. There is an argument to be made that the Being which is examined at the beginning of the *SL* corresponds not at all to Parmenides' Being. For, among other things, Parmenides' Being is determinate, as it lacks nothing, including a limit. By contrast, the Being with which the *SL* starts is pure indeterminacy. As such, it would correspond much more closely to Aristotle's primary matter or pure potency, which, as G.R.G. Mure points out, consists in "determinability in general" (*Introduction to Hegel* 132). This would make sense inasmuch the dialectical determinations which unfold throughout the *SL* correspond ultimately to the dialectical development of the mind, and, for Hegel, the mind itself is, in the first instance, pure potency, which is to say, determinability in general. In other words, the pure potency or pure indeterminacy with which the *SL* begins winds up just being the pure potency that is the mind itself in its initial stage. Cf. Hegel's reference to "the element of *pure indeterminacy* or of the 'I's pure reflection into itself" (*EPR* 37).



elements in Hegel's larger effort to explain this crucial distinction will be unpacked in this section.

The section examining the Perception will also include a special sub-section in which it will be shown how the phenomenology of the viewpoint of Perception provides, not only the basis for an explanatory account of certain historical philosophies, but also the grounds for explaining the existence of the ordinary conception of the history of philosophical multiplicity itself which was discussed in the introductory chapter to this dissertation. For, views on the history and nature of philosophical multiplicity and disagreement are *de facto* philosophical positions. As such, they require an explanation for their very emergence. Perception provides some truly astounding insights into how it ever came about that the history of philosophy should be conceived of as a mere haphazard succession of externality related and mutually exclusive positions.

The last major section of this chapter will examine the Force and Understanding. This section will continue to draw out Hegel's explanatory account for the emergence of the appearance/reality distinction. The viewpoint of Force and Understanding is also quite important inasmuch as it marks the point of transition from "mere" consciousness to self-consciousness, which latter will be the subject of the next chapter of this dissertation. Thus, it will be necessary to track those aspects of Hegel's phenomenology of Force and Understanding that will prove salient to grasping the nature of self-consciousness.

*Brief Prelude on an Important Methodological Technique Employed by Hegel*

Before moving to the beginning of the *PhG* it will be helpful first to explicate an all-important technique Hegel employs in aiding the reader in the very interpretation of

his text. Throughout the course of the *PhG* Hegel draws a distinction between what the form of the mind or “viewpoint” under phenomenological investigation *takes* or *interprets itself* to be experiencing or doing, on the one hand, and what *we*, the phenomenological observers, know the form of the mind to be *actually* experiencing or doing. In fact, properly drawing and maintaining this distinction turns out to be indispensable to understanding the true import of the *PhG*’s argument concerning the source of philosophical multiplicity and conflict.

The basis of the distinction lies in the fact that lower forms of the mind lack self-knowledge. Therefore, they undergo experiences and engage in activities but they do not understand these experiences or activities. More specifically, lower forms of the mind do not adequately understand either themselves, their objects or their relations to their objects and thus do not recognize the role they have in developing and constituting themselves and their objects.<sup>125</sup> Lower forms of the mind thus routinely *mis-take* themselves, their objects and their relations to their objects as being and doing things other than what they are or do.

In contrast, we, the phenomenologists, that is to say, the readers of the *PhG*, are granted privilege to a higher viewpoint by means of which we are enabled to understand both what actually occurs in the experience or activity of a lower form of the mind and also what that form of the mind interprets or takes itself to be experiencing or doing. To be sure, this is a privilege not lightly bestowed and comes with a host of responsibilities.

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<sup>125</sup> Cf. the clear articulation of this point from the “Reason” chapter of the *PhG*: “Consciousness will determine its relationship to otherness or its object in various ways according to the precise stage it has reached in the development of the World-Spirit into self-consciousness. How it *immediately* finds and determines itself and its object at any time, or the way in which it is *for itself*, depends on what it has already *become*, or what it already is *in itself*” (234).

First and foremost, it places a burden on the reader of the *PhG* to transpose herself imaginatively into the viewpoint of the form of the mind currently under investigation. One must phenomenologically rehearse within one's own experience the experience of another viewpoint. One must envisage, not just what the form of consciousness experiences and does, but also what it takes itself to be experiencing and doing. In other words, one must understand the viewpoint's self-interpretation. *At the same time*, however, one must maintain a reflective distance from this form of mind in order thereby to understand what it is *actually* experiencing and doing, its self-interpretation notwithstanding. The point of course being that there is a difference between what occurs within the experience of a given form of mind and what that form of mind takes to be occurring.<sup>126</sup>

The significance of this phenomenological technique for the present dissertation can hardly be overstated. For, as it turns out, the different philosophies can be understood as expressions of the self-interpretations of the various forms of the mind. In other words, different philosophies emerge inasmuch as different forms of the mind 1) undergo certain experiences 2) interpret those experiences and 3) express those interpretations in more or

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<sup>126</sup> The proximate source of the methodological-phenomenological distinction between the form of consciousness under investigation and the phenomenological observer would seem to be Fichte: "'Intellectual intuition' is the name I give to the act required of the philosopher: an act of intuiting himself while simultaneously performing the act by means of which the I originates for him. Intellectual intuition is the immediate consciousness that I act and of what I do when I act. It is because of this that it is possible for me to know something because I do it. That we possess such a power of intellectual intuition is not something that can be demonstrated by means of concepts, nor can an understanding of what intuition is be produced from concepts. This is something everyone has to discover immediately within himself; otherwise, he will never become acquainted with it at all. For anyone to demand that we establish this by means of argument is far more extraordinary than it would be if someone who was blind from birth were to demand that we explain to him what colors are without his having to see" (*Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre* 46); "The *Wissenschaftslehre* contains two very different series of mental acting: that of the I the philosopher is observing, as well as the series consisting of the philosopher's own observations" (*WL* 37).

less philosophical terms. Thus, drawing the distinction between the self-interpretation of a certain form of the mind, on the one hand, and our phenomenologically detached interpretation of that form, on the other, turns out to be a *conditio sine qua non* for understanding Hegel's philosophy of philosophies. For, different and conflicting philosophies turn out to result from varying degrees of deficiency in self-knowledge, and these deficiencies cannot be diagnosed unless one consistently draws and maintains the distinction between the viewpoint of the form of the mind under phenomenological investigation, on the one hand, and the viewpoint of we, the phenomenologists, on the other.

Having noted this fundamental methodological distinction, let us now turn to examining Hegel's phenomenology of Sense-certainty in which he concretely employs it.

### *1. Sense-certainty*

The *PhG* begins with the section "Sense-certainty: Or the 'This' and 'Meaning'" within the larger chapter entitled "Consciousness". Consciousness is a form of the mind and Sense-certainty is a sub-form or sub-specification of that form. The terms "This" and "Meaning" mentioned in the subtitle refer to the dialectic between the particular and universal that will drive this section forward.<sup>127</sup> For, the word "This" would seem invariably to refer to or mean some particular object. Yet, as Hegel will attempt to show,

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<sup>127</sup> In *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Robert Stern maintains that the dialectic between the universal and particular is *the* driving force which pushes the *PhG* forward. While this is not exactly incorrect it should be specified that the principle of development for Hegel is *contradiction* inasmuch as the existence of the Concept is not adequate to itself. As such, the dialectic can be understood to develop according to a series of distinct but intimately related tensions – for example, between the finite and the infinite, the conditioned and the unconditioned, the particular and the universal – all of which manifest this basic contradiction between the Concept and its existence (19-21, 31-37).

it is impossible to *say* what is thus apparently meant, namely, the particular in its particularity. Before examining this point, however, let us first establish the basic structure of the viewpoint of Sense-certainty.

Sense-certainty is constituted by two poles: the 'I' and the object, or the 'This'. From the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, the object, or the 'This', is present in immediately sensuous experience. Sense-certainty, moreover, is certain indeed that the object *is*, that the object is "really there" for it, and that all the 'I' must do is simply be receptive to the absolute presence of the object. Thus, for Sense-certainty the object is the absolute, the true, the essential; for, *it is*, whereas the 'I', as the principle of awareness correlative to this object, is entirely dependent upon the object if it – the 'I' – is going to be what *it is*. As Hegel states, "But the object *is*: it is what is true, or it is the essence. It is, regardless of whether it is known or not; and it remains even if it is not known, whereas there is no knowledge if the object is not there" (*PhG* 59). Certainty is a quality of the 'I'. Yet, from the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, its very certainty is dependent upon the object, for there would be no 'I' unless there was an object existing independently of the 'I'.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, given the fact that the 'I' is aware of the object, it can be certain in its *knowledge* that the object exists independently of itself, that it is "really there". For, there would be no 'I' if there was no object.

As Hegel quickly notes, however, a question arises as to whether or not "in sense-certainty itself the object is in fact the kind of essence that sense-certainty proclaims it to be; whether this notion of it as the essence corresponds to the way it is present in sense-

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<sup>128</sup> As Hegel states, "The 'I' [is] a *knowing* which knows the object only *because the object is*, while the knowing may either be or not be" [later emphases mine] (*PhG* 59).

certainty” (*PhG* 59). In other words, a question immediately arises as to whether or not Sense-certainty’s interpretation of its own experience corresponds to what is actually given or undergone in that experience.

The way Hegel begins to drive a wedge between Sense-certainty’s self-understanding and an understanding of Sense-certainty that can be generated by us, the phenomenologists, is simply to pose the question: “What is the *This*?” (*PhG* 59) It is important to note that Hegel does not specify who is asking this question: Sense-certainty itself, or we, the phenomenologists. Given the fact that immediately after posing the question Hegel refers to how “we” might take the ‘This’ according to its shape of being ‘Now’ and ‘Here’, it would seem that this kind of questioning is an operation performed by the phenomenological observer. Yet, the fact that it is posed as a question would also seem to suggest that Hegel is providing an invitation for Sense-certainty to transcend its present viewpoint. In other words, although in pursuing the question we, the phenomenologists, will indeed discover that Sense-certainty’s self-interpretation is flawed, Sense-certainty is nevertheless not excluded from posing the question itself and thereby gaining the critical distance vis-à-vis its own experience necessary for transcending its flawed perspective. As Hegel famously notes in the Preface, the *PhG* is intended to be a ladder by means of which individuals might transcend their lower viewpoints and attain the highest standpoint of Science (*PhG* 14). Hegel is thus perhaps revealing that that “ladder” is at least partially constituted by a certain method of questioning and the willingness to pursue that method all the way through.

Be that as it may, we, the phenomenologists, along with Hegel, do certainly take up the question that Hegel poses. Again, Hegel’s point is that despite its certainty that its

object – the immediate, sensuous ‘This’ – is the absolute, the essential, the true, Sense-certainty has never in fact investigated in any seriousness sense *what* the ‘This’ is. Sense-certainty says of the ‘This’ “It is!” Hegel asks “*What is it?*”

### 1.1 *The ‘This’ qua ‘Now’ and ‘Here’*

Hegel suggests that we begin by examining the ‘This’ according to its two aspects or “shapes”: ‘Now’ and ‘Here’. Hegel does not provide any reason as to why the examination should proceed in this way, nor does he make clear exactly why the aspects ‘Now’ and ‘Here’ should be taken without any further ado as obvious characteristics of the ‘This’. Presumably Hegel is taking it for granted that since the object of *Sense-certainty* is something by definition sensuous then it must be spatially and temporally determined since all sense-experience would seem to be qualified thusly. Moreover, since the object of Sense-certainty is, from the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, experienced immediately, it must therefore be experienced according to the immediate temporal and spatial determinations ‘Now’ and ‘Here’.

Hegel thus proceeds to his famous analysis of the determinations ‘Now’ and ‘Here’ in which he reveals these two determinations not to be what Sense-certainty took them to be. Sense-certainty took its object to be the absolute, the essential, the true. Hegel shows, however, how this presumption gets inverted. Yet, Hegel would insist that this inversion of the original presumption or self-interpretation of Sense-certainty is not the result of an artificial technique imposed from without by Hegel himself; rather, the inversion results merely from a thinking-through of what is already contained in the ‘This’ and its two determinations ‘Now’ and ‘Here’.

Hegel's procedure thus bears certain potential similarities to Kant's procedure in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic. Indeed, a great deal of secondary commentary on this section of the *PhG* has attempted to sort out the precise nature of Hegel's debt, if any, to Kant in this context.<sup>129</sup> Space does not permit, however, wading into this point of dispute presently. Suffice it to say that Hegel will at times speak of his general philosophical procedure as a kind of deduction. Yet, he is always quick to insist that it is not a deduction in any ordinary or "formally" logical sense of the term<sup>130</sup> – hence, the temptation to construe it as a species of transcendental deduction. For present purposes, however, perhaps the most felicitous way to characterize Hegel's procedure is as a "thinking-through" driven by a determinate species of question, namely, "What?" "What is the 'This'?" "What is the object of experience, more generally?" "What is the quality or form of the mind correlative to such an object?" These are the questions that drive the thinking-through or "phenomenological deduction" forward.<sup>131</sup>

Interestingly enough, this point would seem to suggest that there is a sense in which the phenomenological onlooker does play some role in pushing the dialectic forward. To be sure, there is an immanent critique or thinking-through of the object or form of the mind at any given stage of development. In other words, there is a sense in which we merely look on as the internal "logic" of the object or form of the mind unfolds before us. Yet, by the same token, unless we posed these questions regarding the immanent intelligibility of the object or form of the mind and pursued them ourselves,

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<sup>129</sup> See Charles Taylor's "The Opening Arguments of the *Phenomenology*" in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Hegel, *EL* 236

<sup>131</sup> In the *EL* Hegel refers to this process of "thinking-through" as a *Nachdenken* as in "thinking-over" or "meditating-upon" (25-8 et passim.).



nothing would actually unfold. Thus, it may be that the ultimate driving principle of the dialectic is the intellectual desire of the phenomenological onlooker. It is *our* demand for the absolute, the essential, the true that turns out to be the ultimate criterion for judging the adequacy of any given viewpoint. In following through on that demand we participate in revealing how any viewpoint shy of the Absolute Standpoint invariably fails in its claim to having achieved the absolute.<sup>132</sup>

### 1.1.1 *Thinking-through the 'Now'*

As noted, Sense-certainty claims to know the absolute in the immediate sensuous 'This, Now, Here'. Hegel, in moving the dialectic forward, poses a further "What" question, namely, "What is Now?" Hegel provides on behalf of Sense-certainty a provisional answer: "Now is Night." (*PhG* 60) Recall, however, that on Sense-certainty's self-interpretation the 'This, Now, Here' is absolute, the essential, the true. Thus, insofar as Sense-certainty proclaims 'Now is Night', it is *eo ipso* claiming that Night is the absolute and that the statement 'Now is Night' is absolutely true.

Hegel directs us to write down the proposition 'Now is Night'. He then observes that, upon writing this proposition down, if we wait, we will see that 'Now' has become 'Noon'. The contradiction is clear. According to Sense-certainty, the 'Now', as a determination of the 'This', was absolute and the proposition proclaiming it was thus

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<sup>132</sup> In *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Stephen Houlgate maintains that there are moments in the *PhG* when we, the phenomenologists, must simply step in and push the dialectic forward inasmuch as the form of the mind under investigation is, unto itself, inadequate to this task. Houlgate would maintain that such a procedure does not necessarily violate the ideal that the *PhG* provides an immanent account of the development of consciousness since the progression which we, the phenomenologists, mediate in such cases consists of rendering explicit what is implicit in the experience of the form of consciousness under investigation (81-2).

absolutely true. On the basis of this assumption we proceeded to proclaim that ‘Now is Night’, which entailed that ‘Night’ must be absolute and the statement proclaiming it must be absolutely true. Yet, merely by waiting a certain period of time, ‘Night’ ceased to exist and the statement proclaiming it ceased to be true. Thus, the ‘Now’ *qua* ‘Night’ turns out not to be absolute and the statement proclaiming it turned out not to be absolutely true.

Yet, notice, the ‘Now’ indeed persists or preserves itself. For, *now* it is ‘Noon’. As Hegel states, “The Now does indeed preserve itself, but as something that is *not* Night; equally, it preserves itself in face of the Day that it now is, as something that also is not Day, in other words, as a *negative* in general” (*PhG* 60). ‘Now’ is equally and indifferently ‘Night’ and ‘Day’, just as it is equally and indifferently ‘not-Night’ and ‘not-Day’. The ‘Now’ preserves itself through its ongoing series of particular positions (“Now is...”) and negations (“Now is not...”) and thereby negates these negations and assumes the character of a universal determination: It is always Now.

Recall, however, that we are thinking-through the object that Sense-certainty took to be the absolute, the essential, the true. Sense-certainty took the immediate, particular, sensuous ‘This’ to be the absolute. Yet, the ‘This’ in the case of the ‘Now’ turned out not to be a particular at all but a universal determination. Thus, the thinking-through of the object of Sense-certainty reveals that object to be other than what Sense-certainty took it to be.

### 1.1.2 Linguistic Expression of the ‘Now’

Hegel adds a further element to his discussion which perhaps both illuminates and threatens to obscure his analysis. He states:

It is as a universal too that we *utter* what the sensuous [content] is. What we say is: ‘This’, i.e. the *universal* This; or, ‘it is’, i.e. Being in general. Of course, we do not *envisage* the universal This or Being in general, but we *utter* the universal; in other words, we do not strictly say what in this sense-certainty we *mean* to say. But language, as we see, is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we *mean* to say, the universal is the true [content] of sense-certainty and since language expresses this true [content] alone, it is just not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we *mean*. (*PhG* 60)

The “we” to which Hegel appears to refer in this instance is not we, the phenomenologists, at least not the phenomenologists as inhabiting the more detached phenomenological perspective. Rather, the “we” referred to appears to be those who inhabit as a matter of fact, or through phenomenological transposition, the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. We, in Sense-certainty, thus utter the word ‘This’ or ‘Now’ when attempting to speak of what we take to be our object. Yet, Hegel claims, ‘This’ or ‘Now’ are universal determinations; they apply equally to all ‘Thises’ and all ‘Nows’. Thus, our speaking betrays or refutes our meaning inasmuch as we would mean the particular yet we invariably speak the universal. According to Hegel, what this all reveals is that language is more truthful than our intentions or meanings, at least at this stage of development. For, language indirectly reveals that the true object of Sense-certainty – if Sense-certainty would but think it through – is the universal.

Unfortunately, it is not perfectly clear what exactly this portion of Hegel's discussion contributes to his larger effort to think-through the object of Sense-certainty and thereby expose that it is not what Sense-certainty took it to be. It seems to be something of a digression into a nascent but, at this point, woefully underdeveloped theory of language and, as such, it threatens to obscure as much as it might illuminate Hegel's overall point. One way to recover some useful instruction from Hegel's discussion, however, is to see how it illuminates the very process of self-interpretation in which the various viewpoints engage, especially insofar as this self-interpretation would seek to express itself in more or less philosophical terms.

Thus, a given philosophy might declare or utter that the absolute or "Being" is the immediate sensuous particular object, the 'This'. Hegel would point out that 'Being' and 'This' are universal determinations. Thus, in the very act of declaring its position, such a philosophy would appeal to a realm of universal determinations or objects which it nevertheless fails to account for. In other words, although this philosophy may not explicitly advert to the realm of universal determinations or objects, such determinations or objects are nevertheless constitutive of its experience.

Thus, Hegel's brief and entirely inadequate digression on the nature of language and its potential role in the unfolding of the dialectic can nevertheless perhaps be usefully interpreted as illuminating the problem of performative self-contradiction that is liable to beset any viewpoint shy of the Absolute Standpoint when it attempts to articulate its own self-understanding.

### *1.1.3 Thinking-through the 'Here'*

Hegel next provides a similar analysis of the other determination of the ‘This’, namely, ‘Here’. Sense-certainty presumes that the ‘This’ which is ‘Here’ is absolute, essential, true. Yet, just as it was a mere matter of waiting in order to reveal that the temporal determination ‘Now’ that was ‘Night’ was not absolute, so all that is required is a mere change of spatial location in order to reveal that the ‘Here’ is not absolute, either. As Hegel states

‘Here’ is, e.g. the tree. If I turn round, this truth has vanished and is converted into its opposite. ‘No tree is here, but a house instead’. ‘Here’ itself does not vanish; on the contrary, it abides constant in the vanishing of the house, the tree, etc. and is indifferently house or tree. Again, therefore, the ‘This’ shows itself to be a *mediated simplicity*, or a *universality*. (PhG. sec. pp. 60-61)

Hegel’s point is that in thinking-through the ‘Here’ we discover that it is not what Sense-certainty took it to be, namely, a particular object or determination, but is rather a universal determination: Everywhere is Here.

The analysis of Sense-certainty continues through several more dialectical variations as Hegel describes how Sense-certainty continually shifts its ground in order to hold onto its original conviction that it knows or otherwise experiences the absolute in the immediate sensuous particular. There is no pressing need to rehearse all the details of this analysis at present; instead, let us focus on a few of the more salient lessons learned by, or at least about, Sense-certainty in this section.

## 1.2 *The Dialectical Reversals and Ground-shifting of Sense-certainty*

According to Hegel, as a result of Sense-certainty's discovery that its object is in fact a universal, the relation between knowing or the 'I' and the object has been reversed. Previously, Sense-certainty took the object to be the absolute, the essential, the true. Sense-certainty, in other words, was certain of the object's existence and that the latter was given in immediate sensuous experience. That pretension, however, has been dispelled with the discovery that the object was not what Sense-certainty took it to be. Thus, according to Hegel,

The certainty is now to be found in the opposite element, viz. in knowing, which previously was the unessential element. Its truth is in the object as my object, or in its being *mine* [*Meinen*]; it is, because *I* know it. Sense-certainty, then, though indeed expelled from the object, is not yet thereby overcome, but only driven back into the 'I'. (*PhG* 61)

At least two points are noteworthy about Hegel's discussion. First, what is unfolding is Sense-certainty's shifting of its ground in order to preserve its initial conviction that it knows its object through immediate sensuous experience. Previously, the object was taken to be the absolute and essential element, and knowing was dependent upon it. Now, the knowing or the 'I' is held to be the absolute and essential element, while the object is relegated to a dependent status. Whereas before, the 'I' knew or experienced the object strictly because the object was "really out there", now, the object – the 'Now' and/or the 'Here' – is there because I experience it "in the immediacy of my *seeing*, *hearing*, and so on" (*PhG* 61).

Second, although Sense-certainty's immediate concern is evidently to shift its ground in order to preserve its original conviction as to how it knows its object, the effect

of its effort is, despite itself, to move the dialectic forward. For, what begins to emerge at this point is a nascent appreciation on the part of the mind of the role of consciousness or the 'I' in constituting its object. Previously, the 'I' was little more than an afterthought for Sense-certainty – the object was absolute; *it was being*. Now the 'I' steps forward as an explicit object of inquiry and reflection. To be sure, as we will see, the 'I' in turn is subjected to a similar dialectical treatment as the 'This' has been. Yet, an invaluable, if still incomplete, lesson regarding the very nature and structure of the mind will have been won in the process. Self-knowledge is beginning to emerge.

### 1.3 *The 'I' of Sense-certainty*

Hegel, indeed, demonstrates that the 'I' is subject to a dialectical critique similar to that of the 'This'. For, Sense-certainty now wants to maintain that the 'I' is absolute and essential. The 'I' does not experience the 'Now' or the 'Here' because they *are*; rather, "'Now' is day because I see it; 'Here' is a tree for the same reason" (*PhG* 101). Yet, Hegel continues,

In this relationship sense-certainty experiences the same dialectic acting upon itself as in the previous one. I, *this* 'I', see the tree and assert that 'Here' is a tree; but another 'I' sees the house and maintains that 'Here' is not a tree but a house instead. Both truths have the same authentication, viz. the immediacy of seeing, and the certainty and assurance that both have about their knowing; but the one truth vanishes in the other. (*PhG* 61)

Thus, insofar as Sense-certainty maintains that *this* 'I' is absolute and essential, and that 'Here' is here because this 'I' sees it, it will find itself contradicted or negated by a

subsequent 'I' which experiences something different but which has equal claim to absoluteness and essentiality. Both 'I's' are absolute; therefore, neither 'I' is absolute. Each one, in fact, vanishes upon the appearance of the other.

The problem, of course, lies in the attempt on the part of Sense-certainty to think of the 'I' as a 'This' after the manner of a putatively immediate sensuous object.<sup>133</sup> For, the 'I' *qua* 'This' is subject to the same dialectical critique as the object *qua* 'This'. Thus, as Hegel notes, while each particular and putatively absolute 'I' vanishes upon a mere shift of attention, "What does not disappear in all this is the 'I' as universal, whose seeing is neither a seeing of the tree nor of this house, but is a simple seeing which, though mediated by the negation of this house, etc. is all the same simple and indifferent to whatever happens in it, to the house, the tree, etc." (*PhG* 62) Once again, Sense-certainty discovers that what it took to be the absolute, in this case, the immediate 'I' *qua* 'This', turns out not to be absolute, after all. Instead, the 'I' turns out to be a universal principle

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<sup>133</sup> Incidentally, although he does not explicitly state it at this point, Hegel is in fact drawing attention to an underlying thematic that will recur throughout the *PhG* regarding the process by which the 'I' routinely attempts to conceive or understand itself. There are two basic ways in which this thematic tends to manifest itself. First, the 'I', particularly at its lower stages of development such as Sense-certainty, will attempt to conceive of itself after the manner of the primary reality with which it is familiar. In other words, to take the example of Sense-certainty, in order for something to *be* for Sense-certainty it must be something like an immediate sensuous particular object. Thus, when the 'I' of Sense-certainty at first attempts to understand or conceive of itself it invariably assumes that it must be something very like, or at least analogous to, an immediate, particular 'This'. Needless to say, this way of proceeding necessarily leads the 'I' to misconstrue itself and thus prevents it from attaining true self-knowledge. Second, as the sort of obverse of the previous process of mis-taking the 'I' for an, as it were, spiritless or mindless object, the 'I' will project itself into the object but fail to recognize itself therein. For Hegel, of course, the continual self-objectification of the mind is an entirely necessary and salutary aspect of the mind's ongoing development. Yet, until the mind recognizes that it is in fact doing this it can take its own self-objectifications to be alien objects and powers that stand over-against it and which, among other things, threaten to dominate it and undermine its freedom. Needless to say, this failure of self-recognition also prevents the mind from attaining true self-knowledge, which is its ultimate goal. Thus, there are twin pitfalls to which the mind is continually exposed: 1) misconstruing itself as something like a mindless object and 2) failing to recognize itself in its own mind-full self-objectifications. These two general pitfalls take on various specific manifestations depending upon the stage of development which the mind has thus far been able to reach.



of awareness that encompasses and penetrates any particular intentional act such as seeing or hearing.

#### 1.4 *The 'I-Object' Relation as Absolute*

Hegel next turns to indicating the lesson that Sense-certainty has thus far learned in the experience of thinking-through its own initial presuppositions about the nature of its object and its 'I'.

Sense-certainty thus comes to know by experience that its essence is neither in the object nor in the 'I', and that its immediacy is neither an immediacy of the one nor of the other; for in both, what I *mean* is rather something unessential, and the object and the 'I' are universals in which that 'Now' and 'Here' and 'I' which I *mean* do not have a continuing being, or are not. Thus we reach the stage where we have to posit the whole of sense-certainty itself as its *essence*, and no longer only one of its moments, as happened in the two cases where first the object confronting the 'I', and then the 'I', were supposed to be its reality. (*PhG* 62)

Recall, Sense-certainty has twice now experienced what it took to be absolute and essential turn out not to be absolute and essential, after all. According to Hegel, Sense-certainty is pushed to adopt a third alternative, namely, positing that neither the object nor the 'I' but rather the whole relationship obtaining within Sense-certainty between consciousness or the 'I' and its object is absolute and essential. Hegel does not explain why Sense-certainty, or even we, the phenomenologists, would make this move. Nevertheless, the insight gained by Sense-certainty at this point – which it will

unfortunately promptly forget – is instructive in terms of the larger trajectory of the mind’s development.

Sense-certainty – however tenuously or provisionally – gains some insight into the nature of the *relationship* between consciousness and its object. While by no means identical, a close analogue to the insight gained by Sense-certainty at this point is the famous Husserlian insight that consciousness is always consciousness-of, or, more precisely, that intentional acts and intentional objects are correlative. In other words, Sense-certainty gains some appreciation of the fact that, just as there is no consciousness without an object, there is equally no object without consciousness or an ‘I’.

To be sure, this is a profound and demanding insight and Hegel unfortunately does little to explicate its full significance at this point. Instead, Hegel moves directly to discussing how Sense-certainty makes use of its insight merely in order once again to try to salvage its initial conviction that it knows its object in a state of pure immediacy. Sense-certainty – again, in a quasi-Husserlian sense – brackets its presupposition of the transcendence or absoluteness of the object as well as that of the ‘I’, thereby attempting to constitute the *correlation* between the two into “a relation [...] into which also no distinction whatever can penetrate.” (*PhG* 62) Sense-certainty also attempts to bracket any relationship it might have with distinct conscious acts and their correlative objects. The result is the following:

I, *this* ‘I’, assert then the ‘Here’ as a tree, and do not turn round so that the Here would become for me *not* a tree; also, I take no notice of the fact that another ‘I’ sees the Here as *not* a tree, or that I myself at another time take the Here as not-tree, the Now as not-day. On the contrary, I am a pure [act of] intuiting; I, for my

part, stick to the fact that the Now is day, or that the Here is a tree; also I do not compare Here and Now themselves with one another, but stick firmly to *one* immediate relation: the Now is day. (*PhG* 62-3)

Noteworthy, here, is the *bathos* of the predicament into which Sense-certainty has worked itself by shifting its ground in order to preserve its original conviction. For, originally Sense-certainty was certain that its knowledge of its object was “the *richest* kind of knowledge, indeed a knowledge of infinite wealth for which no bounds can be found” and in which nothing was omitted from the object (*PhG* 58). Sense-certainty originally took the realm of sensuous immediacy as one of infinite expanse and richness. Yet, in order to maintain its conviction that this realm is indeed given in immediate sensuous experience, Sense-certainty now finds itself restricted to a single act of would-be pure intuiting, an act, that is to say, which has been abstracted from the concrete context of other acts through which the object indeed might have been experienced in much greater richness. Sense-certainty thus finds itself banished, or rather has banished itself, from a garden of infinite immediate sensuous delight into a domain of utter experiential impoverishment.

#### *1.4.1 Thinking-through the ‘I-Object’ Relation*

Hegel pushes the dialectic forward by instructing us, the phenomenologists, to enter phenomenologically into the viewpoint of Sense-certainty at this point – the reason being that since Sense-certainty has confined itself to a single act of intuiting it is incapable of “standing at a distance” from its very experience in order thereby to articulate it to us (*PhG* 63). We must therefore enter into the viewpoint of “*this* ‘I’ which

confines itself to one ‘Now’ or one ‘Here’” and we must “point them out to ourselves” (*PhG* 63). In other words, we, the phenomenologists, must confine our attention to a particular ‘Now’ or ‘Here’ and indicate for ourselves what we experience through an act of sheer pointing.

We, the phenomenologists, point to the particular *this* ‘Now’ that we are experiencing. Yet, as Hegel points out, *this* ‘Now’ “has already ceased to be in the act of pointing to it.” (*PhG* 63) *This* ‘Now’ has now become *that* ‘Now’ which merely *has been*. Recall, however, that for Sense-certainty its object *is*. Yet, if Sense-certainty’s object *is this* ‘Now’, then Sense-certainty’s object is of such a nature as “to be no more just when it is.” (*PhG* 63) As Hegel goes on to state

The Now, as it is pointed out to us, is Now that *has been*, and this is its truth; it has not the truth of *being*. Yet this much is true, that it has been. But what essentially has been [*gewesen ist*] is, in fact, not an essence that *is* [*kein Wesen*]; *it is not*, and it was with *being* that we were concerned. (*PhG* 63)

In the very act of pointing the object of Sense-certainty ceases *to be* and instead merely *has been*. Thus, Sense-certainty is again frustrated in its attempt to maintain its original conviction regarding its object.

Indeed, the object of Sense-certainty is again revealed to be a universal determination, as Hegel lays out in the following dialectical progression:

(1) I point out the ‘Now’, and it is asserted to be truth. I point it out, however, a something that *has been* or as something that has been superseded; I set aside the first truth. (2) I now assert as the second truth that it has been, that it is

superseded. (3) But what has been, *is not*; I set aside the second truth, its *having been*, its supersession, and thereby negate the negation of the ‘Now’, and thus return to the first assertion, that the ‘Now’ *is*. (*PhG* 63)

The ‘Now’ that is returned to, however, is different than the original ‘Now’. For, instead of vanishing upon being pointed out, the new ‘Now’ preserves itself through the passing of various immediate, particular ‘Nows’ as well as their being pointed to. It is “a Now which is an absolute plurality of Nows.” (*PhG* 64) An hour would be an example of such a ‘Now’ since it preserves itself in the passing of its various minutes; yet it may be pointed to throughout all of those minutes. Thus, Hegel concludes, “a plurality of Nows all taken together” is the result of the experience of Sense-certainty at this stage, and “the pointing-out is the experience of learning that Now is a *universal*” (*PhG* 64).

### 1.5 *Review of the Dialectic of Sense-certainty*

Initially, Sense-certainty took the particular sensuous object – the ‘This’ – to be the absolute, the essential, the true. Thinking-through the ‘This’ according to its two principal determinations – the ‘Now’ and the ‘Here’ – revealed that they are both universal determinations. In response, Sense-certainty shifted its ground and insisted instead that the ‘I’ was the absolute, the essential, the true. Yet, like the object, the ‘I’ turned out to be a universal determination, as well. In response to this insight, Sense-certainty once again shifted its ground by attempting phenomenologically to bracket any presuppositions about the transcendence or absoluteness of either the ‘I’ or the ‘object’ as well as any awareness of intentional acts other than the one in which it was immediately engaged. In thinking-through the ‘Now’ and ‘Here’ which were supposedly constitutive

of this phenomenologically purified experience, however, it was once again revealed that these were universal determinations.

In the process of this examination Hegel also introduced elements of a theory of language and a phenomenology of meaning, presumably in order to explicate and underscore his larger argument. According to Hegel, even singular demonstrative pronouns are universal terms. Thus, while one might merely “mean” a particular ‘This’, it is apparently impossible to say what one means in such a case, for every term is ultimately a universal. For Hegel, the lesson to be derived from this fact is that language reveals that, despite Sense-certainty’s pretensions to the contrary, the true object of Sense-certainty is the universal. Without wading into the controversy over the adequacy of Hegel’s underdeveloped theory of language, it was suggested that one possible insight to be gleaned from Hegel’s discussion would be his identification of the possibility of performative self-contradiction when a given form of the mind attempts to give linguistic philosophical expression to a problematic self-understanding.

In the last two sections of Sense-certainty Hegel calls attention to a few of the central lessons learned from the analysis of the experience of Sense-certainty and then pivots to setting up the subsequent discussion to take place in the following chapter, Perception. Thus, in beginning to round off the Sense-certainty chapter, Hegel states “It is clear that the dialectic of sense-certainty is nothing else but the simple history of its movement or of its experience, and sense-certainty itself is nothing else but just this history” (*PhG* 64). Hegel thus reminds us that Sense-certainty undergoes the previously adumbrated dialectical movement within its viewpoint. Indeed, in an important sense, Sense-certainty just is this dialectical experience.

The basic structure of the dialectic has thus assumed the following shape, one which will repeat itself throughout the subsequent stages of the mind's dialectical development. First, there is a presupposition or expectation on the part of the form of the mind in question – in this case, Sense-certainty – as to the nature and “location” of the absolute, the essential, the true. Second, there is a thinking-through of this presupposition or expectation in light of what is actually given in experience the upshot of which is to expose that the absolute, the essential, the true is neither what nor “where” the form of the mind thought it was. Third, in order to preserve what remains of its initial presupposition or expectation, the form of the mind shifts its ground and maintains that the absolute, the essential, the true is still susceptible to being known or experienced within its limited horizon – in this case, immediate sensuousness – albeit on slightly different grounds. Lastly, in thinking-through the terms of this new ground the form of the mind is once again disappointed in its presuppositions or expectations, as the absolute, the essential, the true again turn out not to be what the form of the mind took it to be. At this point, the mind finds itself on the threshold of a fundamental reorientation of its basic presuppositions and expectations regarding the absolute, the essential, the true, and is thus primed for a transition to a higher viewpoint.

In the case of Sense-certainty, the lesson that it learns is that the absolute, the essential, the true is not an immediate, particular, sensuous ‘This’, but rather a universal determination. It learns that the universal is its proper object and that its ‘I’, too, is something that perdures after the manner of a universal. Sense-certainty learns, moreover, that the immediate particular is dependent upon and only emerges within a more universal relational context, and that without that context the immediate particular is as

nothing. Thus, for example, the immediate, particular ‘Now’ is a mere vanishing point whose nature is “to be no more just when it is.”

Hegel goes so far as to suggest that there is an incipient awareness of the nullity of the immediate, particular, sensuous object revealed in the practices of ancient mystery cults and even that of animals. According to Hegel, in placing the consumption of sensuous objects like bread and wine at the center of their practices, the initiates of these ancient cults made explicit for themselves – albeit in a merely symbolic, not yet scientific, form – the nothingness of such things. Hegel further states

Even the animals are not shut out from this wisdom but, on the contrary, show themselves to be most profoundly initiated into it; for they do not just stand idly in front of sensuous things as if these possessed intrinsic being, but, despairing of their reality, and completely assured of their nothingness, they fall to without ceremony and eat them up. And all Nature, like the animals, celebrates these open Mysteries which teach the truth about sensuous things. (*PhG* 65).

Sense-certainty began with the conviction that immediate, particular, sensuous objects were absolute, were *being*, and built up an entire worldview based upon this conviction. Yet, animals treat them as ephemeral vanishing points and as such manifest a greater insight into the nature of reality.

### 1.6 *Brief Interlude on the Phenomenon of the Mind’s Self-forgetting*

Before moving on to Hegel’s account of the viewpoint which begins to appreciate that the universal is its proper object, it will be worthwhile calling attention to one further point Hegel makes in summarizing the dialectical experience of Sense-certainty. After



noting that Sense-certainty is constituted by the very dialectical movement of its experience, Hegel states, “[t]hat is why the natural consciousness, too, is always reaching this result, learning from experience what is true in it; but equally it is always forgetting it and starting the movement all over again” (*PhG* 64). The form of the mind or consciousness under investigation does indeed learn from its experience. In the case of Sense-certainty, the lesson that it learned was that, not the immediate, particular, sensuous ‘This’, but the universal was the absolute, the essential, the true. Yet, according to Hegel, while we, the phenomenologists, explicitly appreciate the import of this lesson and recognize that it calls for the transition to a higher viewpoint, Sense-certainty itself repeatedly forgets the lesson it has learned and falls back into a dialectically less sophisticated viewpoint.

This phenomenon of the mind’s repeated *forgetting* of the history and result of its own development is, in fact, an *utterly crucial*, yet often underappreciated, aspect to Hegel’s larger account of how the dialectical development of the mind unfolds. Indeed, one of its most important functions is to help explain how different philosophies emerge from different stages of the mind’s development. Therefore, it will be worth briefly pausing to explicate some of its basic facets since doing so will both further clarify what has already been covered and also provide great help in the treatment of later stages of the mind’s development.

Hegel’s notion of forgetting actually covers a range of distinct but related phenomena. What all these phenomena have in common is a failure or refusal on the part of the mind to appreciate and appropriate the history and results of its own development. Thus, in the case of Sense-certainty, upon thinking-through its own presuppositions it

finds that its object, for example, was not what it initially took it to be. Yet, instead of appreciating and appropriating this discovery and using it as the basis for a deliberate transition to a higher viewpoint, Sense-certainty shifts its ground and ultimately “forgets” the result of its previous lesson in order to avoid being forced to change its fundamental presuppositions and expectations regarding the nature of the absolute. As already noted, for Hegel, in spite of its intentions, the effect of Sense-certainty’s efforts to avoid being forced to change and develop is in fact to push the dialectic forward. For, in shifting its ground, Sense-certainty simply thereby exposes another of its basic presuppositions or expectations to the process of thinking-through. Hegel often refers to this working out of the development of the mind behind its own back as the “Ruse of Reason” [*Der List der Vernunft*].<sup>134</sup>

Another way in which the process of forgetting functions will make greater sense if we recall the second stage of the basic structure of the Concept’s development discussed in the previous chapter. In the second stage of its development, the Concept manages to posit an object for-itself. Yet, it fails to recognize the object as its own production and instead treats it as an alien object or gegen-stand which it merely “finds” existing “out there”, over-against the mind. In other words, the mind “forgets” the dialectical history through which it constituted both its object and, correlatively, itself *qua* producer of the object. As a result, the mind routinely takes the object or itself as something both immediately and absolutely given, instead of as the result of process of dialectical development.

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Reason is as *cunning* as it is *mighty*” (EL 384).

In both of these cases of “forgetting” the mind blocks or simply neglects to appreciate and appropriate its own development and as a result repeatedly mis-takes the nature and location of the absolute. The effectiveness of grasping and deploying this notion of the mind’s self-forgetting in explaining the emergence of different philosophies is profound. Hegel provides a first taste of the power of this technique in the closing sections of Sense-certainty.

*1.6.1 The Self-forgetting of the Mind Used to Explain the Emergence of Schulze’s Philosophy*

After pointing out that each form of natural mind repeatedly learns only to forget basic lessons about the nature of itself, its object and its relation to its object, Hegel states,

It is therefore astonishing when, in face of this experience, it is asserted as universal experience and put forward, too as a philosophical propositions, even as the outcome of Scepticism, that the reality or being of external things taken as Thises or sense-objects has absolute truth for consciousness. (*PhG* 64-65)

Among Hegel’s contemporaries who asserted such a position was G. E. Schulze. Schulze incurred the brunt of Hegel’s philosophical scorn on more than one occasion, most notably, in the “*Skeptizismus*” essay from Hegel’s Jena period. Schulze at times wrote under the pseudonym, Aenesidemus, who himself was member of the ancient skeptical school. Hegel had great regard for the tradition of ancient skepticism but felt that modern practitioners, like Schulze, despite thier professed allegiance to the traditional school, fell

well short of the ideal form of skepticism.<sup>135</sup> Schulze's overall position, moreover, manifests a quintessential philosophical expression of the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, including the phenomenon of forgetting which both complexifies and clarifies the dialectical nature of the mind's development.

As a self-professed skeptic, Schulze divides his skepticism into a "positive side" and a "negative side". The positive side affirms that the existence of immediate, particular sensuous objects is given in consciousness with indubitable certainty. The negative side denies the possibility of speculative or rational cognition of the absolute grounds or conditions of these immediately known objects. In announcing the positive side of his skepticism, Schulze states,

The existence of what is given within the compass of our consciousness has *undeniable certainty*; for since it is present in consciousness, we can doubt the certainty of it no more than we can doubt consciousness itself; and to want to doubt consciousness is absolutely impossible, because any such doubt would destroy itself since it cannot occur apart from consciousness and hence it would be nothing; what is given in and with consciousness we call an actual fact [*Tatsache*] of consciousness; it follows that the facts of consciousness are what is undeniably actual, what all philosophical speculations must be related to, and what is to be explained or made more comprehensible through these speculations.

(qtd. in "Skeptizismus" 318)

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<sup>135</sup> Michael Forster's *Hegel and Skepticism* has spurred a resurgence of interest in Hegel's relation to both ancient and modern skepticism. For Forster's treatment of Hegel's view of Schulze, see *Hegel and Skepticism* 33-4. For a helpful and more recent contribution to this particular topic, see William Bristow's *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique* 107ff.

Later in the same work Schulze continues along similar lines, stating

The intuiting subject cognizes the objects and their existence directly and as something which exists and subsists in complete independence of the workings of the presentative power just as the cognitive subject exists and subsists independently. (qtd. in “*Skeptizismus*” 319)

Obviously, the positive side of Schulze’s skepticism expresses the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. Thus, for Schulze, as with Sense-certainty, the existence of an object insofar as it is given in immediate intuition – a ‘This’ – is thereby known with absolute certainty. Schulze refers to the existence of these objects along with the indubitable certainty with which they are cognized as “facts of consciousness” [*Tatsache der Bewusstsein*].<sup>136</sup> Also like Sense-certainty, Schulze conceives of the cognizing subject – or the ‘I’ – after the manner of ‘This’ in that he views the mind to be constituted by discrete, particular “powers” or faculties which merely rest “in here” alongside the mind’s other faculties in a mental quasi-space.<sup>137</sup>

The negative side of Schulze’s skepticism amounts to, as Hegel puts it, little more than a “vulgar Kantianism” (“*Skpetizismus*” 318). Thus, for Schulze, despite the fact that

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<sup>136</sup> To be clear, Schulze’s argument in favor of the positive side of his skepticism amounts to saying that since consciousness as a matter of fact *takes* the objects which are given in immediate intuition to exist independently of itself, then they must be so. For, apparently to doubt the existence of such objects would be to “doubt consciousness”, which would in turn lead to Cartesian problems of regarding the possibility of conscious doubt doubting itself. Of course, the epistemological question which the ancient Skeptic, among others, would forthwith ask is whether or not consciousness has any good grounds *for taking* the object of which it is conscious to exist independently of itself, irrespective of how things might, as a matter of fact, initially appear to consciousness.

<sup>137</sup> As Hegel notes, for Schulze, “the human cognitive faculty is a thing, which has concepts” (“*Skeptizismus*” 341). Later, Hegel states that Schulze’s faculty psychology “disperses the spirit [Geist] into mutually external qualities and hence finds no whole, no genius and no talent among these qualities but describes them as if they were a sack full of ‘faculties’ each of which is quite particular”, and, again, that Schulze’s conceives of the mind as a “soul-sack” in which various particular faculties dwell” (“*Skeptizismus*” 354).

the aforementioned facts of consciousness are known with indubitable certain, all “speculative” or “rational” cognition is nevertheless restricted to “the formal unity which is to be assigned to those facts” (“Skeptizismus” 318). As a result, according to Schulze, “although the *being of things* is *quite certain* according to the verdict of consciousness, this in no way satisfies Reason, because with the existing things of our acquaintance *it is not self-explanatory, that they are, and that they are what they are*” (qtd. in “Skeptizismus” 319).

To clarify further, Schulze draws a distinction between two types of types of cognition and two types of object. In terms of cognition, on the one hand, there is the immediate sensuous certainty of the facts of consciousness, or what Hegel calls the “perpetual glassy-staring perception of objects,” and, on the other hand, there is rational cognition through concepts (“Skeptizismus” 319). These concepts, again, provide the formal unity of the objects of immediate sensuous certainty, but through rational cognition of these concepts the *existence* of no object can be inferred.

In terms of objects, Schulze distinguishes between the objects of immediate sensuous certainty, on the one hand, and the “*unconditioned causes of all conditioned things whose actuality we are otherwise certain of,*” on the other (qtd. in “Skeptizismus” 317). Thus, despite being indubitably known to exist, the objects of immediate sensuous certainty are nevertheless conditioned by, among other things, the concepts providing their formal unity.<sup>138</sup> Beyond these absolutely existing yet conditioned objects, however, Schulze maintains that reason seeks to discover the things which provide their

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Schulze: “For everything that exists *according to our insight* into it *only* in a conditioned way (qtd. in “Skeptizismus” 319).

unconditioned ground. He concludes, in accord with standard Kantian doctrine, that such objects are beyond the ken of human cognitive ability. In other words, although Schulze maintains that rational cognition of the concepts that lie “in here” in the mind is possible, he is skeptical about the possibility of rational cognition of the unconditioned causes of the objects whose existence, while conditioned, nevertheless possesses immediate and absolute certainty.

Hegel moves quickly to point out the rather egregious contradiction into which the two sides of Schulze’s skepticism cannot help but fall. First, he notes that “if every fact of consciousness has immediate certainty, then this insight that something exists only in a conditioned way is impossible; for ‘to exist in a conditioned way’ is synonymous with ‘not being certain on its own account’” (“*Skeptizismus*” 319). In other words, there would be no occasion for the mind to seek out the grounds for anything if its existence was absolutely certain. If something exists in a conditioned way, then its existence cannot be certain through itself, which is what Schulze nevertheless maintains for the objects of immediate sensuous certainty.

Hegel continues to press the point in noting that Schulze states that “although the *being of things* is quite certain according to verdict of consciousness, this in no way satisfies Reason, because with the existing things of our acquaintance *it is not self-explanatory, that they are, and that they are what they are*” (qtd. in “*Skeptizismus*” 319).

To this statement, Hegel duly responds

In view of this absolute certainty that things exist (and certainty of how they exist) how can it at the same time, be the case that *it is not self-explanatory that they are* and that *they are* what they are? Two cognitions are asserted simultaneously: one

in which the existence and character of things is self-explanatory and another in which this existence and character is not at all self-explanatory. One could not devise a more complete contradiction. (“*Skeptizismus*” 319)

Hegel thus exposes a rather flagrant contradiction on the part of Schulze in the latter’s attempt to maintain simultaneously that the very being of things is known with absolute certainty and thus without need for any further explanation *and* that the existence of such things is not self-explanatory, at all.<sup>139</sup>

To bring the discussion back to more present concerns, it should be noted that in the “*Skeptizismus*” essay Hegel is providing a rather ruthless example of a dialectical *critique* of Schulze’s position by revealing an egregious contradiction. By contrast, in the *PhG* Hegel is doing something different. There, he is providing a dialectical *explanation* for the very emergence of a viewpoint like Schulze’s. For, in the “Sense-certainty” chapter Hegel provides not just a critique but a phenomenology of a particular form of the mind and then shows how from such a form of the mind a determinate philosophical position such as Schulze’s emerges.

For, it is clear that in constructing his philosophy, Schulze operates within the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. Indeed, as he states explicitly, all philosophical speculations must be referred back to the “facts” of sensuous certainty. Thus, we have the grounds for not only a dialectical critique but also a dialectical explanation for Schulze’s

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<sup>139</sup> An important point of reference here is Hegel’s observation that, for Sense-certainty, “the thing *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is*” (*PhG* 58). Hegel’s point is that for the sensuous certainty that is expressed in the positive side of Schulze’s skepticism, the object’s existence is self-explanatory: “it is because it is.” For Schulze then to turn around and in the negative side of skepticism declare that such objects are not self-explanatory presents a clear contradiction.



position. Why does Schulze maintain the position that he does? Answer: *he is giving philosophical expression to the experience of Sense-certainty.*

Other aspects of Hegel's analysis of Sense-certainty provide an explanatory basis for still further details of Schulze's position. For example, the phenomenon of the mind's forgetting its own development would seem to be noticeably at work in the case of Schulze. For, juxtaposed – however haphazardly – alongside his positive skepticism, there is Schulze's negative skepticism. Yet, whereas his positive skepticism expresses the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, his negative skepticism, as we will see, is much closer to the viewpoint of Perception as well as in some ways Force and Understanding, the two viewpoints whose respective analyses succeed that of Sense-certainty in the *PhG*. Thus, Schulze's negative skepticism reveals that at some point Schulze, himself, managed to learn some of the lessons that Sense-certainty learns – perhaps, first of among them being the insight that the immediate, particular, sensuous 'This' is *not* absolute but rather depends on some further context for its existence. Yet, his positive skepticism betrays the fact that he has forgotten or otherwise failed to appropriate this lesson, and therefore he finds himself reverting to a less developed position and insists that all philosophical speculations refer back to the convictions of this viewpoint.<sup>140</sup>

On the basis of these observations it actually becomes possible to *correct* Hegel when he expresses his astonishment that a position like Schulze's should emerge. The point is rather that, given the phenomena of the mind's dialectical learning and

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. Hegel's reference to Schulze's skepticism in the *EL*: "Ancient high skepticism must not be confused with the modern one [...] which partly preceded the Critical Philosophy and partly grew out of it. This consists simply in denying that anything true and certain can be said about the supersensible, and in designating, on the contrary, the sensible and what is present in immediate sense-experience as what we have to hold onto" – or, in other words, what we can be certain of (131).

subsequent forgetting and regression, it is all too understandable that Schulze should have carved out the incoherent position that he did. Indeed, herein lies the power of Hegel's dialectical phenomenology: making such seeming strangeness explicable.

Before moving on to examining Hegel's discussion of Perception it will be useful show how Hegel's phenomenology of Sense-certainty, along with providing the basis for a dialectical explanation for the emergence of a position like Schulze's, also provides the basis for an even more sophisticated dialectical *critique* than was on display in the "Skeptizismus" essay. Thus, based upon the analysis of Sense-certainty, Hegel would not criticize Schulze for maintaining that the absolute is given in conscious experience. In fact, he ultimately chides Schulze as much for his negative skepticism as for his positive inasmuch as the former posits that the absolute or unconditioned is both forever beyond the ken of human cognition and yet somehow known to cause the objects of cognition.<sup>141</sup> What Hegel reveals in Sense-certainty is, not that the absolute is not given in consciousness, but merely that it is not given in the way that Sense-certainty and Schulze take it to be, namely, as an immediate, particular, sensuous 'This'.

The absolute or unconditioned is given consciousness, not as an isolated 'This' (which turns out to be conditioned, anyway), but rather as the conditioned along with its conditions which together form a self-conditioning totality or concrete universal. Indeed, as the analysis of the 'This' shows, the self-conditioning totality through which a 'This' can be experienced at all is given in consciousness, albeit at first only in-itself. The task of the *PhG* itself is to render explicit or for-itself what is at first present merely in-itself.

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<sup>141</sup> Hegel famously quips that on Schulze's view, the absolute or unconditioned, as a phenomenon behind the phenomena, amounts a kind of "mountainpeak under snow" ("Skeptizismus" 318).

As Hegel already notes in the *Skeptizismus* essay by way of rejecting Schulze's view that speculative philosophy is concerned with the (ultimately *futile*) pursuit of the hidden unconditioned causes of the objects of conscious experience,

The causal relation is wholly banned from speculative thought; if it seems sometimes to occur in form of producer and product, then it is only the verbal expression for the relationship not the relationship itself that is employed; for the producer and the product are posited as equivalent, that is equivalent to the effect, one and the same [substance is posited] as cause of itself, and as effect of itself, so that the relationship is immediately sublated. There is simply no question in speculative philosophy of the unconditioned being inferred from the constitution of the conditioned. (*Skeptizismus* 345)

There will be occasion to discuss in more detail Hegel's critique and sublation of the notion of causality when we examine the "Force and Understanding" and "Self-consciousness" sections of the *PhG*. Hegel's basic argument, however, which is indicated, here, is that all would-be causal relationships ultimately function within the context of a self-conditioning totality. Moreover, the task of speculative philosophy is not to infer the unconditioned from the conditioned, but, as the etymology of the term phenomen-ology indicates, to "read off" or otherwise think-through the self-conditioning totality that is actually given in experience. Hence, Hegel's original subtitle for the *PhG*: the science of the actual experience of consciousness. In sum, Schulze, like Sense-certainty, was right that the absolute is given in consciousness; he was simply wrong about how it is given.

## 2. *Perception*

Perception is the form of the mind which takes over the truth revealed in the experience of thinking-through Sense-certainty. The truth of Sense-certainty, despite its own initial preoccupations with the immediate, sensuous, particular ‘This’, turned out to be the universal. Within Perception, there are in fact two” immediately self-differentiating moments”, both of which are universals unto themselves, namely, the ‘I’ and its object (*PhG* 67). In the specific context of Perception, the ‘I’ is the act of perceiving, whereas the object is that which is perceived. For *us*, the phenomenologists, or in-itself, both moments together constitute a concrete unity, which is to say, self-differentiating and self-relating, universal. Yet, for *Perception*, the two moments are related as opposites only one of which can constitute the essential element in the relationship.

As with Sense-certainty, the emphasis for Perception initially falls on the object, and so it is taken to be the essential moment while the ‘I’ is relegated to an unessential element, “the unstable factor which can as well be as not be”<sup>142</sup> (*PhG* 67). Therefore, again, as with Sense-certainty, Hegel immediately turns to thinking-through the object of Perception. The form of the mind or the ‘I’ correlative to the object will, of course, come under phenomenological investigation in its own turn. Let us turn first to examining Hegel’s initial phenomenology of the object of Perception.

### 2.1 *The Thing and Its Properties*

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<sup>142</sup> Perception thus begins by recognizing or remembering that the universal is its proper object while simultaneously forgetting the lesson at least partially learned in the experience of Sense-certainty regarding the essential correlativity of ‘I’ and object.

Regarding the object of Perception, Hegel states, “[s]ince the principle of the object, the universal, is in its simplicity a mediated universal, the object must express this its nature in its own self. This it does by showing itself to be the thing with many properties” (*PhG* 67). As was first indicated in Sense-certainty, the universal, for Hegel, is not a mere abstraction which excludes difference; rather, it is a self-differentiating totality, or mediated universal, a universal which preserves difference within itself. Therefore, since the *principle* of the object of Perception is the universal, the object must constitute a self-differentiating totality or whole. Such an object would be a Thing with many different properties.

Having established that the object of Perception is the Thing with many properties, Hegel proceeds more or less simultaneously to think-through the following: 1) the nature of the Thing, 2) the nature of its properties and 3) the nature of the relations between both the Thing and its properties and amongst the properties themselves. For, it becomes apparent that, despite initial appearances, the Thing, its properties and their respective mutual relations mutually define one another.

The properties of the Thing preserve yet supersede or sublimate the sensuous element present in Sense-certainty. For, while they stand in relation to sensuousness, the properties are not particular ‘Thises’ but rather universal determinations which include different particular instances within themselves. In other words, with respect to its properties, the Thing of Perception is not *this* or *that* immediate swatch of orange, but the universal quality or property “orange”, or the universal property “sweetness” and so on.

The Thing, of course, possesses these properties. Yet, initially it would seem that they exist within the Thing as mutually indifferent determinations, each existing

independently of the others. As such, the Thing would appear to be an “abstract universal medium” in which the properties subsist (*PhG* 68). The Thing is what has become of the ‘This’, namely, a spatio-temporal location that preserves within itself a plurality of indifferent differences or determinations. Thus, with the respect to a perceived Thing like salt, Perception can say, “Here and Now is white and *also* tart and *also* a cubical shape and *also* a specific gravity and so on” (*PhG* 113). Importantly, each property is everywhere present in the Thing, yet they simultaneously manage not to affect one another. For example, the whiteness of the salt, while it qualifies the entire salt, nevertheless does not affect the cubical shape, nor does either affect the tartness (*PhG* 68-9). Thus, in the first instance, the Thing appears to be an indifferent ‘Also’, a medium which permits the properties to subsist in it while also allowing them not to directly affect each other.

Hegel demands, however, that we think-through such a conception of the Thing, its properties and their mutual relationships. Thus, he states,

[I]f the many determinate properties were strictly indifferent to one another, if they were simply and solely self-related, they would not be determinate; for they are only determinate in so far as they *differentiate* themselves from one another, and *relate* themselves to others as to their opposites. (*PhG* 69)

Here, Hegel indicates his basic acceptance of the Spinozist principle: *omnis determinatio est negatio*.<sup>143</sup> All determinations are negations. All determinations, in other words, cannot be merely self-related but presuppose a relation of negation to that which they are not. Orange is orange, not simply because it is orange – that would have been Sense-

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The basis of all determinacy is negation (*omnis determinatio est negatio*)” (*EL* 147).

certainty's position; rather, orange is orange because it is not green, or red, or sweet, or round and so on.

The fact that the properties of the Thing must negate and exclude one another in order to be what they are presents a problem, however, for the would-be simple unity of the Thing. Thus, Hegel states,

As thus opposed to one another [the properties] cannot be together in the simple unity of their medium, which is just as essential to them as negation; the differentiation of the properties, in so far as it is not an indifferent differentiation but is exclusive, each property negating the other, thus falls outside of this simple medium; and the medium, therefore, is not merely an Also, an indifferent unity, but a *One* as well, a unity which *excludes* an other. (*PhG* 69)

If the properties exclude one another that would seem to preclude the possibility that they could exist together in one Thing as their shared medium. Yet, that medium is as essential to their existence as the fact that they exclude each other. In other words, in order to exist, the properties must both exclude each other *and* share a common medium. Reconciling this tension or contradiction intrinsic to the relationship of the properties to one another and to the Thing becomes the task for the succeeding sections of Perception.

Important to note, however, is that Hegel also leaps to asserting that the Thing, too, like its properties is both a universal and exclusive. The Thing is universal *qua* "abstract medium", and it is exclusive *qua One* Thing among other Things which it is not. Thus, we in fact have a twofold set of contradictions to be worked out, or thought-thought, during the course of the ensuing sections of Perception: 1) the properties must

simultaneously be exclusive and share a common medium; 2) the Thing must be both an indifferent or “abstract” universal medium in which the properties subsist and a determinate, exclusive One.

## 2.2 *The Thing, Self-identity, Truth and Error*

Recall that so far as Perception is concerned at this point the object is the absolute. Thus, the task of consciousness is simply to *take* the Thing in an act of pure apprehension. It must not actively engage with the object or alter it in any way since to do so would undermine its truth. Perception is nevertheless aware that it can fail to apprehend the object correctly. For, the principle of the object is universality, and universality contains differences or otherness; therefore, it is possible that Perception can take the object as other than what it is. Accordingly, the *criterion of truth* for Perception is *self-identity* or *self-sameness*. Previously, in Sense-certainty, the criterion of truth had been immediate, sensuous presence. Now, the criterion the object must satisfy in order to be considered the true object is that it should remain identical to itself.

In a sense, the criterion of self-identity was operative – albeit implicitly – in Sense-certainty. What Sense-certainty learned was simply that the immediately, sensuously present ‘This’ was never what it was immediately taken to be. Moreover, immediacy continues to be a criterion for truth into Perception and, as we will see, beyond. The point is that what is immediately present to Perception is a mediated object, namely, a universal. Thus, in Perception, the criterion of immediacy is sublated through the mediation of the universal. The criterion of self-identity will also be sublated by



further mediations. Yet, at present, Perception is not aware of this and so begins with an unmediated or immediate criterion of self-identity for the object.

Again, since the object is a differentiated totality, consciousness is aware of the possibility of taking the object differently than what it is; in other words, it is aware of the possibility of error. The problem of error is a crucial if at times neglected aspect for all philosophy. For, indeed, a theory of error is an intrinsic correlate to any theory of knowledge; in other words, no theory of knowledge could be considered complete without at the same time providing a theory of error. Hegel, for his part, is providing at least the basic outlines for such a theory in this section of Perception.

For Perception, then, the object is the absolute, the true. Yet, in order to be true the object must be self-identical. Still, diversity is constitutive of Perception's object at this point. Therefore, Perception is forced to conclude that anything in its experience which appears to undermine the self-identity of the object, and thereby cause an erroneous rather than truthful "taking" of the object, cannot be due to the object in-itself but rather must be the fault of consciousness. Consciousness is the source of any deception or untrue "taking" in the experience of Perception.

The self-identity of the object does indeed seem to be undermined in the very first instance in which it is taken by Perception. For, in the first instance, the Thing presents itself as a 'One', as a distinct and singular unity; yet, at the same time, Perception perceives in the Thing the universal property which transcends singularity. According to Hegel, Perception therefore concludes that it erred in taking the Thing as a 'One', as a unity, and in turn maintains that the object is an association or community of properties. Immediately, however, Perception perceives that the properties are mutually exclusive

which prevents them from forming a community. Thus, consciousness again convicts itself of error in taking the object as a community or continuity of properties and reverts to positing the object as an exclusive unity (*PhG* 70-71).

Perception once again discovers, however, that the Thing has many properties, and so consciousness was wrong to take it as exclusive. As a result Perception finds that what it perceives is not common medium or mere community, but rather the single property itself. Yet, by itself the property can be neither a property, since it is not related to the Thing, nor determinate, since it is not related to or distinguished from the other properties. Such an immediate, unrelated or context-less sensuous being, moreover, is scarcely distinguishable from the immediate, sensuous object of Sense-certainty. Consciousness would thus appear to have been thrown back to the beginning of its development.

### 2.3 *Clarification and Upshot of the Preceding Analysis*

To be sure, these sections of Perception can come across as an exercise in a dialectical frenzy the point of which is not always immediately evident. Hegel, nevertheless, pauses to bring out a nest of key points regarding what consciousness learns in the course of this somewhat frenzied experience. For, what appears to be happening to the object is actually happening to consciousness itself in relation to its object.

In thinking-through the first object of Sense-certainty, consciousness was forced to reflect upon itself, upon the 'I', in order to maintain its original conviction that its object is given in immediate, sensuous particularity. In thinking-through Perception, consciousness is once again forced to reflect upon itself *qua* perceiver. The difference is

that, whereas Sense-certainty was driven to reflect upon the 'I' and thereby concluded, at least provisionally, that its truth lay within the 'I' rather than the object, Perception, being aware of a diversity or contradiction in its object, concludes that *it* is the source of error or untruth which it experiences. Yet, this is an enormous discovery unto itself, and for more than one reason.

First, consciousness is hereby engaged in a process of discovering its own activity in constituting the object it experiences. In other words, in undergoing the preceding dialectical frenzy, consciousness begins to discover that the way in which the object appears, the way that it is taken, depends upon consciousness' own taking, its own perceptual activity.<sup>144</sup> To be sure, at this point, for Perception, the object is still the absolute and the true, and so, as far as Perception is concerned, any activity on its part can only be the source of error or illusion. Yet, in recognizing this point, consciousness discovers a second factor about itself, namely, that it possesses the criterion of correction within itself.<sup>145</sup> To be sure, since Perception takes the object to be the absolute at this point, it will draw the naïve conclusion that correction is a matter of eliminating the distorting affects that consciousness has upon the object in order thereby to get back to the object as it really is in-itself or "out there" in the "world".<sup>146</sup> Yet, despite its own

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<sup>144</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Thus it becomes quite definite for consciousness how its perceiving is essentially constituted, viz. that it is not a simply pure apprehension, but in its apprehension is at the same time reflected out of the True and into itself. This return of consciousness to itself which is directly mingled with the pure apprehension [of the object] – for this return into itself has shown itself to be essential to perception – alters the truth" (*PhG* 71).

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Consciousness recognizes that it is the untruth occurring in perception that falls within it. But by this very recognition it is able at once to supersede this untruth; it distinguishes its apprehension of the truth from the untruth of its perception, corrects this untruth, and since it undertakes to make this correction itself, the truth, qua truth of *perception*, falls of course *within consciousness*" (*PhG* 72).

<sup>146</sup> We thus have an explanation for the very emergence of the naïve epistemological procedure which Hegel famously critiques in the Introduction to the *PhG* (*PhG* 73ff.). That procedure, of course, involves 1) the presupposition that cognition is a kind of instrument whose activity invariably distorts the object as it is in-itself and 2) the (self-defeating) attempt to remove the effect of this instrument on the object in order that

preoccupations with the object, consciousness is learning that it possesses its own immanent, *self*-correcting criterion. In other words, in convicting itself of error or untruth, consciousness thereby enacts and partially gleans its own immanent criterion of truth.<sup>147</sup>

#### 2.4 *Phenomenology of the Thing Resumed*

Hegel duly returns to Perception as it begins again to think-through the Thing, with the difference now that it is equipped with an explanation of the source of error to go along with its criterion of self-identity. Thus, in the first instance, Perception is aware of the Thing as One, as a unity. Yet, Perception also perceives a multiplicity of properties, which, *qua* multiple, contradict the unity of the Thing. Still, the Thing is One, and so Perception concludes that the source of the multiplicity of properties which would contradict the truth of the object – its self-identity – must lie in consciousness. As Hegel states,

So in point of fact, the Thing is white only to our eyes, also tart to our tongue, also cubical to our touch, and so on. We get the entire diversity of these aspects, not from the Thing, but from ourselves; and they fall asunder in this way for us, because the eye is quite distinct from the tongue, and so on. We are thus the universal medium in which such moments are kept apart and exist each on its own. (*PhG* 72)

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the latter might be cognized as it is in-itself. We are now in a position to explain this very effort – including, the naïve presupposition about the nature of cognition – to be the result of the experience of Perception as it struggles to preserve its initial conviction about the nature of its object.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Otherness or error, as sublated, is itself a necessary moment of the truth, which can only be in that it makes itself into its own result” (*EL* 286).

In order to preserve its original conviction of the unity of the Thing which it perceives, consciousness shifts its ground and makes itself responsible for the diversity of properties which it also perceives. The Thing is a unity, but consciousness possesses different organs of perception – eyes, ears, tongue and so on – which, accordingly, perceive the unified thing in different ways. Consciousness itself thus becomes a universal medium which preserves these different properties in their exclusivity.

Important to note is the similarity between this move on the part of conscious and the earlier one which took place in Sense-certainty. In Sense-certainty, upon first being driven back into itself, consciousness conceived of itself after the manner of the object – the particular ‘This’. In Perception, upon being driven back into itself, consciousness conceives of itself as it had initially conceived of the Thing, namely, as an indifferent, universal medium in which the different properties subsist.

Having drawn this conclusion about consciousness, however, Perception is immediately confronted with a problem when it returns to thinking-through the Thing in its unity. For, in order to be a One, the Thing must exclude other Things. Yet, it is not through being a One that it is thereby exclusive. Rather, according to Hegel, oneness or unity is “the universal relation of self to self” (*PhG* 73). All unified Things possess such intrinsic self-relating, which entails that, to the extent that it is self-relating, the Thing is indistinguishable from other Things. It is by being *determinate* not merely self-relating that the Thing distinguishes itself from other Things, and it is through its properties that the Thing is determinate. A Thing, therefore, in order to be itself and not some-*Thing* else, must possess properties intrinsic to itself. The properties cannot simply be the possession of consciousness. They must be, indeed, proper to the Thing.

Yet, insofar as consciousness maintains that the Thing is the bearer of its own intrinsic properties, it reverts to conceiving of the Thing as an indifferent universal medium in which the mutually exclusive properties subsist. As a result, the problem of the unity of the Thing returns. In response to this problem consciousness takes it upon itself to maintain the unity of the Thing, albeit by means of a contrived artifice. The Thing is perceived as a unity but also as an indifferent medium in which exclusive properties subsist. Consciousness thus perceives the Thing as, for example, white and also tart and also cubical and so on. In order to preserve the unity of the Thing, however, consciousness adds the further contrivance that “*in so far* as it is white, it is not cubical, and *in so far* as it is cubical and also white, it is not tart, and so on” (*PhG* 73).

Hegel’s invocation of the “insofar” is not perfectly clear, but his general point seems to be that it is a distinction which consciousness draws in order to preserve or otherwise make intelligible for itself the fact that it perceives the Thing as both a unity and an indifferent universal medium of mutually exclusive properties. It is, effectively, another instance of consciousness shifting its ground in order to preserve its original conviction about its object. The Thing is a unity with determinate properties. Yet, consciousness can think or perceive these properties apart from one another by specifying the Thing only *insofar* as it is white and therefore not tart, and so on. It is, more or less, a sheer contrivance, but one through which consciousness nevertheless manages to learn something of exceeding importance about itself and its object.

## 2.5 *Clarification of the Preceding Analysis*

As Hegel notes, if we survey the course of Perception's development thus far we notice that it has made a pair of complementary discoveries about itself and its object.

If we look back on what consciousness previously took, and now takes, responsibility for, on what it previously ascribed, and now ascribes to the Thing, we see that consciousness alternately makes itself, as well as the Thing, into both a pure, many-less *One*, and into an *Also* that resolves itself into independent 'matters' [i.e. properties]. (*PhG* 74)

Through the course of Perception, consciousness has alternately ascribed to itself and to the Thing the principle of unity and the principle of differentiation. Yet, in recognizing this very fact, "Consciousness thus finds through this comparison that not only its truthful perceiving [*Nehmen des Wahren*], contains the *distinct moments of apprehension and withdrawal into self*, but rather that the truth itself, the Thing, reveals itself in this twofold way" (*PhG* 74). Just as consciousness found itself in both Sense-certainty and Perception driven back from its immediate apprehension of its object into a reflection upon itself, so now the object, too, has been discovered to possess its own duality of moments: 1) a moment of presentation for consciousness apprehending it and 2) a moment of reflection into itself.

Here we have a major moment in Hegel's ongoing explanation of the emergence of different philosophies and so it will be worthwhile to pause and flesh out more precisely just what Hegel is articulating. Perception has been attempting to think-through how its object can be both one and many.<sup>148</sup> In the course of doing so it has discovered

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<sup>148</sup> At this point, it would be worth noting that the dialectic of the one and the many has been examined throughout much of the history of philosophy and that, for Hegel, the purest ancient expression of this

that the object itself can be considered both as it appears to consciousness and as it is in-itself. Thus, in thinking-through the object *qua* one-and-many, consciousness is led to posit a distinction between *appearance* and *reality*. Consciousness draws a distinction between the Thing insofar as appears for or is related to consciousness, on the one hand, and the Thing insofar as it is self-related, on the other. Several important points must be noted with respect to this distinction.

First, Hegel is providing a more or less generic or typological explanation for a distinction that historically has received myriad specific expressions. The Platonic distinction between appearance and reality, the Lockean distinction between primary and secondary qualities, and the Kantian distinction between the phenomena and noumenon, just to name a few, would all constitute instances of this generic type. The important point to note, however, is that Hegel is providing an explanation as to how and why these philosophies – at least in this particular respect – emerge in the first place. They emerge in and through a determinate experience of consciousness, specifically, that of Perception, as it attempts to think-through the complexity of the object which it in fact perceives.

Second, the distinction drawn by consciousness has its correlate in the structure of consciousness itself. Thus, although the emphasis still remains on the object, what is actually set up at this point is a *parallel set* of distinctions within both consciousness and

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dialectic occurs in Plato's *Parmenides* ("Skeptizismus" 323-4). Importantly, however, on Hegel's interpretation, the result of the *Parmenides* is merely destructive and, therefore, propaedeutic to later, more speculative works, such as the *Sophist*. In the rarity of its dialectical destructiveness, however, the *Parmenides* also represents, for Hegel, the highest achievement of ancient skepticism. Hegel, for his part, sees himself as incorporating the destructive element of ancient skepticism into his own dialectic only to sublimate it as a moment in the larger development of the mind.



the object, respectively. In other words, we have the beginnings of a distinction drawn by consciousness with respect to how it *knows* its object. For, the consciousness to which the object appears has *de facto* been distinguished from the consciousness that withdraws into itself. Thus, along with the Platonic distinction between appearance and reality, we have the beginnings of the Platonic distinction between aesthesis and noesis; or, along with the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumenon, we have the beginnings of the distinction between the empirical and transcendental ego, and so on.<sup>149</sup>

Third, the fact that it is consciousness itself which draws the distinction between the object *qua* appearing-to-consciousness versus the object *qua* withdrawing-into-itself must not be lost sight of. Hegel does not emphasize this point, here, but the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* has prepared us to watch for it. As Hegel states in the Introduction, “The essential point to bear in mind throughout the whole investigation is that these two moments, ‘Notion’ and ‘object’, ‘being-for-another’ and ‘being-in-itself’, both fall *within* that knowledge which we are investigating” (*PhG* 53). *Consciousness* draws the distinction between the object as it is for-consciousness, on the one hand, and as it is in-itself, on the other. *Consciousness* distinguishes between the object as related to consciousness and the object as self-relating. The distinction is not a given, “brute” fact which consciousness merely finds “already there”, but is rather constituted and preserved by and *in* consciousness itself. Thus, the object as self-relating, and thus presumably independent *of* consciousness, nevertheless remains *within* consciousness.

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<sup>149</sup> Hegel’s explanation for the emergence of the Kantian distinction between the empirical versus the transcendental ego will be discussed at much greater length in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

Part of the reason why this point is essential to bear in mind is that even though we, the phenomenologists, know that the distinction between what is for-consciousness and what is in-itself is internal to consciousness, Perception does not. Therefore, the emphasis throughout Perception will continue to fall on the object. Consciousness need no longer convict itself as the strict source of error since it has come to recognize that the object can appear to consciousness differently than it is in-itself. Yet, it will still be preoccupied with thinking-through the object in its complexity, rather than directing its attention upon its own concrete activity in constituting the object.

## 2.6 *Analysis of the Thing Resumed*

To return to the analysis, then, Hegel points out how, now, the object contains within itself the two moments which were previously constitutive of consciousness' relation to its object: "The Thing is One, reflected into itself; it is *for itself*, but is also for *an other*; and, moreover, it is an other on its own account, just *because* it is for an other" (*PhG* 74). Previously, the object was self-related or for-itself, and yet also related to or for-consciousness. Now, in continuing to attempt to think-through the complexity of the object, consciousness posits that the Thing is self-related or for-itself and also related to or *for* another *Thing*. In other words, consciousness posits that the Thing is a unity *qua* self-related; yet, in interacting with other Things, the Thing is drawn into manifesting different properties. For example, consciousness might posit a planet as a unified Thing and maintain that it is only upon interacting with another planet that either object manifests its various properties of solidity, specific gravity and so on. Or, consciousness might posit a squirrel as a Thing and maintain that it is only through its relation to other

Things such as fellow squirrels and sources of food that it manifests its various properties of intussusception, sympathy, aggression, parturition and so on.

The problem with this solution is that each Thing, through its self-relating identity, is supposedly in-itself different from other Things. Yet, it is only in its relation to other Things that the Thing can be differentiated from these others according to its various determinate properties. Therefore, consciousness once again shifts its ground and maintains instead that the Thing possesses an absolute difference that is essential to it in-itself. Yet, this essential property which constitutes its absolute difference is posited precisely as a means to distinguish the Thing from other Things, which is the same as saying that through this absolute difference the Thing is absolutely related to all other Things.

Here, consciousness seems to be in the throes of another dialectical frenzy. It is working feverishly to maintain its original conviction that the Thing unto itself constitutes a unity with many properties. Yet, as it thinks-through this position consciousness is continually forced to recognize that the Thing only is what it is through its relation to something else. Thus, consciousness is on the cusp of grasping the fact that the notion of a Thing with properties which could be defined in abstraction from its relational context to other Things is illusory. As Hegel states,

The experience through which consciousness discovers that the Thing is demolished by the very determinateness that constitutes its essence and its being-for-self, can be summarized as follows. The Thing is posited as being *for itself*, or as the absolute negation of all otherness, therefore as purely *self*-related negation;

but the negation that is self-related is the suspension of itself; in other words, the Thing has its essential being in another Thing. (*PhG* 76)

Consciousness might posit for the Thing an “essence” through which it is absolutely One and therefore absolutely distinct from other Things. Yet, in order actually to differentiate the Thing from other Things it is necessary to make reference to the apparently unessential properties that only become manifest through the Thing’s relation to other Things. Thus, the unessential turns out to be necessary and therefore essential, while the essential turns out to be unnecessary and therefore inessential to differentiating and therefore defining the Thing. The being of the Thing is thereby revealed to be determined, not through itself, but *through its relations to other Things*.

## 2.7 *Consciousness’s Discovery of Constitutive Relationality*

At this point, consciousness has broken-through to the insight that reality in its concreteness is constitutively relational. Things maintain relations to other Things in order to be what they are. As such, Things are not prior to but emerge out of their relational orders. In other words, “what we now have is *unconditioned absolute universality*” (*PhG* 77). The singular Thing is not universal or absolute; or, more precisely, it is not universal and *therefore* not absolute. What is absolute is a universal relational context.<sup>150</sup>

Perception’s invocation of “Also” and the “in so far”, and its distinction between the “essential” versus the “inessential”, were all attempts to preserve its original

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Fichte: “[T]he relation must be absolute, and the absolute must be nothing more than a relation” (*WL* 181).

conviction that the Thing with properties was primary and absolute. While Perception in principle transcended the domain of the immediately sensuous present and posited for itself a Thing with universal properties, still “this universal, since it *originates in the sensuous*, is essentially *conditioned* by it, and hence is not truly self-identical universality at all” (*PhG* 76). Perception does not break decisively with its attachment to the sensuous and so it oscillates back-and-forth between the universal which it perceives and the immediate sensuous particular which it also perceives. Yet, it cannot *see* – that is, sense – how they are related. Perception cannot preserve the self-identical in its universality. It does not *see* the universal relational totality that governs the universe and which is thus the truly absolute, because *self-conditioning*, Thing.<sup>151</sup>

Understanding, the viewpoint which succeeds Perception, by contrast, begins by accepting that “Seeing and Hearing,” or, in other words, the senses, “have been lost to consciousness” (*PhG* 79). It is at home – however tenuously, at first – with “the unconditioned universal” as its proper object. Perception ultimately still found this object to be a mere “mental entity”; it did not recognize, in other words, the universal relational context as the realm of “pure essences, the absolute elements and powers” which governs

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<sup>151</sup> This entire analysis seems to have been prefigured in Fichte: “Hence [...] the totality consists simply in the complete relation, and there is nothing else of an intrinsically stable kind that determines this. The totality consists in the completeness of a *relationship*, but not of a *reality* [Hegel might say ‘Thing’ at this point]. The terms of the relationship, taken individually, are the *accidents* [i.e. ‘properties’], while their totality is *substance* [...] Here it merely needs stating expressly [...] that in substance we are not to think of anything fixed at all, but simply of an interplay” (*WL* 184). Fichte goes on to point out that this relational totality, which is “substance”, is ultimately just the self itself in its dialectical unfolding (*WL* 185). In other words, for Fichte, too, substance has become subject. Another point of reference would, of course, be the abortive attempt by the young Socrates in the *Parmenides* to render intelligible the relation between the forms and their would-be instantiations. Arguably, the underlying flaw which perpetually thwarts Socrates’ effort in this case is the fact that he conceives – or, rather, picture-thinks – of the universal forms as like Things, which is, of course, precisely what Perception repeatedly does.

the universe in its concreteness (*PhG* 78). Understanding begins with this recognition, so we are led to examine how Understanding goes about thinking-through this object.

## 2.8 *Summary of Perception*

Before turning to the viewpoint of Force and Understanding, let us first recall the experiences undergone and lessons learned by Perception that were especially pertinent to Hegel's explanation of the emergence of different philosophies.

Perception began with the conviction that its object was a Thing with many properties. Importantly, however, the *principle* of Perception's object was the universal while Perception's *criterion of truth* was self-identity. As a result, Perception was faced with the task of thinking-through how its object could be both self-identical *and* universal since the universal is that which preserves difference within itself. The dialectical frenzies which it underwent in the course of thinking-through its object were but various permutations on this basic dialectic between particular self-identity and universality. Yet, many of these permutations produced lessons that were valuable not least for their use in explaining how different philosophies emerge as the result of the ongoing dialectical development of the mind.

Recall that due to the dialectical tension between its principle of the object and its criterion of truth, the threat of error or deception immediately presented itself to Perception. According to Hegel, however, "At first, then, I become aware of the Thing as a *One*, and have to hold fast to it in this its true character" (*PhG* 72). Initially, then, the primacy falls on the unity of the Thing. Therefore, when Perception perceives something that contradicts this unity, such as the multiplicity of exclusive properties, it contrives for

itself a solution by which it can “hold fast” to the Thing’s primary unity and thereby preserve the latter’s self-identity. The solution that Perception first contrives for itself is to make consciousness responsible for the “error” of perceiving the Thing to be constituted by a multiplicity of exclusive properties. The Thing is One; therefore, it is white only to our eyes, tart only to our tongue and so on.

As a result of drawing this distinction, and despite the fact that it is primarily concerned simply with preserving the self-identical unity of the Thing, Perception hits upon the appearance/reality distinction for the first time. As previously mentioned, this distinction will manifest itself throughout the history of philosophy in various guises. Yet, the crucial point is that Hegel has provided an explanatory account of the basis of the distinction – and therefore of the philosophies which adopt it – namely, a particular experience of consciousness. The drawing of the appearance/reality distinction is thus not some haphazard event in the history of philosophy; rather, it is the result of a particular viewpoint, in this case, Perception, thinking-through a contradiction within its experience.

Recall, also, that in and through drawing this initial distinction between appearance and reality, consciousness is driven back into itself, if only provisionally or tenuously. The object remains its focus; yet, consciousness cannot help but become more reflectively aware of its own role in constituting its object of experience.<sup>152</sup> Indeed, it is

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<sup>152</sup> Cf. Fichte’s expression of this self-reflective discovery: “The Thing is nothing whatsoever but *the sum of all these relations as combined by the power of the imagination*, and all of these relations, taken together, constitute the thing. The object is indeed the original synthesis of all of these concepts” (IWL 28).

this nascent awareness on the part of consciousness as being forced to reflect upon itself that sets the conditions for a subsequent permutation in its conception of its object.

For, on taking upon itself the responsibility for the multiplicity of determinate properties that it perceives, Perception discovers that it has no basis for distinguishing the Thing from other Things. Therefore, consciousness inverts the conception of the object which it had just established and posits the Thing as a universal medium in which the properties subsist while making itself responsible for the unity of the Thing. In so doing, however, consciousness breaks-through to the insight that, not only itself, but the Thing contains the two moments of 1) a differentiated and determinate appearance for-consciousness and 2) a withdrawal into undifferentiated self-identity.

Here we have, in other words, the basis in conscious experience for the Kantian phenomena/noumenon distinction. Indeed, there can be little doubt that Hegel means to provide an explanatory account of at least this central aspect of Kant's philosophy in this analysis of Perception, for in the *PM*, Hegel states, "The more specific stage of consciousness at which *Kantian philosophy* conceives the mind is *perception*" (*PM* 149). To be sure, the analysis in Perception is hardly Hegel's last word on Kant. Yet, it remains that we have here in the *PhG* the beginnings of a thoroughgoing dialectical explanation for the very existence of the Kantian philosophy.

In connection with the dialectical explanation that Perception provides for the Kantian philosophy, it should be further recalled that a major limitation of Perception is its continued naïve attachment to sensuousness.<sup>153</sup> To be sure, Perception in principle has

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<sup>153</sup> Perception for its own part nevertheless thinks that through this continued naïve attachment to sensuousness it is simply maintaining the "realism" of "sound common sense". As Hegel states, "These



transcended the attachment to immediate sensuous particularity characteristic of Sense-certainty. Yet, its appropriation of the universal is only partial and so the particular Thing of sensuous consciousness merely rests “alongside” its own universal determination. In other words, the sensuous has not yet been properly reduced by consciousness to a mere moment of the “unconditioned absolute universality,” but instead retains its own quasi-absoluteness in opposition to the universality of the property, which latter, for its part, is revealed to be still a merely “sensuous universality”<sup>154</sup> (*PhG* 77). Thus, Hegel states

*My ‘meaning’ has vanished, and perception takes the object as it is in itself, or as a universal as such. Singular being therefore emerges in the object as true singleness, as the in-itself of the One, or as reflectedness-into-itself. But this is still a conditioned being for-for-self alongside which appears another being-for-self, the universality which is opposed to, and conditioned by singular being [...]*

The sophistry of perception seeks to save these moments from their contradiction, and it seeks to lay hold on the truth, by distinguishing between the *aspects*, by sticking to the ‘Also’ and the ‘in so far’, and finally by distinguishing the ‘unessential’ aspect from an ‘essence’ which is opposed to it. But these expedients, instead of warding off deception in the process of apprehension, prove themselves on the contrary to be quite empty. (*PhG* 77)

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empty abstractions of a ‘singleness’ and a ‘universality’ opposed to it, and of an ‘essence’ that is linked with something unessential – a ‘non-essential’ aspect which is necessary all the same – these are powers whose interplay is perceptual understanding, often called ‘sound common sense’. This ‘sound common sense’ which takes itself to a solid, realistic consciousness is, in the perceptual process, only the play of *these* abstractions; generally, it is always at its poorest where it fancies itself to be the richest” (*PhG* 77).

<sup>154</sup> Cf. the section of *PM* in which Hegel comments on this problematic connection between the sensuous particular and the universal property in the experience of Perception: “The connection is therefore a many-sided contradiction – in general between the *individual* things of sensory apperception, which are supposed to constitute *the foundation* of universal experience, and the *universality* which is supposed rather to be the essence and the foundation” (*PM* 150).

Thus, as Hegel famously says about the Kantian philosophy in particular, so it might be said of Perception more generally, “it consists merely in a tenderness for the things of this world” (*EL* 92). Perception retains a tender and perhaps nostalgic attachment to the seeming absolute integrity of the immediate, sensuous particular. As a result, it makes recourse to all manner of sophistry and contrivance in order to avoid ascribing to the Thing in-itself the contradiction that it nevertheless perceives between the particular and universal, for this would involve reducing the sensuous to a mere moment in an “unconditioned absolute universality”.

### 2.9 *A Special Note on Perception and Explaining Philosophical Multiplicity*

As it turns out, the “Perception” chapter contains embedded within it a very special lesson vis-à-vis Hegel’s larger effort to explain and critique the multiplicity of philosophies. As such, it behooves us to note this lesson in some detail before moving on to examining the “Force and Understanding” chapter.

In order to appreciate this lesson properly, it is necessary, first of all, to recall a major point Hegel makes at the very beginning of the Preface to the *PhG*. Thus, regarding the problem of philosophical differences, Hegel states,

The more conventional opinion gets fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity, the more it tends to expect a given philosophical system to be either accepted or contradicted; and hence it finds only the acceptance or rejection. It does not comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive unfolding of truth, but rather sees in it simple disagreements. The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the

latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole. But he who rejects a philosophical system does not usually comprehend what he is doing in this way; and he who grasps the contradiction between them does not, as a general rule, know how to free it from its one-sidedness, or maintain it in its freedom by recognizing the reciprocally necessary moments that take shape as a conflict and seeming incompatibility.

*(PhG 2)*

Here, Hegel is, of course, providing a general statement about how to interpret the multiplicity of different philosophies. Let us pause to clarify this general point and then show how Hegel's analysis of Perception can now be used to illuminate specific elements of Hegel's point that otherwise would not be readily apparent.

### *2.9.1 Hegel's General Point Regarding the Explanation of Philosophical Multiplicity in the "Preface"*

Hegel's general point is that the multiple philosophies do not stand in a relationship of mere conflict and contradiction. Rather, each historical philosophy constitutes a moment in the unfolding of an organic whole. Still, as Hegel points out, it is possible to view the various different philosophies as simply contradicting one another.

Invoking, once again, an organic analogy, Hegel observes that it is possible to view the blossom as simply refuting the bud and the fruit as refuting the blossom in its turn such that what is in fact the organic unfolding of the whole plant is viewed instead as the successive emergence of discrete and incompatible stages, with each stage refuted the prior stage only to find itself refuted and excluded in turn.

Hegel chastises this view, however, for failing to notice and account for the unitary dialectico-organic process governing the emergence of the different philosophies. According to Hegel, previous philosophies constitute necessary intellectual preludes to subsequent developments. Yet, the genuine insights contained within these earlier positions are not simply discarded upon the appearance of a more advanced position; rather, they are preserved and sublated by being released from their one-sidedness and thereby finding their place within a larger organic whole.

### *2.9.2 Perception as Providing Greater Insight into Hegel's General Explanation of Philosophical Multiplicity*

The analysis of Perception allows us to extricate at least two further specific components from Hegel's general point regarding philosophical multiplicity. First, as we have already seen, the transition from Sense-certainty to Perception gives a concrete instance of dialectical development and sublation. Second, the experience of Perception, and specifically its conception of its object, actually provides the means for explaining the very emergence of the kind of interpretation of the history of philosophy Hegel critiques. Let us examine each of these points.

Dialectical development entails undergoing the experience of thinking-through what is implicit in a given viewpoint. Typically, this thinking-through involves the negation of an initial position only to have that negation negated which results in the return of the original position but in a sublated form. Thus, sublation entails the preservation and transposition of an insight or position from a lower viewpoint into a higher viewpoint by means of which the original insight is reduced to a moment of a larger whole.<sup>155</sup> For example, the ‘This’ *qua* immediate ‘Now’ of Sense-certainty was negated by a subsequent immediate ‘Now’ only to have this very process of negation negated by the emergence of a mediated and universal ‘Now’ which reduced the many immediate ‘Nows’ to mere moments of a larger whole. The original ‘This’ *qua* ‘Now’ was thus preserved, not merely refuted or contradicted, within the subsequent higher viewpoint.

By analogy, insofar as it can be shown that a given philosophy expresses the position of Sense-certainty regarding the nature of the ‘This’ and that a subsequent philosophy expresses the transposed and sublated insight of Sense-certainty as manifested in Perception, then we have the means for understanding how the two philosophies stand in a relationship not of mere refutation and contradiction but of dialectical continuity. Thus, a philosophy of Perception such as Kant’s does not simply refute but rather sublates a philosophy of Sense-certainty such as Schulze’s.

Yet, it remains that the history of the multiple philosophies itself has not always been so interpreted. As Hegel notes, conventional opinion has viewed the various

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<sup>155</sup> This process of transposition and sublation was discussed in Chapter One under the rubric of “Vertical Teleology”.

philosophies as each forming fundamentally distinct units standing in relationships of mere opposition and contradiction to one another. To be sure, there are theories regarding how one philosophy “influenced” a subsequent philosophy in historical time. For Hegel, however, such talk of influence does little to help move the discussion beyond conceiving the various philosophies as still simply contradicting one another; it does not help, in other words, in demonstrating the dialectico-organic pattern by which the totality of philosophies are intrinsically united. Importantly, however, in the analysis of Perception, Hegel provides the means for not merely critiquing but for beginning to explain the very existence of this kind of interpretation of the history of the multiple philosophies itself.

This point is the special insight that the phenomenology of Perception provides for elucidating Hegel’s larger explanatory account of philosophical multiplicity. For, the analysis of Perception reveals why philosophy is so often interpreted as a mere haphazard succession of mutually exclusive ‘Things’ or ‘positions’.

### *2.9.3 Perception as the Basis of Naïve Interpretations of Philosophical Multiplicity*

It should be recalled that Perception identifies itself as the viewpoint of “sound common sense”. Yet, as noted in the Introduction of this dissertation, it is precisely the viewpoint of sound common sense or conventional opinion that views the history of philosophy as a history of mere contradiction and refutation. The experience of Perception, however, *explains why* this would be the case.

For Perception, reality is constituted by discrete and mutual exclusive Things with their various properties. As such, we only need to imagine how the history of philosophy would appear to such a viewpoint. For, philosophies themselves could only appear to

Perception as fundamentally distinct and mutually exclusive quasi-Things which have various “properties”. The properties of the various philosophies would be their various “positions” and “arguments” concerning the litany of philosophical topics and questions that each takes up.

Thus, when Perception looks at the history of philosophy, it will invariably arrange philosophies according to distinct groupings, each marked by their different traits or “properties” according to which they exclude and contradict each other. Such groupings are only too common. Thus, according to the ordinary conception of philosophy, there are Realists, and also Idealists, and also Materialists, and also Empiricists, and so on. Realists share various properties amongst themselves, as do Idealists amongst themselves, and these properties contradict one another, just as they both equally contradict those of Empiricists, and so on. If it becomes necessary to make distinctions within a certain group, then one simply identifies and adds the contradictory properties. A Kantian Idealist is to be distinguished from a Platonic Idealist inasmuch as the former holds that the ideas or categories are located in the transcendental ego whereas the latter holds that they are located in a noetic heaven. A Kantian Idealist is transcendental and also this, and this, and this and so on.

Lost in this catalogue of the mutually exclusive philosophies with their various essential properties, of course, is any account as to why the philosophies emerge in the way that they do, at all. Yet, the present point is that *this very fact*, namely, that the history of philosophy is so often conceived, or rather Perceived, in this way, is now explained, at least in part, by Hegel’s phenomenology of the experience of Perception. Moreover, if we recall the experience at which Perception culminates and thus transitions

into Understanding, we see the ground laid for a radical reinterpretation of the manner in which the different philosophies relate to one another. Indeed, in an important sense, this radical reinterpretation of the relationships among the different philosophies just is the *PhG*. Thus, the transition from Perception to Understanding provides an at least partial guide on how to interpret the *PhG* itself.

#### 2.9.4 *Transition to Understanding as Providing Suggestions for Reinterpreting*

##### *Philosophical Multiplicity and Conflict*

Although we have not yet accompanied Hegel in thinking-through the viewpoint of Understanding, we have seen what drives the transition from Perception to that higher viewpoint. As Hegel states, Perception culminates in the recognition that “the object in its pure determinateness, or in the determinatenesses which were supposed to constitute its essential being, is overcome just as surely as it was in its sensuous being” (*PhG* 76). Perception’s ideal of a discrete object capable of being defined apart from its relational context has been overcome. It has been sublated as a moment within a larger universal process, one governed by an order of “pure essences, the absolute elements and powers” (*PhG* 78). The ensuing chapter on Force and Understanding will take up an examination of these absolute elements and powers. It will start with a conception of Force and culminate with a conception of Life as a self-conditioning totality.

For Hegel, as he maintained starting from some of his earliest works, in order to interpret the history of the different philosophies adequately it is important to transition from viewing that history after the manner of Perception and into a viewpoint which



grasps the many philosophies as forming a self-conditioning dialectico-organic whole.<sup>156</sup> The long passage from the Preface of the *PhG* quoted above makes this abundantly clear. The Introduction to *LHP* provides an even more extended meditation on the need to make this transition from a Perception-based interpretation of the history of the different philosophies to an interpretation based on a higher viewpoint. Let us briefly examine the account provided in that Introduction.

First, Hegel critiques those Perception-based interpretations which treat “the diversity in philosophies as if the manifold were fixed and stationary and composed of what is mutually exclusive” (*LHP I* 33). Then, he articulates the need for what would be entailed in transitioning to a higher viewpoint in interpreting the history of different philosophies. Hegel’s basic point is that the different philosophies must be understood as constituting expressions of the development of the mind itself and thereby forming moments in the unfolding of a self-conditioning, self-differentiating universal organic process:

A complete form of thought such as is here presented, is a philosophy [...] But everything hangs on this: these forms are nothing else than the original distinction in the Idea itself, which is what it is only in them. They are in this way essential to, and constitute the content of the Idea, which in thus sundering itself, attains to form. The manifold character of the principles which appear, is, however, not accidental, but necessary: different forms constitute an integral part of the whole

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<sup>156</sup> Cf. the *DZ*: “Speculation is the activity of the one universal Reason directed upon itself. Reason, therefore, does not view the philosophical systems of different epochs and different heads merely as different modes [of doing philosophy] and purely idiosyncratic views. Once it has liberated its own view from contingencies and limitations [i.e. limitations that would result from operating in a viewpoint below Reason such as Perception], Reason necessarily finds itself throughout all the particular forms” (87-8).

form. They are the determinations of the original Idea, which together constitute the whole; but as being outside one another, their union does not take place in them, but in us, the observers. Each system is determined as one, but it is not a permanent condition that the differences are thus mutually exclusive. The inevitable fate of these determinations must follow, and that is that they shall be drawn together and reduced to elements or moments. (*LHP I 34-5*)

The Idea and/or Concept, which is *the* “pure essence and absolute power” mentioned in the *PhG*, differentiates and concretizes itself into various forms of thought or the mind such as Sense-certainty and Perception. These forms, when expressed, just are different philosophies. Accordingly, the different philosophies do not constitute mutually exclusive and contradictory options but rather moments in a self-differentiating, organic whole which just is the mind itself.<sup>157</sup>

In the first instance, however, the philosophies themselves are unaware of their intrinsic dialectico-organic unity with one another. Rather, it remains for us, the phenomenological and historical observers, to discern this unity.<sup>158</sup> For a viewpoint such as Perception, the history of philosophy appears to be an inorganic if not thoroughly unintelligible agglomeration of mutually exclusive positions. As such, then, the Hegelian philosophy, with its breakthrough into grasping the dialectico-organic unity of the

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. Hegel: The progression of the history of philosophy “shows itself to be universal Mind presenting itself in the history of the world in all the richness of its form” (*LHP I 33*); “Within [the developed Idea] Philosophy in its developed state is constituted: it is one Idea in its totality and in all its individual parts, like one life in a living being, one pulse throbs throughout all its members” (*LHP I 28*).

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The manifold character of the principles [of the different philosophies] which appear, is, however, not accident, but necessary: the different forms constitute an integral part of the whole form. They are determinations of the original Idea, which together constitute the whole; but as being outside of one another, their union does not take place in them, but in us, the observers” (*LHP I 35*).

different philosophies, constitutes the latest and highest development of philosophy itself. As Hegel states,

It is only the living and mental [*Geistig*] which internally bestirs and develops itself. Thus the Idea as concrete in itself, and self-developing, is an organic system and a totality which contains a multitude of stages and of moments of development. Philosophy has now become for itself the apprehension of this development, and as conceiving Thought, is itself this development in Thought. The more progress made in this development, the more perfect is the Philosophy. (*LHP I 27*)

What Hegel is providing is the foundation for a thoroughgoing scientific hermeneutic of the history of philosophy. He is providing the means of eschewing the all too conventional Perception-based practice of the viewing the different philosophies as forming discrete and mutually exclusive positions which can be grouped and aggregated according to various “properties”. In its stead, Hegel shows how to interpret the different philosophies as forming moments of a dialectico-organic whole. He replaces the basic terms and relations by which philosophies are conventionally distinguished – for example, Realists are “in between” Empiricists and Idealists – with a new set of basic terms and relations derived from a phenomenology of the development of the mind itself. Philosophies differ inasmuch as different stages in the development of the mind differ. As such, they do not form mutually exclusive and contradictory positions; rather they are expressions and moments of a unitary, organic process.

For Hegel, again, it is only the latest and highest philosophy – the Hegelian philosophy – that grasps this fact. Yet, by that very fact, Hegel is able to provide an

explanation as to why the other philosophies fall short of such an understanding. For, the ultimate conclusion to which Hegel's explanatory account of philosophical multiplicity drives us, at this point, is that the other philosophies are expressions of forms of the mind that are inadequate to grasping the very notion of development itself.

The chapter on Force and Understanding greatly augments our understanding of Hegel's conception of development as consisting in the dialectical unfolding of an organic whole. It is apposite, then, that we should now turn to that discussion.

### 3. *Force and Understanding*

The viewpoint of Force and Understanding begins where Perception leaves off. Consciousness has sublated its view of the object as a self-identical Thing with many universal properties into the notion of the object as an "unconditioned universal" or universal relational context. As Hegel states, with the emergence of this universal relational context,

[t]he unity of 'being-for-self' [i.e. self-identical unity] and 'being-for-another' [i.e. properties defined by their relations to others] is posited; in other words, the absolute antithesis is posited as a self-identical essence. At first sight, this seems to concern only the form of the moments in reciprocal relation; but 'being-for-self' and 'being-for-another' are the content itself as well, since the antithesis in its truth can have no other nature than the one yielded in the result, viz. that the content taken in perception to be true, belongs in fact only to the form, in the unity of which it is dissolved. This content is likewise universal; there can be no

other content which by its particular constitution would fail to fall within this unconditioned universality. (*PhG* 80)

It is not that the mind has simply come to recognize that its objects – the Things – have the *form* of relating to one another. Rather, the *content* of the present object is the relation, or more precisely, it is the universal reciprocal relationality in which Things, with their particular constitutions, have been reduced to mere moments. Thus, the present chapter is a prolonged examination on the nature of relationality, which for Hegel is typified in the relationship which he calls “Force”.

Before moving on to the examination of Force, it would be worth recalling Hegel’s comments in the first paragraph of this new chapter. He reminds us that the object currently under investigation appears differently to the form of consciousness presently under investigation, namely, Understanding, than it does to us, the phenomenologists. Thus, Hegel states,

It is essential to distinguish the two: for consciousness, the object has returned into itself from its relation to an other and has thus become *Concept in principle*; but consciousness is not yet *for itself* the Concept, and consequently does not recognize itself in that reflected object. *For us*, this object has developed through the movement of consciousness in such a way that consciousness is involved in that development, and the reflection is the same on both sides, or, there is only one reflection. (*PhG* 79)

The mind now has an object that has returned to itself through its relation to another. Yet, only we, the phenomenologists, know that such an object *qua* relational pattern is a very

tissue of the mind itself and that therefore what consciousness grasps in its object is but an objectification by consciousness of its own self.<sup>159</sup> To be sure, this is a theme that runs throughout the *Phenomenology*. Nevertheless, it is a point worth emphasizing again as we examine the continued development of both consciousness and its object in Understanding.

Not all of the details of Hegel's analysis of relationality in the mode of Force are of equal interest, not least because they often rely on antiquated conceptions of science. For example, in contemporary physics the very idea of gravity or universal attraction as a kind of "force" has been superseded by the view of gravity as a curvature in space-time.<sup>160</sup> Thus, it will be useful to dilate only on those sections of Force and Understanding that help in understanding Hegel's larger effort to explain the emergence of different philosophies.

### 3.1 *Universality and Particularity Sublated in the Unity of Force*

According to Hegel, within the unconditioned universal, at least provisionally, there is still a distinction to be drawn between the two moments of the universal medium of diverse properties, on the one hand, and the One reflected into itself, on the other, or in

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. Hegel on the viewpoint of Understanding: "Consciousness still shrinks away from what has emerged, and takes it as the essence in the *objective* sense" (*PhG* 80). In other words, consciousness refuses to take full responsibility for having constituted the object in and through its own development. Instead, it still treats it as something "found" "out there" in the "world".

<sup>160</sup> Hegel, in his often uncanny penchant for prescience, seems to have been aware of the need to move beyond a scientific viewpoint limited by the conception of "force", though he of course did not produce the Einsteinian insight through which it was overcome. Thus, speaking of the laws of planetary motion in the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel states, "we must not speak of forces. If we want to speak of force then there is just *one* force, and its moments do not, as two forces, pull in different directions. The motion of celestial bodies is not any such pulling this way and that but is free motion; they go their own way, as the ancients said, like blessed gods" (65).

other words, between being-for-another and being-for-itself. Yet, he immediately clarifies that, in examining Understanding,

[w]e have to see how these moments exhibit themselves in the unconditioned universality which is their essence. It is clear at the outset that, since they exist only in this universality, they are no longer separated from one another at all but are in themselves essentially self-superseding aspects, and what is posited is only their transition into one another. (*PhG* 81)

The unconditioned universal or absolute relational context is the object for the mind in Understanding. Thus, being-for-another and being-for-self have been reduced to moments in this universal process. Still, it remains to show how these two moments operate within this higher context which is their essence.

According to Hegel, the diverse properties or “matters”, provisionally taken as independent, in fact “pass over into their unity,” while their unity, again, provisionally taken as independent, “directly unfolds its diversity, and this once again reduces itself to unity” (*PhG* 81). This very dialectical movement, however, according to Hegel, just is Force. Thus, there are not two problematically independent realities – Thing and properties – but only one universal relational context or process, namely, the totality of Force.<sup>161</sup> Yet, this process has two moments: 1) its dispersal into a plurality of properties or “matters”, which Hegel calls the “expression of Force”, and 2) its withdrawal back into unity from its expression, which Hegel calls “Force proper”. These two moments

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Hegel: “In point of fact, however, Force is the unconditioned universal which is equally in its own self what it is *for an other*” (*PhG* 82).

constitute one process inasmuch as Force proper must express itself, yet, in expressing itself, it remains entirely within itself.<sup>162</sup>

Hegel quickly clarifies, however, that the truth of the intrinsic unity of Force is, at this stage, only for us, the phenomenologists. By contrast, while it has broken into the realm of the unconditioned universal, Understanding still shares with Perception the proclivity for holding the two moments apart from one another as independent. As Hegel states, “the Understanding, to which the Concept of Force belongs, is strictly speaking the *Concept* which sustains the different moments *qua* different.” (*PhG* 82) As a result, Understanding initially posits Force proper as the “inner being of Things”. (*PhG* 83)

Force thus initially appears as a unitary substance reflected into itself, which entails that the unfolding of the diverse properties must be something other than Force. In order for Force to be the very the subsistence of Things with their properties which consciousness perceives, however, it must express itself. Thus, it would seem that Force is solicited into expressing itself by what is other than it, namely, the unfolded or universal medium of matters or properties. Yet, this soliciting is itself Force, and so it would appear that Force proper resides in its expression. The Force that is expressed, however, is itself solicited to reflect back into itself by the principle of unity which is now other than Force, which in turn reveals itself in fact to be Force.

Upon further thinking-through, however, Hegel shows that in order to solicit Force proper to express itself, the soliciting Force must be solicited to do so, namely, by Force proper. Thus, Force was never solicited by something alien to express itself; Force

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<sup>162</sup> Similarly, for Hegel, the multiplicity of philosophies would constitute the various expressions of, as it were, the Force of Forces, namely, the mind.



rather ultimately solicits itself. Moreover, it is also Force proper which solicits itself to solicit it out of expression and back into the latent unity of Force proper. “Consequently”, Hegel states, “this distinction, too, which obtained between the two Forces, one of which was supposed to be soliciting, the other solicited, Force is transformed into the same reciprocal interchange of determinatenesses”<sup>163</sup> (*PhG* 84). We have thus another dialectical frenzy the immediate upshot of which it will be important to clarify.

### 3.1.1 *Clarifying the Previous Section*

Although its proper object is the unconditioned universal context of Force, *for* Understanding there was nevertheless an obvious distinction to be drawn between latent Force, or Force proper, on the one hand, and the expression of Force, on the other. It thus drew a distinction for itself between the condition and the conditioned. Force proper was posited as the condition for the expression of Force in the unfolding of various properties perceived by consciousness. Thus, *qua* conditioned, the expression of Force had to be posited as other than Force, since Force is the universal unconditioned. Yet, as the subsistent condition of its own expression, Force proper nevertheless must be solicited to express itself by its other. To that very extent, however, Force proper is revealed to be itself conditioned. The ultimate lesson for consciousness up to this point, then, is that Force is unconditioned precisely and only to the extent that it is a self-conditioning whole with various moments.

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Fichte: “If a substance is to be *determined* [...] or if something *determinate* is to be considered a *substance*, then certainly the interplay must proceed *from one of the components*, which is *to that extent* fixed, insofar as the interplay is to be determined. But it is not fixed *absolutely*; for I can equally set out from the opposing term; and then the very component that was previously established, fixed, essential – becomes contingent” (*WL* 185).

### 3.2 *Form and Content Sublated in Force*

Hegel pauses, here, to draw a distinction between the form and content of the Concept of Force currently under investigation. According to Hegel, what has thus far been examined, namely, the distinction between Force proper versus the expression of Force, concerns more precisely the *content* of Force. In contrast, the distinction between the Force which solicits versus Force as solicited concerns the *form* of the relation. Hegel's point is to make clear that the preceding investigation has revealed that "the differences, qua differences of content and form, vanished in themselves" (*PhG* 85). In other words,

On the side of form, the essence of the *active, soliciting* or *independent side*, was the same as that which, on the side of content, presented itself as Force driven back into itself; the side which was passive, which was *solicited* or for an *other*, was, from the side of form, the same as that which, from the side of content, presented itself as the universal medium of the many 'matters'. (*PhG* 85)

On the side of form, that which solicits another turned out to be the same as the Force which, on the side of content, withdraws back into itself. By the same token, however, that which was solicited into activity, on the side of form, turned out to be the same as the expression of Force itself, in terms of content.

According to Hegel, then, Force *exists* only as *actual*,<sup>164</sup> and actual Force is not a substance or a Thing but a pure relationality. The two moments of Force, Force proper and the expression of Force,

are not divided into two independent extremes offering each other only an opposite extreme: their essence rather consist simply and solely in this, that each *is* solely through the other, and what each thus is it immediately no longer is, since it *is* the other. They have thus, in fact, no substances of their own which might support and maintain them. (*PhG* 86)

For Hegel, substances or Things are not absolute. They are but moments in a pattern of relations.<sup>165</sup> As Hegel states, “the moments of [Force’s] actuality, their substances and their movement, collapse unresistingly into an undifferentiated unity, a unity which is not Force driven back into itself (for this is itself only such a moment), but is its *Concept qua Concept*” (*PhG* 86). Thus, in recognizing that the reality of Things is dependent upon and governed by a pattern of pure relationality, the mind has thereby broken into the realm of pure conceptuality, as well. The result, for the mind, is that “the realization of Force is at the same time the loss of reality” (*PhG* 86).

Understanding had initially taken Force to be a *form* in which substances related to one another. Now, it realizes that Force is the very *content* of its object, as well. Its object, in other words, is pure relationality grasped under the auspices of pure

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<sup>164</sup> Or, as self-actualizing. Cf. the discussion in the previous chapter vis-à-vis Hegel’s appropriation of the Aristotelian notion of “act” or *energeia*.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Fichte: “The terms of the relationship, taken individually, are *accidents*, while their totality is *substance*” (*WL* 184).

conceptuality, which is to say, apart from any even quasi-sensuous determinations which hitherto had provided consciousness with its basic sense of “reality”.<sup>166</sup>

### *3.3 Inner and Outer, or Reality and Appearance, Sublated in Force*

At this point, Hegel calls attention to a distinction which consciousness draws between the universal which appears to the mind as the “play of forces”, on the one hand, and the inner being of this play as it is understood in its pure conceptuality, or under the “Concept of Force qua *Concept*”, on the other (*PhG* 86). The play of forces is what appears to the mind as the ongoing manifold of changes among the Things in its sensuous perceptual field, whereas the pure Concept of Force “exists only as an *object for the Understanding*”<sup>167</sup> (*PhG* 86). Understanding thus understands itself to be that which “looks through this mediating play of Forces into the true background of Things” (*PhG* 86).

Hegel frames his discussion in terms of a sort of syllogism in which the sensuous appearance of the play of Forces functions as a middle term uniting the extremes of the Understanding, on the one hand, and the inner world of Force in its pure conceptuality, on the other. The middle term, as Hegel states “is therefore called *appearance*; for we call *being* that is directly and in its own self a *non-being*, a surface show” (*PhG* 87).

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. Fichte: “Form and content are not two separate elements. Form in its entirety is the content” (*IWF* 28); “mere relation without anything to relate,” i.e. the pure form of relationality (*WL* 187).

<sup>167</sup> With the emergence of Understanding we thus have a further articulation of the explanation of, for example, the Platonic doctrine of *noesis* or the Kantian transcendental ego mentioned previously.

In one sense, then, for the mind, the sensuous appearance of the play of Forces is merely a kind of epiphenomenal reality through which it peers in order to understand the *real* phenomenon of Force itself. Yet, Hegel quickly qualifies this point by stating,

It is not merely a surface show; it is appearance, a *totality* of show. This *totality*, as totality or as universal, is what constitutes the inner [of Things], the play of Forces as a reflection of the inner into itself. In it, the Things of perception are expressly present for consciousness as they are in themselves, viz. as moments which immediately and without rest or stay turn into their opposite, the One immediately into the universal, the essential immediately into the unessential and vice versa. This play of Forces is consequently the developed negative; but its truth is the positive, viz. the *universal* object that, *in itself*, possesses being. The being of this object for consciousness is mediated by the movement of *appearance*, in which the *being of perception* and the sensuously objective has a merely negative significance. (*PhG* 87)

The ongoing play of Forces experienced in the mind's perceptual field, in which the Things of Perception have indeed been reduced to perpetually negated or vanishing moments, nevertheless presents merely a negative side to the more positive reality of the realm of pure conceptuality which is the inner truth of this show and which is the object strictly of the Understanding. This inner realm of pure conceptuality is thus equally the play of Forces but in its totality or strict universality – the total pattern of intelligible relations, in other words.

According to Hegel, the positing by consciousness of a distinction between the play of Forces and its inner truth actually manifests – albeit, only for us, the

phenomenologists – a movement of the mind or consciousness itself. As he states, in drawing this distinction

Consciousness, therefore, reflects itself out of this movement back into itself as the True, but, *qua* consciousness, converts this truth again into an objective *inner*, and distinguishes this reflection of Things from its own reflection into itself: just as the movement of mediation is likewise still objective for it. This inner is, therefore, for consciousness an extreme over against it; but it is for consciousness the True, since in the inner, as the in-itself, it possess at the same time the certainty of itself, or the moment of its *being-for-self*. But it is not yet conscious of this ground or basis. (*PhG* 87)

In positing an inner Truth “behind” the play of Forces, the mind is in fact objectifying itself since it is the true being-for-itself. Yet, the mind does not recognize that it has done this and so treats the inner Truth as an object-in-itself that stands radically over against it. In other words, what should, or at least could, constitute for the mind a moment of profound self-recognition instead produces a state of utter self-alienation. For the mind now treats what is in fact an objectification of itself as a “pure beyond”, an object-in-itself existing intrinsically outside the scope of consciousness.

### *3.3.1 The Appearance/Reality Distinction as a Further Explanation of Kantian*

#### *Philosophy*

Important to note is that the in-itself “beyond” is posited as the supersensible world in contrast to the sensuous world experienced in perception. For, in noting this point we are able to recognize how Hegel is providing a more profound explanatory

account of the Kantian distinction between Things qua appearing, or phenomena, versus the Thing-in-themselves, or the noumenal realm. The noumenal realm, for Kant, is indeed the realm of the Thing-in-themselves beyond the scope of conscious experience, whereas the phenomena are the Things inasmuch as they can be perceived within what Kant declares to be the limits of human conscious experience. Indeed, noumenon literally means “object of Nous [or Understanding]”. It is the would-be object of pure Understanding. Yet, Hegel’s point is that Kant does not recognize that this object is in fact simply a self-objectification of Understanding. The real Thing-in-itself is the mind.

The mind, including the mind of Kant, at this stage, however, does not recognize itself in the object it has posited. Ironically, then, although it is in fact nothing other than a self-objectification of consciousness, the Thing-in-itself, insofar as it is posited as a “pure beyond” of the mind, can only be interpreted by the mind as “void of all spiritual relationships and distinctions of consciousness *qua* consciousness” (*PhG* 88). The Thing-in-itself, the putatively *real* thing, is thus ironically reduced to a mere void lacking all the rich determinations of conscious experience.

### 3.4 *Determining the ‘Inner’ or ‘Beyond’: The Emergence of Law*

According to Hegel, although Understanding takes the object in its truth to lie in a supersensible “beyond” devoid of all determinations, it nevertheless sets about positing determinations for this realm. The first determination that Understanding posits for the supersensible is that of the notion of “Law”. Law is the expression of the universal difference or relational totality that Force proved itself to be upon being thought-through. According to Hegel,

This [universal] difference is expressed in the law, which is the *stable* image of unstable appearance. Consequently, the *supersensible* world is an inert *realm of laws* which, though beyond the perceived world – for this exhibits law only through incessant change – is equally *present* in it and is its direct tranquil image. (*PhG* 90-91)

Rather than being beyond consciousness, the supersensible is grasped by the Understanding as the realm of laws which is itself simply the truth of sensuous perception. The realm of laws is what governs the pattern and order of incessant transitions constitutive of the realm of perceptual appearance. It is not separate from the perceptual field, but is rather the latter's own immanent intelligibility. Nor is it beyond the scope of consciousness, rather it is given the very experience of Understanding.

According to Hegel, there is a limitation at this point to the mind's positing of a realm of laws governing appearance. The limitation is actually twofold: 1) scientific laws are abstract and so prescind from the particular determinations given in perceptual experience,<sup>168</sup> 2) the realm of laws itself *ipso facto* constitutes a plurality, which is a problem insofar as that plurality violates the simple, tranquil unity which was supposed to characterize the realm of laws inasmuch as they transcended the flux of appearance. It is this twofold limitation within the very concept of law that constitutes the fulcrum point upon which consciousness is lifted out of Understanding to a higher viewpoint. There are several details in Hegel's analysis of Force and Understanding that lead up to the

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<sup>168</sup> Cf. Hegel: "This realm of laws is indeed the truth for the Understanding, and that truth has its *content* in the law. At the same time, however, this realm is only the *initial* truth for the Understanding and does not fill out the world of appearance. In this the law is present, but is not the entire presence of appearance; with every change of circumstance the law has a different actuality" (*PhG* 91).



emergence of this higher viewpoint, not all of which, however, are equally important. Nevertheless, the most important points admit of being summarized in short order.

### 3.4.1 *The Emergence of Law as Mediating the Movement to Self-consciousness*

In response to the second problem vis-à-vis the realm of laws mentioned above, Hegel states that, in contrast to the many specific laws of the contemporary physics of his time, consciousness posits a “pure Concept of law”<sup>169</sup> (*PhG* 92). This pure Concept of law is the Newtonian law of universal attraction. This law in effect encompasses, and thereby reduces to unity, the plurality of more particular laws which the physics of Hegel’s time had managed to formulate. The problem with this solution is that, within the formulation of universal attraction, plurality and difference still remain inasmuch as the terms constituting the definition of universal attraction are distinguished and related in the definition itself.<sup>170</sup> Thus, the pure Concept of law, as simple, undifferentiated unity, “is turned against *law* itself” (*PhG* 92). As a result, a distinction appears to be drawn between the phenomenon, Force, which is a simple unity, on the one hand, and its expression in law, which necessarily posits differences, on the other.

Hegel’s major concern in this context is that the existence of Force as an actually existing phenomenon cannot be derived with necessity from the Concept of law expressed in its definition. “Law and Force, or [...] Notion and being” are indifferent, Hegel states (*PhG* 93). The indifference affects both the relation between law and its existence as Force as well as the relation between the different parts of the law itself:

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<sup>169</sup> Here, Hegel would seem to be referring to Newton’s generalization of Kepler’s laws.

<sup>170</sup> Cf.  $F = MA$  in which Force is distinguished from, yet identified with, Mass times Acceleration.

“either the universal, Force, is indifferent to the division which is law, or the differences, the parts, of the law are indifferent to one another.” (*PhG* 94) Yet, it turns out that in the actual explanation of the phenomena of perception,

*Force is constituted exactly the same as law*; there is said to be no difference whatever between them. The differences are the pure, universal expression of law, and pure Force; but both have the *same* content, the *same* constitution. Thus the difference *qua* difference of content, of the thing, is also again withdrawn. (*PhG* 95)

The immanent intelligibility of the law and the immanent intelligibility of the phenomenon to be explained by the law are the same. Thus, in understanding the law, we thereby simply understand the phenomenon which it explains, nothing more.

The difference that was no difference which was experienced in the play of soliciting versus solicited Forces is now repeated in the Understanding itself in the difference that is no difference between law and Force as well as between the parts of law which consciousness moves back and forth between. The result is that consciousness learns a more basic law, namely the law of appearance itself, according to which “differences arise which are no differences, or that what is selfsame repels itself from itself; and similarly, that the difference are only such as are in reality no differences and which cancel themselves; in other words, what is *not selfsame* is *self-attractive*” (*PhG* 96). Both the realm of appearance and the realm of inner Truth or law thus posit distinctions within themselves only to supersede these differences and return to a unity-in-difference.

The first supersensible inner realm, the realm of inert law, which was “the tranquil kingdom of laws, the immediate copy of the perceived world,” is now changed into its opposite, one in which the simple, selfsame and tranquil realm of law repels itself from itself thus becoming a realm of pure change. (*PhG* 96) Hegel calls this second supersensible world which is opposite the realm of inert, tranquil law, the “inverted world”:

The first supersensible world was only the immediate raising of the perceived world into the universal element; it had its necessary counterpart in this perceived world which still retained for itself the principle of change and alteration. The first kingdom of laws lacked that principle, but obtains it as an inverted world. (*PhG* 96-97)

In thinking-through the inversion of the supersensible world into its opposite, Hegel maintains “We have to think *pure change*, or *think antithesis within the antithesis itself*, or *contradiction*” (*PhG* 90). The supersensible realm of laws is the antithesis of the realm of appearance; yet, within that antithesis is the difference constitutive of law as such, a difference which is produced as a matter of pure change. The inverted world is thus the opposite of the opposite of the realm of appearance and so “overarches” the latter and “has it within in” (*PhG* 99). Only thus is the difference between the inner world and its expression in appearance a “difference as *inner* difference, or difference *in its own self*, or difference as *infinity*” (*PhG* 99).

This “simple infinity, or the absolute Concept,” according to Hegel, “may be called the simple essence of life,” and it is with the emergence of this conception of Life that Hegel proposes to overcome the twofold limitation of the realm of laws as previously

discussed (*PhG* 100). For laws are 1) abstract and so fail to determinate the actual in its particular and 2) lack simple unity and so fall asunder into mutually indifferent moments. Life, by contrast, in its infinity *eo ipso* determines the totality of its moments or differences; yet, it simultaneously supersedes these differences and preserves itself in a higher unity. Accordingly, regarding the simple essence of Life, Hegel states that it is “the soul of the world, the universal blood, whose omnipresence is neither disturbed nor interrupted by any difference, but rather is itself every difference, as also their supersession; it pulsates within itself but does not move, inwardly vibrates, yet is at rest” (*PhG* 100).

Infinity as the self-supersession or sublation of all differences, moreover, just is the mind or consciousness, according to Hegel, and so in having infinity or Life as its object, consciousness thereby becomes self-consciousness. Again, for Hegel, it is through its attempt to explain Force that the Understanding manages to objectify for itself the very nature of consciousness. As Hegel states,

The Understanding’s ‘explanation’ is primarily only the description of what self-consciousness is. It supersedes the differences present in the law, differences which have already become pure differences but are still indifferent, and posits them in a single unity, in Force. But this unifying of them is equally and immediately a sundering, for it supersedes the differences and posits the oneness of Force, only by creating a new difference, that of Law and Force, which, however, at the same time is no difference; and, moreover, from the fact that this difference is no difference, it goes on to supersede this difference again, since it lets Force be similarly constituted to Law (*PhG*101).

Understanding posits Force as a unitary phenomenon which is merely explained by the law which contains indifferent differences. Yet, this positing of Force as unitary itself produces a difference between Law and Force, or Concept and Being. At the same time, however, Understanding posits the essential unity of content of Law and Force and so maintains that it is a difference that is no difference. This very movement, however, of positing differences only to sublimate them is of the very nature of the mind itself. Thus, in the process of explaining Force, consciousness becomes conscious of itself, or self-consciousness.

Hegel maintains that while the self-sublating infinity of Life which is the new object of the mind, has in fact been produced by the mind, it is nevertheless *not* an object *for* consciousness, but only for us, the phenomenologists:

To the Understanding, the *movement*, as it is found in experience, is here a [mere] happening, and the selfsame and the unlike are *predicates*, whose essence is an inert substrate. What is, for the Understanding, an object in sensuous covering, is for us in its essential form as a pure Concept. (*PhG* 102)

For Understanding, there is still an object – for example, a substance or Thing with a sensuous covering “out there” – which constitutes the basic content of reality and to which are attached the various predicates of selfsame and unlike. It does not understand that the very *movement* of Life, the *process* of its self-sublating infinity, is its proper object and, moreover, that it itself is responsible for it.

The fact that the mind has as its object the infinity of Life, yet simultaneously does not recognize itself therein, will form the basis for the ensuing dialectic of self-consciousness.

### 3.5 *Summary of Force and Understanding*

The viewpoint of Force and Understanding provides a provisional sublation of Perception, in particular the tension between particularity and universality operative therein. The key insight for Understanding is that Things or substances are not primary; rather, they are moments in a universal relational context.

The further question that Understanding thinks-through is the nature of relationality itself. Understanding goes through several stages in its attempt to conceive of relation as Force. It initially conceives of Force according to the residual restrictions of the viewpoint of Perception and distinguishes between Force as a latent, universal power and the particular expressions of Force. Upon thinking-through this distinction, however, Understanding experiences a dialectical frenzy in which latent Force is revealed to be indistinguishable from its expression. This was only to be expected inasmuch as Force is not a 'Thing' with properties, but a concrete and universal relational pattern.

In order to preserve its original conviction regarding the distinction between the universal and particular aspects of Force, Understanding shifts its ground and postulates a distinction between the *appearance* of Force and its *reality* behind or beyond the realm of appearance. The realm of appearance is the realm of perceptual or sensuous flux, while the 'beyond' consists of the tranquil unity which is the essence or pure form of appearance.

In terms of explaining the multiplicity of philosophies, Hegel thus shows how the distinction between appearance and reality, as manifested in a plurality of instances such as Kant's phenomena/noumenon distinction, is not simply a haphazard event. Rather, the positing it is to be *explained* as the result of a form of the mind attempting to account for what is given in its experience, albeit from a restricted viewpoint. For, the mind experiences the difference between that which is given in sensuous perception, on the one hand, and that which is grasped by the Understanding, on the other. Yet, it struggles to grasp the nature of the *relation* between these two aspects of its experiences, and at this stage of its development it contrives to explain the nature of the relation in terms of the appearance/reality distinction.

Understanding eventually postulates the realm of Force *qua* 'beyond' as the realm of the pure form of law as opposed to the appearance of Force. Yet, this postulation proves to be doubly problematic. For, the realm of Law postulated is supposed to represent the tranquil unity of Force as the opposed to flux of its sensuous appearance. Yet, the law contains difference within itself. Thus, in the Newtonian formulation  $F = MA$ , a distinction is drawn between Force, on the one hand, and Mass times Acceleration, on the other. This distinction undermines the tranquil unity of the pure form of law. Still, the difference is immediately annulled inasmuch as Force is affirmed to be identical to Mass times Acceleration. Thus, the difference is revealed to be no difference.

The larger point is that this transition from the tranquil unity of the pure form of law, to the positing of a difference which negates that unity, to the subsequent negation of this negation through the affirmation of an identity in a higher unity – this tripartite transition itself manifests *the pure form of change or development*. Yet, the realm of law

was postulated precisely as the opposite or negation of the realm of changing appearances. This point pushes the analysis to the second problematic aspect of positing a realm of law 'beyond' that of the appearance of Force.

For, the realm of appearance is postulated as the realm in which Force is enacted in the play of changing appearances. Thus, Understanding would presume to posit a distinction between Force and law, or Reality and Concept. Yet, the immanent intelligibility of Force is identical to that of its law. Thus, consciousness again posits a difference which in fact is no difference. Indeed, the realm of law already revealed itself to be the realm of pure change. Thus, the distinction between law and Force proves to be doubly a difference which is no difference. For, the tranquil realm of law is the realm of pure change, just as the realm of changing appearances manifests the immanent and abiding intelligibility of law, as such.

According to Hegel, the process by which differences are posited only to be negated and sublated into a higher unity constitutes the very essence of Life *qua* infinity. Infinity, for Hegel, as will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four, does not prescind or abstract from differences or limitations, but posits them in order to preserve itself within them. Life manifests this form of infinity in a form that, as we will see, is only surpassed by the mind itself. At any rate, insofar as the object of consciousness consists in such self-sublating infinity, then the object of consciousness has become Life. It is with the emergence of Life as the object of consciousness that the mind transitions from mere consciousness to self-consciousness. For, the work of self-sublation manifested in the object is actually performed by the mind itself. Yet, at this stage, the mind does not yet recognize this fact. *In-itself* the object of the mind is now



consciousness itself. Still, it will only be in and through the dialectical development of Self-consciousness that this fact will become *for* consciousness.

### Chapter III

#### **Self-consciousness and Hegel's Explanation of Transcendental Philosophy**

The "Self-consciousness" chapter constitutes a pivotal turning point in the development of the *Phenomenology* for several reasons. The present chapter is charged with the task of explicating the most salient among these reasons in the service of the larger goal of demonstrating how Hegel explains the emergence of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. This chapter will accordingly proceed as follows.

First, there will be a brief review of key points that precipitated the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*.

Second, there will be an extended analysis of key aspects of J.G. Fichte's system as it is primarily found in the *Wissenschaftslehre (WL)*, although other texts from Fichte's corpus will be called upon to provide support or clarity, as needed. The reason for this analysis of Fichte is that a central argument of the present chapter will be that Fichte's system constitutes an indispensable point of reference for any proper comprehension of Hegel's effort in the "Self-consciousness" chapter, especially the Lord/Bondsman dialectic.

Third, there will be an examination of Hegel's initial response to Fichte's system in the *Differenzschrift (DZ)*. The *DZ* provides crucial insights into Hegel's view of Fichte's system, insights which can in turn be used to help analyze the account put forth in the "Self-consciousness" chapter of the *Phenomenology*.

Fourth, the “Self-consciousness” chapter will be examined in close detail and in light of the preceding discussion of Fichte’s system and the *DZ*. In this part of the chapter, the controversial argument will be put forth that the Lord/Bondsman dialectic constitutes an allegory for the internal experience of an *individual* consciousness. Such an interpretation is, to say the least, unorthodox. For, the overwhelming consensus among commentators has been to read the Lord/Bondsman dialectic as the account of a primordial social encounter between two distinct individuals in which they attempt to extract mutual recognition from one another. A close reading of the text, especially in light of a sustained analysis of Fichte’s system and Hegel’s initial critique thereof, however, will show that the orthodox reading is unsustainable.

John McDowell has recently defended this heterodox interpretation of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic, as well. He identifies Kant as providing the crucial backdrop for properly understanding the Lord/Bondsman dialectic. While Kant’s distinction between the transcendental ego versus the empirical ego does provide the remote context for Hegel’s effort in the Lord/Bondsman dialectic, Fichte’s appropriation and elaboration of that distinction provides the proximate context and, as such, greatly overshadows Kant’s influence. McDowell, unfortunately, almost entirely neglects the role of Fichte. Still, the helpful insights he provides will be enlisted in support of the larger argument I will be presenting.

With respect to the overall argument of this dissertation, the reason why it is important to establish that the Lord/Bondsman dialectic, at least as it unfolds in the “Self-consciousness” chapter, is a dialectic which occurs within an individual consciousness is that, as such, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic provides a rather unique and profound means

for explaining the emergence of a vast range of different philosophies. In fact, so it will be argued, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic *qua* internal to consciousness turns out to be applicable to the entire panoply of differing philosophies. For, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic provides the means for differentiating philosophies according as they more or less succeed in reconciling the relation of lordship and bondage, or domination and servitude, internal to any given individual consciousness.

Fifth, Hegel's continued analysis of the development of self-consciousness in the sections of Stoicism, Skepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness will be explicated, albeit rather summarily. The discussions of Stoicism and Skepticism are of interest in this context largely because the forms of consciousness which give rise to these philosophies are unambiguously correlated with the philosophies themselves. Thus, little to no interpretive subtlety is needed to show just how Hegel is explaining the emergence of these differing philosophies. The discussion of Unhappy Consciousness calls for a summary treatment for a different set of reasons. First, Unhappy Consciousness constitutes a form of consciousness that undergirds not only some set of particular philosophies but in fact the philosophico-theological outlook characteristic of an entire culture which extended over the course of roughly a thousand years, namely, medieval Christianity. Second, the analysis of Unhappy Consciousness is incredibly rich, suggestive and provocative in its detail and, as such, calls for an extended treatment in order to make sense of its precise import, an effort which present restrictions of space do not permit.

Lastly, the transition from self-conscious into Reason will be briefly discussed in order to set up the following chapter.

1. *Review of the Transition from Consciousness to Self-consciousness*

As mentioned, the “Self-consciousness” chapter of the *Phenomenology* constitutes a pivotal point of transition in Hegel’s account of the ongoing development of the mind. To recall, according to the viewpoint of consciousness out of which the mind has just emerged, the object or the true “is something other than [consciousness]” (*PhG* 104). In other words, mere consciousness took the object to be utterly different than consciousness. Consciousness thereby also took the object to exist independently of or “outside” consciousness. The object existed in and through itself: “the object *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is*” (*PhG* 58). The object was self-sufficient and self-explanatory. In contrast to the self-sufficient, self-explanatory object, consciousness’s awareness of the object was something merely accidental and inessential. While the object was independent and self-sufficient, consciousness itself was dependent upon the prior existence of the object in order that it should be conscious and, therefore, exist at all.

During the course of development from Sense-certainty, through Perception, to Force and Understanding, consciousness is disabused of its conviction regarding the primacy, independence and self-sufficiency of the object. Each time consciousness believed that it had seized upon an object that would conform to its ideal of independence and self-sufficiency it would soon learn that the object was radically dependent upon a universal relational context. Consciousness ultimately reaches a point at which the object of which it is conscious is the self-differentiating, self-relating universal relational context which just is consciousness or the mind itself.

In having itself for its own object consciousness thus transitions into self-consciousness. It is this development which marks out the “Self-consciousness” chapter as so pivotal to the progression of the *Phenomenology*. For, as Hegel states, “With self-consciousness, then, we have therefore entered the native realm of truth” (*PhG* 104). Indeed, Hegel maintains a unique species of correspondence theory of truth according to which truth is the correspondence between thought and being, concept and reality. The uniqueness of Hegel’s correspondence theory of truth lies in the fact that, instead of conceiving truth as a matter of thought or the mind becoming adequate to or otherwise conforming an “independent” object, Hegel envisaged truth as a matter of the object or existence progressively becoming more adequate to its concept. The Concept or the mind is the criterion which existence must satisfy in order for truth to emerge. Thus, it was only upon the emergence of an object that corresponded to consciousness that we entered the native realm of truth.<sup>171</sup>

Importantly, however, while at the culmination of the “Consciousness” chapter consciousness indeed has itself as its own object and has thereby attained to self-consciousness, consciousness is nevertheless not conscious *of this fact*. At this point consciousness is conscious of itself in its object only on the level of immediacy or in-itself.<sup>172</sup> This immediate consciousness of itself will have to be mediated through the

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<sup>171</sup> For, once it is admitted 1) that it is the mind which supplies the criterion for the object and 2) that knowledge is a matter of the adequacy of the object to the mind, then it follows that the only object that could possibly satisfy the criterion of truth and become adequate to the mind would be the mind itself. Truth, then, for Hegel, is fundamentally a matter of self-consciousness, which is to say, self-knowledge. The uniqueness of Hegel’s position on truth, of course, should not be overstated as it certainly had precedents. Among the most immediate precursors to Hegel’s view would have been that of Fichte, as reflected in statement like the following from his *Foundation of Natural Rights (FNR)*: “To say that a person is free means: the person, merely by constructing a concept of an end immediately becomes the cause of an object corresponding perfectly to that concept.” (*FNR* 56)

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Hegel in the “Self-consciousness” section of the *Philosophy of Mind (PM)* on self-consciousness as it first appears on the scene or in its immediacy: “I have in one and the same consciousness *I* and *world*, in

continuing experience of the mind as this is recounted in the ensuing chapter on self-consciousness. Consciousness is to become conscious of itself, or self-conscious, not merely in-itself but for-itself. In so doing, the mind will learn to inhabit more properly its native realm of truth.

Due to its pivotal role in the development of the *Phenomenology*, the “Self-consciousness” chapter has generated immense interest and voluminous commentary. In order to pierce to the core set of issues and concerns motivating and guiding Hegel’s analysis in the “Self-consciousness” chapter it will be necessary first to widen the scope of the present inquiry. As noted, a chief point of reference for Hegel in his analysis of self-consciousness is the thought of Fichte. Thus, it will be necessary to proceed to a thorough analysis of the salient aspects of Fichte’s system.

## 2. *Fichte’s System*

The goal of the Fichtean system is to provide an account of the explanatory ground of experience, and from there to provide a scientific deduction of the total system of experience.<sup>173</sup> Thus, Fichte’s system is transcendental. For, Fichte’s system is a *science* of knowledge and, as such, it is concerned to provide a scientific account of what *grounds* empirical knowledge or experience. Yet, according to Fichte, the explanatory

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the world I find myself again and, conversely, in my consciousness I have what *is*, what has *objectivity*. This unity of the I and the object constituting the principle of the mind is, however, at first present in an *abstract* way in *immediate* self-consciousness, and is known only by *us*, the onlookers, not yet by self-consciousness itself” (*PM* 152).

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Fichte: “Philosophy has to display the basis or foundation of all experience” (*IW* 9); “[T]he question the *Wissenschaftslehre* has to answer is the following: What is the origin of the system of representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity? Or, how do we come to ascribe objective validity to something purely subjective? Or – since objective validity is designated by the term ‘being’ – how do we come to assume the existence of any being?” (*IW*39).

ground of something is necessarily distinct from that which it grounds. Thus, insofar as one seeks to provide an account of the explanatory ground of empirical experience itself, one must make recourse to that which transcends empirical experience.<sup>174</sup> Accordingly, Fichte's system constitutes an instance of transcendental philosophy.<sup>175</sup>

### 2.1 *The Argument of the Wissenschaftslehre: The Self-Positing I*

The foundation of Fichte's system is the absolute self-positing of the self. In order to express the peculiar character of this act Fichte coins a neologism: *Tathandlung*. Literally, the term might be translated into English as "deed-act". As such, the term is meant to emphasize the identity of subject and object in this act of self-positing. In describing the self's self-positing *Tathandlung*, Fichte states

The self's own positing of itself is thus its own pure activity. The *self posits itself*, and by virtue this mere self-assertion it *exists*; and conversely, the self *exists* and *posits* its own existence by virtue of merely existing. It is at once the agent and product of action; the active and what the activity brings about; action and deed are one and the same. (*WL* 97)

Insofar as the self posits itself, the activity (i.e. the "subject") and the product of that activity (i.e. the "object") are the same. Agent and product of the act are one and the

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. Fichte: "It follows from the mere thought of a basis or reason that it must lie outside of what it grounds or explains. The basis of an explanation and what is explained thereby thus become posited – as such – in opposition to one another, and are related to one another in such a way that the former explains the latter. Philosophy has to display the basis of foundation of all experience. Consequently, philosophy's object must necessarily lie *outside of all experience*" (*IW* 9).

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Hegel on Fichte: "This being posited by the Ego [i.e. *Ich* or I] is the deduction of nature, and it is the transcendental viewpoint" (*DZ*, 136).



same. The self is a subject-object. The proposition which expresses this identity is ‘I am I’ or ‘I = I’, in which subject and predicate, or “object”, are identified.

Importantly, the identity of subject and object posited in and through the self’s self-positing is an immediate one. As Fichte states, “*the self* is a necessary identity of subject and object: a subject-object; and is so absolutely, without further mediation” (WL 99). The identity of the self with itself in its self-positing is absolute and immediate.

Important to note, as well, is that along with being absolutely self-identical, the self-positing self is absolutely spontaneous and self-sufficient in its activity. Its activity is unconditioned and strictly without relation to, or dependence upon, anything external to itself.<sup>176</sup> As Fichte states,

*To posit oneself* and *to be* are, as applied to the self, perfectly identical. Thus the proposition, ‘I am, because I have posited myself’ can also be stated as: ‘*I am absolutely, because I am.*’<sup>177</sup> (WL 99)

The Fichtean self *is because it is*. It is self-sufficient. One can note the inversion of the principle articulated at the beginning of the “Self-certainty” section in which the object was because it was. For Fichte, the self or consciousness is because it is. Thus, as will become clearer throughout the ensuing analysis, in Hegelian terms, the Fichtean self is the “self-conscious” self. At any rate, the beginning or foundation of Fichte’s system is the absolute, self-sufficient self-positing self or I.

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. Fichte’s reference to “the man who becomes conscious of his self-sufficiency and independence of everything that is outside of himself” (WL Heath and Lachs, 15).

<sup>177</sup> Jacobi, in his “Open Letter to Fichte,” was perhaps the first to note the unsettling suggestion of the “self-divination” of human being in Fichte’s formulation inasmuch as it seems to mirror or perhaps eclipse the theophany on Mt. Sinai in which God says to Moses: “I am who I am” (*Philosophy of German Idealism* 138-9).

### 2.1.1 *The Counter-positing of the Not-I*

It must be recalled that the goal of Fichte's science of knowledge is to provide an explanatory account of the ground of experience and empirical knowledge. As it stands, however, the absolutely self-positing self, merely unto itself, cannot provide such an explanation. For, while the absolute self is in principle perfectly self-identical, empirical experience, by contrast, is marked distinction, opposition and non-identity. In empirical experience the self finds itself opposed by an object, or range of objects, distinct from itself. For Fichte, this experience of distinction and opposition is simply a "fact of empirical consciousness," which, as such, demands an explanation<sup>178</sup> (WL 102).

In order to explain the fact of distinction and opposition given in empirical experience, Fichte argues that, along with positing itself, the absolute self also posits, or rather counter-posites, a not-self or not-I. Several important aspects of Fichte's account of the process whereby the absolute self posits the not-self bear immediate examination.

First of all, empirical consciousness is not directly conscious of this act of counter-positing on the part of the absolute self. This point is consistent with Fichte's methodological principle according to which that which explains must necessarily lie outside of that which is explained. As Fichte states,

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<sup>178</sup> Recall Schulze's denial that any ultimate or speculative explanation for such facts could be had. It is in his review of Schulze/Aenesidemus that Fichte first publicly introduces his notion of *Tathandlungen* precisely in order to provide such an explanation. See Di Giovanni 136ff.

It follows from the mere thought of a basis or reason that it must lie outside of what it grounds or explains. The basis of an explanation and what is explained thus become posited – as such – in opposition to one another. (*IW* 9)

Yet, the counter-positing of the not-self by the absolute self is meant to explain the fact of empirical consciousness and the experience of distinction and opposition contained therein. Hence, such an act must fall outside empirical consciousness. Indeed, the totality of acts of the absolute self never actually emerges into empirical consciousness.<sup>179</sup>

Second, insofar as the primordial activity of the absolute self never emerges into empirical consciousness, empirical consciousness thus, as it were, “forgets” the activity of the absolute self by which the not-self is posited. Through his doctrine of the unconscious character of the positing of the not-self by the absolute self, Fichte sets a radical precedent for Hegel’s key methodological conceit according to which consciousness, as it develops, repeatedly forgets the prior activity through which it has posits its object and so, in the first instance, naively assumes the object to be distinct from itself and to have its source in something other than itself. As Fichte states,

We do not become aware of our own action, and are necessarily bound to assume that we have received from without what we have in fact ourselves produced by our own forces, and according to our own laws (*WL* 255).

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<sup>179</sup> Cf. Fichte: “The self as such cannot come to consciousness, since it is never immediately conscious of its own action” (*WL* 259); “The self is [...] quite unaware of its own activity, and does not reflect thereon” (*WL* 264); “In acting the rational being does not become conscious of its acting; for *it itself* is *its acting* and nothing else: but what the rational being is conscious of supposed to lie outside what becomes conscious, and therefore outside the acting; it is supposed to be the *object*, i.e. the opposite of the acting. The I becomes conscious only of what emerges for it in this acting and through this acting (*simply and solely through this acting*); and this is the object of consciousness, or the thing” (*FNR* 4-5);

Empirical consciousness experiences the not-self, not as a production of the self, but rather as an alien object (*Gegenstand*) or check (*Anstoss*) external to and independent of itself. The not-I is experienced by empirical consciousness as the whole expanse of the natural world which stands opposed to itself.

Along with maintaining that empirical consciousness “forgets” the positing of the not-self by the absolute self and so naively takes the object to be “out there”, Fichte maintains that it is the task of philosophy to recollect the activity of the absolute self in order thereby to generate a scientific account of the ground of knowledge itself – which is to say, a science of knowledge.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, such a task of recollection is, for Fichte, the signal calling of transcendental philosophy<sup>181</sup> and, as such, Fichte denies that Kant’s doctrine of the thing-in-itself is a residue of the very kind of forgetting and naïveté that transcendental philosophy would deliver us from.<sup>182</sup> What remains to be determined at this point, however, is to what extent Fichte, especially according to Hegel, succeeds in the task of radical recollection of the activity of the absolute self.

At any rate, while the counter-positing of the not-self by the absolute self would seem to provide an explanation for the fact of distinction and opposition between subject and object experienced in empirical consciousness, it nevertheless raises its own peculiar

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<sup>180</sup> Cf. Fichte: “One might ask: if reality belongs only to *that which* is necessarily posited by the I, then what reality is supposed to belong to those actions that lie outside the sphere of all consciousness and are posited within consciousness? – Obviously, no reality except insofar as it is posited, and thus merely a reality for philosophical understanding [...] As soon as the human mind reverts back into itself [...], and finds that everything it believes it perceives outside itself was actually produced by and from itself, then the task that arises for reason in its constant synthetic progression is similarly to unite all these operations of the human mind in one ultimate ground” (*FNR* 25-6)

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Fichte: “The assumption that objects exist outside of and quite independently of us, is contained within idealism and is explained and derived within idealism. Indeed, it is the sole aim of all philosophy to provide a derivation of objective truth” (Breazeale, 38);

<sup>182</sup> For further discussion see *IW* 51-76

problem. In order to clarify this problem it will first be necessary to examine Fichte's account of the absolute self.

### 2.1.3 *The Opposition between the Absolute Self and the Empirical Self*

As its name indicates, the absolute self is indeed absolute. Yet, Fichte states:

Insofar as the self is absolute, it is *infinite* and *unbounded*. Everything that exists it posits; and what it does not posit, does not exist (*for* it; and *apart from* it there is nothing). But everything it posits is posited as self; and the self posits it as everything *that* it posits. From this point of view, therefore, the self includes everything, that is, an infinite, unbounded reality (WL 225).

The absolute self is unbounded, infinite, self-identical, self-sufficient and unconditioned by anything external to itself. It posits all that is. It is the supreme source of everything which exists. Nothing exists external to or apart from it.

To say that that the absolute self posits a not-self, however, presents immediate problems for the unboundedness, infinity, unconditioned-ness and, therefore, the absoluteness of the absolute self. For, as Fichte's states, "Insofar as the not-self is posited, the self is not posited; for the not-self completely nullifies the self" (WL 106). The not-self, by definition, limits the self precisely to the extent that it, the not-self, is posited. How can it come to pass that the absolute self should posit a not-self which would by definition limit it, when the former is precisely infinite, unbounded and absolute? Fichte's answer to this problem will prove of enormous significance for understanding Hegel's discussion of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic.

Fichte's key argument in this context is that the absolute self posits within itself an *empirical self*. Fichte refers to the empirical self also as the "divisible self". According to Fichte, it is the divisible empirical self which is limited by the not-self, not the absolute self. The empirical self and the not-self are both divisible and mutually limiting. Thus, insofar as the divisible not-self is posited, the divisible empirical self is not posited, and vice-versa.

On this account, the absolute self seems to preserve its utter independence, unrestrictedness, self-sufficiency and self-identity vis-à-vis the not-self. For, while the empirical self is opposed and limited by the not-self, "As opposed to the absolute self [...], the not-self is *absolutely nothing*" (WL 109). Moreover, rather than being opposed to the absolute self, the not-self, along with the empirical self to which it is opposed, is posited *within* the absolute self. As Fichte states, "*In the self I oppose a divisible not-self to the divisible self*" (WL 110).

Inasmuch as he maintains that the not-self is not opposed to the absolute self but is opposed only to the empirical self, Fichte would seem to preserve the perfect self-identity, unrestrictedness and independence of the absolute self. Yet, the matter is much more complicated. For, inasmuch as the absolute self posits within itself an empirical self which is opposed by the not-self, the absolute self thus finds itself paradoxically identical with yet opposed by the empirical self. As Fichte states,

The self is to be equated with, and yet opposed to, itself. But in regard to consciousness it is equal to itself, for consciousness is one: but in this consciousness the absolute self is posited as indivisible; whereas the self to which

the not-self is opposed is posited as divisible. Hence, insofar as there is a not-self opposed to it, the self is itself in opposition to the absolute self. (WL 109)

The absolute self is unrestricted, infinite, self-sufficient and opposed by nothing. The empirical self, by contrast, is defined precisely as that which is restricted, limited, finite and dependent in many ways upon the not-self. Yet, the empirical self with its correlative and opposed not-self is posited *within* the absolute self. Thus, *within* the absolute self there is something which by definition is *opposed* to the absolute self. It is this contradiction between the absolute self and the empirical self and the attempt to overcome it which in effect sets in motion the rest of Fichte's system and which also provides the fulcrum point of Hegel's eventual critique thereof.

#### 2.1.4 *The Empirical Self qua Intelligence and qua Practical Reason*

Having distinguished between the absolute self and the empirical self, Fichte further subdivides the empirical self into the empirical self *qua* intelligence and the empirical self *qua* practical reason. The empirical self *qua* intelligence resembles the larger form of consciousness described in the "Consciousness" part of the *Phenomenology*. For, the intelligence is the empirical self insofar as it passive with respect to the not-self or object. The intelligence is *caused* by, and therefore dependent upon, the object. As Fichte states, "The self, *qua* intelligence, stood in a causal relation to the not-self, to which the postulated check [*Anstoss*] is to be ascribed; it was an effect of the not-self, as its cause."<sup>183</sup> (WL 221) The absolute self thus posits a not-self which is

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<sup>183</sup> Cf. Fichte: "as *intelligence in general*, the self is *dependent* on an undetermined and so far quite indeterminable not-self; and only through and by means of such a not-self does it come to be an intelligence" (WL, 220).

experienced by the empirical self *qua* intelligence as an external force impinging upon it and upon which it is dependent for its very existence.

Yet, we are here presented with a major contradiction afflicting the self. For the absolute self is purely active and is unconditioned by and thus independent of any external principle. Yet, the empirical self *qua* intelligence is passive and caused by the not-self. There is thus a radical opposition within the self, as such, one which threatens to undermine its perfect self-identity and which therefore demands to be overcome, reconciled or sublated. As Fichte states, “there lies a major antithesis, which spans the entire conflict between the self as intelligence, and to that extent restricted, and the self as an absolutely posited and thus unrestricted entity” (WL 219).

Fichte’s solution to this antithesis within the self is to posit the absolute self as the cause of the not-self:

Since [...] the absolute self must be capable of no passivity whatever, and be absolute activity and nothing other than activity, we have had to assume [...] that even this postulated not-self must be determined, and thus passive; and that the activity of the not-self must be determined, and thus passive; and that the activity opposed to this passivity has to be posited in the opposite of the not-self, namely the self; and not indeed in the intelligent self, since this is itself determined by the not-self, but rather in the absolute self. But a relationship of the kind thus assumed is the causal relation. The absolute self must therefore be *cause* of the not-self, insofar as the latter is the ultimate ground of all presentation; and the not-self must to that extent be its *effect* (WL 221).



In order to overcome the antithesis within the self that results from the fact that, while the empirical self *qua* intelligence is limited, passive and dependent, the absolute self is unrestricted, purely active and independent, Fichte states that we must posit the absolute self as ultimately causing the not-self.

Yet, this solution turns out to be not quite so simple, for another contradiction emerges. On the one hand, Fichte notes,

The self *is to exert causality on the not-self*, and first bring forth the latter for possible presentation by itself, because nothing is attributable to the self which it does not posit in itself, either mediately or immediately, and because it has to absolutely everything that it is by means of itself. – Hence the demand for causality is based on the absolute essentiality of the self (*WL 225*).

Yet, on the other hand, Fichte states,

The self *can exert no causality on the not-self*, because the not-self would then cease to be a not-self (to stand opposed to the self) and would itself become the self. But it is the self that has opposed the not-self to itself; and this opposition cannot therefore be eliminated unless by eliminating something that the self has posited, and thus by the self's ceasing to be a self, which contradicts the identity of the self. – Hence the contradiction confronting the required causality is based on the fact that a not-self is, and must remain, absolutely opposed to the self (*WL 225*)

Let us clarify the contradiction. If the absolute self were *directly* to cause the not-self, then *either* the not-self would simply be absorbed into the absolute self's own act of

self-positing/self-causing and as such cease to be a not-self, at all, *or*, insofar as the not-self was in fact posited absolutely, it would destroy the absolute self since by its nature the not-self excludes or annuls the self. Thus, in order to preserve the reality of the not-self without thereby destroying the absolute self, Fichte must show the absolute self to be, not the *direct* cause of the not-self since that would nullify the reality of the not-self, but rather its *mediate* or *indirect* cause.

The means by which the absolute self mediately causes the not-self is by positing or causing a practical faculty within the empirical self which will itself directly cause the not-self.<sup>184</sup> Thus, whereas the empirical self *qua* intelligence was caused by and dependent upon the not-self, the empirical self *qua* practical reason will causally determine the not-self. Fichte thus distinguishes two types of activity within the self: 1) the pure activity of the absolute self and 2) the objective activity of the practical faculty of the empirical self. Fichte designates the second type activity as “objective” because it posits an object and is itself objectively determinate with respect to this object. Thus, the absolute self posits or causes the empirical self, and the empirical self in its practical capacity causes the not-self.

We thereby seem to have found a solution to the previous dilemma threatening to undermine the reality of either the absolute self or the not-self. As Fichte states,

The self which, regarded in general as an intelligence, is dependent on the not-self, and is an intelligence simply to the extent that a not-self exists, is nonetheless

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<sup>184</sup> Cf. Fichte: “There lies a major antithesis, which spans the entire conflict between the self as intelligence, and to that extent, the self as an absolutely posited and thus unrestricted entity; and which compels us to adopt as a means of unification a practical capacity of the self.” (WL 219)

to depend merely on the self; and to find this possible, we again had to assume a causality of the self in determining the not-self, insofar as the latter is to the object of the intelligence self. At first sight, and taking the word in its full extension, such a causality annulled itself; once it was presupposed, either the self was not posited, or the not-self was not, and hence no causal relationship could occur between them. We attempted to mediate this conflict by distinguishing two opposed activities of the self, the pure and the objective; and by supposing that perhaps the first might be immediately related to the second, as cause to effect; while the second might be immediately related to the object, as cause to effect. And hence we supposed that the pure activity of the self might at least stand *mediately* (through the intermediacy of the objective activity) in a causal relation with the object (*WL* 231).

The absolute self posits or causes the objective activity of the empirical self which in turn causes the not-self, thereby allowing the absolute self *mediately* to cause the not-self without thereby destroying itself or the not-self.

Having identified the objective activity of the empirical self *qua* practical reason, we have pushed more explicitly into the realm of Fichte's ethical philosophy. We must briefly examine the salient aspects of Fichte's ethical philosophy, as it figures prominently in Hegel's eventual critique of the larger Fichtean system.

## 2.2 *Fichte's Ethical System: A Realm of Domination and Servitude*

Let us begin by recalling the precise state of the discussion at this point. For that we can turn to the following helpful passage from Fichte:

The absolute self is identical with itself: everything therein is one and the same self, and belongs [...] to one and the same self; nothing therein is distinguishable, nothing manifold; the self is everything and nothing, it is nothing *for itself*, and can distinguish not positing or posited within itself. – In virtue of its nature it *strives* [...] to maintain itself in this condition. – There emerges in it a disparity, and hence something alien to itself. [...] *That* this happens, can in no sense be proved a priori, but everyone can confirm it in his own experience (WL 233).

The foundation of Fichte's system is the self-positing absolute self. The absolute self is absolutely self-identical in its self-positing. If there is a distinction between the absolute self *qua* positing and the self *qua* posited, it is distinction which is immediately annulled or sublated. It is a distinction which is yet *not* a distinction. For subject and object are perfectly identical: I = I.

Fichte adds that the absolute self naturally *strives* to preserve itself in its self-identity. In the first instance, this striving is thus not what is ordinarily thought of as striving. Fichte states that it can be considered striving only in a qualified or "figurative" sense. For, typically, striving involves an object *for which* one strives. Yet, in the first instance, there is nothing for which the absolute self might strive since no object has been posited for it. Instead, the absolute self strives simply to maintain itself in its absolute and perfect self-identity.

Yet, according to Fichte, as a matter of *a posteriori* empirical experience, disparity and distinction emerge within the self. It is in acknowledging and attempting to reconcile this alien principle with the absolute self-identical character of the absolute self that the complexity of Fichte's system truly enters in.

For, Fichte explains that the experience of the alien object in empirical consciousness is the result of the positing of the not-self by the absolute self. *For* the absolute self, therefore, the not-self is nothing. The not-self is only an object for the empirical self. Yet, the fact that the empirical self and the not-self are posited within the absolute self poses its own problem.

For, the absolute self finds itself both identical to and yet opposed by the empirical self with its correlative object. Indeed, the absolute self is opposed to the empirical self precisely to the degree that the latter is itself opposed and limited by the not-self. For, were it not opposed and limited by the not-self, the empirical self would simply be the absolute self.

By the same token, however, the absolute self does not merely posit but spontaneously strives to maintain its absolute identity with itself. Yet, the very opposition within itself of the empirical self threatens to undermine this perfect self-identity. Thus, in order to preserve or otherwise restore its perfect self-identity the absolute self must make use of the empirical self as an instrument for causally determining the not-self. Insofar as the empirical self causally determines the not-self it subordinates the not-self to its own immanent laws and thus transforms the not-self into the self. Transforming the not-self into the self would thus negate the limitation or negation of the empirical self by the not-self which would in turn eliminate the opposition between the empirical self and the absolute self. The empirical self would in fact *become* the absolute self, and the absolute self would thus succeed in preserving its perfect self-identity.

The primary means by which the empirical self causally determines the not-self is through the activity of its practical reason. In the practical reason of the empirical self the

abstract striving-in-general of the absolute self to preserve its perfect self-identity becomes determinate and objective. The activity of practical reason is objective in the dual and correlative sense that the activity is itself an objective operation of empirical consciousness and it also determines an object which hitherto stood opposed to it. In order to clarify this point further, let us specify the relation between striving [*Streben*] and drive [*Trieb*] in Fichte as well as the distinct types of drives constitutive of the empirical self.

Striving in general, or, you might say, striving *überhaupt*, is the absolute self's spontaneous striving to preserve its perfect self-identity. Insofar as that striving becomes determinate within the experience of the empirical self, it becomes a drive. As Fichte states, "striving that is fixed, determinate and definite in character is known as *a drive*" (WL 253). The drive of practical reason is, generally speaking, to causally determine the not-self and thereby to preserve the perfect self-identity of the absolute self. This picture, however, gets more complicated when it is noted that the pure drive of practical reason is not the sole drive of the empirical self.

### 2.2.1 *Pure Drive versus Natural Drives*

For Fichte there is a division within the empirical self between the self and its object, namely, the not-self or nature. Yet, the self is partly determined by nature. The most important way in which the empirical self is determined by nature is through what Fichte calls "the original and determinate system of drives and feelings" (SE 113-4). Regarding the way in which this system determines the empirical self, Fichte states

Consciousness of them obtrudes on us and, at the same time, the substance in which this system of boundaries is found is supposed to be the substance which freely thinks and wills, and which we posit as ourselves. So the nature that obtrudes is our nature (*SE* 113-4).

The system of natural drives, feelings and inclinations which partially determines the empirical self thus obtrudes as something alien on the truer nature of the self. For, these drives are determined mechanically by laws that the empirical self does not itself cause. As such, a task emerges for the self, specifically for its practical faculty, to causally determine the natural drives which otherwise obtrude upon the freedom of the self to act according to laws and determinations it gives to itself.

Fichte thus distinguishes two fundamentally different drives: 1) the system of lower, natural drives of the self which is directed towards more or less biological enjoyment and 2) the higher drive of the practical faculty which is directed towards freedom for freedom's sake.<sup>185</sup> The higher drive for freedom is capable of reflecting on the on the lower, natural drive and, through raising it to consciousness, subordinating it to the ends of the higher drive. As Hegel states regarding this aspect of Fichte's system,

That which reflects is *higher* than what is reflected: the drive of him who does the reflecting, that is, of the subject of consciousness, is called the higher drive. The lower drive, that is, nature must be placed *in subservience to the higher*, that is, to reflection. This relation of subservience which one appearance of the self has to the other is to be the highest synthesis (*DZ*, 138).

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<sup>185</sup> Or, in other words, I for the sake of I; I because I.

At the core of Fichte's ethical system, one part of the empirical self, the natural drives, goes into *subservience* to another part, the practical faculty. This domination of the "merely natural" within the empirical self by the pure practical drive of the empirical self is, moreover, a mediated expression of the domination of the empirical self in general by the absolute self. For, the empirical self *qua* pure practical drive functions as a mere instrument and, therefore, servant of the absolute self's more basic striving to preserve its pure self-identity.

Indeed, the empirical self *qua* "merely natural" is, as we have seen, equated with the not-I since the not-I has been identified with nature. Therefore, for Fichte, the quest for domination over the empirical self *qua* "merely natural" extends to the whole expanse of the natural world, which is to say, the world which the empirical self naively assumes to be independent of the absolute self. Thus, Fichte states,

Man's ultimate and supreme goal is complete harmony with himself and – so that he can be in harmony with himself – the harmony of all external things with his own necessary, practical concepts of them (*Philosophy of German Idealism* 8).

And, again,

Man's final end is to subordinate to himself all that is irrational, to master it freely and according to his own laws (*Philosophy of German Idealism* 9).

The empirical self is to become master or lord over its lower nature and, by extension, the entirety of all irrational nature, in order that the absolute self might preserve or otherwise restore its threatened pure self-identity or harmony.



Such a relation of domination and servitude within the self, moreover, is supposed to be the *highest synthesis* in the self and would lead it back to the pure identity or perfect harmony of the absolute self. The relation of domination and servitude within the different parts of the self thus constitutes the highest moral ideal for Fichte. As he states,

Man is supposed to determine himself and not permit himself to be determined by something foreign. He is supposed to be what he is because this is what he wants and is supposed to want to be. The empirical I is supposed to be determined in a manner in which it could be eternally determined. Therefore, I would express the principle of morality in the formula [...]: ‘Act so that you could consider the maxim of your willing as eternal laws for yourself.’ The ultimate characteristic feature of all rational beings is, accordingly, absolute unity, constant self-identity, complete agreement with oneself. This absolute identity is the form of the pure I and is its only true form, or rather, in the conceivability of identity we recognize the expression of the purer form of the I (*Philosophy of German Idealism* 6-7).

The highest synthesis in the self and Fichte’s highest moral ideal thus turns out to be a scenario in which the empirical self submits to the domination of the form of the absolute ‘I’ and, in so doing, sets itself about the task subordinating nature to that form.

Important to note in this context is that, according to Fichte, “mere will is not sufficient for removing [the influence of the not-I on the empirical self] and restoring the original pure shape of our I; we require, in addition, that skill which we acquire and sharpen through practice” (*Philosophy of German Idealism* 7). The fact that labor and practice is necessary for the empirical self to be able to develop the skill to carry out the

task to which it is set by the absolute self will prove quite relevant vis-à-vis the necessity of work in the experience of the Bondsman in Hegel's Lord/Bondsman dialectic.

### 2.3 *The Failure of Fichte's System to Demonstrate the Identity of the Empirical Self and the Absolute Self*

While, in principle, the complete causal determination of the not-self, including the empirical self itself *qua* part of nature, by the empirical self *qua* practical reason would preserve or restore the perfect identity of the absolute self by, in effect, subsuming the empirical self into the absolute self, as a matter of fact no such sublation occurs within Fichte's system. Instead, what occurs is an infinite and indefinitely prolonged striving on the part of the empirical self *qua* practical reason.

Fichte's argument here is complex, but the main outline admits of a ready sketch. Fichte draws a distinction between the empirical self's finite objective activity versus its infinite objective activity. The activity of the empirical self *qua* practical reason is objective in the dual sense that it is both a determinate operation of empirical consciousness and also directed towards a determinate object. Fichte specifies further that such objective activity can be either finite or infinite.

The infinite and the finite activity of the empirical self, however, cannot both be objective in the same sense. According to Fichte, the distinction lies in the fact that, "the finite objective activity of the self relates to a *real* object, while its infinite striving is directed upon a merely *imaginary* object" (WL 236). While perhaps initially appearing odd, what Fichte means here is rather straightforward. *Qua* finite, practical reason consists in a drive that engages with and attempts to causally determine particular, finite

“real” objects, whether these be material objects, bodily movements, or “lower” natural drives. *Qua* infinite, practical reason, as it were, *looks past* any finite object towards an ideal horizon in which the object would be a pure product of the self.

Importantly, however, even the infinite objective activity of the empirical self is not purely infinite; rather, it is characterized by a juxtaposition of finitude and infinitude, a juxtaposition which in the end amounts to a contradiction which is never reconciled or sublated. With respect to the simultaneous finitude and the infinitude which characterizes the infinite objective striving of the empirical self, Fichte states,

But how far is the striving nonetheless finite? To the extent that it refers in general to an object, and must posit limits to this object, as surely as the latter is to be such. In the real object, it was not the act of determining in general, but the limits of the determination, that depended on the not-self: but in the ideal object, both the act of determining, and the limits, depend solely on the self; the latter is subject to no condition, save that it must posit limits in general, which it can extend out to infinity, because this extension depends solely on itself. The ideal is an absolute product of the self; it can be elevated out to infinity; but at each determinate moment it has its limits, which at the next determinate moment must be utterly different (*WL* 237).

According to Fichte, any object is intrinsically limited and finite. In the case of the finite objective activity, the object of this activity is a “real” object and as such prescribes an initial set of limits – for example, the quantity of matter or the spatio-temporal limits of the bodily movement – to the action. The empirical self in this case does not prescribe the limit of the object *per se*, but rather seeks to actively determine the object by

subordinating it to the immanent laws of practical reason – for example, by subordinating bodily movements or lower drives to some intelligent or moral action. In the case of infinite objective activity, by contrast, practical reason is not limited by any pre-given object but instead posits the limits and determines the object entirely through itself.

The contradiction arises due to the fact that, even though in the mode of infinite objective activity practical reason is not limited by a pre-given object, still the object which it posits must itself be limited and therefore finite. “Hence,” Fichte states, “the juxtaposition of infinite and objective is itself a contradiction” (WL 237). In other words, *infinity is not a characteristic of any object for Fichte*.<sup>186</sup> Infinity is rather external to the object. It lies not in the actual object but in the *possibility* of practical reason to posit and determine some further object beyond the finite one that it had just posited and determined.

Infinity is never actualized, for Fichte; it is never actually objectified. Instead, it forever remains an indefinitely deferred possibility or ideal. Still, according to Fichte

The idea of an infinity to be thus completed floats as a vision before us, and is rooted in our innermost nature. We are obliged, as it enjoins us, to resolve the contradiction; though we cannot even think it possible of solution, and foresee that in no moment of an existence prolong to all eternity will we ever be able to consider it possible. But this is just the mark in us that we are destined for eternity (WL 238).

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<sup>186</sup> Cf. Fichte: “The I [...] can posit only what is finite” (FNR 24).

Recall that the absolute self is immediately infinite. It is infinite in its immediate self-relation in which it is opposed by nothing. Yet, the absolute self nevertheless finds itself opposed by the empirical self. To that extent the absolute is not infinite. Still, the would-be-infinite absolute self naturally strives to maintain itself in its perfect and infinite self-identity. In order to preserve or restore its effectively negated infinity it confers upon or imbues the empirical self with a striving to completely dominate and thereby negate the alterity of the object which opposes it. This striving can take a finite form, as mentioned above. It can also take an infinite form which, *qua* infinite, would thus seem to be rooted in “our innermost nature”, namely, the self-identity of the self-positing absolute self.

Yet, this very objective, infinite striving is beset by finitude since objectivity intrinsically entails finitude, for Fichte. Hence, the empirical self is obliged to resolve a contradiction for which the solution, according to Fichte, is not even thinkable, namely, the positing and determining of an object which is infinite. The result of being thus obliged is that the empirical self, like Sisyphus, is condemned to undertake an infinitely renewed yet intrinsically futile task.<sup>187</sup>

#### 2.4 *Brief Summary of Section 2*

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<sup>187</sup> Cf. Fichte: “[T]he Idea of a self whose consciousness has been determined by nothing outside itself, it being rather its own mere consciousness which determines everything outside it. Yet this Idea is itself unthinkable, since for us it contains a contradiction. But it is nevertheless imposed upon us as our highest practical goal. Man must approximate, *ad infinitum*, to a freedom he can never, in principle, attain” (*WL* 115). Cf. Hegel: “This is, in general, the standpoint of Kant with regard to human action, and also that of Fichte. The good ought to be realized; we have to work at this, to bring it forth, and the will is simply the good that is self-activating. But then if the world were as it ought to be, the result would be that the activity of willing would disappear. Therefore the will itself also requires that its purpose shall not be realized” (*EL* 302).

We have thus laid out the aspects of Fichte's overall system which will figure most prominently in Hegel's explanation and critique of that system. The goal of Fichte's system is to provide a scientific account of the ground of all experience and knowledge. His first move is to postulate an absolutely self-positing, self-identical self. Yet, in order to explain the fact of distinction and opposition within empirical consciousness, Fichte postulates that the absolute self also counter-posites a not-self which is opposed to the empirical self. Insofar as the empirical self is opposed and thus limited by the not-self, however, the absolute self finds itself in opposition to the empirical self, a state which threatens the absolute self's claim to absoluteness. In order to overcome this threatened contradiction, Fichte postulates that the empirical self, particularly in its capacity as practical reason, causally determines the not-self. The completion of this causal determination of the not-self by the empirical self, however, is infinitely deferred. Let us turn now to examining the important details of Hegel's initial response to these aspects of Fichte's system in the *DZ*.

### 3. *Hegel's Initial Response to Fichte in the DZ*

Hegel's critical response to Fichte in the *DZ* is complex. Still, it is possible to isolate the most crucial aspects of that response which will prove relevant to understanding Hegel's later and dialectically more sophisticated response in the "Self-consciousness" chapter of the *Phenomenology*. The most crucial of Hegel's criticisms of Fichte in the *DZ* are: 1) the end of Fichte's system fails to correspond to and fulfill its beginning and 2) Fichte's system is permeated by a relation of domination and servitude within the experience of self-consciousness.

### 3.1 *The End of Fichte's System Fails to Correspond to the Beginning*

According to Hegel, in the *DZ* the task of philosophy is to sublimate the distinction between pure or transcendental self-consciousness and empirical consciousness, or in Fichtean terms, the distinction between the absolute self and the empirical self. The way in which the philosopher is to achieve this goal is by deducing empirical consciousness from pure self-consciousness.<sup>188</sup> More specially, according to Hegel,

Philosophy must show that empirical consciousness in all its manifoldness is identical with pure consciousness, and it must show this by its deed, through the real evolution of the objective out of the Ego [*Ich*]. Philosophy must describe the totality of empirical consciousness as the objective totality of self-consciousness (*DZ* 121-2).

It is important to note the ways in which Hegel's position both agrees with and subtly diverges from that of Fichte. For, Hegel evidently agrees with Fichte that the major task of philosophy is to provide an account of the explanatory ground of empirical experience and that this is done by showing that empirical consciousness is grounded in absolute or pure self-consciousness and that the former can be deduced from the latter.

Still, beyond this transcendental requirement, Hegel adds the further speculative requirement that the completeness of the explanation of empirical consciousness show that empirical consciousness is, or at least *becomes*, identical to pure self-consciousness.

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<sup>188</sup> Cf. Hegel: "[The philosopher's] task is now to suspend the apparent opposition of transcendental and empirical consciousness; and, in general terms, this is done by deducing the latter from the former" (*DZ* 120).

In ordinary consciousness the Ego [*Ich*] occurs in opposition. Philosophy must explain this opposition to an object. To explain means to show that it is conditioned by something else and hence that it is appearance. Now, if empirical consciousness is shown to be completely grounded in, and not just conditioned by, pure consciousness, then their opposition is suspended [*Aufgehoben*] as long as the explanation is otherwise completely shown – i.e., as long as it is not merely a partial identity of pure and empirical consciousness that has been shown. The identity is only a partial one if there remains an aspect of the empirical consciousness in which it is not determined by the pure consciousness, but is unconditioned. And as only pure consciousness and empirical consciousness are presented as the elements of the highest opposition, pure consciousness would then be determined and conditioned by empirical consciousness so far as this was unconditioned. The relation would in this way be a sort of reciprocal relation, comprised of mutual determining and being determined. It presupposes, however, an absolute opposition of the reciprocally effective terms; and then it would be impossible to suspend [*Aufheben*] their dichotomy in absolute identity (*DZ* 119-20).

Philosophy must explain the opposition experienced in empirical consciousness. It does so by showing that empirical consciousness is grounded in pure self-consciousness. So far, Hegel is in agreement with Fichte. Hegel adds, however, that insofar as empirical consciousness is shown to be *completely* grounded in pure consciousness, insofar as it is shown to evolve out of the latter and thereby constitute the latter's objective existence, the difference between them is sublated into an absolute unity.



Insofar as the explanation is only partial, however, and the empirical self remains opposed and thus conditioned by an aspect which is not itself determined by pure consciousness, then pure consciousness and empirical consciousness find *themselves* opposed. Indeed, pure self-consciousness thus finds itself not to be absolute at all since it is conditioned by the empirical consciousness which is opposed to it. Instead, pure consciousness and empirical consciousness fall into a relation of mere reciprocal determination which presupposes an absolute dichotomy which is never resolved or sublated into an absolute identity.

The application of the immediately forgoing discussion to the earlier discussion of Fichte's system should be readily apparent. What is more, Fichte in some sense did recognize the speculative requirement to produce an absolute identity between the empirical self and the pure or absolute self. The problem for Hegel at this point is that Fichte simply fails to produce the requisite identity between empirical consciousness and pure self-consciousness. In Fichte, the infinite objective activity of practical reason is supposed to be the "supreme synthesis" (DZ 134). Yet, as Hegel notes, the "infinite progression" of the objective activity of practical reason in Fichte intrinsically entails an "absolute opposition" (DZ 134). For, according to Hegel, true, speculative infinity is, in Fichte, "shoved in to the form" of mere finitude, which is to say, time, and "time [...] immediately involves opposition, extraneousness. What exists in time is something that is opposed to itself, a manifold" (DZ, 134). Indeed, as we have already witnessed, Fichte concedes to the intrinsic incompleteness and opposition which characterizes the infinite, *temporal* striving of the empirical self's objective activity. Thus, he states, "The ideal is an absolute product of the self; it can be elevated out to infinity; but at each determinate

moment it has its limits, which *at the next determinate moment* must be utterly different” [Emphases mine] (WL 237).

We arrive at a clarification of Hegel’s first major criticism of Fichte in the *DZ*. For, Hegel’s criticism is that the end of Fichte’s system fails to correspond to or fulfill the beginning and, as such, fails to produce the speculative identity of pure self-consciousness and empirical consciousness. Fichte’s system begins with the absolutely self-positing, self-identical absolute self. The absolute self is the immediate identity of subject and object. Yet, in order to explain the experience of opposition within empirical consciousness, Fichte also postulates that the absolute self posits within itself an empirical self opposed by the not-self or object. Thus, the absolute, unopposed, self-identical, self-positing self with which Fichte’s system begins finds itself opposed by an alien principle, namely, the empirical self with its own correlatively opposed object. As a result, Fichte is unable to show how the absolute self overcomes or otherwise sublates this opposition which it has posited for itself and so, in contrast to its beginning, the end of Fichte’s system is marked by an absolute opposition.

It helps to make sense of Hegel’s critique if we examine more closely some of the particular terms he employs in articulating it. Thus, in the *DZ* Hegel identifies pure self-consciousness as the “subjective Ego [*Ich*]”, while the empirical self constitutes the “objective Ego [*Ich*]” with its correlative opposed object (*DZ* 124). As Hegel states, “The subjective Ego is Ego, the objective is Ego + non-Ego (*DZ*,124). Pure self-consciousness is the subjective Ego inasmuch as it is opposed to and “conditioned by abstraction from empirical consciousness” (*DZ* 123). Indeed, as Hegel states, “the act of self-consciousness differs decisively from all other consciousness in that its object is the same

as the subject. Ego = Ego is in this regard opposed to an infinite objective world” (*DZ* 121).

Since pure self-consciousness is an immediate identity of subject and object, it might be referred to as the “subjective subject-object”,<sup>189</sup> whereas empirical consciousness *qua* objective Ego would constitute the “objective subject-object”. For Hegel, the task of philosophy is to demonstrate how the objective subject-object becomes identical to the subjective subject-object. The way in which this presumably could be accomplished would be for the subject of the objective subject-object to completely determine its object and thereby sublimate the distinction between empirical consciousness (i.e. the objective subject) and its object (i.e. the objective object). For, in so doing, the objective subject-object would overcome the opposition which characterizes it and thereby constitute itself as a sublated identity of subject and object. As such, it would itself attain to an identity with the subjective subject-object which latter just is a sublated identity of subject and object. In Fichte’s system a residual absolute opposition remains between the subject and object of the objective subject-object which in turn entails an unsublated opposition between the subjective subject-object and the objective subject-object. Thus, to repeat, the end of Fichte’s system fails to correspond to or fulfill its beginning.

Before moving on, one small but important point of interest that should be noted regarding the immediately preceding discussion is that Hegel characterizes the “objective world”, which is opposed to the subjective subject-object and which includes both the

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<sup>189</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The principle, the Subject-Object, turns out to be a subjective Subject-Object” (*DZ* 81).

objective subject and its object, as infinite. Hegel is speaking of Fichte, here, and so it should be immediately recalled that a prime reason for the failure of Fichte's system to sublimate the opposition between the objective subject and its object is that the objective subject fails to posit an infinite object. Yet, here, Hegel is saying that the objective realm in fact infinite.

This point will become more relevant once we turn to examining Hegel's discussion of self-consciousness. Yet, what might be noted is that Hegel is pointing out that there are two infinities already operative in Fichte, but that neither constitutes a properly speculative infinity. First of all, the subjective subject-object of pure self-consciousness or the absolute self is infinite inasmuch as it is purely self-sufficient, self-relating act of self-positing. For Hegel, however, it will turn out that this infinity is a merely abstract infinity, an infinity which does not preserve itself in, but rather abstracts from, all differences. Second, the objective subject-object is also infinite. Yet, unlike the abstract infinity of the subjective subject-object which abstracts from all differences, the infinity of the objective subject-object is an infinity which is beset by an absolute difference or opposition which it cannot sublimate. Again, the full significance of this point will become clear only later in the present discussion, but it is worth noting even at present.

### *3.2 Fichte's System is Beset by Relations of Domination and Servitude in*

#### *Consciousness*

Hegel's second point of criticism of Fichte's system concerns the relations that wind up obtaining between the un-sublated opposed principles in Fichte's system. Hegel

is especially concerned with the fact that in Fichte the relation between the absolute self and empirical self as well as between the empirical self and its object is ultimately a relation of *causality*.

For, the absolute self strives to causally determine the not-self by using the empirical self as an instrument, while the empirical self *qua* determinate objective drive seeks to directly causally determine the object. Yet, according to Hegel, the causal relation is intrinsically one of inequality and non-identity. Moreover, it entails a relation of domination and servitude between the terms of the relation. Thus, in the *DZ* regarding the causal relation, Hegel states,

The causal relation [...] is a false identity; for absolute opposition is at the basis of this relation. In the causal relation both opposites having standing, but they are distinct in rank. The union is forcible. The one subjugates the other. The one rules, the other is subservient. The unity is forced, and forced into a mere relative identity (*DZ* 115).

In Fichte, the relation between the opposed elements is one of causality. Hegel identifies such a relation as a false identity in which the terms enter into a relation of domination and servitude. The absolute self dominates the empirical self which in turn dominates the object. Stated inversely, the empirical self enters into a state of bondage to the absolute self and becomes a mere instrument which the latter uses for the domination of the object.

The situation is even more complex if we recall that the object of the empirical self includes itself *qua* natural. According to Hegel, the harshness of this relation of domination and servitude within the self becomes even more pronounced in works such

as Fichte's *FNR* and *SE*. Speaking of the former work, Hegel states, "As a result of the absolute antithesis between pure drive and natural drive *Natural Right* offers us a picture of the complete lordship of the intellect and the complete bondage of the living being" (*DZ* 148).<sup>190</sup> Thus, according to Hegel, the ultimate expression of freedom for Fichte is a mode, not of unrestricted self-positing, but of self-bondage in which one part of the self goes into subservience to the other. Through the relation of domination and servitude within the self, "the inner harmony is destroyed" (*DZ* 150).

### *3.3 Brief Summary of Section Three*

These are the two major points of criticism which Hegel addresses to Fichte in the *DZ*. First, the end of Fichte's system fails to preserve or sublimate the initial self-identity of the absolute or transcendental ego (i.e. the subjective subject-object) in its relation to the empirical ego (i.e. the objective subject-object). Instead, the Fichtean system culminates in an infinitely recurring absolute opposition between the empirical ego and its object and, therefore, also between the empirical ego and the absolute ego. Second, while Fichte is aware of the speculative task of achieving a sublated identity between the terms that remain opposed in his system, the best he can offer is a relationship of causality between these terms. For Hegel, the causal relationship is invariably one of domination and servitude. Thus, rather than overcoming the opposition between the empirical ego and the absolute ego, the causal relation succeeds merely in solidifying it further.

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<sup>190</sup> Cf. Hegel on Fichte's *System of Ethics*: "In [Fichte's] ethical life the relation of freedom and nature is supposed to become one of subjective lordship and bondage, a suppression of nature by *oneself*" (*DZ* 150).

The time has come to transition into an examination of the “Self-consciousness” part of the *Phenomenology*. In order to aid in this transition, however, it will be helpful to give a point of reference to help focus the results of the preceding discussion of Fichte as well as Hegel’s initial response to Fichte in the *DZ*. This effort can be achieving by briefly returning to Hegel’s larger theory of development, especially as it is illuminated by the biological analogy, and applying it to what has been covered in Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness, thus far.

#### 4. “Self-consciousness” in the *Phenomenology*

It is highly significant that the subtitle for the “Self-consciousness” chapter is “The Truth of Self-certainty” [*Die Wahrheit der Gewissheit seiner Selbst*]. For, as we saw, in the course of the “Consciousness” chapter the certainty with which consciousness began vis-à-vis its object eventually had to give way to the truth of that object since the object was not what consciousness initially took it be. Consciousness was certain that its object was something distinct and independent of itself, but upon the experience of “thinking-through” the object, consciousness is disabused of this certainty and forced to confront the truth that what it initially took to be its object is radically dependent upon a universal relational context which is itself constituted in and by consciousness. Thus, as Hegel states, “the *in-itself* turns out to be a mode in which the object only is for an other” – which is to say, the object exists only as *for* and thus *in* consciousness (PhG. 166, p. 104). By contrast, in self-consciousness, “certainty is to itself its own object, and consciousness is to itself the truth” (PhG. 166, p. 104). In self-consciousness,

consciousness draws a distinction between itself and its object which is at the same time *not* a distinction, for its object is precisely itself.

Two important points bear immediate mentioning in regards to the point that, in self-consciousness, consciousness becomes its own object. First, insofar as consciousness thus posits a distinction which is not a distinction, this entails that the distinction is to be sublated. What is different about self-consciousness, however, is that, while the distinction between consciousness and its object was in fact sublated in the experience of mere consciousness, that sublation occurred only *for us*, the phenomenological observers. By contrast, the sublation of the distinction between self-consciousness and its object will be something that occurs, not just for us, but for consciousness, which is to say, *self-consciousness*. Thus, part of what occurs in the course of the experience of self-consciousness is that the mind learns to observe or otherwise know itself in a manner that is more than analogous to the way in which we, the phenomenologists, observe the whole range of phenomenal consciousness.

Second, as Hegel famously states, “With self-consciousness, then, we have therefore entered the native realm of truth” (PhG. 167, p. 104). Truth for Hegel is the adequacy and correspondence of the object to the subject, of existence to Concept. In order to attain truth, the task of the mind is to posit an objective existence for itself which is adequate to itself. A non-conscious object such as a mere Thing could never satisfy the criterion of truth. Truth demands that consciousness have consciousness for its own object, that certainty become certain of certainty.<sup>191</sup> Insofar as consciousness becomes

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<sup>191</sup> Cf. Hegel on the result of the *Phenomenology*: “Truth is now is equated with certainty and this certainty with truth” (SL 49).



conscious of consciousness it becomes self-consciousness. Yet, this implies that in order for its object to be adequate to itself, self-consciousness's object must be self-consciousness, too. Only such a duplication of self-consciousness within itself could produce the adequacy of object to subject by which truth can be attained and the distinction between the mind and its object be sublated.

The process of sublation by which truth thus emerges in the course of the "Self-consciousness" chapter is complex and demands a close reading of the text. Fortunately begins, with a helpful outline of the basic structure of the experience of self-consciousness at the beginning of its development. Let us begin by examining this brief prospectus.

#### 4.1 *First Stages in the Development of Self-consciousness*

The first task is to examine the state of self-consciousness as it first comes on the scene. Thus, Hegel states

If we consider this new shape of knowing, the knowing of itself, in relation to that which preceded, viz. the knowing of an other, then we see that though this other had indeed vanished, its moments have at the same time no less been preserved, and the loss consists in this, that here they are present as they are in themselves. The [mere] *being* of what is merely 'meant', the *singleness* and *universality* opposed to it of perception, as also the *empty inner being* of the Understanding, these are no longer essence, but are mere moments of self-consciousness. (*PhG* 104-5)

According to Hegel, while the various objects of Sense-certainty, Perception and Force and Understanding have been thought-through and thus “vanished” at least in their pretension to independence and self-sufficiency, they are at the same time preserved as moments of self-consciousness itself. Here we encounter a crucial complexity that derives primarily from the fact that we are as yet only dealing with self-consciousness as it first comes on the scene.

For, regarding the apparent vanishing of the independence of the object of mere consciousness, Hegel immediately clarifies that,

Thus it seems that only the principal moment itself has been lost, viz. the *self-subsistent existence* for consciousness. But in point of fact self-consciousness is the reflection out of the being of the world of sense and perception, and is essentially a return from *otherness*. (*PhG* 105)

The nuance of the point here is subtle and needs to be tracked very closely. For, the various objects of mere consciousness have been revealed to be *moments* of self-consciousness. To that extent, then, they have been preserved. It would thus *seem* that **only** the **principal moment** of these moments has been lost, namely, their collective pretension to self-subsistence or self-sufficiency. **But** – and this is the crucial point – in point of fact, this is not entirely the case. For, while in one sense, self-consciousness constitutes the sublation and preservation of these distinct moments (save, of course, for their principal moment – i.e. independence and self-sufficiency – which has vanished), in another sense, self-consciousness is the reflection *out* of the world of sense and perception entirely. Thus, **within** self-consciousness Hegel distinguishes between, on the one hand, self-consciousness for which the being of Sense-certainty, the Thing of

Perception and so on have been preserved, albeit as mere moments, and, on the other hand, self-consciousness which has reflected entirely out of the world of sensuousness into a pure self-relation.<sup>192</sup>

Grasping the nature of this distinction between two self-consciousnesses within self-consciousness is utterly essential for understanding the entirety of Hegel's subsequent analysis in the "Self-consciousness" chapter. Let us track Hegel's initial account of the distinction between the two.

#### 4.1.1 *The Two Self-consciousnesses within Self-consciousness*

Hegel first describes the self-consciousness which is a withdrawal or return *out of* otherness:

As self-consciousness, it is movement; but since what it distinguishes from itself is *only itself as* itself, the difference as an otherness, is *immediately superseded* for it; the difference *is not* and *it* [self-consciousness] is only the motionless tautology of: 'I am I.' (*PhG* 105)

This self-consciousness which reflects or abstracts out of otherness clearly corresponds to the absolute self of Fichte's system. For, as self-consciousness, it is movement; in other words, it *does* posit a difference within itself. Still, this difference is *immediately* sublated. Similarly, in Fichte's system the absolute self *qua* positing is distinct from the absolute self *qua* posited; yet, this difference is *immediately* sublated. The difference *is*

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<sup>192</sup> Cf. Hegel on "the element of *pure indeterminacy* or of the 'I's pure reflection into itself, in which every limitation, every content, whether present immediately through nature, through needs, desires and drives, or given and determined in some other way, is dissolved" (*EPR*, 37).

*not*, for ‘I am I’. Therefore, there is “movement” in this immediate self-consciousness inasmuch as a difference is posited and then sublated. But there is no mediation. It is therefore *motionless*, for neither side undergoes development.

The abstract and immediate self-consciousness which reflects out of the being of the world of sense and perception *eo ipso* does not preserve as moments of itself the otherness experienced in mere consciousness. It posits and preserves a form of difference – namely, the difference between ‘I’ and ‘I’ – but “for it the difference does not have the form of *being*”. Instead, it is *immediately* sublated.

The point, here, is that the *difference* between the absolute I *qua* positing and the absolute I *qua* posited is a difference that lacks the *being* of the world of sense and perception. It is a difference which *is not*. The result, according to Hegel, is that for self-consciousness which is reflected out of the sensuous world and into itself “otherness is for it in the form of *a being*, or as a *distinct moment*” (*PhG* 105). In other words, self-consciousness *in-itself* preserves as a moment of itself the otherness of the being of the sensuous world of “Consciousness”. Yet, *for* abstract self-consciousness that reflects itself out of the being of the world of sense and perception, the otherness of this world *returns* as it was in the experience in mere consciousness, namely, as a *being* – be it a ‘This’ or a ‘Thing’ – which is entirely *distinct* from and independent of self-consciousness.

Yet, since what we are examining is not mere consciousness, but rather self-consciousness, “there is also for consciousness the unity of itself with this difference as a *second distinct moment*” (*PhG* 105). Thus, there are *two distinct moments* constituting the experience of self-consciousness as it first comes on the scene. Regarding the first

moment, as Hegel states, “self-consciousness is in the form of *consciousness*, and the whole expanse of the sensuous world is preserved for it” (*PhG* 105). Thus, in one of its moments self-consciousness has preserved the being of the world of sense and perception. Yet, according to Hegel, this first moment is preserved “only as connected with the second moment, the unity of self-consciousness with itself” (*PhG* 105). Thus, there is a *difference and connection* between, on the one hand, the self-consciousness that preserves the being of the world of sense and perception and, on the other hand, the self-consciousness which reflects out of that world in order to maintain its exclusive identity with itself. They are different inasmuch as the self-consciousness which preserves the being of the sensuous world as a determination of itself is thus distinct from the self-consciousness which reflects entirely out of the sensuous world. Yet, they are connected inasmuch the two self-consciousnesses – albeit as yet merely in-themselves and not for-themselves – constitute the unity of self-consciousness with itself.

Now, since the first moment of self-consciousness exists only in connection with the second moment, Hegel states that for self-consciousness “the sensuous world is [...] an enduring existence which, however, is only *appearance*, or a difference which, *in itself*, is no difference” (*PhG* 105). The enduring existence or independence of the sensuous world is a mere appearance or difference which *in itself* is no difference. Still, the quality of the sensuous world *as a mere appearance* is not yet *for* self-consciousness – specifically, for self-consciousness which reflects itself out of the sensuous world. Thus, “the antithesis of its appearance and its truth has, however, for its essence only the truth, viz. the unity of self-consciousness with itself; this unity must become essential *to* self-consciousness” [Emphasis mine] (*PhG* 105). The truth of the distinction between the

sensuous world (i.e. appearance) and self-consciousness has as its essence or basis *the* truth, namely, the unity of self-consciousness. Yet, its essence is *only* this truth. However, it is not yet *for* self-consciousness, and therefore not certain, that the distinction between itself and the appearance of the sensuous world has its essence in itself.

#### 4.2 *Self-consciousness as Desire*

Immediately following this observation Hegel famously states, “self-consciousness is *Desire [Begierde] überhaupt*” (*PhG* 105). Much ink has been spilt trying to sort out what Hegel means by the statement that self-consciousness is “*desire überhaupt*” which might be translated as “desire in general” or “desire as such”. If we keep in mind the vital connection between this part of the *Phenomenology* and Fichte’s system as well as exploit some clarifications provided by the *PM* “Phenomenology” section, however, Hegel’s basic point can be explicated without undue difficulty.

Desire for Hegel is, in the first instance, simply the felt tension of the inner contradiction between one’s concept and one’s existence, and the concomitant urge to sublimate this contradiction. In other words, desire is what contradiction feels like.<sup>193</sup> According to the *PM*, the *concept* of self-consciousness “consists in being in relation to its own self, being I = I” (*PM* 155). *Qua* reflected out of the sensuous world, self-consciousness thus does attain to its concept, this pure self-relation. Yet, *qua* reflected out of the sensuous world, self-consciousness attains this self-identity only in an abstract manner. As a result, self-consciousness as reflected into itself and merely self-relating

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. Hegel: “need and drive are [...] the *felt* contradiction, as it occurs *within* the living subject itself” (*EL* 281).

finds itself simultaneously in a “relationship to an *immediate* Other not posited ideally, to an *external* object, to a *non-I*, and is external to its own self” (*PM* 155).

Self-consciousness *qua* reflected into itself simultaneously finds itself in relation to something external. Therefore, self-consciousness *qua* reflected into itself both does and does not correspond to its concept, which is the purely self-relating  $I = I$ . Hence, it is in contradiction with itself and, accordingly, feels the urge to sublimate this contradiction.

Importantly, the external object to which abstract self-consciousness is related is *self-consciousness, too*. Thus, insofar as self-consciousness is, at least implicitly, always the unity of subject and object, we have distinction now between a merely *subjective* subject-object (an “abstraction which is supposed to be objective”) and a merely *objective* subject-object (an “external object [which] is supposed to be subjective”) (*PM* 154). Like the subjective subject-object, or self-consciousness reflected out of sensuous existence, the objective subject-object initially will turn out both to correspond and not to correspond to its concept. Yet, it will manifest this contradiction in a different manner. For, whereas the subjective subject-object constitutes self-consciousness that does not yet recognize itself in its object, the objective subject-object will constitute the object which does not yet recognize itself as self-consciousness. Thus, as Hegel states, *in-itself* self-consciousness “is a totality, a unity of subjective and objective” (*PM* 155). Yet, initially, self-consciousness is “something identical with itself [which] bears within itself a contradiction and is filled with the feeling of its implicit identity with itself as well as with opposite feeling of its inner contradiction” (*PM* 154-55).

The place to turn to make sense of the overriding point is Fichte’s discussion of the relation between the absolute and the empirical ego. For recall, according to Fichte,

The self is to be equated with, and yet opposed to, itself. But in regard to consciousness it is equal to itself, for consciousness is one: but in this consciousness the absolute self is posited as indivisible; whereas the self to which the not-self is opposed is posited as divisible. Hence, insofar as there is a not-self opposed to it, the self is itself in opposition to the absolute self. (WL 109)

In Hegel's terms, what Fichte is expressing is that, *in-itself*, self-consciousness constitutes "a totality, a unity of subjective and objective". Yet, the absolute self constitutes self-consciousness as merely the subjective subject-object, or self-consciousness merely for-itself. For, in Hegel, just as well as in Fichte, the subjective subject-object is "indivisible" inasmuch as it consists in the immediate and exclusive self-relating identity of 'I = I'. Yet, simultaneously it is opposed by the empirical self. Herein lies the contradiction which is explicit in Hegel, but only partially and problematically confronted and dealt with by Fichte.

For, recall, according to Fichte, "nothing is equated or opposed to" the absolute self (WL 117). Yet, simultaneously there *is* something opposed to the absolute self, namely, the empirical self. Thus, the absolute self is exclusively self-related and opposed by nothing, on the one hand, *and also* related to and opposed by something external, on the other. But, how can this be unless the absolute self is itself internally contradictory?

Here we might also have the materials for generating greater insight into what Hegel means when he refers to self-consciousness as desire *überhaupt*. For, recall that – albeit perhaps only partially and problematically – Fichte is aware of the internally contradictory nature of the absolute self:



The absolute self is identical with itself: everything therein is one and the same self, and belongs [...] to one and the same self; nothing therein is distinguishable, nothing manifold; the self is everything and nothing, it is nothing *for itself*, and can distinguish not positing or posited within itself. – In virtue of its nature it *strives* [...] to maintain itself in this condition. – There emerges in it a disparity, and hence something alien to itself. [...] *That* this happens, can in no sense be proved a priori, but everyone can confirm it in his own experience (WL 233).

The absolute self strives to preserve its perfect self-identity. Yet, Fichte immediately follows this statement by pointing that, while the absolute self is perfectly identical with itself, still, disparity emerges within it. Fichte seems to treat the striving of the absolute self to preserve its perfect self-identity as something which is at least in principle prior to the contradiction that emerges within the absolute self. For Hegel, the point would be that the absolute self of its nature strives to preserve its self-identity *precisely because* in its *nature* it is contradictory.<sup>194</sup>

Thus, through connecting it with its Fichtean backdrop, we have an at least first approximation to what Hegel means by saying that self-consciousness is desire *überhaupt*. Self-consciousness, in the first instance, is the desire of self-consciousness to sublimate its own internal contradictoriness, which is to say, the contradiction between its concept (i.e. perfect self-relation) and its existence (i.e. relatedness to, and thus ultimately

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<sup>194</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Mind can step out of its abstract universality, a universality that is for itself, out of its simple self-relation, can posit within itself a determinate, actual difference, something other than the simple I, and hence a negative; and this relation to the Other is, for mind, not merely possible but *necessary* because it is through the Other and by sublation of it, that mind comes to authenticate itself as, and in fact comes to be, what it ought to be according to its concept, namely the ideality of the external, the Idea that returns to itself out of its otherness, or, expressed more abstractly, the self-differentiating universal which in its difference is together with itself and for itself. *The Other, the negative, contradiction, rupture, thus belongs to the nature of the mind*” [Emphases mine] (PM 16).

dependence upon, another). In other words, in the first instance, desire is a principle of self-mediation. As such, desire is not directly related to any object, unless that object is self-consciousness itself. Self-consciousness *qua* desire *überhaupt* does not desire what it takes to be external objects because, for example, it seeks to possess them or even to negate them. What self-consciousness desires as such, or *überhaupt*, is to overcome its own internal contradiction. The putatively external objects which, as we will see, it attempts to negate turn out to be not directly desirable in themselves but rather merely as *means* for this more basic process of self-sublation.

Let us not forget, as well, that self-consciousness will turn out to be doubly self-contradictory. For, just as the subjective subject-object is simultaneously exclusively self-related and also related to something external, so the objective subject-object will inversely turn out to be simultaneously related to something external – namely, the subjective subject-object – and also purely self-related. The self-sublation of self-consciousness will thus involve the supersession of this duplication of self-consciousness within itself.

#### *4.3 The Double Object of Self-consciousness*

Having thus clarified, in part, what Hegel means by calling self-consciousness desire *überhaupt*, let us return to the thread of the discussion in the *PhG*. What needs to be emphasized is Hegel's following discussion of the double object of self-consciousness:

Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however *for self-*

*consciousness* has the character of a *negative*; and the second, viz. *itself*, which is the true *essence*, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object. In this sphere, self-consciousness exhibits itself as the movement in which this antithesis is removed, and the identity of itself with itself becomes explicit for it. (*PhG* 105)

There is thus a double object for self-consciousness: 1) the object of mere consciousness and 2) itself. In the first instance, however, the second object is present in self-consciousness only as opposed to the first, for, indeed, the second object has reflected itself out of the first object and into itself.

The truth, however, is that these two objects actually form an identity. The problem is that this truth is only *in-itself*, not yet *for* self-consciousness. The immediately succeeding sections of “Self-consciousness” delineate the process whereby the truth of self-consciousness becomes explicit *for* self-consciousness so that the truth of self-consciousness can become certain in-and-for-itself.

#### 4.3.1 *One Object of Self-consciousness: Life*

During the course of the “Consciousness” chapter, the first object of self-consciousness mentioned above, namely, the “whole expanse of the sensuous world” has, like consciousness, returned into itself. For Hegel, “[t]hrough this reflection into itself the object has become Life” (*PhG* 106). The first object of self-consciousness mentioned above is thus *life*. Accordingly, since self-consciousness is itself desire “the object of immediate desire is a *living thing*” (*PhG* 106). Self-consciousness thus sunders itself into self-consciousness, on the one hand, and life, on the other.

According to Hegel, *self-consciousness* is “the unity *for which* the infinite unity of differences is”, whereas *life* “is only this unity itself, so that it is not at the same time *for itself*” (*PhG* 106). The whole expanse of the sensuous world *qua* life is the infinite unity of self-differentiating and self-reconciling development that emerged during the course of the “Consciousness” chapter. This infinite, dynamic unity, however, is not yet explicit *for* life; it is only *for* self-consciousness, which latter, however, treats life as a merely “negative element” which it desires but only, as we will see, that it might negate it in order to preserve its own pure self-relation.

According to Hegel, life is a dialectic between the “simple universal fluid medium” or “restless infinity” of life *in-itself*, on the one hand, and the positing of individual shapes or members existing *for-themselves*, on the other (*PhG* 106-7). The two initial aspects of the dialectic mutually produce and negate each other. Life *for-itself* must negate life *in-itself* in order that the former might live, for life lives on life. Yet, the simple universal fluid medium of life is preserved precisely in and through the perpetual positing and negation of the individual members.

Thus the simple substance of Life is the splitting-up of itself into shapes and at the same time the dissolution of these existent differences; and the dissolution of the splitting-up is just as much the splitting-up and a forming of members. With this, the two sides of the whole movement which before were distinguished, viz. the passive separatedness of the shapes in the general medium of independence, and the process of Life, collapse into one another. The latter is just as much as an imparting of shape as a supersession of it; and on the other, the imparting of shape, is just as much a supersession as an articulation of shape. (*PhG* 108)

Life, then, is not just the simple universal fluid medium or the positing of individual members but the “self-developing whole” of these two moments in their dialectic sublation (*PhG* 108).

Hegel specifies that the resultant sublated whole or unity is indeed not the immediate unity of the simple universal medium of life, but a “reflected unity”, or, in other words, a “universal unity, which contains all these moments as superseded [*aufgehoben*] within itself” (*PhG* 108). Life, then, according to Hegel, is not simply an immediate universality, but a sublated universality which posits and sublates differences. As such, it is what Hegel calls a simple genus [*Gattung*] or mediated universal.

Recall, however, that life does not yet exist for itself. Thus, it does not yet exist for itself *qua* this simple determination of genus. Rather, life just *is* the infinite, universal self-differentiating and self-sublating generic process. According to Hegel, life *qua* simple genus, therefore, “points” [*verweist*] to something other than itself, namely, *consciousness* (*PhG* 109). It is *for consciousness* that life exists as a mediated universal or genus.

#### 4.3.2 *The Second Object of Self-consciousness: Self-consciousness*

Self-consciousness is that consciousness for which the genus of life exists. As such, according to Hegel, it is an-other life. Hegel adds the further important point that self-consciousness is *itself* a “genus on its own account” (*PhG* 109). Self-consciousness *qua* genus has itself as pure ‘I’ for object. In other words, self-consciousness, in one sense, is the immediate identity of subject and object: ‘I = I’. Thus, self-consciousness is a genus whose immediate object is the pure ‘I’ which just is self-consciousness itself and

is therefore also a genus. At least two points of reference ought to be kept in mind in order to keep track of Hegel's discussion at this stage, one of which has already been discussed in a previous chapter at some length and the other is on the immediate horizon of the current chapter and so permits a few anticipatory remarks.

The first point of reference is Aristotle's notion of rational Nous as *potentia omnia facere et fieri*. Rational Nous, in the first instance, is a potential totality or, as Hegel would put it, a genus in-itself. Education, for Hegel, is the process whereby this "initially abstract universality is developed to concrete universality" (*PM* 53). In other words, in the first instance, self-consciousness *qua* genus is the abstract 'I' which contains the totality of individual determinations within itself, but only in-itself, in potency. Its development consists in positing these determinations for-itself, thereby rendering them actual and concrete.<sup>195</sup> Thus, Hegel states that the abstract 'I' *qua* object "will enrich itself for the 'I' [*qua* subject] and undergo the unfolding which we have seen in the sphere of life," for, as we have just seen, the sphere of life is the sphere of a universal medium which posits individual differences only to sublimate them (*PhG* 109).

The apex of this development will, of course, entail self-consciousness or mind *qua* genus in-itself becoming actualized for-itself such that the immediate and abstract identity of the 'I = I' of self-consciousness becomes the mediated and concrete identity of the Aristotelian *Noesis noeseos*. As Hegel states,

In natural things their substance, the *genus*, is different from their existence [...]

The content of natural things does not acquire the form of universality and

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The genus genuinely actualizes itself [...] in mind, in thinking, in this element which is homogeneous with the genus" (*PM* 54).

essentiality through itself, and their individuality is not itself the *form*; only subject thinking is the form for itself and in philosophy gives that universal content an existence for itself. The *human content* by contrast is the free mind itself, and it comes to existence in mind's self-consciousness. This absolute content, the intrinsically concrete mind, is just this: to have the form itself, thinking, for its content. *Aristotle* soared above the Platonic Idea (the *genus*, the *substantial*) to the heights of the thinking consciousness of this determination in his concept of the entelechy of thinking, which is *Noesis tos noeseos*. (PM 254-5)<sup>196</sup>

In natural things, the individual remains in contradiction with its genus or concept. Life attains to a mediated identity of the abstract universal medium and the equally abstract individual, thereby producing a concrete universal, or a universal which posits and preserves its individual differences. Yet, life achieves this mediated universal only *in-itself*. It remains for the individual self-consciousness, which is an abstract universal or genus in-itself, to posit its implicit universality for-itself in order thereby to actualize the true concrete unity of individual and universal in which the individual is both itself and the genus.

Aside from Aristotle, the other major point of reference that must be borne in mind in order to make sense of Hegel's point that the abstract 'I' of self-consciousness is itself a genus is Kant's notion of self-consciousness as the Transcendental Unity of

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<sup>196</sup> Bernard Williams thus paints a misleading picture by suggesting that the Aristotelian *noesis noeseos* would, for Hegel, correspond to the merely abstract identity of the Fichtean 'I = I' (*Recognition* 268-70). For Hegel, the Aristotelian *noesis noeseos* clearly corresponds to the intrinsically *concrete* mind.

Apperception (TUA). Fichte is, of course, relevant as well in this context, but mainly as extending or *otherwise* refining Kant's position.

For Hegel, the TUA is more or less cognate with Aristotelian rational Nous at least in the latter's initial abstract or potential quality. Thus, in the case of the TUA, the mind or self-consciousness just is a genus or, as Hegel will specify later, a category which turns out to be a category of categories – which is to say, a mediated universal, or a category/genus which posits and sublates differences within itself.<sup>197</sup> Yet, like the abstract 'I' of self-consciousness, the TUA is thoroughly abstract and lacks concrete, individual determinations. Moreover, the concrete determinations which it does achieve are problematically derived in the Kantian system. Again, all of these points will be returned to in later discussions. Yet, they are helpful to bear in mind when attempting to make initial sense of Hegel's claim that life *qua* self-consciousness has in the first instance itself *qua* abstract 'I' which is itself a genus as an object.

#### 4.3.3 *Self-consciousness as Desire Redux*

Having established the nature of the double object of self-consciousness, namely, life *qua* genus in-itself and itself *qua* genus for-itself, let us return to the thread of the *Phenomenology* and further examine Hegel's discussion of the simple, abstract genus or 'I' that is self-consciousness. Thus, Hegel states,

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Hegel: "This category [...] possesses difference *in itself*; for its essence is just this, to be immediately one and selfsame in *otherness*, or in absolute difference. The difference therefore *is*, but is perfectly transparent, and a difference that is at the same time none. It appears as a *plurality* of categories" (*PhG* 142).



The simple 'I' is this genus or the simple universal, for which the differences are *not* differences only by its being the negative essence of the shaped independent moments; and self-consciousness is thus certain of itself only by superseding [*Aufheben*] this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life; self-consciousness is Desire. Certain of the nothingness of this other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is *for it* the truth of the other; it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a *true* certainty, a certainty which has become explicit for self-consciousness itself *in an objective manner* (*PhG* 109).

Recall, the simple, abstract 'I' *qua* genus for-itself is *also* self-consciousness *qua* reflecting out of the world of sensuous life and existence. Thus, *for* self-consciousness *qua* reflecting out the world of sensuous life and existence, that world is not even a mere moment of itself (although, to be sure, that world is indeed a moment of self-consciousness in-itself).<sup>198</sup> Therefore, the world of sensuous life and existence is for abstract, reflecting self-consciousness, at this stage, *nothing at all*. At the very same time, however, abstract, reflecting self-consciousness is *confronted by the otherness of the sensuous world of life*. Thus, there is for abstracting, reflecting self-consciousness a difference which is *not* a difference, for it is confronted by an other which for it is nothing. Stated differently, abstract, reflecting self-consciousness is self-contradictory since, for-itself, it both is and is not related to something other.

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<sup>198</sup> Recall, Hegel: "The [mere] *being* of what is merely 'meant', the *singleness* and the *universality* opposed to it of perception, as also the *empty inner being* of the Understanding, these are no longer essence, *but are moments of self-consciousness*" [Emphases mine] (*PhG* 105).

Recall, further, that along with being reflected out of the sensuous world of life, the simple, abstract 'I' or self-consciousness is also a genus. Therefore, the difference between itself and the sensuous world of life which confronts self-consciousness is *not* a difference only insofar as self-consciousness constitutes the *negative essence* of the independent moments, only insofar as self-consciousness is "infinity as the supersession of all distinctions" (*PhG* 106). How, then, does abstract, reflecting self-consciousness sublimate the distinction between itself and the world of sensuous life that confronts it, thereby proving that the distinction was no distinction? Answer: in the first instance, through desire.

Recall, once more, that desire *qua* self-consciousness is not primarily concerned with consumption or destruction in the satisfaction of desire. Rather, desire primarily is the felt contradiction within self-consciousness between its existence and its concept as well as the concomitant urge to sublimate this contradiction. Thus, self-consciousness *qua* reflected, abstract 'I' is in contradiction with itself inasmuch as it is both purely self-related *and* related to something external. Pure self-relation or  $I = I$ , however, is the concept self-consciousness. Thus, in order to achieve an existence that is adequate to its concept, self-consciousness must negate the object – the sensuous world of life – which stands opposed to it.

In so doing, self-consciousness actually achieves two correlative goals. First, in consuming or otherwise destroying *the object*, self-consciousness proves to itself that the object was in fact nothing and that self-consciousness is purely self-related. Second, through *its activity* of consumption or negation, self-consciousness explicitly objectifies for-itself its own – previously implicit – certainty of existing purely for-itself, of being

purely self-related. As such, the subjective or abstract certainty of self-consciousness now becomes its objective or concrete truth.<sup>199</sup> This is the overall pattern of development, for Hegel: an initially abstract principle actively posits differences within itself in order to recognize itself objectively therein.

Still, despite the success with which self-consciousness meets in destroying the objectivity of the sensuous world of life and thereby objectifying for-itself its own implicit certainty of itself as purely self-relating, the achievement is fleeting, even somewhat illusory. Indeed, a crucial turning-point in the experience of self-consciousness occurs when in the very satisfaction of its desire it realizes that the object has its own independence. For, despite the fact that it would affirm the nothingness of the other by negating it, self-consciousness realizes that its self-certainty comes precisely *through* overcoming this other. Thus, according to Hegel, self-consciousness experiences the irony that “by its negative relation to the other, [self-consciousness] is unable to supersede it” (*PhG* 109).

Were self-consciousness truly independent and self-sufficient, and were its object truly nothing, then it should not feel the desire to negate its object. For, in such a case,

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<sup>199</sup> Hegel summarizes this point of discussion in the *PM* as follows: “Abstract self-consciousness is the *first* negation of consciousness, therefore also burdened with an external object, formally with the negation of itself; thus it is at the same time the preceding stage, consciousness, and is the contradiction between itself as self-consciousness and itself as consciousness. Consciousness and the negation in general are already implicitly sublated in the  $I = I$ ; so as this certainty of itself in contrast to the object, it is the *urge* to posit what it is implicitly, – i.e. to give content and objectivity to the abstract awareness of itself, and conversely to free itself from its sensoriness, to sublimate the objectivity that is given and to posit it as identical to itself. The two things are one and the same, the identification of its consciousness and self-consciousness” (153). Abstract self-consciousness, due to its internal contradiction – namely, its being both purely self-related ( $I = I$ ) and related to an external, sensuous object – feels the *urge* to overcome this distinction. The means by which it would achieve this are 1) negating the external object which it takes to be merely given and 2) positing its own objective activity so that the only object to which it would be related would be itself, thus returning to a mediated  $I = I$ . These two actions are in fact *one and same* since the activity of negating just is the objectification *for* self-consciousness of its implicit pure self-relating.

self-consciousness would not be self-contradictory. Yet, insofar as it does experience such desire and its subsequent satisfaction, self-consciousness *eo ipso* establishes a relation, indeed a relation of dependence, to the object of which it would otherwise presume to be independent.

As the result of this ironic experience, self-consciousness is forced to the realization that while, in one sense, self-consciousness is the essence of desire or desire *überhaupt* (for desire, in the first instance, seeks to sublimate the internal contradiction of self-consciousness), still, in another sense, and despite or perhaps because of the self-contradictory nature of self-consciousness, the essence of desire “is something other than self-consciousness” (PhG. 175, p. 109). For desire *qua* desire, despite its initial pretensions to the contrary, is inextricably linked with and therefore dependent upon something distinct from itself.<sup>200</sup>

Yet, by the very same token, self-consciousness *does* exist absolutely for-itself, and it must experience the satisfaction of overcoming the other, namely, the world of sensuous life. The true overcoming of the other and the concomitant establishment of independence and self-certainty, however, cannot take the form of a desire which simply negates the object. For, that effort ironically only reveals the dependency of self-consciousness *qua* desire on its object. Instead, Hegel asserts that the other of self-consciousness, namely, its object-*qua*-life, must negate *itself*. Only then, can self-

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<sup>200</sup> To put it in Fichtean terms, desire initially seems to manifest the pure self-positing of ‘I am I’ or ‘I therefore I.’ For, in the first instance, I desire in order to mediate myself – hence, ‘I therefore I.’ Yet, in proving to be dependent upon something external, desire simultaneously manifests the principle of ‘I therefore not-I’ or ‘I am not-I’.

consciousness attain the satisfaction which would attend upon its own self-certainty and self-sufficiency.

#### 4.4 *Life as the Concrete, Developing Object of Self-Consciousness*

With Hegel's claim that the sensuous world of life must negate itself in order for self-consciousness to truly objectify its own certainty of itself, and thereby raise that certainty to truth, we have entered into a new phase of the discussion of self-consciousness. For, previously the focus of the attention was placed on self-consciousness as reflected out of the world of sensuous life and existence along with its failed attempt to preserve or otherwise sublimate its hitherto abstract self-identity by merely negating the sensuous world of life which threatened the purity of that self-relation. Now, the focus broadens to include the activity and development of the sensuous world of life itself in relation to abstract, reflecting self-consciousness.

To begin the discussion it must be recalled that, according to Hegel, insofar as it is both the independent genus of life and its own self-negation, this object of self-consciousness is *consciousness* (PhG. 175, p. 110). Thus, while, on the one hand, self-consciousness reflects out of the world of sensuous life, it also posits and preserves that life for which the whole expanse and infinite variety of the natural world is its own object. Self-consciousness is, accordingly, divided into: two moments: 1) abstract self-consciousness and 2) consciousness which is immersed in and opposed by the entire sensuous world – in other words, life.

In the *PM* Hegel clarifies the point, stating

The defect of *abstract self-consciousness* lies in this: it and consciousness are still *two different things* confronting each other, they have not yet achieved a reciprocal equilibrium. In consciousness, we see tremendous *difference*, on the one side, of the *I*, this wholly *simple* entity, and on the other side, of the infinite *variety of the world*. The opposition of the *I* and world, which does not yet come to genuine mediation here, constitutes the *finitude* of consciousness. *Self-consciousness*, by contrast, has its finitude in its still wholly *abstract identity with its own self*.<sup>201</sup> (*PM* 153)

Abstract self-consciousness is “burdened” by an external object – consciousness – which latter is itself opposed by the infinite variety of the sensuous world. The correlative terms in Fichte’s system should be readily apparent. For, there, the absolute self (i.e. abstract self-consciousness) was identified with, yet opposed by, the empirical self (i.e. consciousness) which latter was opposed by the world nature or the not-I (i.e. the whole expanse of the sensuous world).

Yet, it is important not to lose track of the fact that the distinction between self-consciousness and consciousness is a distinction within self-consciousness itself. As Hegel states, “The rift between self-consciousness and consciousness forms an *inner* contradiction of *self-consciousness* with itself, because self-consciousness is also the stage directly preceding it, *consciousness*, and consequently is the opposite of itself (*PM*

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<sup>201</sup> Recall that in Fichte, the empirical self (i.e. consciousness) and the absolute self (i.e. abstract self-consciousness) both were also beset by finitude.

153).<sup>202</sup> Again, the correlates in Fichte should be readily apparent. For, there, the empirical self was simultaneously opposed to, yet posited within, the absolute self.

Important to note, as well, is that Fichte's system essentially stops at the viewpoint of abstract self-consciousness. For, it does not succeed in moving past the moment of desire or striving in self-consciousness and the concomitant effort to negate the object. As noted, however, the source of Hegel's eventual critique of Fichte lies in Hegel's decision to take on the viewpoint of the empirical self, which up to this point has been characterized as mere consciousness.

Yet, Hegel proceeds to observe how the would-be *merely* conscious life which is the opposed object of self-consciousness turns out to be itself self-consciousness. For, recall that as consciousness *qua* life is a genus. Yet, it is a genus which is conscious of itself, and a genus that is conscious of itself, for Hegel, just is *self-consciousness*. Thus, the self-negating independent object of self-consciousness is a self-consciousness. In the terms of the *DZ*, the objective subject-object of life is truly a *subject-object*.<sup>203</sup>

Recall that self-consciousness seeks the satisfaction derived from the certainty that its object corresponds to itself. Yet, we have just learned that the object of self-consciousness is a self-consciousness. As a result, Hegel states, "*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness*" (*PhG* 110). In other words, abstract, reflecting self-consciousness will achieve satisfaction only in the independent world of sensuous life which has itself become self-consciousness.

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<sup>202</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Self-consciousness necessarily goes on, therefore, to confront itself with *another* self-consciousness by repulsion of itself from itself" (PM, 146).

<sup>203</sup> Cf. the *Philosophy of Mind*: "The object is [...] immersed in the inwardness of the self" (PM, 153).

#### 4.4.1 McDowell's Challenge to the Orthodox Interpretation of Self-consciousness

According to McDowell, the claim that self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness “is usually taken to claim that there can be a self-conscious individual, say a self-conscious human being, only if there are at least two, each recognizing the other as another of what it is one of” (*HWV* 159). The strongest part of McDowell's larger argument occurs precisely in his response to this more or less orthodox position, as he states,

The otherness that needs to be *aufgehoben* by the movement of self-consciousness appeared in the first instance as the otherness of ‘the whole expanse of the sensible world’, one moment in the doubled object of self-consciousness, whose movement is to overcome the antithesis between that moment and the other, namely itself. It was that moment in the doubled object, ‘the whole expanse of the sensible world,’ that returned into itself and became life, and then revealed itself as consciousness and finally self-consciousness. This is the ‘another self-consciousness’ of our passage. It should surely be in some sense the same object, or moment in a doubled object, that we began with, only now more hygienically – less immediately – understood. But if ‘another self-consciousness’ here is a literally other mind, say a different human being, *what has happened to ‘the whole expanse of the sensible world’?* How does replacing the first moment in the doubled object of self-consciousness [i.e. the whole expanse of the sensuous world] with someone else's self-consciousness belong with the unfolding of that



moment that Hegel seemed to be offering in the text up to this point? [Emphases mine] (*HWV* 159)

The orthodox interpretation would replace the entire expanse of the sensuous world, which is the first object of the doubled object of self-consciousness<sup>204</sup> and which through its own inward reflection reveals itself to be conscious life and ultimately self-consciousness, with “a literally other mind, say a different human being”. Yet, in such a scenario, what happens to the entire expanse of the sensuous world? How is the other self-consciousness *qua* other individual human being which self-consciousness would thus confront itself *the entire expanse of the sensuous world of life*? Moreover, how is the entire expanse of the sensuous world preserved as a moment within self-consciousness? All of these questions are avoided if the orthodox interpretation is jettisoned, and the two self-consciousnesses which find themselves opposed are interpreted as abstract/absolute self-consciousness, on the one hand, and empirical self-consciousness, on the other.

#### 4.4.2 *Summary of Preceding Section and Transition to the Lord/Bondsman Dialectic*

At this point, Hegel briefly summarizes the state of the argument thus far:

The notion of self-consciousness is only completed in these three moments: (a) the pure undifferentiated ‘I’ is its first immediate object. But (b) this immediacy is itself an absolute mediation, it *is* only as a supersession of the independent object, in other words, it is Desire. The satisfaction of Desire is, it is true, the reflection of self-consciousness into itself, or the certainty that has become truth. (c) But the

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<sup>204</sup> The other object, of course, being self-consciousness for-itself.

truth of this certainty is really a double reflection, the duplication of self-consciousness. Consciousness has for its object one which, of its own self, posits its otherness of difference as a nothingness, and in so doing is independent. (*PhG* 110)

In the first instance, self-consciousness has the abstract or undifferentiated 'I' as its immediate object: I = I. This is self-consciousness *qua* reflected into itself and out of the sensuous world of life. But this immediate, self-sufficient identity can only be preserved by negating the independent object, life. The demand for this negation is experienced as desire and its fulfillment as satisfaction. Thus, in one sense, the satisfaction of desire is the very "reflection of self-consciousness into itself". It is that by which self-consciousness becomes certain of itself in its self-sufficiency and independence. Yet, the truth of this experience of self-certainty reveals that there must be a double reflection: one by self-consciousness and one by the object. Since the object is a genus, however, the reflection of itself into itself reveals it to be self-consciousness. Thus, self-consciousness is duplicated within itself.

With the discovery that the object of self-consciousness is a self-consciousness, "we already have before us the concept of mind [*Geist*]" (*PhG* 110). Yet, Hegel maintains that the experience of what mind *is* still lies ahead for consciousness. For mind in its fullest sense is the "absolute substance which is the unity of different independent self-consciousness, which in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (*PhG* 110).

The vast majority of commentators take this statement to imply that in the "Self-consciousness" chapter we thus entered upon the stage in which the analysis has shifted

from the the experience of a single self-consciousness to the experience of the social encounter and interplay between two distinct and independent individual self-consciousnesses. McDowell is right to emphasize, however, that Hegel clearly states that the experience of this truth about the mind *still lies ahead for consciousness* (HWV 160-61). We are as yet dealing with an individual self-consciousness which has itself as its own object.

This claim can be verified by simply recalling the beginning of the present analysis of self-consciousness in which Hegel states that the *being* of the whole expanse of the sensuous world was but a moment of self-consciousness, albeit merely *in-itself* (PhG 105). For abstract self-consciousness, as it first comes on the scene, this infinitely self-differentiating sensuous world, the world of life, is taken to be an independent object. Thus, self-consciousness found that it had two objects: itself and life. In truth, or in-themselves, these two objects were the same, but self-consciousness was not yet certain of it; the truth was not yet explicit for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness initially tried to make this truth explicit for itself by simply negating the object. This procedure, however, only revealed the independence of the object. It was necessary for the object to negate itself in order for self-consciousness to become certain of itself in its own object. For in thus reflecting into itself, the object constituted itself as the genus which exists for itself, which just is self-consciousness. Thus, self-consciousness duplicates itself in order that its self-certainty might become objective for-itself.

The parallel between the present analysis of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology* and the previous analysis of Fichte's system and Hegel's critique thereof has also been revealed. For, self-consciousness *qua* reflected into itself would correspond

to the absolute self of Fichte's system. Indeed, Hegel explicitly invokes the foundational principle of the *WL*,  $I = I$ , in describing this moment of self-consciousness. The self-consciousness constituted by the *object* reflecting into itself would correspond to the empirical self, or objective subject-object, of Fichte's system. Self-consciousness reflected into itself would correspond the subjective subject-object.

Importantly, self-consciousness in the first instance, or the subjective subject-object, is an abstract and immediate self-identity which lacks motion or mediation. It will therefore be within the objective subject-object that mediation and development take place. More precisely, development and mediation will occur *both* in the relation *between* the subjective subject-object and the objective subject-object as well as *among the distinct aspects* of the objective subject-object. The fact that the development and mediation that occur will take place through the form of lordship and bondage, however, indicates that Hegel will be here extending his critique of the ultimate inadequacy of Fichte's system.

#### 4.5 *The Lord/Bondsman Dialectic*

The initial phase of Hegel's account of the relationship between the subjective subject-object and the objective subject-object takes place in the section entitled, "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" (*PhG* 111). It begins by noting that self-consciousness exists in-and-for-itself only insofar as it exists for another. Thus, the object of self-consciousness must be self-consciousness in order for self-consciousness properly to exist, which is to say, in order for self-consciousness not to be in contradiction with its own concept. Each self-consciousness

must exist for the other in order for either to exist, at all. In other words, self-consciousness exists only insofar as it is acknowledged by self-consciousness. The process in and through which this acknowledgement is achieved is what Hegel calls the “process of recognition” (*PhG* 111).

Self-consciousness has “come out of itself” (*PhG* 111). In terms of Fichte’s system, the absolute self or subjective subject-object has posited for itself an empirical existence. The absolute self, as it were, loses itself inasmuch as it finds itself as an-other being. In other words, the absolute self finds itself objectified in an-other being, namely, the empirical self, which, while constituting an objectification or positing of the absolute self, nevertheless is opposed to the absolute self.<sup>205</sup> At the same time, however, the absolute self has already superseded the other for the empirical self is posited within the absolute self; therefore, “it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self.”<sup>206</sup> (*PhG* 111)

For Hegel, the twofold relation of the absolute self to the empirical self yields a twofold ambiguity [*gedoppelte Doppelsinn*]. First, the absolute self must overcome the ambiguous opposition of the empirical self to itself in order thereby “to become certain of *itself* as the essential being” (*PhG* 111). Yet, overcoming this ambiguous opposition gives

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<sup>205</sup> Recall the relevant passage in Fichte: “The self is to be equated with, and yet opposed to, itself [...] Hence, insofar as there is a not-self opposed to it, the [empirical] self is itself in opposition to the absolute self” (*WL* 109).

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Fichte: “Opposition is possible only on the assumption of the unity of consciousness between the self that posits and the self that opposes. For if consciousness of the first act were not connected with that of the second, the latter would be, not a *counterpositing*, but an absolute positing. It is only in relation to a positing that it becomes a counterpositing” (*WL* 104); “Now the not-self is posited in the *self*; for it is counterposited; but all such counterpositing presupposes the identity of the self, in which something is posited and then something set in opposition thereto” (106); “the identity of consciousness [is] the sole absolute foundation of our knowledge” (107).

rise to a second ambiguity, namely, that in thereby overcoming the opposed empirical self, the absolute self simply overcomes its *own* self, “for this other is itself” (*PhG* 111).

According to Hegel, the abstract or absolute self’s “ambiguous overcoming of its ambiguous otherness” thus constitutes an “ambiguous return *into itself*” (*PhG* 111). For, in the first sublation, the absolute self returns into itself inasmuch as it regains the self-identity of  $I = I$ , while in the second sublation, the empirical self “gives back” the absolute self to itself inasmuch as it, the empirical self, overcomes or negates its very being-other *in* the absolute self.

Hegel’s primary critique of Fichte should be recalled here, namely, that the latter’s system does not achieve this very kind of return of the objective subject-object back into identity with the subjective subject-object. Hegel, himself, proposes to accomplish this return in the *PhG*, yet it will not be completed during the course of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic. Rather, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic will reveal the ultimate futility of attempting to produce this return by way of a relation of domination and servitude within self-consciousness.

Hegel’s observation that the empirical self would negate or overcome its own otherness to the absolute self, thereby giving back to the absolute self its self-identity, precipitates his subsequent comment that, while in one sense, the dialectic between the absolute and the empirical self is driven by the activity of the absolute self, nevertheless this activity of the absolute self has a double significance inasmuch as it is the activity of the absolute self *and* the activity of the empirical self. Absolute self-consciousness has the empirical self before it, not as the mere object of desire, but as a self-relating, self-negating self-consciousness in its own right. In principle, then, the absolute self cannot

treat the empirical self as a mere instrument which it would subordinate to its own purposes. Still, although this is true as a matter of principle or in-itself, it will not prevent the absolute self from *attempting* to reduce the empirical self to the status of a mere instrument. The point is simply that such an effort is doomed to failure since it neglects the intrinsically self-relating and self-determining character of the empirical self. The doomed attempt by self-consciousness to achieve this return into itself through a relation of domination and servitude, however, will not be entirely fruitless since in the process consciousness will learn several important lessons about itself.

#### *4.5.1 The Lord/Bondsman Dialectic as the Expression of an Allegorical Self*

##### *interpretation by Self-consciousness*

Hegel observes that the doubled activity of self-consciousness repeats the double reflected-ness into self that we witnessed in the play of Forces, yet with the crucial difference that this dialectic will now occur, not just for us, the phenomenologists, but for the consciousness we are observing itself. Thus, as previously mentioned, the account of self-consciousness marks an important turning point in the emergence of the very form of the mind which could conduct the *Phenomenology* itself. Yet, just like for the forms of the mind within the “Consciousness” chapter, the forms of the mind within self-consciousness, while they will achieve a heightened level of self-observation, nevertheless will misinterpret the object of their observation, namely, themselves, and will thus be forced to learn through experience to adjust, in this case, their own *self*-interpretation.

Importantly, the account of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic begins with Hegel stating, “We have now to see how the process of this pure Concept of recognition, of the duplicating of self-consciousness in its oneness, *appears to self-consciousness*” [Emphasis mine] (*PhG* 112). The point of *Hegel’s* examination in this section of “Self-consciousness” is to analyze the process by which the absolute self and the empirical self come to recognize one another. McDowell rightly points out, however, that to begin with, we will not be examining how this process occurs properly or *for us*, phenomenological observers, but rather, how it appears *to the self-consciousness(es) we are observing* (*HWV* 160-61). The image or pattern of the relationship between the absolute self and the empirical self that is thus portrayed, therefore, will be distorted or skewed due to the inadequacy of self-consciousness to observe and properly interpret itself.

According to McDowell, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic is thus a kind of allegory that self-consciousness constructs for itself in order (inadequately) to interpret its own observation of itself (*HWV* 161ff.). Just as Sense-certainty and Perception routinely mistook themselves, which is to say, misinterpreted themselves and their experience due to their lack of self-knowledge, so the Lord/Bondsman dialectic is not an account of the experience that Self-consciousness actually undergoes at this stage of its development, but is rather an expression of its own misinterpretation of itself and its experience. To be sure, such misinterpretation or inadequate self-understanding will push the dialectical development of consciousness forward in spite of itself. Nevertheless, it is important not to confuse Self-consciousness’s inadequate self-understanding of its experience with what we, the phenomenologists, know it actually experiences.

#### 4.5.2 *The Life-and-Death Struggle of Self-consciousness*



As the name indicates, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic entails an inequality between the two terms of the relationship. Thus, in its allegorical account of its experience, Self-consciousness will exhibit the absolute self and the empirical self in a relationship of inequality in which one is merely recognized and the other is merely recognizing. In the allegory, what is other for the absolute self, namely, the empirical self, is experienced by the absolute self as a mere object submerged in the immediacy of biological existence. Yet, the same is true for the empirical self. Thus, the relation internal to self-consciousness between the absolute self to the empirical self is understood by self-consciousness at this stage to be a confrontation between two individuals.

Initially, therefore, no distinction has been drawn within the allegory between absolute versus empirical *self-consciousness* since for both self-consciousnesses as they appear immediately on the scene the other does not appear to be self-conscious, at all. Instead, *for* each individual the other appears as a form of consciousness “which ha[s] not yet accomplished the movement of absolute abstraction, of rooting-out all immediate being, and of being merely the purely negative being of self-consciousness; in other words, they have not as yet exposed themselves to each other in the form of pure being-for-self, or as self-consciousness” (*PhG* 113). Each fails to recognize the other as self-conscious. In order to attain the necessary mutual recognition, therefore, each must demonstrate to the other that it is indeed a self-consciousness.

The means by which self-consciousness demonstrates that it is the pure self-relating of self-consciousness “consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific existence, to the individuality common to existence as such, that it is not attached to life” (*PhG* 113). Self-

consciousness shows itself to be self-conscious inasmuch as it demonstrates that it is not attached to the world of sensuous life which includes its individual biological existence – that it is capable, in other words, of abstraction from or reflecting out of this specificity and individuality.

Such abstraction from merely biological existence entails a twofold action from self-consciousness, one aspect of which is on the part of the other and one on the part of itself. Thus, there are two actions, each with a twofold aspect. Insofar as the action is on the part of the other, “each seeks the death of the other” (*PhG* 113). Yet, in the very action of the other, “action on its own part is involved” as well (*PhG* 113). Here we have another double ambiguity that can only be clarified if we recall the distinction between the viewpoint of the form of the mind which we are investigating, namely, self-consciousness as it immediately comes on the scene, and that of we, the phenomenologists.

For, why should seeking the death of the other necessarily involve risking one’s own life? Surely, one might figure out a means of killing the other – for example, through cunning and deceit, or simply superior technology – which would not entail risking one’s own life. If, however, the other is *one’s own* objective mode of biological existence, then, by definition, to seek the death of this existence would simultaneously be to risk one’s own life. In other words, the radical abstraction from one’s merely biological existence is in fact a twofold action: 1) the (attempted) negation of one’s biological existence and 2) the risking of that very existence. *For* the form of self-consciousness under observation, however, these two aspects of a single activity would appear, at least initially, as two separate realities.

As a result of this twofold action on the part of each self-consciousness, a life-and-death struggle ensues. According to Hegel,

They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being *for themselves* to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case. And it is only through staking one's life that freedom is won; only thus it is proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not [just] being, not the immediate form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment, that it is only pure *being-for-self*. (*PhG* 114)

The result of "Consciousness" was consciousness's discovery that the entire expanse of sensuous life and being was but a moment of its own *being-for-self*. Consciousness became self-consciousness. Yet, this self-certainty of self-consciousness was merely immediate; it had yet to be objectified or raised to truth for self-consciousness. It is only in the *activity* of staking one's life that the certainty of self-consciousness begins to be raised to truth.

To the extent that the trial-by-death issues in the death of both self-consciousnesses, however, self-consciousness fails to raise its certainty to truth. For, each self-consciousness was to the other its biological existence, and insofar as each succeeds in killing the other, they thereby achieve, not mutual recognition, but merely mutual destruction. In this case, the relationship between the two self-consciousnesses "collapses into a lifeless unity which is split into lifeless, merely immediate, unopposed extremes" (*PhG* 114).

Through the experience of the futility of the life-and-death struggle as a means for attaining mutual recognition and thus raising the certainty of self-consciousness to truth, “self-consciousness learns that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness” (*PhG* 115). As a result of this experience the initial immediate unity of self-consciousness, the simple  $I = I$ , is dissolved into the two essential principles of self-consciousness: 1) pure, self-relating self-consciousness and 2) consciousness as immediately bound up with biological existence.

While both moments are essential to self-consciousness, they come on the scene as unequal and lacking true unity. Pure self-consciousness experiences itself as independent and existing for-itself, while the consciousness bound up with biological existence experiences itself as dependent and existing, not for-itself, but for another, namely, pure self-consciousness. In the relationship between the two self-consciousnesses, then, pure self-consciousness is the Lord, while consciousness bound up with biological existence is the Bondsman.

Here, then, is expressed in allegorical terms the process described in the *WL* by which the immediate identity of the purely self-positing  $I$  is differentiated into absolute or pure self-consciousness, on the one hand, and empirical self-consciousness which is bound up with the not-self, on the other. The  $I = I$  of self-consciousness, in other words, has dirempted itself into:  $(I \text{ therefore } I) + (I \text{ therefore not-}I)$ .

It might be further noted that a major difference between Hegel and Fichte in this context is that, while Fichte’s procedure is deductive, starting, as it does, from a first principle and proceeding “downwards”, Hegel’s procedure can only be called

“emergentist.”<sup>207</sup><sup>208</sup> For, although in Hegel’s account the life-and-death struggle issues in the dissolution of the immediate self-identity of pure self-consciousness, the distinction thus posited itself constitutes, as we will see, the concrete conditions or potency for a higher, more profound unity, a unity in which empirical consciousness will become adequate, indeed identical, to pure self-consciousness.

#### 4.5.3 *The Structure and Elements of the Lord/Bondsman Dialectical Relationship*

The structure of the relationship between the Lord and Bondsman, or pure self-consciousness and empirical consciousness, is complex but can be summarized in fairly clear terms. Like the immediate I = I, the Lord is self-consciousness existing for-itself. The difference, however, is that a mediation has occurred in which the I relates not strictly to itself but to itself through another, namely, the Bondsman or empirical consciousness. The Bondsman is, again, that consciousness which is bound up with the independent objects of empirical existence or “thinghood in general” (in Fichtean terms, the not-I) (*PhG* 115). As such the Lord relates both to the Bondsman and the latter’s

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. Hegel: “[The Concept is] a going forth of the *more perfect from the imperfect*” (*EL* 233).

<sup>208</sup> A translation from Geraets, Suchting and Harris of a footnote in the *EL* would seem to suggest that Hegel disavows the term “emergence” as capturing his position (*EL* 16). A closer examination of the German term employed as well as the context in which it is used, however, contradicts this suggestion. The German term which is translated as “emergence” is *Hervorgehen* which carries with it the connotation of “going out.” In the context, Hegel is objecting to von Baader’s ascription to him, i.e. Hegel, of the position according to which matter eternally “emerges” from, in this sense of “goes out” from, God. Hegel points out that he would not use this term in this context because it is a “pictorial expression” [*bildlicher Ausdruck*]. Here, then, Hegel is not objecting to the notion that higher orders of existence emerge from lower orders and, therefore, to the very notion of emergence, but rather to the pictorial expression of creation of matter as entailing a kind of pseudo-spatial going *out* from God. In other words, the objection to the term *Hervorgehen* in this context has nothing to do with denying the reality of emergence, but is rather an instance of Hegel’s familiar rejection of using spatial images as means for expressing the relation between consciousness and its object – in this case, the relationship between the consciousness of God and His object, namely, Creation.

object; moreover, the Lord relates immediately to both as well as mediately to both through the other.

First of all, the Lord relates mediately to the Bondsman through the things of empirical existence. For, the Bondsman was unable to free himself from being determined by this very realm. Insofar as the Bondsman finds himself dependent upon his objective existence he corresponds to Fichte's divisible empirical self especially in its mode as intelligence as well as its mode as a system of merely natural drives. For, *qua* intelligence, the divisible, empirical self found itself determined by and dependent upon the empirical object or not-self.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, in its mode as a system of natural drives the empirical self was thoroughly immersed in or even identified with the whole expanse of sensuous existence. As with the absolute self, however, for the Lord, the object that keeps the Bondsman in bondage is "something merely negative" (*PhG* 115).<sup>210</sup> As such the Lord has immediate power of the object and mediate power over the Bondsman through the object

Second, the Lord also relates mediately to the object through the Bondsman. For, the Bondsman, like the empirical self, is also self-conscious and is thus capable of negating the object – albeit not to the degree of the Lord whose action entailed the (apparent) total abstraction from the object. Rather, the Bondsman *works* on the object and in so doing he transforms it into a form which can be enjoyed by the Lord. Thus, through the mediation of the labor of the Bondsman the Lord succeeds where mere desire

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. Fichte: "Thus, as *intelligence in general*, the self is *dependent* on an undetermined and so far quite indeterminable not-self; and only through and by means of such a not-self does it come to be intelligence" (*WL* 220).

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Fichte: Insofar as the not-self is opposed to the absolute self, "the not-self is *absolutely nothing*" (*WL* 109).

failed, namely, in ridding himself of the independent aspect of the object and taking to himself the merely dependent aspect of it which permits him the pure enjoyment of the object. In other words, the object as worked on by the Bondsman, for the Lord, just is the experience of mere satisfaction which, as such, is a determination of the Lord, not the object.<sup>211</sup>

Needless to say, the discussion of the labor by which the Bondsman actively determines the object, as opposed to being merely determined by it, points to the transition in Fichte from empirical self *qua* intelligence to the empirical self *qua* practical reason. Further aspects of the ongoing relationship between the Lord and Bondsman make this point even clearer.

At the current stage of the relationship, the Lord has achieved for himself two of the crucial moments in the process of recognition. Recognition, first of all, calls for each side to do to themselves what the other does to it. Thus, in setting aside his own immediate desires and working for the sake of the Lord, the Bondsman places himself in the service of the Lord just as much as the Lord forces the Bondsman into servitude. Second of all, in order to achieve recognition, the action of one party must in fact be the action of the other. Thus, the activity of the Bondsman is really just a mediated activity of the Lord. Here we have, moreover, an evocation of the process in Fichte in which the striving of the empirical self to determine the not-self is simply an indirect expression of the absolute self's striving to preserve its own pure (or, for Hegel, abstract) self-identity. The problem to which Hegel's account calls attention, however, is that the recognition is

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<sup>211</sup> Recall, once again, that, according to Hegel, in principle or in-itself "[t]he [mere] *being* of what is merely 'meant', the *singleness* and *universality* opposed to it of perception, as also the *empty inner being* of the Understanding, these are no longer essence, but are mere moments of self-consciousness" (*PhG* 104-5).

unequal and one-sided. For, while Bondsman does to himself what Lord does to the Bondsman, the Lord does not do to himself what the Bondsman does to the Lord, nor is the action of the Lord's truly that of the Bondsman.

#### 4.6 *The Dialectical Inversion of the Lord/Bondsman Relation: The Development of the Bondsman*

The result of the analysis, thus far, has shown the Bondsman entering into servitude to the Lord. The Lord treats the Bondsman as a mere object or instrument indistinguishable, in fact, from the biological existence in which the latter is immersed. Yet, the fact that the Bondsman constitutes the object of the Lord sets up a radical turning point in the entire analysis of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic, one which marks the beginning of a rather profound dialectic critique and inversion of the entire Fichtean backdrop to this dialectic. For, insofar as the object of the Lord is the Bondsman, the Bondsman thus is the latter's *truth*. What that means is that, as Hegel states, "The *truth* of independent consciousness is accordingly the servile consciousness of the Bondsman" (*PhG* 117). Understanding more precisely what it means to say that the servile consciousness of the Bondsman is in fact the truth of the independent consciousness of the Lord requires tracking very closely Hegel's subsequent analysis of what servile consciousness itself is.

To begin with, in contrast to the Lord, the Bondsman has the independent consciousness that exists for-itself of the Lord as *his* truth. Servile consciousness, however, is not yet explicitly aware that it contains this truth implicitly within itself. Yet, what does it mean to say that the truth of the Bondsman is the pure being-for-self of the Lord's consciousness? It means that the abstraction from or reflected-ness out of



immediate attachment to merely biological existence which the Lord putatively achieved in the risking of his life in the life-and-death struggle is, ironically, even more radically achieved by the Bondsman who seemed to be utterly attached to this biological existence.

How is this radical abstraction from the whole expanse of sensuous biological existence achieved by the Bondsman? It is achieved in and through the *fear of death*. Thus, ironically, despite the fact that Bondsman would cling to his biological existence, in the experience of *fearing its loss* he is actually driven all the more deeply into himself and thus reflects all the more out of his immediate identity with that biological existence. Speaking of the experience of servile consciousness in its fear of death, Hegel states,

This consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. In that experience it has been quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations (*PhG* 117).

In the fear of death, even more so than in the staking of one's life, consciousness succeeds in the universal abstraction from and nullification of the whole expanse of sensuous biological existence. Thus, in fact implicit in servile consciousness is the absolute negativity or pure being-for-itself which had hitherto been ascribed to the Lord.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> The discussion of the fear of death is thus also a continuation of Hegel's emergentist view of development. For, the fear of death constitutes – quite ironically – the “natural” emergence of consciousness out of mere nature. Needless to say, this emergence of mind from nature is ultimately a “play” of mediation of mind with itself. As Hegel states in the *PM*: “The emergence of mind from nature must not be conceived as if nature were the absolutely immediate, the first, the original positing agent, while mind, by contrast, were only something posited by nature; it is rather nature that is posited by mind,

To be sure, while we, the phenomenologists, are able to recognize the implicit truth contained in the experience of servile consciousness, for the Bondsman himself his pure being-for-self is still only objectified in the Lord. This alienated objectification or projection of his own intrinsic power, however, is eventually overcome by the Bondsman in and through his very work for the Lord – although, it should be noted, this work of the Bondsman will take the remainder of the *PhG* itself to be completed, and so will not be achieved within the “Self-consciousness” chapter. For work accomplishes two things: 1) it makes *concrete* in every *particular* detail what was merely an abstractly universal detachment from biological existence experienced by the Bondsman in his fear of death; 2) it objectifies, not just for us, but for the Bondsman himself, the truth about the Bondsman, namely, that it is he, not the Lord, who truly possesses the universal negating and abstracting power of being-for-self.

Through work the Bondsman imparts form and permanence to what previously had been fleeting objects of mere desire. In the work itself, then, the Bondsman is able to recognize himself in the objective order which he in fact posits. As Hegel states, “consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence” (*PhG* 118). What is more, insofar as the Bondsman imparts form and permanence to the world of fleeting sensuous biological existence he thereby negates it, at least in the form in which it initially presented itself to him. Yet, it was precisely this realm of sensuous biological existence before which the Bondsman had trembled in fear.

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and the mind is what is absolutely first. Mind that is in and for itself is not the mere result of nature, but is in truth its own result; it brings itself forth from the presuppositions that it makes for itself, from the logical Idea and external nature, and is the truth of the logical Idea as well as of nature.” (PM, 14). Thus, much more clearly than in Fichte, for Hegel, the mind posits nature or the not-self not simply as a mere fact but precisely in order to mediate its own development and thereby to emerge as mind in and for itself.

Thus, through work, the Bondsman “destroys this alien negative moment, posits *himself* as a negative in the permanent order of things, and thereby becomes *for himself*, someone existing on his own account” (*PhG* 118).

Through fear, service and labor, then, the Bondsman, unlike the Lord, simultaneously forms an objective order in which he can recognize himself and *forms himself* into a master or universal power over “the whole of objective being” (*PhG* 196, 119). In other words, he forms himself into a pure self-consciousness or being-for-self. The Bondsman has become the Lord.

#### 4.7 *Explication of the Upshot of the Lord/Bondsman Allegory*

It is important to clarify the precise nature and scope of the dialectical inversion that has just been allegorically represented as an encounter between a Lord and a Bondsman. First of all, in terms of scope, the significance of the relationship of domination and servitude (as well as, of course, its dialectical sublation), for Hegel, is practically unrestricted. From his earliest to his most mature works Hegel was especially preoccupied by this theme. Indeed, the Lord/Bondsman dialectic can be read as an allegorical figure for virtually all relationships that Hegel addresses throughout his corpus, of course, of the culminating moment of development in which this relationship is finally sublated.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Hegel’s interest in the relation of domination and servitude stretches at least from the early *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* all the way through the discussion of causality in the *SL*, and beyond (*ETW* 182-301 and *SL* 554-76). Indeed, there is an argument to be made that famous dialectic between Being and Nothing at the beginning of the *SL* is but the most purified conceptual expression of the relation of domination and servitude.

Second, in terms of the significance of the dialectical inversion for the *PhG*, it now becomes possible 1) to qualify accounts of earlier stages of development as manifesting an at least implicit relationship of domination and servitude, and 2) to qualify accounts of later stages of development as further workings-out of this relationship by, for and within consciousness. Thus, for example, in Sense-certainty consciousness takes itself initially to be *dominated by* and *dependent upon* the object. Through the intellectual *labor* of thinking-through this object, however, consciousness manages, albeit still problematically and tenuously, to invert this relationship. It remains to be seen how subsequent sections of the *PhG* manifest further developments and sublations of the relation of domination and servitude.

Third, the significance of the dialectical inversion of the Lord/Bondsman relationship for this dissertation is that, on the basis of Hegel's analysis, *it now becomes possible to explain the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies in terms of their manifesting various stages of the dialectic of domination and servitude within consciousness*. We have already discussed at some length the way in which the Lord/Bondsman relationship serves as an allegorical figure for explaining the constituent elements of the Fichtean philosophy in particular as well as transcendental philosophy more generally. It will be useful, however, to return again to this theme in order to explain more fully how, in the allegory, Hegel is providing an initial schematic of his eventual full dialectical explanation of transcendental philosophy as resulting from a failed sublation of the relation of domination and servitude within consciousness.

#### 4.7.1 *The Lord/Bondsman Dialectic and Transcendental Philosophy*

Perhaps the most crucial turning-point in the Lord/Bondsman dialectic occurs when it is observed that “the truth of independent consciousness is [...] the servile consciousness of the bondsman” (*PhG* 117). What this fact entailed was that true being-for-self or self-consciousness was achieved, not by the Lord, but by the Bondsman. Indeed, the Bondsman became the true Lord of his objective existence. In terms of the experience of consciousness as well as the task of explaining the emergence of different philosophies, such as Fichte’s, to say that the Bondsman becomes the true Lord is, allegorically, to say that the empirical self *becomes* the absolute self.<sup>214</sup>

What does it mean to say that the empirical self *becomes* absolute or pure self-consciousness? It means that Fichte’s philosophy expresses a misinterpretation of the experience of empirical consciousness. For, empirical consciousness becomes absolute or pure self-consciousness. At the present stage of its development as represented allegorically by the Lord/Bondsman dialectic, however, the empirical self does not recognize this fact. In other words, *in-itself*, the empirical self is or has become pure self-consciousness. Yet, *for* the empirical self *qua* Bondsman, pure self-consciousness actually resides in an alien element, namely, the Lord. It is just this alienated self-interpretation, moreover, which Fichte’s philosophy expresses inasmuch as in that

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<sup>214</sup> McDowell makes substantially the same point when he states vis-à-vis the philosophical upshot of this aspect of the Lord/Bondsman allegory, “an empirical consciousness *becomes* an apperceptive consciousness” (*HWV* 164). McDowell uses the Kantian terms “apperceptive consciousness” and “apperceptive I” in order to refer what Fichte (and Hegel in the *DZ*) tends to call the absolute self or ego. Both Fichte and Hegel view Fichte’s notion of the absolute self as simply a more purified expression of the Kantian “apperceptive ego” or “transcendental unity of apperception”. Moreover, there are several elements in the Lord/Bondsman dialectic that have direct and precise correlates in Fichte’s philosophy but which are either missing entirely or only suggestively present in Kant’s philosophy. As such, focusing more heavily on the specifically Fichtean backdrop to the account of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic seemed called for. McDowell does manage to note, albeit briefly and in passing, that the “intervening contribution” of Fichte between Kant and Hegel would be relevant to this overall discussion (*HWV* 153). He seems to have missed, however, the utter indispensability of that contribution for properly understanding Hegel’s effort in this section of the *Phenomenology*.

philosophy the true absoluteness of empirical consciousness is said to reside in an alien element, namely, the absolute or transcendental self. To put the point in terms of the overall thesis of this dissertation: *Fichte's philosophy expresses in philosophical terms an alienation within and misunderstanding of the experience of empirical consciousness.*

In Fichte's philosophy, the empirical self is alienated from absolute or pure self-consciousness – they do not achieve an identity. Rather, in Fichte, the absolute self lords it over the empirical self and uses the latter as a mere instrument for reestablishing the lost certainty of its self-identity. The result of this domination of the empirical self by the absolute self, however, is the mere condemnation of the empirical self to a futile infinite striving to completely determine its object, the not-self. Fichte thus fails to appreciate how through fear, service and labor the empirical self becomes the absolute self. Fichte's philosophy thus expresses a flawed and alienated self-interpretation of the empirical self. It represents, in other words, a lack of self-knowledge on the part of the empirical person, Fichte, himself.

The empirical person, Fichte, has failed to understand that through his own fear, service and labor as a philosopher he has become an absolute or pure self-consciousness. In a very pregnant passage Fichte does allude to the possibility that empirical consciousness, through the labor of education and philosophical development, might attain to pure self-consciousness:

The more a determinate individual can think away of himself, the closer does his empirical consciousness approximate to pure self-consciousness; – from the child who leaves his cradle for the first time, and thereby learns to distinguish it from himself, to the popular philosopher who still accepts material idea-pictures, and

searches for the seat of the soul, and thence to the transcendental philosopher, who at least entertains and abides by the rule of conceiving a pure self. (*WL* 216)

This passage is highly suggestive and instructive. In order to understand its significance it will be important to recall a central aspect of Fichte's overall system, specifically, the means by which it explains the fact of empirical experience.

For, recall, Fichte maintains that the absolute self unconsciously posits a not-self which the empirical self confronts as an external object opposed to it. The empirical subject "forgets" this aboriginal act of positing by the absolute self and so, under the domination of the absolute self and its striving in general to preserve its perfect self-identity, the empirical self sets about on its infinitely deferred task of determining the object in a manner that would be ultimately adequate to the infinity of the absolute self.

Yet, in the above passage Fichte describes what is in effect the inverse task – or, rather, a task which is apparently the inverse but which would in fact constitute the same task, for Hegel. For, Fichte is describing a process whereby the empirical self infinitely approximates to the absolute self. Yet, if we were to apply the logic of Fichte's own explanation of empirical experience which culminates in an infinite approximation to an infinite or absolute object, then we must conclude that Fichte has forgotten that the absolute self has in fact been posited by Fichte himself. In other words, rather than there being merely one moment of forgetting on the part of empirical consciousness, as in Fichte, what Hegel's account of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic permits us to see is that there are in fact two correlative acts of forgetting: one by which empirical consciousness posits and then forgets its positing of an independent, absolute object, and the other by

which the empirical self posits and then forgets its positing of an independent, absolute self or subject.

Indeed, this act of forgetting penetrates to the very core of Fichte's, not to say, Kant's, philosophy – yet, it is also patently on the surface for all to see. For, to what is Fichte himself referring in discussing the absolute self's infinite, unrestricted, self-sufficient act of self-positing if not an absolute and infinite object?<sup>215</sup> In *WL*, this object has been constituted by the empirical consciousness of Fichte and by anyone who has understood Fichte's system. Fichte, however, has forgotten this and so declares that empirical consciousness – including his own – can only ever infinitely approximate to the absolute self.

Like the Bondsman vis-à-vis the Lord, Fichte locates his own absolute or pure self-consciousness in a principle outside of his empirical self, namely, in the absolute self, which, by definition, never appears in empirical consciousness.<sup>216</sup> The same dialectical explanation would apply to Kant and to most all philosophy in the Kantian transcendental tradition inasmuch as these draw a distinction between the absolute or transcendental ego and the empirical ego.

For Hegel, by contrast, *educated* empirical consciousness just is absolute or pure self-consciousness. In other words, for Hegel, *there is no absolute self distinct from the empirical self*. That there is such a distinction is simply how things appear to the self-consciousness at this stage of its development. For us, the phenomenologists, and thus in-

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. Hegel, according to whom, “the limitless infinity of *absolute abstraction* or *universality*, the pure thinking of oneself” can be had by any individual “consulting” their own self-consciousness (*EPR* 37).

<sup>216</sup> For, recall, according to Fichte, insofar as absolute consciousness is to provide the explanation for empirical consciousness it must necessarily fall outside of empirical consciousness.



itself, the empirical self becomes the absolute self.<sup>217</sup> This fact simply does not yet become explicit for the empirical self, and so it misinterprets itself. This is the primary lesson of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic.

#### 4.8 *Preemptory Response to a Potential Objection*

Since passages from the *PM* have been made use of in supporting the current nest of arguments, it is only fair to note that select few passages in that *PM* give some support to the orthodox interpretation according to which the confrontation between the two self-consciousness hitherto discussed is that between two distinct human beings. Thus, regarding this confrontation, Hegel states,

In this determination lies the massive contradiction that, since the I is what is wholly *universal*, absolutely *pervasive*, *interrupted by no limit*, the *essence common to all men*, the two selves here relating to each constitute *one* identity, so to speak *one* light, and yet they are also *two* selves, which subsist in complete *rigidity* and *inflexibility* towards each other, each as a *reflection-into-self*, absolutely *distinct* from and *impenetrable* by the other (*PM* 157).

Such passages must be read within the context of the larger works in which they are embedded and ultimately within the larger context of Hegel's entire corpus.

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<sup>217</sup> Cf. Hegel on the emergence of his own philosophy: "This is then the demand of all time and of philosophy. A new epoch has arisen in the world. It would appear as if the World-spirit had at last succeeded in stripping off from itself all alien objective existence, and apprehending itself at last as absolute Spirit, and keeping it within its own power, yet remaining at rest all the while. The strife of finite self-consciousness with the absolute self-consciousness, which last *seemed* to the other to lie outside of itself, now comes to an end. Finite self-consciousness has ceased to be finite; and *in this way* absolute self-consciousness has, on the other hand, attained to the reality which it lacked before" [Emphases mine] (*LHP III* 551). Absolute self-consciousness attains to its proper reality *precisely by* finite, empirical self-consciousness becoming infinite.

First, none of the terms used by Hegel to describe the relation between the two selves operative within self-consciousness (e.g. “rigidity,” “inflexibility”) run counter to the interpretation of self-consciousness offered, thus far. To be sure, according to the orthodox interpretation as voiced by Pippin, to maintain that two rigidly opposed selves or self-consciousnesses are nevertheless unified in a single individual is to consign such an individual to a “schizophrenic frenzy” (*Hegel on Self-Consciousness* 48). Yet, according to that logic, the Kantian who finds her particular, natural inclinations rigidly and inflexibly opposed by her universal, absolute moral conscience is but a mere schizophrenic. Indeed, the limitation of self-consciousness as it first comes on the scene lies precisely in the fact that abstract self-consciousness and empirical consciousness are each only reflected into themselves and thus stand in a relation of mere externality to one another, rather than being sublated into a higher unity.

It would be useful to recall the figure of Christ. For, according to traditional Christology, which Hegel at least partly accepts, Christ is a single individual with an absolute/lordly as well as empirical/human or even slavish consciousness.<sup>218</sup> Indeed, in *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, Hegel describes Christ as instantiating in his individual person a sublation of the radical Kantian dichotomy between absolute and empirical self-consciousness which characterizes self-consciousness in its initial stages.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Cyril O’Regan, in his *The Heterodox Hegel*, attempts to work out the details of Hegel’s peculiar appropriation of the Christological doctrine of the hypostatic union, i.e. the doctrine according to which Christ is one person with two natures, one human (empirical) and one divine (absolute) (219-21 et passim).

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Hegel: “In this Kingdom of Heaven, however, what [Christ] discovers to them is not that laws disappear but that they must be kept through a righteousness of a new kind in which there is more than is in the righteousness of the sons of duty and which is more complete because it supplements the deficiency in the laws [or ‘fulfills’ them]. This supplement he does on to exhibit in several laws. This expanded content we may call an inclination so to act as the laws may command, i.e., a unification of inclination with the law

Second, immediately preceding the above passage from the *PM*, while discussing the opposition between empirical consciousness and abstract self-consciousness, Hegel states, “The two things are one and the same, the identification of [self-consciousness’s] consciousness and its self-consciousness” (*PM* 144). For Hegel, however, as we know from the *PhG* as well as the *PM* consciousness just is self-consciousness.<sup>220</sup> Thus, self-consciousness is in fact the identity of abstract self-consciousness and empirical self-consciousness – they are one and the same.

Third, like the *PhG*, the *PM* indicates how it will be only for the form of the mind under investigation, not for us, the phenomenological observers, that the development which occurs in the objective, empirical self-consciousness is something truly distinct from the ‘I’ or subjective/abstract self-consciousness:

In *phenomenology*, the soul, by the negation of its bodiliness, raises itself to pure self-identity, becomes consciousness, becomes I, is for itself over against its Other. But this first being-for-self of mind is still conditioned by the Other from which the mind originates. The I is still completely empty, an entirely abstract subjectivity; it posits all the content of immediate mind outside itself and relates

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whereby the latter loses its form as law. This correspondence with inclination is the [fulfillment] [Hegel might say ‘sublation’] of the law, i.e., it is an ‘is,’ which, to use an old expression, is the ‘complement of possibility,’ since possibility is the object as something thought, as a universal, while ‘is’ is the synthesis of subject and object, in which subject and object have lost their opposition. Similarly, the inclination [to act as the laws may command], a virtue, is a synthesis in which the law (which, because it is universal, Kant always calls something ‘objective’) loses its universality and the subject its particularity; both lose their opposition, while in the Kantian conception of virtue this opposition remains, and the universal becomes the master and the particular the mastered” (*ETW* 214). Cf. also: “Between the Shaman of the Tungus, the European prelate who rules church and state, the Voguls, and the Puritans, on the one hand, and the man who listens to his own command of duty, on the other, the difference is not that the former make themselves slaves, while the latter is free, but that the former have their lord outside themselves, while the latter carries his lord in himself, yet at the same time is his own slave” (*ETW* 211).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Consciousness of an other, of an object in general, is itself necessarily *self-consciousness*” (*PhG* 102); “All consciousness of another object is self-consciousness” (*PM* 152).

to it as to a world it finds before it. Thus what was initially only our object, does indeed become an object for mind itself, but the I does not yet know that what confronts it is the *natural mind itself*. There, the I, in spite of being-for-self, is at the same time not for itself, for it is only in relation to an Other, to something given. [Emphases mine] (*PM* 27)

In other words, abstract self-consciousness forgets that the mind which apparently confronts it as an “external,” “given” body is just its own “natural mind”, or empirical consciousness. Indeed, as a rule, it only *appears* to the form of consciousness under investigation that its object operates independently of itself, including when that object is empirical self-consciousness itself.<sup>221</sup> To interpret the Lord/Bondsman dialectic along orthodox lines, however, would effectively do away with the distinction between how things merely appear to the form of consciousness under investigation and how things actually are in-themselves or for us, the phenomenological observers. For, it would entail that the first moment of the doubled object of self-consciousness, namely, empirical self-consciousness, does not merely appear to be, but is in fact or in-itself, a wholly alien, external object – namely, another human being.

Fourth, McDowell’s objection still stands: the orthodox interpretation leaves entirely unexplained what happens to the whole expanse of sensuous being inasmuch as it constitutes a moment of self-consciousness.

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<sup>221</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Since the I is *for itself* only as formal identity, the *dialectical* movement of the concept, the progressive determination of consciousness, does not look to it like its *own* activity, but is *in itself* and for the I an alteration of the object” (*PM* 144).

Fifth, the orthodox interpretation renders virtually meaningless the strikingly evident Fichtean and Kantian context to the entire discussion of self-consciousness in the *PhG*. For, that context concerns precisely the distinction in Fichte and Kant between the transcendental or absolute ego and the empirical ego as well as the experience within an individual consciousness of the tension between these two principles – specifically, the experience of domination and servitude, lordship and bondage. To say, for example, that one of the two distinct human beings in the orthodox interpretation constitutes abstract or pure self-consciousness while the other constitutes empirical self-consciousness does not solve anything. For, I fail to see how the results of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic which do occur could be attained on the assumption that one of the two distinct human individuals involved was not empirically conscious.

### *5. Stoicism, Skepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness*

Before turning to the “Reason” chapter, let us first briefly examine how Hegel advances upon the results of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic in explaining the emergence of Stoicism, Skepticism and Unhappy Consciousness.

#### *5.1 Stoicism*

In the experience of consciousness which gives rise to Stoicism, the first point to note is that, while, for us, or in-itself, the object of consciousness *qua* formed by the Bondsman’s fear, service and labor is identical with the being-for-itself of self-consciousness, still, for the form of consciousness under investigation these two elements “fall apart” (*PhG* 120). Stated differently, self-consciousness at this stage of development

achieves the identity of its being-for-self and being-in-itself, but only on the level of immediacy. Insofar as it recognizes the unity of itself and its object, self-consciousness becomes thinking consciousness. “For,” as Hegel notes, “in thinking, the object does not present itself in picture-thoughts [*Vorstellungen*] but in Concepts [*Begriffen*], i.e. in a distinct *being-in-itself* or intrinsic being, consciousness being immediately aware that this is not anything distinct from itself” (*PhG* 120).

Thinking consciousness, moreover, is a free or independent form of consciousness inasmuch as, in thinking, consciousness is not determined by something alien to itself. Yet, insofar as the identity recognized by self-consciousness between itself and its object is merely immediate, consciousness remains merely thinking consciousness in general [*denkendes Bewusstsein überhaupt*]. Therefore, consciousness identifies only with the universal aspect of conceptual thinking in general and forgets the “development and process of its manifold being” (*PhG* 197 and 122). As a result, the development and process of its manifold being remains *for consciousness* an alien “multiplicity of things” (*PhG* 122).

Stoicism as a philosophy thus expresses a form of consciousness which has undertaken the intellectual labor of forming its object as an objectification of itself but which is still, as it were, under the sway of the *moment of fear* and the general withdrawal out of objectivity characteristic of that experience. As Hegel states, “As a universal form of the World-Spirit, Stoicism could only appear on the scene in a time of universal fear and bondage, but also a time of universal culture which had raised itself to the level of thought” (*PhG* 121). Thus, the object with which Stoicism identifies lacks the fullness of life. Instead, Stoicism finds itself inhabiting a world of mere generalities which lack

concrete determinations. Its pretension to freedom is therefore compromised inasmuch as the concrete, individual determinations of natural existence from which it would presume to abstract are simply given to it from without.

## 5.2 *Skepticism*

Despite the intellectual labor entailed by its level of education, Stoicism expresses the moment of fear in the experience of the Bondsman. Skepticism, by contrast, expresses the labor of the Bondsman who sets about actively negating the independence of the merely natural object. As Hegel states, “In Skepticism [...] the wholly unessential and non-independent character of this ‘other’ becomes explicit *for consciousness*; the [abstract] thought becomes the concrete thinking which annihilates the being of the world in all its manifold of determinateness, and the negativity of free self-consciousness comes to know itself in the many and varied forms of life as a real negativity” (*PhG* 123).

Recall that with the emergence of self-consciousness it was discovered that the whole expanse of life and the being of natural existence constitute merely vanishing moments of self-consciousness itself. Yet, this occurred only in-itself, or for us, not yet for the form of consciousness under investigation. In Skepticism, consciousness succeeds in actively bringing about this negation of the seeming stability and objectivity of natural existence.

Skepticism causes to vanish “not only objective reality as such, but its own relationship to it, in which the ‘other’ is held to be objective and is established as such” (*PhG* 124). Stoicism abstracted itself from identifying with the flux of life and empirical existence. Skepticism does not merely abstract from but actively negates this object, and

not only this object but its relationship to it which had been established by the abstraction of Stoicism. As a result, Skeptical consciousness careens back and forth between two different ways of experiencing itself. At times Skeptical consciousness experiences itself as “a consciousness which is *empirical* [...] a single and separate, contingent and, in fact, animal life, and a *lost* self-consciousness”, while at other times it experiences itself as “a consciousness that is universal and self-identical; for it is the negativity of all singularity and all difference” (*PhG* 125).

The fundamental limitation of Skepticism<sup>222</sup> is that it is unable to unite these two ways of thinking about and experiencing itself. Through the method of “equipollence” the skeptics were able to negate the certainty of any determinate position by marshalling its opposite, thereby revealing to others as well as the skeptics themselves their own universal power of negating all determinate or singular principles. Yet, these very same skeptics advised that it was appropriate to allow oneself to be guided by merely sensuous phenomena and to live in conformity with the particular customs and laws of the country in which one happened to find oneself (*LHP III* 342ff.). Skepticism holds apart these two contradictory aspects of its consciousness.

### 5.3 *The Unhappy Consciousness*

The form of consciousness which succeeds Skepticism, namely Unhappy Consciousness, *knows* that it is both the “self-liberating, unchangeable and self-identical” being-for-itself of pure self-consciousness *and* the contingent, animal, and lost empirical consciousness (*PhG* 126). Thus, in the experience of the Unhappy Consciousness,

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<sup>222</sup> And it would seem that Hegel, here, is explaining the emergence of ancient, not modern, Skepticism.



according to Hegel, “the duplication which formerly was divided between two individuals, the lord and the bondsman, is now lodged in one” (PhG. 206, p. 126).

As McDowell notes, this statement might seem to count against the previously advanced interpretation according to which the Lord/Bondsman dialectic is best understood as dialectic internal to the experience of one individual consciousness, rather than as occurring between two individuals (*HVW* 164-5). The point to be recalled, however, is that the image of self-consciousness as divided into two different individual is merely how things *appeared* to consciousness at that stage of its development. The emergence of Unhappy Consciousness is precisely the emergence of a form of consciousness which not only experiences in-itself, but recognizes *for-itself* its own dual nature.

Even with Unhappy Consciousness, however, the duplication of self-consciousness within itself is not present in its unity. To the contrary, the internal contradictoriness of consciousness is experienced all the more poignantly by the Unhappy Consciousness; this is its special burden from which it cannot liberate itself.

In terms of explaining the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies, Unhappy Consciousness expresses the overarching philosophico-theological viewpoint of the Middle Ages as mediated through the religious institution of the Catholic Church. Thus, while in principle Unhappy Consciousness is aware of its dual nature, it initially projects one aspect of that duality, namely, the unchangeable being-for-self of pure self-consciousness into alien Beyond, while simultaneously reducing the here-below to an unessential vanishing realm.

We have, in fact, already witnessed the basic form of this alienation whereby empirical projects its own mastery onto a “Lord” external to it. In the case of the Unhappy Consciousness, the external Lord which comes to be invested with the power and mastery of developed empirical consciousness is that of the Judeo-Christian God. As will be discussed further, in the case of Kantian and Fichtean transcendental philosophy, Unhappy Consciousness reemerges in a more poignant form inasmuch as the Lord upon which empirical consciousness projects its mastery and power is the transcendental ego.

At this stage, Unhappy Consciousness acknowledges that the Unchangeable Beyond also resides within itself, but it cannot reconcile this indwelling of the Unchangeable with its simultaneous experience of itself as a wretched and fleeting natural existence. The Church and, in particular, the priest as mediators between the absolute, Unchangeable Beyond and the vanishing, changeable here-below, provide a kind of anticipatory figure for the subsequent form of consciousness, namely, Reason. For, Reason is the form of consciousness which is certain that, “in its particular individual, it has being absolutely *in itself*, or is all reality” (*PhG* 138). As such, it will apposite to turn to examining the “Reason” chapter of the *PhG*.

#### 8. *Chapter Summary*

Self-consciousness is that form of consciousness for which consciousness has become its own object. As it first appears on the scene, this fact is true only in-itself, not yet for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness undergoes a complex series of dialectical transformations, the upshot of which is to mediate the development by which self-consciousness comes recognize for-itself that its object just is itself.

Insofar as self-consciousness eventually discovers that its object is, in fact, itself, it thereby recognizes that its object is not merely conscious, but self-conscious. The unfolding of this dialectical development necessitates a complex and doubly ambiguous self-duplication of self-consciousness. For, in the process of coming to recognize itself in its object, self-consciousness divides itself into an abstract and putatively absolute or lordly self-consciousness, on the one hand, and a slavish, empirical self-consciousness, on the other. The moment of recognition emerges inasmuch as empirical self-consciousness, through its fear, service and labor, succeeds in producing a truly universal object, an object, that is to say, of thought. For, in producing such an object, empirical consciousness itself becomes a universal, absolute mind whose object – *qua* universal – turns out to be just itself.

In terms of explaining and critiquing the existence of various philosophies, Hegel's analysis of self-consciousness proved to be quite illuminating. For, through this analysis it became possible to explain the emergence of transcendental philosophy to be the result of the alienation and faulty self-interpretation operative within empirical consciousness at a certain stage of its development. Thus, Fichte's philosophy emerges inasmuch as empirical consciousness does not recognize itself to be the universal power of thought which it has become, and instead projects that power onto an alien principle, namely, a would-be lordly absolute or transcendental ego.

The existence of other philosophies was also explained. For example, Stoicism was revealed to result from the residual effect of the moment of fear in the development of empirical consciousness. For, while Stoicism attains to the level of universal thought, in fear it withdraws or abstracts from the realm of natural, empirical existence. Stoicism

recognizes itself only in abstract universality; the realm of natural, empirical existence, by contrast, strikes it as a realm terror and bondage.

## Chapter IV

### **Reason and Hegel's Explanation of the Conceptions of Objectivity**

Early in the "Reason" chapter of the *PhG* Hegel articulates a point which is crucial to the overall argument of this dissertation:

Consciousness will determine its relationship to otherness or its object in various ways according to the precise stage it has reached in the development of the World-Spirit into self-consciousness. How it *immediately* finds and determines itself and its object at any time, or the way in which it is *for itself*, depends on what it has already *become*, or what it already is *in itself*. (*PhG* 234)

The overall argument of this dissertation is that, for Hegel, the multiplicity of philosophies is to be explained and critiqued by way of a theory of the polymorphism of the mind. As has been established, different philosophies express different stages in the development of the mind. The above quote helps to specify further that inasmuch as the polymorphism of the mind explains the fact of the multiplicity of philosophies it thereby explains the fact of the multiple *conceptions of objectivity* – that is to say, the multiple conceptions of the mind, the mind's object and the relationship between the mind and its object – operative within those philosophies.

For, that which perhaps most radically distinguishes philosophies is their respective conceptions of objectivity. Thus, in order to explain how Hegel's account of the polymorphism of the mind provides an explanation for the multiplicity of philosophies it is necessary to show how the polymorphism of the mind is responsible for the multiple conceptions of objectivity.

The present chapter, therefore, will be broken up into two major sections:

First, there will be an examination of Hegel's own conception of objectivity. It will be useful to establish at least the basic elements of Hegel's conception of objectivity first since, for Hegel, conceptions of objectivity other than his own constitute restrictions on, and distortions of, his more developed position. The examination of Hegel's conception of objectivity will address the following elements:

1. Hegel's effort to generalize his conception of objectivity beyond the restrictive distortions of lower viewpoints.
2. The experiential element of Hegel's conception of objectivity.
3. The principle determinations of Hegel's conception of the mind, the mind's object and the relation between the mind and its object.

Second, the chapter will show in the case of Kant how Hegel's phenomenology of the polymorphic development of the mind can be used to explain the conceptions of objectivity operative within the various philosophies. In order to achieve this goal, the discussion will return to the "Reason" chapter of the *PhG*. For, Reason as it first appears on the scene is beset by a peculiar set of limitations which causes it to maintain more than one conception of objectivity. It is Hegel's explanation of how Reason comes to maintain these multiple and, as it turns out, conflicting conceptions of objectivity that reveals even more fully the effectiveness of his phenomenological method of explaining the existence of different philosophies.

As will be shown, the Kantian philosophy, and, in particular, the multiple conceptions of objectivity operative therein, expresses the viewpoint of Reason as it first appears on the scene. Accordingly, certain details of Kant's philosophy will be examined

inasmuch as they correspond to Hegel's explanation of the multiple conceptions of objectivity operative within the viewpoint of Reason as it first appears on the scene.

Having established the twofold goal of this chapter, let us turn to examining Hegel's conception of objectivity.

### 1. *Hegel's Conception of Objectivity*

Hegel does not have a systematic work in which he spells out in precise and exhaustive detail his conception of the objectivity of knowledge. Indeed, Hegel has often been criticized for taking a cavalier or even dismissive stance towards traditional epistemological questions. To be sure, Hegel lacks the kind of rigorous gnoseology that has become *de rigueur* in our post-Husserlian context. As a result, we often only get indirect insight into Hegel's own position by way of his explanation and critique of more restricted viewpoints. Still, through a close examination of works such as the *PhG*, the *PM* and the "Positions on Objectivity" section of the *EL*, it becomes possible to articulate at least the basic outlines of Hegel's larger conception of objectivity. In order to begin sketching this outline let us turn first to examining how Hegel would generalize his – and our – conception of objectivity.

#### 1.1 *Hegel's Generalized Conception of Objectivity*

Hegel's effort to generalize his conception objectivity involves several key elements. First, one must recall the passage quoted above in which Hegel states that the conception of objectivity operative within a given form of the mind will be determined by the stage of development to which that form of the mind has managed to reach. For, a conception of objectivity is constituted by the manner in which the mind determines

itself, its object and its relation to that object. Thus, *Hegel shows that it is possible to derive particular conceptions of objectivity from the more basic and general principle of the polymorphism of the mind.*<sup>223</sup>

For example, in the case of Sense-certainty, consciousness or the mind is determined to be largely an inessential afterthought, while the object is determined to be an absolute and immediate ‘This’. The mind’s relation to the object in the case of Sense-certainty is determined to be that of immediate “receptivity”.<sup>224</sup> Objectivity according to this form of the mind thus entails the mind being merely “receptive” or “passive” with respect to the “external” object existing “out there.” Other viewpoints, as we have seen, determine themselves, their objects and their relations to their objects according to their respective levels of development.

In contrast to the multiplicity of more or less restricted conceptions of objectivity, however, Hegel would generalize his conception of objectivity beyond any such

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<sup>223</sup> Hegel’s well-nigh pathological antipathy for Newton notwithstanding, a useful analogy for understanding Hegel’s effort, here, would be Newton’s achievement in generalizing Kepler’s laws. For, in generalizing Kepler’s laws Newton achieved two important feats. First, he released Kepler’s insights from the restrictive horizon of what could be sensuously experienced or “perceived” from the viewpoint of Earth and thereby made them applicable to all moving objects. Second, he made it possible to derive Kepler’s laws from a more basic and general principle. Both of these achievements have analogues within Hegel’s effort to generalize his conception of objectivity. For, first of all, as we will see, in bracketing the naïve assumptions of ordinary consciousness and thinking-through what is in fact given in conscious experience, Hegel releases consciousness from the restrictive horizon of, for example, Sense-certainty and Perception according to which objects are simply what is given in sensuous experience or intuition. Second, in making the entire range of polymorphic consciousness the object of his inquiry, Hegel thereby shows how it is possible to derive or otherwise explain specific conceptions of objectivity – such as that of Kant – from a more basic and general principle, namely, polymorphic consciousness in its dialectical development. As we saw in Chapter One, Hegel’s objection to Newton focuses on the fact that the Concept of Law as expressed in Newton’s formulations is not *self-differentiating* or *self-determining*. Rather, the parts of the Concept of Law as formulated in Newton fall apart into an indifferent multiplicity. Thus, while Newton sublates Kepler, Hegel demands that Newton be sublated by Hegel’s conception of life *qua* self-determining organic unity which prescribes its own law or governing principle to itself. For a brief summary of Hegel’s view of Newton, cf. *LHP III* 324ff.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Hegel: In Sense-certainty, objectivity necessitates that “[o]ur approach to the object [...] be *immediate or receptive*” (*PhG* 58).



restrictions by, first of all, showing how they themselves are grounded in a more basic and general principle. Thus, an important part of achieving this generalization lies simply in the reflective recognition *by* the mind *that* the mind will determine in its conception of objectivity according to the level of development it has reached. In other words, for Hegel, in order to generate a properly generalized conception of objectivity it is necessary to abstract from or reflect out of all the more or less restricted conceptions of objectivity in order to observe how all conceptions of objectivity are derived from a more basic principle, namely, the polymorphism of the mind. Needless to say, the very ability to engage in this kind of self-observation is mediated by the experience of Self-consciousness.

A second and deeply related element involved in specifying the nature of Hegel's generalized conception of objectivity involves his larger theory of development. For Hegel, development is a transition from potency to act. Hegel accepts, moreover, the Aristotelian view of the mind as *potentia omnis facere et fieri*. The mind contains within itself the totality of all objects.<sup>225</sup> To be sure, it does so, in the first instance, only in potency, or in-itself. Yet, what this basic point entails is that, for Hegel, unlike for the viewpoints of Sense-certainty and Perception, the mind relates immediately to objects, not through "receptive" sensuous experience or intuition, but through itself. For, the mind contains, or rather *is*, the totality of objects in-itself. On such a view, objectivity is not a matter of gaining "access" or being "receptive" to an "object" "out there". Rather,

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<sup>225</sup> Cf. Fichte's similar observation: "There can no longer be anything obscure, complicated and confused for a practiced Scientist of Knowledge, if only he recognizes the object of concern. It is always easiest for him to erect everything new and from the beginning since *he carries the plans for every scientific building within him*" [Emphases mine] (*Philosophy of German Idealism*, 103).

objectivity is fundamentally a matter of self-mediation, of explicitly positing what is implicit in the mind, of actualizing the mind's potency.

To affirm this point, however, is just to generalize one's conception of objectivity beyond any naïve restrictions. For, the mind on such an account is, by definition, unrestricted; it is potentially all things. Thus, for Hegel, an object can be defined in abstraction from the restrictions of any particular stage of the mind's development as simply the actualization of the mind's potency.<sup>226</sup> In the most generalized sense, then, an object, for Hegel, is whatever the mind posits for itself.

### *1.1.1 Preemptory Response to Potential Objections to Ascribing to Hegel Such a Generalized Conception of Objectivity*

Before continuing to examine the basic outlines of Hegel's conception of objectivity, it would be worthwhile to note that many commentators, such as Pippin and McDowell, refuse to ascribe to Hegel the generalized conception of objectivity just articulated. For them, to affirm that, for Hegel, objects are actualizations of the mind's potency is wrongly to ascribe to him "wild [and] improbable psychological and metaphysical claims" (*Hegel's Idealism* 14). According to these commentators, Hegel's conception of objectivity simply *must* entail some notion of "external constraint" lest it devolve into a theory of mere "projections of the mind" upon the "independently real" (*HWV* 152-3). A crucial point which these commentators miss, one which has already been suggested several times, is that the degree of probability or plausibility one discerns in a given philosophical position will depend upon the viewpoint one has attained

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<sup>226</sup> Thus, Hegel maintains that if the mind only knew itself, "it would go down into the depths of its own being, and seek Reason there rather than in things" (*PhG* 146).

oneself. Thus, for example, what appears to be “wild” and “improbable” or otherwise incomprehensible to a lower viewpoint will appear perfectly intelligible and rational to a higher viewpoint. Nevertheless, it would behoove us to clarify why, for Hegel, objectivity is not a matter of an “external” object supplying a normative principle of “constraint” upon the mind.

According to Hegel, that the mind should come to presuppose that there is, or must be, a “constraint” supplied by an “external” object is itself the result the mind operating at fairly restricted stage of development. Indeed, such a presupposition is but a manifestation of the ruse that the mind or Reason plays upon itself in its complex process of self-mediation. The mind generates for itself the illusion that there is, or must be, an “externally constraining” object, but does so precisely as a means of sublating itself.<sup>227</sup> In other words, *for* the mind at a certain stage of its development, there can appear to be an “external” object “constraining” it. Yet, we, the phenomenologists, know that this is just the mind itself mediating its own self-development and that, accordingly, no such “externally constraining” object exists. Still, in order to clarify this point still further, let us return to Hegel’s use of the biological analogy and dis-analogy for understanding the development of the mind.

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<sup>227</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Therefore limitation is not in [...] mind: it is posited by mind in order to be sublated” (*PM* 23-4); “The concept needs no external stimulus for its actualization...But the concept is just as independent of our willfulness in the conclusion of its development as it is in the beginning and in the course of it. In a merely ratiocinative approach the conclusion certainly appears more or less arbitrary; in philosophical science, by contrast, the concept itself sets a limit to its self-development by giving itself an actuality that completely corresponds to it” (*PM* 7). Thus, contra McDowell, for Hegel, there is no “external constraint” on the mind. All limitation, including any “being” or “object” given in intuition, is posited within the mind in order to be sublated and thereby to mediate the mind’s own self-development. Cf. Hegel’s reference to the Concept’s positing of an “other” opposed to itself as a mere “play”: “The movement of the Concept must be considered, so to speak, only as a play; the other which it posited by its movement is, in fact, not an other” (*EL* 238). Hegel also refers to this process as the production of an “illusion”: “It is within its own process that the Idea produces that illusion for itself; it posits an other confronting itself, and its action consists in sublating this illusion” (*EL* 286).

1.1.2 *The Biological Analogy and Clarifying Hegel's Generalized Conception of Objectivity*

The process of the plant's development is indeed one of self-mediation. The plant posits differences or "constraints" within itself which it preserves and sublates within a higher unity. Importantly, however, the self-mediation of the plant involves an element of "externality," an element which is instructive precisely because it is *not* present in the self-mediation of the mind. For, in order to develop, the plant must be "receptive" to "external" "matter" such as, for example, the soil and carbon-dioxide. Thus, despite the fact that its development is largely a matter of self-mediation, the plant is nevertheless dependent upon "external" matter.

Regarding the plant's relation of dependence upon something external to itself, however, a few points must be borne in mind. First, although it initially finds itself dependent upon something "external", the plant immediately negates and sublates this externality by incorporating that which was external to it into its own process of self-mediation. In other words, it does not treat the "matter" external to itself as an object or something supplied by the thing-in-itself which "externally" "constrains" it. Quite to the contrary, it reduces such "matter" to a means or moment constitutive of its own process of self-mediation or self-"constraint"; it makes such "matter" a part of itself.

Second, insofar as it might be proper to speak of an object or thing-in-itself at all in the case of the plant, it would not be of the "external" "matter" "standing over-against" the plant of which one spoke, but rather of *the plant itself*, including, if not especially, its culminating moment of development, the fruit. Thus, even in the case of the plant, the

object or thing-in-itself is the *result* of the process of self-mediation and self-positing. It is not something “already out there” which imposes “constraints” on that process. Thus, if there are constraints on the development of the plant *qua* thing-in-itself, they are in the final instance constraints or limitations which the plant imposes upon itself in its process of self-development and self-mediation.<sup>228</sup>

So much for the self-mediation of the plant. As far as present concerns go, the most important dis-analogy between the self-mediation of the plant and that of the mind lies in the fact that, while in the self-mediation of the plant there is a moment of dependence upon an external element, in the self-mediation of the mind no such dependency or externality obtains. For, while the soil in the ground or the CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere might be spatially external to the plant, nothing is external – spatially or otherwise – to the mind.

To be sure, the mind can “forget” its process of self-development and treat its object as something “external” upon which it is somehow dependent or by which it is “constrained.” Indeed, for Hegel, such forgetting is part and parcel of the ruse that the mind plays upon itself in mediating its own self-development. Yet, as was revealed in the chapter on self-consciousness, anything of which the mind is conscious is already a moment or determination within the mind’s process of self-mediation. There is nothing “outside” the mind.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Even in the living thing we see this self-limitation of the concept. The germ of the plant, this sensuously present concept, closes its development with an actuality like itself, with production of the seed” (*PM* 7); “Even in the plant, we see a centre which has overflowed into the periphery, a concentration of the differences, a self-development-from-within-outwards, a unity that differentiates itself and from its differences produces itself in the bud” (*PM* 10).

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Hegel: “There is simply no out-and-out Other for the mind” (*PM* 3); “The semblance of mind’s being mediated by an Other is sublated by the mind itself, since mind has, so to speak, the sovereign

Furthermore, for Hegel, *pace* Sense-certainty and Perception, sensuous experience and our would-be “passive reception” of what is given therein bears no especial significance for objectivity.<sup>230</sup> Sensuous experience may prove to be a factor in objectivity. Yet, as we have already seen in the chapter on self-consciousness, that which is given in sensuous experience has already been reduced to a mere means or moment of the mind’s own self-mediation and development.<sup>231</sup> The object or thing-in-itself does not supply the “matter” for this moment; rather, the object or “thing-in-itself” emerges *from* this “matter” as act emerges from potency, or as the fruit emerges from the tree.

### 1.1.3 Summary of the Initial Discussion of Hegel’s Generalized Conception of Objectivity

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ingratitude of sublating, or mediating, that by which it seems to be mediated, of reducing it to something subsisting only through mind and in this way making itself completely independent” (*PM* 15); “Thought, and, more precisely, the Concept, is the infinite form, or the free, creative activity that does not need a material at hand outside it in order to realize itself” (*EL* 241).

<sup>230</sup> Cf. Hegel’s famous inversion, or rather sublation, of the pseudo-Aristotelian dictum according to which nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses: “There is an old saying that is usually (but falsely) attributed to Aristotle – as if it were supposed to express the standpoint of his philosophy: ‘Nihil est intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu.’ (There is nothing in the intellect that has not been in sense-experience.) If speculative philosophy refused to admit this principle, that would have to be considered a misunderstanding. But conversely, philosophy will equally affirm: ‘Nihil est in sensu quod non fuerit in intellectu’ – in the most general sense that the *nous*, and more profoundly *the spirit*, is the cause of the world, and more precisely that feelings concerning right, ethical life, and religion are feelings – and hence an experience – of the kind of content that has its root and its seat in thinking alone” (*EL* 32).

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The human soul has much to do in making its corporeal nature into a means” (*EL*, 284); “But in the realizing of the purpose of what happens *in-itself* is that *the one-sided subjectivity* is sublating, along with the semblance of an objective independence standing over against it. In taking hold of the means, *the Concept* posits itself as the essence of the object” (*EL* 285); “In point of fact, the Mind is the *idealist* proper; in Mind, even as feeling, imagination and still more as thinking and comprehending, the content is not present as a so-called *real existence*; in the simplicity of the ego such external being is present only as sublating, it is *for me*, it is *ideally* in me” (*SL* 155); “In this way, our knowing of God, like our knowledge of all that is *supersensible* in general, essentially involves an *elevation* above sensible feeling or intuition; hence, it involves a *negative* attitude toward the latter as first and in that sense it involves *mediation*” (*EL*, 37).

The preceding section sought to establish the initial point that Hegel attempts to conceive of objectivity according to its full generality. The two key aspects to Hegel's effort to generalize his conception of objectivity identified were the following:

1. Hegel contributes to generating a generalized conception of objectivity inasmuch as he abstracts from all more or less restricted conceptions of objectivity. Hegel achieves this abstraction precisely in and through his observation that the mind will determine itself, its object and its relation to its object according to the level of development it has reached.
2. Hegel's appropriation of the Aristotelian definition of the mind as potentially all things permits him to conceive of a radically generalized conception of objects and objectivity as ultimately a matter of the mind's self-mediation.

Some initial objections to ascribing to Hegel such a generalized conception of objectivity were noted and met through an appeal to Hegel's use of the biological analogy and dis-analogy in his overall account of the mind's development. It was also noted how Hegel's articulation of these elements of his generalized conception of objectivity is itself mediated by the experience of self-consciousness as it learns to abstract from and observe itself. For, in analyzing that experience Hegel thereby explains the emergence of this crucial aspect of his own philosophy.

### *1.2 The Experiential Element in Hegel's Conception of Objectivity*

Having examined certain key elements in Hegel's effort to generalize his conception of objectivity, it will be useful to examine the manner in which experience functions in Hegel's overall conception of objectivity. For, just as Hegel generalizes his

conception of objectivity, he also generalizes his conception of the role of experience in objectivity. Indeed, the generalized character of Hegel's conception of objectivity runs parallel to his generalized conception of the role of experience in objectivity.

For Hegel, sensuous experience, while perhaps a contributing factor to the objectivity of knowledge, is nevertheless certainly not decisive in the way that it is for Sense-certainty or Perception. Yet, it remains that experience is a crucial element in the mind's attainment of objectivity.<sup>232</sup> In order to understand the role of experience in Hegel's conception of objectivity it will be useful to begin by examining his dialectical appropriation and sublation of the Empiricist's insistence on the role of experience in their conception of objectivity.

### 1.2.1 *Hegel's Appropriation of Empiricism*

The demand that knowledge be grounded in conscious experience, for Hegel, marks the peculiar contribution of the Empiricists to the history of philosophy and, therefore, to the ongoing genesis of self-knowledge. For, according to Hegel, the flaw afflicting the traditional Scholastic and Wolffian metaphysics rests in their failure to ground their theorizing in concrete experience. The Empiricists provide an important corrective to this deficiency by insisting that all theorizing be grounded or otherwise verifiable in experience. As Hegel states,

*Empiricism* was the initial result of a double need: there was the need first for a *concrete* content, as opposed to the abstract theory of the understanding [e.g. Scholastic and Wolffian metaphysics] that cannot advance from its universal

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<sup>232</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The principle of *experience* contains the infinitely important determination that, for a content to be accepted and held to be true, man must himself *be* actively involved *with it*, more precisely, that he must find any such content to be at one time and in unity with *the certainty of his own self*" (EL 31).



generalizations to particularization and determination on its own, and secondly for a firm hold against the possibility of proving any claim at all in the field, and with the method, of the finite determinations. Instead of seeking what is true in thought itself, Empiricism proceeds to draw it from *experience*.<sup>233</sup> (EL 77)

Thus, Empiricism represents an important contribution to a fully generalized conception of objectivity inasmuch as it insists upon the experiential element of objectivity in contrast to the abstract theorizing of, for example, the Scholastics whose objects, or *termini technii*, could apparently not be discerned within experience.

For Hegel, the flaw with Empiricism, therefore, lies not in its insistence upon the experiential element of objectivity but rather in its *restricted conception of experience* and, therefore, of objectivity itself. As Hegel states,

inasmuch as, so far as the content is concerned, Empiricism restricts itself to what is finite, the *consistent* carrying through of its programme denies the supersensible altogether or at least its cognition and determinacy, and it leaves thinking with abstraction, [i.e.,] with formal universality and identity. – The fundamental illusion of scientific empiricism is always that it uses the metaphysical categories of matter, force, as well as those of one, many, universality, etc., and it goes on to draw *conclusions*, guided by categories of this sort, presupposing and applying forms syllogizing in the process. It does this without knowing that it thereby contains a metaphysics and is engaged in it, and that it is using those categories and their connections in a totally uncritical and unconscious manner. (EL 77)

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<sup>233</sup> Cf. Hegel: “In Empiricism there lies this great principle, that what is true must be in actuality and must be there for our perception” (EL 77).

Empiricism thus corresponds to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and, perhaps, the empirical consciousness of the Bondsman at an early stage in his development. For, like Sense-certainty and the Bondsman, Empiricism is, in the first instance, wholly immersed in the realm of the sensuous. As a result, Empiricism restricts its conception of experience to the finite and sensible. Yet, despite this restriction, Empiricism, behind its own back, presupposes and, in fact, employs the “lordly” categories – indeed, the very categories of the old metaphysics which it would presume to jettison – which clearly transcend the realm of the merely sensuous. Since these categories are not given in sensuous experience, the Empiricist denies that cognition of these categories or objects is possible and, therefore, consigns them to the realm of merely abstract or “subjective” thought. Thus, Empiricism’s restricted conception of objectivity runs parallel with its restricted conception of experience.

By contrast, Hegel recovers the Empiricist insistence upon the experiential element in objectivity, but, as with his conception of objectivity, he generalizes his conception of experience well beyond any Empiricist restrictions. Perhaps the clearest statement of Hegel’s generalized conception of experience occurs in the *EL* in which Hegel states: “everything that is in consciousness at all is experienced (This is even a tautological proposition.)” (32). To repeat: for Hegel, *everything that is in consciousness at all is experienced*. To appreciate the significance of this radical claim it would be helpful to view it in light of Hegel’s comment on Locke in which he explicitly accepts Locke’s insistence that objective knowledge be grounded in experience yet, simultaneously, generalizes his conception of experience beyond Locke’s Empiricist restrictions:

As to the question in point we must in the first place say that it is true that man commences with experience if he desires to arrive at thought. *Everything is experienced*, not merely what is sensuous, but also what excites and stimulates my mind. Consciousness thus undoubtedly obtains all conceptions and Concepts from experience; *the only question is what we understand by experience* [Emphases mine]. (*LHP III* 303)

Thus, for Hegel, *everything* is experienced - not simply what is sensuous, but also objects which “excite the mind,” objects, including, as we will see, universal, necessary, concrete, infinite and absolute determinations. To recognize this point, however, one must generalize one’s conception of experience.<sup>234</sup>

Hegel’s effort to articulate his generalized conception of experience is verily pursued throughout his entire corpus. Thus, for example, as often noted, the original subtitle of the *Phenomenology* was “The Science of the Experience of Consciousness”. Indeed, Hegel’s recognition of the experiential element in objectivity is *part and parcel of his recognition that empirical consciousness becomes absolute consciousness*. For, in becoming the universal power of thought that is absolute consciousness, empirical consciousness does not thereby cease to be empirically conscious. Rather, since everything that is in consciousness at all is experienced, for the fully developed mind everything that is given in universal, absolute consciousness is experienced.

### 1.3 *Determinations of Hegel’s Conception of Objectivity*

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<sup>234</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Everything must be experienced. But if we are supposed to be talking about philosophy, then we must rise above the demonstrations that remain tied to presuppositions, above empiricism’s demonstration, to the proof of the absolute necessity of things” (*POM* 150). In other words, it is only by generalizing one’s conception of experience beyond empiricist restrictions that one attains to the properly philosophical viewpoint in which it is recognized that necessary determinations are given in experience.

Having outlined both Hegel's attempt to conceive of objectivity according to its full generality and his generalized conception of the role of experience in objectivity, it will now be possible to outline with greater clarity the basic determinations of Hegel's more or less mature conception of objectivity. Recall that the mind's conception of objectivity is determined by three factors: the manner in which the mind determines 1) itself, 2) its object and 3) its relation to its object. Let us take up each of these determinations in turn.

### *1.3.1 Hegel's Determination of the Mind*

Beginning with the discussion of Hegel's overall theory of development through the examination of his phenomenology of the dialectical development of self-consciousness, the manner in which Hegel conceives of or determines consciousness or the mind has already been outlined in great detail in this dissertation. To be sure, further specific elements regarding Hegel's conception of the mind will be analyzed in the present chapter when the discussion turns to Hegel's phenomenology of Reason. Still, the basic elements of Hegel's conception of the mind have been sufficiently established.

For Hegel, the mind is a potential totality which, through a dialectico-organic process of self-mediation and self-developing, actualizes itself. The process of self-mediation occurs inasmuch as the mind posits differences – including objects – within itself, only to sublimate those differences in a higher unity. Inasmuch as the development of the mind culminates thusly, the relation between the fully developed mind and its object is, first of all, one of sublated *identity*. Before examining further details of this relationship between the mind and its object, however, let us first examine Hegel's determination of the nature of object itself which is known in and through this identity.

### 1.3.2 *Hegel's Determination of the Object*

To be sure, for Hegel, the ultimate object of the mind is the mind itself. Still, it is possible to identify at least five more specific manners in which the mind determines this object: 1) universality, 2) necessity, 3) infinitude, 4) absoluteness and 5) concreteness. Thus, for Hegel, in order to demonstrate the objectivity of knowledge of some object of inquiry one must demonstrate that its development and eventual existence is universal, necessary, infinite, absolute and concrete. It turns out, of course, that the development and existence of only one such object can be demonstrated, namely, the mind itself in its self-development and self-mediation.<sup>235</sup>

Thus, to begin with, Hegel, like Kant, retains the ideal of universality as a determination of objectivity of the mind. Unlike Kant, however, for Hegel, the universal mind is not abstract but concrete; or, more precisely, the universal mind begins as abstract, but then proceeds to concretize itself. The universal mind is abstract insofar as it contains the totality of its eventual determinations within itself but only in potency. The universal mind becomes concrete inasmuch as it posits the determinations and differences which it contains within itself and preserves itself within them. In other words, a universal which abstracts from concrete determinations is not properly uni-versal since *eo ipso* it does not penetrate, govern and order the particular determinations from which it abstracts and, therefore, fails to sublimate them into a uni-ty.<sup>236</sup> Thus, the universal *qua*

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<sup>235</sup> This point was discussed in Chapter One vis-à-vis Hegel's concept of the Concept and its development. Indeed, as we learn at the culmination of the *PM*, the Concept just is the mind and that, therefore, for Hegel, the totality of all that is is ultimately "spirit all the way down": "It is the concept, the nature of the subject-matter, that moves onwards and develops, and this movement is equally the activity of cognition. The eternal Idea, that is in and for itself, eternally remains active, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute mind" (*PM* 276). Cf. Hegel: "[P]hilosophical thinking [...] proves to be the activity of the Concept itself" (*EL* 305).

<sup>236</sup> Cf. the abstract universality of the Stoic mind discussed in Chapter Three.

truly universal must not abstract from its particular determinations and differences but, again, must posit and preserve itself concretely within them.

Regarding the determination of absoluteness, it is clear that the concrete universal mind must be absolute. For, were the universal to be restricted in extension, it would not be fully universal. Yet, were the universal to be restricted in intension, it would not fully concrete. Thus, the concrete, universal mind determines not just everything, but *everything about everything*.<sup>237</sup> As such, it is absolute or unconditioned. For, there are no conditions external to it. Rather, it posits and preserves within itself all possible conditions or determinations. It is absolutely self-conditioning and self-determining.<sup>238</sup>

The concrete universal mind is also thereby infinite in the sense that it is unrestricted by anything external. It posits restrictions and determinations within itself only to sublimate them into its own concrete, absolute universality.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. Hegel's insistence that *all* the elements constitutive of the experience of the empirical consciousness of the bondsman – i.e. fear, service and labor – be present in order for the bondsman to truly determine not just everything, but everything about everything – in other words, in order for the bondsman to become the *concrete* universal mind: “Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own. For this reflection, the two moments of fear and service as such, as also that of formative activity are necessary, both being at the same time in a universal mode. Without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains at the formal stage, and does not extend to the known real world of existence. Without the formative activity, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become explicitly *for itself* [...] If it has not experience absolute fear but only some lesser dread, the negative being has remained for it something external [...] Just as little as the pure form can become essential being for it, just as little is that form, regarded as extended to the particular, a universal formative activity, an absolute Concept; rather it is a skill which is master over some things, but not over the universal power and whole of objective being” (*PhG* 118-9).

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Hegel: “[T]he definition that results at this point is that ‘the Absolute is the *Concept*’” (*EL* 237).

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Hegel: “But when we pronounce the mind to be unlimited, genuinely infinite, we do not mean to say that there is not limitation whatsoever in the mind; on the contrary, we have to recognize that mind must determine itself and so make itself finite, limit itself. But the intellect is wrong to treat this finitude as a rigid finitude, – to regard the distinction between the limitation and infinity as an absolutely fixed distinction, and accordingly maintain that mind is either limited or unlimited. Finitude, properly conceived, is, as we have said, contained in infinity, limitation in the unlimited. Mind is therefore both infinite and finite, and neither only the one nor only the other; in making itself finite it remains infinite, for it sublimes finitude within itself; nothing in the mind is a fixture, a being, rather everything is only something ideal,

The self-development and self-mediation of the infinite, absolute, concrete and universal mind is also, for Hegel, necessary. A task of philosophy is to demonstrate this necessity which, for Hegel, entails demonstrating how all particular forms of the mind, along with their correlative objects, derive necessarily from the Concept of mind itself:

[S]peculative thinking has to demonstrate each of its objects and the development of them in their absolute necessity. This happens when each particular concept is derived from the self-producing and self-actualizing universal concept or the logical Idea. Philosophy must therefore comprehend mind as a necessary development of the eternal Idea and must let what constitutes the particular parts of the science of mind evolve purely from the concept of mind. Just as in the living creature generally, everything is already contained, in an ideal manner, in the germ and is brought forth by the germ itself, not by an alien power, so too must all particular forms of the living mind grow out of its concept as from their germ. (*PM* 6-7)

According to Hegel's particular conception, the necessity of the mind's development rests in the fact that the mind supplies *its own* conditions for emergence. For, the mind *qua* potency is in contradiction with its concept and so spontaneously desires to posit an existence for itself that is adequate to its concept. Yet, in thereby positing its existence the mind is not restricted by any external principle but instead supplies the grounds or conditions for its own development from within itself.<sup>240</sup> As a result, the freedom or self-

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only appearing [...] Therefore limitation is not in [...] mind: it is posited by mind in order to be sublated" (*PM* 23-4). For further discussion of sublated infinity, see *EL* 148-52.

<sup>240</sup> The mind contains the totality of its own determinations and conditions within itself. Yet, according to Hegel, "When *all conditions* are present, the matter *must* become actual [...] *Developed* actuality [...] is *necessity*" (*EL* 220-1). The Concept supplies the conditions for its own emergence. Yet, since it is

determination of the mind in its development is, for Hegel, famously coincident with its necessity.<sup>241</sup>

Thus, for Hegel, the normative determinations of the mind's objectivity consist of universality, necessity, concreteness, absoluteness and infinitude. Such an object, in the end, can only consist of the mind itself in its full actuality. These determinations of the object thus do not constitute "constraints" supplied by an "external" object. They are immanent in the mind, and are posited by and for the mind as it engages in its process of dialectical self-mediation.

### 1.3.3 *Hegel's Determination of the Mind's Relation to Its Object*

As already noted, the mind's ultimate relation to its object is one of mediated or sublated *identity*. As such, *recognition* is also a quality of the relation between the fully developed mind and its object. For, the fully developed mind is not merely identical with its object in-itself, but it also recognizes this fact *for-itself*.

Inasmuch as the fully developed mind is identical to its object and recognizes itself therein, *truth* itself must also be a quality of the relation of the mind to its object. Indeed, as was noted in the Chapter One, Hegel appropriates the traditional conception of truth as the correspondence between thought and being, or the mind and its object. Hegel,

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unconditioned by anything external there is nothing to prevent the actualization of itself through the positing of the very conditions by which it would emerge. Thus, insofar as the conditions are present, the mind necessarily will become actual. For further details, see Hegel's discussion of the necessity of the actual in *SL*, pp. 541-53.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The *truth of necessity* is thereby *freedom*" (*EL* 232).



of course, adds the crucial point that the only object which could ultimately correspond to or be adequate to the mind would be the mind itself.<sup>242</sup>

Insofar as it is the mind itself which is its own object, then not only is truth a quality of the relation between the mind and its object, but so is *certainty*. For, to the extent that the mind's object is ultimately just itself, this would seem to preclude the possibility of skeptical doubts that the mind might somehow not be adequate to knowing its object or that, in coming to know its object, the mind would be at risk of distorting it. Indeed, as we have already seen in earlier sections of this dissertation, Hegel not only critiques but explains the very existence of such skeptical doubts, showing them to manifest a lower stage of the mind's development. At any rate, this quality of certainty which turns out to be coincident with truth and is that according to which the mind relates to its object will become clearer when we turn to the discussion of the "Reason" chapter whose subtitle is "The Certainty and Truth of Reason."

Thus, the mind relates to its object in and through identity, recognition, truth and certainty. The mind, in the course of its self-development, posits an object for itself which slowly becomes adequate to the mind itself. Once the object becomes adequate to

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<sup>242</sup> Cf. Hegel: "[T]ruth in the deeper sense means that objectivity is identical with the Concept" (*EL* 287). In fairness, this conception of truth as the object's adequacy to the mind is already present in the tradition prior to Hegel, especially in traditional doctrines of God as truth itself. Cf. Aquinas: "Truth is found in the intellect according as it apprehends a thing as it is; and things according as they have being conformable to an intellect. This is to the greatest degree found in God. For His being is not only conformed to His intellect, but it is the very act of His intellect; and His act of understanding is the measure and cause of every other being and every other intellect, and He Himself is His own existence and act of understanding. Whence it follows not only that truth is in Him, but that He is truth itself, and the sovereign and first truth" (*ST*, 1.i, q. 16, a. 5). Needless to say, the proximate source for Aquinas's doctrine of God as truth itself is Aristotle's concept of the God as *noesis noeseos*, which Hegel, of course, appropriates. Cf. Hegel: "This unity [of Concept and object] is the *absolute truth and all truth* [...] This is the *noesis noeseos*, which was already called the highest form of the Idea by Aristotle" (*EL* 303).

or corresponds to the mind, the mind recognizes itself therein, truth is attained and the mind and its object enjoy the certainty of their sublated identity.

#### *1.4 Summary of Preceding Section*

We have thus provided an outline of Hegel's more or less mature conception of objectivity. As mentioned, Hegel's conception of objectivity is often lacking ingnoseological detail and rigor. Still, it was possible to determine that Hegel's conception of objectivity includes an effort to generalize it beyond the restrictions of all viewpoints shy of the absolute viewpoint. This effort of removing any naïve restrictions on his conception of objectivity runs parallel with his effort to conceive of the experiential element of objectivity according to its full generality, as well. For Hegel, everything that is in consciousness at all is experienced. Therefore, contrary to lower viewpoints such as Sense-certainty or Perception, sensuous experience bears no special significance for the objectivity of knowledge, for Hegel. Instead, sensuous experience is but a means or moment in the mind's process of self-mediation.

In terms of the basic determinations of Hegel's conception of objectivity, the mind is a self-developing, self-mediating totality which posits an ultimately universal, concrete, absolute, infinite and necessary object for itself, which object turns out to be the mind itself. Hence, the mind relates to its object according to the qualities of identity, recognition, truth and certainty.

## *2. Reason*

Now that we have established a basic outline of Hegel's conception of objectivity, it will be useful to return to the ongoing analysis of the *PhG*. For, we are now in a position to diagnose with even greater precision how Hegel explains the multiplicity of philosophies. As Hegel makes clear, the conception of objectivity operative within a given viewpoint will be determined according to that viewpoint's level of development. Lower forms of consciousness will necessarily maintain distorted conceptions of objectivity coincident with their restricted viewpoints. Yet, now that we have established Hegel's mature conception of objectivity, we can specify more precisely exactly wherein those restriction and distortions lie. As such, we can also specify more precisely how Hegel explains the emergence of the philosophies which express these restricted and distorted conceptions of objectivity.

Reason is the next form of consciousness which Hegel analyzes in the *PhG*. As noted, Reason constitutes a very highly developed form of consciousness. Still, Reason as it first appears on the scene is beset by some peculiar restrictions which manifest themselves in the conceptions of objectivity to which they give rise. In order to explicate this set of issues, let us turn to examining the initial portions of Hegel's phenomenology of Reason.

### *2.1 An Examination of the Initial Stages of Reason*

Like all the major parts of the *PhG*, the "Reason" chapter is rich and multifaceted. Its points of analysis extend from the arcane theories of Phrenology and Physiognomy of Hegel's time all the way to ancient Greece and Sophocles' great play *Antigone*. Much of this analysis, however, does not admit of proper treatment in the current context. Focus

will remain, instead, on those aspects of Hegel's discussion which serve most directly to advance the larger effort of this dissertation, namely, to explicate the method by which Hegel explains the emergence of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. Fortunately, some of the most pertinent aspects of Hegel's discussion in this respect occur within the opening few sections of the "Reason" chapter. For, these sections pick up and carry forward in a most explicit fashion Hegel's ongoing effort to explain just how Kantian and Fichtean transcendental philosophy emerges.

Reason, like the whole of reality with which it turns out to be coincident, is an emergent phenomenon. Reason, *qua* actual, comes into being. The account of the experience of consciousness and self-consciousness which has thus far been provided shows the basic schematic structure by which Reason has developed. Reason results from the "movement" in which the mind posits "the completely developed single individual" (*PhG* 139). The completely developed single individual is that form of the mind which grasps that it is "*in itself* Absolute essence" (*PhG* 139). In other words, Reason is the form of consciousness which possesses the certainty that, "in its particular individuality, it has being absolutely *in itself*, or is all reality" (*PhG*. 230, 138).

Needless to say, that Reason should constitute the consciousness of the fully developed, single individual, and that the "Consciousness" and "Self-consciousness" chapter of the *Phenomenology* have described the development of this consciousness, serves to confirm all the more one of the central arguments of the preceding chapter, namely, that the course of development described within the "Self-consciousness"

chapter is that of a single, empirical, individual consciousness.<sup>243</sup> Be that as it may, what calls for some initial clarification is just what Hegel means by stating that Reason is the form of the mind which is certain that it is all of reality.

### 2.1.1 Reason qua All of Reality

According to Hegel, what does it mean to say that Reason is, and recognizes itself as, all of reality? The simple answer is that, according to Hegel, Reason recognizes that the world it inhabits is one which it has posited for-itself and which, in fact, is itself. For, Reason is the successor or continuation of the empirical servile consciousness. Yet, the servile consciousness labored to develop an object in which it could recognize itself, and in so doing it correlatively produced itself as a fully developed, individual mind. Reason is the recognition that the mind and the object which have been thereby produced are in fact the same.

The object which the servile consciousness produces as it proceeds on its journey is the universal. Yet, as Hegel states, “In this movement [consciousness] has also become aware of its *unity* with this universal, a unity which, for us, no longer falls outside of it since the sublated [*Aufgehoben*] single individual is the universal” (*PhG* 139). In producing a universal object, the mind of the particular individual thus becomes universal itself. As such, it is united to the universal. Indeed, this is just what an educated, individual empirical consciousness consists in for Hegel: a mind which has overcome in its initial one-sided particularity and now actively inhabits a universal viewpoint.

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<sup>243</sup> Cf. Ferrarin: “Hegel’s system will have precisely the task of showing the *actuality of the Idea*, the Greek identity of thought and being, *in the individual*” (*Hegel and Aristotle* 46).

Now, despite the fact that the world which the developed empirical mind of Reason inhabits is indeed a universe, a universe in which it is certain that whatever it may come to know will be just its own self, certain limitations still afflict the mind at this point. We have already seen similar limitations afflicting the mind *qua* consciousness and *qua* self-consciousness during each of their respective initial stages of development. The two main limitations afflicting Reason with which Hegel is concerned are 1) that at this stage we are as yet only dealing with Reason in its *immediacy*, or Reason as it *first comes on the scene*, and 2) as a result of its immediacy Reason has *forgotten* the path of development which it has traversed in order to become Reason. Let us examine both of these limitations.

### 2.1.2 *The Immediacy of Reason and its Self-forgetting*

According to Hegel,

Reason is the certainty of consciousness that it is all reality; thus does idealism express its Concept. Just as consciousness, that comes on the scene as Reason, possesses that certainty *directly* [*unmittelbar*] in itself, so too does idealism given direct expression to that certainty: 'I am I', in the sense that the 'I' which is an object for me is the sole object, all reality and all that is present. (*PhG* 140)

In a sense, we have returned to the truth already revealed in the experience of self-consciousness, namely, that the object of which consciousness is conscious is itself, which truth, moreover, is expressed in the foundational principle: 'I am I.' The difference, however, between mere self-consciousness, on the one hand, and Reason, on the other, is that while in self-consciousness it was true that the object of which it was

conscious was indeed itself, that truth had yet to be raised to certainty; it had yet to be rendered fully explicit *for* consciousness.<sup>244</sup> In-itself, or for us, the phenomenological observers, self-consciousness could be expressed as ‘I am I’; yet, it is only with the emergence of Reason that consciousness expresses *itself* thusly.

The emergence of Reason is thus concomitant with the emergence of philosophical Idealism. Reason is emergent in and through Idealism. For, Idealism objectifies and expresses *for* consciousness the truth that Reason is all of reality, thus raising this truth to certainty. Needless to say, Hegel is here explicitly confirming the basic thesis of this dissertation, namely, that different philosophies express different stages of the development of the mind.

Hegel makes the further point that Reason sublates the viewpoint of the two previous major forms of consciousness, namely, consciousness and self-consciousness. For, from the viewpoint of consciousness, its object or the *true* “had for [it] the determinateness of *being*”, while, for the viewpoint of self-consciousness, the object or the *true* “had the determination of being only *for consciousness*” (*PhG* 140). Yet, with the emergence of Reason, these two viewpoints, “[r]educed themselves to a single truth, viz. that what *is*, or the in-itself, only *is* in so far as it is *for* consciousness, and what is *for* consciousness is also *in itself* or has *intrinsic* being” (*PhG* 140-41). The mind posits the objective world which it inhabits. By the time we arrive at the viewpoint of consciousness, however, the mind has already forgotten that it has posited its object, so it

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<sup>244</sup> Cf. Hegel: “Immediate self-consciousness does not yet have its object the I= I, but only the I” (*PM* 152). It is only with the emergence of Reason that I = I becomes the object of the mind, *for* the mind.

naively treats it as a “being” which it “finds” “out there” in the “world.”<sup>245</sup> As such, mere consciousness also naively assumes that any activity on the part of the mind can only distort the object thereby resulting in the object becoming “merely” for consciousness and so not possessing intrinsic being or existence in-itself.

The experience of self-consciousness breaks the mind of this naiveté. In its culminating moment of development, self-consciousness overcomes the naïve assumption that there is an object “out there” in “the world” and that its active positing or determination of this object would thus somehow render it “merely” “subjective” or only *for* consciousness. Instead, mind *qua* Reason “contains no determination that it does not recognize as a determination posited by itself” (*PM* 16). Thus, in becoming Reason, the mind recognizes that the objective world which it has posited *for itself* is the *real* world, or is being-*in-itself*.<sup>246</sup>

Philosophical Idealism expresses this emergent certainty on the part of Reason that it is all of reality or that the world which it inhabits is one which it has posited for itself. Yet, in the first instance, Reason is present *only in its immediacy*. It has therefore

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<sup>245</sup> In the *PM*, Hegel clarifies that the point of departure of the *PhG*, namely, the viewpoint of consciousness, has already forgotten that the object which apparently confronts it is itself: “In *phenomenology*, the soul, by the negation of its bodiliness, raises itself to pure ideal self-identity, becomes consciousness, becomes I, is for itself over against its Other. But this first being-for-self of mind is still conditioned by the Other from which the mind originates. The I is still completely empty, an entirely abstract subjectivity; it posits all the content of immediate mind outside itself and relates to it as to a world it finds before it. Thus what was initially only our object, does indeed become an object for mind itself, but the I does not yet know that what confronts it is the natural mind itself” (*PM* 27).

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Hegel in the “Reason” section of the *PM*: “Self-consciousness is thus the certainty that its determinations are objective, are determinations of the essence of things, just as much as they are its own thoughts. Hence it is reason which since it is this identity, is not only absolute *substance*, but the *truth* as awareness. For truth here has, as its peculiar *determinacy*, as its immanent form, the pure concept existing for itself, I, the certainty of itself as infinite universality. This truth that is aware is the *mind*” (164).



forgotten the path which it traversed in order to reach its current stage of development. Several aspects of this forgetting and its consequences demand immediate clarification.

First, because Reason as it first appears on the scene has forgotten the course of its development it “does not comprehend its own self” (*PhG* 141). In other words, recollecting the developmental path which the mind has traversed in order to arrive at its current viewpoint is essential to its self-knowledge. Needless to say, such self-knowledge is crucial, for Hegel, since its lack distorts Reason’s own interpretation of what it means to be all of reality.

Second, in forgetting its path of development Reason is also unable to “make itself comprehensible to others” (*PhG* 141). The issue raised, here, is explicitly that of the problem of *philosophical disagreement*. For, in first coming on the scene, Reason asserts the truth that it is all of reality as an immediate certainty. Here, Hegel surely has in mind that fact that Fichte’s system begins with the immediate affirmation of the self-positing I, which is expressed in the formula: “*I am I, my object and my essence is I*” (*PhG* 141). For Hegel, the discovery on the part of the mind that, *qua* Reason, it is all of reality is the result of an arduous journey of intellectual development. Fichte’s Idealism, by contrast, *begins* with the immediate assertion of this principle.

The problem with beginning with the immediate assertion that Reason is all of reality, according to Hegel, is that such Idealism thereby admits of being refuted by the mere counter-assertion of another certainty, namely, that of ordinary consciousness for which there is an object other than it which is its essence, or, that the I is the essence of consciousness only “by drawing back from the ‘other’ altogether, and taking [its] place as an actuality *alongside* it” (*PhG* 141). In other words, in merely asserting the truth that it

is all of reality as an immediate certainty, Fichtean Idealism 1) proclaims a truth which is incomprehensible to ordinary naïve consciousness and 2) gives ordinary naïve consciousness license to proclaim its own immediate certainty that it is confronted by an “external” object distinct from itself. In such a scenario, philosophical discourse between those philosophies which proclaim the immediate certainty of Reason and those which proclaim the immediate certainty of ordinary naïve consciousness, or indeed *Sense-certainty*, rapidly devolves into battle of counter-assertions.

Hegel is perhaps somewhat unjust to Fichte on this score since Fichte is at least aware that ordinary naïve consciousness is immediately certain that it is confronted by an “external” object that is distinct from itself. Moreover, one of the overriding goals of the *WL* is to provide an explanation of this naïve assumption. Thus, Fichte in principle recognizes the need both to comprehend, and to make oneself comprehensible *to*, naïve consciousness.

Hegel’s critique, however, seems to focus on the fact that Fichte does not provide an account of the genesis of Reason’s own self-certainty. Fichte’s Idealism “appeals to the *self*-consciousness of each and every consciousness” in order to make itself comprehensible; in other words, it asks those who would wish to comprehend it to engage in the radical abstraction that Fichte describes on various occasions. Yet, it does not thereby generate a genetic account of the very emergence of self-consciousness and the self-certainty of Reason. It does not, in other words, provide the “natural history of consciousness” which it promised. Instead, it forgets this history and proclaims without further ado the certainty of Reason that it is all of reality.

For Hegel, ordinary consciousness needs more than the immediate assertion of Reason if it is to comprehend and indeed come to adopt the viewpoint of Reason. This point, of course, connects back to Hegel's famous declaration in the Preface to the *PhG* according to which "the individual has the right to demand that Science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint, should show him this standpoint within himself" (*PhG* 14-5). Ordinary consciousness has the right to demand that it be provided not simply with a bare assertion that Reason is all of reality but with a very ladder by which it could raise itself to this viewpoint.

To be sure, for Hegel, the *PhG*, not the *WL*, would constitute such a ladder. For, the *PhG* will demonstrate to ordinary consciousness much more precisely and comprehensively than the *WL* that

Consciousness will determine its relationship to otherness or its object in various ways according to the precise stage it has reached in the development of the World-Spirit into self-consciousness. How it *immediately* finds and determines itself and its object at any time, or the way in which it is *for itself*, depends on what it has already *become*, or what it already is *in itself* (*PhG* 141-2).

Fichte can explain to ordinary consciousness the source of its naiveté. For Hegel, however, Fichte does not provide ordinary consciousness with a precise phenomenology of the stages (i.e. steps on the ladder) it must traverse in order to break itself of its naiveté and ascend to the viewpoint of Reason. As a result, ordinary consciousness can only find

in Fichtean Idealism an incomprehensible mere counter-assertion against its own assertion of its immediate certainty.<sup>247</sup>

### 2.1.3 Summary of Hegel's Initial Account of Reason as it first Appears on the Scene

Reason as it first appears on the scene, or in its immediacy, is Reason which immediately asserts the certainty that it is all of reality. Reason in its immediacy is thus incomprehensible to ordinary consciousness for whom, by contrast, it is simply obvious that Reason or the mind is not all of reality, but rather that the mind is confronted or otherwise “constrained” by an “object” “out there”. The result is that the assertion of immediate Reason’s certainty – ‘I am I’ or ‘I am because I am’ – can only appear to ordinary consciousness as a mere incomprehensible counter-assertion to its own immediately asserted certainty, ‘The object is because it is.’ In the context of this analysis, Hegel provides an explanation for the ever-renewed and seemingly futile conflict and mutual incomprehension between naïve Realists and transcendental Idealists.

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<sup>247</sup> Hegel repeats the basic outline this entire critique of the Fichte’s failure to provide a ladder for ordinary consciousness and consequent mere assertion of the immediate assertion of Reason’s self-certainty along with the philosophical conflict to which this approach invariably gives rise in the *SL*: “In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* I have exhibited consciousness in its movement onwards from the first immediate opposition of itself and the object to absolute knowing. The path of this movement goes through every form of the *relation of consciousness to the object* and has the Concept of science for its result. This Concept therefore (apart from the fact that it emerges within logic itself) needs no justification here because it has received it in that work [...] The definition with which any science makes an absolute beginning [e.g. ‘I am I’] cannot contain anything other than the precise and correct expression of what is *imagined* to be the *accepted* and *familiar* subject matter and aim of the science. That precisely *this* is what is imagined is an historical asseveration in respect of which one can only appeal to such and such as recognized facts; or rather the plea can be advanced that such and such could be accepted as recognized facts. There will always be someone who will adduce a case, an instance, according to which something more and different is to be understood by certain terms the definition of which must therefore be made more precise or more general and the science too, must be accommodated thereto. This again involves argumentation about what should be admitted or excluded and within what limits and to what extent; but argumentation is open to the most manifold and various opinions, on which a decision can be finally determined only arbitrarily. In this method of beginning a science with its definition, no mention is made of the need to demonstrate the *necessity* of its *subject matter* and therefore of the science itself” (48-9).

Importantly, Reason in its immediacy also has forgotten the path by which it developed itself into its current form of the mind. Reason in its immediacy, therefore, fails to comprehend itself. It is this self-forgetting and consequent lack of self-comprehension or self-knowledge on the part of immediate Reason, moreover, which, as we will see, serves to explain in greater precision the very emergence of Kantian-style transcendental philosophy. Let us turn, then, to examining this aspect of Hegel's analysis.

## 2.2 *Kantian Transcendental Philosophy as Expressing the Viewpoint of Immediate Reason*

Recall that Reason just is the single individual which affirms for-itself that it is the universal power of thought, or that it is all of reality. As such, it is coincident with philosophical Idealism. Still, when Reason first appears on the scene it has forgotten the path of development by which it has attained to the standpoint of the universal. As a result of having forgotten its path of development, moreover, Reason, according to Hegel, *reverts* "to the standpoint of 'meaning' and 'perceiving'" (*PhG* 145). The fact that Reason as it first appears on the scene forgets its path of development and reverts to the viewpoints of Sense-certainty and Perception is *all-important* for certain of the details of Hegel's explanatory account of the emergence of Kant's philosophy.

For, to begin with, recall that for Sense-certainty and Perception objects are given in immediate sensuous experience. Thus, despite the fact that Reason has in-itself constituted the universal as its object and has in-itself become the universal power of thinking, due to its self-forgetting and thus lack of self-knowledge, it *reverts* to the naïve standpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception according to which objects are not universal

but rather particular ‘Thises’ or ‘Things’ “out there” which are given in immediate sensuous experience. Insofar as Kant’s philosophy expresses the viewpoint of Reason which has forgetfully and thus unwittingly reverted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception we can expect that its conception of itself and its object will correspond to that which we have already found in Sense-certainty and Perception. Indeed, this is precisely what we find.

For, despite attaining to the viewpoint of Reason, Kant also clearly reverts to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. This fact is revealed throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For example, the opening passages of the Transcendental Aesthetic clearly articulate a viewpoint that has reverted to Sense-certainty and Perception: “In whatever way and through whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, that through which it relates immediately to them, and at which all thought as a means is directed as an end, is intuition” (A19/B33). Thus, according to Kant, cognition relates to objects, not through self-mediated identity and truth, but rather *immediately* through *intuition*. All thought, moreover, is directed as a mere *means* to intuition. More direct expressions of the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception could scarcely be imagined.<sup>248</sup>

Kant continues to express the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception in the clearest of terms:

The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility. Objects are therefore given to us by

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<sup>248</sup> Needless to say, for Hegel, what consciousness learns in thinking-through the viewpoints of Sense-certainty and Perception is that cognition relates only mediately to objects through intuition. Indeed, consciousness learns that intuition is *itself* a mere means or moment in consciousness’s process of self-mediation whose end is hardly intuition but rather truth, which is to say, the adequacy of the mind or cognition to itself.

means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions; but they are thought through the understanding, and from it arise concepts. But all thought, whether straightaway (*directe*) or through a detour (*indirecte*), must ultimately be related to intuitions, thus, in our case, to sensibility, since there is no other way in which objects can be given to us (A19/B33).

Objects are *given* to us through *sensibility* which is a *receptive* capacity for being *affected* by objects. These statements correspond precisely to the self-understanding operative on the level of Sense-certainty and Perception. For Sense-certainty and Perception, the object is a particular ‘This’ or ‘Thing’, given in “sensibility” and by which consciousness is “affected.”

Evidence of Kant’s having reverted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception could be multiplied.<sup>249</sup> Yet, that is not the end of the story. For, Kant has also attained to the viewpoint of Reason. What does it mean to say that one has attained to the viewpoint of Reason? It means that one has posited and determined the universal within one’s experience and that one has indeed become the universal power of thought. Thus, we must conclude that Kant has constituted the universal within his own experience.

The fact that Kant both *attains to* and yet *reverts from* the viewpoint of Reason – or, as Hegel will express more precisely, the fact that Kant “shifts” back-and-forth between the viewpoint of Reason, on the one hand, and Sense-certainty and Perception,

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<sup>249</sup> Despite his genuine advances upon Kant, one can also detect such a reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception in Fichte. Thus, for example, Fichte states, “Since the *Wissenschaftslehre* derives the entire concept of being only from the form of sensibility, it follows that, for it, all being is necessarily *sensible* being” (*IWF* 56). In other words, to be a “being” or an object is to be given in sensibility, for Fichte. As a result of such reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, Hegel declares that Kant’s and Fichte’s Idealism “is bound, therefore, to be at the same time absolute empiricism” (*PhG* 144).

on the other – this fact is an essential basis upon which Hegel explains the very existence of the Kantian philosophy (*PhG* 144). For, Hegel has already succeeded in explaining the very existence of certain statements in Kant inasmuch as they express the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Yet, Hegel's explanatory account can be further specified and enriched by showing how it permits him to account for the *different* conceptions of objectivity operative within Kant's philosophy.

### 2.2.1 *The Multiple Conceptions of Objectivity Operative within Kantian Philosophy*

Insofar as Kant's philosophy expresses the viewpoint of immediate Reason, which is to say, Reason which has also unwittingly reverted to the viewpoint Sense-certainty and Perception, it will contain at least two distinct conceptions of objectivity, two conceptions, moreover, which, in the event, prove to be at odds with one another. For, in the case of immediate Reason, there will be a conception of objectivity which corresponds to the mind *qua* operating within the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception as well as a distinct conception of objectivity which corresponds to the mind *qua* operating within the viewpoint of Reason.

Hegel provides a quite helpful account of these two distinct conceptions of objectivity operating simultaneously within Kant's philosophy in the *EL*. In fact, as it turns out, Hegel identifies a third, distinct conception of objectivity operative within Kant's philosophy. As will become evident, however, this third conception has already been shown to be grounded in the experience of Perception – or, to be more precise, this third conception of objectivity will prove to result not merely from the experience of Perception, but from the distortion that emerges inasmuch as Kant unwittingly shifts back



and forth between the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, on the one hand, and that of Reason, on the other.

Thus, with respect to the distinct conceptions of objectivity operative in Kant's philosophy, Hegel states:

'Objective' and 'subjective' are convenient expressions which we employ currently, but their use can very easily give rise to confusion too. So far our explanation has shown that 'objectivity' has a threefold significance. *To start with*, it has the significance of what is externally present, as distinct from what is *only* subjective, meant, dreamed, etc.; *secondly*, it has the significance, established by Kant, of what is universal and necessary as distinct from the contingent, particular and subjective that we find in our sensation; and *thirdly*, it has the last-mentioned significance of the *In-itself* as thought-product, the significance of what is there, as distinct from what is only thought by us, and hence still distinct from the matter itself, or from the matter [*Sache*] *in-itself*." (EL 83)

Let us take each of these conceptions of objectivity in turn and note how they are grounded in the polymorphism of the mind.

First, within Kant's philosophy there is a conception of objectivity according to which what counts as objective is that which is "externally present" in sensible experience. Such a conception of objectivity corresponds to that operative in Sense-certainty and Perception.

There is a second conception of objectivity within Kant's philosophy according to which in order to count as objective the object must consist of universal and necessary

determinations. Such a conception of objectivity corresponds to that operative within Reason.

There is, of course, a third conception of objectivity according to which to count as objective the object must be independent or absolute. Of course, each viewpoint determines what it considers to be independent or absolute, or what exists through itself. For Sense-certainty, the absolute is the immediate being of the ‘This’: it is because it is. For self-consciousness, the absolute is itself: I am because I am. As we saw in the specific case of Perception, however, consciousness at a certain point conceives of the absolute as a wholly indeterminate ‘Thing’ lurking behind the multiplicity of sensuous phenomena. As will be shown, moreover, that, for Kant, this thing-in-itself ultimately cannot be known as it is in-itself results from the *ad hoc* solution he devises for reconciling the prior two conceptions of objectivity. Thus, Kant’s three conceptions of objectivity clearly are grounded the polymorphism of Kant’s mind as he unwittingly shifts back and forth between different viewpoints.<sup>250</sup>

### *2.2.2 The Significance of Kant’s Multiple and Conflicting Conceptions of Philosophy for Explaining and Critiquing his Philosophy*

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<sup>250</sup> Indeed, one can witness Kant shifting back and forth from the viewpoint of Reason to that of Sense-certainty and Perception *within a single sentence*: “For if one removes from our experiences everything that belongs to the senses, there still remain certain original concepts and the judgments generated from them, which must have arisen entirely *a priori*, independently of experience, because they make one able to say more about objects that appear to the senses than mere experience would teach, or at least make one believe that one can say this, and make assertions containing true universality and necessity, the likes of which empirical cognition can never afford” (KRV A1/B5). Thus, according to Kant, upon removing from *experience* that which belongs to the senses, there still remain universal and necessary determinations. Note precisely: for Kant, these universal and necessary determinations are elements of *experience* which *still remain* after removing other elements. Yet, in the very same sentence Kant *denies* that these elements are given in experience, instead equating experience with the realm of the senses and with “merely” empirical cognition. Thus, within a single sentence Kant expresses a conception of experience which would correspond to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, for which universal and necessary determinations are not experienced, as well as a conception of objectivity which would correspond to the viewpoint of Reason, for which, of course, universal and necessary determinations are given in experience.

Let us explore in even more depth the precise nature of the dialectical explanation and critique of Kant's position which Hegel is articulating both in his phenomenology of Reason and in his treatment of Kant's multiple conceptions of objectivity laid out in the *EL*.

Based on what has been covered, thus far, it is clear that, according to Hegel, in Kant there is an experiential, a universal and necessary, and an absolute element to objectivity. Importantly, however, for Hegel, these various elements and conceptions of objectivity in Kant are not synthesized and sublated into a unitary conception of objectivity, but rather the different elements and conception remain opposed to one another.<sup>251</sup> Thus, the first conception of objectivity emphasizes the experiential element of objectivity. Here, Kant would appear to be deriving the previously discussed lesson from the Empiricists, namely, that in order to be objective knowledge must be grounded in experience. Yet, since, like the Empiricists, Kant's conception of experience is restricted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, he can only conceive of experience in terms of sensation, whether the so-called inner or outer sense.<sup>252</sup>

This fact, however, creates a tension with the second conception of objectivity according to which the objectivity of an object depends upon its consisting of universal and necessary determinations.<sup>253</sup> Yet, such universal and necessary determinations are not given in sensation or sensible intuition. Thus, Kant's first conception of objectivity would seem to be at odds with his second conception. For Hegel, it is just this tension

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<sup>251</sup> Cf. Hegel: "With Kant the thinking understanding and sensuousness are both something particular, and they are united only in an external, superficial way, just a piece of wood and a leg might be bound together with a cord" (*LHP III* 441).

<sup>252</sup> On Kant's reversion to the naïve viewpoint of Empiricist conception of experience and its role in the objectivity of knowledge, cf. Hegel: "Kant's philosophy [...] allies itself with naïve empiricism without derogating in the least from the universal principle of empiricism" (*EL* 107).

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Because it is universal, Kant always calls something 'objective'" (*ETW* 214).

between these two conceptions of objectivity operative within Kant's philosophy – along with the further complicating factor introduced by the third, absolute, aspect of objectivity – which precipitates several of the various problematic aspects of Kant's philosophy.

Hegel articulates the state of the problem facing Kant by observing that, on the one hand, for Kant, “only what *is singular* and only *what happens* are contained in perception [taken] on its own account”, while, on the other hand, “Critical Philosophy *holds on to the factum* that *universality* and *necessity*, being also essential determinations, are found to be present in what is called experience” (EL 81).<sup>254</sup> In other words, from the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, only singular ‘Thises’ or ‘Things’ as well as their contingent succession in imaginable space and time (i.e. “*what happens*”) are given in experience.<sup>255</sup> Yet, the viewpoint of Reason, as a matter of fact, experiences universal and necessary objects or determinations. Kant's challenge as a philosopher is to attempt to reconcile these two viewpoints.

Again, it is helpful to correlate this discussion with the analysis of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic. For, it is through the development of the empirical consciousness of the Bondsman that the universal is actually constructed as the object of experience and that a universal mind comes into existence. Thus, in the case of Kant, the empirical person, Immanuel Kant, through the fear, service and labor involved in becoming an educated denizen of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Prussia, learned to construct in his

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<sup>254</sup> Cf. Kant on universal and necessary determinations constituting a given *Faktum*: “The empirical derivation, however, to which both [Locke and Hume] resorted, cannot be reconciled with the reality of the scientific cognition *a priori* that we possess, that namely of pure mathematics and general natural science, and is therefore refuted by the *fact*” [Emphases mine] (A95/B127-8).

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Hegel's famous quip that, for Kant, “objects” consist merely in “a candlestick standing here, and a snuff-box standing there” (LHP III 444-5).

experience such putatively universal and necessary objects or determinations as one finds, for example, in the laws of Newtonian science or the laws of moral conscience.<sup>256</sup> Yet, the mere emergence of the universal within the experience of the empirical consciousness of the Bondsman does not imply that the Bondsman has attained to perfect self-knowledge. Rather, in the first instance, the Bondsman forgets himself and his process of development, and as a result ascribes to an alien principle, the Lord, his own universal power of thought. A precisely analogous phenomenon occurs in Kant's philosophy.

For, Kant has "forgotten" the empirical process of the education and intellectual development by which he has posited and determined for himself in conscious experience the universal objects and determinations of, for example, Newtonian science or moral conscience.<sup>257</sup> Still, these objects are indeed given in his conscious experience, provided that one generalizes one's conception of experience.<sup>258</sup> Yet, Kant has reverted to the

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<sup>256</sup> Cf. Hegel on how Kant's position expresses the viewpoint of the ordinary educated person: "The more specific stage of consciousness at which *Kantian philosophy* conceives the mind is *perception*, which is in general the standpoint of our *ordinary consciousness* and more or less of the *sciences*. The sensory certainties of individual apperceptions or observations form the starting-point; these are supposed to be elevated to truth, by being considered in their relation, reflected upon, generally be becoming, in accordance with determinate categories, at the same time something necessary and universal, *experiences*" (*PM* 149); Kant's view of the relation of subject and object expresses "our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness; but when these prejudices are carried out into the sphere of reason as if the same relation obtained there, as if this relation were something true in its own self, then they are errors the refutation of which throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe is *philosophy*, or rather, as they bar the entrance to philosophy, must be discarded at its portals" (*SL* 45); again, Kant's philosophy of "reflective understanding" "behaves as ordinary common sense and imposes its view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, meaning that it is sense perception which first gives them filling and reality and that reason left to its resources engenders only figments of the brain. In this self-renunciation on the part of reason, the Concept of truth is lost" (*SL* 45).

<sup>257</sup> Perhaps if Kant had "recollected" this he might also have noticed that these objects are historically contingent and thus certainly lack the seemingly self-evident or "factual" universality and necessity which he ascribes to them.

<sup>258</sup> Likely due to his method of abstraction, the sophistication of which is to be found nowhere in Kant, Fichte is able to raise much more definitively the question of precisely how such (putatively) universal phenomena as the moral law are in fact given in conscious experience. As Fichte states, "The intellectual intuition of which the *Wissenschaftslehre* speaks is not directed toward any sort of being whatsoever; instead, it is directed at an acting – and this is something that Kant does not even mention (except, perhaps,

viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception according to which experience is restricted to the realm of the sensuous and objects must be given in sensuous experience in order to be considered objective. Thus, in order to account for the *Faktum* of putatively universal and necessary objects constitutive of his experience, the empirical person, Kant (like the Bondsman) ascribes to an alien, lordly power – namely, the Transcendental Unity of Apperception (TUA) – his own universal power of thought.

Hegel thus summarizes the upshot of Kant's effort:

While Hume attacks the universality and necessity of the categories generally, and Jacobi their finitude, Kant merely argues against their objectivity in so far as they are present in external things themselves, while maintaining them to be objective in the sense of holding good as universal and necessary, as they do, for instance, in mathematics and natural science. The fact that we crave for universality and necessity as that which first constitutes the objective, Kant thus undoubtedly allows. But if universality and necessity do not exist in external things, the question arises 'Where are they to be found?' To this Kant, as against

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under the name 'pure apperception'). Nevertheless, it is still possible to indicate the exact place within Kant's system where he should have discussed this. For Kant would certainly maintain that we are conscious of the categorical imperative, would he not? What sort of consciousness is this? Kant neglected to pose this question to himself, for nowhere did he discuss the foundation of *all* philosophy. Instead, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he dealt only with theoretical philosophy, within the context of which the categorical imperative could not appear; and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he dealt only with practical philosophy and discussed only the content of this sort of consciousness, and thus the question concerning the very nature of this sort of consciousness could not arise with the context of the *Second Critique*. – Our consciousness of the categorical imperative is undoubtedly immediate, but it is not a form of sensory consciousness. In other words, it is precisely what I call 'intellectual intuition'" (*IWF* 56). While Hegel would appreciate the advance Fichte has made on Kant in providing a method for identifying the moral law as, in fact, constitutive of conscious experience, he would certainly reject the claim that such consciousness is immediate. For Hegel, such consciousness is mediated highly by the experience of the fear of death, service and labor of empirical servile consciousness. To be sure, however, consciousness of the moral law can be *taken to be* immediate if one forgets the concrete empirical process of development one underwent in order to construct it in consciousness.

Hume, maintains that they must be *a priori*, i.e. that they must rest on reason itself, and on thought as self-conscious reason; their source is the subject, 'I' in my self-consciousness. This, simply expressed, is the main point in Kantian philosophy (*LHP III* 427-8).

Thus, Kant has attained to the viewpoint of Reason. As such he both experiences universal and necessary determinations and insists upon these as the normative criteria for the objectivity of objects. Yet, Kant has also reverted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception according to which the criteria for the objectivity of an object consist not in its possessing universal and necessary determinations but in being "external" to the mind and being given in sensible experience or intuition. Since universal and necessary objects are not given in sensible intuition they cannot be "objective" according to the conception of objectivity operative within Sense-certainty and Perception. Yet, it is their very universality and necessity which ensures their objectivity from the viewpoint of Reason.

According to Hegel, Kant responds to this pseudo-problem by contriving an *ad hoc* solution. Kant's solution is to maintain the following two positions simultaneously: that

- 1) The universal and necessary determinations of pure science, mathematics and moral conscience *are* objective in the sense that they are not reducible to the "mere" subjectivity of empirical consciousness but are instead grounded in the transcendental subject, or TUA.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Cf. Kant: "The effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it, is sensation. That intuition which is related to the object through sensation is called empirical. The

- 2) The universal and necessary determinations are also *not* objective in the sense that they do not qualify “external” objects as they are in themselves.

The first aspect of this *ad hoc* solution satisfies the conception of objectivity operative within the viewpoint of Reason, while the second aspect satisfies the conception of objectivity operative in Sense-certainty and Perception – satisfies this conception in the sense that it A) responds to Sense-certainty and Perception’s demand that, in order to be considered truly objective, objects must be given in sensuous experience, and then B) acknowledges that this criterion fails to be met in the case of universal and necessary determinations.<sup>260</sup>

Yet, for Hegel, the result of Kant’s *ad hoc* attempt to satisfy these two conflicting conceptions of objectivity between which he unwittingly shifts back and forth consists is a mere contradiction in which knowledge of objects is held to be both objective and not objective, true and not true:

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undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called appearance. I call that in that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its matter, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuition as ordered in certain relations I call the form of appearance. Since that within which the sensations can alone be ordered and placed in a certain form cannot itself be in turn sensation, the matter of all is appearance is only given to us *a posteriori*, but its form must lie ready for it in the mind *a priori*, and can therefore be considered separately from all sensation” (A20/B34).

In other words, for Kant, since the “form” of the appearance is not sensed, then it must lie merely “in” the mind as opposed to the object “out there.” For Hegel, such is, indeed, the conclusion to which Reason which has reverted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception would come. For, on the one hand, Reason is aware of the role of “form,” which is to say, putatively universal and necessary relations, in constituting the object of experience; yet, on the other hand, for Sense-certainty and Perception, an object is what is given in sensuous experience, and universal and necessary patterns of relations are not given in sensation as such. Therefore, such a viewpoint can only conclude that the form or intelligible pattern of relations of which it is aware is nevertheless not intrinsically constitutive of the object but lies already “in here,” “in” the mind.

<sup>260</sup> As Hegel states, Kant’s “solution” to the problematic he sets for himself constitutes nothing more than an *ad hoc* counter-assertion against Hume, and thus begs the question as to the source of our knowledge of universal and necessary determinations: “The Humean skepticism does not deny the fact that the determinations of universality and necessity are found in cognition. But in the Kantian philosophy, too, this is nothing else but a presupposed fact; in the ordinary language of the sciences, we can say that this philosophy has only advanced another *explanation* of that fact” (EL 81).



The pure Reason of this idealism, in order to reach this ‘other’ which is *essential* to it [i.e. it is needed to supply the “matter” of sensation], and thus is the in-itself, but which it does not have within it, is therefore thrown back by its own self on to that knowing which is *not* a knowing of what is true; in this way, it condemns itself of its own knowledge and volition to being an untrue kind of knowing, and cannot get away from ‘meaning’ and ‘perceiving’, which for it have no truth. It is involved in a direct contradiction; it asserts essence to be a duality of opposed factors, the *unity of apperception* and equally a *Thing*; whether the Thing is called an extraneous impulse, or an empirical or sensuous entity, or the Thing-in-itself, it still remains in principle the same, i.e. extraneous to that unity (*PhG* 144-5).

Kant, despite having attained to the viewpoint of Reason, nevertheless “cannot get away from” from Sense-certainty and Perception (i.e. “meaning” and “perceiving”). As a result, he contrives an *ad hoc* solution which in the end condemns him to a knowing which is yet a not knowing, for the object which is known is denied to be the thing-in-itself as it is in-itself. Most importantly, as far as this dissertation is concerned, this “direct contradiction” is not just critiqued, but explained to be an expression of the polymorphism of Kant’s mind.

### *2.2.3 The Significance of Kant’s Restricted Conception of Experience for Explaining and Critiquing his Philosophy*

As noted, Kant’s conception of the role of experience in objectivity is restricted and distorted due to his inability to get away from Sense-certainty and Perception. This

fact adds a still further element to Hegel's dialectical explanation and critique of Kant's philosophy that bears at least brief mention.

For Kant, insisting that the pure categories of the TUA do not derive from experience, or are "*a priori*", is meant to preserve their objectivity in the face of Hume's critique. Yet, for Hegel, this *ad hoc* maneuver can only appear necessary to the extent that one retains a restricted conception of experience, a conception of experience, that is, which corresponds to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Once one generalizes one's conception of the experiential element of objectivity and thereby recognizes that everything given in consciousness is experienced, then it no longer becomes necessary to insist on the "*a priori*" of universal and necessary determinations in order to preserve their objectivity. For, in that case, the fact that a determination is not given in sensuous experience does not mean that it is not given in experience at all; nor does it threaten to undermine the objectivity of what is thereby experienced, for on a generalized conception of experience, sensuous experience possesses no special relevance for objectivity. For Kant, by contrast, inasmuch as he reverts to the conceptions of experience and objectivity operative in Sense-certainty and Perception, the fact that universal and necessary determinations are not given in sensuous experience necessarily entails that they are not objective.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Kant says that reason has certainly the desire to know the infinite, but has not the power. And the reason which Kant gives for this, is on the one hand that no psychologically sensuous intuition or perception corresponds with the infinite, that it is not given in outward or inward experience; to the Idea 'no congruent or corresponding object can be discovered in the sensuous world.' It depends, however, on how the world is looked at; but experience and observation of the world mean nothing else for Kant than a candlestick standing here, and a snuff-box standing there. It is certainly correct to say that the infinite is not given in the world of sensuous perception; and supposing that what we know is experience, a synthesis of what is thought and felt, the infinite can certainly not be known in the sense we have a sensuous perception of it. But no one wishes to demand a sensuous proof in verification of the infinite" – no one wishes this, of course, unless they are operating within the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception (*LHP III* 444-5)

#### 2.2.4 *An Example by Way of McDowell*

It will help to clarify and solidify Hegel's point regarding how the mind can attain to the viewpoint of Reason yet revert to a lower viewpoint by examining an example other than Kant. As it turns out, we need look no further than McDowell for an example of a philosopher and reader of both Kant and Hegel who, despite useful insights, clearly reverts to the restrictions of the Sense-certainty and Perception. This reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception on the part of McDowell can be used 1) to explain McDowell's own interpretation of certain aspects of Hegel which was briefly discussed earlier in this chapter and 2) to demonstrate, once again, the ambiguities and contradictions involved in Kant's multiple and conflicting conceptions of objectivity.

McDowell states, both as a matter of explicating Kant and as a matter of fact: "Intuitions are immediately of objects" (*HWV* 148). McDowell thus clearly shares in Kant's reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Inasmuch as McDowell reverts to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, however, we have an *explanation* as to why he would insist that objectivity *for Hegel* must entail an element of "external constraint" on the part of the object. For, from the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, the object does indeed supply an "external constraint" upon or otherwise determines the mind.

Thus, McDowell's very interpretation of Hegel can be shown to result from McDowell's own reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Indeed, McDowell is explicit that Hegel's conception of objectivity must be made to fit with

within the more restricted horizon of Sense-certainty and Perception, or ordinary consciousness, more generally:

A stress on self-determining subjectivity is characteristic of German Idealism in general. Hegel takes this theme to an extreme with his talk of absolute knowing as the free self-realization of the Concept [...] If a conception expressible in such terms is to fit subjective engagement with objective reality, the realization of the Concept had better itself embody a responsiveness to constraints that are in some sense external. Rather than disappearing from the scene, the external constraint that figures in a more ordinary conception of objectivity must be incorporated within what we are supposed to be shown how to conceive as self-determination. (HWV 90)

According to McDowell, Hegel “incorporates” the ordinary conception of objectivity as entailing “external constraint” into his generalized conception of objectivity as a matter of self-mediation. As was discussed earlier, this is not what Hegel does. Hegel explains and critiques the conception of objectivity as entailing “*external constraint*” by showing it be the expression of a lower viewpoint. He then *sublates* the very notion of constraint by showing it to be a matter of the “internal” self-differentiation and self-determining of the mind. Similarly, Hegel, unlike Kant, does not “incorporate” the Empiricist conception of objectivity according to which intuition is immediately “of” objects. Rather, he dialectically explains and critiques such a conception as being the expression of a lower form of the mind, and then *sublates* the very notion of experience itself by generalizing it.

For McDowell, Hegel *had better* include the notion of “external constraint” on the part of “objective reality” if he is going to meet the criterion of objectivity operative on

the level of ordinary conception. Yet, what McDowell in fact proposes would entail “constraining” Hegel’s speculative or rational conception of objectivity to fit within a more restricted horizon. Such a constraint would itself ultimately result in the confusions and distortions as manifested in, for example, the pseudo-problems and *ad hoc* solutions which characterize Kant’s position. For Kant’s philosophy, as we have seen, represents Reason operating within the “constraining” horizon of Sense-certainty and Perception.<sup>262</sup>

The shortcomings of McDowell’s interpretation of Hegel notwithstanding, his discussion of Kant is still instructive precisely inasmuch as it throws into relief the ambiguities involved in Kant’s multiple conceptions of objectivity. Thus, after unquestioningly stating that intuitions are immediately “of” objects, McDowell proceeds to quote the following passage from the *CPR*: “The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition; and this unity, in its most general expression, we entitle the pure concept of the understanding” (A79/B104-5). According to McDowell, what Kant means in this passage is that “The objective purport of intuitions is to be understood, then, in terms of their exemplifying logical unities that are characteristic of judging” (*HWV* 148).

Thus, McDowell seems to think that the point of the *CPR* is to demonstrate how *intuitions* gain “objective purport.” Yet, in point of fact, we should already know how, according to Kant, intuitions possess “objective purport.” For, McDowell has just told us.

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<sup>262</sup> Indeed, this view was already anticipated in the *DZ* in which Hegel refers to Kant’s philosophy as “Reason [which] operates as Understanding [*Verstand*]” – Reason, in other words, which operates within the restricted horizon of mere Understanding (96). Of course, in the *PhG* Hegel will specify more precisely that Kant reverts not merely to Understanding but to Sense-certainty and Perception.

Intuitions have “objective purport” *immediately*. They are immediately “of” objects. In other words, that intuitions have “objective purport” ought not to be a point that requires justification, for Kant, since it is apparently immediately obvious. Kant’s concern in the *CPR*, rather, would seem to be to justify the “objective purport” of “the pure concepts of the understanding”, or the TUA. For, these objects are not given in immediate intuition. Yet, according to Kant, cognition relates immediately to objects through intuition. Thus, the overriding question of the *CPR*, namely, “How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?” is a question seeking to determine, not how intuition, but how the pure concepts of the understanding have “objective purport” (B19).<sup>263</sup>

McDowell, in fact, misses the great tension and contradiction that Hegel’s account of the Lord/Bondsman dialectic reveals to be afflicting Kant’s philosophy. For, despite their lordly universality and necessity, in the first instance, the pure concepts *lack* objectivity or “objective purport.” Unto themselves, they do not determine any object. It is only insofar as the pure concepts relate to intuition that they gain “objective purport.” In other words, despite its pretensions to lordly self-sufficiency and spontaneity, the TUA is ultimately *dependent* upon what is given in sensuous intuition in order to gain “objective purport.” Thus, in order to show how the categories have “objective purport” Kant must show how the categories relate to or otherwise determine intuition. Indeed, demonstrating this relation of the categories to intuition is the entire point of Kant’s infamous doctrine of the schematism.<sup>264</sup> For, unless this relation can be demonstrated, the categories will lack all “objective purport”.

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<sup>263</sup> The pure concepts or categories, of course, just are the functions of unity embedded in the forms of judgment.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. *CPR* A137/B176ff.

Yet, there is a further piece of instruction to be derived from McDowell's misguided effort, a piece of instruction which can only be specified precisely now that we have examined Hegel's diagnosis of the multiple and conflicting conceptions of objectivity operative in Kant. For, what McDowell's discussion helps again to confirm is that the within Kant's philosophy itself there is operative *multiple* conceptions of objectivity or "objective purport," multiple conceptions, moreover, which are never properly distinguished but merely juxtaposed. Witness the following passage from Kant that makes this point clear:

But since in us a certain form of sensible intuition *a priori* is fundamental, which rests on the receptivity of the capacity for representation (sensibility), the understanding, as spontaneity, can determine the manifold of given representations in accord with the synthetic unity of apperception, and thus think *a priori* synthetic unity of the apperception of the manifold as sensible intuition, as the condition under which all objects of our (human) intuition must necessarily stand, through which then the categories as mere forms of thought, acquire objective reality, i.e. applicable to objects that can be given to us in intuition, but only as appearances; for of these alone are we capable of intuition *a priori*. (CPR B150-1)

"Objects" are given to us through the passive faculty of sensibility. It is thus only insofar as the categories "apply" to this manifold that they acquire "objective reality". Yet, by the same token, the manifold of intuition must *necessarily* be determined by the categories in order that objects can appear at all in experience. Thus, while the conception of objectivity operative within Sense-certainty and Perception is satisfied inasmuch as Kant

determines cognition to relate to its object immediately through intuition, this determination fails to satisfy the conception of objectivity operative within the viewpoint of Reason. For, from the viewpoint of Reason, the criteria of objectivity are not immediacy and sensuous intuition but universality and necessity, neither of which is given within Kant's restricted conception of experience. Kant's *ad hoc* compromise between these two conflicting conceptions of objectivity is to deny that universal and necessary determinations qualify things as they are in-themselves but only as they "appear" to us.

There is a sense, then, in which McDowell is correct that, for Kant, even though intuition is immediately "of" objects and thus already possesses "objective purport" (according to Kant's first conception of objectivity), nevertheless intuition needs to conform to conditions of TUA in order to have "objective purport" (according to Kant's second conception of objectivity).<sup>265</sup> The problem is that McDowell misses the contradiction involved in the mere juxtaposition of these two conceptions of objectivity as well as the manner in which Hegel explains and critiques it.

### 2.3 *Summary and Clarification of Section 2*

On the basis of his phenomenology of Reason as it first comes on the scene, Hegel identifies three conceptions of objectivity operative within Kant's theoretical philosophy. These three conceptions emerge inasmuch as Kant shifts back and forth between the viewpoint Sense-certainty and Perception, on the one hand, and that of

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<sup>265</sup> Needless to say, for Hegel, the process whereby the manifold of intuition is made to conform to the TUA results, not in a sublated unity, but merely in a relation of domination and servitude.



Reason, on the other. Like all conceptions of objectivity, each of these conceptions contains a determination of the mind, the mind's object and the relation between the mind and its object. It will be helpful to summarize the three elements of objectivity which characterize Kant's three conceptions of objectivity as whole.

First, insofar as Kant operates within the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, his conception of the mind is that of a *passive faculty of sensibility*, the relation of the mind to its object is one of *immediacy* and *receptivity* to the "external" object and the object itself is simply that to which the mind is immediately related through intuition.

Second, insofar as Kant operates within the viewpoint of Reason, the mind is an *active faculty*, the relation of the mind to the object is one of (self-)mediation<sup>266</sup> and *spontaneity* and the object itself is a pattern of universal and necessary determinations, or more precisely, "that in the [universal and necessary] concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is unified" (B137). As established in the previous chapter, however, for Hegel, the unification achieved through of the TUA spontaneously determining the manifold of empirical intuition is not a true synthesis or sublation, but manifests rather a relationship of domination and servitude.

Third, insofar as Kant shifts back-and-forth between the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception, on the hand, and Reason, on the other, a certain hybrid conception of the mind emerges. Thus, Kant conceives of the possibility of an "intuitive

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<sup>266</sup> Cf. Kant's famous line according to which knowledge of the object – i.e. nature – is ultimately self-mediation: "Thus even physics owes the advantageous revolution in its way of thinking to the inspiration that reason what would not be able to know of itself and has to learn from nature, it has to seek in the latter (though not merely ascribe to it) in accordance with what reason itself puts into nature" (Bxiv).

intellect” which would immediately intuit or experience the absolute or thing-in-itself (*CPR* B145). Indeed, in the very phrase “intuitive intellect” one sees the kind of confused juxtaposition – rather than sublation – of the conceptions of the mind operative within Sense-certainty and Perception, on the one hand, and Reason, on the other. Still, because he has indeed reverted to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception according to which experience is restricted to the realm of experience, Kant denies this possibility of such an intuitive intellect. The object on such a view, then, while in some sense absolute or unconditioned, is relegated to the status of a mere noumenon which can never be known or experienced as it is in-itself. The relationship of the mind to the object in this case is thus one of “mere” thought (*CPR* A254ff./B310ff.). At best the object can only be infinitely or indefinitely approximated to, but never properly known or experienced.

Needless to say, as was established in the previous chapter, for Hegel, it is precisely in thought that the mind first recognizes itself in its object. Thus, the notion that *thought* should represent, as it does in Kant, a profound state of alienation from the object simply reflects the confusions that result from Kant unwittingly shifting back-and-forth between more than one viewpoint.

Hegel thus shows that the very problems which Kant sets for himself as well as the solutions which he proposes are not simply haphazard developments in the history of thought but have a clear explanatory basis in the polymorphism of Kant’s own mind.

### 3. *Summary of the Chapter*

The present chapter has been concerned to examine further aspects of Hegel’s method of explaining the existence of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. The

chapter began by examining the various elements constitutive of Hegel's mature and fully generalized conception of objectivity. For, it was noted that in order to explain the existence of the multiplicity of philosophies it is ultimately necessary to explain the existence of the multiplicity of conceptions of objectivity. Yet, in order to understand the details of Hegel's explanatory account of the multiple conceptions of objectivity it was necessary first to examine Hegel's own conception of objectivity. For, in the event, all conceptions of objectivity shy of Hegel's own manifest restrictions and distortions of his mature position.

Hegel's mature conception of objectivity was shown to entail several elements. First, Hegel generalizes his conception of objectivity primarily by 1) demonstrating how the mind itself is the basic and general principle which determines the total set of conceptions of objectivity and 2) showing that objects can be defined in the most general terms as actualizations of the mind's potency. Second, while Hegel notoriously lacks in rigorous gnoseological detail, it was still possible to examine the basic outlines according to which he determines his conception of objectivity. Thus, Hegel's determinations of the nature of the mind, the mind's object and the mind's relation to its object were established.

The discussion then proceeded to examine the "Reason" chapter of the *PhG* in which Hegel articulates further aspects of his dialectical explanation and critique of the existence of transcendental philosophy in the Kantian tradition. Along with expressing an alienated form of consciousness in which one aspect of the mind or self falls into a relation of subservience to another aspect, as was established in Chapter Three, transcendental philosophy in the Kantian tradition also expresses a form of consciousness

which, in fact, shifts back and forth between the viewpoint of “lordly” transcendental apperception and that of “slavish” empirical consciousness. More precisely, transcendental philosophy in the Kantian tradition expresses a form of consciousness which has developed to the viewpoint of Reason, yet which has simultaneously “forgotten” the course of its own development and so repeatedly and unwittingly reverts to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception in its attempts, for instance, to address the philosophical problem of the objectivity of knowledge.

## Chapter V

### **Conclusion**

#### *1. Chapter Review*

The goal of this dissertation has been to explicate the general method by which Hegel not only critiques but explains the very existence of the multiplicity of philosophies. As discussed in the Introduction, the main motivating factor for pursuing this goal lies in the fact that, as Hegel discusses at length, the existence of a multiplicity of conflicting and seemingly irreconcilable philosophies threatens to render the entire philosophical enterprise futile. As also discussed in the Introduction, the urgency of this threat has only been increased in light of the spectacular credentials of modern science and technology. For, from the perspective of ordinary consciousness in the modern world, science is to be distinguished from philosophy precisely to the degree that it succeeds, while philosophy fails, in progressively overcoming initial disagreement and conflict to arrive what appears to be universal consensus. In order to respond to the challenge posed by this threat, the following efforts were taken.

In Chapter One, Hegel's overall theory of development was analyzed. Establishing the basic elements of Hegel's theory of development was essential. For, as was soon to be demonstrated, Hegel explains the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies in terms of the development of the mind. Yet, in order to understand how Hegel explains the development of the mind, it was first necessary to establish the basic principles of his overall theory of development. It was shown in this chapter that a large source for Hegel's theory of development is Aristotle's conception of the transition from potency to

act. The all-important biological analogy for understanding Hegel's theory of development was also examined in detail.

Chapter Two initiated the examination of Hegel's phenomenology of the development of the mind. The initial effort, then, was made to show how Hegel explains the emergence of the multiplicity of philosophies in terms of the dialectical development of the mind. Thus, it was shown, for instance, that the problematic skepticism/naïve realism adopted by Hegel's contemporary, G.E. Schulze, could be explained to result from Schulze inhabiting and expressing the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. Chapter Two also provided an initial discussion of the "meta" quality of Hegel's effort in the *PhG*. For, the viewpoint of Perception was shown to be the source of the naïve view of the history of philosophy as a mere agglomeration of mutually exclusive viewpoints. Yet, the transition from Perception to Force and Understanding provided rich suggestions as to how Hegel himself would reinterpret the history of philosophy as a dialectico-organic whole.

Chapter Three examined in minute detail how Hegel's phenomenology of self-consciousness provides essential aspects in his effort to explain the emergence of transcendental philosophy in the Kantian and Fichtean traditions. It was shown that, for Hegel, transcendental philosophy emerges inasmuch as one aspect of an individual self-consciousness falls into a relation of subservience to another aspect. The various permutations of this dialectic of domination and servitude within self-consciousness were shown to give rise to several of the key elements in transcendental philosophy most notably of which would be the distinction between transcendental or absolute self-consciousness, on the one hand, and empirical self-consciousness, on the other.

Chapter Four added a new element to the examination of Hegel's explanatory account of the multiplicity of philosophies. For, in explaining the emergence of the various philosophies, Hegel thereby explains the various conceptions of objectivity operative therein. This analysis was applied in detail to Kant who was shown to manifest at least three different and often conflicting conceptions of objectivity. Through demonstrating this fact, however, certain of the more problematic details in Kant were provided, not simply with a critique, but with an explanation as to their very existence.

Thus, for Hegel, the multiplicity of philosophies is not a mere haphazard agglomeration of mutually incomprehensible and irreconcilable positions. Rather, all philosophies have as their core explanatory principle the dialectical development of the mind. To the extent that this is true, then philosophy is absolved of the charge of futility. For, true development can be discerned within the history of philosophy inasmuch as it manifests the successive efforts of the mind to develop and thereby come to know itself. Recognizing this fact, however, as Hegel would insist, nevertheless requires a great deal of philosophical development.

## Appendix

In response to corrections required from members of the dissertation panel the following appendix has been supplied. Generally speaking, the panel members wanted the dissertation to demonstrate more clearly the unique argument and contribution this dissertation is providing vis-à-vis other scholarly treatments of Hegel. In order to accomplish this task it was suggested that I clarify the position delineated in this dissertation by contrasting it with the work of Michael Forster in his book, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit* (hereafter *Hegel's Idea*). Given its highly specific character, rather than attempt to integrate this critical discussion of Forster into the main body of the dissertation, it seemed more efficient simply to include it as an appendix.

The present appendix will accordingly proceed in the following manner. The first section will examine Forster's interpretation of Hegel's theory of the structure of consciousness. This section will show that Forster is misguided in his ascription to Hegel of a "representationalist" theory of consciousness. The second section will examine Forster's interpretation of Hegel's theory of truth. This section will show that Forster is misguided in his ascription to Hegel of an "enduring communal consensus" theory of truth. The third section will examine several weaknesses within Forster's overall treatment of Hegel's account of development, in general, and of the development of the mind, in particular. The fourth section will examine Forster's discussion of the crucial question of the relation between the *PhG* to the history of philosophy and, therefore, to the history of philosophical multiplicity and conflict. This section will show that Forster's interpretation of the relation between the *PhG* and the history of philosophy is misguided. The fifth section will turn to showing how the core analyses and arguments of this



dissertation provide a better means for understanding the relation between the *PhG* and the history of philosophy, including the history of philosophical multiplicity and conflict. The sixth, and final, section will attempt to recover an aspect of Forster's interpretation of Hegel's theory of truth; doing so will also help illustrate Hegel's ultimate view of how the problem of philosophical multiplicity and conflict is to be resolved.

1. *Forster on Hegel's Theory of the Structure of Consciousness*

According to Forster, in his account of the structure of consciousness, Hegel presupposes the theory of his predecessors Kant, Reinhold and Fichte. As Forster states, According to this theory, all consciousness essentially includes three interdependent elements: consciousness of *consciousness* itself, or of the *self*, as such; consciousness of *something other than oneself*, or of an *object*; and consciousness of one's *representation* of this other something or objects as such (*Hegel's Idea* 116-7).

Forster states further that Hegel takes this theory of the structure of consciousness "somewhat for granted" due, at least in part, to its "widespread acceptance by his immediate predecessors" (*Hegel's Idea* 117). An examination of Hegel's texts, especially in light of what has been covered thus far in the present dissertation, demonstrably shows, however, that Forster's ascription of such a theory of consciousness to Hegel as well as Forster's rather perfunctory explanation as to why Hegel would have chosen to adopt it is misguided.

To begin with, the account of the structure of consciousness laid out by Forster is to be found nowhere in Hegel's texts except in the instances in which Hegel dialectically

explains and critiques it. In order to begin establishing this point, let us examine the first passage from Hegel which Forster enlists in support of his interpretation:

Consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, and on the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what for it is the True, and consciousness of its knowledge of the truth [...] But the distinction between the in-itself and knowledge is already present in the very fact that consciousness knows an object at all. Something is for it the in-itself; and knowledge, or the being of the object for consciousness, is, for it, another moment (*PhG* 54).

In his rendering of this passage Forster translates the German term, *Wissen*, as “cognition”, whereas Miller translates it as “knowledge”. More importantly, however, Forster forcibly inserts the term “representation” in brackets immediately following the first usage of the term *Wissen* as if to indicate that, for Hegel, knowledge or cognition is equivalent to “representation”.

The first thing to note is that the German term which is typically translated as “representation”, namely, *Vorstellung*, is nowhere to be found in the present passage or in any other relevant instance in the entirety of Hegel’s corpus in which Hegel is discussing his own mature view of either consciousness or knowledge. This fact is not merely an accident which Forster’s insertion helps to ameliorate. It is rather grounded in Hegel’s radically critical view of the “representationalist” theories of consciousness and knowledge which were, indeed, to varying degrees, shared by many of his predecessors. Before examining the details of Hegel’s dialectical explanation and critique of representationalist theories of consciousness, let us first establish more clearly the basic elements of Hegel’s own theory.

### 1.1 Hegel's Theory of the Structure of Consciousness

A first approximation to Hegel's theory of consciousness is supplied by a passage from slightly earlier in the Introduction to the *PhG* in which Hegel states:

Consciousness simultaneously distinguishes itself from something, and at the same time relates itself to it, or as it is said, this something exists for consciousness, and the determinate aspect of this relating or of the being of something for a consciousness, is knowing. But we distinguish this being-for-another from a being-in-itself; whatever is related to knowledge or knowing is also distinguished from it, and posited as existing outside of this relationship; this being-in-itself is called truth. Just what might be involved in these determinations is of no further concern to us here. Since our object is phenomenal knowledge, its determinations too will at first be taken directly as they present themselves; and they do present themselves very much as we have already apprehended them.

(*PhG* 52-3)

On Hegel's account, then, consciousness, or the mind, is self-differentiating.<sup>267</sup> Like the plant, the mind posits a fruit or object for itself. Insofar as it posits such an object, the mind forms a *relation* to that object. Thus, there are three crucial elements in Hegel's

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<sup>267</sup> It should be noted that Hegel is not always clear and consistent in specifying the nature of the relationship of the *mind* [*Geist*] to *consciousness* [*Bewusstsein*]. This point is evident, for example, in the fact that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* or *Mind* is a phenomenology of the various shapes or forms of *consciousness*. Consciousness, for Hegel, then, can take on more than one meaning depending upon the context. Thus, at times, consciousness takes on a generic sense in which forms of consciousness just are forms of the mind, whereas at other times, consciousness takes on a more specific sense in which it is restricted to one stage in the overall development of the mind, a stage, however, which includes three sub-stages or forms, namely, Sense-certainty, Perception and Force and Understanding. In similar fashion, spirit or mind is both the subject of the entire *PhG* and restricted to the last chapter. As such, it often simplifies matters to treat Hegel's discussion of especially the generic sense of consciousness as a discussion of the mind, even though mind itself, for Hegel, is an even more generic category – indeed, the most generic but also the most specific of categories.

basic theory of the structure of consciousness or the mind. These elements, however, are *not* those identified by Forster in his account. According to Forster, the three elements constitutive of Hegel's theory of the structure of the mind are: 1) the mind, or consciousness, 2) the mind's object and 3) the mind's representation of that object (Hegel's *Idea* 116-7). In point of fact, however, the three elements which are actually constitutive of Hegel's theory of the structure of the mind are: 1) the mind, or consciousness, 2) the mind's object and 3) the mind's *relation* to that object.<sup>268</sup>

Important to note is that Hegel distinguishes between, on the one hand, the relation between the mind and its object which actually obtains in-itself or for *us*, the phenomenological observers, and, on the other hand, the relation as it merely *appears* for the form of the mind under investigation. The fact that Forster makes absolutely no use of this crucial methodological distinction would help explain the misguidedness of his interpretation. For, as discussed at length in Chapter Four of this dissertation, according to Hegel, the mind will determine itself, its object and the nature of the *relation* between itself and its object according to the level of development it has reached (*PhG* 141-2). The relation between the mind and its object is in-itself or for us, the phenomenological observer, always one of identity. True, until the final moment of its development, the identity between the mind and its object is only partial. That partiality, however, is not based upon the fact that up until the final moment there was a "representation", as it were, "between" the mind and its object precluding such perfect identity. Rather, as will be discussed below in the critique of Forster's interpretation of Hegel conception of truth,

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<sup>268</sup> Cf. Hegel: "In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* I have exhibited consciousness in its movement from the first immediate opposition of itself and the object of absolute knowing. The path of this movement goes through *every form* of the *relation* of consciousness to the object and has the Concept of science for its result" (Emphases mine; *SL* 48).

the lack of identity consists in the fact that the object posited by the mind is not yet adequate to the mind itself, or, what amounts to the same thing, it has not yet become fully actual.

The reason why it is especially important to note in this context that the mind determines its relation to its object according to the level of development is that the mind can, indeed, thus *take* or determine itself to relate to its object by way of some kind of “representation”. Yet, such a self-taking or self-interpretation will prove to be the result of the mind’s having forgotten itself and the history of its own development. It will not, in other words, express the basic structure of consciousness or the mind as such, according to Hegel.

It should be further added that, in point of fact, the account of the structure of the mind just provided in the above passage does not correspond *precisely* to Hegel’s own theory, at least not in terms some of the details. Rather, there are elements contained in that passage which, as Hegel states, correspond to how things present themselves to merely phenomenal consciousness or knowledge. By qualifying his comments with clauses such as “as it is said” [*wie diß ausgedrückt wird*] and “[b]ut we distinguish” [*unterscheiden wir*], Hegel provides an indication as to which parts of his analysis in particular correspond to the viewpoint of mere phenomenal consciousness versus which would correspond to the viewpoint of us, the phenomenologists.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> It is clear both from the context and from what is said elsewhere in the *PhG* as well as other works of Hegel’s corpus (which will be presently discussed) that the “we” referred to here is not the “we” of the community of phenomenological observers, but of the community of ordinary consciousness. In other words, Hegel is saying that “we typically” or “as a matter of (naïve) course” posit an object existing outside any relationship to the mind. Yet, as has been established repeatedly throughout this dissertation, for Hegel, there is ultimately no object which exists “outside” consciousness or the mind.

Thus, on *Hegel's* account, the mind is a self-differentiating totality in which there are three moments: the mind, its object and the mind's relation to its object. Still, "it is said" that the object or the in-itself exists "outside" of this relation. Yet, as has been established throughout the course of this dissertation, for Hegel, nothing exists "outside" of or independently of its relation to consciousness or the mind. Indeed, in order to confirm this point, we need only look later on the same page of the previous passage in which Hegel states, "But the essential point to bear in mind throughout the whole investigation is that these two moments, 'Concept' and 'object', 'being-for-another' and 'being-in-itself', both fall *within* that knowledge which we are investigating" (*PhG* 53). Consciousness or the mind distinguishes its object from itself, yet it simultaneously preserves the object within itself.<sup>270</sup> Thus, there is no object existing "out there", perhaps lurking behind or apart from our "representation" of it.

### 1.1.1 Example of the *Meno*

A useful example for examining this general point can be found in the famous Paradox of Learning in the *Meno*. For, first of all, despite its seeming skeptical sophistication, the paradox can be shown to be grounded in the naïve presupposition that knowledge must consist in some kind of comparison between our "representations" "in here" and objects "out there". Secondly, the speculative response to this paradox supplied by Socrates is precisely that taken up by Hegel, provided that we acknowledge the intervening mediation of Aristotle.

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<sup>270</sup> Cf. Hegel on the structure of consciousness in the *PM*: "I is itself and extends over the object as an object *implicitly* sublated, I is one side of the relationship and the whole of the relationship" (142).

In the dialogue Socrates articulates the paradox which Meno initially sets forth thusly:

Do you realize [Meno] what a debater's argument you are bringing up, that a man cannot search either for what he knows or for what he does not know? He cannot search for what he knows – since he knows it, there is no need to search – nor for what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for. (80e)

The source of this paradox is precisely the “representationalist” view of knowledge which Forster ascribes to Hegel. For, on the representationalist view of knowledge in which consciousness consists of the three elements “consciousness”, “representation” and “object”, it is impossible to learn anything. Either one already has the “representation” of the object, in which case it would be pointless to search for the object since one already knows it, or one lacks the representation of the object, in which case it would be impossible to know whether or not one had found what one was searching for.

Socrates' solution to this problem is the speculative one in which knowledge is conceived to be, not a matter of comparing our “representations” “in here” with “objects” “out there” and then seeing whether or not they “correspond”, but rather a kind of self-mediation which he calls “recollection” [*Anamnesis*]. Aristotle appropriates this notion of knowledge as self-mediation but sublates it into his larger explanatory theory of development of potency and act. Thus, with respect to the doctrine of *Anamnesis*, Aristotle states, “It was a good idea to call the soul ‘the place of the forms’, though this description holds only of the thinking soul, and even this is the forms only potentially”

(429a27-29).<sup>271</sup> Hegel, in turn, explicitly appropriates this aspect of Aristotle's sublation of Plato and sublates it into his own theory of knowledge as self-mediation:

The claim in the Platonic philosophy that we *remember* the Ideas means that Ideas are implicitly in the human mind and are not (as the Sophists maintained) something alien that comes to mind from the outside. In any case, this interpretation of cognition as 'reminiscence' does not exclude the development of what is *implicit* in the human mind, and this development is nothing but mediation (EL 116).

For Aristotle and Hegel, knowledge is not a matter of determining whether or not "representations" "in here" correspond to "objects" "out there"; rather, it is an ontological perfection (*energeia*) of the knower.

### 1.2 *Hegel's Critique of the Viewpoint of Representation*

Having clarified the basic structure of consciousness according to Hegel, it would be worth examining a few aspects of Hegel's critical treatment of the viewpoint of Representation in order to drive home the point about the misguidedness of Forster's interpretation. Let us, then, examine Hegel's critical appraisal of the viewpoint of Representation in the *PhG* and then complement that examination by drawing on Hegel's discussion of the viewpoint of Representation in the *Philosophy of Mind*. For, it is precisely the viewpoint of Representation which, according to Hegel, finds it so difficult to conceive of a relationship such as that constitutive of the mind itself in relation to its

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<sup>271</sup> Hegel has no patience for the orthodox or otherwise traditional interpretation that Aristotle, as it were, reverts from the speculative view of knowledge as self-mediation to the "common sense" "realist" or "empiricist" viewpoint according to which knowledge is a matter of "representations" "in here" being "caused" "in" us through the passive "reception" in sensation of the effects of objects "out there". Cf. p. 66 and note 82 above.



object in which a difference is posited only to be sublated into a higher unity or identity. As such, it may be possible to attribute Forster's misinterpretation of Hegel's position on consciousness to the fact that Forster is himself viewing it from something like the viewpoint of Representation.

In the *PhG* as well as preceding and subsequent works, Hegel will often rely on a shorthand method or schema for identifying viewpoints that fall short of his own speculative or absolute viewpoint. Among the most common of these lesser viewpoints would be that of Representation.<sup>272</sup> The relationship between the more generic viewpoint, Representation, and that of the more specific forms of the mind delineated in the *PhG* is never worked out by Hegel in detail.<sup>273</sup> Still, the basic contours of what Hegel means by the viewpoint of Representation in the *PhG* can be specified without undue strain.

In terms of what Hegel means by the viewpoint of Representation, Miller's often disputed but not entirely inapt translation of the term "*Vorstellung*" as "picture-thinking" provides a first approximation. For, despite its weaknesses, what Miller's translation captures is the fact that the viewpoint of Representation is essentially restricted to the realm of the sensuous or imaginable. This point is important because, from the viewpoint of sensation or imagination, if two things are distinct then they must be "outside" one another.<sup>274</sup> In other words, it is impossible to sense or to imagine the unity-in-difference,

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<sup>272</sup> Another would be the viewpoint of Understanding [*Verstand*]. The precise nature of the relationship of the viewpoint of Understanding discussed, for example, in such early works as the *DZ*, to the one delineated in the Force and Understanding chapter of the *PhG* is likewise nowhere worked out in detail in Hegel's corpus. Suffice it to say, there are certainly superficial similarities but also potential notable differences, the parsing of which, however, extends beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

<sup>273</sup> In general, Representation as a viewpoint most closely approximates to Perception. Hence, in the "Psychology" section of the *PM*, Representation follows Intuition, just as in the "Phenomenology" section of the *PM*, Perception follows Sense-certainty. Also, at times, Hegel will simply run together the viewpoints of Representation and Perception. Cf. *LHP I* 122.

<sup>274</sup> Cf. *PhG* 46, 120, 210. As discussed at length in Chapter One, spatial prepositions such as "inside" and "outside", or "internal" and "external", are distinctly misleading when dealing with the relation between

or speculative identity, according to which consciousness, or the mind, is ultimately related to its object.<sup>275</sup>

Thus, for the viewpoint of Representation, insofar as the mind's object is posited as distinct from the mind then the former must be "outside" the later. It is this fact, moreover, which actually gives rise to the seeming obviousness of conceiving the fundamental task of epistemology to be that of solving the Problem of the Bridge, that is to say, "justifying the belief" that the representations we have "in here" correspond to objects-in-themselves "out there" in the "world".

Thus, in the Introduction to the *PhG*, Hegel famously criticizes the naiveté of such putatively critical philosophies of Representation as Kant's which take as their basic point of departure the epistemological task of the Problem of the Bridge. According to Hegel, these philosophies engage in the futile attempt to determine the nature of the instrument by which our "representations" of objects existing "out there" are generated "in here" – that is to say, "in" the mind – in order thereby to subtract the effect which our faculty of cognition or "representation", has upon the object-in-itself "out there", in order, in turn, to provide for consciousness a (doomed to fail) "representation" of the object-in-itself in its purity.<sup>276</sup> Thus, for Hegel, the very notion that the basic structure of

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mind and its object, or knower and known. Thus, we can now see that it is due to the prevalence of the viewpoint of Representation and related viewpoints like Perception that there is such a tendency naively to employ such prepositions in order to explicate the knowledge-relation.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Hegel on the inability of the viewpoint of Representation to deal speculatively with concrete relation of unity-in-difference characteristic of the mind: "The concrete is not conceived of speculatively, but is simply taken from ordinary ideas inasmuch as it is expressed in accordance with their forms of representation and of perception" (*LHP I* 122).

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Hegel: "It would seem, to be sure, that this evil could be remedied through an acquaintance with the way in which the *instrument* [i.e. the "faculty" of cognition or representation "in" the mind] works; for this would enable us to eliminate from the representation [*Vorstellung*] of the absolute [i.e. object-in-itself "out there"] which we have gained through it whatever is due to the instrument. But this 'improvement' would in fact only bring us back to where we were before. If we remove from a reshaped thing what the instrument has done to it, then the thing – here the Absolute – becomes for us exactly what it was before this superfluous effort" (*PhG* 46-7).

consciousness entails a “representation” of the “object” which is distinct from the object-in-itself is hardly a basic or normative account of its structure but rather simply expresses the impoverished viewpoint of Representation itself.

### 1.2.1 *Hegel’s Critique of the Viewpoint of Representation in the Philosophy of Mind*

Regarding Hegel’s discussion of the viewpoint of Representation in the *PM*, it should be immediately noted that the representations discussed there are not the representations of some further object distinct from the representations. Rather, the representations *are* the object. The problem with the viewpoint of Representation in this case is not that it is perhaps unable to “justify belief” in the correspondence between its representations and the objects-in-themselves. Rather, a representation as such constitutes a not-fully-developed or actualized object of the mind. For, representations as such are still conditioned by a sensuous material or intuition which the mind treats as “found” or “given” by the object-in-itself “out there” and which thus has not been reduced to a mere moment of the mind itself. As Hegel states:

But as representing begins from the intuition and the *ready-found* material of intuition, this activity is still burdened with this difference, and its concrete productions within it are still *syntheses* which become the concrete immanence of the concept only in thinking (*POM* 185).

Again, the *object* of the viewpoint of Representation *is* the representation. Still, because the viewpoint of Representation has not reduced the sensuous material of intuition to a moment of the mind, it *relates* to that material as coming from an object “out there”.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> The ultimate reason why the mind treats the sensuous material of intuition as “found” or otherwise deriving from the object-in-itself “out there” is that it has forgotten that it, in fact, posited this very sensuousness in the course of its own development. As will be discussed below, however, Forster entirely

As a result, it can only conceive of its own activity, not as a process of self-differentiation and self-mediation, but as the production of syntheses among the various manifolds of intuition whose ultimate source is another object “external” to the mind.

On the whole, then, Hegel’s view of the viewpoint of Representation and the representationalist theory of the structure of consciousness to which it gives rise is far from that indicated by Forster. According to Forster, Hegel simply takes up the representationalist theory of consciousness because it was popular and happened to be laying around.<sup>278</sup> As it is, however, Hegel not only heavily criticizes this view of consciousness, but, going beyond Socrates’ skeptical critique of this view, explains how it comes into existence in the first place, namely, as the expression of the mind at a certain lesser stage of its development. The fact that Forster would take this to be Hegel’s position and then supply what he takes to be “quite a forceful argument” on behalf of it suggests that it is Forster himself who is operating within something like the viewpoint of Representation in interpreting Hegel.

## 2. *Forster’s Interpretation of Hegel’s Theory of Truth*

Forster’s misinterpretation of Hegel’s theory of the structure of consciousness, or the mind, has important implications for his misinterpretation of Hegel’s theory of truth. According to Forster, Hegel rejects the correspondence theory of truth in favor of what Forster calls an “enduring communal consensus” theory. It will be necessary first briefly

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neglects the crucial methodological role that this forgetting of its own activity and development on the part of the mind plays in Hegel’s phenomenology of the mind’s self-mediation.

<sup>278</sup> Recall that it is Hegel who routinely lambasts Kant for simply taking up the naïve psychology of Locke and Hume as well as the categories as he found them, as it were, laying around. Cf. Hegel: “We are all well aware that Kant’s philosophy took the easy way in its *finding* of the categories” (EL 85). Cf. p. 294, footnote 252, above.

to unpack what Forster seems to intend by this notion of “enduring communal consensus” as well as his reasons for ascribing it to Hegel. It will then be possible to demonstrate more clearly the misguidedness of Forster’s interpretation.

According to Forster, Hegel’s theory of truth would

[P]artially reconceive/reconceptualize “truth,” dropping the offending idea that truth consists in the correspondence of representations to independent facts, and instead substituting for this the idea that it consists in representations being agreed upon by an enduring communal consensus (and falsehood in their failure to be agreed upon by such a consensus). (*Hegel’s Idea* 233)

Forster is right that Hegel rejects the naïve conception of truth as a correspondence between “representations” that are “in here” with objects or “independent facts” which are “out there”. Indeed, he not only rejects it, but explains how it comes into existence. However, likely due in part to his misinterpretation of Hegel’s theory of consciousness, Forster does not seem to appreciate that Hegel’s theory of truth would eschew reference to the term “representation” altogether.

As stated, according to Forster, Hegel maintains that truth consists in “representations being agreed upon by an enduring communal consensus”. The support that Forster actually marshals in favor of this interpretation in terms of direct evidence drawn from Hegel’s texts is scanty at best. It will therefore be helpful to note the broader context from which Forster is arguing in order to make sense of his decision to proffer such an interpretation.

In both *Hegel’s Idea* as well as his earlier work, *Hegel and Skepticism*, Forster emphasizes the role of skepticism, especially ancient skepticism, in shaping the very

essence of Hegel's overall project. Thus, according to Forster, despite the fact that Hegel himself supposedly subscribes to a representationalist theory of consciousness, the *PhG*, at least from the viewpoint of Consciousness up through the viewpoint of the Spiritual Animal Kingdom section of the Reason chapter, provides a series of skeptical paradoxes the ultimate upshot of which is to show that there is no "coherent way of articulating a conception of representations standing over against independent facts" (*Hegel's Idea* 236). According to Forster, the culminating instance of this skeptical critique of the correspondence theory of truth occurs when Hegel shows that consciousness reaches a stage at which "objective reality [...] is a moment which itself no longer possesses any truth on its own account" (*PhG* 245). The lesson Forster draws from this statement is that, for Hegel, insofar as objective reality no longer possesses any truth for consciousness, then it would seem that the very notion of truth as a correspondence between our "representations" and the "objects-in-themselves out there" is no longer possible since "objects-in-themselves" or "objective reality" no longer possesses any truth for the mind. Thus, Hegel apparently demonstrates that maintaining such a correspondence theory of truth necessarily results in a final skeptical paradox according to which "there is no such thing as truth" (*Hegel's Idea* 236).

In response to this apparent skeptical paradox or impasse, Hegel offers, according to Forster, a "skeptical solution" according to which truth would consist in an "enduring communal consensus". The main passage from the *PhG* which Forster cites in support of his claim runs as follows:

Reality therefore has for consciousness only the value of a being ... whose universality is one with the action [of consciousness]. This unity is the true

product; it is the matter itself, which simply maintains itself in being asserted and is experienced as something which endures, independently of the matter which is the contingency of the individual action as such ... The matter itself is thus an expression of spiritual essentiality, in which all ... moments are sublated as autonomous, and so are only valid qua universal, and in which consciousness's certainty of itself is ... the object born of self-consciousness as its own, but without ceasing to be a free, real object. (*Hegel's Idea* 236-7)

It should be noted that Forster states that in paragraph 418 of the *PhG* Hegel glosses the term "spiritual essentiality" [*geistige Wesenheit*] mentioned in the above passage as "the action of the single individual and of all individuals, ... the action of each and everyone" (*Hegel's Idea* 237). Thus, Forster finds evidence for his interpretation of Hegel's theory of truth in Hegel's apparent view that "the matter itself" [*die Sache selbst*] consists in an expression of spiritual essentiality which itself consists in the action of all individuals. In other words, for Hegel, truth, or "the matter itself", now seemingly just is what is expressed, and thus agreed upon, by the community as a whole. As such, truth would seem not to consist in the agreement or correspondence between our "representations" and "objects", but instead in "representations" being agreed upon by an "enduring communal consensus". Unfortunately, Forster's interpretation does not hold up upon a close examination of the relevant texts.

Before examining the problematic aspects of Forster's interpretation of the *PhG* and the theory of truth which he purports to find there, however, it would be useful to note a brief auxiliary point. For, notice, Socrates already articulated what might be considered the definitive skeptical paradox which afflicts the viewpoint of Representation

along with its naïve correspondence theory of truth. Moreover, Hegel appropriates, by way of Aristotle and in sublated form, the very theory of truth and knowledge which Socrates proposes as a response to this paradox. Thus, Forster fails adequately to identify Hegel's peculiar contribution to this whole discussion, which is that Hegel not only critiques the naïve representationalist correspondence view of truth, but *he explains how it comes into existence in the first place*. This point is worth noting because it is part and parcel of Hegel's effort to show that the various and conflicting philosophies (e.g. of knowledge and truth) do not emerge simply haphazardly and with no intelligible relation to one another but rather have an explanatory ground in the polymorphism of the mind. Yet, as will be discussed again below, Forster never articulates this central point with sufficient clarity and precision.

### *2.1 Critique of Forster's Interpretation of Hegel's Theory of Truth*

To return to Forster's discussion of Hegel's theory of truth, Forster's interpretation of the passage in which Hegel says "[O]bjective reality [...] is a moment which itself no longer possesses any truth on its own account in this consciousness" is misguided. According to Forster, what this passage expresses is that the form of consciousness operative within the viewpoint of "Reason" has reached a level of development for which there no longer exists an objective reality distinct from its own "representations". Previous forms of consciousness presupposed such a distinction and, on Forster's reading, the dialectic of the entire *PhG* up to this point has unfolded as a "serial critique" in which Hegel demonstrated that ultimately there is "no coherent way of articulating a conception of representations standing over against independent facts" and that, therefore, there is no coherent way in which to articulate, much less



defend, a “correspondence” theory of truth (*Hegel’s Idea* 236). Thus, for Forster, The Spiritual Animal kingdom subsection of Reason marks a radical shift in the entire trajectory of the *PhG*. For, at this stage, not only in-itself, but *for* consciousness or the mind, as such, the correspondence theory of truth has been jettisoned in favor of an enduring communal consensus theory.

Hegel’s point, however, in stating that “objective reality” is a moment which no longer possesses any truth on its own account for Reason at this stage is far from what Forster contends. To begin with, it must be immediately noted that we have already passed through a similar stage in Self-consciousness. For, Self-consciousness recognizes that “being” or “objective reality” is but a *moment* of Self-consciousness itself and, as such, “being” or “objective reality” does not possess any truth *on its own account*. That does not mean, however, that Self-consciousness ceases to have an object; rather, the object has become Self-consciousness itself.

Yet, there is a further element to this story which – ironically – Forster forgets. For, despite the fact that, in-itself, “being” or “objective reality” has been reduced to a mere moment of Self-consciousness as a result of its prior development in Consciousness, Self-consciousness nevertheless *forgets* this fact and, as a result, *relates* to the Self-consciousness which it itself is as *another* Self-consciousness existing “out there” in “objective reality”. As a result, there emerged within Self-consciousness the distinction between abstract Self-consciousness which reflects out of the world of “objective reality”, on the one hand, and the Self-consciousness which is coincident with such reality, or Life, on the other. The history of the development of Self-consciousness, then, is the dialectic between these two moments of Self-consciousness itself.

Next, it must be noted that a similar dialect unfolds in the case of Reason; in fact, it does so more than once. For, recall that, generically, Reason is the viewpoint which is confident that it will find only itself in its object. Thus, in Observing Reason, Reason is confident that it will find itself within the “objective reality” of the sensuous existence which in Self-consciousness confronts it as an other.

Still, despite having reached the viewpoint of Reason, a certain recapitulation of the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception takes place on the level of Reason as it first comes on the scene. For, as we know, Reason when it first comes on the scene reverts to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Yet, such immediate Reason is also, of course, *Reason*, and Reason knows, at least implicitly or in-itself, that its object will simply be itself. Thus, Hegel states,

[Immediate Reason] reverted from self-consciousness to consciousness, i.e. to the consciousness for which the object is something which merely *is*, a Thing; but here, what is a Thing is self-consciousness; the Thing is, therefore, the unity of ‘I’ and being – the category. The object being determined thus for consciousness, the latter *possesses* Reason. (*PhG* 208)

For both Perception and immediate or Observing Reason, its object is a Thing existing “out there”. The difference, however, is that Observing Reason’s object is a *new object*, namely, the category, which, *in-itself* or *for us*, the phenomenologists, just is Reason itself.

The problem with Observing Reason is thus that despite the fact that it has produced its object – i.e. through rational observation, modern scientific technique, etc. – it forgets this very *activity* and, therefore, like Perception, *relates* to its object as

something found “out there” (*PhG* 209). As Hegel states, “The *pure* category, which is present for consciousness [at this stage] in the form of *being* or *immediacy*, is the object as still unmediated, as merely *given*, and consciousness is equally unmediated in its relation to it”<sup>279</sup> (*PhG* 209). In Observing Reason, as revealed through its confidence that it will find nothing but itself in its object, “objectively reality” or being “out there” has been reduced to a mere moment of Reason itself, and thus does not possess any truth for Reason. Still, despite this *implicit* confidence that it will only find itself in its object – hence, its *active* observation and experimentation upon its object – Observing Reason nevertheless *explicitly* treats its object as ultimately something found “out there” in the “world”. It will remain for the ensuing form of consciousness to objectify and thereby “recollect” the very activity of Reason itself.

The viewpoint which at first takes up the task of more fully objectifying for Reason its own activity is that of “Individuality Which Takes Itself To Be Real In and For Itself” along with its subsection, The Spiritual Animalkingdom, the latter of which Forster claims marks the definitive break within the *PhG* in terms of the mind’s explicit conception of truth. Again, Forster’s claim is that since by the time we reach The Spiritual Animalkingdom the moment of “objective reality” no longer possesses any truth on its own account, consciousness or the mind, at this stage no longer has an object to which a “representation” could possibly correspond. As a result, the very notion of truth as “correspondence” between “representations” and “objects” has ceased to be operative

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<sup>279</sup> The target of this analysis is, among others, clearly Kant. For, as was noted above, Hegel heavily criticizes Kant for merely “finding” the categories constituted by modern science already “in” the transcendental ego *qua* “theoretical”, just as he merely finds the categorical imperative already “in” the transcendental ego *qua* “practical”. For Hegel, there is a prior task of showing how these various categories emerge, just as there is prior task of showing how the various philosophies (with, for example, their distinct category of categories, or concept of concepts) emerge.

now and within all subsequent forms of the mind to be treated in the *PhG*. But this is not at all what is happening at this stage of the *PhG*.

To begin with, although “objective reality” or “being” that is “out there” has been reduced to a moment of Reason and thus has ceased to possess any truth on its own account for the mind, Reason still has an object. At this stage, the object of Reason is *rational action itself*. Thus, in *The Spiritual Animal Kingdom*, Hegel provides a phenomenology of the rational activity which is the object of Reason and which is, in fact, coincident with Reason. As Hegel states,

Action is present at first in the form of *object*, an object, too as pertaining to consciousness, as *End* and hence opposed to a reality already given. The second moment is the *movement* of the End conceived as passive, and realization conceived as the relation of the End to the wholly formal actuality, hence the idea of the transition itself, or the *means*. The third moment is, finally, the object, which is not longer in the form of an end directly known by the agent to be *his own*, but as brought out into the light of day and having *for him* the form of an ‘other’. (*PhG* 239)

The object of Reason at this stage is thus a complex object composed of three elements: the end, the means by which the end is achieved and the achieved end itself.

In- itself, or implicitly, rational action is not a means by which Reason, as it were, acts upon some “objective reality” “out there”; rather, rational action is a process of the self-mediation and self-development of Reason itself. As Hegel states, in the case of rational action, “objective reality” or the “limitation of being [...] cannot limit the *action* of [rational] consciousness, for here consciousness is a relation purely of itself to itself:

relation to an *other* which would be a limitation of it, has been eliminated” (*PhG* 238).

The fact that in rational action Reason is not related to an “objective reality” or being “out there” therefore does not entail that it has no object. Rather, its object is the complex object that just is rational action itself.

Importantly, there is an ambiguity built into the very phenomenology of action which sets the stage for another dialectic in which the mind forgets its own activity and, as a result, re-confronts its object – which just is itself – as something once again external or existing in “objective reality”. For, as was noted, the third element of action is the achieved *work*. According to Hegel, the mind at the stage of Reason “withdraws from its work” because it, the mind, is the “universal consciousness” while the work, despite being an objectification of the mind itself, nevertheless is “determinate or particular” (*PhG* 243). In other words, rational mind is the *universal* power of thinking; yet, every action *qua* achieved work is *particular*. As such, these two elements – indeterminate, universal rational mind and its particular, determinate action – find themselves opposed. The subsequent paragraphs of “The Spiritual Animal Kingdom” are dedicated to working out these dialectically opposed aspects of rational action.

According to Forster, the ultimate upshot of Hegel’s phenomenology between the universal and particular aspects of rational action is that truth is revealed to be, not the correspondence between “representations” and “objective reality”, but an enduring communal consensus. Again, he cites the passage in which Hegel states that the nature of “matter in hand” [*die Sache selbst*] is such that “its *being* is the *action* of the *single* individual and of all individuals and whose action is immediately *for others*, or is a

‘matter in hand’ and is such only as the action of *each* and *everyone*” (*PhG* 251-2).

Hegel’s point at this stage, however, is far from what Forster contends.

For, it is not that there is no longer any object for consciousness. Indeed, the “matter in hand” is precisely this object. It is an object, however, which is a sublation of the universal and particular elements of rational action. Thus, Hegel states,

The ‘matter in hand’ [...] is rather substance permeated by individuality, *subject* in which there is individuality just as much *qua* individual, or *qua this particular* individual, as *qua all* individuals; and it is the universal which has being only as this action of all and each, and a *reality* in the fact that *this* particular consciousness knows it to be its own individual reality and the reality of all. The pure ‘matter in hand’ itself is what was defined above as the ‘category’, being that is the ‘I’ or the ‘I’ that is being, but in the form of *thought* which is still distinguished from *actual self-consciousness*. Here, however, the moments of actual self-consciousness insofar as we call them its content (purpose, action, and reality), and also insofar as we call them its form (being-for-self and being-for-another), are posited as one with the simply category itself, and the category is at the same time the entire content. (*PhG* 252)

In rational action, the particular individual ultimately recognizes that its object is that towards which all rational individuals act; it is a *universal* end. In Observing Reason, the activity of Reason and its object (i.e. the universal category), while implicitly identical, were nevertheless experienced by the mind for-itself as opposed elements. However, when rational activity is itself objectified, Reason eventually recognizes that its particular action is in fact a universal action, that the ‘matter in hand’ or the thing-in-itself is that

which is produced through the rational activity of all rational individuals and, as such, is universal. Truth, then, at this stage is the coincidence or correspondence of actual self-consciousness with the category or “matter in hand”.<sup>280</sup>

Needless to say, this coincidence or correspondence between consciousness or the mind and its object at this stage of development will prove to be only partial and, therefore, will be found to possess a hitherto unsublated element. Hence, the dialectic between consciousness, or the mind, and its object will continue until their perfect, sublated identity or correspondence is achieved and the True becomes self-conscious, or substance corresponds to subject.

### *2.1.1 Further Solidification of the Critique of Forster’s Interpretation of Hegel’s Theory of Truth*

In order to solidify the forgoing critique of Forster, it will be useful to recall the many instances in which Hegel states explicitly that truth is the correspondence or adequation of the mind and its object as well as clarify the peculiar sense that Hegel intends for this formulation of truth. Here is a partial list:

“Truth in philosophy means that the concept corresponds to reality” (*EPR*, 53);  
 “What is required by the definition of truth, namely, the agreement of the Concept and its object (*SL*, 595); the definition of truth as agreement of cognition with its object is “a definition of great, indeed of supreme, value” (*SL*, 593); “The Idea is what is true *in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity*” (*EL*,

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<sup>280</sup> Cf. Hegel in the immediately follow section of the *PhG*: “The category is *in itself*, or implicit, as the universal of *pure consciousness*; it is equally *for itself* or explicit, for the *self* of consciousness is equally a moment of it. It is absolute being, for that universality is the simply self-identity [or “correspondence”] of being. Thus what is object for consciousness has the significance of being the True” (252-3).

286); “Only when we consider mind in this process of the self-actualization of its concept, do we know it in its truth (*for truth just means agreement of the concept with its actuality*). In its immediacy, mind is not yet true, has not yet made its concept an object for itself, has not yet transformed what is present in it in an immediate way, into something posited by itself, has not yet converted its actuality into an actuality appropriate to its concept” [Emphases mine] (PM, 7).

It is telling that Forster cites the following passage from the *EL* in which Hegel rejects the naïve representationalist correspondence theory of truth: “In the ordinary way, what we call ‘truth’ is the agreement of an ob-ject with our representation. We are then presupposing an ob-ject to which our representation is supposed to conform” (60; cited in *Hegel’s Idea* 234). For, Forster then proceeds to entirely neglect the immediately succeeding passage of the *EL* in which Hegel affirms his own speculative correspondence theory of truth: “In the philosophical sense, on the contrary, ‘truth,’ expressed abstractly and in general, means agreement of the a content with itself. This is therefore a meaning of ‘truth’ quite different from the one mentioned above” (*EL* 60). Thus, the problem with ordinary consciousness is not that it maintains a correspondence theory of truth; rather, the problem lies in the fact that it naively posits an object distinct from its “representations” and therefore is driven to conceive of the basic epistemological problem as the Problem of the Bridge.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Cf. Hegel’s later statement in the same section of the *EL*: “God alone is the genuine agreement between Concept and reality; all finite things, however, are affected with untruth; they have a concept, but their existence is not adequate to it” (*EL* 60).



In summation it can be stated that the uniqueness of Hegel's theory of truth lies not in the fact that it proposes to replace the correspondence theory of truth with one of "enduring communal consensus". Rather, it lies in the fact that

- 1) Hegel would both explain and critique the naïve correspondence theory of truth inasmuch as he explains and critiques the very theory of consciousness which Forster ascribes to him, and
- 2) Hegel inverts the notion of correspondence such that the challenge is not for mind to conform itself or its "representations" to objects "out there", but rather for mind to posit an existence or object which is adequate to itself.

## 2.2 *Problems with Forster's Conception of Hegel's Theory of Development*

Since Forster so fundamentally misinterprets Hegel's theory of the structure of consciousness as well as Hegel's theory of truth, it is inevitable that Forster should misinterpret Hegel's account of the dialectical structure of consciousness's development as it proceeds towards truth. In fact, Forster's misinterpretation of Hegel's account of consciousness's development is unsurprisingly intertwined with his failure to adequately explicate Hegel's overall theory of development. Let us turn then to examining how Forster treats of this nest of issues surrounding the theme of development in Hegel.

### 2.2.1 *Forster's Neglect of Hegel's Appropriation of Aristotle's Theory of Potency and Act*

Forster entirely neglects Hegel's debt to and appropriation of Aristotle's theory of development, with its central elements of potency and act. He makes a fleeting mention of Hegel's possible debt to Aristotle's conception of the soul as the first act of body with

life potentially within it, but merely in the context of arguing that Hegel is not a “dualist” with respect to the relation between the mind and body (*Hegel’s Idea* 41). Had Forster paid due heed to Hegel’s appropriation of Aristotle in this regard he might have avoided his problematic interpretation of Hegel’s theory of truth. For, Hegel’s appropriation of Aristotle’s theory of potency and act provides a crucial context for understanding the manner in which, for Hegel, truth is the correspondence between concept and existence, mind and object.

As discussed at length in Chapter One, for Hegel, development is a transition from potency to act. Development proceeds inasmuch as an initially immediate and unstable or “dynamic” unity – for example, a seed or the mind of a human child<sup>282</sup> – posits a difference within itself and sublates that difference in a higher unity. The initial immediate and unstable unity is itself the concept, albeit merely in-itself or in potency. As such, it contains all the objective determinations that will eventually become actualized in and through the process of self-differentiation. Development is complete when the actual existence of the concept corresponds to itself, that is to say, to the totality of determinations which were present – in potency – at the beginning of the development. The coincidence or correspondence between concept and existence, or mind and object, is what Hegel calls the Idea and “it alone is Truth” (*LHP I* 20).

### 2.2.2 *Hegel’s Theory of Development and its Relation to Philosophical Multiplicity*

Along with contributing to his misinterpretation of Hegel’s theory of truth, Forster’s neglect of Hegel’s appropriation of Aristotle’s theory of potency and act also has serious consequences for how Forster understands Hegel’s diagnosis of and response

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<sup>282</sup> Cf. pp. 41-2 above.

to the problem of philosophical multiplicity and conflict. This point will be returned in more depth momentarily when the discussion turns to examining a central part of Forster's interpretation of how the *PhG* is related to the history of philosophy and philosophical multiplicity. Still, it will be apposite presently to establish certain basic ways in which Hegel's appropriation of Aristotle's theory of potency and act and, therefore, Hegel's overall theory of development is related to the problem of philosophical multiplicity and conflict.

Hegel states with respect to the difference between potency and act,

The whole variation in the development of the world in history is founded on this difference. This alone explains how since all mankind is naturally rational, and freedom is the hypothesis on which this reason rests, slavery yet has been, an in part still is, maintained by many peoples, and men have remained contented under it. The only distinction between the Africans and the Asiatics on the one hand, and the Greeks, Romans, and moderns on the other, is that the latter know and it is explicit for them that they are free, but the others are so without knowing that they are, and thus without existing as being free. This constitutes the enormous difference in their condition. (*LHP I 21*)

Despite the shocking offensiveness of Hegel's racism and Eurocentrism, the relevant philosophical point Hegel is making, here, can be extricated. For, Hegel's point is that the differences among the various cultures – whether they are historically or merely geographically separated – is to be explained by the notion of development, which is to say, in terms of the transition from potency to act.<sup>283</sup> Implicitly or in potency, all humans

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<sup>283</sup> Cf. Hegel: "We could indeed embrace the whole in the single principle of development" (*LHP I 20*).

are rational and, therefore, free, according to Hegel. The fact that some people remain in bondage simply entails that their implicit or potential rationality has not been actualized or explicitly posited. The relative stage of development of a given culture can thus be judged in terms of the relative level of actualization of its potential rationality.

Needless to say, this general point is, for Hegel, all the more true with respect to the multiplicity of different and conflicting philosophies. For, as Hegel states, “Philosophy is system in development” (*LHP I* 29). Thus, the various philosophies represent and express the various stages to which the mind has succeeded in developing itself, in actualizing the mind’s potency. As, Hegel states:

Now if we thus grasp the principles of the Concrete and of Development, the manifold [of philosophies] obtains quite another signification [than mere seeming haphazard and irreconcilable conflict], and what is said of the diversity in philosophies as if the manifold were fixed and stationary and composed of what is mutually exclusive is at once refuted and relegated to its proper place [...] Those who believe the principle of diversity to be one absolutely fixed, do not know its nature, or its dialectic; the manifold or diverse is in a state of flux; it must really be conceived of as in the process of development, and as but a passing moment. Philosophy in its concrete Idea is the activity of development revealing the differences which it contains within itself. (*LHP* 33-4)

Thus, different philosophies represent different stage of the development of the mind. Moreover, it is possible for these differences to obtain both historically and contemporaneously. Lower stages of development can manifest themselves in latter periods if, for example, an individual mind fails to fully actualize the concept of mind

which it implicitly is. For, every mind is a potential totality, which is to say, every mind contains within itself – albeit, in the first instance, merely in potency – the totality of philosophies. What distinguishes one mind from another, just as what distinguishes one culture from another, is the relative degree to which they have actualized that potency.

It is worth noting further that there is a kind of heightened reflexivity in the case of philosophy and its very relation to the notion of development. For, as Hegel states,

Philosophy has now become for itself the apprehension of this development [i.e. of the mind as a “self-developing organic system and a totality which contains a multitude of stages and of moments in development”], and as conceiving Thought, is itself this development in Thought. The more progress made in this development, the more perfect is the philosophy. (*LHP I 27*)<sup>284</sup>

Thus, the highest development or perfection of philosophy is manifested in that philosophy which most precisely grasps and explicates the very notion of development, in general, and the notion of the mind as a self-developing, systematic organic totality in which the various other philosophies constitute but moments or stages, in particular.

As noted, this discussion of Hegel’s notion of development and its concomitant notions of potency and act along with their relation to the problem of philosophical conflict will be returned to momentarily. Before turning to that task, however, let us note a few further elements of Hegel’s account of the dialectic of development which Forster unfortunately neglects.

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<sup>284</sup> Cf. Hegel: “The most important point for the nature of spirit [or mind] is not only the relation of what it is in itself to what it is actually, but the relation of what it knows itself to be to what it actually is; because spirit is essentially consciousness, this self-knowing is a fundamental determination of its actuality” (*SL 37*).

### 2.3 *Forster's Forgetting of Hegel's Notion of "Forgetting"*

An absolutely essential element in Hegel's overall effort to provide an explanatory account of the multiplicity of philosophies resides in his notion of the mind's forgetting of itself. As already mentioned, far from adequately explicating this notion of the mind's self-forgetting and its role in Hegel's overall account of the mind's development in the *PhG*, Forster does not so much as mention it. As it stands, it is Forster's forgetting of Hegel's account of forgetting that would, in part, explain the misguidedness of his various interpretations of Hegel that have been discussed, thus far.

For example, the fact that Forster forgets Hegel's account of forgetting helps to explain why Forster would ascribe to Hegel the problematic theory of consciousness which he does. For, Hegel's notion of forgetting is especially instructive for understanding how he explains and critiques the view of consciousness which Forster ascribes to him. For, it is only upon the mind forgetting that it has posited its object in the course of its own development that it might treat or relate to the object as something "found" "out there". Moreover, it is only upon relating to its object as a something "found" "out there" or "external" to itself that the mind might then wonder how its "representations" "in here" could "correspond" to objects "out there". Thus, Forster's forgetting of Hegel's account of forgetting also leaves Forster unable adequately to account for how Hegel explains and critiques the naïve notion of truth which emerges from the very view of consciousness which, again, Forster ascribes to Hegel himself.

The mind's forgetting of itself is also ultimately explicable in terms of Hegel's overall theory of development, which, of course, Forster also forgets or neglects. For, every object of which the mind is conscious is the result of the mind's own process of

self-differentiation and self-development. Yet, the mind forgets its development and, hence, its responsibility for the object and, as a result, relates the object as something “found” “out there”. Still, as we have just learned, at its highest moments of development, the mind begins to objectify for itself its own activity and, eventually, its own process of development. Hence, Active Reason, that is to say, Reason for which its own activity becomes its object, for example, is higher than merely Observing Reason which, while indeed active, has yet to objectify or render explicit this action for-itself. Thus, for Hegel, the antidote to the mind’s self-forgetting is self-knowledge conceived as a kind of recollection [*Erinnerung*], which is to say, a taking-possession-of-self or turning inward which is achieved in the very process of self-positing or self-differentiation.<sup>285</sup> Unfortunately, these points go entirely undiscussed in Forster’s work, even though for Hegel the self-recollection of the mind as a self-developing organic totality constitutes its highest end.<sup>286</sup>

#### 2.4 Forster’s Neglect of the Problem of Futility in Motivating the *PhG*

Throughout his first chapter, Forster provides and unpacks an elaborate list of the factors that motivate Hegel in the writing of the *PhG*. Yet, he fails to mention what, alongside the goal of mediating self-knowledge in the reader, is perhaps its overriding concern, namely, responding to the charge of futility levelled against philosophy due to

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<sup>285</sup> Cf. p. 29, footnote 33, above.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. Hegel on Plato’s doctrine of *Anamnesis*: “In one sense recollection [*Erinnerung*] is certainly an unfortunate expression, in the sense, namely, that an idea is reproduced which has already existed at another time. But recollection has another sense, which is given by its etymology, namely that of making oneself inward, going inward, and this is the profound meaning of the word in thought. In this sense it may undoubtedly be said that knowledge of the universal is nothing but a recollection, a going within oneself, and that we make that which at first shows itself in external form and determined as a manifold, into an inward, a universal, because we go into ourselves and thus bring what is inward in us into consciousness” (*LHP II* 34).

the fact of philosophical multiplicity and conflict. This point is worth noting especially because it is upon discussing this problem at length in the long Introduction to the *LHP* that Hegel immediately turns to elaborating in detail his larger theory of development. For, it is only in and through an adequate theory of development, in general, and of the development of the mind, in particular, that, according to Hegel, one can adequately respond to this charge of futility against philosophy (not to mention, treat the problem of truth). Yet, like so much else needed in order to understand Hegel's effort in the *PhG*, the problem of futility and its important connection to Hegel's theory of development goes entirely unmentioned in Forster's account.

### 3. *The Relation Between the PhG and the History of Philosophy*

It is now time to turn to a portion of Forster's work in which he raises a set of related problems which are quite relevant to the overall aim of the present dissertation. Thus, it will be apposite to 1) explicate this set of problems as articulated by Forster, 2) recount Forster's own attempt to respond to them and 3) show how the present dissertation provides the means of providing a better overall response to them.

#### 3.1. *Historical Chronology in the PhG*

Forster articulates this set of problems in his chapter "History in the Chapters *Consciousness through Reason*". The general problem to which Forster calls attention concerns the extent to which the phenomenologies of the various forms of the mind provided in the *PhG* are supposed to correspond to specific historical philosophies. It will be recalled that a central thesis of this dissertation is that, in the *PhG*, Hegel attempts to provide an explanatory account for the totality of different and conflicting philosophies.



Thus, it would seem that the total analysis provided in the *PhG* should in some way correspond to the totality of historical philosophies. Yet, what are the precise mechanics of this? Do earlier philosophies necessarily correspond to earlier forms of the mind and, thus, earlier sections of the *PhG* such that the philosophies which express Sense-certainty will necessarily be found to have emerged historically prior to philosophies which express Observing Reason, for example? Or, is the issue of historical chronology in effect irrelevant to the *PhG* provided that it does, in fact, succeed in integrating the totality of philosophies into a unified explanatory account? These are questions which Forster raises and attempts to respond to.

The first step of Forster's response to these questions is simply to attempt to show that there is, in fact, a strict chronological order to the successive forms of the mind dealt with in the *PhG*, or at least those that are covered from Consciousness through Reason. Thus, to briefly summarize elements of Forster's chronology, Sense-certainty, for example, being the earliest form of the mind analyzed in the *PhG* corresponds to the viewpoint of "early prehistory" manifested in ancient Persia; Perception, coming next, corresponds to "early prehistory" in India; Lordship and Bondage, dealt with a few stages later, corresponds to Late 5<sup>th</sup> Century Athens as well as Rome after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War; Reason as Testing Laws, showing up towards the end of Reason, corresponds to Kant's moral philosophy; and finally the concluding paragraphs of the Reason chapter correspond to Hegel's viewpoint (*Hegel's Idea* 297-353). There are further details to Forster's chronology, but the above list provides a rough summary of its basic structure and nature.

### 3.2 *Forster's Response to Potential Objections against His Chronology*

After delineating this account of the correspondence between the chronology of historical philosophies, or viewpoints, and the forms of consciousness successively analyzed in the *PhG*, Forster acknowledges a set of objections that might be raised with respect to his effort. Let us note two of these objections as well as discuss the manner in which Forster would respond to them. The first objection Forster articulates concerns the fact that in *Consciousness*, especially, but also in *Self-consciousness* and *Reason*, Hegel seemingly makes few references to specific historical dates, individuals or works, and the ones that he does make would seem to be extremely vague. Thus, against his own argument that there is a strict chronological order to the forms of the mind successively analyzed from *Consciousness* to *Reason*, Forster notes that one might object, “If Hegel had really intended to give a chronological history here, would he not have made the allusions clearer, or included specific reference?” (*Hegel’s Idea* 353).

The second objection that Forster articulates concerns the fact that many of the clear historical references that are provided in Hegel’s phenomenology of the forms of the mind from *Consciousness* through *Reason* occur *out of chronological order* (*Hegel’s Idea* 354). As Forster notes, this would seem to pose the greatest threat to his argument that there is a strict chronological order to the forms of the mind successively analyzed in those chapters and sections.

Forster responds to these two objections by introducing what he regards as a “very important principle”, one which he considers to be operative within the overall design of the chapters *Consciousness* through *Reason* but which is distinct from the principle of strict chronological order (*Hegel’s Idea* 354). Thus, according Forster,

[T]he sequence of shapes of consciousness presented in these chapters is supposed to be *not only* a chronological history of consciousness's development but *also and simultaneously a collection of the strata constitutive of the modern consciousness*. (Emphases Forster's; *Hegel's Idea* 354)

Thus, according to Forster, in the chapters *Consciousness through Reason* there are effectively two distinct but related principles governing the successive analyses of the forms of the mind provided therein. First, there is the principle of strict chronological order according to which Hegel attempts to provide an account of the emergence in historical time of the various forms of the mind and their concomitant viewpoints or philosophies. Second, there is the principle according to which Hegel attempts to show how forms of the mind which first emerged in earlier historical periods are nevertheless preserved within the "strata" of the modern mind.

According to Forster, insofar as one recognizes that these two principles simultaneously govern the overall presentation provided by *Consciousness through Reason*, one can adequately respond to the objection previously raised. Thus, to the first objection that the chapters *Consciousness through Reason* lack specific historical references, Forster provides a pair of related responses. First, he states:

The depiction in these chapters [i.e. *Consciousness through Reason*] of a series of shapes of consciousness is supposed to serve *not only* as a chronological history of consciousness, but also and simultaneously as an analysis of the strata of the modern consciousness. The intrusion of historical details, while it might have benefitted the former project, could have done so only at the serious cost of

interfering with the latter. Hegel therefore decided to omit historical details as far as possible. (Emphases Forster's; *Hegel's Idea* 357)

Thus, a first reason Hegel refrained from making clear historical references in these chapters was apparently in order not to interfere with his simultaneous effort to provide an analysis of the strata of forms of the mind present in the modern consciousness or mind.

The second reason why the early stages of the *PhG* apparently lack specific historical references, according to Forster, has especially to do with the Consciousness chapter. Thus, Forster states,

[W]hen Hegel actually wrote this chapter, he in all probability had no more precise idea of the historical reference of its first two sections, *Sense-certainty* and *Perception*, than that they depicted shapes of consciousness from the very beginnings of human prehistory. He was therefore not even in a position to provide historical details in these sections when he wrote them. (*Hegel's Idea* 357)

Thus, according to Forster, Hegel omitted any specific historical references from his account of Sense-certainty and Perception simply because there were no specific historical details to which he might make references since the period of time to which they might refer would be that of prehistory.

Forster follows this pair of responses with his response to the second objection that could be raised against his argument that the chapters Consciousness through Reason are governed by a strict chronological principle. That objection, again, was that the

historical references that do, in fact, occur within the Consciousness through Reason very often do so out of chronological order. Forster responds to this objection by stating,

Hegel intends these chapters to provide not *only* a chronological history of consciousness but also and simultaneously, in exploitation of the putative circumstance that consciousness's development has been cumulative in nature an analysis of the structure of modern consciousness. Consequently, within any given section he will wish to allude, not only to examples of the shape of consciousness at issue from the period of its original emergence, but also to examples of its preservation in the modern consciousness. (*Hegel's Idea* 358)

Thus, the reason why some historical references are out of chronological order is that at times Hegel wishes to draw attention to the instances in which historically earlier forms of the mind are retained in the strata of modern consciousness. This fact would explain, for example, the many references to Newtonian physics in the Force and Understanding chapter, despite the fact that, according to Forster, the historical reference of this section is to certain ancient viewpoints which culminate in Greek rationalism. As Forster states,

Greek rationalism's distinction between the sensible appearances of things recognized by the sensuous representation of the native investigator and the underlying supersensible constitutions and causal principles of things recognized only through a more exalted mode of cognition is preserved as a fundamental background assumption within modern physics. (*Hegel's Idea* 358-9)

Thus, in making multiple clear references to Newton in the course of Force and Understanding Hegel is not undermining the strict chronological sequence of Consciousness through Reason. Rather, he is fulfilling the ulterior task of showing the

reader how the form of the mind first emergent in Greek rationalism is still preserved among the strata of the modern mind.

Before moving to a critical examination of Forster's articulation of these possible objections to his argument for a strict chronological sequence to Consciousness through Reason as well as his proffered responses to them, it will be worth noting an important point which Forster notes in the context, albeit merely in a footnote. Concerning this general problem of explaining why certain historical references occur out of chronological order, Forster adds in the footnote that in the *PhG* Hegel is probably also concerned with the problem of "atavism", which occurs when "later perspectives which do not so much preserve an earlier perspective in a modified form within themselves as attempt to *return* to it" (*Hegel's Idea* 359). Thus, for example, according to Forster,

[I]t is plausible to interpret the *Sense-certainty* section as an attack, not only on the historically original form of the outlook which it describes, but also on later positions which Hegel regards as attempts to revert to that outlook, such as certain types of philosophical empiricism. (*Hegel's Idea* 359)

In his reference to the phenomenon of the "atavism" of the mind in its course of development, Forster thus in effect alludes to a crucial set of elements of Hegel's entire effort in the *PhG*, such as the phenomenon of the mind's self-forgetting and its reversion to lower viewpoints. The fact that Forster mentions this nest of issues only in a footnote and does not explicate it in any more detail provides some indication as to inadequacy of his overall analysis of the *PhG*. This point will be returned to in the course of the ensuing critical examination of Forster's articulation of his position on the issue of historical

chronology in the *PhG*, the possible objections to his position and his response to those objections.

### 3.3 *Critique of Both Forster's Chronology and His Responses to the Potential Objections against It*

Clearly, the aspects of Forster's work just adumbrated are quite relevant to the overall argument of the present dissertation. For, a central part of overall the argument of this dissertation is that in the course of the *PhG* Hegel attempts to demonstrate how it is possible not only to critique but to provide an explanation for the very emergence of the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. Hegel shows that the various conflicting philosophies are explicable as expressions of the various stages in the development of the mind. In showing that the multiplicity of philosophies are expressions of stages of development of the mind Hegel is thus able to show 1) that these philosophies do not emerge haphazardly but have an intelligible ground for their emergence and 2) that they are not ultimately irreconcilable and that the disputes that have emerged among them are not doomed to persist in perpetuity. For, in showing how the various philosophies are expressions of the stages of the mind's development Hegel shows 1) that there is an intelligible pattern or unity to the totality of philosophies inasmuch as there is an intelligible unity to the mind and 2) that it is possible for there to be progress and development within the history of philosophy inasmuch as there is progress and development within the mind.

A key challenge facing the overall argument of this dissertation which the discussion of Forster's work in the previous section helps to focus is the challenge of showing *precisely how* the phenomenology of the development of the mind provided in

the *PhG* relates to the history of the conflicting philosophies. According to Forster, the *PhG*, at least in the Consciousness through Reason chapters, adheres to a strict chronology which begins in prehistory and culminates with the viewpoint of Hegel himself in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This argument is qualified by Forster's claim that the *PhG* also supposedly shows how the historically emergent viewpoints are preserved within the modern mind – a qualification intended to explain, for example, the historical references that are out of chronological sequence. Despite perhaps some *prima facie* plausibility, however, Forster's argument in this context is flawed. Let us turn to delineating this critique of Forster's argument.

### *3.3.1 Forster's Problematic Interpretation of the Relation between the History of Philosophy and the "Strata" of the Modern Mind Delineated in the PhG*

A first point of entry for a critique of Forster's argument concerns his claim that the intrusion of historical details in Hegel's analysis of Consciousness through Reason, while it might have helped clarify the chronological principle operative in those sections, would nevertheless have seriously interfered with Hegel's simultaneous effort to show how the forms of the mind analyzed in these sections are also present as strata in the modern mind. Forster, unfortunately, makes no argument and provides no evidence in support of this claim. More importantly, the fact that he makes it reveals a misunderstanding of the very nature of Hegel's effort in the *PhG* as well as with Hegel's philosophy at large. In order to show this more clearly it would be helpful to advert to a crucial point Hegel makes in the Introduction to the *LHP*.



Hegel is addressing the issue of what it takes to properly interpret the history of philosophy. It is worth quoting Hegel at length in this context since he makes a series of crucial but interlocking points:

[T]he study of the history of philosophy is the study of philosophy itself, for, indeed, it can be nothing else. Whoever studies the history of sciences such as physics and mathematics, makes himself acquainted with physics and mathematics themselves. But in order to obtain a knowledge of its progress as development of the Idea in the empirical, external form in which philosophy appears in history, a corresponding knowledge of the Idea is absolutely essential, just as in judging of human affairs one must have a conception of that which is right and fitting. Else, indeed, as in so many histories of philosophy there is presented to the vision devoid of idea, only a disarranged collection of opinions. To make you acquainted with this Idea, and consequently to explain the manifestations, is the business of the history of philosophy [...] Since the observer must bring with him the concept of the subject in order to see it in its phenomenal aspect and in order to expose the object faithfully to view, we need not wonder at there being so many dull histories of philosophy in which the succession of its systems are represented simply as a number of opinions, error and freaks of thought. They are freaks of thought which, indeed, have been devised with a great pretension of acuteness and of mental exertion, and with everything else which can be said in admiration of what is merely formal. But, considering the absence of philosophic mind in such historians as these, how

should they be able to comprehend and represent the content, which is reasoned thought? (*LHP I* 30-1)

Here we have perhaps the first expression of the Hermeneutic Circle of doing history of philosophy and, indeed, doing philosophy itself. For, according to Hegel, one must know one's mind in order to understand the history of philosophy, but one must study the history of philosophy in order to know one's mind. Stated differently, if one does not know one's mind as a self-developing organic system, then one will be unable to recognize the various historical philosophies as successive expressions of the moments of that system. Yet, it is only through studying the history of philosophy that one comes to recognize that the mind is a self-developing system whose various moments are expressed in the various philosophies. Stated differently, again, one must possess the Idea of philosophy in order to profitably study the history of philosophy (i.e. not dismiss it as a haphazard succession of freaks), and the Idea of philosophy is grasped only insofar as the mind grasps itself as a self-developing organic system. Yet, recognizing that the mind is a self-developing organic system requires profitably studying the history of philosophy.

Needless to say, the Hermeneutic Circle of learning philosophy very closely approximates to the previously discussed Paradox of Learning in the *Meno*. For, it would seem that one must already know what philosophy is if one is to learn what philosophy is, thus making learning philosophy impossible. Also needless to say, just like the Paradox of Learning, the Hermeneutic Circle of philosophy is insoluble from the viewpoint of Representation. While space does not permit providing a detailed account of Hegel's response to the Hermeneutic Circle in this precise context, suffice it to say that, in a very real sense, the *PhG* just is Hegel's response. This comes out in Hegel's famous

discussion of the Problem of the Criterion in the Introduction in which he specifies that learning is a self-mediating and thus self-correcting process in which the criterion is immanent to the mind itself (*PhG* 52-56).<sup>287</sup> Hence, in Hegel's phenomenology of Perception, for example, in which the problem of error is treated, Hegel is keen to emphasize that, in the case of error, it is the mind itself which convicts itself of error. In other words, the mind discovers the very problem of error, not by finding that its "representations" fail to correspond to their putative objects, but rather insofar as the object fails to correspond to the immanent rational criterion of absoluteness that just is the mind itself (*PhG* 70ff.).<sup>288</sup>

This Hermeneutic Circle, which affects the very core of studying the history of philosophy and philosophy itself, along with Hegel's explicit awareness of it, helps to show, furthermore, the misguidedness of Forster's argument as to why there are apparently so few explicit historical references in the *Consciousness through Reason* chapters. For, far from seriously interfering with any effort on the part of Hegel to reveal the preservation of earlier forms of the mind within the modern mind, making explicit historical references to the philosophies which express the viewpoint of Sense-certainty, for example, could only aid in the quest for self-knowledge (or knowledge of the strata of the modern mind) which the *PhG* is intended to mediate within the reader. For, in order

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<sup>287</sup> Cf. Hegel: "This spiritual movement which, in its simple undifferentiatedness, gives itself its own determinateness and in its determinateness is equality with itself, which therefore is the immanent development of the Concept, this movement is the absolute method of knowing and that the same time is the immanent soul of the content itself. I maintain that it is this self-construing method alone which enables philosophy to be an objective, demonstrated science. It is in this way that I have tried to expound consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" (*SL* 28).

<sup>288</sup> Cf. Aquinas, that other great student of Aristotle, according to whom the mind unto itself, insofar as it is a *potens omnia facere et fieri*, and not the mind's "representations", is the measure of all things: "The term *mind (mens)* is taken from the verb *measure (mensurare)* [...] So, the word *mind* is applied to the soul in the same way as *understanding* is. For understanding knows about things only by measuring them, as it were, according to its own principles" (*De Ver.* Q. 10, a. 1, rep.).

properly to understand the strata or moments of one's mind, one must understand how these strata or moments, when explicitly expressed, give rise to determinate historical philosophical positions. In other words, Forster's argument in this instance suggests that the effort to understand the history of philosophy and the effort to understand the strata or moments of one's mind are opposed and that engaging in one risks interfering with engaging in the other, when, for Hegel, these two activities are complementary and, in fact, ultimately identical.

Thus, it can be further noticed that Forster's attempted clarification of the relation between the history of philosophy and the *PhG* actually serves to obscure an important fact which is that *all* references to viewpoints or philosophies referenced in the *PhG* that are not ultimately Hegel's are "historical" in the sense that Forster uses the term in contrast to the supposedly "ahistorical" strata of the modern mind. In other words, *no* viewpoint or philosophy discussed in the *PhG* other than Hegel's own, which comes at the very end, preserves the viewpoints or philosophies that went before it in the manner in which they are preserved within the strata of the modern mind.

To illustrate this point, take the example provided by Forster regarding the relation between Greek rationalism and Newtonian science supposedly indicated in the Force and Understanding chapter. According to Forster, in terms of its chronology, Force and Understanding corresponds to Greek rationalism which, for Forster, culminates in Plato. Thus, on Forster's reading, the copious clear references to Newtonian science in the Force and Understanding chapter are inserted there merely to illuminate for the modern reader the way in which the Greek rationalist/Platonic viewpoint has been preserved, albeit in modified or sublated form, in the modern mind.

Yet, for Hegel, the Newtonian viewpoint is itself no more preserved in the modern mind, which is to say, the mind that has reached Hegel's viewpoint, in an unmodified or unsublated form than the Greek rationalist viewpoint. This is precisely the point of the sections of *Force and Understanding* that move beyond Newtonian mechanism to an organicist viewpoint. For Hegel, his own Idealist philosophy of nature has already sublated the Newtonian viewpoint by the time the *PhG* is written. In other words, both Greek rationalism and Newtonian science have been sublated into the modern – Hegelian – mind. It is thus highly misleading to suggest that the reference to Plato in the *Force and Understanding* chapter are “historical” while the references to Newton are not.

There are actually further problems with Forster's discussion of the relation between Greek rationalism and Newtonianism in *Force and Understanding* as well as with his larger discussion of the relation of the *PhG* to the history of philosophy. In order to address these problems, however, it will first be necessary to address an even deeper problem with Forster's understanding of certain basic elements of Hegel's effort in the *PhG*.

### *3.3.2 Forster's Neglect of Both Basic Elements of Hegel's Dialectic of Development and Their Relation to the History of Philosophy*

In order to begin addressing this deeper problem with Forster's overall understanding of Hegel's effort in the *PhG*, it will be helpful first to show how and why Forster establishes some of the chronological order which he purports to find within the *PhG*. Thus, to take the first chronological instance, Forster claims that the historical reference of Sense-certainty is to ancient Persian religion. The sole piece of evidence that

he cites in favor of his interpretation is Hegel's reference to Sense-certainty in the part of the Religion chapter in which Hegel is discussing ancient Persian religion. Thus, Forster states,

[I]n the Religion chapter, which is generally recognized to be chronologically historical in design, he explicitly associates Sense-certainty with the historically first and most primitive of religion, God as Light. He associates this form of religion with the Zoroastrian tradition of ancient Persia. It is therefore reasonable to infer that his considered view of Sense-certainty is that it too has its source in ancient Persia. (*Hegel's Idea* 305)

There are multiple problems with Forster's interpretation in this context.

In order best to clarify the problems with Forster's interpretation, it will be helpful to recall certain of the basic principles which govern the entire dialectal development of the mind as delineated in the *PhG*. To begin with, it should be recalled that the mind will determine itself, its object and its relation to its object according to the level of development it has reached. Next, it should be recalled that the development of the mind is also dialectical, and part of that dialectic involves the mind's repeated forgetting of its own development and its reversion to lower viewpoints.

Thus, it may happen that in the course of its development, the mind posits a highly developed object but nevertheless forgets the very development in and through which it was posited and consequently reverts to a lower viewpoint. Insofar as the mind reverts to a lower viewpoint it will determine its *relation* to its object on the basis of that lower viewpoint despite the fact that the object itself corresponds to a higher viewpoint. For example, as has been repeatedly discussed, the object posited by the Kantian

viewpoint is the object of Reason, which is to say, the ‘I’ or self-consciousness itself *qua* category. Yet, within the Kantian philosophy one also detects a reversion to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty and Perception. Thus, despite the fact that the object determined by Kantian philosophy – the category – is highly developed and mediated, in the Kantian philosophy the *relation* between the mind and its object is determined by the mind to be one of sensuous immediacy or intuition.

Precisely the same phenomenon as this unfolds in Hegel’s treatment of the God of Light to which Forster appeals in order to make his case regarding the historical reference of Sense-certainty. In the case of the God of Light section, the *PhG* has moved past Reason into Spirit or mind. Thus, the object of this form of the mind is even more developed than that of Kantian philosophy, for example. As Hegel states, the object of the viewpoint of the God of Light is “filled with Spirit [or mind]” (*PhG* 419). Still, the God of Light viewpoint has reverted to the viewpoint of immediate consciousness, or Sense-certainty, in terms of its relation to its object. Interestingly, the God of Light viewpoint has also reverted to the viewpoint of immediate self-consciousness, or Lordship and Bondage, in its relation to its object.<sup>289</sup> As a result of its thus having reverted to these lower viewpoints in terms of its relation to its object, the object of the God of Light viewpoint, that is to say, the object filled not just with Reason but with Spirit or mind, is experienced by this viewpoint as an uncanny or sublime, but still sensuous, spectacle of light and dark which lords over it. As Hegel states, *for* the viewpoint of God of Light, its object is “torrents of light [and] streams of fire destructive

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<sup>289</sup> This is interesting not least because, in an important sense, Kant’s philosophy, too, reverts to the viewpoint of Lordship and Bondage. Thus, in its relation to a higher object, the God of Light nevertheless recapitulates elements that were manifested in the Kantian viewpoint.

of [all] form” from which the mind slavishly “retreats” rather than identifies with and recognizes as itself (*PhG* 419).

The larger point to be noted here with respect to Forster’s effort to establish Persian religion as the historical reference of Sense-certainty, and, indeed, with his entire effort to establish the chronological order of the *PhG*, is that the mind *repeatedly* reverts back to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty throughout the course of *PhG*. Thus, the fact that mind does this at a stage in which the object corresponds to that present in “prehistoric” Persian religion bears no especial significance for the putative chronological order of the viewpoints meant to be exemplified in the Consciousness chapter or beyond. Indeed, on the basis of Forster’s argument one could just as easily say that the chronological reference of Sense-certainty is to Kantian philosophy or early modern science (i.e. the viewpoint of Observing Reason), both of which also revert to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty.

In fact, the only place in the history of philosophy in which we see the viewpoint of Sense-certainty expressed, as it were, in its purity is the positive side of Schulze’s skepticism discussed in Chapter Two. For, not only does Schulze determine the mind to *relate* to its object in terms of immediate sensuousness, the *object itself* lacks all spiritual or mental determinations or mediations; it just is. By contrast, the object for the God of Light viewpoint is at least spirit or mind-filled. Thus, in the strictest sense, the God of Light viewpoint is more advanced than the viewpoint expressed in Schulze and, as such, cannot be considered the prime historical reference of the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. For, as far as Hegel informs us, the only historical philosophy which has expressed that viewpoint in its purity would be the positive side of Schulze’s skepticism.



It should be noted further that this kind of reversion of the mind to a lower viewpoint in terms of the manner in which it determines itself relation to its object just is the “atavism” of the mind to which Forster provided only the most fleeting reference but which is, in fact, central to the entire dialectic of the mind’s development. It will be recalled, of course, that Forster restricted the total possible ways in which the mind can determine its relation to its object to a single one, namely, representation. This fact would, in part, explain his highly misleading treatment of the relation between Sense-certainty and the God of Light viewpoint since the notion that the mind might determine its relation to its object in *multiple* ways is peremptorily ruled out by Forster’s interpretation of Hegel’s theory of the structure of the mind.

Another example of Forster’s problematic rendition of the chronological order of the *PhG* concerns the previously mentioned instance regarding the putative relation between Greek rationalism and Newton in the Force and Understanding chapter. It will be recalled that, according to Forster, the point of the copious references to Newton in Force and Understanding is to alert the reader to the manner in which the viewpoint of Greek rationalism, which is the true historical reference of Force and Understanding, has been preserved – albeit in modified or sublated form – among the strata of the modern mind. Even a cursory inspection of Hegel’s relative estimation of the viewpoint of Greek rationalism, culminating as it does in Plato, compared to that of Newton, however, shows that this is decidedly not what Hegel is up to in Force and Understanding.

To begin with, it is clear that, for Hegel, the value of Plato’s philosophy lies in the fact of “its elevation of consciousness into the realm of Spirit” and that mind itself is grasped as relating to its object primarily through thought (*LHP II* 2ff.). Thus, for Hegel,

Plato succeeds in determining the mind to relate to its object through thought, or *Noesis*, and this kind of relation would ultimately correspond to the viewpoint of Spirit. By contrast, Hegel ruthlessly criticizes Newton for determining the mind to relate to its object according to the viewpoint of Sense-certainty. As Hegel states, “Newton treated concepts like sensuous things, and dealt with them just as men deal with wood and stone” (*LHP III* 325).

In the Force and Understanding section Hegel shows that he, of course, recognizes that the *object* developed and posited by Newtonian science was, in many respects, much more advanced than the object of Plato’s philosophy. Indeed, as Hegel states, “The philosophical culture of Plato, like the general culture of his time, was not yet ripe for truly scientific work” (*LHP II* 17). Still the manner in which Plato determines the mind’s relation to its object is decidedly *not* preserved in the Newtonian viewpoint.<sup>290</sup> Thus, it is highly misleading to say that the point of the references to the Newtonian viewpoint in Force and Understanding is merely to show how the Platonic viewpoint has been preserved among the strata of the modern mind. For, the *object* of the Newtonian viewpoint which is analyzed in Force and Understanding is qualitatively more advanced than anything in Plato’s science; yet, the manner in which the Newtonian viewpoint determines its *relation* to its object is, in fact, significantly impoverished compared to that of Plato. Also, as previously noted, if there is any historical reference in terms of actual chronology in Force and Understanding, it is to that of the transition of Newtonian mechanics to the German Idealist philosophy of nature.

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<sup>290</sup> Cf. Hegel: “[W]e must regard it as an infinite step forward that the forms of thought have been freed from the material in which they are submerged in self-conscious intuition [and] figurate conception [...] and that these universalities have been brought into prominence for their own sake and made objects of contemplation as was done by Plato and after him especially by Aristotle” (*SL* 33).

Thus, there are myriad problems with Forster's attempt to relate the supposed historical references to the putative strata of modern mind, and these problems themselves are grounded in still further problems with Forster's basic understanding of central elements of Hegel's effort in the *PhG*. It is now time to turn to showing how the overall argument of the present dissertation provides the means for a better response to the set of problematics which Forster attempts to address.

4. *A Better Way to Approach the Relation between the PhG and the History of Philosophy and Philosophical Multiplicity and Conflict*

According to the basic argument of this dissertation, the *PhG* provides an account of the structure of mind in its development from potency to act. Thus, forms of the mind analyzed earlier in the *PhG* correspond to forms of the mind which are not yet fully actualized or whose actualization is not yet adequate to the concept of the mind as such. Recognizing that the *PhG* provides an idealized or phenomenologically purified account of the development of the mind from potency to act is crucial to understanding the relation between the *PhG* and the history of philosophy, including, of course, the history of philosophical conflict.

In order to clarify this point further, it is first necessary to recognize that different individual minds can be differently actualized. Thus, in most general terms, insofar as two individuals have attained to different degrees of actualization of their respective minds, they are liable to fall into fundamental philosophical disagreement. Moreover, different individual minds can be less actualized even though they come historically later. Thus, modern minds might find themselves in disagreement with Aristotle, not because they have superseded his viewpoint, but because they have fallen short of it. Indeed,

Hegel famously maintains that Aristotle's theory of rational *Nous* far surpasses that of the so-called "rational psychology" or "empirical psychology" of Hegel's time.<sup>291</sup>

Still, there are conditions for the emergence and actualization of any given individual mind and, therefore, of all minds of any given epoch. As we have seen, Hegel maintains that previous achievement is necessary in order to make the time ripe for still further advancement.<sup>292</sup> This phenomenon is generically accounted for in the notion of "vertical teleology" discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation. There it was pointed out that, for Hegel, previous actualizations and objectifications of the mind provide the proximate potency for a subsequent stage of actualization. Thus, even though later individuals can fall beneath the level of previous viewpoint insofar as they fail adequately to actualize their minds, certain higher types of actualization are simply impossible for individuals within earlier periods.<sup>293</sup> Thus, as we have seen, even the actualization of the mind of Plato himself was restricted by the lack of previous actualizations of the mind.<sup>294</sup>

The larger point is that insofar as one recognizes that the history of philosophy and, indeed, of all culture is the self-actualization of the mind, *one can thereby*

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<sup>291</sup> Cf. Hegel: "Aristotle's books on the soul, along his essays on particular aspects and states of the soul, are [...] still the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of speculative interest on this topic" (*POM* 4); "Ancient metaphysics had in this respect a higher conception of thinking that is current today" (*SL* 45).

<sup>292</sup> Cf. Hegel: "As a matter of fact, the need to occupy oneself with pure thought presupposes that the human spirit must already have travelled a long road" (*SL* 34). Schelling had already made a similar point in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*: "[N]o individual consciousness could be posited, with all the determinations it is posited with, and which necessarily belong to it, unless the whole of history had gone before [...] This particular individuality presupposes this particular period, of such and such a character, such and such a degree of culture, etc." (201).

<sup>293</sup> Cf. Hegel: "This [...] is no mere pride in the philosophy of our time, because it is in the nature of the whole process that the more developed philosophy of a later time is really the result of previous operations of the thinking mind; and that it, pressed forwards and onwards from the earlier standpoints, has not grown up on its own account or in a state of isolation" (*LHP I* 42).

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Hegel: "The individual is the offspring of his people, of his world, whose constitution and attributes are alone manifested in his form" (*LHP I* 45); "[S]eeing that difference in culture on the whole depends on difference in the thought determinations which are manifested, this must be so still more with respect to philosophies" (*LHP I* 44).

*understand the source of the multiplicity of philosophies along with their various conflicts.* Thus, in the case of Sense-certainty, insofar as one grasps this viewpoint as a stage in the mind's development, one can grasp why the philosophy of Schulze emerged even at the relatively late date that it did. For, Schulze's philosophy simply expresses a form of the mind at a very primitive stage of development. Yet, insofar as Schulze is operating at a viewpoint which is less developed than, say, Fichte, who, for Hegel, clearly inhabits a higher viewpoint given that his philosophy has at least moved to the viewpoint of Self-consciousness, then it becomes explicable – as opposed to merely haphazard – as to why Schulze and Fichte would have fallen into the disagreement which they famously did.<sup>295</sup>

There is thus no reason to insist upon any kind of *strict* chronological order to the *PhG*. There will be a rough correlation between the succession of viewpoints in the *PhG* and the succession of historical philosophy since certain higher forms of the mind simply could not emerge until previous historical philosophies, and the minds which expressed them, were actualized. Thus, in the history of philosophy, higher viewpoints tend to come historically later.

Yet, the development of the mind is dialectical, with various advancements but also various forgettings of advancements and consequent reversions to lower viewpoints, both on an individual and historically epochal level. Thus, Hegel maintains that there is a degree of contingency operative within the history of philosophy which is not present in the ideal structure of the mind's development delineated in the *PhG*. As Hegel notes, there is a distinction to be drawn between the “sequence in time of history [of

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<sup>295</sup> For an introduction to this dispute between Schulze and Fichte, Cf. *Between Hegel and Kant* pp. 104-57.

philosophy] and [...] the [...] succession in the order of ideas”, the former of which is beset by a certain contingency - although, ultimately, the history of philosophy, too, is governed by the necessary, in the sense of ineluctable, providential direction of the mind itself (*LHP I* 30ff.).<sup>296</sup>

As has been noted, the order of viewpoints delineated in the *PhG* corresponds to a certain ideal order of the development of the mind. For, the overall goal of the *PhG* as such is not to articulate a strict chronological order of viewpoints in the history of philosophy. Rather, the goal is to mediate the development of self-knowledge in the reader which will in turn permit the reader to be able to discern the intelligible unity governing the multiplicity of conflicting philosophies. For, that intelligible unity turns out to be identical to the intelligible unity governing the mind itself.

##### 5. *Recovering an Aspect of Forster's Interpretation of Hegel's Theory of Truth*

As a final point of discussion, despite its misguidedness, it may still be possible to recover a certain useful insight in Forster's argument that Hegel adopts an “enduring communal consensus” conception of truth. For, as has been noted, higher actualizations of the mind presuppose previous actualizations which serve as their proximate potency. Thus, the actualization of any individual mind presupposes the actualization of other minds. This point can perhaps be further exploited with respect to the later parts of the

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<sup>296</sup> Cf. Hegel: “In the peculiar shape of external history, the coming to be of philosophy and its development is represented as the history of this science. This shape gives the form of contingent succession to the stages of the Idea's development, and it gives a kind of mere diversity to the principles and their exposition in the various philosophies of these stages. But the master workman of this labour of thousands of years is the One living Spirit whose thinking nature is to bring to consciousness what it is; and when what it is has become object in this way, it is at once raised above this, and it is inwardly a higher stage” (*EL* 37-8).

*PhG* in which Hegel begins more explicitly referring to the spiritual, or mental, community.

For, it would seem that, for Hegel, the truly full actualization of any mind requires the full actualization of all minds and that the full actualization of all minds would produce universal philosophical agreement, or “enduring communal consensus”, among all minds. As Hegel states in the Preface to the *PhG* “it is the nature of humanity to press onward to agreement with other; human nature only really exists in an achieved community of minds” (*PhG* 43). The human mind is only ever fully achieved or actualized in a community of other fully actualized minds, and this full actualization produces full agreement. Thus, the overcoming of philosophical disagreement requires the universal actualization of the mind.

Still, this does not entail that Hegel views truth itself is a matter of enduring communal consensus, as if mere agreement were enough to generate truth. For, there may be communities in which agreement is achieved but yet the minds in those communities are not fully actualized. Rather, truth, for Hegel, is only achieved when existence is adequate to concept, or object corresponds to mind. The point would be that, only in a universal community of fully actualized, and thus agreeing, individual minds would there be an existence that is indeed adequate to or corresponds to the concept of mind itself.

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