

The Spirit of the Phenomenology:

Hegel's Resurrection of Metaphysics in the Phänomenologie des Geistes

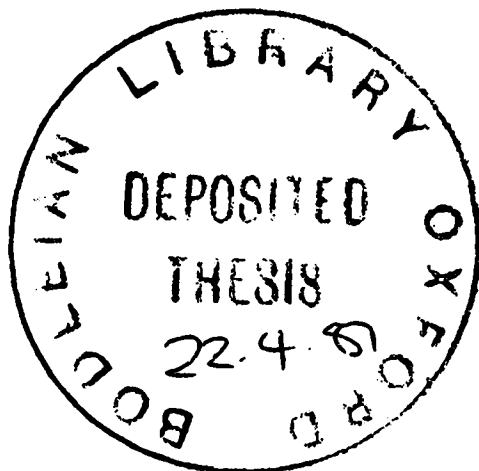
Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Michaelmas Term 1980



Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to investigate Hegel's attempt to resurrect metaphysics in the Phänomenologie des Geistes. Chapter 1 sets forth Hegel's general strategy for the resurrection of metaphysics: to justify knowledge of reality as a whole through epistemology or the critique of knowledge. Chapter 2 then examines why Hegel thinks that the resurrection of metaphysics is necessary after its destruction by the Kantian critique of knowledge. Chapter 3 turns to Hegel's argument for the necessity of a critical justification of metaphysics. It reconstructs his arguments in behalf of the critique of knowledge, and it analyses his polemic against Schelling's postulate of intellectual intuition. The task of chapters 4 and 5 is to explain how Hegel resolves the problems that confront his ambition to justify metaphysics through the critique of knowledge. Chapter 4 considers the objections raised by the meta-critical campaign of Hamann, Herder, Schulze, Schlegel and Reinhold, and it examines how Hegel attempts to re-establish the programme of the critique of knowledge after the meta-critique. Chapter 5 discusses the problem of solipsism, and interprets the dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A of the Phänomenologie as Hegel's reply to the solipsist. Finally, chapter 6 is a historical study of Hegel's development toward the Phänomenologie in Jena. It describes the stages by which Hegel came to conceive his programme for the critical resurrection of metaphysics.

Hegel had a grand ambition when he set upon the adventure of his Phänomenologie des Geistes: to resurrect metaphysics after its destruction by the Kantian critique of knowledge. Rather than allowing metaphysics to relapse into pre-critical dogmatism, Hegel maintained that it had to respond to the challenge of the critique. The foundation of metaphysics was to be nothing less than the critique of knowledge itself. This attempt to justify metaphysics through the critique of knowledge is the fundamental enterprise of the Phänomenologie des Geistes. It is indeed this enterprise which distinguishes Hegel from all his contemporaries. Against his contemporaries—who affirmed either a dogmatic metaphysics or the critique of knowledge, but never both—Hegel claimed that he had found the path to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge.

The main task of the following thesis is to come to terms with Hegel's resurrection of metaphysics in the Phänomenologie des Geistes. It investigates his apparently paradoxical attempt to justify metaphysics through the critique of knowledge. There are four questions that naturally arise in considering this theme. (1) What does it mean to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge? What claims must Hegel commit himself to in embarking upon such a programme? (2) Why does Hegel think that his programme is necessary? Why does he think that it is necessary to revive metaphysics after the critique of knowledge? And why does he believe that metaphysics has to be justified through the critique? (3) How does Hegel achieve his ambition? How

does he re-establish the critique of knowledge after the meta-critical campaign, so that it is a presuppositionless foundation for metaphysics? And how does he use the critique of knowledge to break out of the circle of consciousness and to establish knowledge of reality as a whole? (4) When does Hegel first conceive his programme for a critical resurrection of metaphysics? How does he come to develop such an idea during his Jena years? All these questions will be dealt with in the following thesis.

* * *

A short word is necessary about method. My approach to Hegel attempts to walk a middle path between the extremes of the Anglo-American and Continental traditions. On the one hand, the main concern of the Anglo-American tradition is to analyse Hegel's arguments and to see them as solutions to philosophical problems; on the other hand, the basic interest of the Continental tradition is to interpret Hegel through the understanding of his contemporaries and his place in the philosophical tradition. Both these approaches have their pitfalls. The Anglo-American tradition often reconstructs Hegel's arguments in a historical vacuum. It is then necessary to read premises into Hegel's arguments, so that the attribution of an argument to the historical Hegel becomes a hazardous—or, even worse, irrelevant—business. Conversely, the Continental tradition often loses sight of Hegel's arguments and problems, failing to see the philosophical point behind his ideas. Hegel's problems and arguments are simply taken for granted because they derive from

a tradition, and his terminology is only repeated without making it more accessible to a contemporary audience. My middle path tries to avoid these pitfalls and to get the best of both worlds. My approach is to analyse Hegel's arguments, but as a response to the positions and problems of his contemporaries, so that philosophical reconstruction is based upon historical fact.

Above all, though, I want to avoid that style of interpretation which explains Hegel's philosophy only in the light of modern philosophical issues and concerns. Supposedly, judging from some Anglo-American commentators, to make good philosophical sense of Hegel is to see how he answers such problems as private languages, sense-data, the analysis of propositional form, etc. Now there is nothing wrong with such interpretations per se, and they might indeed be philosophically interesting in bringing out how Hegelian themes are still relevant today. What I find problematic, however, is the underlying assumption that Hegel's philosophical merits and defects are exhausted by his answers to modern issues. This is to assume that our philosophical problems are the only problems, and to ignore that problems themselves change with philosophical traditions. Yet Hegel's philosophical interest need not be exhausted by his relevance to contemporary issues. He might be making genuine philosophical points on problems which are genuine, if no longer burning issues of the day.

A word of caution. My only aim in this study is to reconstruct Hegel's arguments upon a historical foundation. If I do not criticise Hegel, that is not because I believe his arguments,

but because I think that understanding precedes criticism. An historical reconstruction of Hegel's arguments ought to indeed provide the basis for a more just and accurate philosophical appraisal.

The ultimate hope of this study is to make Hegel's Phänomenologie more intelligible to an Anglo-American audience without compromising historical context. I want to bring out some of the ways in which Hegel is philosophically interesting, but in the light of his own contemporary problems.

* * *

My major debts are to my supervisor, Charles Taylor, for his constant surveillance and encouragement. I must also thank Patrick Gardiner for his painstaking criticisms of earlier drafts and for several useful suggestions. The thesis would have been impossible without the support of several friends: Peter Hylton, Anke Ritter, and Harriet Strachan.

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Notes on References and Abbreviations

In constructing the stages of Hegel's development toward the Phänomenologie, I have relied upon the chronologies of G. Schüller, 'Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften', Hegel-Studien, ii. (1963) 111-159, and H. Kimmerle, 'Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jenaer Schriften', Hegel-Studien, iv. (1967) 125-167. I have also adopted Schüller's and Kimmerle's convention of referring to fragmentary texts by their opening phrase of incipit.

Citations from texts repeat the original emphasis and spelling, unless otherwise stated in a footnote.

The following abbreviations are used regularly:

KrV=Kritik der reinen Vernunft
PhG=Phänomenologie des Geistes
Wis. d. Er.=Wissenschaft der Erfahrung
W-I=Wissenschaftslehre
Erg.=Ergänzungsband

In citing from collected editions, small roman numerals refer to volume numbers and arabic numerals to page numbers. Subdivisions within a volume are indicated by a '/' (eg. '1/2' indicates volume 1 part 2).

All references to Kant's first Kritik refer to the page numbers of the first and second editions, 'A' for the first edition and 'B' for the second edition. All other references to Kant refer to the Akademie edition.

All references to Hegel's Phänomenologie are to the standard edition of J. Hoffmeister, Phänomenologie des Geistes (Hamburg, Meiner, 1952), and all references to the Logic are to the standard edition of G. Lasson, Wissenschaft der Logik (Hamburg, Meiner, 1967)

1.

The Metaphysical Aim of the Phänomenologie des Geistes

'Es sind nun mehr als 150 Jahre her, dass Hegel an Schelling die Frage richtete, was er von der Idee einer Phan. d. Geistes halte? Wissen wir heute eine Antwort auf Hegel's Frage? Wissen wir überhaupt, was die Idee von Hegel's Phän. ist?'

O. Pöggeler

The Phänomenologie as the Critical Resurrection of Metaphysics

Hegel has a grand ambition in his Phänomenologie des Geistes (PhG): to re-establish metaphysics upon a firm foundation after its destruction by the Kantian critique of knowledge. Despite all Kant's critical limits upon reason, Hegel wants to justify not only the possibility, but even the necessity of metaphysics, ie. the rational knowledge of reality as a whole. This metaphysical ambition of the PhG is affirmed from the very beginning in its 'Vorrede'. Here Hegel reveals that his intention in writing his 'System der Wissenschaft' is to bring philosophy closer to its ideal of science (Wissenschaft).¹ This statement has to be understood in the context of Hegel's purely metaphysical conception of the task of philosophy. The aim of philosophy, he writes in his 1801 Differenz,² is to know the absolute, the unconditioned or the universe as a whole. Thus when Hegel states that his aim is to help philosophy toward its goal of science he means that he intends to put metaphysics upon a firm scientific foundation.

There is an apparent paradox behind Hegel's ambition to resurrect metaphysics in the PhG. Although his aim is to overthrow the limits imposed upon reason by the Kantian critique of

1. Phänomenologie des Geistes, ed. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner 1952), p. 12

2. G.W.F. Hegel, Werke in zwanzig Bänden, ed. Moldenhauer and Michel (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1970), II 25

knowledge, his new foundation for metaphysics is to be nothing less than the critique of knowledge itself! The PhG does not struggle against the demands of the critique, but it in fact strives to satisfy them. For Hegel, there cannot be a relapse into the dogmatism of pre-Kantian metaphysics. The great contribution of the first Kritik is precisely its destruction of Wolffian rationalism, and Kant is surely right to declare in the Prolegomena that 'no future metaphysics can come forward as a science alone' unless it first reckons with the critique. Metaphysics simply cannot escape the basic demand of the critique: 'accept no claims to rational knowledge without a previous investigation and criticism of the powers of reason'. In the PhG, Hegel rejects Schelling's and Jacobi's attempt to re-establish metaphysics through intellectual intuition just because it cannot satisfy this demand of the critique. Schelling and Jacobi cannot answer the simple critical question 'How is this known?', and so they have to resort to their desperate appeal to an esoteric faculty.

This demand of the critique is decisive for the method of the PhG. In the 'Einleitung', Hegel insists that the philosopher precede his claim to absolute knowledge with a critique. When philosophy first appears upon the scene, he says,¹ it has no right to presume to be a superior standpoint to that of ordinary consciousness or common sense. Rather, philosophy has to justify itself before ordinary consciousness, showing itself to

1. PhG, p. 66

be necessary according to the self-examination of ordinary consciousness. The critique which precedes the philosopher's absolute knowledge is thus nothing less than the dialectic of ordinary consciousness, ie. that self-examination and self-criticism whereby it evaluates its beliefs by its own standards of knowledge. This dialectic is then made into the test of a philosophical principle. The philosopher has to test his claim against the dialectic, seeing whether it is verified or falsified by the self-criticism of consciousness. His claim is justified only when it proves to be a necessary result of consciousness' dialectic.

Hegel's ambition to resurrect metaphysics upon the basis of Kant's critique of knowledge appears even in the original title of the PhG, 'Wissenschaft der Erfahrung des Bewusstseins'.¹ Like Kant and Fichte, Hegel endorses experience as his standard of knowledge. Hence he writes in a Kantian-Fichtean spirit in the 'Vorrede': 'Das Bewusstsein weiss und begreift nichts, als was in seiner Erfahrung ist...'.² The metaphysician's claim to absolute knowledge has to be tested against the experience of consciousness. What is 'in itself' for the philosopher has to become 'for itself' through consciousness' own experience. In order to justify metaphysics through experience, Hegel certainly has to

1. The PhG is originally conceived as a 'Wissenschaft der Erfahrung', but, during the printing of the work, Hegel replaces this title with another, 'Wissenschaft der Phänomenologie des Geistes'. On the circumstances surrounding Hegel's decision to change the title, see F. Nicolin 'Zum Titelproblem der Phänomenologie des Geistes' in Hegel-Studien, IV (1967), 113-123

2. PhG, p. 32; cf. p. 558

extend the sense of 'experience' beyond its narrow Kantian limits, where it applies exclusively to sense perception. But Hegel replies that Kant artificially and arbitrarily restricts the bounds of experience:

'...aber die Erfahrung, die Betrachtung der Welt heisst Kant nie was anderes, als dass hier ein Leuchter steht, hier eine Tabakdose...Aber man wird auch für die Bewahrung des Unendlichen nicht eine sinnliche Wahrnehmung fordern wollen; der Geist ist nur für den Geist'.¹

Experience is not only sense perception, Hegel insists, but also what is discovered through the examination of one's immediate awareness, ie. what appears to be given and known without further reflection. This is by no means a technical or stipulative use of the word 'Erfahrung', and there is no need to replace this term with another (eg. 'Erleben', as Kroner suggests).² Hegel is only reviving the original sense of experience where it denotes what is known by an experiment.³ According to this original sense, experience is anything that one learns through experiment, through trial and error, or through an enquiry about what appears to be the case. Hegel's term 'Erfahrung' is then to be taken in its literal meaning: a journey or adventure (fahren), which arrives at a result (er-fahren), so that 'Erfahrung' is quite literally 'das Ergebnis des Fahrts'. The journey undertaken

1. Hegel, Werke, xx. 352

2. See R. Kroner, Von Kant bis Hegel (Tübingen, Mohr, 1924) ii. 374

3. According to Hoffmeister, Paracelsus is the first to use 'Erfahrung', where it is the substitute for the latin 'experientia', a trial or experiment, or the knowledge gained by such means. See his Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe (Hamburg, Meiner, 1955), p. 209

by consciousness in the PhG is that of its own dialectic. Not aware of what it really knows, consciousness cross examines itself, asking itself the simple question 'What do I know?'. What it discovers through its self-examination or dialectic is its experience. Hence, in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG, Hegel identifies the dialectic of consciousness with its experience:

'Diese dialektische Bewegung, welche das Bewusstsein an ihm selbst, sowohl an seinem Wissen als an seinem Gegenstände ausübt, insofern ihm der neue wahre Gegenstand daraus entspringt, ist eigentlich dasjenige, was Erfahrung genannt wird'¹

What allows Hegel to extend the concept of experience beyond its narrow use in the empiricist tradition is his all-too Kantian insistence that it is not possible to separate the conditions of experience from what is given in perception. The empiricist's definition of experience as sense impressions in contrast to abstract ideas only begs the question. The concepts by which experience is understood are constitutive of it. Hence Hegel's decidedly more intellectual concept of experience: it is not just sense perception, which cannot even appear to consciousness on its own, but it is also the laws and concepts by which it is understood.

'Die Empirie ist nicht blosses Beobachten, Hören, Fühlen, das Einzelne Wahrnehmen, sondern geht wesentlich darauf, Gattungen, Allgemeines, Gesetze zu finden. Und indem sie diese hervorbringt, so trifft sie mit dem Boden des Begriffs zusammen...'²

This concept of experience means that it is possible to broaden and deepen one's experience simply by discovering the necessary

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1. PhG, p. 73
 2. Hegel, Werke, xx. 79

conditions of its appearance. This deepening and broadening of experience through the discovery of its necessary conditions is in fact characteristic of the entire dialectic of the PhG. As it ascends a new stage of consciousness, the self-examining subject learns the conditions of its experience on a previous stage. It discovers that what is apparently given on a lower stage requires the concepts and presuppositions of a higher stage. The subject then finds that its self-awareness of the conditions of its experience is in fact constitutive of its experience.

Hegel's advocacy of experience as the standard of knowledge for metaphysics reveals the underlying strategy behind his reply to Kant. The PhG is to be nothing less than the 'transcendental deduction' of metaphysics. According to Kant, a transcendental deduction is a justification of synthetic a priori principles which shows them to be necessary conditions of possible experience.¹ It begins from some undeniable fact which is true of any possible experience (eg. the 'Ich denke') and it then discovers the necessary conditions of such a fact, arguing that it cannot be without certain synthetic a priori principles. Now just as Kant argues in the transcendental deduction of the first Kritik that the categories are a necessary condition of any possible experience, so Hegel contends in the PhG that the synthetic a priori ideas of metaphysics are

1. Kritik der reinen Vernunft, ed. R. Schmidt (Hamburg, Meiner 1971), B 117, 129

a necessary condition of actual experience. Only where Kant's categories are abstract, the 'forms in general' for any possible experience, Hegel's metaphysical ideas are concrete, necessarily true of actual experience. By embarking upon such a transcendental deduction, Hegel hopes to disarm Kant's fundamental objection to metaphysics: that it transcends the limits of experience. The PhG aims to establish a strictly immanent metaphysics, and it cannot tolerate a transcendent metaphysics which appeals to a special source of knowledge transcending experience. Hence the absolute knowledge of the PhG is nothing more than Er-innerung, the recollection of the whole experience of consciousness.

Another respect in which Hegel attempts to reconstruct metaphysics upon the basis of the critique appears in an argument in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG. According to this argument, ordinary consciousness has a right to educate itself up to the standpoint of philosophy, and it ought to accept this standpoint only when it agrees with the self-criticism of its own beliefs.¹ Here Hegel rejects Schelling's and Jacobi's intellectual intuition, which presumes that the philosopher's insight is esoteric, available to only a select few with special capacities of intuition or imagination. The standpoint of philosophy, he insists, cannot justify itself by appeals to authority. Rather, it ought to be accessible to everyone alike, and it ought to be justified before everyone's critical understanding. Hence experience is

1. PhG, 17, 25

the appropriate standard of knowledge for metaphysics: experience is exoteric, given to the awareness of everyone alike.¹ In rejecting esotericism, and in granting each individual the right to educate himself up to the standpoint of philosophy, Hegel is only recognising one of the basic principles of Kant's critique. This principle is what Kant calls the duty of self-thought,² a duty which his critique is to exercise and defend by clarifying the standards of reason. According to this duty, the individual ought to exercise his own critical understanding. He must not accept beliefs because they are commanded by authority, but only because they agree with his own understanding and conscience. In other words, he should not think and act on principles because they are prescribed by his state, church or community, but because they are self-prescribed. This duty of self-thought obliges each individual simply as an intelligent or rational being. A rational being has a sufficient criterion of right and wrong, of truth and falsity, within himself, and so he is capable of autonomy, of thinking and acting according to self-given principles. Now Hegel also defends this right of self-thought—it is the only royal road to science, the Waste-book informs us³—and he then demands that the standpoint of philosophy justify itself before its formidable tribunal. It is indeed precisely through the exercise of his self-thought

1. Hence Kant's statement in the Prolegomena: 'Mein Platz ist das fruchtbare Bathos der Erfahrung...'. See Kant's Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, Reimer, 1903), iv. 374

2. See Kant's essay 'Was heisst: Sich im Denken orientiren?' in Schriften, viii. 145

3. Hegel, Werke, ii. 557

that the individual educates himself up to the standpoint of philosophy.

Hegel's aim to satisfy the demands of the critique in re-constructing metaphysics is nowhere more apparent, though, than in his plan to systematise and realise Kant's ideal of knowledge. According to Kant's first Kritik, to know an object is to create it, to produce it according to the laws of consciousness. The paradigm of knowledge is therefore self-knowledge, for to be aware of an object is only to be aware of the embodiment of one's own activity. This paradigm of knowledge is nothing less than what Kant calls the principle behind his 'new method of thought'. As Kant puts this principle: '...wir nämlich von den Dingen nur das a priori erkennen, was wir selbst in sie legen'.¹ This new method of thought states that reason knows of an object only what it actively creates and structures in it: '...die Vernunft nur das einsieht, was sie selbst nach ihrem Entwurfe hervorbringt...'.² Kant thinks that something is intelligible to reason only if it creates it; and reason's activity is perfectly transparent to itself: '...was Vernunft gänzlich aus sich selbst hervorbringt, sich nicht verstecken kann, sondern selbst durch Vernunft ans Licht gebracht wird...'.³ Kant's commitment to this standard of knowledge is also explicit when he states that only a purely intuitive intellect,

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1. KrV, B xviii
 2. Ibid., B xiii
 3. Ibid., A xx

ie. an intellect which creates its object in the act of knowing it, knows its object in itself, and not only as an appearance.¹

In sections 76 and 77 of the Kritik der Urteilskraft, Kant further explains his paradigm of knowledge through a contrast between a divine intuitive understanding (intellectus archetypus) and our human discursive understanding (intellectus ectypus).² He postulates the idea of an intuitive understanding in order to highlight the limitations of our discursive understanding. He draws two contrasts between these types of intelligence. (1) Although there is a distinction between possibility and actuality for a discursive understanding, there is no such distinction for an intuitive understanding. This distinction applies to the discursive understanding because it employs abstract concepts which conceive only the possibility of an object, while the object's existence has to be given from an external source. This distinction does not hold for the intuitive understanding, though, because it creates its object in the very act of knowing it. (2) A discursive understanding distinguishes between universal and particular since it has only an 'analytic' universal that abstracts from all the particulars that fall under it; the universal cannot determine the particular, then, so that each particular is contingent for the universal. An intuitive understanding, however, unites universal and particular since it has a 'synthetic' universal that determines every particu-

1. Ibid., A 249-250

2. Kant, Schriften, v. 401-10

lar falling under it, so that each particular is necessary for the universal. Now it is important to recognise that Kant conceives this distinction between types of understanding as a distinction between forms of explanation, and in particular between teleological and mechanical explanation. A teleological explanation sees its object as a self-generating organism where the idea of the whole determines the formation of all its parts; a mechanical explanation conceives its object as a mechanism which is generated by an external cause, and where the idea of the whole does not determine its parts, all of which are replaceable. Hence for teleological explanation there are no distinctions between possibility and actuality, universality and particularity, while for mechanical explanations such distinctions hold.

Now it is this Kantian ideal of knowledge, the intellectus archetypus, which Hegel turns into the guiding principle for his resurrection of metaphysics. Hegel's adherence to Kant's ideal dates back at least to his 1801 Differenz when he celebrates the 'spirit' of the Kantian philosophy: its principle of self-knowledge or subject-object identity. This principle is truly speculative, he declares, the firm basis for knowledge of the absolute. Hegel sees this principle at work in Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories of the understanding. What he especially admires in Kant's deduction is his identification of self-consciousness or the unity of apperception with the concept of an object. Such an identification is a great advance in overcoming the subject-object dualism:

'In dem Prinzip der Deduktion der Kategorien ist diese Philosophie echter Idealismus...In jener Deduktion der Verstandesformen ist das Prinzip der Spekulation, die Identität des Subjekts und Objekts, auf bestimmteste ausgesprochen. Diese Theorie des Verstandes ist von der Vernunft über die Taufe gehalten worden'¹

Although Hegel thus praises Kant for discovering the principle of subject-object identity, he still criticises him for stopping short with it. The principle of the unity of apperception holds only for any possible experience, and that still leaves a given and contingent actual experience. Hegel argues that it is also necessary to extend the principle to actual experience, so that it is not given and contingent, but posited by and necessary to self-consciousness. Otherwise, if the principle is not extended and if experience remains given, then idealism has to set limits to knowledge by postulating an unknowable thing-in-itself as the cause of representations.

Hegel's resurrection of metaphysics is not a reaction against Kant's Copernican revolution, then, but it is in fact the completion of it. Hegel insists that Kant is too conservative with his own revolutionary principle. He restricts it to a mere regulative role in sense experience, where it is only a guide to enquiry in helping to systematise the laws of experience, and where it is possible to proceed only as if were true. But it is necessary to be more radical, Hegel argues, and to put Kant's principle in a constitutive role where it is true of reality in itself. The aim of the PhG is to realise that project which Hegel set for himself in the Differenz: to establish Kant's prin-

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 9-10

ciple of subject-object identity in a philosophical system, so that it is made into a truly speculative principle. Thus the scenario for the completion of the Copernican revolution is to be nowhere else than the PhG itself.

II

The Task of Metaphysics in the Phänomenologie

What is the task of the metaphysics in the PhG? What does it attempt to know? What is its object of knowledge? Sadly, Hegel is never very explicit about the task of his metaphysics. He writes in the Differenz that the aim of philosophy is to know the absolute, or to construct the absolute for consciousness.¹ But this obviously does not explain anything, and only restates the problem. For what is the absolute?

Although Hegel never presents a simple and basic definition of the absolute, some definitions and explanations are offered by his former philosophical ally, Schelling. It is Schelling who provides the best opening clue about the nature of Hegel's metaphysics. Sure enough, Hegel later breaks with Schelling precisely over the nature of the absolute and the task of metaphysics; but it is crucial to recognise that he does so only by transforming and developing some of the consequences of Schelling's ideas. It's best to begin, then, with a brief account of Schelling's definitions, and then to explain how Hegel develops them. This should reveal the origins of Hegel's ideas

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 25

and it should also explain why he thought it necessary to transform Schelling's starting point.

According to Schelling's Darstellung meines Systems,¹ the standpoint of philosophy is that of reason, and the task of reason is to know das An-sich, ie. the thing in itself, apart from its relations to other things, and as if there is nothing else outside it. The Jahrbücher then contrast the thing in itself with its appearances, where its appearances are its relations to other things, whether these relations be to a knowing subject or another object.² This thing in itself is then nothing less than substance, substance in contrast to its properties, since the properties of a thing relate it to other things, either by likening it to them or by contrasting it against them. Substance is by definition that in which all properties exist, but which cannot in turn be a property existing in anything else. Now it is in terms of the thing in itself or substance that Schelling defines the absolute. He virtually equates the absolute with the thing in itself, defining it as that which is in and through itself and not in and through something else.³ But he also identifies his absolute with substance, calling it 'die Eine unendliche Substanz'.⁴

What, more precisely, though, does Schelling mean when he talks about the absolute as being 'in and through itself and not in and through another thing'? Roughly, he means that

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1. Schellings Werke, ed. M. Schröter (Munich, Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927), iii. 11
 2. Ibid., iv. 98, 115
 3. Ibid., Erg. ii. 78
 4. Ibid., Erg. ii. 128

the absolute is that which has a self-sufficient essence and existence, an essence and existence which does not depend upon anything else. But in what sense does the absolute not depend upon anything else? There are three senses in which Schelling attributes self-sufficiency or independence to the absolute, although these are never clearly distinguished by him.

(1) The absolute has substantial independence in that it does not inhere in another substance in order to exist; it is not the mode or property of a substance, but it is that in which any mode or property inheres. (2) The absolute has essential independence in that it has an inner essence or nature which does not depend upon the essence or nature of anything else. It is defineable strictly in its own sui generis terms, and does not have to be defined in its relations to anything else. (3) The absolute has causal independence in that it does not depend upon another external cause in order to exist; it is self-causing, existing by the necessity of its own nature alone. According to Schelling's definition, then, the absolute is nothing less than the ultimate unit of reality. It is that upon which all other things depend, but which in turn does not depend upon them, either substantially, essentially or causally.

This is still, however, only one of Schelling's definitions of the absolute. He also has another definition, though, which adds a further aspect to his idea of the absolute. This definition appears in his System der gesamten Philosophie:

'Das Absolute ist dasjenige, welches unmittelbar durch seine Idee auch ist, oder es ist dasjenige, zu dessen Idee es gehört zu sein, dessen Idee also die unmittelbare Affirmation von Seyn ist (weder Idee noch Seyn insbesondere)'¹

In other words, according to this definition, the absolute is that which exists by the necessity of its own nature alone; or, to use Spinoza's words, it is causi sui: 'that whose essence involves existence.'² This definition introduces a new and distinct element. The absolute now has an existence which is not only independent, but which is also necessary. Its independent existence still permits the possibility that it does not exist; it states only that if it exists, then it does not depend upon anything else; but it does not follow that it exists, still less that its existence is necessary. It is possible that it does not create its own existence, so that its independent existence is only contingent. This is a possibility, though, which Schelling's second definition now rules out. So, pulling together his two definitions of the absolute, it is necessary to define the absolute in the following terms: it is that which has an independent and necessary essence and existence.

According to Schelling, there is one—and only one—thing which satisfies his definitions of the absolute: the universe as a whole. Only the universe as a whole fulfills the requirement of an independent essence and existence. Anything less than the universe as a whole, Schelling argues in his 1801 and 1804 Systems,³ is dependent and conditioned. Each

1. Ibid., ii. 79; cf. iii. 238

2. Ethics, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York, Dover, 1955), p. 45 Part I, Definition 1

3. Werke, iii. 26-7, and Erg. ii. 124

individual thing depends upon another thing. Its nature is identified only through other things, since it has to be defined in terms of its properties, which are determinations contrasting it against other things; and it comes into existence only through external causes, for, according to the principle of sufficient reason, it is always necessary to find some prior event which causes its existence. The universe as a whole, however, obviously cannot depend upon anything else. This is all for the simple reason that it includes everything within itself, so that there is nothing else outside itself for it to depend upon, either in its essence or existence. So there is one, and only one, absolute, and that is the universe as a whole.

* * *

It is worthwhile to contrast and compare Schelling's idea of the absolute with other ideas in the history of philosophy. The absolute has two cousins: Descartes' and Spinoza's substance, and Kant's thing-in-itself. It is about as close to substance as it is far removed from the thing-in-itself.

Schelling's idea of the absolute originates from Descartes' and Spinoza's concept of substance. In the Principles of Philosophy, Descartes anticipates Schelling when he defines substance as follows:

'By substance we can understand nothing else than a thing which so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist'.¹

In the Ethics, Spinoza then extends Descartes' definition, giving substance not only an independent existence, but also an independent essence:

'By substance, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception.'²

The language of Schelling's definition of the absolute—especially the prepositional phrase 'in itself and through itself'—simply paraphrases Spinoza's definition. It is hardly surprising, then, to find that Schelling equates his absolute with substance, eg. in Bruno he dubs the absolute 'die Substanz aller Substanzen'.³

Although akin to Descartes' and Spinoza's substance, Schelling's idea of the absolute is distinct from Kant's thing-in-itself. It is easy to confuse these ideas since there is a verbal similarity between Schelling's das An-sich and Kant's Ding an sich: both are defined in terms of their inner essence, a nature which is 'an sich'. It then appears as if Schelling derives his idea from Kant, and as if he is flying in the face of Kant's challenge to metaphysics, trying to know what Kant holds to be unknowable. Despite this verbal similarity, though, there is a basic conceptual difference between the absolute and the thing-in-itself. Unlike the absolute, which is a propertyless

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1. The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. E. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973), i. 239
 2. Ethics, p. 45, Part I, Definition 3
 3. Schelling, Werke, iii. 216

substance, the thing-in-itself has properties, although they are unknowable. These properties are noumenal rather than phenomenal, the objects of an intellectual rather than a sensible intuition. Kant therefore uses the phrase 'an sich' in a narrower sense than Schelling. It means only that something exists apart from its relation to consciousness, not that it exists apart from its relations to anything else. It is perfectly possible for the Kantian thing-in-itself to depend upon other things just as long as they are conscious. Schelling himself is far from equating his absolute with Kant's thing-in-itself. He criticises it as an abstraction, a representation which is so empty that it does not even amount to 'absolut Nichts'.¹

* * *

Such is Schelling's idea of the absolute, if only in its barest outlines. This is the idea from which Hegel begins, but which he soon radically transforms. Hegel accepts Schelling's definition of the absolute as that which has an independent essence and existence. He also agrees with Schelling that there is a single universal substance which is the foundation of philosophy. Thus in the Geschichte der Philosophie he remarks about Spinoza's substance:

'Wenn man anfängt zu philosophieren, so muss man zuerst Spinozist sein. Die Seele muss sich baden in diesem Aether der einen Substanz, in der² alles, was man für wahr gehalten hat, untergegangen ist.'

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1. Schelling, Werke, I. 683
 2. Hegel, Werke, XX. 165

Where Hegel departs from Schelling, though, is in the assumption that the absolute is only substance, the single propertyless substratum. The central point behind his criticism is this: that substance cannot be the absolute because it cannot have an independent essence according to the original definition. The problem is that a bare substance cannot be conceived in itself, apart from its relations to anything else, for it is in fact conceivable only in contrast to something else, and that is its properties. Substance is by definition not its properties, but that in which they inhere. Hence it has to be defined in contrast to them, so that it cannot have an independent essence which is perfectly conceivable apart from them. The absolute only has an independent essence, then, when it is the whole of substance and its properties, the unity of the universal whole and all its individual parts. This conclusion then forces Hegel to read a new meaning into Schelling's term 'das An-sich'. In the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, he states that 'das An-sich' is only the beginning of the absolute, what is potential and latent, the universal whole without its differentiation into its parts; it is not the whole absolute, though, which is not only 'in itself', but also 'for itself', actualised in all its properties or determinations.¹

With this new idea of the absolute in mind, Hegel reconceives the task of metaphysics from its original conception in Schelling. The aim of metaphysics is no longer to intuit the single universal substance which lies behind all appearances,

1. PhG, 20, 24

but it is to conceive the whole of substance and its appearances, the unity of the universal whole and all its limited modes. This is not metaphysics in the classic Aristotelian or Wolffian sense,¹ the study of being as being, being in general, apart from its specific determinations. Hegel rejects the idea of pure being as it is found in traditional metaphysics. Pure being is a pure abstraction, he argues in his Logik,² because it robs being of all its determinations. It is in fact pure nothingness—nothingness, since to exist is to be something determinate; or, as Hegel remarks, 'das Dasein' is 'Qualität' or 'bestimmter Gedanken'.³ Metaphysics is not the study of pure being, then, but of how being organises, embodies and differentiates itself into the totality of its specific forms. Its main problem is how the one exists in the many, how the single, indivisible universal whole appears in the multiplicity of distinct finite things. Or, in other words, to the problem in a more characteristic Hegelian form: how is it possible to think the identity of identity and difference?⁴

1. Aristotle writes in Book IV of the Metaphysics:

'There is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature'.

See The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon (New York, Random House, 1966), p. 731 (1003a). Wolff adopts a definition of ontology which echoes Aristotle: it is 'the science of being in general, or insofar as it is being'. See his Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General, trans. Blackwell (Indianapolis, Bobbs Merrill, 1963), pp. 39-40

2. Wissenschaft der Logik, ed. G. Lasson (Hamburg, Meiner, 1971), i. 66-7

3. PhG, p. 45

4. Heidegger disregards the special character of Hegel's metaphysics in his interpretation of the 'Einleitung' to the PhG, 'Hegel's Begriff der Erfahrung' in Holzwege (Frankfurt,

This re-conception of the task of metaphysics explains why Hegel insists in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG that philosophy has to assume the form of a system:

'Die wahre Gestalt, in welcher die Wahrheit existiert, kann allein das wissenschaftlichen System derselben sein'.

Klostermann, 1972), pp. 105-192. He interprets Hegel so that his aim in the PhG is to know being as being, being apart from how it organises and embodies itself in its specific forms. When Hegel writes in the 'Einleitung' that 'die Sache selbst' of philosophy is 'das wirkliche Erkennen dessen, was in Wahrheit ist', Heidegger interprets this through the above lines of Aristotle, so that 'die Sache selbst' is being as being in the classic Aristotelian sense (p. 117). According to Heidegger, the PhG aims to contemplate being as being or to intuit being as such:

'Die Philosophie beschaut das Anwesende in seinem Anwesen. Das Beschauen betrachtet das Anwesende. Es trachtet so zu ihm, dass es das Anwesende nur als solches ansieht' (p. 117).

The basis for this interpretation is already laid down in Sein und Zeit:

'Sein ist was in reinen anschauenden Vernehmen sich zeigt, und nur dieses Sehen entdeckt das Sein. Ursprüngliche und echte Wahrheit liegt in der reinen Anschauung. Diese These bleibt fortan das Fundament der abendländischen Philosophie. In ihr hat die Hegelsche Dialektik das Motiv, und nur auf ihrem Grund ist sie möglich'.

See Sein und Zeit (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1972), p. 171. This attribution of an intellectual intuition to Hegel is also still in evidence in Holzwege (see pp. 117, 120, 126).

But Heidegger's assumption that Hegel wants to know being as being without its specific forms misses what is characteristic of Hegel's ontology and reads it as if there is no difference between Hegel and Schelling. And his ascription of an intellectual intuition to Hegel—or what he calls 'die reine Anschauung'—also ignores Hegel's entire critique of intellectual intuition. Hegel demands that the absolute be known through concepts, which is only another way of saying that the absolute has to be known through all its specific forms.

For a criticism of Heidegger along similar lines, see T. Adorno, Drei Studien zu Hegel (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1969), pp. 45-8, 69.

1. PhG, p. 12

If the aim of philosophy is to know the absolute, and if the absolute is not only substance, but the unity of substance and all its specific forms, then philosophy has to be systematic. For only a system shows how a totality of specific forms are organised around and generated from a single principle. To know the absolute, it is not sufficient to know the idea of the whole but not all its parts; for the absolute is not only the whole, but the unity of the whole and all its parts. The mere idea of the whole is no more absolute knowledge, Hegel remarks, than the groundplan for a building is the building itself.¹ Hegel maintains that this is just the problem with first principles in philosophy, eg. Fichte's 'Ich=Ich' and Schelling's 'A=A'. A first principle states only the idea of the whole and abstracts from all its determinations, so that it cannot express absolute knowledge. Hence Hegel's apparently paradoxical claim that a first principle is false simply because it is a first principle.² It claims to express absolute knowledge as a first principle; but such a claim must be false, for a first principle abstracts from all the specific forms of the absolute. For absolute knowledge, then, there is no substitute for a system. Only a system explains how all the parts of a whole unite to form a single, indivisible unity.

1. PhG, p. 16

2. Ibid., p. 23

What dictates Hegel's special conception of metaphysics in the PhG is his desire to carry through with the Kantian Copernican revolution. He maintains that this revolution succeeds only upon one condition: that it establishes the constitutive truth of Kant's principle of subject-object identity. What, more precisely, though, does Hegel mean by this principle? What are the conditions for subject-object identity? Like Kant and Schelling before him, Hegel thinks that there are at least two requirements for subject-object identity: the unity of possibility and actuality where an object exists by the necessity of its own nature alone; and the unity of universality and particularity where the idea of the whole determines the identity of all its parts. The question then arises: what in reality satisfies these conditions? Where does subject-object identity exist? This question poses a severe challenge for Hegel. Obviously, he has to have some criterion for the existence of subject-object identity if he is to have evidence for his claim that it is a constitutive truth, and if he is to have a reply to Kant's assertion that it is only a regulative idea. So the question is inescapable: under what conditions is subject-object identity present in reality? Like Schelling, Hegel maintains that it is hopeless to seek subject-object identity in the self-consciousness of the finite subject. Kant is right: our human understanding is finite, its concepts are abstract and its object is given. So

rather than seeking subject-object identity in the finite subject, Hegel and Schelling look for it in nature herself. Following Kant's suggestion in the third Kritik, they assume that subject-object identity reveals itself only in living phenomena. And, indeed, life does satisfy the conditions of subject-object identity. An organism unites possibility and actuality because it is self-generating, developing from potentiality to actuality according to the necessity of its own nature; and it unites universality and particularity since an organic whole determines the growth and function of all its parts. Both requirements of subject-object identity are indeed fulfilled by a single concept: teleology or what Kant calls 'finality' (Zweckmässigkeit). According to Kant,¹ the end (Zweck) of an object is its concept insofar as it is the ground of its existence (hence the unity of possibility and actuality); and it is also the idea of the whole which determines the formation of all its parts (hence the unity of universality and particularity). So for Kant, the principle of subject-object identity depends upon the idea of finality, the idea of judging nature as if it acts according to ends. This is just the point which Hegel and Schelling latch upon in seeking a criterion of subject-object identity.

According to Hegel, then, the Copernican revolution in metaphysics consists in nothing less than establishing the

1. Kant, Schriften, v. 180-1, 405-10

necessity of an organic vision of reality. Since the principle of subject-object identity is realised only when the concept of finality proves to be true of the universe as a whole, the possibility of metaphysics hinges upon the possibility of teleology.¹ Hegel fully recognises the importance of teleology for his renewal of metaphysics. In the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, he poses the question of metaphysics in teleological terms. After admitting that teleology is in disrepute, thanks to Kant's critique of rational theology, Hegel defines reason as 'das zweckmässige Tun' and calls for a return to the metaphysical tradition of Aristotle, which sees all of nature as purposive.²

1. Pöggeler rightly sees that Hegel's metaphysics consists in teleology. Referring to Hegel's later system in the Enzyklopädie, he writes: 'Die Wendung zum teleologischen Denken ist eine Rückwendung zur metaphysischen Tradition...'. See his 'Hegel's Jenaer Systemkonzeption', Philosophisches Journal, Jahrgang 71 (1963/64), 315. But Pöggeler then argues that the teleological metaphysics of the later system is incompatible with the history and experience of consciousness in the PhG. Supposedly, teleology is incompatible with the contingency and open-endedness of history: '...denn eine teleologisch gedachte Geschichte ist keine Geschichte mehr, da zur Geschichte die unaufhebbare Offenheit für die Zukunft gehört...' (p. 316). But Pöggeler's interpretation appears questionable. The distinction he draws between Hegel's later system and the PhG ignores the fact that Hegel attempts to justify teleology in the PhG itself; as Pöggeler himself notes, the PhG already defines 'Vernunft' as 'das zweckmassige Tun'. And Pöggeler's argument that teleology is incompatible with the history and experience of consciousness only begs the question against Hegel, who disputes a hard and fast distinction between an a priori teleology and an a posteriori experience of consciousness. Although the PhG does maintain that there is a goal and necessity behind the experience of consciousness, it insists that the philosopher's knowledge of this goal and necessity cannot bring in any more metaphysics than that which is recovered by the experience of consciousness. The aim of the dialectic is precisely for consciousness to know this goal and necessity for itself and from within, according to its own inner experience.

That Hegel's renewal of metaphysics rests upon a return to Aristotle and teleology is perfectly grasped and explained by Haym in Hegel und seine Zeit (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), pp. 225-230

2. PhG, p. 22

The great danger to metaphysics now turns out to be Kant's and Spinoza's critique of teleology. They maintain that teleology reads a human fiction or heuristic rule into its subject matter, while, considered purely objectively, everything strictly behaves according to the laws of mechanism. For Kant, that everything in nature acts for an end is only a rule for reflective judgement in discovering and systematising the laws of nature, but this rule offers no insight into nature herself; to assume that it has a constitutive worth is only to reify the purely subjective conditions of our human understanding.¹ And for Spinoza, final causes are only human fictions which conceal ignorance of the true causes of events; such fictions arise only because men assume that all things in the universe are made for them.²

Now Hegel agrees with Kant and Spinoza that teleology invites the danger of anthropomorphism, but he considers this as only an abuse of teleology, and not as a problem inherent to it. Kant and Spinoza properly criticise the external teleology of rational theology, which sees nature as a creation of God that is designed for human ends, eg. God creates cork trees to provide wine stoppers for wine bottles. But, to Hegel, the whole question of internal teleology still remains, ie. that nature has its own ends apart from human concerns. Although Kant's and Spinoza's arguments are decisive against external teleology, there is still the possibility that nature is an end in itself, and not only a means for human ends. The problem of metaphysics

1. Schriften, v. 181-6, 381-4

2. Ethics, pp. 74-81, Part I, Appendix

is then how to know the inner purposes of nature.

Hegel's solution to this problem is nothing less than his new philosophical method in the PhG. The aim of this method is to know the inner purpose of an object, and to establish that it is necessary to its very existence, so that the idea of an end does not have only regulative status. Hegel's name for this method—'das begreifende Denken'—already betrays its teleological role. 'Das begreifende Denken' grasps 'der Begriff der Sache', where 'der Begriff' refers to an end or purpose, a formal-final cause. This term applies exclusively to the inner purpose of an object. It does not refer to an 'external' end that a human agent imposes upon an object, where the object might exist apart from the end, and where it has a different form and development when left to itself. Rather, it refers to an 'internal' end that is necessary to the object, so that the object cannot exist without it, and so that it grows and develops toward it by its own formative power. This sense of the word 'Begriff' derives from Kant's third Kritik, where Kant defines 'Zweck' as 'der Begriff eines Objekts, sofern er den Grund der Wirklichkeit desselben enthält'.¹ Hegel takes this sense of an end and applies it exclusively to what Kant calls a 'Naturzweck': the purpose of a self-organising, self-generating organism; such an end opposes a 'Kunstzweck': the purpose that human artifice creates in an object. Indeed, even before Hegel, Schelling had already extended Kant's use of 'Begriff' in just this sense. In his 1798 Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur he uses 'der Begriff' to refer to the inner purpose of a self-generating organism, a purpose

1. Kant, Schriften, v. 180

which is the cause not only of its form, but also its existence.¹

How does this new method grasp the inner purpose of an object? Hegel gives a good clue in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG. Here he insists that 'die Anstrengung des Begriffs' requires 'Enthaltsamkeit', the restraint against imposing pre-fabricated formulae upon a subject matter.

'Sich des eignen Einfallens in den immanenten Rhythmus der Begriffe entschlagen, in ihnen nicht durch die Willkür und sonst erworbene Weisheit eingreifen, diese Enthaltsamkeit ist selbst ein wesentliches Moment der Aufmerksamkeit auf den Begriff'.²

These lines reveal how 'das begreifende Denken' amounts to that phenomenological method which Hegel further explains in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG. This method demands that the philosopher bracket all his reflections as an external observer—his standards of truth, laws of explanation and regulative maxims—and that he simply describe his subject matter for its own sake. The philosopher must not impose his universal upon the particular, but must observe how the particular develops the universal from within itself and according to its inner necessity. Now if the philosopher strictly obeys these rules, Hegel maintains, then he will not run the risk of anthropomorphism, of reading his own human ends into nature. He will in fact know the inner purpose of the object, thanks to his strict observation of the universal which emerges from it. It is through his phenomenology, then, that Hegel hopes to secure a firm foundation for teleological judgement.

1. Schelling, Werke, 1. 691

2. PhG, p. 48

Hegel thinks that his phenomenology provides an adequate basis for the understanding of life not only because it avoids Kant's and Spinoza's arguments against teleology, but also because it escapes the romantics basic objection against a conceptual understanding of life. In the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, he explicitly sees his method as a reply to the romantics. He acknowledges that his call for 'das begreifende Denken' contradicts the widespread conviction in favour of intuitive knowledge.¹ But he advocates a discursive rather than an intuitive understanding of life, and so he deliberately uses 'der Begriff' to contrast it against 'die Anschauung'. Hegel defiantly maintains that 'der Begriff' grasps the inner life and soul of its object²—in direct opposition to his romantic contemporaries who insist that concepts dissect and destroy life. Both Hegel and his romantic antagonists see conceptual thought as systematic. Only while the romantics believe that a system classifies and ossifies life,³ Hegel affirms that a system only reflects the self-organisation of life itself. What accounts for his faith in systematic thought is nothing less than his phenomenological method. The phenomenology does not dissect and destroy life, but simply observes its subject matter as it organises itself into a system according

1. PhG, p. 12

2. Ibid., 44, 45

3. For some romantic objections against systematic thought, see, for example, the following: Schleiermacher's Reden über die Religion (Hamburg, Meiner, 1970), pp. 33-5, Hamann's 14th November, 1784 letter to Jacobi in his Briefwechsel, ed. Henkel (Frankfurt, Insel, 1979), vi. 350, and Goethe's 'Probleme' in Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe, ed. D. Kuhn (Hamburg, Wegner, 1955), xiii. 35

to its own inner necessity. The system of the PhG is not a pre-fabricated construction of the philosopher, then, but it is only his description of the self-organisation and organic development of his subject matter. Thus the phenomenology amounts to nothing less than Hegel's attempt to reconcile philosophy with life. It is his reply to that sentiment which Hamann expressed to Jacobi:

'Durch den Baum der Erkenntnis wird uns der Baum des Lebens entzogen—und sollt uns dieser nicht lieber seyn, wie jener...'¹

And it is his middle path between that dilemma posed by Fichte:

'Leben ist ganz eigentlich Nicht-Philosophieren;²
Philosophieren ist ganz eigentlich Nicht-Leben'.

The phenomenology aspires to be that 'Baum der Erkenntnis' whose fruit is 'der Baum des Lebens', that 'Philosophieren' whose gain is nothing less than 'Leben' itself.

III

The Unity of Epistemology and Ontology in the Phänomenologie

The programme of the PhG—to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge, to justify ontology through epistemology—is unique to Hegel and the characteristic idea behind his PhG.

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1. Hamann an Jacobi, 14th November, 1784, Briefwechsel, v. 265
 2. See 'Rückerinnerungen, Antworten, Fragen' in Fichte's Werke, ed. I. Fichte (Berlin, de Gruyter, 1971), v. 343

Such a programme would appear extremely controversial to all of Hegel's contemporaries. They are unanimous in the verdict that it amounts to squaring the circle. In their eyes, metaphysics and the critique of knowledge, ontology and epistemology, are exclusive options. They then divide into two conflicting camps, depending upon whether they advocate epistemology or ontology as the starting point of philosophy.

There are first of all the advocates of epistemology or the critique of knowledge, Kant and Fichte. They make epistemology into their first philosophy because they advise investigating the conditions of knowledge before making a claim to knowledge. It is necessary to know the first principles and criteria of knowledge, they argue, before it is possible to know whether or not a belief about the world itself is true or false. Their great predecessor in the history of philosophy in this respect is Descartes. They follow the path of Descartes' radical doubt, assuming that every belief is false until it has been justified according to the necessary standards of reason. Not only, though, do Kant and Fichte make epistemology into their first philosophy, but they also make the subject of knowledge prior to the object. Their transcendental ego is the necessary condition of any possible experience, so that it is prior to experience itself. Their ego is a self-sufficient noumenon which transcends the laws of nature, and whose rational thought and action remain the same even if nature does not exist.

This ego is indeed nothing less than the 'law-giver' of nature. In Kant, it is the understanding which prescribes the universal form of nature through the categories; in Fichte, it is the will which controls and dominates nature through its infinite striving. Neither Kant nor Fichte regard nature (as it appears to consciousness) as a reality in itself, existing apart from consciousness; and neither consider nature as an end in itself, consisting in a hierarchy of self-organising, self-generating organisms. After thus affirming the priority of epistemology and the knowing subject, Kant and Fichte then deny the possibility of metaphysics. Their investigation into the conditions of knowledge inevitably concludes that the activity of the knowing subject determines and creates what he knows, so that he cannot know reality in itself, apart from and prior to how it appears to his consciousness. They elevate self-knowledge into the paradigm of all knowledge, so that the subject knows only his own creations, and so that he cannot know reality as a whole, but only the representations of his own finite mind. Kant and Fichte then have to commit themselves to the existence of an unknowable reality. Thus Kant affirms the existence of an inscrutable Ding an sich which exists prior to consciousness, and Fichte admits the existence of an insurmountable Anstoss which acts as an obstacle to the ego's infinite striving.

There are then the proponents of metaphysics or ontology, Hamann, Jacobi, Hölderlin, Schelling and Schleiermacher. Their standpoint is the very reverse of the epistemology of Kant and

Fichte. They make the knowledge of being or the universe as a whole prior to, and the basis for, the knowledge of consciousness. Like Spinoza, the great mentor of Hölderlin, Schelling and Schleiermacher, they maintain that the order of explanation in philosophy ought to reflect the order of being itself¹—the way to proceed in philosophy is the way that nature herself proceeds, as Schelling puts it²—and that means that being itself, and not the consciousness of being which depends upon it, ought to be the starting point and first principle of philosophy. Epistemology cannot be the presuppositionless first philosophy, they argue, since it is a mistake to assume along with Kant and Fichte that the knowing subject is self-revealing and self-explaining. He cannot be self-conscious by focussing his attention upon himself and by abstracting from everything outside himself. Rather, the subject knows himself only when he knows how his nature depends upon everything outside himself and his place within the universe as a whole. Equally contrary to Kant and Fichte, these metaphysicians reverse the Kantian-Fichtean picture of man's place in nature. They argue that the ego does not transcend nature, but that he is another mode of the single universal substance; it is not the ego who acts, they say, but the universe which acts through him. They also deny that the ego is the law-giver of nature, and they affirm instead that he is the highest

1. See Spinoza's 'On the Improvement of the Understanding' in Ethics, p. 15

2. Hegel, Werke, ii. 711-12

organisation and manifestation of the organic power within nature. After thus reversing the Kantian-Fichteian standpoint, though, the metaphysicians then fly in the face of the critique of knowledge by postulating a form of mystical knowledge that transcends all the critical limits upon reason. They deny that all knowledge is limited to the exoteric concepts of the understanding, and they appeal to an esoteric faculty of intuition to justify their knowledge of the universe as a whole. And although they admit that the consciousness of the finite subject conditions what he knows, they assume that it is possible for him to escape and leap outside the limits of his own individual consciousness and to lose his finite identity in an intuition of the universe as a whole.

This is the conflict which confronts Hegel's programme in the PhG. Hegel has to face the challenge of a serious dilemma: either a sceptical epistemology or a dogmatic metaphysics. It appears as if he must begin either with epistemology—only to get caught inside a circle of consciousness—or with ontology—only to appeal to an esoteric faculty of intuition which transcends finite consciousness and the concepts of the understanding. There is no third or middle option, though, where the critique of knowledge establishes and justifies metaphysics.

Hegel's path out of this dilemma rests upon a single idea, but one which is unique and central to the PhG: that of the self-negating, self-transcending subject. The entire PhG

is nothing but an elaboration of this theme, which appears whenever the subject negates a lower stage of consciousness and ascends to a higher stage. Hegel is perfectly aware of this idea's importance, and he duly draws attention to it in the 'Einleitung':

'Was auf ein natürliches Leben beschränkt ist, vermag durch sich selbst nicht über sein unmittelbares Dasein hinauszuweisen; aber es wird durch ein anderes darüber hinausgetrieben, und dies Hinausgerissenwerden ist sein Tod. Das Bewusstsein aber ist für sich selbst sein Begriff, dadurch das Hinausgehen über das Beschränkte und, da ihm dies Beschränkte angehört, über sich selbst...Das Bewusstsein leidet also diese Gewalt, sich die beschränkte Befriedigung zu verderben, von ihm selbst'¹

According to this idea, by its own inner necessity, by the self-examination and self-criticism of its own consciousness, the subject negates its limits as a finite ego and rises up to its self-consciousness as an infinite ego. The finite ego has the infinite ego within itself in potentiality, and it realises itself as an infinite ego only through its full development as a finite ego. The finite ego is empirical—ie. it acts on its physical desires and has a passive sensibility—and it is individual—ie. it is self-conscious only in contrast to everyone else; conversely, the infinite ego is rational—it acts on universal laws and is purely active—and it is universal—ie. it is that single self which is the condition of everyone's self-consciousness. Since these aspects of the ego are in opposition to one another, the finite ego attains its self-consciousness as an infinite ego only by negating itself, ie. by controlling its desires and acting on universal laws, and by becoming self-conscious not as a distinct

individual, but as that universal self who is present within the consciousness of everyone alike. The finite ego therefore has the seeds of its own destruction within itself, and it 'suffers its violence only through its own hands.' What is the law of development, though, which makes the finite ego transform itself into an infinite ego? What is the necessity behind such a transformation? Hegel alludes to this law when he states that consciousness is 'für sich selbst sein Begriff'.¹ This means that the subject is a self-determining agent who acts according to self-given ends ('sein Begriff'), and that he is a self-positing agent who is only what he makes of himself through his own will. The subject distinguishes himself from a merely living being ('ein natürliches Leben') precisely because he is self-determining and self-positing, unlike an animal or vegetable which is determined by external causes ('durch ein anderes hinausgetrieben'). Like Kant and Fichte before him, then, Hegel assumes that freedom is the distinguishing feature of a rational being; he rests his case upon Kant's argument in the Grundlegung: 'Freiheit muss als Eigenschaft des Willens aller vernünftigen Wesen vorausgesetzt werden.'² What makes the finite ego transform itself into an infinite ego is thus its need to realise itself as a free being. Now the finite ego realises itself as

1. On the precedent for this use of 'Begriff', see Fichte's 1798 Sittenlehre in Werke, iv. 29-30, 32

2. Schriften iv. 447. Also see Fichte's 1793 Bestimmung des Gelehrten in Werke, v. 305

a free being, Hegel maintains, only when it becomes infinite. It is free only when it ceases to be driven by its desires and acts according to self-imposed universal laws, and only when it no longer sees itself as a mere individual and finds its universal self-identity as a member of the community.

Now it is this idea of the self-negating, self-transcending subject which brings into question the common assumption behind the apparently exclusive choice between epistemology or ontology, the critique of knowledge or metaphysics. Both schools of opinion assume that there is no inner necessity or internal dialectic by which the finite ego must become self-conscious as an infinite ego. They all think that when the finite ego examines and criticises its consciousness it only bumps up against the limits of its empirical and individual nature. This assumption is apparent in Kant and Fichte. It appears in the 'Paralogismus' chapter of the first Kritik when Kant argues that the ego cannot know itself as a noumenon but only as a phenomenon.¹ It also emerges in the 'Zweite Lehrsatz' of Fichte's 1794 Wissenschaftslehre when Fichte admits that the ego cannot complete its infinite striving and realise itself as a self-positing being without destroying itself as an ego.² The solipsism of Kant's and Fichte's epistemology indeed reveals the same assumption, for

1. KrV, B 422, A 346

2. Fichte Werke, 1. 270

the ego is trapped inside the circle of its own representations, aware of nothing but its empirical consciousness. The same assumption is no less apparent, though, in Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hölderlin. It occurs in Schelling's 1802 Fernere Darstellung when he dismisses the possibility of educating empirical consciousness up to the absolute knowledge of philosophy;¹ and it is also present in his 1804 System der gesamten Philosophie when he states that the universe is known only through revelation and not through dialectic.² It equally appears in Schleiermacher's 1799 Reden über die Religion when he insists that the ego must destroy his own finite identity if he is to have an intuition of the universe.³ And, finally, it emerges in the penultimate version of Hölderlin's Hyperion when Hyperion has to forget his own identity to have his vision of nature.⁴ All these thinkers insist that the ego must lose and jump outside his finite nature, and they all appeal to an esoteric intuition, precisely because they do not recognise any inder necessity by which the finite ego becomes self-conscious as an infinite ego. While they all maintain that the finite ego knows the infinite only when it surrenders and abstracts from its finite nature, Hegel

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 414

2. Ibid., Erg. ii. 493

3. Reden, p. 73

4. Hölderlin, Sämtliche Werke, Grosser Stuttgarter Ausgabe, ed. F. Beissner (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1957), iii. 9

insists that the ego has to proceed in the very opposite direction: it knows the infinite only when it immerses itself in its finite consciousness, examining and criticising it according to its own standards of knowledge.

Once, however, one admits the possibility of the finite ego negating its limits and becoming self-conscious as an infinite ego, a new prospect and middle path opens up: it is possible to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge. The finite ego can now become self-conscious as an infinite ego through its own inner experience, or through the self-explication of what is already present, though latent, in its own awareness. There is no need to resort, then, to Jacobi's, Schelling's or Schleiermacher's appeal to an esoteric intellectual intuition—a desperate plea, given that such an intuition is not within the power of ordinary consciousness, that it occurs only through the grace of God, and that it requires a superhuman leap beyond one's individual and empirical consciousness. It is equally superfluous, though, to set critical limits upon knowledge in the manner of Kant and Fichte. Since the ego is self-determining and self-positing, the limits that it sets upon its own awareness are only self-imposed limits, and that means that it has every power to abolish and transcend these limits.

* * *

Perhaps the central and characteristic claim of the PhG is that epistemology and ontology are inseparable from one another. What is distinctive about the PhG is that it aims to be the synthesis of two grand philosophical traditions, the epistemological tradition which derives from Descartes and which re-appears in Kant and Fichte, and the ontological tradition which originates in Spinoza and which then recurs in Hamann, Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hölderlin. This aim emerges in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG when Hegel pronounces his famous dictum that the truth is not only substance, but also subject.

'Es kommt nach meiner Einsicht...alles darauf an, das Wahre nicht als Substanz, sondern eben, so sehr als Subjekt aufzufassen und auszudrücken.'

Here Hegel declares that the substance of Schelling's ontology and the subject of Kant's and Fichte's epistemology are false abstractions apart from one another. The failure of Schelling's ontology is that it hypostasises substance, regarding it as a self-subsistent entity apart from the subject who knows it; and, conversely, the shortcoming of Kant's and Fichte's epistemology is that it sees the subject as a self-sufficient noumenon who transcends the universal order (ie. substance) of nature and history. The aim of the PhG is to rectify the one-sidedness of Kantian-Fichtean epistemology and Schellingian ontology, and to show that substance and subject depend upon one another. This amounts

to nothing less than Hegel's attempt to establish and think through the principle of subject-object identity—a principle which both Fichte and Schelling proclaim, but which they both realise in a one-sided fashion, Fichte as a subjective subject-object and Schelling as an objective subject-object. In the Differenz, Hegel argues against Fichte that the principle of subject-object identity remains subjective, and he champions Schelling for his understanding of the full mutuality and reciprocity of subject-object identity.¹ Hegel's great advance in the PhG, though, is to recognise that Schelling also has a one-sided principle of subject-object identity, an objective rather than subjective subject-object identity.² Hence the task of the PhG is to complement not only the Kantian-Fichtean subject with Schelling's substance, but also Schelling's substance with the Kantian-Fichtean subject.

How do subject and substance depend upon one another in the PhG? How is substance subjective, and how is the subject substantial? The subject is substantial in the PhG in that he is self-conscious only when he knows how his identity depends upon the universal order of substance. Here 'substance' is not so much the whole of nature, as it is in Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hölderlin, but the whole of society and history. According to Hegel, the sub-

1. Werke, ii. 52f., 94f.

2. PhG, 19-20

ject depends upon substance not in the sense that his identity depends upon the universal order of nature—and, indeed, Hegel argues against the romantic circle in Jena (Novalis, Schelling) that the individual is free only insofar as he liberates himself from the shackles of nature¹—but in the sense that he depends upon the universal order of society and history. Hegel then re-interprets the mode/substance distinction so that it holds not between the individual and the whole of nature, but between the individual and the whole of society and history.² Now one of the basic aims of the PhG is to establish that the subject realises himself as a rational being only through his education into the social-historical order. In chapters IV, IV.A., and V, for example, consciousness learns that it thinks and acts rationally only because it is socialised by a community and its cultural traditions. It sees that its rationality is not self-created, but that it is the result of the history of consciousness—the product not of a self-sufficient individual, but of the struggle of entire nations. Consciousness discovers that it is self-conscious as a rational agent only through the mutual recognition of a community, and that its self-identity depends upon the purposes it assigns itself in public life. It now recognises that, apart from the community, it is no better than an animal who acts upon instinct and the necessity of its desires.

1. See Rosenkranz, G.W.F. Hegels Leben (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 186-7

2. See, for example, PhG, pp. 314, 318

It is now possible to explain why Hegel thinks that Kant and Fichte are guilty of a false abstraction when they separate their subject from substance, ie. when they isolate the individual from the universal laws and customs of a community. Where Kant and Fichte commit their fatal blunder is in their assumption that the subject is a self-sufficient noumenon who transcends society and history. Although Kant and Fichte often recognise the role of society and history in the development of rationality,¹ their solution to the problem of freedom compels them to de-socialise and de-historicise the subject's rational thought and will, so that he thinks and acts rationally apart from the effects of society and history, and indeed even if there were no society and history. They rescue the subject's freedom from the causal necessity of nature by placing him in a noumenal sphere above and beyond the phenomenal sphere of nature, so that although his rational thought and will can be the cause of phenomenal events in nature, phenomenal events in nature cannot conversely be the cause of his thought and will. But they then save freedom only at a price: it is now not possible to give an explanation of the social and historical origins of rational thought and action. For social and historical events are also phenomenal—they appear to the senses and they occur in space and time—and phenomenal events ex hypothesi

1. In his 'Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht', for example, Kant states that man's rational capacities develop only because of the action of the species, and not isolated individuals. See Schriften, viii. 18-19. And in his 1796 Rechtslehre, Fichte argues that the individual is self-conscious as a rational being only through the mutual recognition of a community. See Werke, iii. 85-110

cannot act upon noumenal events. This creates an unbridgeable gap between the noumenal subject and society and history, then, so that there cannot be a social-historical genesis of his rational thought and action. Kant and Fichte therefore have to assume that the subject thinks and acts rationally apart from all social and historical events. Hence they hold that the subject's rationality is simply given to him, and that it is not the result of his social and historical education, eg. Kant states in the preface to the first edition of the Kritik that his simple self-reflection suffices to discover all the principles of pure reason.¹ Hence they also state that the subject is self-conscious only by abstracting from everything outside himself and by reflecting upon the moral law within himself, a law which is prescribed by his pure reason alone, apart from his awareness of social norms and cultural traditions.² Now it is this de-socialised de-historicised subject which is one of Hegel's main targets in the PhG. For Hegel, such a subject has to be a mere abstraction—or at best a mere animal—since it only society and history which educates men to reason.³ The aim of the PhG is to undertake that task which Kant and Fichte forbid: the explanation of the social-historical genesis of rational thought and action. The Kantian-Fichtean subject will be shaken from his amnesia and forced to recollect those stages

1. KrV, A xiv

2. Cf. Kant, Schriften, v. 30-1 and Fichte, Werke, i. 422 465-7

3. See, for example, the chapter 'Das geistige Tierreich' in the PhG, pp. 284-9. For an interpretation of this chapter as a critique of Kant and Fichte, see J. Shklar, Freedom and Independence, 'A Study of the Political Ideas of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Mind"' (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 122-3

of consciousness which are necessary for the formation of his rationality.

If the subject is substantial in the PhG, though, so is its substance no less subjective. Substance has to be subjective since it has an independent essence only if it includes the dialectic by which it is known. If it excludes that dialectic, it forfeits its independent essence, for it is then conceivable only in contrast to consciousness and is thus limited by it. The dialectic by which consciousness attains its knowledge of substance, however, is by no means accidental to subjectivity. Rather, it is the very nature of subjectivity. The subject consists in its very activity of self-discovery, to borrow a formula from Hegel's Metaphysik,¹ and its dialectic is nothing less than its activity of self-discovery. So, when the essence of substance includes the dialectic within itself, it is of necessity subjective.

Not only in its essence, though, but even in its existence, substance depends upon the subject. According to Hegel, substance by itself is a pure abstraction and it comes into existence only when it reveals and embodies itself in finite things, and especially finite minds. There are two steps by which he arrives at this conclusion. (1) He first argues that substance has to exist in individual things. He identifies substance by itself with pure universality, since, as the

1. Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie, ed. G. Lasson. (Hamburg, Meiner, 1967), pp. 184-5

bare substratum of properties, it cannot have any determinate features of its own.¹ This pure universal cannot exist by itself, however, since a universal has to exist en re in individuals.² There is no such thing as whiteness as such, for example, but only this or that individual white spot. Consequently, to talk about the existence of substance on its own is to reify an abstraction. (2) Hegel then argues that if substance does exist in individuals, it only fully embodies and realises itself in finite minds and not natural objects. This is because he equates the universality of substance with the universal formal-final cause, the purpose of the universe itself.³ Such a purpose only fully reveals and embodies itself in finite minds, though, since they alone are conscious of the purposes and laws which govern them. So substance manifests itself only in the activity by which it becomes manifest to consciousness; in other words, since substance is only its power of self-manifestation, substance exists only as subject.

According to Hegel, then, Schelling is guilty of the opposite false abstraction from Kant and Fichte. Schelling thinks that substance or the absolute exists apart from and prior to consciousness. Since he regards the absolute as pure self-identity and excludes all finite differences from it,⁴ he commits himself to the self-subsistence of substance, its

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1. PhG, p. 20
 2. Hegel, Werke, viii. 82
 3. PhG, 20, 21, 23
 4. Schelling, Werke, iii. 15, 21

existence apart from the consciousness of finite minds. Hegel sees Schelling's substance as only the reification of an abstraction, though. Substance by itself is only pure universality, and so it is an abstraction which has no existence on its own. Rather, it comes into existence only when it is constructed by human activity in history, and only when it is given a determinate form through human agency. So, like Kant and Fichte, Schelling also makes a false abstraction from the history and experience of consciousness: just as Kant and Fichte assume that the subject thinks and acts rationally apart from his social and historical education, so Schelling assumes that substance is self-subsistent and is not the result of the activity of finite minds in history.

As Hegel sees it, Schelling's basic flaw is that he does not fully realise and grasp the consequences of his principle of subject-object identity. Although Schelling affirms the principle of subject-object identity and rightly sees more than its subjective side—a point which Hegel admires about Schelling and which he defends in the Differenz—he still grasps only the objective side of this principle. Schelling reifies subject-object identity into an object or substance beyond consciousness because he excludes ordinary consciousness from the absolute standpoint of philosophy. If in Fichte the principle of subject-object identity is subjective because it is limited to the self-consciousness of the finite ego, in Schelling it is objective since it is restricted

to the self-consciousness of God, where God's self-consciousness is objective since it transcends the self-consciousness of the finite ego.¹ In order for Schelling to fully realise his principle, then, it is necessary for him to de-hypostasise it and to make the self-consciousness of God accessible to ordinary consciousness, so that consciousness becomes self-conscious in God. Subject-object identity then—and only then—becomes truly mutual and reciprocal, both subjective and objective, applying to the self-consciousness of the finite ego and the self-consciousness of God. Such a programme of de-hypostasising Schelling's principle, of complementing its objective side with the subjective side of the Kantian-Fichtean subject, is nothing less than the task of the PhG.

IV

The Unity of the Phänomenologie

All the previous sections have tried to explain Hegel's metaphysical aims in the PhG. But any account of Hegel's programme and intention in the PhG has to come to terms with a basic difficulty: that it appears to be applicable only to one half of the work. The problem is that Hegel does not appear to have a single unifying conception

1. See Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 70-71, 73

of his aim in the PhG. The work seems to be curiously schizophrenic, divided into epistemology and history. As Haym complains in Hegel und seine Zeit, the PhG is a palimpsest: a second more historical text is written over an original epistemology.¹ It is split into a 'transcendental psychology' on the one hand and a 'history of the world' on the other hand. According to Haym, Hegel then confounds his epistemology and history. He uses the contingent facts of history to determine his a priori epistemology, and he employs an a priori epistemology to construct the contingent stages of history. And so the PhG turns out a botch: 'eine durch die Geschichte in Verwirrung und Unordnung gebrachte Psychologie und eine durch die Psychologie in Zerrüttung gebrachte Geschichte'.² Along with Haym, Haering also finds the PhG to be irredeemably divided. He gives a philological and historical backing to Haym's thesis by uncovering some of the facts behind the composition of the work. According to his classic article 'Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Phänomenologie des Geistes',³ the PhG is not written according to a single organic, well thought-out plan, and Hegel's intentions change drastically even during the printing of the first half of the work. At first, as late as the summer of 1806, while the first half is already in the hands of the publisher, and only months before the final printing in November 1806, Hegel wants to write a short introduction to his Logik und Metaphysik, which is to com-

1. Hegel und seine Zeit, p. 238

2. Ibid., 243

3. See Verhandlungen des dritten Hegelkongresses, ed. B. Wigersma (Tübingen, Mohr, 1934), pp. 118-138

prise a single volume; but he then loses control over his work and ends out writing an introduction which alone fills the single volume.¹ The epistemological half of the PhG corresponds to the original introduction; but Hegel then adds—quite contrary to his original intention—the later historical sections. Haering flatly rejects any attempt to unify the two sections of the work, ascribing its duality to the extraordinary pressures, haste and lack of planning behind its composition.

Such is the supposed duality of the PhG that it is even held to be a misguided enterprise to explain it in terms of its original title, 'Wissenschaft der Erfahrung des Bewusstseins'. Haering denies that the idea behind the 'Wis. d. Er.' is applicable to the entire PhG. He maintains that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is originally designed as the introduction to the Logik und Metaphysik, and that it is only meant to extend as far as the chapter 'Vernunft', where the discussion of logical and psychological laws is to pass over into the Logik.² The 'Wis. d. Er.' then applies to only the earlier epistemological half of the PhG, and it does not extend to the later historical half, the chapters on 'Geist' and 'Religion'. This is apparent, Haering argues, from the fact that Hegel's description of the experience of consciousness in the 'Einleitung' is appropriate only for the earlier epistemological chapters and not the later historical chapters.

1. Ibid., p. 119

2. See Haering, Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk (Leipzig and Berlin, Tuebner, 1929), ii. 480, 485-6

In the later chapters, Hegel supposedly shows little or no concern with how an object appears to consciousness, and he simply describes social and historical phenomena in general and for their own sake.¹

What is to be said about Haym's and Haering's thesis? The first question to ask is whether or not they have accurately described the duality of the PhG. And here it is necessary to give a negative answer. Although there is a dualism which roughly centres around the psychological and historical aspects of the work, it is seriously misleading to assume, as Haering does, that only the first half deals with the experience of consciousness. The idea of a 'Wis. d. Er.' is meant to apply to both halves of the work, and both the psychological and historical halves deal with a form of experience. There are more than sufficient textual and historical considerations to cast doubt upon Haering's thesis and to make it evident that the 'Wis. d. Er.' does in fact apply to the entire PhG. Consider the following. (1) Haering is simply wrong when he thinks that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is originally meant as only an introduction to the system of philosophy. The title page to the 'Wis. d. Er.' already has 'Erster Theil' written above it, and Hegel expressly states in the 'Einleitung' that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is a 'Weg zur Wissenschaft' which is 'selbst schon Wissenschaft'.² (2) Hegel also says

1. Ibid., pp. 483-4

2. PhG, p. 74

in the 'Einleitung' that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is to comprehend 'das ganze Reich der Wahrheit des Geistes'.¹ Judging from Hegel's earlier 'Philosophie des Geistes', though, the 1805/06 Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes, the 'whole realm of spirit' has to include art, history, religion and 'Sittlichkeit', so that the 'Wis. d. Er.' has to extend beyond the 'Vernunft' chapter and to the whole PhG.² (3) Haering's claim that the later historical chapters of the PhG describe social and historical events in general and for their own sake, without considering how they appear to consciousness, is hardly borne out by the texts. One needs to consider only such conspicuous examples as how 'Sittlichkeit' revolves around the figure of Antigone, and how 'Die Welt des sich entfremdete Geistes' is articulated by Rameau's nephew. And, indeed, in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, written after the completion of the whole work, Hegel still states that the PhG (and not only the 'Wis. d. Er.') applies to 'das unmittelbare Dasein des Geistes', which he then immediately identifies with 'das Bewusstsein'.³ So, at least according to Hegel's intention, if not his practise, the entire PhG ought to deal with how objects appear to consciousness, whether these objects are social and historical or not. (4) Although Hegel does drop the title 'Wis. d. Er.', he still continues to use the term 'Erfahrung' as a description of the subject matter of the PhG. Thus the retrospective 'Vorrede' uses 'Erfahrung'

1. PhG, p. 74

2. See Hegel, Jenaer Realphilosophie, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner, 1969), pp. 180-273

3. PhG, p. 32

(and even re-employs 'Wis. d. Er.') to describe the dialectical movement of 'Geist',¹ while the chapter on 'Das absolute Wissen' refers to the 'Erfahrung' by which 'Geist' becomes an object for consciousness.² (5) Hegel states in the 'Einleitung' that the 'Wis. d. Er.' ends with that point where appearance coincides with essence,³ and this point cannot be at the end of the 'Vernunft' chapter, as Haering reads this passage,⁴ but only at the end of the PhG and at the beginning of the Logik. For Hegel states explicitly in the 'Vorrede' that appearance coincides with essence at the end of the PhG (and not only the 'Wis. d. Er.') and that this marks the beginning of Logik or spekulativen Philosophie.⁵ The 'Wis. d. Er.' must then include the entire PhG, and cannot be limited to the epistemological sections alone where appearance and essence still do not coincide. Although it is surely possible that Hegel's statement in the 'Vorrede' re-interprets and modifies that in the 'Einleitung', so that he does originally intend the 'Wis. d. Er.' to reach up to only 'Vernunft', nonetheless the fact that he even re-interprets the point where essence and appearance coincide shows that he allows the 'Wis. d. Er.' to cover the entire PhG.⁶

1. Ibid., p. 32

2. Ibid., p. 558

3. Ibid., p. 75

4. Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk, ii. 486

5. PhG, pp. 32-3

6. For another reading of this passage from the 'Einleitung' see O. Pöggeler 'Zur Deutung der Phänomenologie des Geistes', Hegel-Studien, I (1961), 282-4. Pöggeler's reading does not consider, however, Hegel's restatement of the 'Einleitung' passage in the 'Vorrede'.

The difference between the two halves of the PhG cannot be marked by the 'Wis. d. Er.', then, which in fact applies to the entire PhG. Rather, the difference is between two kinds of experience. There is a distinction between the psychological experience of the first half and the social-historical experience of the second half. The first half deals with the experience whereby the individual becomes self-conscious as Geist, while the latter half concerns the experience whereby Geist becomes self-conscious in the individual. This division in types of experience is apparent from the introductory chapter to the second half of the PhG, chapter VI, 'Der Geist'. Here Hegel declares that it is not Geist which experiences itself, and that consequently the stages of consciousness are historical, figures of the world and not only of consciousness.

'Er [der Geist] muss zum Bewusstsein über das, was er unmittelbar ist, fortgehen, das schöne sittliche Leben aufheben und durch eine Reihe von Gestalten zum Wissen seiner selbst gelangen. Diese unterscheiden sich aber von den vorhergehenden dadurch, dass sie die realen Geister sind, eigentliche Wirklichkeiten, und statt Gestalten nur des Bewusstseins, Gestalten einer Welt'.¹

This distinction also appears in the 'Vorrede' and 'Das absolute Wissen' where Hegel re-interprets his original idea of experience. Now the emphasis is upon the experience of Geist, and how it appears to consciousness, rather than simply upon the experience of consciousness itself:

1. PhG, p. 315

'Denn die Erfahrung ist eben dies, dass der Inhalt
—und er ist Geist—an sich Substanz und also Gegen-
stand des Bewusstseins ist!'¹

The stages of consciousness are then re-interpreted as
abstractions from the experience of Geist:

'Der Geist ist hiemit das sich selbst absolute trag-
ende Wesen. Alle bisherigen Gestalten des Bewusstseins
sind Abstraktionen desselben; sie sind dies, dass er
sich analysiert, seine Momente unterscheidet und bei
einzelnen verweilt. Dies Isolieren solcher Momente hat
ihn selbst zur Voraussetzung und zum Bestehen, oder es
existiert nur in ihm, der die Existenz ist....Der Geist
ist also Bewusstsein ueberhaupt, was sinnliche Gewissheit,
Wahrnehmen und den Verstand in sich begreift...'²

The division within the PhG is not primarily between epis-
temology and history, then, so much as it is between the
experience of the individual and Geist. The distinction
between psychology and history reflects the more basic one
between the individual and Geist.

So Haym and Haering have a point. Although it is not
precisely the distinction drawn by them, there is indeed—
and according to Hegel's own admission—a distinction between
the two halves of the PhG. It is important, however, not
to overemphasise this distinction between the two kinds of
experience. There is still a single, univocal sense of exper-
ience in the PhG: the appearance of Geist to consciousness.
The difference between experiences only depends upon whether
Geist appears to consciousness through its activity or that
of consciousness itself. Hegel brings out this single sense
of experience in the 'Vorrede' in his retrospective attempt to

1. PhG, p. 558; cf. p. 32
2. Ibid., 314-5

unify the work:

'Die Wissenschaft dieses Wegs des Bewusstseins ist Wissenschaft der Erfahrung, die das Bewusstsein macht; die Substanz i.e. Geist an sich wird betrachtet, wie sie und ihre Bewegung sein Gegenstand ist'¹

The experience of Geist and the individual are never separate from one another. They do not belong to distinct subjects, since Hegel affirms that Geist and the individual are self-conscious only through one another. And they do not occur apart from one another in distinct sections of the text—the experience of the individual in the first half and that of Geist in the latter half—for there is always a simultaneous double experience throughout the PhG:

Geist experiences itself as consciousness as consciousness experiences itself as Geist. This demand for mutual self-awareness is already explicit in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG,² but Hegel states it much more simply and plainly later on in his Philosophie der Religion:

'Dass der Mensch von Gott weiss, ist nach der wesentlichen Gemeinschaft ein gemeinschaftliches Wissen,—d.i. der Mensch weiss nur von Gott, insofern Gott im Menschen von sich selbst weiss; dies Wissen ist Selbstbewusstsein Gottes, aber ebenso ein Wissen desselben vom Menschen, und dies Wissen Gottes vom Menschen ist Wissen des Menschen von Gott. Der Geist des Menschen, von Gott zu wissen, ist nur der Geist Gottes selbst.'³

The only difference between the earlier and later halves of the PhG is then one of emphasis: one experience is implicit and potential while the other is explicit and actual.

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1. PhG, p. 32
 2. Ibid., p. 24
 3. Hegel, Werke, xvii. 480

If it is important not to exaggerate this distinction, it is equally important to recognise it and not to slur it over. An adequate account of the unity of the PhG cannot deny this distinction, but it has to explain why it is necessary according to Hegel's over-all and guiding aim. So the question then arises: how do the epistemological and historical halves of the PhG fit together? Why are they both necessary for Hegel's aim? Assuming, if only for the sake of argument, Haering's thesis that Hegel initially wants to write only an epistemological introduction to his Logik und Metaphysik, the problem is then to understand why he is compelled to include the historical chapters to complete his introduction to his system of philosophy. Even if Hegel's intentions do change during the composition of the work, as Haering maintains, it is still important to explain why they change, a question which Haering does not even raise. It is necessary, then, to return to Hegel's original intention in writing the PhG, and to establish how it demands both the epistemological and historical chapters, the experience of consciousness and the experience of Geist. If there proves to be a single programme for which both parts are necessary, then the unity of the PhG will be established, pace Haym and Haering.

Hegel's original aim in writing the PhG is to introduce and justify the standpoint of 'Wissenschaft' or speculative philosophy (ie. absolute idealism) to ordinary consciousness. The task of the original 'Wis. d. Er.' is to narrate those stages of consciousness which are necessary for ordinary con-

sciousness to educate itself up to the standpoint of absolute knowledge. This aim of the PhG appears explicitly in the 'Einleitung', which is written along with the first half of the work, and which is initially intended as the introduction to the 'Wis. d. Er.'. Here Hegel announces that he is undertaking 'die Darstellung des erscheinenden Wissens' in order to justify the standpoint of philosophy before ordinary consciousness.¹ Such a justification is necessary, he insists, since there is a conflict between the standpoints of ordinary consciousness and philosophy. According to the standpoint of philosophy, the standard of knowledge is self-knowledge where the subject and object are identical with one another; according to ordinary consciousness, though, the standard of knowledge is the correspondence of a representation with a given object, where the subject and object are distinct from one another. Now this conflict puts the onus of proof upon the standpoint of philosophy. It has no right to claim that its standpoint is superior and correct while that of ordinary consciousness is inferior and false; for ordinary consciousness has just as much a right to claim against philosophy that its standpoint is superior and correct. One barren assurance of the truth, though, is just as good as another. So if philosophy is to justify itself before ordinary consciousness, if it is to prove itself the superior and correct standpoint, then ordinary consciousness has to discover the necessity of philosophy from within, according to its own self-examination and self-

1. PhG, p. 66

criticism. It has to negate its standard of knowledge and to affirm that of philosophy through its own inner dialectic or experience. The aim of the 'Wis. d. Er.' is then to describe the experience by which consciousness renounces its own standpoint and recognises that of philosophy. Hence Hegel describes the 'Wis. d. Er.' as nothing less than 'die ausführliche Geschichte die Bildung des Bewusstseins selbst zur Wissenschaft'.¹

Hegel never renounces his original conception of the task of the PhG, and the aim of the PhG still remains that of the earlier 'Wis. d. Er.' This is apparent from both the 'Vorrede' and 'Selbstanzeige', which were written in 1807, after the entire work was already in the hands of the publisher in 1806. The 'Vorrede' re-affirms the task Hegel sets for himself in the 'Einleitung' to the 'Wis. d. Er.' The aim of the PhG, he writes, is to describe the stages of consciousness by which the individual educates himself up to the standpoint of 'Wissenschaft' or philosophy.² Hegel then restates that opposition between philosophy and ordinary consciousness which he sets forth in the 'Einleitung', and he again calls for an introduction and justification of the standpoint of philosophy.³ Furthermore, he still adheres to the term 'Erfahrung', using it to refer to the path by which consciousness attains the standpoint of 'Wissenschaft'.⁴ The 'Selbstanzeige' also re-states the task of

1. PhG, p.67

2. Ibid., pp. 24-7

3. Ibid., pp. 24-6

4. Ibid., p. 32

the 'Wis. d. Er.'. In terms reminiscent of the 'Einleitung', Hegel describes the PhG as 'die Begründung des Wissens'. Its business is to consider 'die Vorbereitung zur Wissenschaft', and to present the stages of spirit which are necessary to attain 'reines Wissen oder absoluter Geist'.¹

Hegel maintains one constant intention, then, in both the earlier 'Wis. d. Er.' and the PhG. The fact that he only re-affirms his original aim in the 'Vorrede' and 'Selbstanzeige' is telling since it shows that at least he does not consider the PhG to be a divided work. Although Haering is perhaps correct to claim that Hegel's intentions change during the composition of the work, such a change in intention can only mean that he adds the later historical chapters without originally planning them. It is false to further assume, though, that Hegel ever drops or deviates from his original aim of introducing and justifying ordinary consciousness. Pace Haering, then, this aim is not limited to the original 'Wis. d. Er.', but it also extends to the latter half of the PhG.

Why, then, does Hegel's intention demand both the epistemological and historical halves of the PhG? The answer to this question requires taking a closer look at the standpoint of philosophy which Hegel aims to introduce and justify. According to Hegel, the standpoint of philosophy proclaims the speculative principle of subject-

1. PhG, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii

object identity; or it states that the absolute is nothing less than Geist. Both these formulations amount to the same thing: Geist and the principle of subject-object identity both affirm that the absolute is the identity of substance and subject.¹ They maintain on the one hand that the subject is substance in that the individual is self-conscious only when he knows how his identity depends upon the universe as a whole (ie. substance); and they state on the other hand that substance is subject in that the purpose of the universe as a whole is realised and embodied only in the activity of finite agents. Now it is this double claim which holds the key to the duality of the PhG. The first half of the PhG aims to establish that the subject is substantial. The task of chapters I to V is to educate the individual up to his self-consciousness as Geist where he recognises that his self-identity depends upon the mutual recognition and universal rules of the public life of the community. The second half of the PhG, though, attempts to show that substance is subjective. It begins in chapter VI with the abstract concept of Geist, and then demonstrates that it has a content only in history, in the life of particular nations. Although these aims are clearly distinct, they are both necessary if Hegel is to carry out his original intention: to justify the principle of subject-object identity, to establish that

1. PhG, pp. 19-20, 24

the absolute is Geist. Thus the metaphysical programme attributed to the PhG in the earlier sections—to realise the principle of subject-object identity, to prove that the absolute is both substance and subject—satisfactorily explains the duality of the PhG and unites the two halves of the work. Haym and Haering fail to see the unity of the work simply because they do not examine its metaphysical intention in sufficient detail.

There is another way of explaining why Hegel's original intention requires the historical half of the PhG. The aim of the earlier 'Wis. d. Er.' is to educate consciousness up to its self-consciousness as Geist. Consciousness reaches its turning point, Hegel writes at the close of chapter IV,¹ only when the ego recognises the equal and independent reality of another ego, and only when the other ego in turn recognises his equal and independent reality. This mutual recognition consists in a single act of self-consciousness which is identical in distinct egos. Such self-consciousness, though, is nothing less than the concept—if only the concept—of Geist; it is, as Hegel puts it, 'Ich, das Wir, und Wir, das Ich ist'.² Now by the end of chapter V, consciousness has still only half fulfilled its task of becoming self-conscious as Geist. It has learned that its rational nature is realised only through the mutual recognition

1. PhG, p. 140

2. Ibid.

and public life of a community. Or, in short, it has discovered that its self-realisation as a rational being depends upon Geist. But this is still not enough for it to be self-conscious as Geist. For it not only has to know that it depends upon Geist, but it also has to know the converse: that Geist depends upon it. Consciousness also has to see that its actions occur according to the necessity of the nature of Geist, so that Geist realises itself only by embodying itself in its actions. It has to recognise that its actions are nothing less than the highest organisation, development and manifestation of the activity of Geist. Otherwise, if Geist does not depend upon consciousness, then the individual is self-conscious as Geist only by abstracting from his determinate nature. His determinate nature is then only contingent, and it is replaceable in the universal order, so that he is not self-conscious as a determinate individual, but only as consciousness in general. The individual then remains outside the absolute, alienated from it as a hostile power; he is not reconciled with it according to his own determinate nature. Even worse, though, Geist then turns into an abstract universal which is robbed of all its determinate differences. It remains self-identical in all individuals only by abstracting from their differences and not expressing itself through them. Hegel is anxious to avoid, however, such an abstract concept of the absolute. The absolute then amounts to only the idea of life,

he argues,¹ since it is the nature of life not to express itself in determinate living individuals. Everyone is alike simply as a living being, and life as a species continues even though individuals die off. The absolute, however, is more than life; it is Geist, and it is the nature of Geist to express and embody itself in the determinate nature of individuals. Now it is because the absolute is Geist that it realises itself only in history. History consists in the actions which are specific to individuals as conscious agents, so that it is history, and not mere biological life, which provides the field for the embodiment of Geist in determinate individuals. Hegel insists upon this point in chapter V in the course of describing the difference between life and consciousness:

'So hat das Bewusstsein zwischen dem allgemeinen Geiste und zwischen seiner Einzelheit oder dem sinnlichen Bewusstsein, zur Mitte das System der Gestalten des Bewusstseins, als ein zum Ganzen sich ordnendes Leben des Geistes—das System das hier betrachtet wird, und welches als Weltgeschichte sein gegenständliches Dasein hat. Aber die organische Natur hat keine Geschichte...'²

It is here that Hegel commits himself to the historical half of the PhG, flatly contrary to Haering's expectation that this section of the text ought to contain a transition to the Logik und Metaphysik. So, in sum, in the second half of the PhG Hegel embarks upon an account of how Geist embodies itself in history in order to establish that it depends upon the con-

1. PhG, pp. 218-221

2. Ibid., 220

scious actions of determinate individuals. Only then does he realise his original intention: to guarantee that consciousness is self-conscious in Geist, and not only as any individual, but as a determinate individual, an individual who lives at a particular time and who is the citizen of a particular nation. What the individual sees at the end of the PhG is that his actions, as the determinate actions of a citizen of his own nation and generation, are nothing less than the highest organisation and development of Geist thus far in history. The individual is self-conscious as Geist because he is conscious that his actions, and not only the actions of anyone, are necessary to realise the purpose of Geist.

The Necessity of Metaphysics: the Transition from Fichte's
1794 Wissenschaftslehre to Hegel's Differenz

Introductory

After considering the aim of the PhG in chapter 1, the problem now before us is to see why Hegel thought this aim to be necessary. This raises the question: why does Hegel argue that it is necessary to revive metaphysics upon the basis of the critique of knowledge? This question in turn naturally divides into two: why does he consider metaphysics to be necessary?, and why does he regard epistemology as its necessary foundation? Each of the next two chapters will treat one of these questions.

The problem of the forthcoming chapter is to explain Hegel's argument in behalf of metaphysics in the Differenz. It raises the question: why does Hegel demand a revival of metaphysics despite the criticism of reason by the epistemology of Kant and Fichte? In answering this question, I shall attempt to follow a new line of investigation. I shall argue that Fichte's 1794 Wissenschaftslehre, Schelling's break with Fichte, and Hegel's alliance with Schelling in the Differenz, all have their origin in the attempt to solve a single philosophical issue: the mind-body problem. Although the presence of this problem is often implied in the literature, it is rarely, if ever, explicitly stated, and in any case its importance for the history of German idealism is still not fully appreciated.¹

1. By the 'literature' here, I have in mind these standard works on the history of German idealism: R. Haym, Hegel und seine Zeit and Die romantische Schule (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977); R. Kroner, Von Hegel bis Kant; N. Hartmann,

An Historical Prelude: Hegel's Role in Schelling's Break from Fichte

By the time of Hegel's arrival in Jena in January 1801, Fichte and Schelling are already deeply engaged in the dispute which will eventually spell the end of their collaboration. After several months of fraught correspondence, they have clearly established the main point at issue between them. While Fichte insists that his Wissenschaftslehre(W-L) accomodates and explains the independent reality of nature, and while he maintains that the Naturphilosophie is only subordinate to the W-L, Schelling replies that his Naturphilosophie is independent of and co-ordinate to the W-L, and that it is necessary to postulate the independent reality of nature. In his November 15th, 1800 letter to Schelling, for example, Fichte argues that nature does not exist according to its own laws, but only according to the laws of intelligence; and he goes on to describe Schelling's 'Selbstkonstruktion der Natur'—a method which treats nature as an end in itself—as a false abstraction from the W-L.¹ In his

Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus (Berlin, de Gruyter, 1929); Lukacs, Der junge Hegel (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1973); H. Marcuse Reason and Revolution (London, Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1968); W. Dilthey, Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels in Gesammelte Schriften, iv (Leipzig, Tuebner, 1921); and E. Bloch, Subjekt-Objekt, 'Erläuterungen zu Hegel' (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1962). Cassirer comes closest to seeing the full significance of this problem for Fichte in his brilliant, but sadly neglected Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neuern Zeit, (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), 'Die nachkantische Systeme', iii. 126-9

1. Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, ed. H. Fuhrmans (Bonn Bouvier, 1962), ii. 296

November 19th, 1800 reply to Fichte, Schelling declares that the Naturphilosophie is completely independent of the W-L, and that it has every right to assume that nature exists apart from consciousness.¹ What is at stake in this dispute over the status of the Naturphilosophie, then, is nothing less than the possibility of metaphysics. The Naturphilosophie postulates knowledge of the universe as a whole, apart from and prior to how it appears to consciousness. Its aim is to break outside the circle of consciousness of the W-L, as is plain from Schelling's 1801 essay 'Ueber den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie'.²

Into this growing dispute steps the young 'Doktor der Weltweisheit', Hegel. His main contribution to the dispute is his Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie, whose aims are to distinguish between Fichte's and Schelling's system, and to explain the superiority of Schelling's system over Fichte's. As Hegel sees it, the main difference between these systems is this: Schelling affirms and Fichte denies the equal status of the Naturphilosophie to Transcendentalphilosophie. And the superiority of Schelling's system over Fichte's consists in this: Fichte's system betrays the principle of subject-object identity and fails to explain empirical consciousness, while Schelling's system remains loyal to this principle and succeeds in explaining empirical consciousness, and precisely because it maintains the equal rights

1. Ibid., ii. 296

2. Werke, ii. 718-726. Cf. Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Prozesses in Werke, ii. 710-12

of the Naturphilosophie alongside the Transcendentalphilosophie. The external stimulus for the Differenz is a recent publication—the first issue of Reinhold's Beyträge zur leichtern Uebersicht des Zustands der Philosophie zu Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts—which conflates Fichte and Schelling, seeing them both as champions of 'Ichheit', a principle which conceives all thought as purely subjective, and which dissolves the actual opposition between subject and object in empirical consciousness in the pure subject-object identity of the absolute.¹ Against Reinhold, Hegel argues that he has got hold of only the subjective side of Schelling's principle of subject-object identity, and that he completely ignores its objective side, which insists upon abstracting from 'Ichheit' and the subjectivity of thought.² And it is precisely the distinctive virtue of Schelling's system over Fichte's, Hegel further insists, that it explains the opposition between subject and object in actual experience.

Whatever its reception in the philosophical world,³ the Differenz achieves its desired effect: Schelling's break with Fichte. Although the evidence is only circumstantial, it strongly suggests that the Differenz strikes the final death blow to Schelling's faltering alliance with Fichte. Although Fichte and Schelling are already clearly aware of their differ-

1. C. Reinhold, Beyträge (Hamburg, Perthes, 1801), i. 86-7. Reinhold's interpretation of Schelling is in fact more complex, though inconsistent. Although he does see that Schelling's absolute is also objective, he at the same time insists that Fichte and Schelling affirm the same principle—'Ichheit'—which restricts Schelling's absolute to its subjective side. See Beyträge, i. 85-6. This inconsistency is noted by Hegel in the Differenz. See Werke ii. 116-7.

2. Werke, ii. 116-7

3. Fichte never comments on the Differenz, Reinhold considers

ences before Hegel's intervention, they are still desperately anxious to patch up their ailing friendship. Thus on November 19th, 1800, less than two months before Hegel's arrival in Jena, Schelling writes to Fichte that they are still at one on all essential points.¹ And even after Hegel's arrival in Jena and the publication of Schelling's Darstellung meines Systems, Schelling is still eager to express his agreement with Fichte, telling him in his May 24th, 1801 letter that, despite all their differences, they still share a single viewpoint.² After the publication of the Differenz in July 1801, however, the break is finalised and formalised. By seeing such a wide difference between Fichte and Schelling, and by arguing that there are such great advantages to Schelling's system over Fichte's, Hegel forbids reconciliation between these past allies. It is indeed probably the Differenz which explains Schelling's dramatic 3rd October, 1801 letter to Fichte. Schelling is now confident enough to write to Fichte that he no longer deems the W-L the last word in philosophy, and that it is only one part of his own system.³ He then asks Fichte to stop considering him as his collaborator.⁴ It is no accident that he then reveals the source of his new-found confidence: the publication of 'einem sehr vorzüglichen Kopf', titled Differenz des Fichte'schen

it insignificant (see Beyträge (1803) v. xiii), and F. Schlegel regards it as simply 'schlecht'. See Fuhrman's note to Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, ii. 298

1. Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, ii. 298

2. Ibid., ii. 326

3. Ibid., ii. 352

4. Ibid., ii. 355

und Schelling'sohen Systems der Philosophie. And so one philosophical alliance ends and a new one begins: it is no longer Fichte-Schelling, but Schelling-Hegel.

But why does Hegel ever take sides with Schelling against Fichte in the first place? Why does he argue that the Naturphilosophie is necessary? And why indeed does he think that there must be a revival of metaphysics, despite all the critical limits upon reason imposed by the epistemology of Kant and Fichte? To even begin to answer this question, it is necessary to go back in philosophical history: back to the origins, problems and principles of Fichte's 1794 W-L. The Differenz maintains the necessity of the Naturphilosophie just because it resolves the outstanding problem of the W-L, and just because it alone remains true to the first principle of the W-L. However great their differences, Hegel still thinks that the systems of Fichte and Schelling have their root in a single philosophy and in a common problem. The philosophy is the 'spirit' of the Kantian system: its principle of subject-object identity. The problem is the central question of transcendental philosophy: how is experience possible? The argument of the Differenz is that only Schelling's system can lay claim to be the legitimate heir of the Kantian revolution, and that it alone resolves the remaining problem of a transcendental philosophy. Thus Hegel's rationale for metaphysics puts the onus of proof upon Kant's and Fichte's epistemology: it is necessary to go beyond the critical limits of epistemology precisely because it cannot solve its own problem of the possi-

bility of experience.

So, in order to interpret Hegel's argument, it is necessary to return to the principles and problems of Fichte's W-L. But to come to terms with the W-L is no easy task. It requires a lot of explaining.

II

The Principles and Problematic of Fichte's 1794 Wissenschaftslehre

The problem of the W-L begins with a basic fact of our ordinary experience. This is the fact that experience is outside our conscious control, or that there is a feeling of necessity accompanying our representations. What representations appear, and when they appear, does not depend upon our will and imagination. When I look outside the window, for example, I see these trees and buildings with just these properties and no others, quite apart from the fact that I do not want to see them. What is the ground of such an experience? How is it possible to explain the feeling of necessity that accompanies representations? That is the main problem of philosophy, at least as Fichte conceives it in the Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre.¹ But Fichte has other formulations for the same problem. In the introduction to the 1798 Sittenlehre, for instance, he raises this question: how does something objective ever become something subjective? How does an object

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 423

act upon the subject to produce a representation when the subject and object appear to have a distinct existence? The task of philosophy is to answer this question, Fichte says.¹ Then in his early 1795 essay 'Vergleichung des vom Herrn Prof. Schmid aufgestellten Systems mit der Wissenschaftslehre', Fichte hits upon yet another formulation for his problem. 'What is the ground of our belief that representations correspond to something external to themselves?' This question raises the main problem of philosophy, he writes.² Still another version of the problem is voiced by an early disciple of Fichte, the young Schelling. In his 1796-7 Abhandlung zur Erläuterung der Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre, Schelling puts the main problem of philosophy as follows: how is knowledge possible when it requires the correspondence of a representation with its object and when the representation and its object are completely distinct entities?³

Whatever their differences, all these statements about the problem of philosophy boil down to a single underlying issue. Whether they ask how an object acts upon the subject to create the feeling of necessity accompanying a representation, or whether they ask how the subject and object correspond with one another if they are such distinct entities, they still raise anew one basic and classic problem of philosophy: the mind-body problem. This issue begins in modern philosophy with Descartes' rigid dualism between the mental and physical.

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1. Ibid., iv. 1-2
 2. Ibid., ii. 440-1
 3. Werke, i. 288-9

In the Principles of Philosophy, Descartes sharply distinguishes between the mind and body: the mind is thinking substance, while the body is extended substance.¹ The mind cannot have extension—motion or dimension in space—any more than the body can possess thought—the consciousness of feeling, perceiving or understanding. If the mind and body are such distinct substances, though, then the question arises: how can they act upon one another? How is cause-effect action possible between such totally distinct types of entity?

In re-invoking the mind-body problem, however, Fichte re-conceives the task of transcendental philosophy since Kant. The basic question of transcendental philosophy is this: how is experience possible? But this question is ambiguous. It might ask about the conditions for knowledge of experience: how is it possible to know objects in experience?, how is it possible to make objective judgements about it? Or it might ask about the genesis of experience: how do the subject and object interact to produce experience? In Kant, transcendental philosophy deals only with the former question, the quid juris?: how are synthetic a priori concepts valid of experience?, how are they true of it if they do not derive from it? But it does not treat the latter question, the quid facti?: how does a representation arise from an object?, how do understanding and sensibility interact to produce exper-

1. Philosophical Writings, i. 221, 240. Principles X and LIII

ience?¹ In Fichte, however, transcendental philosophy treats not only the quid juris, but also it especially concerns itself with the quid facti? Thus the problem of transcendental philosophy is extended: it deals not only with the conditions for making valid objective judgements about experience, but also the causal conditions for the genesis of experience.

Fichte has his reasons—good reasons—for pushing the transcendental philosophy in this new direction. He clearly sees that the quid juris cannot be fully answered without also raising the quid facti? All knowledge rests upon a correspondence between the subject and object, he says, and that correspondence is possible only if there is an interaction between them.² If per contra the subject and object are distinct substances which cannot interact, then the subject's consciousness of a distinct object is either an illusion or a miracle, a figment of his imagination or the mysterious result of a pre-established harmony. This simple insight is decisive for the history of German idealism. After Fichte, the transcendental philosophy shifts its centre of attention from the quid juris? to the quid facti? Schelling and Hegel follow in the tradition of transcendental philosophy in that their main concern is the problem of the possibility of experience. They see this problem, though, not through the eyes of Kant, but through those of Fichte.

1. KrV, B 116-119

2. Fichte, Werke, iv. 1-2

The pressing need to raise the quid facti? is brought home to Fichte by Kant's evident inability to answer this question. Kant cannot explain the genesis of experience simply because he re-instates Descartes' mind-body dualism. He only replaces Descartes' dualism with his own equally rigid noumenal-phenomenal dualism. No less than the mind and body, noumena and phenomena are distinct kinds of substance. Noumena are intelligible—they are active, beyond space and time, and not subject to the law of causality—while phenomena are sensible beings—they are passive, in space and time, and subject to the laws of nature. Thus, as such distinct types of entity, it is impossible for noumena and phenomena to interact with one another. And yet, if Kant so radically divides noumena and phenomena, he equally insists upon their most intimate interaction. The heart of the critical teaching is that knowledge is possible only if the understanding—a noumenal faculty which applies the categories to experience—and sensibility—a phenomenal faculty which receives intuitions—interact with one another. The understanding has to act upon sensibility to organise intuitions according to the categories; and, conversely, sensibility has to act upon the understanding so that its categories have a content and apply to actual experience. In other words, as Kant's famous maxim has it: concepts without intuitions are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. Thus Kant is stuck on a dilemma. On the one hand, his theory of freedom in the solution to the third antinomy requires that

noumena and phenomena are distinct entities, so that they cannot interact with one another; on the other hand, though, his theory of knowledge demands that the understanding and sensibility co-operate with one another, so that they must interact with one another. So Kant has a choice between either his theory of knowledge or his theory of freedom. If he drops his noumenal-phenomena dualism for the sake of his theory of knowledge, he destroys his solution to the third antinomy, and so imperils freedom; but if he keeps his dualism to maintain freedom, his theory of knowledge becomes implausible. This dilemma poses the fundamental challenge to Fichte's W-L. Its task is to find the middle path between its horns: a theory of freedom which allows for the interaction between the understanding and sensibility.

Kant's failure to solve the quid facti? became nearly a standard complaint in philosophy before the appearance of the first versions of the W-L, the 1794 Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre. This deficiency of the critical philosophy is put forward by two of Kant's earliest critics, Jacobi and Maimon. In his 1787 dialogue David Hume, Jacobi protests against Kant's reason/sensibility dualism. Reason and sensibility are not distinct faculties, he argues, but only higher and lower degrees of organisation of life.¹ He then insists that there is a severe penalty for dividing these faculties:

1. Jacobi, Werke, F. Roth and F. Köppen (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), ii. 218-26

the mental and physical cannot interact with one another if they are distinct entities, and such a dualism means that there cannot be an explanation of knowledge or action.¹ After Jacobi, Maimon presses home the same point in his 1790 Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosophie. He likens Kant's a priori/a posteriori dualism to that between the mind and body, and contends that, in beginning with such a dualism, Kant cannot possibly resolve his central problem of the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. According to Maimon, Kant rightly insists that such knowledge requires a unity of understanding and sensibility; but once he so radically sunders these faculties, he cannot put them back together again, for they are simply too heterogeneous to interact with one another.² There is every reason to think that Fichte takes their criticism seriously. He calls Maimon 'einer der grössten Denker unseres Zeitalters',³ and he praises Jacobi as 'ein Mann von ueberwiegender Geisteskraft', recommending all his philosophical writings.⁴

Kant's failure to solve the quid facti? becomes all the more apparent with his only attempt to explain the genesis of experience. In the Prolegomena, Kant explicitly states

1. Ibid., ii. 244-5

2. S. Maimon, Werke, ed. V. Verra (Hildesheim, Olms, 1965) ii. 62-5, 362

3. Werke, i. 146 Cf. Fichte's 1795 letter to Reinhold: 'Gegen Maimon's talent ist meine Achtung grenzenlos; ich glaube fest und bin erbötig, es zu erweisen, dass durch ihn die ganze Kritische Philosophie...von Grund aus umgestossen ist'.

See Fichte's Briefwechsel, ed. H. Schulz (Leipzig, Haessel, 1925) i. 446

4. Fichte, Werke, i. 481-2

that the representations of experience arise from the action of the thing-in-itself, which is their unknowable cause.¹ Such an explanation, though, is patently at odds with his own critical principles. This is the theme of the Beilage to Jacobi's David Hume—an argument which Fichte acknowledges in his Zweite Einleitung in die W-L.² Jacobi argues that Kant's explanation transcends the boundaries of experience, contrary to the critical doctrine that there is no legitimate knowledge beyond experience. The thing-in-itself is beyond experience, he points out, and thus it cannot be known to be the cause of its representations. Kant applies the category of causality beyond experience to the unknowable thing-in-itself; but the conclusion of the deduction is precisely that the categories are valid only for objects in experience.³ Hence Kant is in a predicament: he must both affirm and deny the thing-in-itself. He needs the thing-in-itself to account for the passive sensibility, the feeling of necessity accompanying representations; but he must also dispense with it if he is to explain the genesis of experience according to his critical principles. And so Jacobi comes to his famous verdict: he needs the thing-in-itself to enter the critical system; but he must dispense with it if he is to remain inside it.⁴ He then concludes—and his

1. Schriften, iv. 289, 314-5

2. Fichte, Werke, i. 481

3. Jacobi, Werke, ii. 305-6

4. Ibid., ii. 304

conclusion has a decisive effect upon Fichte--that, if he is to remain true to his critical principles, Kant must drop his thing-in-itself and explain all experience on the basis of the ego's activity and creativity. But, to Jacobi, this amounts to a reductio ad absurdam since it results in a thorough-going spekulativen Egoismus.¹ To Fichte, however, this is precisely the direction which the W-L must ardently pursue.

So Kant still has some explaining to do. His theory of knowledge requires some explanation of how such heterogeneous faculties as understanding and sensibility interact; and his inconsistent account of the origin of experience demands a new explanation more in accord with critical principles. So given these shortcomings of the critical philosophy, Fichte has a sound rationale for elevating the mind-body problem into the central problem of transcendental philosophy. The critical philosophy will be complete and on a sound foundation only thanks to the W-L which will resolve the outstanding quid facti? concerning the origin of experience. Thus transcendental philosophy begins in Kant where it ends in Fichte. If Kant simply takes a mind-body dualism for granted, never asking how such distinct entities as noumena and phenomena interact, Fichte turns the basic problem of transcendental philosophy into the explanation of their interaction. And if Kant takes experience as given without attempting to explain its origins, except half-heartedly through the thing-in-itself, Fichte's

1. Ibid., ii. 310

basic problem is to explain the origin of experience according to critical principles.

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So much for Fichte's problem. But how does he propose to solve it? In the Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre,¹ Fichte states that there are only two possible solutions open to him. He stubbornly maintains that there are just two consistent, but conflicting systems of philosophy: idealism and materialism, or 'criticism' as represented by Kant, and 'dogmatism' as represented by Spinoza. While idealism explains experience as the product of the ego, the Kantian 'Ich', materialism accounts for it as the product of the thing-in-itself, the Spinozian substance. If idealism explains the interaction between subject and object according to mental laws, materialism accounts for it according to physical laws. What is at stake in the conflict between idealism and materialism is nothing less than the choice between freedom and fatalism. Idealism subsumes the subject and object under the laws of freedom, which are self-imposed by the spontaneous activity of the ego, while materialism brings them under the laws of necessity, which are imposed upon the ego by the universe as a whole. When Fichte identifies idealism with 'criticism' and materialism with 'dogmatism', he uses these terms in a Kantian sense. According to Kant, criticism obeys the limits upon reason, and so remains within the boundaries of experience; dogmatism transcends the limits upon reason, though, since it presumes

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 425-6

to have a rational insight into things-in-themselves which transcend experience. In this sense, idealism is 'criticism' because its first principle is given to self-consciousness, so that it does not transcend the limits of experience; conversely, materialism is 'dogmatism' since its first principle is Spinoza's substance, which cannot be given in any possible experience.

Why, though, does Fichte limit his philosophical alternatives down to idealism and materialism? Why not dualism too? The Einleitung does not explain, but, given the historical context, it is not hard to surmise Fichte's reasons. Fichte accepts Maimon's and Jacobi's critique of dualism: that if the mind and body are distinct substances, then there cannot be any interaction between them. This means that dualism is in no position to explain experience, since a necessary condition of experience is that the subject and object interact with one another. Hence an adequate philosophical system has to be monistic: it has to assume that the subject and object—despite all appearances—are one and the same type of entity and that they obey one type of law. This limits the choice down to either idealism or materialism. Only these alternatives are in a position to explain experience, since only they account for subject-object interaction.

What is the best alternative, then, idealism or realism? There is no philosophical answer to this question, Fichte contends in the Erste Einleitung.¹ Both provide an adequate

1. Ibid., i. 429-30

and consistent account of experience, and both have first principles which are indemonstrable, since all reasoning has to begin with them. So, if philosophical argument is to no avail, what does determine the choice between these systems? It is not the intellect, but the will, not theoretical, but practical reason, Fichte answers. The choice of a philosophy depends upon someone's values and ideals, it rests upon what kind of man he is:

'Was für eine Philosophie man wähle, hängt davon ab, was man für ein Mensch ist: denn ein philosophischer System ist nicht ein toter Hausrat, den man ablegen oder annehmen könnte, wie es uns beliebt, sondern es ist beseelt durch die Seele des Menschen, der es hat.'¹

Returning to the same theme in his 1800 Bestimmung des Menschen,² Fichte argues that the ground of all certainty is belief, and that belief is unassailable by reason, because it is a decision between equally rational but conflicting first principles. Belief is not knowledge, but it is a decision of the will, a decision which determines the validity of knowledge.

There is a strange paradox and inconsistency, however, in Fichte's claim that there is no theoretical basis for a choice between idealism and materialism. The point of his argument is to defend freedom: if the intellect or understanding compels someone to adopt one philosophy over another, especially when he does not want to live according to its precepts, then he is no longer free. Here Fichte agrees with

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 434

2. Ibid., ii. 253-4

Jacobi: that where the intellect holds sway, determinism reigns; or, as Jacobi puts it in his famous adage: 'Jeder Weg der Demonstration geht in den Fatalismus aus'.¹ Like Jacobi, Fichte maintains that the understanding adheres to the principle of sufficient reason, which states that every event has a prior cause which determines it into action; hence freedom—the power to begin a causal series—is possible only outside the sphere of the understanding.² Just by this argument, though, Fichte has to admit that there is no rational ground for the belief in freedom, and that the materialist is equally right to believe that everything is determined. Paradoxically, then, the idealist defends the possibility of freedom only when he admits that it is indemonstrable, and only when he concedes that the materialist might be right that it does not exist! And yet at the same time Fichte still argues that the choice between idealism and materialism is a choice between freedom and fatalism. To choose materialism over idealism, he maintains, is to alienate one's freedom, to allow external causes to dictate one's actions.³

Whatever he says about no rational choice between idealism and materialism, Fichte still cannot resist arguing against materialism. The Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre holds an argument against materialism which is fundamental to the rationale of the W-L, and which plays a decisive role in Fichte's later break with Schelling.⁴ According to Fichte's

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1. Jacobi, Werke, iv/i. 223
 2. Fichte, Werke, i. 508-9; viii. 411-17; iv. 182
 3. Ibid., i. 513
 4. Ibid., i. 435-7

argument, materialism simply cannot do justice to the experience that it sets out to explain. A material object cannot be the cause of a representation. Such a causal connection is impossible because there is an unbridgeable gap between the object and its representation. The materialist makes the connection appear plausible by reducing the representation to a thing, so that it appears as if the cause and effect are between the same type of entity. But this reduction of a representation to a thing is utterly impossible. A representation is unlike a material object in that, while a material object exists without a perceiving subject, a representation requires such a subject. Here Fichte only builds upon Kant's point in the unity of apperception: that a representation is nothing at all to me unless it is accompanied by the possibility of self-consciousness.¹ He takes this point to drive a wedge between a representation and a material object: if a perceiver is contingent and external to a material object, he is necessary and internal to a representation. Although it is necessary to ask of a representation who is aware of it, it is not necessary to ask this for a thing. As Fichte puts it: there is a unity of 'Zusehen' and 'Sein' in the case of an intelligent being, but a distinction between them in the case of a thing. Hence Fichte makes self-consciousness into the dividing line between the self and nature.² What defines the border between subject and object, the Sittenlehre explains, is nothing less than reflection.³

1. KrV, B 131-2

2. Fichte, Werke, 1. 290

3. Ibid., iv. 130-1

Since it is now not only dualism, but also materialism which cannot explain experience, there is no other option but idealism. Fichte must then embark upon a programme to show that idealism can account for experience. Such a programme is nothing less than that of the W-L. The aim of the W-L is to establish a single, fundamental principle: subject-object identity. According to Fichte, it is possible to explain experience—how the subject and object act upon one another—only if there is some point where the subject and object are identical with one another. Thus he writes in the introduction to the Sittenlehre:

'Wie ein Objektives jemals zu einem Subjektiven, ein Sein für sich zu einem vorgestellten werden möge... wie es...mit dieser sonderbaren Verwandlung zugehe, wird nie jemand erklären, welcher nicht einen Punkt findet, in welchem das Objektive, und Subjektive überhaupt nicht geschieden, sondern ganz Eins sind'.¹

With subject-object identity, there is no longer a need to postulate a mysterious pre-established harmony between distinct substances in order to understand the interaction between subject and object in experience. For now the subject and object are not distinct things, but one and the same thing. Only upon the establishment of this principle of subject-object identity, Fichte claims, will the critical philosophy be consistent and complete. Then, and only then, will it be in a position to solve its outstanding quid facti? about the origin of experience and rid itself of its thing-in-itself. Hence Fichte's controversial—but all too understandable—

1. Werke, iv. 1; cf. ii. 441

claim that the principle of subject-object identity represents the 'spirit' as opposed to the 'letter' of the Kantian philosophy.

It is the thesis of Fichte's idealism that subject-object identity exists only in the ego and not in substance. The necessary condition of our experience, he insists, is not without us in an unknowable substance, but it is within us in the consciousness of our own ego. If the subject and object are one and the same thing, then, they are not a physical, but a mental thing. They interact with one another only because they obey mental laws, the necessary laws of the ego's own self-consciousness. Subject-object identity is realised only in the ego's self-knowledge, Fichte further insists, for it is only in self-knowledge that the subject and object of knowledge are one and the same. The task of the W-L, then, is to establish that self-knowledge is the first principle of all knowledge, the condition for the possibility of experience.

Now it is only self-knowledge, Fichte contends, which explains the possibility of knowledge in our experience. When the subject knows an object in his experience it is not necessary to assume a pre-established harmony between distinct realms of being, a mental representation and an external object. Rather, the subject's awareness of his object is nothing less than his own (subconscious) self-awareness. There is no problem in explaining the correspondence of a representation with its ob-

ject, then, since such correspondence is only the subject-object identity of self-knowledge. That the W-L makes self-knowledge into the necessary condition of all knowledge is evident from the earliest commentary upon it, Schelling's

Erläuterung zur Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre:

'Nur in der Selbstanschauung eines Geistes also ist Identität und Vorstellung und Gegenstand. Also müsste sich, um jene absolute Uebereinstimmung von Vorstellung und Gegenstand, worauf die Realität unseres ganzen Wissens beruht, darthun zu können, erweisen lassen, dass der Geist, indem er ueberhaupt Objekte anschaut, nur sich selbst anschaut. Lässt sich dies erweisen, so ist die Realität unseres Wissens gesichert'.¹

Thus, no less than Kant, Fichte makes self-knowledge into the paradigm of all knowledge—and in this respect, Fichte can legitimately claim to be the heir of the Copernican revolution. But he takes this paradigm beyond all its critical limits. It is not only the 'Ich denke' of Kant's unity of apperception, but the self-knowledge of the intellectus archetypus. What is only a regulative ideal for Kant, a principle which merely brings systematic unity to the manifold of empirical laws, then becomes a constitutive principle for Fichte, the very condition of experience itself.

* * *

Such is Fichte's basic explanation of the possibility of experience. But at first sight his explanation appears to be utterly implausible. There does not seem to be a subject-object identity, but only a subject-object dualism in actual experience. The subject does not see himself in

1. Schelling, Werke, i. 290

his object, but he regards it as something external to himself. He does not consider his object as the product of his own conscious activity, but as something given which acts upon him. So the principle of subject-object identity appears to be falsified by the subject-object dualism of actual experience. It is indeed only because there is a subject-object dualism in experience that the problem of the possibility of experience arises in the first place.

Fichte himself is painfully aware of this problem. He repeatedly insists in the Grundlage that idealism is sound and successful only insofar as its principle of subject-object identity accomodates and explains the subject-object dualism of experience.¹ An idealism which denies this dualism is labelled as dogmatic and transcendent. So how does Fichte get around this difficulty? His reply is to distinguish between the absolute ego, which is known from the transcendental standpoint of the philosopher, and the finite ego, which is known from ordinary experience. While the principle of subject-object identity is conscious and explicit for the absolute ego, which posits its object and sees itself in it, it is only implicit and subconscious for the finite ego, which sees the object as given and external to itself. Of course, though, the absolute and finite ego are still—somehow—one and the same ego; for, otherwise, the absolute ego's subject-object identity is irrelevant to the explanation of the experience of the finite ego. Its only that the finite ego is not conscious

1. Werke, i. 178, 186-7, 281

of itself as an absolute ego.

What, though, does Fichte mean by the absolute ego? And how does it differ from the finite ego? There are two basic distinguishing features of the absolute ego, two traits in which it differs from the finite ego. 1) The absolute ego is universal, one and the same within the self-consciousness of everyone alike, while the finite ego is individual, differing from one person to the next. Hence in the Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre Fichte calls his 'Ich' 'Ichheit überhaupt' or 'Geistigkeit überhaupt' and sharply distinguishes it from the individual.¹ The 'Ich' is that which remains after one abstracts from all his accidental empirical and individual features, he says,² and such an 'Ich' cannot then differ from one person to another. The 'Ich' which remains after abstraction is nothing less than the necessary condition of any possible experience, so that it cannot be this or that individual which is within experience. Here Fichte sees what Kant does not: that the 'Ich' of the unity of apperception cannot be an individual when it is the necessary condition for the identification of an individual, for distinguishing one individual from another.³ Hence the universality of the absolute ego is nothing less than the Kantian unity of apperception without Kant's unwarranted allocation of one such unity per person. 2) Universality is not, however, a sufficient condition of the absolute ego. It cannot be just a universalised unity of apperception be-

1. Werke, 1. 503

2. Ibid., 1. 244-5

3. Ibid., 1. 476

cause that still permits a dualism between the subject and object, the impersonal 'Ich' and the manifold of experience. The absolute ego then has to be something more: it is subject-object identity. To Fichte, to say that the absolute ego is subject-object identity is to say that it posits its own being.¹ He even explicitly defines the absolute ego as that which is self-positing. Thus he writes in the Grundlage:

'Dasjenige, dessen Sein (Wesen) bloss darin besteht, dass es sich selbst als seiend setzt, ist das Ich, als absolutes Subjekt'.²

Fichte makes almost the same definition of the 'Ich' in the Sittenlehre when he says that its distinguishing characteristic consists in its drive for independence:

'Der wesentliche Charakter des Ich, wodurch es von allem was ausser ihm ist, unterscheidet, besteht in einer Tendenz zur Selbständigkeit um der Selbständigkeit willen.'³

The ego is perfectly self-positing, Fichte says, only when it realises what the Sittenlehre calls absolute independence, i.e. complete autonomy where it obeys only the laws of its own making. The absolute ego then differs from the finite ego in this respect: it is not divided into a noumenal and phenomenal character, a noumenal character which obeys self-imposed rational laws, and a phenomenal character which submits to the laws of an external nature. Rather, the absolute ego consists in nothing less than noumenal-phenomenal self-identity since its entire nature conforms to its own self-imposed laws. It does not have a passive phenomenal character, which is determined by nature, and whose desires act contrary to its rational laws.

1. Werke, i. 98
2. Ibid., i. 97
3. Ibid., iv. 29

Rather, it has complete control over its own identity: its phenomenal character of necessity acts according to its rational will. Thus the absolute ego is only what it wills itself to be: possibility and actuality, command and execution are one.¹

What, more precisely, though, does it mean to say that the absolute ego is self-positing? This question is fundamental to understand the foundation of the W-L. The ego is self-positing only under two conditions. 1) It is self-causing, so that it brings itself into existence and is not determined by an external cause. Fichte regards self-causation as a necessary condition of the ego's existence, ie. no less than Spinoza's substance, the ego must exist 'by the necessity of its own nature alone'. Like Kant, he assumes that the ego's freedom consists in spontaneity, ie. the power to begin a causal series.² Only Fichte takes Kant's spontaneity a step further: it applies not only to the ego's will and actions, but to its very existence. 2) The ego is self-defining or self-conceiving, ie. when it posits itself as X it makes itself or constitutes itself as X. This self-defining, self-conceiving aspect of the ego means that there is no separation between the self as subject and as object. Since the self is only what it defines itself to be, the self as subject (the self-defining self) consists in the self as object (the self

1. That the absolute ego assumes the status of Kant's 'holy will' is made plain by one of Schelling's early works, Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie. See Werke i. 122-3

2. Fichte, Werke, iv. 24

as defined); in other words, the self is nothing but its own self-objectification, its self-expression through self-awareness. Hence Fichte's constant emphasis that the ego is not a self-knowing subject who precedes his self-knowledge, but nothing but the act of self-knowledge itself!¹

Although at first sight Fichte's postulate of a self-positing self appears to be hyper-metaphysical, it is necessary to appreciate the deep epistemological point behind it. What Fichte is striving for in all his verions of the W-I—there are at least ten verions stretching over a period of twenty years—is an adequete theory of self-consciousness.² Since idealism makes self-knowledge into the first principle of all knowledge, it is essential that self-knowledge is upon a firm foundation. If self-knowledge is not self-grounding, then all knowledge becomes uncertain and insecure. Fichte therefore wants a theory of self-knowledge which satisfies the following two conditions: 1) it ensures that self-knowledge is the unconditional, self-justifying principle of all knowledge; and 2) it does not invoke an unknowable subject, a self-knowing subject who transcends his own acts of self-knowledge. Now the idea of a self-positing self, Fichte argues in his 1798 Wissenschaftslehre and Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre,³ is to satisfy these con-

1. Ibid., i. 97, 529, 462

2. Such is the thesis of D. Henrich in Fichte's ursprüngliche Einsicht (Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1967), pp. 7-9

3. See Fichte, Nachgelassene Schriften, ed. H. Jacob (Berlin, Junker und Dunnhaupt, 1937), ii. 377, and Werke, i.525-530

ditions. Assume the contrary, he asks. Suppose that the self-knowing self does not posit itself as the known self, but that it exists apart from and prior to the known self. What then? In that case, he points out, there cannot be self-consciousness. For the question then arises: how is it possible to know the self-knowing self? It cannot be known through knowing the known self, for ex hypothesi it does not posit itself as the known self and exists prior to it. The answer to this question must then be that the self-knowing self is known only if it is the known self for another higher-order knowing self. But this opens up an infinite regress since the same question arises all over again for the higher-order self-knowing self. The regress keeps going, thanks to the sharp separation between the subject and object of self-consciousness. There is no level where the subject becomes an object to itself, so that it is then always necessary to ascend another level of self-consciousness. There is then only one cure for this regress: deny that the self-knowing self is distinct from the known self; and to Fichte that means affirming that the self-knowing self must posit itself as the known self, ie. that the self is self-defining or consists in only what it conceives itself to be.

In struggling toward an adequate theory of self-consciousness, Fichte appears to only follow in the Kantian tradition. Self-consciousness has been solemnly inaugurated as the first principle of philosophy ever since Kant's transcendental deduction. It then appears as if Fichte strives to resurrect Kant, to put his

theory of self-consciousness upon a firm foundation. But the irony is that Fichte's great antagonist is Kant. One of his main aims in the W-L is to eliminate Kant's unknowable noumenal self, that self who is always the subject, but never the object of self-consciousness. Fichte sees Kant's noumenal self as a covert re-introduction of the thing-in-itself, for a self-knowing subject who transcends his own acts of self-knowledge is obviously unknowable. He also regards Kant's noumenal self as a hypostasis, since what distinguishes the subject from an object is only the possibility of self-consciousness, as Kant himself implies in the unity of apperception. Nowhere indeed are Kant and Fichte more opposed than over their concepts of the self: for Kant, the self is free only if he is indefinable; for Fichte, however, the self is free only if he is definable, since his freedom consists in his self-positing activity. In the end, these differences do not escape Fichte, and he eventually brings them to the fore: the 1798 Versuch complains about the assumption of an unknowable subject which infects even 'die berühmtesten Weltweisen unseres philosophisches Jahrhunderts';¹ and the 1798 Wissenschaftslehre even goes on to mention Kant by name: Kant's denial of self-knowledge is nothing but sophistry, he says.² After 1798, it is interesting to note, Fichte no longer claim to represent even the 'spirit' of the Kantian philosophy.

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1. Werke, i. 529-30

2. Nachgelassene Schriften, ii. 356, 377

But the problems with Fichte's explanation of experience are still not over. The introduction of the absolute ego into the W-L only creates more difficulties than it solves. According to the 1794 Grundlage, the absolute ego posits a non-ego, which makes it into a finite ego opposed to a non-ego; hence there arises the subject-object dualism of experience.¹ A paradox soon arises for this explanation, though. The nature of the absolute ego is to be purely self-positing; but then it posits a non-ego, which makes itself finite, and which stops itself from becoming only what it posits itself to be. The active, self-determining absolute ego makes itself passive and determined as a finite ego by positing a non-ego opposed to itself. But how can the purely self-positing ego posit something opposed to itself? How can the absolute ego make itself passive as a finite ego? This problem already appears in Kant's first Kritik with the paradox of 'inner affection'. The spontaneous noumenal ego actively applies the categories to itself; but that makes itself passive and determined as a phenomenal ego subsumed under these categories, for among these categories is that of causality, according to which the ego is determined by an external cause. Kant is aware of this paradox, but gives up the attempt to solve it, pleading that it is a difficulty which arises for any theory of self-consciousness.¹ Once again, however, Fichte has to begin where Kant left off. He obviously has to come to terms with this paradox if the W-L is to adequately explain experience. The first principle of the W-L is 'Ich=Ich', that the ego is purely self-identical,

1. KrV, B 156-8

that it is only what it posits itself to be. If, however, there is no reason why the purely self-identical, self-positing ego posits a non-ego opposed to itself, then idealism cannot achieve what it sets out to explain: the givenness of experience, the fact that the ego finds itself passive and opposed by a non-ego.

The best hint on how Fichte solves this paradox comes from his former disciple, Schelling. In his Erläuterung, Schelling says that the core of idealism rests upon the assertion that there is a single activity where the ego is both self-determining and determined, both active and passive.¹ What is this activity? Nothing other than the autonomy of the will.² Autonomy of the will is to obey the laws of one's own making; it has the double sense, then, of both legislating and obeying laws. Now it is this double sense of autonomy which explains how the ego is both self-determining and determined: it is active and self-determining in legislating the law, and it is passive and determined in obeying it. Its self-determining, active nature is consistent with its determined, passive nature simply because the ego is only obeying the laws of its own creation. What Fichte does to explain experience, then, is to extend Kant's idea of autonomy so that it holds not only for moral imperatives, but also for the categories of experience. Autonomy is thus the first principle not only of practical, but also theoretical reason. As Fichte says in the Sittenlehre: autonomy is 'ein theoretisches Bestimmungsprinzip

1. Schelling, Werke, i. 335
2. Ibid., i. 338

unserer Welt'.¹ Idealism is now in a position to explain experience: if the finite ego is passive and determined by an external cause, then that is only the submission under a law of its own making as an absolute ego; the limits the finite ego finds in experience are nothing but its self-imposed limits as an absolute ego. Hence Fichte solves Kant's paradox of inner affection—but only by radically extending Kant's concept of autonomy beyond its strictly practical significance in the critical philosophy.

All this still does not explain, however, why the ego ever posits the non-ego. It dispels the paradox involved in the ego limiting itself, but it still leaves the question: why does it limit itself? The answer to this question requires taking a closer look at the nature of Fichte's ego. According to the combined arguments of the 1793 Bestimmung des Gelehrten and the 1798 Sittnelehre, there are two distinguishing features of a subject in contrast to an object. 1) While a subject is free, an object is determined according to the laws of nature. The freedom characteristic of a subject, Fichte argues, does not consist only in acting according to ends, but in choosing them and spontaneously acting according to them. A plant or animal also acts according to ends, but it does not choose them, and acts instead according to the necessity of its own nature.² In thus making freedom into a necessary condition of subjectivity, Fichte follows Kant's closing argument in the Grundlegung:

1. Ibid., iv. 69

2. Ibid., vi. 305

that freedom has to be presupposed as necessary to the will of a rational being.¹ 2) According to the Sittenlehre, freedom by itself is not a sufficient condition of subjectivity. It is also necessary to add another condition, a condition which is indispensable for freedom itself: self-consciousness. As a self-positing being which is only what it makes of itself, the ego also has to be self-conscious since it consists in only what it conceives itself to be. It cannot be self-positing if it does not conform to its own self-conceptions, its own ideas about what it ought to be. As Fichte puts this point:

'Was es [das Ich] je werden soll, dazu muss es sich selbst durch den Begriff machen, und was es je sein wird, dazu wird es durch ihn gemacht haben'.²

The 'Begriff' here refers to the ego's own self-conceptions, the goals that it sets for itself; hence Fichte says that freedom is spontaneous activity under 'die Notmässigkeit des Begriffs'.³ Here again the conflict between Kant and Fichte reveals itself. While to Kant freedom and self-consciousness are incompatible since the self becomes passive and determined when it subsumes itself under the categories, to Fichte freedom requires self-consciousness because the self cannot be self-positing unless it conforms to its own self-conceptions.

Now these two conditions of subjectivity—freedom and self-consciousness—come together. If the ego is to realise its nature, then it must become self-conscious; but, since its nature consists in freedom, it must be self-conscious of its freedom. Thus the ego realises itself only if it becomes self-

1. Kant, Schriften, iv. 447
2. Werke, iv. 38; cf. 29-30, 106
3. Ibid., iv. 29-30, 32

conscious as a free being. Fichte insists on just this point in his 1794 Grundlage. He stresses that the ego is not only self-positing, but that it is self-positing for itself, and not just for some external observer:

'Das Ich soll nicht nur sich selbst setzen für irgendein Intelligenz ausser ihm, sondern es soll sich für sich selbst setzen; es soll sich setzen, als durch sich selbst gesetzt. Es soll demnach, so gewiss es ein Ich ist, das Prinzip des Lebens und des Bewusstseins lediglich in sich selbst haben. Demnach muss das Ich, so gewiss es ein Ich ist, unbedingt und ohne allen Grund das Prinzip in sich haben, über sich selbst zu reflektieren...!'¹

Now it is the ego's striving to be self-conscious as a free being which holds the key to the W-L's explanation of experience. If the ego is to reflect upon itself as a self-positing being, then it must posit the non-ego. As the Grundlage puts it: the ego's striving toward self-reflection, its striving to be self-positing for itself, is the ground of its self-limitation, 'der Grund alles Herausgehens aus sich selbst'.² But why is this? If the ego is to know that it is free, then it must know that it acts, for it is only through its determinate actions that its spontaneity becomes apparent to itself. But if it is to act, then it must struggle against an obstacle, for it is only in striving against something that resists it that the ego comes into activity. Hence to know itself as a free agent the ego has to know itself as acting against obstacles.³ It is indeed only by seeing how its actions change, control and appropriate nature that it knows that it is not an instrument or

1. Ibid., i. 274

2. Ibid., i. 276

3. Ibid., iii. 18-20

victim of nature, falling under its laws. Hence the ego must posit a non-ego: this is the only condition under which it has an obstacle to struggle against so that it is self-conscious of its freedom. Such positing is not in opposition to the nature of the ego, then, but it is perfectly in accord with its nature: to be aware of itself as a free agent.

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After setting forth its basic principle for the explanation of experience, and after clearing away all the paradoxes and objections surrounding it, the W-L only faces a new kind of problem: how does it show that its principle is necessary and true? It now has to confront two serious questions: how is it possible to know the absolute ego?, and how is it possible to demonstrate that it is the necessary condition of all possible experience? It is over just these issues that Fichte's philosophical method assumes the first importance. The aim of this method is to acquire self-consciousness as an absolute ego, and to demonstrate that the absolute ego is the ground of all possible experience. Fichte outlines his method in several of his earlier works, the 1794 Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre, the 1795 'Schmid' essay, and the 1797/8 Einleitungen. It is now time to turn to these texts and to examine Fichte's method, seeing how it attempts to tackle these questions.

By what method, then, does the philosopher know the absolute ego? How does he establish its existence? According to Fichte, the philosopher cannot demonstrate the existence of

the absolute ego through abstract reasoning, but he actually has to have an experience of it. The W-L has to begin from some actual, living first-order experience, he insists, and not an artificial, dead second-order proposition or argument.¹ Abstract thought cannot demonstrate existence, he further argues, but can only analyse what is already given.² This is all in accord with Fichte's demand that the W-L be a critical philosophy which never transcends the boundaries of experience. He is so adamant about this point that his Sonnenklarer Bericht even makes a public proclamation out of it:

'Ich erkläre hiermit, öffentlich, dass es der innerste Geist und Seele meiner Philosophie sey, der Mensch hat überhaupt Nichts, denn die Erfahrung, und er kommt, wozu er kommt, nur durch die Erfahrung, durch das Leben selbst.'³

There is in fact no difference between Fichte's criticism and Spinoza's dogmatism unless Fichte can demonstrate that his absolute ego is within finite experience.

So to re-phrase the question: how does the philosopher experience the absolute ego? What method does he employ to be self-conscious as an absolute ego? 'Merke auf dich selbst!', that is the first lesson of philosophy, Fichte declares,⁴ and it is through just such introspection that the philosopher begins. He abstracts from everything possible in his experience—from all external objects, all other minds, and even his own individual traits—and he reflects upon his own conscious activity itself. The philosopher has to abstract from every-

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1. Ibid., i. 454, ii. 337, 442
 2. Ibid., ii. 331
 3. Ibid., ii. 333
 4. Ibid., i. 422

thing in his experience since its ground cannot lie within experience itself; and he has to reflect upon himself because this ground rests within his own consciousness.¹ After abstracting from his experience, though, the philosopher soon discovers that there is one fact that he cannot abstract away, and that is his own existence.² All abstraction and doubt presupposes that there is someone who abstracts and doubts. Hence the philosopher arrives at his first principle: 'Ich bin', the simple self-awareness that he exists. Since this statement 'Ich bin' is undeniable—it is not possible to deny one's existence without presupposing it—it provides the philosopher with a first principle that is self-evident and self-verifying. This first principle expresses 'reines Selbstbewusstsein', as Fichte puts it, because it is an abstraction from all the ego's empirical and individual traits.³ It affirms the philosopher's self-awareness that he exists as a purely universal 'Ich', since the same 'Ich' is applicable to everyone else when they abstract from their individual traits. This 'Ich bin' is in fact nothing less than the philosopher's self-awareness that he is an absolute ego, although he has as yet to know how he exists (or his nature) as an absolute ego. As Fichte puts it: his knowledge of this state only amounts to the self-awareness of 'Ichheit ueberhaupt', 'die Form der Ichheit', which is still lacking 'die vollständige Materie der Ichheit'.⁴

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1. Ibid., i. 424-6
 2. Ibid., ii. 447-8
 3. Ibid., i. 244
 4. Ibid., i. 515-6, vi. 295-6

The awareness that the philosopher gains by abstraction from everything in his experience, and by his self-reflection upon himself as the ground of all possible experience, is what Fichte calls an intellectual intuition (intellektuelle Anschauung). He insists that intellectual intuition is the only firm basis and starting point for philosophy, and that it is the organ for the construction of a transcendental philosophy: 'Die intellektuelle Anschauung ist der einzige feste Standpunkt für alle Philosophie.'¹ What, then, does Fichte mean by intellectual intuition? The general meaning behind his idea is this: it is the self-knowing subject knowing itself as the self-knowing subject; it is the self who is the ground of all consciousness conscious of itself as the ground of all consciousness; or it is the act of self-knowing knowing itself as an act. This description of an intellectual intuition is already strongly implied by Kant in the first Kritik: it is the self-knowledge of the determining in me prior to the act of determination.² For Fichte, no less than Kant, an intellectual intuition is the act of self-knowing which knows itself as an act of self-knowing. Thus Fichte's metaphor for an intellectual intuition is 'zurückkehrendes Handeln': an activity of self-knowing which turns back upon itself since it knows itself as the activity of self-knowing.³ An intellectual intuition, excludes, therefore, a distinction between the subject who

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1. Ibid., i. 466
 2. KrV, B 158-9
 3. Werke, i. 462

knows himself and the subject who is known. There cannot be a dualism between the self-knowing subject and the known subject, where the self-knowing subject exists prior to the known subject, and where the known subject is given. This creates an infinite regress where the act of self-knowing presupposes a higher-order self-knowing subject, who is unknowable because he cannot ever appear as an object of knowledge. Rather, an intellectual intuition realises nothing less than pure subject-object identity. The self-knowing subject knows itself as a self-knowing subject because it expresses and manifests itself as the known subject; in other words, the self-knowing subject 'posits' or objectifies itself through its act of self-knowing. Thus Fichte states that an intellectual intuition is an act of self-knowing whose object is not given, but created and acted out through the very act of self-knowing itself.

'Sie [die intellektuelle Anschauung] ist das unmittelbare Bewusstsein; dass ich handle, und was ich handle; sie ist das, wodurch ich etwas weiss, weil ich es tue.'¹

This act of self-knowing creates or acts out what it knows simply because what it knows is the very act of self-knowing itself! Of course, though, Kant argues in the 'Paralogismen' chapter of the first Kritik that the self-knowing subject cannot be known as a self-knowing subject.² This subject is the condition of all consciousness, the 'Ich' who accompanies all representations, and the attempt to know what is the conditions of all consciousness revolves in a circle since it presupposes

1. Ibid., i. 463

2. KrV, B 422, A 346

precisely what it is to know. But against Kant's argument, Fichte is ready with a reply: he misconceives the act of self-knowing, seeing it as something which exists apart from and prior to its products and objects; but in fact the act of self-knowing, like all acts of knowing, actualises itself only through its products and objects; apart from its self-manifestation in its objects, it is nothing more than an abstraction. It is necessary to see self-knowledge according to this new model of self-expression, Fichte argues, since Kant's dualism between the self-knowing subject and the known subject only re-introduces the thing-in-itself, the unknowable self-knowing subject. Such an unknowable subject means, however, that the critical philosophy relapses into dogmatism, postulating an unknowable 'Ich' who lies beyond the bounds of all possible experience. According to Fichte, it is in fact Kant who is guilty of a 'paralogism'—the hypostasis of the subject into an object—since he reifies the subject by putting it outside the realm of all possible self-knowledge. As the critical philosophy itself teaches: a representation differs from a thing only because of the possibility of self-consciousness. So, in the end, however mystical it appears, Fichte's idea of an intellectual intuition is necessary for the critical philosophy to rid itself of all transcendent entities and to remain within its self-imposed limits of experience. It is only when the self-knowing subject knows itself as a self-knowing subject that the critical philosophy purges itself of the postulate of an unknowable subject which transcends all the bounds of experience.

Now it is from this intellectual intuition of himself as a self-knowing subject that the philosopher begins his explanation of experience. His task is to establish that his 'pure self-consciousness'—ie. his self-awareness that he exists as an absolute 'Ich'—is nothing less than the ground of all experience. He achieves this task through a deduction of empirical consciousness from his self-evident first principle 'Ich bin'. Thus he starts with 'Ich bin' and deduces its necessary conditions; and from these necessary conditions he derives further necessary conditions; and so on, until all experience appears before his eyes.¹ So just as Kant's transcendental deduction begins with the 'Ich denke' and derives the categories as the necessary conditions of possible experience, so Fichte's W-L starts with the 'Ich bin' and deduces empirical consciousness itself. Only the W-L claims to go further than the critical philosopher. If Kant deduces only the categories as the necessary forms for possible experience, Fichte goes so far as to deduce the existence of actual experience. Hence the Kantian manifold is no longer given and contingent, but posited and necessary. So much, then, for Kant's a priori/a posteriori dualism:

'Das a priori und das a posteriori ist für einen vollständigen Idealismus gar nicht zweierlei, sondern ganz einerlei; es wird nur von zwei Seiten betrachtet, und ist lediglich durch die Art unterschieden, wie man dazu kommt.'²

Fichte is at pains to stress, however, that a rigorous deduction from a first principle is still not a sufficient

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 446
 2. Ibid., i. 448

guarantee that it is the ground of all experience. It is also necessary, he insists, that the philosopher test the results of his deduction against experience. If his first principle has consequences which do not agree with experience, then so much the worse for the principle.¹ The philosopher cannot assume at the outset of his deduction that his first principle is the ground of all experience; for it is just the success of his deduction in deducing experience that decides this issue. On the whole, the W-L aims to be a problematical and hypothetical philosophising, accepting its principles only because of their success in deducing experience, and not because of some presumed dogmatic insight.²

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But no sooner does Fichte expound his method than he completely abandons it and considers it an unworkable ideal. Although the Erste Einleitung demands deducing not only the categories, but the empirical manifold itself when it says that the W-L abolishes the a priori/a posteriori dualism and derives 'das ganze System unserer notwendigen Vorstellungen',³ the

1. Ibid., i. 447-8

2. This point is sometimes overlooked. Lukacs, for example, sees Hegel's demand to test principles against experience as characteristic of his method in contrast to Fichte and Schelling. See Der junge Hegel, ii. 403, 674. But both Fichte and Schelling make the same demand, and Hegel is only following in their footsteps. Where Fichte and Schelling differ from Hegel is in how the principles are to be tested against experience. While Fichte and Schelling demand beginning with a first principle and testing its consequences against experience, Hegel insists upon beginning with experience itself and then deriving the principle as its result.

3. Werke, 1. 445-8

Zweite Einleitung already admits that all deduction comes to an end before the particular and contingent determinations of experience, and that philosophy can at most derive 'einer Beschränktheit ueberhaupt'.¹ But as if this is not enough, Fichte's admissions become even more embarrassing. Although the earlier Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre demands that the W-L derive all propositions from a single self-evident first principle,² the later Grundlage concedes from the very beginning that the first principle of the W-L cannot even deduce the second.³ The deduction cannot get off the ground simply because the first two principles oppose one another. If the first principle expresses the ego's self-positing—'das Ich setzt sich'—the second expresses its positing of the non-ego—'das Ich setzt ein Nicht-Ich sich entgegen'—and since the non-ego is the sheer negation of the ego, the ego's self-positing cannot derive its positing of the non-ego. All the deductions of the theoretical half of the W-L in fact presuppose the opposition between the ego and non-ego, which remains irresolvable. Fichte admits that the theoretical W-L cannot ever unify the ego and non-ego. It cannot demonstrate that there is an absolute ego which limits itself and posits a non-ego.⁴ In the end, then, theoretical reason is no better off in Fichte than in Kant. It simply presupposes that the non-ego is given and that it acts upon the passive sensibility of the finite ego.⁵

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1. Ibid., i. 489
 2. Ibid., i. 41-2, 48
 3. Ibid., i. 102
 4. Ibid., i. 144, 156, 177, 211, 218
 5. Ibid., i. 125-6

But why is Fichte so ready to admit the failure of his method? Although his programme for a deduction of experience collapses, that hardly seems to disappoint him. In fact, it is really only in keeping with his deeper designs. The guiding spirit behind the doctrine of the 1794 Grundlage is that only practical reason solves the riddle of the existence of the non-ego. Since the W-L cannot deduce a priori the particular and contingent features of experience, and since its first principle cannot derive its second, theoretical reason offers no solution. It cannot then make the constitutive claim that the ego posits the non-ego, or that there is an absolute ego which causes the non-ego to act upon the empirical ego.¹ All that then remains is the regulative claim and practical imperative that the ego ought to posit the non-ego.² It is in the end only a demand of practical reason that the ego have complete causality over the non-ego. Practical reason commands that the finite ego attain absolute independence; it ought to become completely self-determining, so that it makes itself only what it posits itself to be, and so that it is no longer determined by the non-ego outside itself.³ Such absolute independence, though, is only an ideal, not a reality. The absolute ego, who is perfectly self-positing and who has complete causality over the non-ego, then turns into a regulative ideal, a goal toward which the infinite ego ought to strive in its attempt to bring nature under its rational control. Fichte

1. Ibid., i. 252, 254

2. Ibid., i. 156

3. Ibid., i. 263-4, 260

insists that the absolute ego is only such an ideal when he re-interprets his first principle in the light of the practical half of the Grundlage:

'Hier est wird der Sinn des Satzes: das Ich setzt sich selbst schlechthin, völlig klar. Es ist in demselben gar nicht die Rede von dem im wirklichen Bewusstsein gegebenen Ich...sondern von einer Idee des Ich, die seiner praktischen unendlichen Forderung notwendig zu Grunde gelegt werden muss, die aber für unser Bewusstsein unerreichbar ist, und daher in demselben nie unmittelbar vorkommen kann.'¹

The use of the Kantian term 'Idee' is significant here: an idea in Kant has only regulative validity, whether in guiding enquiry or action. In speaking of 'die Idee des Ich', then, Fichte attributes an equal regulative validity to the absolute ego. Thus he also calls the absolute ego 'eine Forderung', contrasting it with what actually exists.² So, in the end, Fichte's absolute ego turns out to be nothing more than a postulate, an ideal of practical reason.³

But it is precisely by admitting that the absolute ego is only a postulate of practical reason, Fichte contends, that it is possible to explain the existence of the non-ego. Theoretical reason cannot deduce the non-ego and simply has to accept it as given. Practical reason succeeds, though, where theoretical reason fails. The command of practical reason that the ego strive for his independence forces it to

1. Ibid., i. 277; cf. i. 91

2. Ibid., i. 274

3. The regulative status of the absolute 'Ich' in the W-L is often ignored by English commentaries on Fichte. See, for example, the preface to Heath and Lach's translation of the 1794 Grundlage, the Science of Knowledge (New York, Appleton Century Crofts, 1970), vi-xviii, and Copleston's A History of Philosophy (Garden City, Doubleday Anchor, 1962), vii. 72, 79.

assume the existence of the non-ego. Practical reason demands that the ego act, that he strive to realise his self-identity as an absolute ego. This demand is satisfiable, however, only if there is a non-ego. For the ego can strive only if it has an obstacle to struggle against; without an obstacle, it ceases to act when activity belongs to its very nature as a free being.¹ Thus practical reason is obliged to assume the necessary existence of the non-ego: it must exist to be a counter and foil to the ego's moral striving. Nature then exists only as the condition for the realisation of moral duties. As Fichte sums up this picture of nature in his 1800 Bestimmung des Menschen: 'Meine Welt ist Objekt und Sphäre meiner Pflichten, und absolut nichts anderes.'²

This doctrine of practical reason means, however, that the absolute ego remains an unknowable, unattainable ideal. If the finite ego wants to be self-conscious as an absolute ego, then it ought to act, it ought to strive to overcome the non-ego, it ought to gain such control over nature that it is no longer passive, but completely self-positing—it must do all this simply because the absolute ego is just an abstract ideal until it is brought into existence through the determinate actions of the finite ego. And yet this struggle against nature and for perfect self-determination is never completeable. If the ego is to realise its nature as a free

1. Ibid., i. 270

2. Ibid., ii. 261; cf. v. 185

being, then it must act; and if it is to act, it must strive; but if it is to strive, it requires an obstacle to struggle against and to overcome; hence as long as the ego is to realise its nature as a free, active being, it must be locked in a battle against a recalcitrant non-ego. Fichte is perfectly explicit about this point in the Grundlage:

'Im Begriffe des Strebens aber liegt schon die Endlichkeit, denn dasjenige, dem nicht widerstrebt wird, ist kein Streben, Wäre das Ich mehr als strebend, so wäre es kein Ich, es setze sich nicht selbst, und wäre demnach nichts.'¹

Hence the ego is an activity of striving, of infinite ceaseless striving. Its struggle has to go on ad infinitum: although it always overcomes obstacles, it must never cease to be opposed by them. Thus the ego is condemned to its finitude since it always confronts a non-ego which is given and an obstacle to its actions. This means, though, that the absolute ego forever stays beyond the experience of the finite ego, an ideal to which it approximates, but which it never attains. It is only God who is perfectly self-positing, and who has the perfect self-consciousness of subject-object identity;² were we finite beings to ever attain subject-object identity, though, we would then cease to be men and turn into Gods.³

The ultimate result of the purely regulative status of the absolute 'Ich', however, is that Fichte has to admit the very subject-object dualism which it was his original purpose to overcome. The subject-object dualism of experience still

1. Ibid., i. 270
2. Ibid., i. 253, 275
3. Ibid., vi. 300

remains intact where each is a distinct kind of substance apart from the other; how such distinct substances interact, and how empirical consciousness arises from their interaction, still remains a mystery. The dualism stubbornly persists simply because the principle of subject-object identity has no constitutive status within our experience, but is only a regulative ideal. In other words: its not that subject-object identity exists, but only that it ought to exist. The subject-object dualism is overcome only when perimpossible the ego's infinite striving succeeds in making all nature subordinate to its rational will. Although the subject and object are distinct kinds of substance in our actual experience, it is still necessary to act so that they become one and same kind of substance in our future experience. Fichte makes such a great concession, though, only because he thinks that it demonstrates the primacy of practical over theoretical reason. Although Maimon's scepticism is justified in that there is no theoretical bridge between the a priori/a posteriori dualism of actual experience, this still does not jeopardise the practical imperative that there ought to be such a bridge. All the mysteries of theory will eventually disappear with practise. Although theoretical reason cannot demonstrate the existence of subject-object identity, practical reason still prescribes actions which will bring it into existence:

'Wir handeln nicht, weil wir erkennen, sondern wir erkennen, weil wir zu handeln bestimmt sind; die praktische Vernunft ist die Wurzel aller Vernunft'.¹

1. Ibid., ii. 263

It is indeed precisely by admitting the regulative and moral status of its principle of subject-object identity that the W-L achieves its ultimate end: to be an incentive and call to action.

III

Hegel's Metaphysical Turn: the Polemic against Fichte and the Struggle for Absolute Idealism in the Differenz

Such is the grand principle and programme of the W-L. But it is a principle which Fichte betrays, and it is a programme which he never fulfills. Hence the 'spirit' of the Kantian philosophy has to go away frustrated. That, at any rate, is Hegel's main charge against Fichte in the Differenz.¹ Hegel's critique is strictly immanent: Fichte's principle and system, his programme and practise, never coincide. Although Fichte affirms a principle of subject-object identity, his system lapses into a subject-object dualism. Although the first principle of the W-L proclaims the necessary existence of the absolute ego, the system ends out giving it only regulative status. And although the programme of the W-L aims to deduce all of experience from a single first principle, such a deduction never even begins since the first and second principles of the

1. This point is made most clearly in the 'Vorerinnerung' to the Differenz. See Hegel, Werke, ii. 11-14.

W-L prove to be incompatible with one another. The result of all these discrepancies, though, is that the W-L never solves its original problem. Although Fichte begins by postulating a principle of subject-object identity in order to explain how the subject and object interact with one another in experience, his system re-institutes a subject-object dualism which forbids any explanation of their interaction. The W-L then relapses into that mind-body dualism which it is its very purpose to overcome, and so the problem of explaining the origin of experience remains as problematic as ever. The mind-body dualism returns to haunt Fichte just as it plagued Descartes and Kant.

But what has gone wrong? Why has the W-L broken down and failed to carry through with the Copernican revolution? Or, to put the question more precisely: why has the W-L relapsed into a mind-body dualism? Hegel's diagnosis puts much of the blame upon Fichte's philosophical method. The Differenz has been called Hegel's Discourse on Method—and rightly so, at least given the amount of criticism that Hegel devotes to Fichte's method.¹ It is Fichte's method which is held responsible for re-establishing the subject-object dualism, and it is supposedly his method which divides his principle from his system.

1. The analogy is made by Harris in his introduction to Cerf's translation of the Differenz. See The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy (Albany, New York University Press, 1977), p. 15.

So where has Fichte's method gone astray? What is especially to blame, Hegel argues, is Fichte's method of abstraction and reflection. This robs his first principle of all its content, rendering it impotent for a deduction of experience.¹ Since the philosopher must abstract from everything given in his experience and reflect upon himself in order to arrive at the first principle of experience, all that remains for him to reflect upon is the bare fact that he exists, for only his existence cannot be abstracted away. The first principle of the W-L then turns into the bare declaration 'Ich bin', the empty tautology 'Ich=Ich', and from such an abstract first principle it is not possible to deduce all the determinations of the empirical manifold. After abstracting from all the features of experience, Fichte cannot then expect to turn around and deduce them. For Hegel, no less than Marx, an indeterminate or universal premise cannot have a determinate or particular conclusion.² As Hegel insists:

'Und aus blossen Reflexionsprodukte kann sich die Identität nicht als Totalität konstruieren... Eben solche Reflexionsprodukte sind Unendlichkeit und Endlichkeit, Unbestimmtheit und Bestimmtheit usw. Vom Unendlichen gibt es keinen Uebergang zum Endlichen, vom Unbestimmten keinen Uebergang zum Bestimmten'.³

1. See Hegel, Werke, ii. 54f. Also compare Glauben und Wissen in Werke, ii. 399-407

2. That Hegel infers the particular from the universal is the charge of Marx in 'Der Mythos der spekulativen Konstruktion' in Die Heilige Familie. See Marx, Werke, ed. H. Lieber and P. Firth (Stuttgart, Cotta, 1962), i. 730-36

3. Hegel Werke, ii. 98. Cf. Werke, ii. 398-403

Another aspect of Fichte's method which comes in for heavy criticism is the demand for a first principle or Grundsatz.¹ According to Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre, philosophy must begin with a single first principle, a proposition which is self-evident, and which is alone sufficient to express knowledge of the absolute or unconditioned.² Such a first principle, Fichte argues, is 'Ich bin' or 'Ich=Ich' since it is self-justifying and expresses the philosopher's knowledge that there is an absolute ego. Against this principle, though, Hegel poses a simple but telling dilemma. The subject-object identity of 'Ich=Ich' either includes or excludes the subject-object dualism of experience. If it includes it, it contradicts itself, since then it expresses both subject-object identity and non-identity. But if it excludes it, the principle cannot express absolute knowledge; for the pure self-awareness of the 'Ich=Ich' is then conditioned and limited by empirical consciousness. Thus a first principle is either self-contradictory or it is conditioned and limited, so that it cannot express knowledge of the absolute.

Now the result of both these methods—the use of abstraction and first principles—is that the first principle of the W-L is in no position to explain what happens in experience. Since it is abstracted from all the content of experience and expressed in a single proposition, the principle of subject-object identity in fact opposes the subject-object dualism of experience, and it transcends all the determinations of the empirical manifold. It is a subjective principle of subject-

1. Ibid., ii. 35-41

2. Fichte, Werke, i. 41, 48

object identity, as Hegel calls it, because it holds only for the philosopher's pure self-consciousness in contrast to his objective experience. This opposition between the principle of subject-object identity and experience then gives rise to a new version of the subject-object dualism. The dualism is now between the philosopher's pure self-consciousness and his empirical consciousness, his awareness of himself as a self-determining being through intellectual intuition and as a passive being determined by the non-ego in experience. What is this, though, but a recrudescence of Kant's distinction between noumenal and phenomenal self-consciousness?

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But it is not only Fichte's method which Hegel blames for re-establishing the subject-object dualism. What he equally holds at fault is Fichte's concept of nature.¹ Fichte has such an exalted view of the ego, and such a degraded view of nature, that he puts a dividing wall between them. His contempt for nature emerges most clearly in the Bestimmung des Menschen and Sittenlehre.² Here he sees nature as only an obstacle to the ego's moral striving, as an enemy which the ego's will is to conquer and subdue. The ego is the master and nature the slave. Hence the 'Ich' in the Bestimmung des Menschen declares: 'Ich will der Herr der Natur sein, und sie soll mein Diener sein...'³ Nature is not an end in itself, having its own self-

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 72-81. Also see again Glauben und Wissen in Werke, ii. 417-422

2. Fichte, Werke, iv. 141-2, 151-2, 214-5, and ii. 266-9

3. Ibid., ii. 192

generating, self-organising purposes, but it exists only as a means for the ego's moral self-realisation. It is only the stage upon which the ego executes its duties:

'Unsere Welt ist das versinnlichte Materiale unsere Pflicht; dies ist das eigentliche Reelle in den Dingen, der wahre Grundstoff aller Erscheinung.'¹

Fichte's negative picture of nature not only paints it as an obstacle to the will, but also as a threat to the ego's freedom. The ego is self-determining or spontaneous: it has the power to act without determination by an external cause; but nature is a mechanism: a sphere of necessity where each event is determined by an external cause. Hence the Bestimmung des Menschen expresses the ego's fear of being just another event in the causal chain of nature. Such a prospect fills the ego with 'Abscheu und Entsetzen' since it foresees that it will no longer be autonomous or responsible; it will lose its power to act since there will be an external cause compelling it into action.¹ In order to console his ego, Fichte puts him outside and beyond the sphere of nature. The ego has to transcend nature if he is to remain free; he must belong to a purely noumenal or intelligible realm which is beyond the causal laws of the phenomenal or sensible realm of nature.² If this picture is not already black enough, Fichte also sees nature as spiritless and lifeless. This does not mean that he regards it as material—the second book of the Bestimmung des Menschen turns the entire empirical world into the ego's sensations³—

1. Ibid., ii. 191-2

2. Ibid., ii. 281-3

3. Ibid., ii. 199-212

but that he considers it a mechanism which cannot generate or develop conscious life.¹ Nature is not an organism, a system of ends, of self-organising, self-generating powers whose highest organisation and development is human self-awareness itself. Rather, to Fichte, conscious beings are prior to and outside of nature since nature has no power to generate or develop their self-awareness. Hence the Sittenlehre states that reflection or self-awareness is the dividing line between the ego and nature.² As Fichte argues in the Erste Einleitung: consciousness cannot be explained on the basis of natural laws since there is an unbridgeable gap between a representation, which exists only for the consciousness having it, and a natural object, which exists only for an external observer.³

But such a dark picture of nature, Hegel argues, only violates Fichte's original principle of subject-object identity.⁴ The subject and object are hardly identical with one another if the ego and nature stand to one another as a master to his slave. They are obviously on an unequal footing: the ego commands, nature obeys; the ego is active, nature is passive; the ego is cause, nature the effect. Since nature is never active and self-causing like the ego, there is no mutuality or reciprocity—ie. identity—between them. The subject and object are not only in an unequal relation, though, but there are also completely distinct from one another. The ego is self-determining, but everything in nature is determined; the ego is self-conscious,

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1. Ibid., ii. 171-2
 2. Ibid., iv. 131-2
 3. Ibid., i. 435-8
 4. Hegel, Werke, ii. 48-9, 75

but nothing in nature is either conscious or alive. These distinctions between the ego and nature finally suggest an even greater dichotomy between them: each is explicable according to a logically distinct form of explanation. Nature is explicable according to mechanical laws, and from the viewpoint of an external observer. But the ego has to be understood by its purposes, by its chosen ends, and from within, according to its own self-conceptions. Thus nature is explicable by a mechanical-external standpoint, and the ego is understandable only from a teleological-internal standpoint. Fichte does not permit an exchange between these standpoints: the ego cannot be explained by the mechanical-external standpoint since that does not account for its freedom or self-consciousness; and nature cannot be accounted for by the internal-teleological standpoint, for nature has no inner purposes or life within itself. But such a dualism between forms of explanation only seals the division between the ego and nature as types of entity. If they are explicable only according to logically distinct forms of explanation, they are hardly one and the same type of entity. It is impossible to account for the interaction between them without confusing forms of explanation. Hence all the problems of explaining mind-body interaction return, just as worrisome in Fichte as they are in Kant and Descartes.

So how can Fichte's principle and system be made to coincide? Or, how is it possible to stop the relapse into the mind-body dualism? In other words: how can the principle of

subject-object identity explain the subject-object dualism of experience, so that the action of apparently distinct types of entity upon one another in experience is in fact the interaction of one and the same type of entity? Hegel's thesis in the Differenz is that only Schelling's philosophy of identity allows Fichte's principle and system to coincide, that only it permits the principle of subject-object identity to account for the subject-object dualism of experience. According to Hegel's argument, there is one reason for the superiority of Schelling's system over Fichte's: Schelling grants equal rights to the Naturphilosophie alongside the Transcendentalphilosophie, and conceives both disciplines as necessary to the absolute standpoint.¹ In the 1799 Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie, and in the 1800 System des transcendentalen Idealismus,² Schelling claims that both disciplines are necessary to demonstrate subject-object identity. It is not only necessary to begin with the ego and to explain nature according to the laws of consciousness, but it is also necessary to begin with nature and to explain the ego according to natural laws. If Transcendentalphilosophie shows that the ideal must be real or that the ego=being, Naturphilosophie shows that the real must also be ideal or that being=ego. As Schelling puts this idea as early as his 1797 Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur: 'Der Natur soll der sichtbare Geist, der Geist die unsichtbare Natur seyn'.³ It is only by granting equal rights to an independent Naturphilosophie, Schelling argues, that subject-

1. Ibid., ii. 94-102

2. Schelling, Werke, ii. 272-3, 341

3. Ibid., i. 706

object identity becomes a true identity, reciprocal and mutual, in the object as in the subject, and not a one-sided identity, a principle of subjective subject-object identity, the prerogative of the self-conscious subject alone. What both sciences together demonstrate is that there is one and the same reason in both the ego and nature, i.e. since, as Fichte argues, reason consists in self-determining, self-conscious activity, they both show that the ego and nature conform to the universal and necessary laws of self-consciousness and self-determination. Transcendental-philosophie shows that a free and self-conscious ego has to express itself in nature, and conversely Naturphilosophie shows that the powers of nature express themselves and realise their goal only in human self-consciousness and self-determination.

Now Hegel sides with Schelling and defends his claim that a Naturphilosophie is necessary. Why? Because it is only in recognising the equal and independent status of a Naturphilosophie that it is possible for the principles of subject-object identity to accommodate and explain the subject-object dualism of experience. Without a Naturphilosophie, the subject-object dualism is insurmountable, the mind and body are such distinct types of entity that there is no accounting for their interaction in experience. This is Hegel's main point in behalf of Schelling in the Differenz.¹ In order

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 94-102.

The irony is that Hegel's defense of Schelling conflicts with Schelling's current exposition of his system, the 1801 Darstellung meines Systems. While Hegel prefers Schelling's

to appreciate it, it is only necessary to recall the consequences of Fichte's denial of a Naturphilosophie. Fichte denounces a Naturphilosophie because he assumes that self-consciousness and freedom are either inexplicable or destroyed by natural laws. But the result of this denial is that he re-introduces a subject-object dualism: the ego is free, but everything in nature is determined; the ego is self-conscious, but nature is lifeless. Thus to deny the Naturphilosophie is to put the ego outside and beyond nature, and that puts such a barrier between the ego and nature that an explanation of their interaction in experience becomes impossible. So if the subject and object are not to be distinct substances, if their interaction in experience is to be explicable, then the ego cannot transcend nature; its rationality, ie. its self-conscious and self-determining activity, cannot exist in a self-enclosed noumenal realm, but it must be explicable according to the laws of nature.

Now Hegel's reason for committing himself to metaphysics begins to become clear. The argument of the Differenz is that it takes nothing less than the Naturphilosophie to stop the relapse into the mind-body dualism and to guarantee the principle of subject-object identity. The Naturphilosophie

system because it accommodates the subject-object dualism of experience, Schelling states in the Darstellung that the absolute is pure self-identity, and that it excludes all the oppositions of empirical consciousness. See Schelling, Werke, iii. 13-15, 19-24. Hence Hegel ought to reject Schelling's system on the same ground as Fichte's. It is probably Hegel's argument that influences Schelling to change his views about the nature of the absolute. Thus, in his 1802 Bruno, Schelling argues against Fichte that the absolute is not only pure identity, but the identity of identity and non-identity. See Werke, iii. 131-2

presupposes, however, that nature exists apart from and prior to consciousness, and it has to postulate knowledge of such a nature. So, unless philosophy breaks outside the circle of consciousness, unless it assumes knowledge of reality in itself, it cannot justify its principle of subject-object identity and explain the subject-object dualism of experience. The problem of a transcendental philosophy—how is experience possible?—is resolved, then, only by going beyond its original epistemological approach which examines the knowing subject apart from his place in nature. An ontology is also necessary which understands the ego by his place in the universe as a whole, and which explains his rationality through its genesis in nature. For without such an ontology, the mind-body dualism returns, and then philosophy is in no position to explain how the subject and object interact in experience. So it is only by transcending Kant's critical limits, it is only by going beyond appearances and acquiring knowledge of reality in itself, that transcendental philosophy resolves its problem of the origin of experience. Hence Hegel's argument for metaphysics puts the onus of proof upon epistemology. The critical philosophy cannot answer its own question about the possibility of experience unless it permits the possibility of ontology or metaphysics. The W-L cannot remain true to its principle of subject-object identity except when it grants equal and independent rights to a Naturphilosophie. Its principle and system coincide only when it allows knowledge of a nature which exists independent of consciousness.

* * *

In defending a Naturphilosophie, though, Hegel and Schelling are not advocating a mechanistic or materialistic explanation of consciousness. They agree with Fichte that such an explanation does no justice to self-consciousness and destroys freedom.¹ But Fichte condemns, and Hegel and Schelling approve a Naturphilosophie because they have opposing concepts of nature. Fichte rejects the Naturphilosophie because he thinks that it reduces the ego to a material thing and explains it on the model of a machine. Yet this only betrays his own mechanistic concept of nature, and fails to appreciate the new concept of nature which is behind the Naturphilosophie. The Naturphilosophie does not regard nature as a mechanism, and not does it see it as an assemblage of material things. It is in fact conceived in direct opposition to the mechanistic and materialistic theories of the Enlightenment. Its basic and guiding idea is that nature is an organism, ie, a living whole, a whole which determines the identity of its parts, and whose parts are self-organising and self-generating. What the Naturphilosophie understands by an organism is best explained by going back to Kant's analysis of a 'Naturzweck' in section 65 of the Kritik der Urteilskraft.² Here Kant specifies two distinguishing features of an organism in contrast to a mechanism, a 'Naturzweck' in contrast to a 'Kunstzweck'. 1) The first condition of an organism is that all its parts—both in their existence and form—are possible only through the whole, which is their end or purpose. The

1. See Schelling's Werke, i. 671, and Hegel's Werke, ii. 102
2. Kant, Schriften, v. 372-76

idea of the whole comprehends a priori everything contained within it. Such a whole is unlike a mechanism where each part is detachable and substitutable in another whole. This dependence of parts upon a whole is still not enough to define a living organism, though, for it is possible for a work of art to show a similar dependence of parts upon a whole, although it is not alive. 2) It is necessary, then, to add another condition. What is also required is that the parts combine of themselves to produce the whole. The whole cannot be created by a conscious agency outside it, like a work of art, but it must be produced by the activity of the parts themselves. In other words, the parts must be self-organising and self-generating, organs for the production of other parts. An organism differs from a mechanism in this respect in that no part of a machine is self-organising or self-generating, and in that no part produces another part, but only causes it to move. As Kant succinctly puts it: a machine has only motive power, but an organism has formative power. Now it is this Kantian concept of an organism which Schelling takes over and applies to nature as a whole. In section 67 of the third Kritik, Kant himself suggests such a universal application of this concept.¹ He says that it is possible to treat all of nature on the analogy of final causes, and that it is possible to go beyond strictly called living organisms and treat nature as a whole as if it were a teleological order. This step—a universal teleology of nature where all is considered a living organism—is just the one which Schelling

1. Ibid., v. 380-1

takes with his Naturphilosophie. Only where Kant hesitates, Schelling goes ahead. He does not obey Kant's regulative strictures: it is not just that it is possible to treat nature as if it were an organism, but it is necessary to assume that it is an organism. Schelling has good reason to take this additional step: it is only if both the mind and body, subject and object, noumena and phenomena are living organisms that the radical dualism between them disappears. The path is then open to treat both as simply differing degrees of organisation and development of life. But to adhere to Kant's regulative limits, to consider the subject and object only as if they are organisms, that is just to admit that there is in fact a yawning gulf between them.

It is this concept of nature as an organism, this constitutive and universal application of the category of life to the universe as a whole, which provides Hegel and Schelling with their solution to the mind-body problem. The mind and body are now one and the same type of entity since they are both organisms or living forces. This is the true union of the mind and body since the mental is not reduced to the physical, as in materialism, and the physical is not reduced to the mental, as in idealism, but both are united in a higher concept, that of life or organic development. The mind differs from the body only in that it is a higher degree of organisation and development of organic power than the body. Conversely, the body is not just dead matter, but it is just a more inchoate and potential form of life, a lower stage before

the evolution of consciousness. Physical nature is also organic since it consists in dynamic forces which are active and purposive, and which form a hierarchy or system of ends, the highest end of which the formation and development of human self-consciousness itself. This concept of life creates a completely new picture of the connection between the mind and body.¹ Life has to be understood as a process of organic development: it is the purposive evolution from potentiality to actuality, from the indeterminate to the determinate, from the inchoate to the organised. This development into something actual and determinate is the 'expression', 'realisation' or 'embodiment' of the potential and indeterminate. Now, as organisms, the mind and body are both in such a process of organic development. Each is the expression, embodiment or realisation of the other. The mind has to express its thought and will in physical actions and signs; conversely, the body has to express its energies in the mind, which is only the highest realisation and organisation of physical force. The connection between the mind and body is not only causal, then, but it is also teleological: the mind realises its powers and purposes only through the body, and the body realises its powers and purposes only through the mind. This means, however, that the mind and body are no longer in a contingent cause-effect connection, where each is separable from the other, and where each could act and exist even if the other did not act and exist. Descartes, Kant and Fichte all see the mind and body in terms of such a

1. Here I develop some suggestions of Charles Taylor in his Hegel (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 15-16, 24

connection, but that only betrays their deep mind-body dualisms. Rather than such a contingent link, the mind and body must now be seen to be necessarily connected, for each comes into existence and has a determinate nature only through the other. What expresses itself is only potential and abstract apart from its expression. It depends upon its expression both to be actualised and to have a specific form. If what expresses itself is without its expression, then it is only a bare potentiality without actuality, an abstraction without determination, an inchoate mass without determinate shape.

When Hegel and Schelling present the concept of life as their solution to the mind-body problem, they are only following in the wake of two precedents. One of these is set by Kant. In the third Kritik, Kant makes 'Zweckmässigkeit' into the mediating concept between freedom and nature, noumena and phenomena.¹ Although the laws of freedom and nature hold over distinct domains, and although noumena and phenomena are separate types of entity, it is still necessary to postulate some connection between these realms, Kant admits, for the noumenal will has to act upon and realise its intentions in phenomenal nature. There must be some third concept, then, which links these two realms, and which explains how noumenal intentions are realised in phenomenal events. This is the idea of 'Zweckmässigkeit': that a divine understanding designs the laws of nature so that the moral will can act in accord with

1. Kant, Schriften, v. 181-6

them. The 'Idee zu einer allgemeine Weltgeschichte' takes this idea of a design in nature a step further: nature is designed so that moral ends not only can be, but so that they must be realised.¹ There is a design behind the mechanism of man's natural drives—the 'ungesellige Geselligkeit' of man's 'Ehrsucht, Habsucht und Herrschsucht'—which guarantees the eventual realisation of the moral world order, where eternal peace and an international republican constitution will prevail. The other precedent is established by Herder. In his Gott, Einige Gespräche, Herder advocates the idea of organic power or 'Kraft' in order to overthrow the Cartesian dualism.² Although he fails to provide an explicit definition of this term, and even surrenders the attempt to accurately define it, it is not hard to gain a rough idea of its meaning from his usage. By 'Kraft', Herder means the activity by which life realises itself—the development from potentiality to actuality, from the amorphous to the organised, from the indeterminate to the determinate. He applies this concept to the totality of nature. Nature is a single organic power which is self-organising and self-generating. It is a system of ends, a hierarchy of living forms, all of which generate and develop the highest form of life, human reason itself.³ In this cosmic order, the mind and body do not belong to distinct ontological realms, but they are only differing expressions of a single organic force. The mind is only a higher degree of organisation and development than the body. After these precedents of Kant

1. Ibid., viii. 18-22

2. Herder, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Suphan (Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1889), xvi. 451

3. Ibid., xvi. 567-571

and Herder, the path is clear for Hegel and Schelling to build a whole metaphysics around the concept of life. They accept Kant's suggestion that teleology unifies noumena and phenomena, only they drop the regulative strictures upon teleology, and rid it of its connotations of an external designer creator. They also appropriate Herder's concept of nature and systematise his concept of 'Kraft' by organising nature into a hierarchy of 'Potenzen' whose highest stage is human self-consciousness or the 'Ich'.

Although Hegel and Schelling borrow their concept of life from Kant and Herder, they convert this concept into their own original doctrine, objective or absolute idealism. This doctrine has to be understood as Hegel's and Schelling's solution to the mind-body problem. Absolute idealism is not materialism—it does not explain the mental through the physical—and nor is it idealism—it does not explain the physical through the mental—but it asserts that the mental and physical are not reducible to one another, and that both are equal and necessary manifestation or appearances of one and the same reality, life itself. Schelling emphasises this assertion in his own definition of absolute idealism. According to his anti-Fichtean essays 'Ueber den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie' and 'Ueber das Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie ueberhaupt',¹ absolute idealism states that the ideal and the real, the subjective and objective, are equally necessary, and that both are identical with one another in the

1. Schelling, Werke, ii. 720, iii. 532

absolute standpoint of subject-object identity. But why call such a theory 'absolut Idealismus'? What is the point behind the label? Its worthwhile to explain the meaning of each term. Absolute idealism is 'absolute' because it maintains the existence of the absolute, ie. a one and all, a single omnipresent reality which is not divisible into distinct realms of being like the mental and physical, the noumenal and phenomenal. Or it is 'objective' idealism since it states that the absolute exists apart from and prior to individual consciousness. The principle of subject-object identity is not subjective, because it is not limited to the self-awareness of the noumenal subject, but it is objective, because it is realised in the living phenomena of nature. Absolute idealism is 'idealism' in the sense that it is what Schelling calls 'die Lehre von den Ideen'. Here the ideal is not the conscious in contrast to the non-conscious, the subjective in opposition to the objective, but the archetype in contrast to the ectype, the rational and necessary in opposition to the non-rational and contingent. In this sense, idealism states that everything exists in the idea and acts according to its rational necessity. It then appears to be a Platonic version of Spinoza's claim that everything is a mode of substance, or that everything acts according to the necessity of the divine nature alone. But such a general definition of absolute idealism still leaves out what is characteristic to Hegel's and Schelling's absolute idealism: its organic vision of nature, a vision whose central concept of

teleology is at odds with both Plato and Spinoza. Like Aristotle, Hegel and Schelling identify the idea with an end or formal-final cause. The idea is in fact nothing less than the purpose of the universe as a whole, the development of reason or freedom according to self-consciousness. Their absolute idealism then maintains that everything acts of necessity according to the end of reason.

It is this version of absolute idealism which Hegel's Differenz enthrones as the true heir of the Kantian philosophy. The spirit of the Kantian philosophy, its principle of subject-object identity, finds its culmination in the thesis that the mental and physical are equal and necessary appearances of the absolute idea. Yet, however plausible, there is a deep irony to Hegel's claim in behalf of absolute idealism. The Copernican revolution has now come full circle. It begins in Kant by seeing human reason as the centre of the universe, but it ends in Hegel by putting reason outside man and back into the universe itself. It starts by making human reason into the law-giver of nature, but it finishes by making human reason depend upon the universal logos. Self-consciousness is no longer the self-explaining first principle of philosophy, but it is intelligible only by its place in the universe as a whole. So rather than his rival Reinhold, it is now Hegel who can declare 'le revolution est finie!'. The revolution is over because it has achieved the very opposite of its original intention.

The Necessity of the Critique: Hegel's Argument Against
Schelling's Method of Intellectual Intuition

'Schellings Philosophie, die man kritisierten Mystizismus nennen könnte, endigt, wie der Prometheus des Aeschylus, mit Erdbeben und Untergang'.

Friedrich Schlegel

Introductory

Given Hegel's argument for the necessity of metaphysics, why does he also think that epistemology is a necessity? Why does he insist that metaphysics be built upon the basis of the critique of knowledge? In considering this question, it is necessary to examine one crucial phase of Hegel's development in Jena: his break with Schelling. During his first Jena years (1801-03), Hegel defends Schelling's metaphysics, which rejects the need for an antecedent critique of knowledge. Later on, however, and especially in the PhG itself, Hegel decisively breaks with Schelling by demanding that metaphysics be preceded by the critique of knowledge. Why does Hegel break with Schelling? As Lukács observes, the main point at issue between Hegel and Schelling concerns the problem of how to know the absolute.¹ Hegel no longer accepts Schelling's intellectual intuition as the method to attain absolute knowledge. After criticising Schelling's method, though, Hegel finds himself compelled to precede metaphysics by the critique of knowledge.

Two questions inevitably arise, then, in considering Hegel's reasons for advocating the critique of knowledge. What do Schelling and the early Hegel mean by intellectual intuition? And why does Hegel reject intellectual intuition for the sake of the critique of knowledge? Each of the following sections will deal with one of these questions.

1. Lukács, Der junge Hegel, ii. 663

The Concept of Intellectual Intuition

During their Jena years, Hegel and Schelling justify their revival of metaphysics as an internal necessity of the critical philosophy itself. Since the critical philosophy completes its basic task—the explanation of the possibility of experience—only by postulating knowledge of the universe as a whole, it has to transcend its own critical limits and to become a full-blown metaphysics. The metaphysics of the critical philosophy is already apparent in its speculative principle of subject-object identity, and it is now only a question of fully developing this principle into a system. So, even though they often disparage the critical philosophy as a mere 'Reflexionsphilosophie', Hegel and Schelling still consider themselves to be the true representatives of the 'spirit' of the Kantian philosophy, the vanguard of its Copernican revolution. They then take upon themselves the task of defending the speculative principle of the Kantian philosophy against the host of its unenlightened detractors—Reinhold, Jacobi, Bardili and Schulze. And, alas!, since Kant and Fichte are not always fully aware of the spirit of their own philosophy, Hegel and Schelling sometimes have to defend it even against them.

No sooner do Hegel and Schelling go beyond the critique, though, than it returns to haunt them. If philosophy has to

resurrect metaphysics and postulate knowledge of the universe as a whole, then the old critical questions inevitably return: how is it possible to know the universe as a whole? Under what conditions is it possible to know reality in itself (das An-sich)? Or, in short: how is metaphysics possible? These are the very questions with which Kant begins his critical search, and to which Hegel and Schelling must now return.

So a difficult task now confronts Hegel and Schelling. They have to justify the possibility of knowledge of the universe as a whole in the face of the critique's withering assault upon metaphysics. They have no illusions, though, about the challenge before them. What is required, they insist is nothing less than a complete revolution in the method of metaphysics. They realise that there cannot be a relapse into the antiquated and discredited method of pre-Kantian metaphysics, which uncritically applies the categories of the understanding (Verstand) to the absolute. Hegel and Schelling in fact fully endorse Kant's attack upon this method, and see his great contribution to philosophy as his demolition of pre-critical rationalism.¹ Kant rightly points out that the antinomies arise as soon as the understanding extends its categories beyond experience and attempts to know the unconditioned. And yet this concession to Kant necessarily goes along with a modest appraisal of his achievement: he has only destroyed the attempt of the understanding to know the absolute. Hence

1. See, for example, Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 402-3

the meaning of 'dogmatism' is re-interpreted: it not only means metaphysics without a previous investigation of the powers of knowledge, but, more specifically, the application of the concepts of the understanding to the absolute.¹

Where Hegel and Schelling disagree with the critique, though, is in its conclusion that there cannot be any knowledge of reality in itself. Although Kant has destroyed the attempt of the understanding to know the infinite, there still might be another faculty of knowledge that does not fall prey to his criticisms. And, indeed, that is precisely Hegel's and Schelling's thesis. They distinguish between reason (Vernunft) and the understanding (Verstand), and argue, that, while Kant's critique does perfectly apply against the understanding, it has no effect against reason. It is only reason, though, which has insight into reality as a whole, and which provides the method for the resurrection of metaphysics. Of course, Kant does have an inkling of the characteristic power of reason: it appears in the transcendental imagination of the first Kritik, and in the intellectus archetypus of the third Kritik. But he then dogmatically dismisses the possibility that it is a means to metaphysical knowledge, and simply relegates it to a regulative role. He fails to appreciate its necessary role in our actual knowledge, and does not see the criteria for its existence. The strategy for Hegel's and Schelling's struggle against the critique ought

1. Ibid., Erg. i. 401

to be apparent now: to set forth the faculty of reason in contrast to the understanding, to explain how reason is necessary for absolute knowledge, and to find the criteria that demonstrate its existence.

* * *

So what do Hegel and Schelling mean by 'reason' (Vernunft)? They identify it with a mysterious capacity, with what Schelling calls 'ein wunderbares, geheimes Vermögen': intellectual intuition. They make great claims for this faculty. It is nothing less than the new organ for speculative thought, philosophy's sole salvation in its search for a certain knowledge of reality in itself or the universe as a whole. 'Ohne intellektuelle Anschauung keine Philosophie!', Schelling declares in his 1803 Vorlesungen ueber die Methode des akademischen Studiums.¹ 'Ohne transcendentale Anschauung kann nicht philosophiert werden!', Hegel trumpets in the Differenz.² Supposedly, only intellectual intuition escapes the relapse into precritical dogmatism, and only it proves itself immune from all the criticisms of the critique of knowledge. What, then, do Hegel and Schelling mean by this mysterious faculty? A close examination will soon reveal that it is not as 'mystical' and 'irrational' as it is often thought to be.³

1. Schelling, Werke, iii. 277

2. Hegel, Werke, ii. 42

3. The charge of mysticism and irrationalism is common. See, for example, Haym in Die romantische Schule, pp. 655-6, and Lukács in Der junge Hegel, ii. 657. And, indeed, the thesis of Lukács' Die Zerstörung der Vernunft, 'Der Weg des Irrationalismus von Schelling zu Hitler' (Berlin, Aufbau Verlag, 1955), 103-124, is that Schelling's intellectual intuition is the birthplace

The best clue to the meaning of intellectual intuition comes from Schelling's own version of Spinoza's Ethics, his sadly neglected 1804 System der gesamten Philosophie.¹ According to Schelling, the principle of reason is subject-object identity, a principle which he formalises as $A=A$.² He also states, however, that the subject and object are identical only in self-consciousness.³ This means that, as the faculty of reason, intellectual intuition must be self-consciousness. And so far, so good. This is at least his basic formula for intellectual intuition. Only this bare and abstract formula raises the questions: what kind of self-consciousness?, and whose self-consciousness? And here Schelling's exposition has few simple answers. It is necessary, then, to investigate the matter in some detail.

Schelling is at least straightforward about what he does not mean by intellectual intuition. After his break with Fichte, he conceives his idea in direct opposition to him. According to Fichte, an intellectual intuition is the subject's self-

of modern irrationalism. The best antidote to these interpretations is offered by E. Cassirer in Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit, iii. 253-274.

1. Although commentators rarely spend much time on it, this work is the only complete systematic exposition of the philosophy of identity. Fischer ignores it in his otherwise extremely thorough Schellings Leben, Werke und Lehre (Heidelberg, Winters, 1923), and Knittermeyer hastily devotes only a few pages to it in his Schelling und die romantische Schule (Munich, Reinhardt, 1929), 421-2. The common but false belief that Schelling never completed his system, and that he never developed its 'ideal' half (ie. that dealing with history and politics), is a sad tribute to the neglect of this work.

2. Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 75, prop. 5

3. Ibid., Erg. ii. 71, prop. 3

awareness as a 'transcendental' subject, ie. the subject who is the necessary condition of all consciousness or who accompanies all possible representations.¹ Since this subject is prior to experience and transcends its causal laws, he is regarded as active, as a spontaneous agent who has the power to begin a causal series; hence an intellectual intuition is seen as the subject's awareness of himself as an agent, as the sole cause of his own actions.² Such self-awareness then provides him with a ratio cognoscendi for his freedom, ie. his responsibility for his own actions, and his power to act according to the moral law. An intellectual intuition thus gives the subject an awareness of himself as a self-sufficient noumenon: he sees that he has the power to act apart from the causal order of nature, and that his rational thought and will remain unaffected by whatever happens in nature. Since the subject is seen as such a self-sufficient noumenon, Fichte states that he attains an intellectual intuition only by abstracting from everything else and by focussing his attention exclusively upon himself.

Now, to Schelling, Fichte's intellectual intuition is guilty of two fatal errors. 1) Its subject is a false abstraction from the whole of nature. Fichte supposes that the subject has a self-sufficient noumenal character apart from nature, while in fact his character depends upon his place within nature as a whole. Thus in his 1804 Propädeutik, the intro-

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 526-530
2. Ibid., i. 463

duction to his gesamt System, Schelling identifies 'Ichheit' with 'der allgemeine Ausdruck der Absonderung, der Trennung von dem All'.¹ While Fichte assumes that the subject is the cause of his own actions, it is really the universe that is acting through him. And although he believes that the subject is the ground of all consciousness, this ground is in fact nothing less than the universe itself. This criticism of Fichte appears most explicitly in the 1806 Jahrbücher when Schelling strongly attacks both Kant's and Fichte's first principles:

'Das Ich denke, Ich bin, ist, seit Cartesius, der Grund-
irrthum in aller Erkenntnis; das Denken ist nicht mein
Denken, und das Seyn nicht mein Seyn, sondern denn alles ist
nur Gottes oder des Alls'.²

2) Fichte's intellectual intuition also traps the subject inside the circle of his own self-consciousness, so that it forbids knowledge of the universe as a whole. Since it sees the 'Ich' as the ground of all consciousness, and since it also claims that the 'Ich' creates what he knows, so that everything conforms to the a priori conditions of his own consciousness, it condemns the 'Ich' to the awareness of nothing but his own representations. But such a circle of consciousness, Schelling argues in his Fernere Darstellung and gesamt System, means that the 'Ich' knows either himself or nothing, and that what he knows is either reduced to the limits of his own self-consciousness or is a transcendent thing-in-itself.

What Schelling means by intellectual intuition, then, is the very opposite of what Fichte means. It is not the

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 53

2. Ibid., iv. 82, prop. 42; cf. Erg. ii. 70, 72-5

subject's self-awareness of his self-sufficient noumenal character: of how he transcends everything in nature, of how he is the cause of his own actions, and of how is the ground of all experience; but, conversely, it is his self-awareness of his identity with the universe: of how he depends upon the universe, of how it acts through him, and of how it is the ground of all experience. Both Fichte and Schelling see an intellectual intuition as self-awareness; but, because they have opposing concepts of man's place in nature, they give conflicting meanings to self-awareness. While Fichte assumes that the subject is a self-sufficient noumenon apart from nature, Schelling affirms that his character depends upon his place within the universe as a whole. So, if Fichte claims that the subject is self-conscious only by abstracting from everything else and by focussing his attention exclusively upon himself, Schelling insists that he is self-conscious only by knowing the universe as a whole and how he depends upon it.¹

1. In his interesting study of Schelling, Jacobi and their followers, The Reason, the Understanding and Time (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1961), pp. 41-2, Lovejoy sums up their theory of knowledge in these terms:

'A more nearly differentiating characteristic of this theory of knowledge is the direction in which it bids us to look if we are to find and grasp the true nature of reality. That direction is "inward": "look in and not out" is the motto—the initial though not the final motto—of Schelling and most of his school. In short, the intellectual intuition is a Selbstanschauung, an intuition of oneself, or rather, of the innermost kernal of oneself...'. But this is a more apposite description of Fichte's rather than Schelling's intellectual intuition. In describing Schelling's theory of intellectual intuition, Lovejoy limits himself to the early Schelling, who is still a disciple of Fichte. He therefore misses Schelling's later transformation of Fichte's intellectual intuition, which hardly fits Lovejoy's description. Schelling's later idea of intellectual intuition bids us to look outwards to discover ourselves inward. And the historical significance which Lovejoy attributes to Schelling ought to in fact be ascribed to Fichte, who is the true father of the doctrine as Lovejoy describes it.

Ironically, this conflict in the senses of intellectual intuition is perfectly captured by Schelling himself, but in his early Fichtean days when he is still an advocate of Fichte's intellectual intuition. In his 1795 Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus, he makes several comparisons between the intellectual intuition of Fichte and Spinoza.¹ While Fichte's intellectual intuition beholds the self as absolute, and makes the entire universe depend upon his consciousness, Spinoza's intellectual intuition sees the absolute outside the self, and makes his identity depend upon his place within the universe as a whole. If Fichte's intuition affirms individual freedom, the power to act without being determined by an external cause, Spinoza's proclaims determinism, the knowledge that it is not me acting, but the universe acting through me. And while Fichte's intuition spurns the subject into activity, the striving to bring all nature under his rational control, Spinoza's intuition advises passivity, the resignation that everything happens according to a divine necessity beyond one's conscious control. Pregnant comparisons! Needless to say, Schelling eventually reverses his position, accepting Spinoza's intuition and rejecting Fichte's.

In general, then, Schelling's intellectual intuition is the self-awareness of one's dependence upon the universe. It is nothing more than Schelling's philosophical formula for the romantic theme of self-awareness in nature, for the 'Selbstvergessenheit ins All der Natur' of Holderlin's Hyperion, and

1. Schelling, Werke, i. 243f.

for the 'Anschauung des Universum' of Schleiermacher's Reden über die Religion. There are two senses, however, in which Schelling refers to an intellectual intuition of the universe. 1) An intellectual intuition is the subject's self-consciousness that he is only a mode of the single universal substance, and that his identity depends upon the whole of nature. It is his awareness not that he acts, but that the divine nature acts through him. This sense of an intellectual intuition derives from Spinoza. According to Spinoza's Ethics, the more the self understands of his mind and body the more he understands of God, since all things exist in God and are only modes of his attributes; moreover, the self attains an adequate idea of himself only when he knows how his nature follows of necessity from the divine essence; such self-consciousness, depending upon and increasing with the understanding of God, Spinoza calls the intellectual love of God.¹ This intellectual love of God is one of the ancestors of Schelling's intellectual intuition, a debt which Schelling himself acknowledges in his 1804 System.² Yet this debt to Spinoza hardly puts Schelling into a 'mystical' tradition. It is important to note that Spinoza's love of God is arrived at through a systematic understanding of the whole of nature, and not through a supernatural vision.³ 2) An intellectual intuition is also the subject's self-consciousness that he is not only any mode of substance—as if he were on par with a rock or an ape!—but that he is also the highest organisation and manifestation of that

1. Spinoza, Ethics, pp. 255, 260-2, Part V, Propositions XV, XXX, XXVI

2. Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 486

3. For an appropriate non-mystical reading of Spinoza's love of God, see S. Hampshire's Spinoza (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976), pp. 168-171

living force which realises itself throughout the hierarchy of nature. Now the subject is aware not only that he depends upon nature, but that nature depends upon him, for he sees his self-consciousness as the final end of nature herself. Schelling reveals this sense of self-consciousness in nature through the mouthpiece of Heinz Widerporstein, that drunk and dissolute anti-hero of his Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntnis Heinz Widerporsteins. After drinking a fair quantity of wine, Heinz finally attains this self-awareness, and boasts:

'Ich bin der Gott, der sie [die Natur]¹ im Busen hegt,
Der Geist, der sich in Allem bewegt.'

This sense of self-awareness in nature derives from Herder.²

According to Herder's 1784 Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit and his 1787 Gott, Einige Gespräche,³ nature is one vast organism, a unifies self-organising, self-generating whole, whose only purpose is to realise the force inside itself. This force realises itself in a hierarchy of living forms, all of which act to generate and develop the highest form of life, human reason itself. The order of the universe is so organised that man will realise his Humanität, ie. all his characteristic powers as a human being. Man is not only one mode of nature on par with others, then, but he is in fact nothing less than the highest organisation and development of its powers. Herder then maintains that in rare moments of cosmic 'Genuss' the self feels that he is the soul of all na-

1. Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, ii. 212

2. There are good reasons to assume that Schelling is deeply influenced by Herder, especially in the development of his Naturphilosophie. See Haym, Die romantische Schule, pp. 556, 582.

3. Herder, Werke, xiii, 167, 179; xvi. 567-571

ture, that his individuality is nothing less than the highest manifestation of all its powers.¹

* * *

What justification does Schelling give for intellectual intuition? Why does he think that it is a necessary condition for knowledge of the absolute?

It has to be recognised at the outset that Schelling doubts the need for an epistemological justification of intellectual intuition. He does not think that it is necessary to conduct an examination of the conditions of absolute knowledge before actually acquiring it. The problem with Kant's critique of knowledge, he argues, is that the doubts it raises about first-order knowledge apply to its own second-order knowledge.² An infinite regress then arises: it is necessary to investigate the conditions for an investigation of knowledge, and so on, ad infinitum. What is required to escape this regress is a self-justifying, self-evident insight, whose self-evidence immediately reveals its standard of truth and falsity. As Spinoza, Schelling's great mentor, argues in his Tractatus de intellectus emendatione: in order to know that I know, it is first necessary to know; the first act of knowledge has to be a self-evident 'true idea', which immediately reveals its certainty and standard of truth.³ Now, to Schelling, this self-evident insight, this Spinozian 'true idea', is nothing less than an intellectual intuition.

1. Ibid., xvi. 503, 574-5

2. Schelling, Werke, v. 149

3. Spinoza, Ethics, pp. 13-14

Whatever his doubts about the necessity of an epistemological justification for intellectual intuition, Schelling still does not hesitate to advance arguments in its behalf. According to his 1804 System, the principle of subject-object identity is the first principle of all knowledge:

'Die erste Voraussetzung alles Wissens ist, dass es ein und dasselbe ist, das da weiss, und das da gewusst wird.'¹

Like Kant and Fichte, Schelling maintains that the self-consciousness of the intellectus archetypus is the paradigm of knowledge. Only he goes a step further than them. While Kant insists that the intellectus archetypus is only a regulative ideal to bring system and unity into the diverse empirical sciences, and while Fichte claims that it is only a practical ideal to guide our action, Schelling affirms that it is a constitutive truth. He argues that it is a necessary condition not only for the systematic unity of the sciences, but even for their truth. In his 1803 Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums, he states that intellectual intuition is das Ur-wissen, that first principle presupposed by all the special sciences.² These sciences presuppose the unity of thought and being, of universality and particularity, in das Ur-wissen, Schelling argues, because their laws assume that particular events are determined of necessity according to the idea of the whole. They also presuppose such a unity

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 67

2. Ibid., iii. 237-9

in their very ideal of 'Wissenschaft': an organic system organised around and deduced from a single principle.

Schelling begins his 1804 System with his only argument that subject-object identity is necessary for knowledge of reality in itself (das An-sich).¹ Suppose the contrary, Schelling asks. Assume that there is a subject-object dualism, and that the subject knows an object only when his representation corresponds to a given, external object. There are then two options for explaining this correspondence: realism or idealism. According to realism, the object acts upon the subject, so that his representations are made to conform to it; conversely, according to idealism, the subject acts upon the object, so that the object is made to conform to his representations.² In either case, Schelling argues, there cannot be knowledge of reality in itself, apart from and prior to the intervention of consciousness. The problem with realism is that the subject knows the object only as it affects him. The same object has different effects upon different observers; hence the subject cannot infer that the object as he perceives it, or as it affects him, is identical with the object in itself. Conversely, the difficulty with idealism is that the subject knows the object only as he affects it. Since the knowing subject is active, conditioning and changing what he knows, he cannot know the object in itself, apart from the application

1. Ibid., Erg. ii. 68-70

2. Schelling sees these options in Kantian terms. See Kant's first Kritik, B xx.

of his conscious activity. Hence Schelling concludes that any subject-object dualism—whether that of idealism or realism—forecloses the possibility of knowledge of reality in itself.

Although Schelling does not give a direct argument for subject-object identity, it is still not hard to reconstruct why he thinks that it is necessary for knowledge of reality in itself. It is only necessary to examine his diagnosis of the failures of realism and idealism. Their problems arise in the first place, he claims, simply because they misconceive the connection between subject and object. They insert a contingent cause-effect connection between them, and that sanctions a dualism between the subject and object. The cause is active, but the effect is passive; and both the cause and effect can exist apart from one another. The result of such a dualistic cause-effect connection, though, is that there cannot be knowledge of the object in itself, because the subject ends out knowing the object only insofar as either he affects it or it affects him. As a remedy for this predicament, Schelling proposes a radical cure: a new model of the subject-object connection, a model that is available thanks to the organic concept of nature of the philosophy of identity. Rather than regarding the subject and object as only the cause and effect of one another, as Descartes, Kant and Fichte in fact look at them, Schelling, the true disciple of Herder's notion of 'Kraft', sees the subject and object expressing manifesting and revealing one another. Thus the 1802 Fernere Darstellung criticises Fichte for imposing an external causal

relation between the subject and object, and states that they are identical with one another since each is the 'Einbildung', 'Reflex', or 'Erscheinung' of the other.¹ Now this new organic connection between the subject and object surmounts the subject-object dualism. What appears and its appearance are to one another as potentiality to actuality, as the abstract and inchoate to the determinate and organised. The essence or what appears cannot then exist or be determinate apart from its appearance; it is only an abstraction or bare potentiality apart from the determinate form it assumes in its appearance. Such a bond between the subject and object is no longer causal, then, but teleological. According to the principle of subject-object identity and the organic vision of nature of the philosophy of identity, the subject and object both realise their natures through one another: the object fulfills its powers only as a subject; and, conversely, the subject realises its powers only through their embodiment in objects. Now it is this connection, Schelling maintains, which ensures that the subject knows the object in itself. If the object embodies and manifests itself only through the consciousness of the subject, then no problem arises where the subject knows the object only as it affects him; for the object's nature reveals and realises itself as the subject's consciousness. As Schelling puts it in his 1800 System: the subject's awareness of nature is nature coming to awareness of itself through him.²

1. Schelling, Werke, i. 392, 469f

2. Ibid., ii. 341

So far Schelling's argument for intellectual intuition has only established the necessity of subject-object identity. But that still leaves the question: why is intuition (Anschauung) necessary for knowledge of the absolute? Why cannot the concepts of the understanding (Verstand) also know it? In order to answer this question, its best to go back in philosophical history, back to the writings of F.H. Jacobi.¹ His polemic against the claims of the understanding (or discursive reason) are a decisive influence upon the young Schelling.² Schelling's own criticism of the understanding in the Fernere Darstellung and Philosophie und Religion only repeat or adumbrate Jacobi's earlier and clearer arguments.³

One of Jacobi's most famous and influential arguments against the understanding appears in the seventh 'Beilage' to his 1785 Briefe über die Lehre von Spinoza. Here, no less than Kant in the first Kritik, Jacobi restricts the knowledge of the understanding to the principle of causality or sufficient reason. To explain or conceive something, Jacobi says, is to

1. Here I agree with Lovejoy's evaluation of Jacobi: 'The importance of the role of Jacobi as the initiator of new tendencies in German philosophy is even yet, as a rule, too little appreciated; as an historical influence, he is hardly second to Kant.'

See his The Reason, the Understanding and Time, p. 5.

2. Schelling's early favourable opinion of Jacobi is apparent from his 1795 Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie, where he puts Jacobi on par with Plato. See Werke, i. 140.

3. For Schelling's own argument, see Werke, Erg. i. 395-6, and iv. 11-17.

subsume it under this principle.¹ According to this principle, there must be a sufficient reason for the occurrence of any event, so that for any event, it is necessary to assign it some set of conditions as its cause, such that given the cause, the event must follow as its effect. Explanation or understanding is then simply to find the sufficient reason for the occurrence of an event. It is to know, as Jacobi puts it, the 'mechanism' of the event, the mediating conditions which causally connect it with other events in nature; in other words, then, to conceive is to mediate: to connect one event with another which is its cause. Now since the task of the understanding is to mediate, Jacobi concludes that it cannot know the absolute. For the absolute is self-causing or unconditioned: it is that which does not depend upon anything else in order to exist, or that which exists by the necessity of its own nature alone. Thus it is absurd to conceive or understand the absolute: that assigns a cause to the self-causing, a condition to the unconditioned. The absolute must therefore lie outside the sphere of the principle of sufficient reason, and so beyond the ken of the understanding.

In his 1787 dialogue David Hume, Jacobi continues his polemic against the claims of the understanding. This seminal work gives birth to two themes which are prevalent in much romantic thought: the inexpressible individual, the analytical understanding. According to Jacobi, the role of the understanding is to analyse: it divides a whole into its distinct

1. Jacobi, Werke, iv/i. 153-4

parts and sees them as independent of one another. It knows an object only as the sum of its parts, or as the conjunction of its properties. Now such analysis, Jacobi argues, prevents the understanding from knowing each thing as a unique individual.¹ As an individual, each thing is the indivisible unity of its parts, an organic whole where the whole determines the identity of each of its parts, and where each of its parts determines the identity of the whole. The understanding cannot know a thing as an individual, then, since it cannot grasp it as a whole or indivisible unity, but only as the sum of its parts. The individual is therefore inexpressible. The understanding can express all the partial aspects or distinct properties of it, but never its unity or wholeness. The main weakness of the understanding, then, is that it is incurably abstract: it creates an artificial self-sufficient identity for each part of a whole, or each property of an individual, when it in fact has its identity only in the whole.

Now Schelling accepts Jacobi's arguments against the understanding, but he does not draw the same conclusion from them. While Jacobi thinks that his arguments work against all forms of knowledge,² and then concludes that there can only

1. Ibid., ii. 210, 232, 254-5

2. This only holds for the early Jacobi, however, the defender of the philosophy of Nicht-Wissen. Later on, Jacobi distinguishes between Verstand and Vernunft and sees Vernunft as a non-discursive form of knowledge. See the 'Vorrede zugleich Einleitung' to his Werke, in Werke, ii. 8-11.

be faith in the absolute, Schelling maintains that they apply against only the understanding (Verstand), and that they do not threaten the knowledge of reason (Vernunft). Reason is immune from Jacobi's criticisms, Schelling argues, because it is not a faculty of explanation, demonstration or conception, but of intuition. What Schelling means by intuition here is already defined by Kant in the first Kritik.¹ According to Kant, intuition is the direct and immediate knowledge of an object as a particular; it is not discursive or conceptual knowledge where the particular is known by 'mediation' or the 'representation of a representation', ie. a universal which applies to many particular representations, and which then represents not the particular itself, but only the representations of it. Schelling calls his intuition 'intellectual' to contrast it to 'sense' intuition. While a sense intuition discerns only the finite things which are given to the senses, an intellectual intuition grasps the infinite which is beyond the realm of the senses.² This act of intellectual intuition has to be seen as a clear insight or a distinct vision. It is not so much the vague feeling of the mystic as it is the rational intuitus of Descartes and Spinoza.³

Now it is this intellectual intuition, Schelling maintains, which grasps a thing as an individual whole or unity. While concepts know only the distinct properties of a thing, an intuition sees these properties merge into a single indivis-

1. KrV, B 93.

2. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 421

3. On the whole, irrationalist and mystical interpretations of intellectual intuition tend to ignore its affinities with the rationalist tradition.

ible whole where none has a separate existence. As Schelling puts it: '...denn nur das Zusammengesetzte ist durch Beschreibung erkennbar, das Einfache aber will angeschaut sein'.¹ When intuition grasps any individual as a unity or whole, Schelling insists, then it at the same time sees the entire universe as a whole: 'Alle wahre Betrachtung, auch des Einzelnen, ist Intuition aktueller Unendlichkeit'.² All individuals are identical as individuals, since a pure individual has no distinct properties, although one thing differs from another only through its properties.³ A pure vision of an individual then comprehends the absolute: the totality of all individuals in a single indivisible whole.

* * *

It is important to recognise one fateful consequence of Schelling's theory of intellectual intuition: its esotericism and elitism. Schelling agrees with Kant that the understanding is necessary for knowledge to be exoteric, ie. to be capable of coming into the possession of everyone alike just as an intelligent being. Since an intellectual intuition is purely immediate, however, and in direct opposition to the understanding, its knowledge has to be esoteric, ie. only within the capacity of a select few with extraordinary imagination and sensitivity. Thus in his 1802 Bruno Schelling draws the fatal conclusion that philosophy is of necessity esoteric, the province of an elite who divine the secret and mysterious:

1. Schelling, Werke, iv. 16

2. Ibid., iv. 93

3. Schelling adheres to Leibniz's identity of indiscernibles. See his Jahrbücher in Werke, iv. 114, 122, prop. 196 and 220

'Und die Philosophie ist nothwendig ihrer Natur nach esoterisch, und braucht nicht geheim gehalten zu werden, sondern ist es vielmehr durch sich selbst'.¹

Philosophy ought to protect its secret wisdom from the vulgar misunderstandings of the public. Hence it must not educate ordinary consciousness up to its standpoint, and it must even prevent it from attempting the ascent.² The philosopher has no choice but to dismiss those who cannot agree with him, for they are after all only 'der geistig Blinde'.

This esotericism soon brings Schelling into conflict with the Enlightenment. It undermines the Enlightenment's most cherished value: the duty of self-thought. This duty means that everyone ought to judge a philosophy according to the critical exercise of his own understanding. If philosophy is esoteric, however, this will only lead to misunderstanding and distortion. Only those have the right to judge who have the rare gifts of intuition. Schelling is perfectly aware of his conflict with the Enlightenment, and he duly declares war against it:

'Dieses Zeitalter verlangt ein Wissen als Wissen des Subjekts, eine Sittlichkeit als eine selbstgegebene des Individuums. In einem solchem Sinn schliesse ich diese so wie jenes aus dem Vernunftsystem aus, und zwar auf eine ganz positive Weise aus...'³

Schelling sees a great danger when the Enlightenment elevates the understanding into the tribunal of philosophy: it results immediately in 'die Ocholokratie im Reiche der Wissenschaften', and eventually in 'die allgemeine Erhebung des Pöbels'.⁴ After rejecting the Enlightenment's right of

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1. Schelling, Werke, iii. 128
 2. Ibid., Erg. i. 414
 3. Ibid., iv. 85
 4. Ibid., iii. 280-1

self-thought, Schelling also dismisses its republican constitution, whose basis is this right. Rather than a republic, he advocates an aristocracy of philosophers, holding up Plato's Republic as the true model for the statesman.¹ Here his philosophical and political elitism go hand-in-hand. Only a select few are capable of governing, Schelling argues, because only they grasp the philosophy which is the basis for the constitution.

* * *

Where, though, does one ever get hold of an intellectual intuition? How does one know that it even exists? Obviously, Schelling needs some proof that intellectual intuition exists if he is to reply to Kant's claim that it is only a regulative ideal. This is just the problem which Schelling faces in his 1800 System des transcendentalen Idealismus, and he attempts to solve it by making art into the criterion of intellectual intuition. Thus he writes: 'Denn die aesthetische Anschauung eben ist die objektiv gewordene intellektuelle'.² But why say this? Because, Schelling answers, only aesthetic creation reveals the subject-object identity of the absolute. Assuming that the absolute's subjective pole manifests itself as free and conscious activity, and supposing that its objective pole embodies itself as necessary and subconscious activity, then there is but one perfect synthesis of these activities, and that is art. Only the artist acts with choice and con-

1. Ibid., iii. 337

2. Ibid., ii. 625

scious aim (according to the subjective pole), but also according to subconscious forces which compel him to create (according to the objective pole). Although he begins his work with a conscious design in mind, nature herself subconsciously works through him, producing much in his work which he does not predict. As a result, his product is a unity of form and content: a synthesis of a consciously imposed form and a subconsciously created content. Now, Schelling explains, it is only by contemplating this unity of form and content, and it is only by recognising the act of synthesis behind its creation, that the artist attains his intellectual intuition.¹ In other words, it is only then that he comes to his self-awareness of his identity with the universe. Why? Simply because from observing the unity of conscious form and subconscious content, and from attending to how its creation is a synthesis of subjective and objective activity, the artist knows that he reveals the subject-object identity of the absolute.

What makes Schelling so certain, though, that art is an infallible organ for comprehending the absolute? Why does art not falsify the absolute, creating a veil of Maya? Schelling's confidence in the testimony of art rests upon nothing less than the crowning principle of his Naturphilosophie: that human self-consciousness is the goal of nature's activity, the ultimate development and manifestation of its powers. Assuming that art is the highest form of human self-

1. Ibid., ii. 615

awareness—and that is admittedly a grand assumption—
then it has to be the manifestation of the absolute. According to the principle of Schelling's Naturphilosophie,¹ art cannot be the imitation of nature, an artificial copy of it—that only brings back the subject-object dualism since then the artist only represents an external nature. Art also cannot be only an expression of the personality of the artist—a purely personal act of self-expression, belonging to the artist alone, abstracts him from his place in nature. Rather, art is the embodiment and realisation of the infinite force within nature, for it is this force which is subconsciously working through the artist and finally coming to self-awareness through him. There is no problem, then, of art misrepresenting the absolute. For it does not copy or represent the synthesis of the ideal and real in nature—rather, it is this synthesis! Schelling more than implies this: he states that the conflict between the ideal and real activities of nature ceases only with artistic creation itself.²

1. Not recognising the role of the Naturphilosophie in Schelling's aesthetics leads to misunderstandings. In Die romantische Schule, pp. 647-8, Haym accuses Schelling of obscuring the difference between art and nature. If art is conscious, nature is non-conscious, Haym assures us. But this only begs the question against Schelling by failing to put his aesthetics in the context of his metaphysics. According to Schelling's metaphysics, art or consciousness in general is not distinct from nature, but the realisation of its living powers.

2. Schelling, Werke, ii. 614-5

It is for this reason that Schelling concludes:

'...so ist die Kunst die einzige und ewige Offenbarung, die es gibt, und das Wunder, das...uns von der absoluten Realität ueberzeugen musste'.¹

Schelling's identification of intellectual with aesthetic intuition helps to explain some of the features which he attributes to intellectual intuition. 1) It accounts for why he thinks that it is immediate, ie. inexpressible in language or abstract thought. This immediacy simply refers to a basic fact of aesthetic experience: that a work of art cannot be completely analysed or summarised into concepts or rules. A painting, poem or symphony is a whole which is equally appreciated by several angles, none of which is necessarily true of it, and all of which never exhaust it. Schelling has a solid historical precedent for stressing this aspect of aesthetic experience. In the third Kritik,¹ Kant gives philosophical expression to it when he says that aesthetic perception consists in the 'freies Spiel' between the imagination and understanding, ie. the object given to imagination does not conform to any definite rule of the understanding, but conforms freely or in no regular fashion to many rules. 2) It also explains Schelling's claim that intellectual intuition is esoteric. It has to be esoteric since it is just a fact that artistic talent cannot be taught or learnt; as Kant himself notes in the third Kritik: only a genius expresses the forces of nature working inside him, and only he breaths spirit into the technical, lifeless rules of art.² Putting Schelling's

1. Kant, Schriften, v. 217-19

2. Ibid., v. 313-19

idea of intellectual intuition into the context of his aesthetic theory in this manner helps to dispel some of the mystical fog surrounding this faculty. Against the charge of mysticism, Schelling is ready with a reply: if it is mystical, is it any more mystical than artistic creation itself?

Schelling's choice of art as the criterion for intellectual intuition becomes much more comprehensible once it is seen in the context of its historical background. His choice is dictated by several precedents, starting with Kant's 1790 Kritik der Urteilskraft. In the third Kritik, Kant states that aesthetic perception unites the faculties of the understanding and sensibility in a free exchange,¹ and he also strongly implies that art is the only mediating agency between man as a noumenal and phenomenal being.² This brings Kant close to making art into the instrument for knowledge of reality in itself, because he also affirms that the unity of sensibility and understanding in the intellectus archetypus gives it knowledge of reality in itself.³ And, indeed, like Schelling's intellectual intuition, Kant maintains that aesthetic intuition is purely contemplative, considering its object for its own sake, apart from the moral and physical interests of the observer.⁴ Nonetheless, Kant explicitly argues that art cannot be a medium of knowledge. He contends that aesthetic judgements are not cognitive, and that they do not make

1. Ibid., v. 189-192, 217-19

2. Ibid., v. 210

3. KrV, B 145, B 135

4. Kant, Schriften, v. 209-11. Schelling is plainly under Kant's influence when he writes in the 1804 System: 'Die Erkenntnisart des Absoluten, wenn sie eine absolute ist, ist auch eine contemplative.' See Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 83

claims about reality since they concern only the feeling of pleasure of the perceiver.¹ Schiller soon takes a hesitant step beyond Kant in his 1793 Kallias Briefe. His aim is to outline an objective aesthetic theory which ascribes beauty to the object itself and not simply the observer's pleasure in it.² Beauty is then defined as autonomy in appearance: an object is beautiful when its laws and ends are not imposed by an external force, but self-imposed according to its inner spontaneity.³ Like Schelling, Schiller thus sees beauty as uniting the subjective realm of freedom and the objective realm of necessity, and he even comes close to saying that art gives knowledge about nature.⁴ Schiller still hesitates, however, since he also argues that beauty is only a regulative idea: it is necessary to perceive things as if they are free in appearance, although they are in fact determined.⁵ Later on, in his 1794 Aesthetische Briefe, Schiller does move closer to Schelling when he affirms that art is the only proof of the unity of the understanding and sensibility, of the unity of the infinite and finite.⁶ Even here, however, Schiller still adheres to the Kantian thesis that art cannot provide knowledge. Aesthetic semblance is an end in itself, he says, and that means that it has no concern with truth or the improvement of morals.⁷ Beauty

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1. Kant, Schriften, v. 203-4
 2. Schiller, Werke in Drei Bänden (Munich, Hanser Verlag, 1976), ii. 333
 3. Ibid., ii. 363-5
 4. Ibid., ii. 378-9
 5. Ibid., ii. 355
 6. Ibid., ii. 509
 7. Ibid., ii. 511-14

has its own autonomous laws independent of reality, and the artist succeeds in his creation just insofar as he makes no attempt to portray reality. The decisive move in equating truth and beauty, in making art into the organ for absolute knowledge, comes from Hölderlin. In his famous September 4th, 1795 letter to Schiller, he states that the unity of subject and object is accessible only through an aesthetic intuition, and not through thought or action, which only approximate to this unity.¹ And in his final version of Hyperion(1797/8), Hölderlin virtually identifies philosophy with art, and with poetry in particular. 'What does philosophy have in common with poetry?', Hyperion is asked; and he replies:

'Die Dichtung, sagt ich, meiner Sache gewiss, ist der Anfang und das Ende dieser Wissenschaft. Wie Minerva aus Jupiters Haupt, entspringt sie aus der Dichtung eines unendlichen göttlichen Seins.'²

Hölderlin's equation of truth and beauty, of philosophy and poetry, soon becomes one of the characteristic doctrines of the romantic school. In one of his 1797 'Lyceum' fragments, for example, F. Schlegel demands nothing less than the unification of philosophy and art:

'Die ganze Geschichte der modernen Poesie ist ein fortlaufender Kommentar zu dem kurzen Text der Philosophie: Alle Kunst soll Wissenschaft, und alle Wissenschaft soll Kunst werden; Poesie und Philosophie sollen vereinigt sein.'³

1. Hölderlin, Werke, vi/i. 181

2. Ibid., iii. 81

3. F. Schlegel, Kritische Ausgabe, ed. E. Behler (Zürich, Thomas-Verlag, 1964), ii. 161, no. 115

And in one of his 1797/8 fragments, Novalis sums up his whole philosophy as follows:

'Die Poesie ist das absolut Reelle. Dies ist der Kern meiner Philosophie. Je poetischer, je wahrer.'¹

Schleiermacher, too, is infected by this wave of aesthetic enthusiasm, and so he tells us in his 1799 Reden über die Religion that the religious intuition of the universe is best stimulated by art.² Now, with all these precedents behind him, Schelling can confidently declare in his 1802 Philosophie der Kunst: 'Schönheit und Wahrheit sind an sich oder die Idee nach eins'.³ Schelling's distinct contribution to this tradition is to give art a precise position in the universe according to his Naturphilosophie. His vision of art as the crowning glory of the cosmos is the pinnacle of the romantic apotheosis of art. No one else in the romantic school gives art a greater significance in philosophy, and no one else places it in a higher order in creation. Thus it is with justice that Knittermeyer calls Schelling's 1800 System 'der vollkommenste Ausdruck, den die romantische Sehnsucht in der Sprache der Philosophie sich geschaffen hat'⁴; and it is with no less justice that Haym states that Schelling brings the whole aesthetic standpoint of the romantic school to its conclusion.⁵

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1. Novalis, Werke in einem Band, ed. U. Lassen (Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe, 1966), p. 413
 2. Schleiermacher, Reden, pp. 168-9
 3. Schelling, Werke, iii. 404, Proposition 20
 4. Knittermeyer, Schelling und die romantische Schule, p. 232
 5. Haym, Die romantische Schule, p. 650.

Although Schelling insists that an intellectual intuition cannot be taught and that there are no prescribed rules to attain it, this still does not stop him from developing a philosophical method. He requires a method so that the philosopher can articulate his original vision into an organised and rigorous system. So, even though the philosopher begins with an intuition which cannot be attained by a method, he still has to express it through a method once he has attained it.¹ It is important to recognise—contrary to 'irrationalist' and 'mystical' interpretations—that Schelling never surrenders the demand for a rigorous and exact philosophical system. Like Fichte, he maintains that philosophy has to realise the ideal of 'Wissenschaft': a system all of whose propositions are necessary according to a single idea. It is this demand for a philosophical system which distinguishes Schelling from some of his more 'mystical' romantic contemporaries, eg. Hölderlin and Schleiermacher, who disown a system in favour of pure feeling and intuition.² Schelling in fact criticises those philosopher's of faith and feeling who do not see the need for a philosophical system.³ Hence Schelling is at pains to devise a method for the elaboration of a philosophical system. The result of his labours: the method of philosophical construction.

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 444

2. See Schleiermacher's Reden, pp. 33-5, and Holderlin's September 4th, 1795 letter to Schiller in Werke vi/i. 181

3. This is indeed one of the main bones of contention between Schelling and Jacobi in their famous controversy. See Schelling's Denkmal der Schrift von den göttlichen Dingen in Werke, iv. 39f.

Schelling outlines his method of construction in his 'Discourse on Method', the 1802 Fernere Darstellung aus dem System der Philosophie. The task of construction, he explains, is to expound the rational comprehension of the universe.¹ Reason demands one universe, Schelling says, and its aim is to grasp the identity of each individual with the universal whole.² Hence to construct an individual is to intuit its identity with the universe. In order to know such an identity, the philosopher has to negate and abstract from each individual's distinctive features and to see it in its identity with all others, so that it dissolves in a single undifferentiated identity with them.³ Although the philosopher thus sees all qualitative differences between individuals disappear in the unity of the absolute, he still has to recognise the quantitative differences between them, ie. that they differ in degree, according to how much they embody or realise the single organic force of all nature. The philosopher then has to assign each individual its place in the hierarchy of the universal organism. The product of his construction is therefore a 'Potenz', ie. the level of organisation and development of an individual in the organic hierarchy of nature. This term is borrowed from the theory of powers in mathematics ($x, x', x'',$ etc). Schelling uses the analogy to express the degree to which something expresses the single, unified power of the absolute. The higher the degree of organisation and development, the higher its power.

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 443-7

2. Ibid., Erg. i. 442

3. Ibid., Erg. i. 445, 459

The inspiration for Schelling's method of construction comes from no less a source than Kant's theory of mathematics.¹ Only where Kant confines construction to mathematics, Schelling extends it to philosophy. According to Kant, to construct a concept is to present it a priori in intuition, eg. the judgement 'two parallel lines never intersect' is constructed by drawing two lines which are equidistant from one another.² Construction treats the particular as a pure case of the universal, because it abstracts from all its accidental features. These two parallel lines drawn on this blackboard, for example, illustrate the universal and necessary property of space that any parallel lines do not intersect. It does not matter that they are drawn on this blackboard with this chalk; all such accidental features are abstracted away and the lines are taken as paradigms of any parallel lines. What Schelling sees in such a geometrical construction is the primitive, sensory form of the philosopher's intellectual intuition. Just as the geometer abstracts from the accidental properties of figures and considers them as pure instances of space in general, so the philosopher abstracts from all the contingent features of particulars and sees them as pure cases of the absolute whole. Both geometer and philosopher aspire to a unity of thought and intuition, an identity of universal and particular. The only difference

1. This is a debt which Schelling readily acknowledges. Thus he writes in his article 'Ueber die Konstruktion in der Philosophie' that Kant has the idea of construction 'tief und philosophisch aufgefasst.' See Werke, iii. 548

2. KrV, B 741-7

between them is this: the geometer deals with a universal which is the a priori form of sensible intuition (space), while the philosopher deals with a universal which is the a priori form of intellectual intuition (the absolute).

With such an analogy between mathematics and philosophy in mind, Schelling elevates mathematics into the model for philosophical method.¹ Just by this token, then, Schelling is hardly a mystic or irrationalist. He thinks that philosophy ought to attain the self-evident certainty of mathematics. Philosophy must proceed more geometrico, starting from general axioms and principles, and then proceeding to more specific theorems. Hence, in both his 1801 Darstellung and 1804 gesammt System, Schelling consciously takes Spinoza's Ethics as his model,² beginning with definitions and axioms and deducing theorems. When Schelling makes mathematics into the model for philosophical method, though, he has in mind his own intuitionist concept of mathematics. He does not regard mathematics as a formal procedure of discursive reasoning—that would destroy the pure immediacy of intellectual intuition. Thus he criticises Wolff's abstract and formal use of the geometrical method,³ and he reprimands those mathematicians who lose their original insights by covering them with formal symbols.⁴ Rather, Schelling considers mathematics simply as the articulation of rational insights and intuitions. His understanding of mathematics is decidedly Kantian, or even Spinozist or Cartesian.

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1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 397, iii. 277
 2. Ibid., iii. 9
 3. Ibid., iii. 547
 4. Ibid., iii. 277

II

Hegel's Critique of Intellectual Intuition

But what goes wrong with intellectual intuition? Why does Hegel regard it as a weak foundation for knowledge of the absolute? And why do its problems force him to advocate the critique of knowledge?

A crucial part of Hegel's polemic against intellectual intuition appears in chapter A.I. of the PhG, 'Die sinnliche Gewissheit'. Although its dialectic is explicitly directed against sense intuition, it still applies mutatis mutandi to intellectual intuition. Hegel's target is pure immediacy, and it is irrelevant whether this belongs to intellectual or sense intuition. Surely, the standpoint of sense certainty which Hegel sets forth makes claims to knowledge which are remarkably similar to those of intellectual intuition. Like intellectual intuition, sense certainty attempts to have a direct and intuitive knowledge of its object without the intervention of concepts.¹ Its aim is to have a purely passive apprehension of its object, so that it does not alter anything by its conscious activity, and so that it grasps it in itself, as it exists apart from its awareness.² It therefore assumes that its knowledge will be the most certain of all, because it will not use concepts or judgements, which always bring the

1. PhG, p. 79

2. Ibid., p. 79-80

risk of error.¹ Equally like intellectual intuition, sense certainty also wants to have the complete fullness and richness of its object before itself, just as the object presents itself. It does not attempt to know the object in this or that respect, but as an indivisible unity, as an irreducible whole. What sense certainty strives to know, then, is the bare particular, the particular without its properties. Hence Hegel calls its object 'das reines Dieses oder das Einzelne', which is without 'die Bedeutung einer mannigfaltigen Beschaffenheiten'.² This bare particular, though, is also the object of an intellectual intuition.³

1. Ibid., p. 79

2. Ibid., p. 80

It is important to see that the aim of sense certainty is to know the bare particular. In his Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 99-103, Soll interprets Hegel so that he is arguing that language cannot refer to any particular, and so he duly objects against Hegel that a complex combination of universals might refer to or identify only one particular. But Hegel surely would not disagree with Soll's point. He does hold that language can identify and refer to particulars, eg. he maintains the identity of indiscernibles. What Hegel is saying, though, and what Soll does not see, is that language cannot express the bare particular.

3. Who is Hegel's target in 'Die sinnliche Gewissheit?'. Some commentators suggest that it corresponds to a standpoint of knowledge presented in Plato's Thaetetus. See, for example, Hyppolyte, Genesis and Structure of the Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. S. Cherniak and R. Heckman (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 83, and M. Westphal's 'Hegel's Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung' in Materialen zu Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes, ed. D. Henrich H. Fulda (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 83-5. Others point out the similarities between sense certainty and empiricism. See, for example, R. Norman's Hegel's Phenomenology, 'A Philosophical Introduction' (London, Sussex University Press, 1976), pp. 30, 35. It is more likely, however, that Hegel's target is Jacobi. In his David Hume, Jacobi sets forth a view of experience which is remarkably similar to that of sense certainty. He holds a realist view of sense perception(ii. 36-7); he states that the object is simple and indivisible, a bare particular(210, 255, 232); and,

The main thrust of Hegel's argument against sense certainty is that there cannot be any such thing as pure immediacy because concepts are necessary for all knowledge. Like Kant in the transcendental deduction of the first Kritik, Hegel argues that sense perception is of necessity mediate, ie. that representations come into consciousness only by conforming to concepts. There is no such thing as a direct and immediate acquaintance with a bare particular in sense perception, he insists, since even the most basic identification of a particular requires concepts.

The dialectic of sense certainty begins with the simple question: 'What do I know?'. Sense certainty ought to be able to identify what it knows, its bare particular. This is surely a fair demand to make upon it, since it must be able to identify its object—at least in principle—if it is the certain basis of all knowledge. So sense certainty must ask itself: what is the bare particular? 'Was ist das Dieses?'¹ It is just this simple question, though, which it cannot answer. The problem is that any identification of an object requires concepts or universals, eg. even in such a simple spatial-temporal identification as 'It is that which is here and now', 'here' and 'now' count as universals. They are universals for two reasons: (a)

finally, he thinks that sense perception is purely immediate and certain(164-9). So it is probably Jacobi who is the behind the scenes in chapter A.I. This is only in keeping with Hegel's general appraisal of Jacobi. In criticising theories of immediate knowledge—whether concerning intellectual or sense intuition—Hegel usually has Jacobi foremost in mind. Thus, in the Enzyklopädie, it is Jacobi who represents the third attitude of thought toward objectivity, 'das unmittelbare Wissen'. See Hegel, Werke, viii. 148-9. That Jacobi is Hegel's target here only confirms my point that the argument of chapter A.I. applies to immediacy in general. For in the Enzyklopädie Hegel sees Jacobi as the advocate of pure immediacy, especially as it applies to intellectual intuition.

1. PhG, p. 81

they might be attributed to other times and places on other occasions; and (b) it is possible to negate them, to say 'It is not here and now', when negation is a distinguishing feature of a universal from a singular term.¹ If, however, any identification of an object requires universals, then it is not possible to have a direct or immediate knowledge of it, for any universal of necessity creates mediation. It produces 'mediation' in two senses. 1) The universal intervenes, mediates or comes between consciousness and its object. It is not simply a direct singular representation of a particular, but a 'representation of a representation' in the Kantian sense, since it is a common feature of many particulars. 2) The universal knows the object not by itself, but only through its relations to other objects. As a common property of many objects, it knows an object only through its similarities to others; and as a determination, acquiring its determinate meaning only by the negation of other determinations, it knows an object only through its contrasts to others. In either case, the object is not known directly or immediately, either without the intervention of a third term, or as it is in itself, apart from its relations to anything else.

The result of this dialectic is that the advocate of pure immediacy faces a dilemma. His object is either identifiable or unidentifiable. If it is identifiable, then it is always known through universals, so that there cannot be immediate knowledge of it; but if it is unidentifiable, then it is no better than an unknowable thing-in-itself, and hence far from the certain

1. Ibid., pp. 81-2

foundation of all knowledge. The only path out of the dilemma is to deny that identification requires concepts: but that position has just been destroyed by the dialectic! So pure immediacy has to face a grim choice: its object is either a bare particular—and an unknowable thing-in-itself—or it is 'clothed' by universals—so that it is known only by mediation.

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The argument of chapter A.I. of the PhG is not Hegel's only argument for the necessity of mediation. He has another argument which goes even a step further: that concepts are necessary not only to define or identify the nature of an object, but also to determine that it exists; in other words, they are a pre-condition for knowing not only its essence, but also its existence. According to Hegel, anything that exists has to be identifiable in principle by concepts, so that only they can correspond to something in reality. A purely immediate intuition does not just fail to describe its object, then, but it in fact does not even have an object. There is nothing which can be the object of a purely immediate intuition.

Although Hegel never sets forth an explicit argument for this extra claim, he still assumes its conclusion, and he also commits himself to its premises. There are two premises to take into account. 1) Only a concept, not an intuition, knows the determinate. A concept knows the determinate, because to determine something is to identify it from other things, and this is the special task of the understanding. An intuition cannot

know the determinate, however, since it sees its object as a whole and unity, and not in this or that determinate respect. What it knows is therefore purely indeterminate, the negation of any determination, the abstraction of pure self-identity, $A=A$. Hence Hegel equates pure immediacy with the abstract thought of pre-Kantian metaphysics, since they both deal with pure abstractions:

'Abstraktes Denken (die Form der reflektierenden Metaphysik) und abstraktes Anschauen (die Form des unmittelbaren Wissens) sind ein und dasselbe...Die Unmittelbarkeit ist ueberhaupt abstrakte Beziehung auf sich und somit abstrakte Identität, abstrakte Allgemeinheit'.¹

This is a cruel ad hominem point against Schelling. For it means that intellectual intuition does not revive metaphysics, but that it only relapses into the old principles of pre-Kantian rationalism. 2) All that exists is determinate. If a universal exists, it does not exist by itself, but only in this or that particular.² Hence to know that something exists is to know that it exists in some determinate form:

'Das Dasein ist Qualität, sich selbst gleiche Bestimmtheit oder...bestimmter Gedanken; dies ist der Verstand des Daseins.'³

So, pulling these premises together: if anything that exists is determinate, and if only a concept knows the determinate, then it follows that only a concept knows what exists. An intuition cannot know anything that exists, however, for its object is purely indeterminate, an abstraction not corresponding to anything in reality.

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1. Hegel, Werke, viii. 164; no. 74
 2. Ibid., viii. 81-2; no. 24, Zusatz
 3. PhG, p. 46

Hegel's critique of intellectual intuition does not end with his arguments against pure immediacy. This is only the first round in a long, bitter fight. Another round begins in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG. Here Hegel probes another weakness of intellectual intuition: its claim to be self-evident and self-justifying, knowledge which does not require demonstration according to the standards of the understanding. When Hegel demands that the standpoint of philosophy cast off its appearance and justify itself before ordinary consciousness,¹ he is criticising—albeit tacitly—Schelling's claim that philosophy begins with a self-justifying intuition which need take no notice of the opposing standpoint of ordinary consciousness. This critique of Schelling also occurs—although no more explicitly, but still with more polemical intent—in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG. This is how Hegel describes the dogmatism of intellectual intuition:

'...die Begeisterung, die wie aus der Pistole mit dem absoluten Wissen unmittelbar anfängt und mit andern Standpunkten dadurch schon fertig ist, dass sie keine Notiz davon zu nehmen erklärt'¹

This is surely a reference to Schelling, who begins his Darstellung meines Systems with his first principle $A=A$, and who then dismisses the claims of ordinary consciousness as mere 'Schein'. Later on, in his Geschichte der Philosophie, Hegel will complain that Schelling only asserts and announces his first principle without attempting to justify it before opposing standpoints.²

1. Ibid., p. 26

2. Hegel, Werke, xx. 434-6

The main problem of pretending that philosophy has self-justifying intuitions, Hegel argues, is that it simply begs the question against ordinary consciousness.¹ If philosophy appeals to its immediate intuitions and asserts that the subject and object are identical with one another, ordinary consciousness has the equal right to reply that the subject and object are distinct from one another in its experience. What is given in ordinary experience appears to contradict philosophy's principle of subject-object identity: the object seems to be given apart from the subject, for the subject has no conscious control over how and when it appears. Against ordinary consciousness, philosophy has only the appeal to its intuition; but consciousness has the equal right to appeal to its experience. But one mere assurance of the truth is just as good as another. So, unless philosophy surrenders its claim to dogmatic insight, unless it makes the serious effort to justify itself before ordinary consciousness, it has no right to set itself up as the superior standpoint.

It is precisely Hegel's recognition that philosophy must justify itself before ordinary consciousness which drives him back to the standpoint of epistemology or the critique of knowledge. For philosophy justifies itself before ordinary consciousness, he argues, only when it provides itself to be necessary according to the standpoint of consciousness itself. Philosophy cannot demonstrate its necessity from its own principles without begging the question against con-

1. PhG, p. 66.

consciousness all over again. If, however, philosophy is to prove itself to be necessary according to the standpoint of consciousness itself, then consciousness has to examine and criticise itself, to make its beliefs undergo an internal dialectic. Obviously, if consciousness is to reject its first beliefs about its experience (ie. that there is a subject-object dualism), and if it is to accept the principle of philosophy (ie. the principle of subject-object identity) which contradicts them, then it must submit its beliefs to an inner dialectic, ie. a self-examination and self-criticism according to its own standards of knowledge. Without such a dialectic, the conflict between philosophy and ordinary consciousness remains. This inner dialectic, though, represents nothing less than a return to the standpoint of epistemology. Hegel now sees Kant's point and agrees to the priority of a critique of knowledge: consciousness has to examine and criticise its beliefs about knowledge before it attains actual knowledge. He then breaks with Schelling and the Spinozian tradition which demands actual knowledge before acquiring the knowledge of knowledge.

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Along with his polemic against intellectual intuition, Hegel dismisses Schelling's method of construction. Although Hegel himself employs this method in his systematic writings up until early 1804,¹ he eventually turns against it with a

1. See, for example, Hegel's 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit in Jenaer Schriften, ed. G. Irrlitz (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1972), pp. 431-2. Hegel still uses this method in his 1803/04 Philosophie des Geistes where he constructs the 'Potenzen' of consciousness. See Hegel, Jenaer Realphilosophie I, ed. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner, 1931), pp.

vengeance. His critique appears in its most explicit and vehement form in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG.¹ Here Hegel's main point against construction is that it cannot possibly achieve its basic aim or resolve its original problem. Its aim is to grasp each particular within the universe as a whole, to demonstrate that everything is an appearance of the absolute. Its problem is to explain how all the distinct particulars of experience, which have no apparent necessary connection with one another, nonetheless unite in a single whole and connect in one system. But this is an aim which it cannot achieve, and a problem which it cannot resolve. Rather than showing that all distinct particulars still manage to form a single whole, Hegel argues, construction simply negates and abstracts from all the differences between particulars, so that it sees them only insofar as they have already lost all their distinctions from one another. It casts aside all their differences and refuses to them as appearances of the absolute. These differences are only an illusion, Schelling explains, posited by an arbitrary reflection which is outside the absolute.² And yet the problem all along is precisely to explain how all these distinct particulars are still appearances of a single absolute! It is trivial to assume that they are such appearances only insofar as their differences are already negated, since without their differences they are obviously and immediately one. But that still leaves the problem of how philosophy accounts for all those distinct particulars which are given within experience.

1. PhG, pp. 17-19, 35-44

2. Schelling, Werke, iii. 21-2, 194

Even if they are illusory, their existence in the absolute still has to be explained, for even illusions are undeniably part of the universe as a whole. All this is what is behind Hegel's famous damning indictment of Schelling:

'...so sehen wir hier ie. with the method of construction der allgemeinen Idee in dieser Form der Unwirklichkeit allen Wert zugeschrieben und die Auflösung des Unterschiedenen und Bestimmten, oder vielmehr das weiter nicht entwickelte noch an ihm selbst sich Hinunterwerfen desselben in den Abrund des Leeren für spekulative Betrachtungsart gelten. Irgeind Dasein, wie es im Absoluten ist, besteht hier in nichts anderem, als dass davon gesagt wird, es sei zwar von ihm gesprochen worden als von einem Etwas; im Absoluten, dem $A=A$, jedoch gebe es dergleichen gar nicht, sondern darin sei alles eins. Dies Eine Wissen, dass im Absoluten Alles gleich ist...oder sein Absolutes für die Nacht auszugeben, worin, wie man zu sagen pflegt, alle Kühe schwarz sind, ist die Naivität der Leere an Erkenntnis.'¹

Another criticism which Hegel levels against construction is that it degenerates into an empty formalism. He virtually equates construction with formalism when he says that the external and empty application of a fixed formula to a subject matter is called 'construction.'² By 'formalism', Hegel means an a priori conceptual scheme, or a pre-established system of classification, which is blindly applied to its subject matter for its own sake. A universal from this scheme or system is externally tacked onto the particular without determining whether it is necessary from the particular. It then appears as if the particular 'manifests' the universal, as if it were explained according to the absolute standpoint, although that is only because the universal is forced upon it and read into it. Thus formalism amounts to nothing less than a self-verifying Procrustean bed. As an

1. PhG, pp. 18-19

2. Ibid., p. 42

example of such a procedure, consider how Schelling divides up the universe in the beginning of his 1803 Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums.¹ Schelling begins with his intuition of the absolute as subject-object identity, and then fits nature and history into his intuition by calling history and time the 'subjective pole' and nature and space the 'objective pole'. Never does he examine nature and history for their own sake to see if they reveal subject-object identity from their own inner necessity. According to Hegel, such formalism is not only a misuse of construction, but it is in fact necessary to it. It is the inevitable result of its demand that the philosopher negate and abstract from all the differences between particulars. Abstracting away all their differences naturally leads to forcing them into some pre-conceived universal. Never does the philosopher examine the particular for its own sake to see the universal that derives from its inner necessity.

The basic problem with formalism, as Hegel sees it, is that the philosopher does not know his subject matter in itself, apart from how it appears to him according to his pre-conceived schema.² He does not consider his subjectmatter in itself or for its own sake to see the universal which emerges from its inner development. The universal from the philosopher's schema then remains external to his subject matter, reflecting only the philosopher's thought about it rather than its own inner identity. The result is that formalism betrays

1. Schelling, Werke, iii. 240, 272

2. PhG, pp. 41-3

Schelling's own principle of subject-object identity: it creates a subject-object dualism since it separates the philosopher's reflection upon his object from the object itself. This objection against formalism only repeats Hegel's critique of the mathematical method: this method introduces a subject-object dualism because it is only a means of knowledge and remains external to its object.¹ His critique of the mathematical method, though, is a disguised critique of Schelling, who models his method of construction around mathematics. Against Schelling, Hegel is saying that his revival of the mathematical method cannot satisfy his basic principle of subject-object identity.

* * *

It is not only as a philosophical method, though, that Hegel rejects intellectual intuition. It is not only that intellectual intuition cannot justify itself as the organ or method for absolute knowledge, but also that it cannot account for the origins of absolute knowledge. If it cannot vindicate itself before the quid juris?, it does no better before the quid facti?. What Hegel singles out for criticism is its a-social, a-historical account of the origins of absolute knowledge.

According to Schelling's 1804 System, an intellectual intuition is both a-historical and a-social.² It is a-historical because it is eternal, contemplation which transcends time.

1. Ibid., 35-6

2. Schelling, Werke, Erg. ii. 491-2

Its source is not the activity of the contemplator, but the grace of God. An intellectual intuition is also a-social since its self-awareness does not arise from the mutual recognition of a community or the education into a cultural tradition. Rather, its self-awareness comes more from the isolated, solitary contemplation of art and nature. Each individual must find eternity within himself, Schelling says,¹ and in such a quest he is condemned to solitude. Here Schelling comes under the spell of two romantic novels, Hölderlin's Hyperion and Novalis's Die Lehrling zu Sais. The heroes of these novels find their self-awareness in nature by shunning the company of their fellow men. Hölderlin's Hyperion is a hermit whose hopeless longing for the lost community and liberty of ancient Greece forces him to seek consolation in the arms of nature; Novalis' Hyazinth leaves his homeland on a solitary pilgrimage to find the truth of nature. In their solitude, both of our heroes find their self-awareness in nature.² What Schelling thus advises the philosopher is nothing less than the seclusion of a Hyperion, the pilgrimage of a Hyazinth.

Nothing more provokes Hegel's wrath than the a-historical pretensions of intellectual intuition. Rather than eternal, Hegel argues that absolute knowledge is only the final result of the history of consciousness. When the advocate of pure immediacy sees his knowledge as a sudden timeless illumination,

1. Ibid., Erg. ii. 493

2. See Novalis, Werke, p. 131, and Hölderlin, Werke, iii. 8-9

he only makes a false abstraction from his own intellectual education. He suffers from amnesia since he forgets that his knowledge comes from his initiation into a long and old cultural tradition. What appears self-evident and obvious now was in fact a great insight in the past, a profound discovery earned through the most prodigious labour. And so Hegel writes in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG:

'Allein eine vollkommene Wirklichkeit hat dies Neue so wenig als das eben geborene Kind; und dies ist wesentlich nicht ausser Acht zu lassen. Das erste Auftreten ist erst seine Unmittelbarkeit oder sein Begriff. So wenig ein Gebäude fertig ist, wenn sein Grund gelegt worden ist, so wenig ist der erreichte Begriff des Ganzen das Ganze selbst ...So ist die Wissenschaft, die Krone einer Welt des Geistes, nicht in ihrem Anfange vollendet. Der Anfang des neuen Geistes ist das Produkt einer weitläufigen Umwälzung von mannigfaltigen Bildungsformen, der Preis eines vielfach verschlungenen Weges und ebenso vielfacher Anstrengung und Bemühung'.¹

What the ego knows comes through only the most strenuous effort of enquiry, through the harshest self-criticism of its immediate intuitions, and through the worst suffering and experience as a result of its own errors. It is self-deceptive to pretend that it comes from the grace of God: that is for the ego to simply alienate his autonomy, his power to think for himself. Here again Hegel returns to the fold of the critique. He commits himself to Kant's and Fichte's principle of autonomy: that the ego is only what he makes of himself, that he becomes what he is only through his own efforts, and that he acquires his knowledge only through the result of his own enquiry.

1. PhG, p. 16

Hegel equally dismisses the a-social pretensions of intellectual intuition. Against Schelling, he maintains that the ego attains absolute knowledge—the self-awareness that his identity depends upon the universe as a whole—not through the solitary contemplation of nature, but through the mutual recognition of the community and the recollection of its cultural traditions. In making society and not nature into the locus for absolute knowledge, Hegel accuses Schelling of failing to appreciate one fundamental point: that self-awareness or rationality is intersubjective. What makes man rational, Hegel argues, is not simply the organic powers of nature, ie. sheer biological life, but his education into the institutions and customs of the public life of his community. Thus, in his 1802 Naturrecht essay, Hegel cites Aristotle's Politics with approval: the state is a whole which is prior to the individual; apart from this whole, man is either a beast or a god.¹ It is the task of the community to educate men to reason: to teach them how to control their animal desires, to exercise their choice, and to act according to universal norms. Now it is this recognition of the intersubjectivity of rationality in the Naturrecht essay which compels Hegel to make society and not nature into the setting for absolute knowledge. If absolute knowledge is the self-awareness of dependence upon the universal whole, then this whole ought to be society, not nature, for it is after all society which makes oneself into a rational being. And so in his 1802/03 System der Sittlich-

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 506

keit, Hegel makes the public life of a Volk into the setting for absolute knowledge.¹ Although here Hegel is still a disciple of Schelling's intellectual intuition, he still differs from Schelling by re-locating it from nature to society. He states that intellectual intuition becomes objective only in the public life of a Volk, and that subject-object identity is realised only in the mutual recognition of a community. The absolute appears to consciousness, not through the contemplation of nature, but through the self-consciousness of the universal spirit of a Volk. After putting intellectual intuition into such a social context, however, the path is open for completely dismissing the idea. For now it cannot be esoteric, the eternal insight of a genius, but it is learned, the exoteric product of a social education.

The pre-eminent role that Hegel assigns to society in his absolute idealism distinguishes him from all his contemporary absolute idealists: Schelling, Hölderlin and Schleiermacher. What all these absolute idealists requires is some criterion of subject-object identity, some proof that there is absolute knowledge. While Hölderlin and Schelling see such a criterion in art, and while Schleiermacher finds it in religion, Hegel discovers it in the self-awareness of belonging to a Volk. Although the pre-eminent role of Sittlichkeit in the 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit soon gives way to philosophy in the 1805/06 Jenaer Realphilosophie, Hegel never stops seeing philosophy as its own time comprehended in thought, as the self-conscious-

1. Hegel, Jenaer Schriften, pp. 480-1

ness of the spirit of a Volk. Art and religion are seen only as a means of presenting the spirit of a Volk to consciousness. And here Hegel departs from his contemporaries in one fundamental respect. Unlike Hölderlin, Schelling and Schleiermacher, Hegel does not share in the credo of Schiller's Aesthetische Briefe: that the artist stands aloof from the corruption of his age, that he achieves an independent voice, and that he expresses timeless truths that hold for all men.¹ It is this Schillerian faith in the artist which accounts for the privileged status of art in romantic thought. In this respect, though, Hegel breaks decisively with the romantic tradition. Hegel insists that the artist shares the same fate as the philosopher: he only voices the self-consciousness of his age and cannot leap beyond his own time.

* * *

Hegel's polemic against intellectual intuition does not remain on the abstract level of epistemology, however. He also attacks it in a more practical domain: that of political philosophy. The problem with intellectual intuition, he argues, is not only that it cannot be the basis for the consensus of the community, but that it also undermines the right of self-thought. These political points cannot be anything but fundamental objections for Hegel. For, throughout his Jena years, he thinks that the task of philosophy is political: its aim is to re-establish the idea of the community, to restore

1. Schiller, Werke, ii. 461-3

the ideal of the Greek polis, while nonetheless remaining true to the modern demand for individual autonomy and self-thought.¹

What goes wrong with intellectual intuition that it cannot fulfill the political ideal of philosophy?² There are two difficulties that arise. 1) It cannot provide a basis for intersubjective agreement or universal consent. It is simply notorious that people differ in their intuitions, and that there is no rational standard to settle the conflict between them. What is only intuited remains personal and cannot be universalised into a law which is valid for everyone alike. 2) It also destroys the right of self-thought. People not only disagree in their intuitions, but also not everyone has a capacity for all of them. Some are esoteric, the preserve of a select few with innate powers or extraordinary talents. Such esotericism then permits the possibility of an elite who have the exclusive privilege to fathom the divine mysteries. The majority, who have no special talents or powers, then have no right to judge the right or wrong, the truth or falsity, of the beliefs, practises and institutions based upon such feelings and intuitions. They have no choice but to submit to the authority of an elite, then, who alone possess

1. That the aim of philosophy in the Jena years is political will be explained and justified later on in chapter 6, section II.

2. For another explanation of the political issues behind Hegel's critique of intellectual intuition, see R. Plant, Hegel (London, George, Allen & Unwin, 1973), pp. 86-9

the insight into the truth and rectitude of the laws and traditions. Hence a government which bases its legitimacy upon an esoteric intellectual intuition eventually lapses into authoritarianism, depriving the individual of his autonomy, his power to judge laws and traditions for himself according to his own understanding. Hegel criticises intellectual intuition on both these grounds—its failure to establish consensus and to satisfy the demand for self-thought—in some concentrated sentences in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG:

'Indem jener sich auf das Gefühl, sein inwendiges Orakel beruft, ist er gegen den, der nicht uebereinstimmt, fertig; er muss erklären, dass er dem weiter nichts zu sagen habe, der nicht dasselbe in sich finde und fühle;—mit andern Worten, er tritt der Humanität mit Füßen. Denn die Natur dieser ist auf die Uebereinkunft mit andern zu dringen, und ihre Existenz nur in der zustande gebrachten Gemeinsamkeit der Bewusstsein e.'

Now both these difficulties—the loss of intersubjectivity and authoritarianism—disappear when philosophy replaces intellectual intuition with the concepts of the understanding (Verstand). Unlike intellectual intuition, the understanding not only guarantees intersubjective agreement, but it also provides the basis for the right of self-thought. This becomes apparent after considering Kant's notion of a concept, a notion which Hegel inherits from Kant. According to the first Kritik, a concept is a universal and necessary rule, ie. it is a maxim or judgement which is universalisable and which has to be valid for everyone alike.² Since a concept is universalisable, it

1. PhG, p. 56
2. KrV, A 106

has two features which distinguish it from intuition and feeling. 1) A concept is intersubjective, securing agreement among everyone alike, since universalisability is a test which demands nothing more than logical consistency, a standard to which everyone has to consent as a rational being. 2) A concept is exoteric, belonging to everyone alike just as an intelligent being, for universalisation is a test which requires only ordinary intelligence and no special gifts or talents.¹ Kant advocates both these advantages of discursive thought against intuition in two later polemical essays—the 1786 'Was heisst: Sich im Denken orientiren?', and the 1796 'Von einem nuerdings vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie'—where he attacks Jacobi's romantic cult of feeling.² In the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, Hegel allies himself with Kant, criticising the romantics on the same grounds. Like Kant, he contrasts the exotericism or the concepts of the understanding to the esotericism of intuition,³ and he points out that conceptual thought is universal or intersubjective, unlike intuition which is only personal or private.⁴

1. In the second Kritik, Kant sees universalisability as the only guarantee of universal laws, and as the only criterion of morality which is available to everyone alike. See Kritik der praktischen Vernunft in Schriften, v. 25-7.

2. See Kant's Schriften, viii. 131-148, 387-406. Though written some time before the PhG, Kant's essays are a likely influence upon Hegel since the similarities between their views are truly striking and remarkable.

3. PhG, p. 17

4. Ibid., pp. 56-7

4.

Hegel's Phenomenology and the Meta-Critique

Introductory

If Hegel's aim is necessary, then how does he achieve it? What problems arise for his attempt to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge, and how does he resolve them? This question sets the investigation for the next two chapters.

In trying to justify metaphysics through the critique, Hegel confronts one serious challenge in the post-Kantian meta-critical campaign. After the meta-critique of Hamann, Herder, Schulze, Schlegel and Reinhold, the programme of a critique of knowledge appears naive and questionable, to say the least. The critique is hardly a safe foundation for metaphysics because it is not on a safe foundation itself.

Hegel is far from timid in rising to the challenge of the meta-critique. The point of his phenomenological method in the PhG is to resurrect the critique while still resolving all the problems raised by the meta-critique.

The task of the following chapter is to place Hegel in the critical and meta-critical tradition. This demands a short account of Kant's programme of critique, and a brief summary of some of the main points of the meta-critical campaign. I shall then set forth Hegel's early justification for the critique in his 1802 'Kritik' essay, and explain how his phenomenological method in the PhG reverses his earlier programme of critique in order to account for the meta-critique.

The Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason

How does Kant conceive the task of epistemology?

What is the aim of his critique of pure reason? In the pre-faces and introduction to the first Kritik, Kant gives a simple and straightforward answer to this question. The problem of the critique is not to know the origin of reason—what causes stimulate it into activity—but to know the validity of reason—the conditions and limits of its knowledge.¹ It does not raise the question quid facti?, but quid juris?, ie. it does not ask where the concepts of reason come from, but whether or not they are true.² Its concern is not with the causal conditions for the faculty of thought in general, but the truth conditions for the knowledge of reason in particular.³ The aim of the critique is to investigate what reason knows independently of all experience,⁴ and hence its subject matter is 'pure' reason. It therefore examines the conditions of synthetic a priori knowledge, ie. knowledge which is universal and necessary (a priori), and not empirical and contingent (a posteriori), and knowledge which is true of reality (synthetic) and not the meaning of concepts (analytic).⁵ Since metaphysics is the science which makes claims to synthetic a priori knowledge, the task of the critique is to decide nothing less than the possibility of metaphysics.⁶

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1. KrV, A ix, xvi-xvii
 2. Ibid., B 116-7
 3. Ibid., A xvii
 4. Ibid., A xii
 5. Ibid., B 19
 6. Ibid., B 21-3

Kant describes the critique as the call to reason to undertake the most difficult of all its tasks: the self-awareness of its own laws.¹ Since the aim of the critique is to determine the conditions and limits of reason, it has to know the universal and necessary standards of reason, which define these conditions and set these limits. These standards then act as the basis of the critique. The critique of pure reason is in fact nothing more than a tribunal to test reason—to arbitrate its disputes, to uphold its rightful claims and to dismiss its groundless pretensions—according to its own universal and necessary standards.² This tribunal is not an external standard forced upon reason, which governs it by despotic decrees, censoring and constraining it.³ Rather, it is the self-examination and self-criticism of reason, its self-discipline according to its own laws. Hence the double meaning of the genitive in the title Kritik der reinen Vernunft: reason is both judge and defendant, both the instrument of the inquiry and its subject matter. Reason is a self-governing faculty, Kant thinks, capable of finding its errors, of adjudicating its disputes, and of disciplining itself according to its own laws. It does not have to defer to another faculty—eg.: the physical senses or an intellectual intuition—to put its house in order or to be at peace with itself.⁴

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1. Ibid., A xi
 2. Ibid., A xi, B 26, B 799
 3. Ibid., A xi-xii
 4. Ibid., A xx

How does reason become self-conscious of its laws? How does it know its standards and principles? Sadly, Kant raises this question, but never thoroughly answers it. He simply states that to know the principles of pure reason, he has to do nothing but consult his own self, because he does not have to deal with empirical, but strictly a priori principles.¹ Reason is self-explaining and self-illuminating, Kant thinks, since it knows only its own activity, and its activity is perfectly transparent to itself.² The philosopher has no problem in knowing the principles of reason, then, because they are the products of his own spontaneity. He only has to actively think out the principles that he seeks, and—lo and behold!—they are there. Kant explains that his main aim is to have a complete and exhaustive knowledge of all the principles of pure reason, so that they form a system which is organised around a single principle.³ He does not think that it is difficult to achieve such completeness, for pure reason is a unity, and it reveals itself once its common principle is discovered.⁴ He cites logic as an example of how all the forms of reason can be systematically and exhaustively organised.⁵

The final goal of the critique is to put synthetic a priori knowledge upon a firm foundation. It is to be the basis for a complete and certain system of pure reason, every part of which is certified by its tribunal.⁶ In order to put

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1. Ibid., A xiv, B 23
 2. Ibid., A xx, B xiii, xxviii
 3. Ibid., A xiii
 4. Ibid., A xiii-xiv, xx
 5. Ibid., B xx, B 24-5
 6. Ibid., B xx, B 24-5

reason upon such a sure foundation, the critique resorts to a radical scepticism: it suspends all presuppositions and doubts all beliefs. It regards all beliefs as uncertain until they are known to satisfy its standard of knowledge. It demands knowing the conditions of knowledge before acquiring knowledge, since the claim to know that P, and not just to believe that P, presupposes knowledge of the conditions of knowledge. By thus doubting and testing all claims to synthetic a priori knowledge, the critique guarantees that they amount to knowledge and not just belief or illusion.

Although Kant's ultimate aim is to create a system of pure reason, the critique is still only a propadetic to such a system. It is only the preliminary to synthetic a priori knowledge in that it does not add to it, but only examines and criticises it; it does not make claims to synthetic a priori knowledge, but only tests and corrects them.¹ The critique of pure reason has to precede the system of pure reason, or the investigation of knowledge has to be prior to the acquisition of knowledge, since no beliefs are certain and fit to be within the system of pure reason until they are known to satisfy the standard of the critique.

To Kant, the critical path alone remains open. He sees criticism as the only rational middle ground between the irrational extremes of scepticism and dogmatism. On the one hand, the critique is not scepticism since it does not deny

1. Ibid., B 25-6

knowledge, but only investigates its origins and limits. While scepticism attempts to destroy reason, the critique aims to provide it with a firm foundation.¹ Although the critical philosopher also engages in radical doubt, it is doubt of a different kind from that of the sceptic: it is not a categorical denial of belief, but only a hypothetical suspension of it until it is tested by the standard of the critique. On the other hand, though, the critique is not dogmatism because it brings all beliefs under a free and open examination. Although it does not oppose the dogmatic method—the clear use of principles, the unambiguous definition of concepts and strictness of proof—it does object to its uncritical employment. The critique does not proceed without any further ado to use reason, since it demands an investigation into this faculty before trusting any of its claims to synthetic a priori knowledge.

It is necessary to see the critique in the context of the main social-political movement of its day: the Enlightenment. Kant himself virtually equates the goal of the critique with this movement. Alluding to the Enlightenment in a footnote to the first preface to the Kritik, he writes: 'Unser Zeitalter ist das eigentliche Zeitalter der Kritik, der sich alles unterwerfen muss'.² The critique shares and promotes at least two of the ideals of the Enlightenment. 1) It makes the individual act on the maxim 'Sapere aude!' and use his own understanding. Since the critique is the call to reason to

1. Ibid., B 788-9, B 795

2. Ibid., A xii

be self-conscious of its own powers, and since it also demands that all beliefs be brought under criticism, it compels the individual to be aware of his reason and to exercise it. He then no longer needs to rely upon the guidance of an external authority in making judgements. 2) The critique also represents the Enlightenment's ideal of a public and exoteric truth and makes common cause against the esoteric truths of the state and religion. The tribunal of the critique is based upon reason, but this reason belongs to everyone alike just as an intelligent being; hence Kant describes it as 'die allgemeine menschlichen Vernunft, worin ein jeder seine Stimme hat'.¹

II

The Meta-Critical Campaign and the Collapse of the Critique

Such are the lofty aims and admirable ambitions of Kant's critique of pure reason. It is a programme, though, which is by no means as trouble-free as it appears. One serious and fateful question soon arises: how does the critique justify its own tribunal? How does it know the conditions and limits of reason? This is a question which the critique simply cannot avoid. For if it demands that all

1. Ibid., B 780

beliefs submit to criticism, then that surely ought to also hold for its own tribunal. All the doubts that the critique raises against first-order knowledge ought to then equally well apply against its own second-order knowledge. And, indeed, if the critique is the self-examination of reason, where there is no distinction between the examining subject and the examined object, then all the questions raised about the object ought to also be raised about the subject. And yet these self-critical doubts and questions admit of no easy answer. They put the critique in the most serious dilemma. If the critique dismisses these doubts, then it lapses into dogmatism; but if it attempts to justify itself, then it has to appeal to another higher-order tribunal, so that an infinite regress arises. The regress is inevitable since the critique insists that to know that P always requires knowing the higher-order conditions of knowing that P. This dilemma then means that the critique cannot justify itself without falling into the dangerous extremes of dogmatism and scepticism. Its middle path now turns out to be nothing but a self-deception.

That the critique collapses under the weight of its own self-critical doubts is the theme of the meta-critical campaign. The opening salvo of this campaign is fired by Hamann in his 1784 essay 'Metakritik uber den Purismus der Vernunft'. Only three years after the publication of the

first edition of the Kritik,¹ he completes his review, raising the fatal question of the critique's self-justification. According to Hamann, the critique is guilty of a simple but basic fallacy: the 'purism' of reason. Kant purifies reason when he abstracts it from sense experience, tradition, and—worst of all—language.² He thinks that reason subsists in a self-sufficient noumenal realm which transcends all these phenomenal realms, and which exists prior to them. What he fails to appreciate, however, is that reason is of necessity linguistic and cultural. It does not transcend language and tradition, Hamann argues, because they are its very media and criteria 'What is reason?', Hamann asks himself, and he answers that it is only an idol, a reification apart from its expression in language.³ 'Das einzige erste und letzte Organon und Kriterion der Vernunft'—that is Hamann's formula for the place of language in reason.⁴ Like Herder before him, Hamann regards language as not only the medium of thought, but also its criterion in the sense that thought becomes determinate only through its articulation into words.⁵ This dependence of reason upon language, though, only goes to show how it also depends upon a cultural tradition. For language is anything but a-historical and a-social, Hamann insists. Words

1. The essay was finished on December 8th, 1783. It was not published, however, until 1800. On the circumstances surrounding the publication and composition of the 'Metakritik', see J. Nadler, Hamann, 'Der Zeuge des Corpus Mysticum' (Salzburg, Muller Verlag, 1949), pp. 346-350.

2. Hamann, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Nadler, (Vienna, Herder Verlag, 1949), iii. 284-5

3. See Hamann's Briefwechsel, vii. 172, October 28, 1785, an Jacobi; v. 108, December 8, 1783 an Herder; and v. 177, August 6, 1784 an Herder.

4. Hamann, Werke, iii. 284

5. See Herder's 1774 Abhandlung zur Ursprung der Sprache in Werke v. 34-5

only get their meaning from traditions or their use in a community; thus he states that language is 'ohne ein ander Creditiv als Ueberlieferung und Usum'.¹ In accusing Kant of purifying reason, Hamann probes one of his weakest spots: his inability to answer the quid facti?, to explain the social, historical and linguistic origins of rational thought and action. What compels Kant to purify reason is nothing less than his noumenal-phenomenal dualism, which forbids phenomenal causes to have noumenal effects. This dualism then means that reason is simply given and eternal, the effect of a purely timeless, inexplicable noumenal spontaneity. Against Kant, though, Hamann points out that reason cannot be given and eternal, for it is just a fact that rational thought and action arises and develops only from learning the use of a language and the education into a cultural tradition. Now such a de-purified view of reason compels Hamann to reject Kant's method for acquiring transcendental knowledge. The philosopher can no longer know the principles of reason through sheer a priori self-reflection, as Kant assumes, but only through seeing how they embody themselves in language and a cultural tradition. It is absurd to assume that the philosopher can think out all the principles of reason completely by himself, even as a self-sufficient noumenon. Such a noumenon would know nothing about reason, for it would never have learned the use of a language or have been educated into a cultural tradition.

1. Hamann, Werke, iii. 284

After Hamann, the next striking figure in the meta-critical campaign is G. E. Schulze. His meta-critique appears in his epistolary treatise Aenesidemus, which is published in 1792. Schulze sets himself up as a sceptic (ie Aenesidemus) who doubts if there is any dogmatic (ie. universal and necessary) knowledge about things-in-themselves and the sources and limits of knowledge. He does not claim that there is no knowledge about these things—for that too would be a dogmatic assertion—but only that there is no dogmatic knowledge about them.¹ The point of scepticism is to stimulate the striving after truth, so that it brings into question all doctrines which threaten the expansion of enquiry.² It doubts not only dogmatic metaphysical claims, but also dogmatic epistemological claims about the sources and limits of knowledge. Starting from such a sceptical standpoint, Schulze then asks himself: can the critique justify its universal and necessary claims about the sources and limits of knowledge? His answer is a decisive and emphatic 'no!!'. The main theme of Aenesidemus is that the critical philosophy cannot justify its transcendental knowledge by its own standards. The critical philosophy has to go beyond experience in order to discover its pre-conditions, since they are prior to it and not given in it; but at the same time it categorically insists that all knowledge has to remain within the limits of

1. G.E. Schulze, Aenesidemus, oder uber die Fundamente der von dem Herrn Professor Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementar-Philosophie, ed. A. Liebart (Berlin, Reuter u. Reinhard, 1911) pp. 24-5. (All page numbers refer to the original edition, reprinted at the top of the page in the Kantgesellschaft re-edition).

2. Ibid., pp. 29-30

possible experience.¹ So its transcendental knowledge is illegitimate by its own standard, and transcends the limits of experience no less than the metaphysics it brings into question. Schulze confesses that he finds it difficult to be serious about the aims of the critical philosophy when he compares them with its means of achieving them. The critique aims to have universal and necessary principles about the limits and powers of knowledge. And by what means does it establish such principles? Through its experience and inferences from it. There cannot be any other means as long as the critique remains true to its own standard of knowledge. But, Schulze argues, as Hume points out, experience gives us knowledge only of the particular and contingent, so that it cannot be the basis for universal and necessary conclusions. Because something is observed in my experience, it does not follow that it will be observed in the experience of everyone else; and because it happens to be true of everyone's experience does not mean that it must be true.² Schulze never tires of pointing out that all the limits that Kant assigns to first-order knowledge equally well apply against his own second-order transcendental knowledge. Kant suffers from his own 'transcendental illusion', he insists, if he thinks that he has any more knowledge about the knowing faculty than anything else. And, to prove his point, Schulze comes forth with a telling argument. If Kant is to determine the sources of know-

1. Ibid., pp. 168-9

2. Ibid., pp. 403-8

ledge, then he has to apply the categories to the faculty of knowledge, eg. he applies the category of causality when he states that the spontaneous activity of the understanding is the source of a priori concepts. Kant argues, however, that the categories give knowledge only of appearances, and never of things-in-themselves. Hence his transcendental knowledge is also limited to appearances, and the faculty of knowledge in itself is just as unknowable as reality as a whole.¹

After Hamann and Schulze, and largely due to Hamann's inspiration,² Herder continues the meta-critical campaign against Kant. In his 1799 Metakritik, he too raises the crucial question of the critique's self-justification. He begins by pointing out a curious circularity in the tribunal of critique:

'Wenn aber Vernunft kritisiert werden soll, von wem kann sie es werden? Nicht anders als von ihr selbst; mithin ist sie Partei und Richter. Und wonach kann sie gerichtet werden? Nicht anders als nach sich selbst; mithin ist sie auch Gesetz und Zeuge. Sofort erblickt man die Schwierigkeit dieses Richteramts'.³

For Herder, the self-criticism of reason is not an ideal, but a paradox. According to the critique, he says, reason

1. Ibid., 172-6

2. Herder's meta-critique is directly stimulated by Hamann, and in many respects it is only a restatement of Hamann. On Hamann's influence upon Herder in the meta-critical campaign, see Haym, Herder nach seinem Leben und Wirken (Berlin, Gaertner, 1855), ii. 662-5

However, both Haym and Berlin wrongly see Herder as only Hamann's disciple in the struggle against Kant. See Haym, op. cit., p. 662 and Berlin, Vico and Herder (London, Hogarth Press, 1976), p. 167. This ignores the fact that Hamann borrows Herder's theme—already presented in the 1772 Abhandlung zur Ursprung der Sprache—of the bond between reason and language. Hamann indeed recognises his debt to Herder on this score. See Hamann an Herder November 9, 1785 in Briefwechsel vi. 127, and Hamann an Jacobi October 28, 1785 in Briefwechsel vi. 108.

3. Herder, Werke, xxi. 18

ought to criticise itself, so that it is both the cross-examining subject and the cross-examined object, both judge and defendant. In that case, though, all the doubts and questions that the critique raises against first-order knowledge also apply against itself. Like Hamann, Herder also harks upon the theme of the inseparability of reason and language. Language is the criterion for reason in that thought becomes determinate and actualises itself only through words:

'Die menschliche Seele denkt mit Worten; sie aussert nicht nur, sondern sie bezeichnet sich selbst auch und ordnet ihre Gedanken mittels der Sprache'.¹

In order to understand the workings of reason, Herder argues, it is necessary to see how it expresses itself in language, and how it arises from experience. Kant proceeds in precisely the wrong direction: he abstracts from experience and language, thinking that reason is transcendental, existing apart from and prior to all experience and language. The result: Kant hypostasises reason, making it into a self-sufficient faculty which has no interchange with sensibility, imagination, action, etc. The hypostasis of reason—the analogue of Hamann's purism—is indeed the main charge that Herder lays against Kant's Kritik:

'Menschliche Vernunft können wir zwar in Gedanken und Worten zu einem gewissen Zweck von andern Kräften unser Natur sondern; nie aber müssen wir vergessen, dass sie in ihr abgesondert von andern Kräften nicht subsistiere. Es ist dieselbe Seele, die denkt und will, die versteht und empfindet, die Vernunft übt und begehrt'.²

1. Ibid., xxi. 19

2. Ibid., xxi. 18

Around the time of the appearance of the Hamann-Herder meta-critique in 1799-1800, another figure appears on the scene to add to the growing meta-critical campaign. This figure is none other than F. Schlegel. Although his interest in the foundation of the critique stems from problems in literary criticism, his philosophical views on the critique are still important and influential. Like Hamann and Herder, Schlegel calls for the critique's self-criticism. In his 1798 Athenaeums 'Fragmente', for example, he argues that, since the critique has already criticised everything on heaven and earth, it is now high time that the critique criticises itself:

'Da die Philosophie jetzt alles, was ihr vorkommt, kritisiert, so wäre ein Kritik der Philosophie nichts als ein gerechte Repressalie'.¹

The critique's self-criticism, though, does not mean justifying, but in fact opposing the Kantian philosophy:

'Kritisch heisst die Philosophie der Kantianer wohl per antiphrason; oder es ist ein epitheton ornans'.²

Unlike Hamann, Schulze and Herder, though, Schlegel sees himself as a critical philosopher, and stresses that philosophy has to be critical:

'Auch ist kritisch wohl etwas, was man nie genug sein kann'.³

Philosophy must be self-conscious, he insists, aware of its presuppositions, methodology, and relation to the other arts and sciences. The highest form of philosophy is for him the philosophy of philosophy.⁴ And so he laments the lack of self-

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1. Schlegel, Kritische Ausgabe, ii. 173; no. 57
 2. Ibid., ii. 172; no. 47
 3. Ibid., ii, 213; no. 281
 4. Ibid., xii, 91

awareness that most philosophers have about their own activity:

'Ueber keinen Gegenstand philosophieren sie seltner als über die Philosophie'.¹

Nonetheless, if Schlegel wants to maintain the critique, he is still extremely critical of Kant's method and attempts to replace it with his own. In his 1804 lectures on Die Entwicklung der Philosophie, for example, he criticises the attempt by Kant and Descartes to brush aside the history of philosophy and to re-build it anew through their empty a priori reflection.² The only philosophy is the history of philosophy.³ There is not an absolute, a-historical standpoint to judge all philosophy, Schlegel argues, and so it is necessary to appraise each philosophy by its own historical standards, seeing if it achieves its self-imposed aims.⁴ In his early Jena and Berlin years (1796-1800), Schlegel struggles for a new critical standpoint which accounts for the historicity of reason. What Kant fails to see is that reason is not universal and eternal, consisting in a single standard for all men in all times and places; rather, reason differs from one culture to the next and changes through history, because, as Hamann argues, its only criteria are language and tradition. The problem of the critique is then to find a critical standpoint which also accounts for the relativity of reason, its variation from one culture and epoch to another. Schlegel's most systematic attempt to fuse history and the critique appears in his 1800/01 lectures on Transcendentalphilosophie.

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1. Ibid., ii. 165; no. 1
 2. Ibid., ii. 111
 3. Ibid., ii. 110-111
 4. Ibid., xii. 93, 113-4

Here Schlegel argues that the true method of philosophy is genetic: it does not evaluate a philosophy according to some abstract standard, but it understands its necessity according to the conditions of its genesis.¹ The genetic method does not replace the critical, however, but has to be united with it.² It does not criticise philosophy by some abstract standard, but from within, according to its own historical context and the spirit of its age. A truly self-critical philosophy then understands itself by its place within the whole of history.³ It does not presume to have a universal and eternal truth, but recognises that it too incarnates the spirit of its age. This attempt to unify Kant's critique with Hamann's understanding of the historicity of reason stands as Schlegel's outstanding contribution to the meta-critical campaign. Hegel will soon have to re-discover the value of some of Schlegel's original insights.⁴

The final figure to jump on the meta-critical bandwagon is Reinhold. In his 1801 Beyträge, he clearly points out the circularity which threatens the programme of epistemology. The main aim of philosophy, he writes,⁵ is to establish the reality of knowledge. If philosophy is to achieve this aim, though, it requires a clear conception of its task, a standard

1. Ibid., xii, 96, 102

2. Ibid., xii, 96

3. Ibid., xii, 96

4. Concerning Schlegel's possible influence upon Hegel, see Ernst Behler's 'Friedrich Schlegel und Hegel' in Hegel-Studien, ii (1963), 234-240

5. Reinhold, Beyträge i (1801), 1-2

to judge if it has successfully established the reality of knowledge. Such a standard, however, already amounts to a claim to knowledge, whose reality also has to be established.¹ This means that it is absurd for the critique to think that it is a purely presuppositionless enquiry into the foundation of knowledge. It cannot avoid presuppositions since it has to employ a standard to investigate knowledge, and this standard also has its presuppositions. The critical philosopher commits himself to a second-order, if not a first-order, claim to knowledge just because he assumes that his standard reflects the actual conditions and limits of knowledge. In order to escape this vicious circle, Reinhold proposes a new method of philosophy, a problematic method which only hypothetically assumes its starting point, so that it does not commit itself to dogmatic presuppositions from the very beginning.² If the philosopher is to establish the reality of knowledge, he explains, then he has to know the ultimate truth (das Ur-wahre), ie. that truth which is self-evident and unconditionally true, and he must then deduce all conditions truths from it. Since, however, the philosopher cannot know the ultimate truth when he begins, he has to begin from some conditional and hypothetical starting point. What he then has to hypothetically—and only hypothetically—assume is that his starting point is the first conditional truth, ie. that truth which is the condition of all other conditional truths, and which has as its condition only the ultimate truth itself. The philosopher confirms his starting

1. Ibid., i. 2-3

2. Ibid., i. 71-5

point later on if it proves to be the necessary stepping stone to grasping the ultimate truth.

III

Hegel's Early Programme of Critique in his 1802 'Kritik' Essay

Although it is customary to see the PhG as a reaction to Schelling's metaphysics and as Hegel's 'return to the critique',¹ it is still important to keep in mind one basic fact: that Hegel is a critical philosopher during his collaboration with Schelling and long before his PhG. In their first two Jena years (1801-03), Hegel and Schelling co-edit the Kritisches Journal der Philosophie, whose programme (as the title suggests) is explicitly critical. The aim of the Journal is to review works of philosophy according to the purely objective standard of universal reason.² Its critical tribunal distinguishes sharply between the rational and non-rational aspects of a work, separating its truly philosophical from its non-philosophical content. The critique thus exposes the poverty of the prevailing 'Unphilosophie', while at the same time clarifying

1. See, for example, R. Kroner, Von Kant bis Hegel, ii. 363, and Haym, Hegel und seine Zeit, p. 233, and Adorno, Drei Studien zu Hegel, pp. 15-17.

2.

the true nature of philosophy. By such criticism, the Journal prepares the ground for the reception of the single absolute philosophy, which represents the standpoint of purely universal reason.¹ A critical tribunal, a standard of universal and eternal reason, and a propaedeutic to the system of philosophy—such are the values of the Kantian critique which Hegel adheres to in the Kritisches Journal, six years before the publication of the PhG.

Hegel's best exposition of his early concept of critique appears in the introduction to the Kritisches Journal, the short opening essay 'Ueber das Wesen der philosophischen Kritik'. The 'Kritik' essay sets forth the tribunal of critique which is to be employed in the Journal. This tribunal rests upon a purely objective standard, that of universal reason.² Such a standard abstracts from all partial standpoints, and is recognised by all parties to a dispute. There are rational conflicts only if there are common principles, Hegel says,³ and the aim of the critique is to clarify these principles in order to arbitrate and settle all philosophical disputes. The standard of the critique is what Hegel calls 'the idea of philosophy', ie. the universal principle of reason which is presupposed by all true philosophy. All philosophy aspires by its nature to be knowledge of the absolute, and so the idea of philosophy

1. See the 'Ankündigung des Kritischen Journals' in Hegel, Werke, ii. 169-170.

2. Hegel, Werke, ii. 172

3. Ibid., ii. 215-6

consists in nothing less than the standard for absolute knowledge, the principle of subject-object identity. The tribunal of critique therefore consists in nothing less than the principle of subject-object identity. The critique keeps this principle firmly before its eye in judging the rational or non-rational content of a philosophy. In making the principle of subject-object identity into the standard of critique, Hegel again reveals his debt to the Kantian critique, whose 'spirit' consists in nothing less than this principle.

The very origins of the Kritisches Journal firmly link Hegel with the critical tradition. Before Schelling asks Hegel to join him in the editorship of the Journal, he expects his co-editor to be no less an advocate of the critique than Fichte.¹ It is indeed Fichte who first outlines the critical programme for the Journal, and Schelling takes over much of his programme even during his later collaboration with Hegel. As Fichte outlines his programme in his November 23rd, 1799 letter to A.W. Schlegel, its main aim is to be a 'pragmatische Zeitgeschichte der Literatur und Kunst', ie. it deals with literature and art insofar as they promote human progress.² Such a goal already carries strong overtones of Kant's critique, whose aim is also to advance Enlightenment and historical progress.

1. All my facts about the origins of the Journal are gleaned from Harmut Bächner's 'Hegel und das Kritische Journal der Philosophie' in Hegel-Studien, iii (1965), 98-115

2. Fichte, Briefwechsel, ii. 197.

After setting forth its aim, Fichte then outlines his method for the Journal: it must set forth the rational idea of a science or art, and then judge a work strictly according to it.¹ This method is indeed basically that which is employed by Hegel and Schelling themselves. Now it is probably still with such a programme in mind that Schelling desires Fichte's collaboration as late as May 25th, 1801, only months before he asks Hegel to join him around August 1801. In taking over Fichte's place in the production of the Journal, then, Hegel is participating in a critical programme whose lineage goes straight back to Fichte and ultimately to Kant himself.

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No less than Kant's critique of pure reason, however, the programme of critique in the Kritisches Journal is vulnerable to the attack of the meta-critique. All the meta-critical doubts and questions soon raise their ugly head again. How does the philosopher know the universal standard of reason? How does he justify his tribunal? These are the questions which Hegel now has to confront. A reviewer of Reinhold's Beyträge and Schulze's Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie in his Jena years, he is scarcely ignorant of all the meta-critical problems that arise for his critical philosophy. It is only reasonable to expect, then, that he has some reply to the meta-critique up his sleeve.

1. Ibid., ii. 197

And yet as soon as one considers how Hegel attempts to justify his critique, it becomes apparent that he thinks that there cannot be any demonstration of it. Rather, the standard of critique has to be based upon a self-evident and self-justifying intellectual intuition. Whoever has this intuition knows that he knows, and whoever does not have it simply has to remain in ignorance. This intuition cannot be justified by another higher-order act of knowledge, though, without the pain of an infinite regress. All demonstration has to stop somewhere, and so why not with an appeal to a self-evident intuition? Like Schelling before him, then, Hegel rests his case for the defense of the critique upon Spinoza's notion of the 'true idea', whose certainty immediately reveals its standard of truth.

To prove his point that the standard of critique is indemonstrable, Hegel engages in a polemic against the methods of Reinhold and Fichte. They think that they have a sure method of demonstrating absolute knowledge without having to appeal to a self-evident intuition. But, Hegel argues, their methods never get beyond their starting points, so that the absolute remains an unknowable beyond. Against Reinhold's problematic method, Hegel points out that his hypothetical and conditional starting point cannot be the basis for knowledge of the absolute, which is always categorical and unconditional. A hypothetical and conditional premise cannot have a necessary and unconditional conclusion. The knower who is stuck upon such a problematical starting point

then sees the absolute as an unknowable beyond.¹ After finishing with Reinhold, Hegel turns to Fichte, giving him equally nasty treatment. His target is Fichte's method of demonstrating absolute knowledge by beginning with a first principle verified in immediate consciousness (eg. 'Ich bin'), and then deducing its consequences. The problem with Fichte's method, Hegel maintains, is that his first principle has to remain within the narrow limits of individual self-awareness, ie. the 'Ich' has to denote my individual self. It is confined to such limits because all that is self-evident and given in my immediate self-consciousness is the fact that I exist as this particular and empirical subject. Restricted to such individual self-awareness, though, Fichte's principle is useless for absolute knowledge. As the whole of all reality, the absolute is always greater than the individual ego, and so it transcends the limits of its self-awareness. A dilemma then arises: either the ego jumps outside the limits of its individual self-awareness—and at least catches a glimpse of the absolute—or it remains within these limits—and the absolute turns into an unknowable ideal.² While the first option transcends the limits of individual self-awareness and experience—contrary to Fichte's own strictures that philosophy has to remain within experience—the second option leaves the absolute as an unknowable thing-in-itself.

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 179-180

2. Ibid., ii. 180-1

If the philosopher cannot justify his intellectual intuition, the only question that remains is how he attains it. He obviously must have some intuition of the absolute if he is to know the correct standard to judge claims about it. So what method arrives at such an intuition? Hegel's demands are of a tall order. Since the critique aims to root out all subjectivity and to acquire a purely objective knowledge of the absolute, it demands that the philosopher refrains from all his conscious activity, and that he become completely passive.¹ Only then does he receive a pure intuition of the absolute as it is in itself, prior to the intervention of his conscious activity. The philosopher has to suspend all concepts, then, since their application requires the activity of the understanding, which disturbs the pure apprehension of the absolute. Even further, though, he also has to abstract from his own finite ego, whose conscious activity traps him inside the circle of his own representations. This is to demand the impossible according to Kant, who maintains that the 'Ich denke' accompanies all possible representations. Yet if Kant is right that the application of the 'Ich denke' to experience means that there is knowledge only of appearances, then it is surely necessary to do as Hegel demands: to think away one's own self.

But what if someone cannot fulfill these difficult demands? What if ordinary consciousness maintains that it cannot attain such an intuition? What does the critique then say in its

1. Ibid., ii. 172-3

self-defense? The standpoint of critique is not accessible to everyone alike, Hegel replies, but only to that elite few who have the rare gift for an intellectual intuition. Since the critique sees philosophy in conflict with common sense and the understanding, it indeed insists that philosophy must protect its sacred mysteries from vulgarisation and distortion. Philosophy must not compromise itself by explaining its insights to ordinary consciousness. In any case, there is no point in philosophy making itself accessible to ordinary consciousness, for ordinary consciousness will surely deny its truths because it is in conflict with them. Philosophy will always appear as an inverted, topsy-turvey world to ordinary consciousness. And so Hegel writes:

'Die Philosophie ist ihrer Natur nach etwas Esoterisches, für sich weder für den Pöbel gemacht noch eine Zubereitung für den Pöbel fähig; sie ist nur dadurch Philosophie, dass sie dem Verstande...gerade entgegengesetzt ist; im Verhältnis zu diesem ist an und für sich die Welt der Welt der Philosophie eine verkehrte Welt'¹

Since an intellectual intuition is indemonstrable and esoteric, Hegel upholds the right of the critique to make dogmatic judgements against common sense and the understanding. The critique sets itself up as an authority, the final court of appeal, and it does not deign to explain itself before an opposing standpoint. It does not give any consideration to someone who denies its objectivity, ie. who thinks that there is not one standard of reason for all philosophy, but incom-

1. Ibid., ii. 182

patible standards for conflicting philosophies.¹ A philosophy recognises the critique, Hegel admits, only if it already has a sense for the idea of philosophy. If it does not have any inkling of the idea, though, then the critique has no choice but to dismiss it, relegating it to the status of 'Unphilosophie'. A conflict then breaks out between the philosopher under judgement and the critique, so that it appears as if each standpoint is just as legitimate as the other; the philosophy then regards the critique as 'Parteisache', 'ein fremder Gerichtshof'. The critique has to concede that there is no fail-safe resuce from this conflict, and that the judge and defendent might remain unalterably opposed. The only option is then to present the philosophy in all its nullity, hoping that it will eventually recognise its error and shallowness.² Sadly, in this predicament, even an internal critique is a forlorn prospect, for such criticism is effective only for a philosophy which already recognises the idea.³

IV

Hegel's Phenomenology and the Meta-Critical Tradition

The 'Einleitung' and 'Vorrede' to the PhG reverse Hegel's earlier position about the foundation of critique in the 1802 'Kritik' essay. Hegel now realises that his earlier

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1. Ibid., ii. 172
 2. Ibid., ii. 174
 3. Ibid., ii. 175

defense of the critique is not sufficiently self-critical and that it leaves the critique upon a weak foundation. This demand for a new self-justification of the critique compels him to reverse his previous position. A more complete reversal is hardly imaginable. He now rejects the appeal to a self-justifying intuition; he denies the right of the critique to make dogmatic judgements against ordinary consciousness; and he insists that philosophy must be exoteric, accessible to ordinary consciousness. This reversal of his earlier position does not amount to Hegel's 'return to the critique'—for he is already a critical philosopher in his 1802 'Kritik' essay—but to his appropriation of the meta-critical tradition. It is Hegel's great strength that he manages to resurrect the critique while still accomodating and explaining the insights of the meta-critique.

Hegel's new meta-critical awareness appears perfectly explicitly in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG. He now makes criticisms of the critique and raises questions about its self-justification—criticisms and questions which hold against his own earlier method of critique in the 'Kritik' essay. He begins by pointing out some of the illegimate presuppositions of the Kantian critique. Kant wants his critique to be purely presuppositionless, but in fact it has presuppositions of its own. It uses these presuppositions to determine the limits upon knowledge precisely when they ought to be brought into question. And so Hegel complains:

'In der Tat setzt sie etwas und zwar manches als Wahrheit voraus und stützt darauf ihre Bedenklichkeiten und Konsequenzen, was selbst vorher zu prüfen ist, ob es Wahrheit sei'.¹

Without examining itself, the critique supposes that knowledge is an activity, an instrument that affects and changes its object; it also assumes that there is a dualism between the subject and object, the a priori concepts of the understanding and the a posteriori manifold of sensibility. These unexamined presuppositions then ensure its conclusion that knowledge is limited to appearances. For if the knowing subject changes his object through becoming conscious of it, and if his object is still distinct from him, then he cannot know it in itself, as it exists prior to the application of his cognitive instrument. But, Hegel protests, such a conclusion is premature. It is precisely the premises behind it which the critique ought to bring into question if it wants to be completely presuppositionless.

After pointing out these illegitimate presuppositions, Hegel then raises the demand for the critique's self-justification. Contrary to his earlier position in the 'Kritik' essay, he now recognises that the critique cannot simply dogmatically condemn ordinary consciousness, relegating it to the status of mere appearance.² When philosophy first appears on the scene, Hegel says, it is no less an appearance itself, and it casts aside its status as an appearance only when it justifies

1. PhG, pp. 64-5
2. Ibid., p. 66

itself before ordinary consciousness. The critique can no longer justify itself by appealing to a self-evident intellectual intuition, he now argues, because such an intuition is only brought into question by ordinary consciousness. If the philosopher claims that he intuits the identity of subject and object, ordinary consciousness replies that it experiences a subject-object dualism. One barren assurance of the truth, though, is just as good as another. So, unless philosophy justifies itself before ordinary consciousness, it cannot come forward as an authority which is recognised by consciousness.

Not only does Hegel demand that the critique justify itself, but he also sees the basic difficulty involved in its self-justification. In a manner reminiscent of Herder and Reinhold, he points out the circularity of the critical enterprise. The critique cannot test and justify knowledge without a standard, he says, and yet this standard also has to justify itself.¹ Hence the critique cannot be a presuppositionless enquiry which tests all beliefs before committing itself to them; for the very standard by which it tests beliefs is a presupposition itself.

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So, given all these difficulties, how is the critique of knowledge possible? How can there be an examination and criticism of consciousness without the application of a standard

1. Ibid., p. 70

which itself requires examination and criticism? Hegel's solution to this problem rests upon a simple, but basic insight: that the philosopher does not have to apply his standard to consciousness because consciousness already has a standard within itself. The philosopher need not examine and criticise consciousness according to his standard, then, since consciousness can examine and criticise itself according to its own standard. Hegel stresses the importance of this point for his entire investigation:

'...das Wesentliche aber ist, dies für die ganze Untersuchung festzuhalten, dass diesen beiden Momente, Begriff und Gegenstand...in das Wissen, das wir untersuchen, selbst fallen, und hiemit wir nicht nötig haben, Maßstäbe mitzubringen und unsere Einfälle und Gedanken bei der Untersuchung zu applizieren'.¹

Since consciousness has its own standard within itself, and since it is perfectly capable of examining and criticising itself by it, the philosopher need not do anything but observe and describe its self-examination and self-criticism. And so Hege concludes:

'...indem das Bewusstsein sich selbst prüft, uns auch von dieser Seite nur das reine Zusehen bleibt'.²

The philosopher's method is then purely descriptive. He brackets all his own standards and presuppositions, and simply observes consciousness just as it appears to him. Hence Hegel calls his method 'die Phänomenologie' or 'die Darstellung des erscheinenden Wissens'. Now it is this phenomenology or purely descriptive method that avoids the circularity that destroys the critique. Since the philosopher only describes

1. Ibid., pp. 71-2

2. Ibid., p. 72

consciousness as it criticises its claims to knowledge, he does not commit himself to a claim to knowledge. Since he suspends all his own claims to knowledge, he avoids all the third-order questions and doubts about their justification.

What allows Hegel to avoid the circle of epistemology, then, is his recognition that consciousness is self-explaining. In making this point, however, Hegel only follows in a tradition initiated by Fichte. For the idea that consciousness is self-explaining is the basic point behind Fichte's principle that the ego is 'for itself'. According to Fichte's principle, the ego's characteristic nature consists in its (actual or possible) self-awareness, and to assume that it is something of which it cannot be self-aware (eg. Kant's noumenal self) is to reify it. This principle does not commit itself to the implausible claim that the ego exists only if it is self-conscious—it acknowledges that there are trances and dreams—but it does state that it realises its nature as an ego only if it becomes self-conscious. The underlying rationale for such a principle is that self-consciousness is the distinguishing feature of subjectivity in contrast to objectivity. What distinguishes consciousness from a thing, Fichte argues in the Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre,¹ is that a representation cannot exist without a possible perceiver, while a thing can exist without such a perceiver. And here Fichte simply builds upon Kant's point in the unity of apperception: that a representation is nothing to me unless it is accompanied

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 427-8

by at least the possibility of the 'Ich denke'. Thus the ego is 'for itself' in the sense that its consciousness exists only for some possible self-consciousness; by contrast, it is not 'for another' in the sense that it cannot exist only for an external observer.¹ Now such a principle brings a serious methodological consequence along with it. It means that the ego has to be understood from within, according to its own self-explanations, and not from without, according to the explanations of an external observer. This is because the ego exists as an ego only through its self-awareness. Hence to understand it as an ego is to explain it according to its self-conceptions; but to abstract from its self-conceptions is to fail to understand it as an ego and to treat it as if it were an object rather than a subject. This demand for an internal understanding of the ego is a basic principle of Fichte's philosophical method. He insists that the philosopher suspend his own explanations about the ego, and that he understand it from within by simply observing the stages of its self-awareness. In the Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre, for example, Fichte stresses that the philosopher's task is only 'Beobachtung' and that he must not impose his own pre-conceptions.² And then in the 'pragmatische Geschichte' section of the 1794 Grundlage he describes the ego's progress toward self-consciousness, beginning with the primitive level of intuition and ending with the sophisticated standpoint of the philosopher himself.³ Hegel only follows in the footsteps of Fichte. His

1. For this exposition of Fichte's principle, see Schelling's Erläuterung der Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre, in Werke, i. 291

2. Fichte, Werke, i 454-5

3. Ibid., i. 227-246.

phenomenological method attempts to fulfill the same methodological demand. When he insists in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG that the philosopher's business is only 'das reine Zu-
sehen', he is only ensuring that consciousness is understood from within, according to its self-explanations. His phenomenology is indeed nothing less than the hermeneutics of consciousness.

What Hegel regards as the traditional error of epistemology now begins to come into focus. Its basic flaw is that it hypostasises consciousness. It ignores the fact that the subject is essentially self-conscious when it abstracts from its self-explanations and explains and evaluates it from the external standpoint of the philosopher. The subject is then treated as if it were a thing with no views of its own. It is just because it hypostasises the subject, though, that traditional epistemology has to use an external standard to evaluate consciousness, thus bogging itself down in the question of their self-justification. Kant, of course, does see that reason is self-revealing and self-illuminating. But he fails to bring this point to bear on his own epistemological methodology. Rather than allowing reason to speak for itself through its own inner dialectic, he examines it from the external perspective of the philosopher.

Hegel's new phenomenological epistemology represents both the abolition and radicalisation of Kant's ideal of a critique of pure reason. On the one hand, it abolishes the

critique since it banishes its external tribunal, and replaces its evaluation and criticism of consciousness with a purely neutral description of consciousness' self-evaluation and self-criticism. On the other hand, though, it also radicalises the critique because it renews its ideal of a completely presuppositionless enquiry into knowledge, an investigation which does not make claims to knowledge and which precedes all such claims. Since the phenomenologist only describes consciousness and does not criticise it according to a pre-conceived standard, he does not commit himself to any presuppositions before his enquiry, and so he does not make a claim to knowledge prior to investigating such claims. The phenomenology is indeed Hegel's path between dogmatism and scepticism. Kant cannot walk this path since he commits himself to a standard before his enquiry begins, thus raising the question of its own justification, which ends either with a dogmatic appeal to authority or a sceptical infinite regress. Since the phenomenologist's purely neutral description does not commit him to a standard, he does not have to appeal to his authority or to a higher-order standard.

* * *

Now Hegel thinks that his new phenomenological epistemology resurrects the critique but still avoids or explains all the problems raised by the meta-critique. He regards his phenomenology as the response to Schulze's great challenge: that the critique cannot know the conditions of experience without transcending it and refuting itself. A basic demand

of the phenomenology is that the philosopher's thought about the conditions of experience has to be confirmed by experience itself. What is 'in itself' (an sich) for the philosopher, Hegel insists, has to be 'for itself' (für sich) for consciousness itself. The rationale behind this demand is Fichte's principle that the ego is for itself. This principle requires that the philosopher's external explanation of consciousness be verified by consciousness own self-explanation. Only then is the philosopher's explanation of consciousness true to its distinctive self-conscious nature. Now, as if he has Schulze explicitly in mind, Hegel calls the self-examination and self-criticism of consciousness its experience.¹ So when the philosopher's examination of consciousness is confirmed by consciousness' self-examination, the philosopher's knowledge of the conditions of experience is confirmed by experience itself. The whole dualism between the transcendental and the empirical which threatened the justification of transcendental knowledge now disappears. Since consciousness explains itself, there is not a gap between the philosopher's explanation of consciousness and consciousness itself. Consciousness' self-reflection raises itself up from the empirical to the transcendental level, where it soon discovers that the conditions of experience are not beyond it, but within it.

The phenomenology also stands as Hegel's reply to Schulze's objection that the critique knows consciousness only as an appearance. Against Schulze, he maintains that

1. PhG, p. 73

the phenomenology knows consciousness 'in itself'. Thus, in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG, he states that the philosopher knows 'die Sache, wie sie an und für sich ist' only when he suspends his standards and simply describes consciousness.¹ And, in the 'Vorrede', he affirms that the philosopher grasps 'das Leben des Gegenstandes', 'der immanenten Inhalt der Sache', only by abstaining from the application of pre-conceived formulae and by immersing himself in the inner necessity of his subject matter.² Why does Hegel advance such a claim for his phenomenological method? Here again the answer lies with Fichte's principle that the ego is for itself. When the philosopher enters into the standpoint of consciousness, simply describing it according to its self-conceptions, then he has to know it in itself; for, following Fichte's principle, the ego is essentially self-explaining, so that to understand it according to its self-conceptions is to understand its essential nature as an ego. The philosopher only has to suspend his own standards and to allow the ego to speak for itself, for its very nature is to explain and reveal itself. This means that the dialectic of consciousness is not the philosopher's method for knowing consciousness, but that it is in fact the inner movement of consciousness itself. Since the dialectic is the activity by which the ego becomes self-conscious, and since the characteristic nature of the ego consists in its self-consciousness, the dialectic cannot be only a means by which the philosopher investigates consciousness; rather, it has to be the internal necessity and inner development of consciousness itself.

1. Ibid., pp. 72-2

2. Ibid., p. 45

Hegel thinks that his phenomenology also accepts and accomodates Hamann's arguments against the purism of pure reason. The phenomenology is not guilty of the purism of the critique because it overthrows the dualism between the transcendental and empirical, the gap between the philosopher's reflection upon consciousness and consciousness' self-reflection. The transcendental is not beyond and prior to experience, Hegel maintains, but it is the result of the experience of consciousness. The philosopher's transcendental knowledge is not simply given and immediate, as Kant assumes, but it is derived from, and mediated by, consciousness' history and development. His transcendental first principles (eg. Kant's 'Ich denke' and Fichte's 'Ich bin') are not given to the timeless contemplation of an a-social, a-historical ego, but they are results of, and abstractions from, the ego's social and historical education. This is just the point behind Hegel's idea of determinate negation: the transcendental does not arise from the complete negation of all the experience that has preceded it, but it is still conditioned and determined by it; it is not a complete abstraction or negation of its past, but it preserves its past within itself. Although the philosopher's first principles appear to be simply given, they are only so for the philosopher who suffers amnesia and who fails to recall their genesis in experience. The cure for such a 'transcendental illusion' that arises in going beyond experience is recollection, recalling the experience and history of consciousness. Thus, in chapter V of the PhG, 'Gewissheit

und Wahrheit der Vernunft', Hegel argues that Kant and Fichte appeal to the immediacy of their first principles only because they forget their necessity in the development of consciousness; although they appear to be given, they are posited by such stages of consciousness as sense certainty, sense perception, force and understanding, etc.¹

The phenomenology is also Hegel's solution to Schlegel's problem of how to reconcile the universality of critique with the historical and cultural character of reason. Like Schlegel before him, Hegel is anxious to avoid two extremes: on the one hand, an absolutism which maintains that the standard of reason remains the same throughout all history and in each culture, so that it is completely independent of language and culture; and, on the other hand, a relativism which affirms that the standard of reason changes throughout history and varies between cultures, so that there is no single standard to judge between them. The first extreme is represented by Kant in the first Kritik, and the second extreme appears in Herder's Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit. During his early Jena years, Hegel wavers between both these extremes without achieving an effective reconciliation between them. The 1802 'Kritik' essay verges on absolutism when it sees reason as universal and eternal, one and the same throughout all history; then the 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit approaches relativism when it says that reason realises itself only

1. Ibid., 176-7

und Wahrheit der Vernunft', Hegel argues that Kant and Fichte appeal to the immediacy of their first principles only because they forget their necessity in the development of consciousness; although they appear to be given, they are posited by such stages of consciousness as sense certainty, sense perception, force and understanding, etc.¹

The phenomenology is also Hegel's solution to Schlegel's problem of how to reconcile the universality of critique with the historical and cultural character of reason. Like Schlegel before him, Hegel is anxious to avoid two extremes: on the one hand, an absolutism which maintains that the standard of reason remains the same throughout all history and in each culture, so that it is completely independent of language and culture; and, on the other hand, a relativism which affirms that the standard of reason changes throughout history and varies between cultures, so that there is no single standard to judge between them. The first extreme is represented by Kant in the first Kritik, and the second extreme appears in Herder's Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit. During his early Jena years, Hegel wavers between both these extremes without achieving an effective reconciliation between them. The 1802 'Kritik' essay verges on absolutism when it sees reason as universal and eternal, one and the same throughout all history; then the 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit approaches relativism when it says that reason realises itself only

1. Ibid., 176-7

in the characteristic language, customs, institutions and religion of a nation. The problem before Hegel is then to reconcile the universality of the critique with his recognition that reason is cultural, embodied in the spirit of a nation. By the time of the PhG, Hegel thinks that he has a solution to this problem. The standpoint which the philosopher attains in the final chapter of the PhG, 'Das absolute Wissen', walks the middle path between these extremes. This standpoint is universal because it grasps the single goal which realises itself throughout all the stages of history and in each culture: the self-awareness of freedom. At the same time, however, it sees that each stage of history is necessary for the realisation of this goal, and that each culture realises it in its own unique manner, though to a greater or lesser degree. The same reconciliation is expressed by Hegel's idea that absolute knowledge is Er-innerung. The recollection of all events in history is eternal, because eternity is nothing but a single instant of time (without relation to other instants), and recollection is the simultaneous presence in a single moment of all events in history. It is not eternal, however, in the sense that it is the negation of time, but in the sense that it is the whole of all time, an event which cannot itself time or undergo change.

Last, but not least, Hegel thinks that his phenomenology avoids the conflict that arises between the tribunal of critique and ordinary consciousness. Since the critical philosopher

simply judges and governs consciousness by his own rules, he is in danger of begging questions against it, of imposing an arbitrary discipline and constraint upon it. And yet one ideal of the critique is the self-discipline of reason, where reason submits to laws only of its own making and does not comply with despotic decrees. Thus the critique's method does not match up to its ideal. Now, to rescue the critique from this predicament, Hegel proposes his phenomenology as the method to fulfill Kant's ideal of the self-discipline of reason. Since the phenomenologist suspends his standards and simply allows consciousness to examine and criticise itself, consciousness establishes its own limits, so that there is no danger of it obeying any but its own self-imposed laws. Consciousness discovers the necessity of the philosopher's tribunal from within, according to its own self-examination, so that it no longer appears as an external constraint. It is through the phenomenology, Hegel argues, that reason can successfully discipline itself and cure itself of all its fallacies. Kant is more pessimistic. He thinks that the illusions of reason are inevitable, and that they never go away, not even after the discipline of critique; to prevent them is like stopping the sea from appearing higher at the horizon than at the shore.¹ But, Hegel replies, if the illusions of reason appear inevitable and ineradicable, that is only because reason has to submit to an external standard which it does not recognise. If, however, reason criticises itself according to its own standards, then it comes to an inner

1. KrV, B 353-4

recognition of its own errors, and such a self-diagnosis is enough to stop it from constantly stepping beyond its own bounds and compulsively repeating the same old fallacies.

5.

**'Herrschaft und Knechtschaft' Revisited:
Hegel's Argument against Solipsism**

Introductory

After the meta-critique, Hegel still faces another serious problem in his attempt to justify metaphysics through the critique of knowledge. This is nothing less than Kant's limitation of knowledge to appearances, ie. the knowledge of an object only as it appears to consciousness or as it conforms to the faculty of knowledge, but not as it is in itself, apart from consciousness and prior to the application of the faculty of knowledge. This limitation upon knowledge appears to be the inevitable consequence of Kant's epistemology. His investigation into the faculty of knowledge discovers that the knowing faculty changes and conditions what it knows, so that it concludes that the subject knows only his own creations or representations. Hence Hegel's attempt to base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge seems doomed to failure. Metaphysics demands knowledge of the universe as a whole, but the critique limits knowledge only to appearances or the awareness of one's own representations.

So how does Hegel base metaphysics upon the critique of knowledge without getting caught inside the circle of consciousness? How does he use the critique to break through the veil of appearances and to attain knowledge of the universe as a whole? This is the leading question of the following chapter. In considering this question, it is necessary to examine the dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A. of the PhG, the first two chapters of 'Selbstbewusstsein'. It is here that Hegel breaks outside the circle of consciousness, and it is here that he establishes the necessity of absolute knowledge and carries through his transcendental deduc-

tion of metaphysics.

The aim of the following chapter is to reconstruct the dialectic of chapters IV. and IV.A. of the PhG as an argument against solipsism. These chapters have been long since interpreted from many different angles--they have been read as existentialism, philosophical anthropology, genetic psychology, and as phenomenological psychology¹--but their basic metaphysical dimension has been largely ignored. It is now time to right this imbalance and to read the metaphysics back into these chapters. It is only then that it is possible to fully grasp their original metaphysical intention: to break through the circle of appearances and to establish the necessity of absolute knowledge.

Before examining these chapters in detail, though, it is necessary to put them in their historical context. This should help to explain the problem which lies before Hegel.

1. The only commentator to explain the metaphysical problem behind these chapters is Gadamer in his article 'Hegel's Dialektik des Selbstbewusstseins' in Materialen zu Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes, pp. 217-242. Gadamer rightly sees that Hegel attempts a transcendental deduction of absolute idealism in these chapters. Nonetheless, he does not concentrate upon the problem of solipsism. Richard Norman does realise that solipsism is at stake, but he does not reconstruct Hegel's argument against it. See his Hegel's Phenomenology, pp. 45-56.

The locus for the existential interpretation of these chapters is Hyppolyte's article 'The Concept of Existence in Hegel's Phenomenology' in Studies on Marx and Hegel (London, Heinemann, 1969), pp. 22-35.

The advocate of an anthropological reading is of course Kojève. See his Kommentar zur Phänomenologie des Geistes, ed. I Fetscher (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 20-48, 48-90, and especially pp. 49, 56 where he explains his anthropological standpoint.

It is Plamenatz who reads Hegel's argument as an account of genetic psychology. See his Man and Society (London, Longman, 1963), ii. 188-192.

Kelly reads these chapters as phenomenological psychology. See his 'Notes on Hegel's Lordship and Bondage' in Hegel, A Collection

The Problem of Solipsism in German Idealism and its Role in
Hegel's Phänomenologie

In the 'Einleitung' to the PhG, Hegel himself admits that his philosophical programme confronts a serious challenge.¹ It appears self-defeating to justify metaphysics through the critique of knowledge. The problem is that the critique restricts knowledge to appearances, to the awareness of one's own representations, so that it is impossible to get outside them to know reality as a whole. The critique inevitably leads to a dualism between knowledge and its object, where the subject knows the object only as an appearance--as it conforms to his faculty of knowledge--but not as it is in itself--as it exists apart from and prior to the application of this faculty. This gap between knowledge and reality arises when the critical philosopher discovers that knowledge is either an active instrument or passive medium. He naturally concludes that this instrument or medium conditions or changes what it knows, so that it cannot be known in itself, before the intervention of the instrument or medium. Since consciousness conditions or creates what it knows, it knows only its own creations, but not the object in itself, which exists apart from its

of Critical Essays (New York, Doubleday, 1972), pp. 189-217. Kelly's reading reverses the true intention of Hegel's argument. He puts both master and slave within the individual ego, so that it cannot be an argument against solipsism.

Findlay sees these chapters as politics and history, reading the metaphysics out of them entirely. See Hegel: A Re-examination (London, George, Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 96

1. PhG, pp.63-5

appearance to consciousness. The critical philosopher cannot escape this predicament, Hegel argues,¹ by seeing what contribution the knowing subject makes to his object, and then subtracting this to get a pure view of the object in itself; for to distinguish the subject's contribution from the object itself already presupposes a pure view of the object, so that the whole business of subtraction is only so much wasted labour. Thus it appears inevitable: the critique traps the subject inside a circle of his own representations which bars him from knowledge of reality as a whole. This quandry is the necessary result of the critical philosopher's discovery that the faculty of knowledge--whether instrument or medium--determines how an object appears to consciousness. But if the critique of knowledge creates such a mistrust in knowledge, Hegel asks in irony,² then ought there not to be a mistrust of this mistrust? Why not forget the preliminary of a critique and go straight ahead to grasp the absolute like a bird on a lime-stick? Yet the 'Einleitung' still insists that the critique is indispensable. The standpoint of philosophy justifies itself against ordinary consciousness only when it satisfies the demand of the critique and emerges as the necessary result of consciousness' internal dialectic.³ So Hegel's attempt to resurrect metaphysics now faces a major obstacle: how to maintain the critique and to nonetheless break out of the circle of consciousness?

This circle of consciousness thwarts Hegel's plan to complete Kant's Copernican revolution. It is indeed the immediate

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1. Ibid., p. 64
 2. Ibid., pp. 64-5
 3. Ibid., p. 66

result of the principle of subject-object identity. If all knowledge is self-knowledge, then the self cannot know reality as a whole, but only his own representations. This principle then creates a dilemma where the self is caught between two extremes: he knows either himself or nothing. Reality is either inside his consciousness--and reduced to his creation--or outside his consciousness--and an unknowable thing-in-itself. There is no middle option, though, where the self knows either the universe as a whole or something which exists apart from and prior to his own representations. So the question now arises: how can Hegel carry through with the Copernican revolution, ie. realise its principle of subject-object identity, without lapsing into this dilemma?

* * *

Now it is this dilemma which brings the problem of solipsism into the centre of philosophical concern before Hegel's PhG. There are several philosophers before Hegel who devote much serious attention to it. The first philosopher to become aware of this dilemma, and to attract attention to it, is Fichte. In his 1794 Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre, Fichte admits that his finite ego is trapped inside an inescapable circle. On the one hand, it has to postulate an unknowable thing-in-itself which is the cause of its representations; and on the other hand, it has to assume that anything it knows is only the construction of its consciousness.¹ There is no third option, though, where the ego knows an independent

1. Fichte, Werke, i. 281

reality. What traps the ego inside this circle is nothing less than the principle of subject-object identity. Fichte affirms that the ego knows only its own activity, what it creates according to the laws of consciousness. Hence his ego is caught between two extremes in its striving to make the non-ego conform to its consciousness. To the extent that the ego gains control over the non-ego, it knows it, reducing it to a mere construction of its consciousness; but to the extent that it cannot subdue the non-ego, it remains an unknowable thing-in-itself.¹

Another philosopher who sees this dilemma is Jacobi. In his 1799 Brief an Fichte, he attacks Fichte's idealism, dramatically drawing attention to the consequences of its principle of subject-object identity. Jacobi accuses Fichte's idealism of nihilism. It dissolves all reality--other minds, nature, value and even the self--into a production of consciousness. Conscious activity is a creation 'aus Nichts, zu Nichts, für Nichts, in Nichts'.² Idealism encloses the ego inside a solipsistic shell, where his representations are only appearances--but not of anything, only nothingness. The source of this nihilism, Jacobi argues, is Fichte's principle of subject-object identity. This is the principle of 'Vernunft' or 'Wissenschaft': to know an object is to conceive it, but to conceive it is to create it, to construct it according to the laws of consciousness.³ According to this principle, knowledge consists in the 'Selbst-

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1. Ibid., i. 280-2
 2. Jacobi, Werke, iii. 20-2, 44
 3. Ibid., iii. 16, 20-3

hervorbringung ihres Gegenstandes', and in this process 'sucht der menschlichen Geist nur sich selbst, Begriffe bildend, wieder hervor...'.¹ This principle means, however, that the ego knows an object only insofar as he destroys it, forcing it to comply with the laws of his consciousness. Knowledge transforms its object into a concept; but this concept is only a creation of the imagination, representing nothing existing in itself. As Jacobi puts it:

'...der Mensch erkennt nur indem er begreift; und er begreift nur indem er--Sache in blosser Gestalt verwandelnd-- Gestalt zur Sache, Sache zu Nichts macht'.²

Since Jacobi agrees that subject-object identity is the principle of knowledge, he confronts the philosopher with a painful dilemma. He has to choose between either a philosophy of 'Wissen' or 'Nichtwissen'. The philosophy of Wissen affirms that the creative powers of human intelligence are in principle infinite, and that man can eventually make all nature conform to the laws of his reason. This option has the advantage that it maintains the possibility of knowledge--but it has to admit that knowledge destroys reality, transforming everything into the nothingness of mere representations. The philosophy of Nichtwissen, on the other hand, recognises that man's cognitive powers are limited and that they confront an unknowable reality. This option has the disadvantage of confessing ignorance--but at least it guarantees the abiding existence of an external reality, even if it is unknowable. This is a choice, then, between the knowledge of nothingness or the blind faith in an unknowable

1. Ibid., iii. 15-16

2. Ibid., iii. 20

reality. Jacobi's own choice is plain from the start. He chooses the philosophy of Nichtwissen since at least this stops him from falling into the abyss of nihilism.

After such a precedent as Fichte and Jacobi, Schelling almost inevitably has to address himself to this dilemma. His 1802 Fernere Darstellung and 1804 System der gesamten Philosophie present it as a serious challenge to his theory of absolute knowledge.¹ Like Fichte and Jacobi, Schelling affirms the principle of subject-object identity and agrees that self-knowledge is the paradigm of knowledge. Unlike them, however, he does not admit the dilemma, but he attempts to escape it. He wants the principle of subject-object identity to be the basis for knowledge of reality as a whole. So in order to avoid this dilemma, his only strategy is to re-interpret the principle of subject-object identity. He argues that Fichte's mistake is to assume that subject-object identity is only the self's awareness of his finite or individual nature. This assumption inevitably traps the Fichtean ego inside his inescapable circle. If all knowledge is self-knowledge, and if the self is only finite, then the self cannot know anything independent of, and not reducible to, its finite nature; reality is then either a construction of finite consciousness or an unknowable thing-in-itself. After such a diagnosis of Fichte's mistake, the stage is set for Schelling's re-reading of the principle of subject-object identity. His crucial move is this: to universalise the subject of subject-object identity. This means

1. Schelling, Werke, Erg. i. 405-13, Erg. ii. 72-5

that the subject is no longer aware of himself as a finite being, as one individual distinct from every other, but as nothing less than God himself, as the universal whole of all individuals where they are all one. When the subject has an intellectual intuition, then, he intuits that his finite nature disappears, that it merges, mingles and becomes identical with all other finite beings to form a single self-identical universal whole. Thus the self-consciousness of subject-object identity is not the subject's awareness of himself as an individual actor or thinker; but, on the contrary, it is his awareness that he depends upon and is identical with the universe. Now Schelling's argument is that only this re-interpretation of the principle of subject-object identity gets over its dilemma. For consider. If there must be knowledge of reality in itself, and if all knowledge is self-knowledge, and if, finally, reality in itself cannot be reduced to a creation of the finite ego, then there is one, and only one, interpretation of self-knowledge which guarantees knowledge of reality in itself without reducing it to the finite ego's creation. This is when self-knowledge is the self's awareness of his identity with the universal whole. Only then is knowledge of reality in itself self-knowledge, and only then is reality in itself not reduced to a creation of the finite ego, for it is in fact the universal whole of which the finite ego is only a mode. This re-interpretation then paves the path between the horns of the dilemma. Since an intellectual intuition is the subject's consciousness of how his identity depends upon the universal whole, reality in itself is neither purely inside nor purely outside his consciousness; it is

neither reduced to a mere representation or elevated into an unknowable thing-in-itself. Rather, it is both inside and outside consciousness; it is inside, since the subject is self-conscious in the universe, and not just aware of an external object; and it is outside, for it is the universal which is greater than the subject, who is only one of its modes.

Now Hegel inherits Fichte's, Jacobi's and Schelling's treatments of this dilemma, but he is not satisfied with any of them. Unlike Fichte and Jacobi, he does not see this dilemma as inescapable. In chapter V of the PhG, he criticises Fichte for trapping his ego between the empty 'Ich=Ich' of self-knowledge and an unknowable Anstoss or Ding an sich.¹ Nor does he accept Jacobi's exclusive alternatives of Wissen and Nichtwissen. This is only an apparent dilemma since there is a middle path between its horns: a philosophy of Wissen which does not dissolve all reality into the nothingness of one's own representations. Like Schelling, Hegel strives to steer a middle course between these options and to establish subject-object identity as the principle for knowledge of reality as a whole. Only he cannot accept Schelling's solution to this dilemma. Although Hegel agrees with Schelling that subject-object identity must be universalised, that it cannot be the self-awareness of my finite nature and that it must be self-awareness in the universe as a whole, he still thinks that Schelling's solution suffers from two difficulties.

1. PhG, pp. 175-182

The first problem is that in Schelling's intellectual intuition the self intuits only his identity with the universe; he loses sight of the fact that he is also a finite individual who is distinct from everything else in the universe. An intellectual intuition is not sufficient for absolute knowledge, then, for such knowledge has to grasp reality as a whole, and this whole includes both the self's unity and opposition with the universe. As Hegel puts it: the absolute standpoint is not only that of subject-object identity, but that of the identity of subject-object identity and subject-object non-identity. The second problem is that Schelling has no explanation of how ordinary consciousness attains the standpoint of intellectual intuition. He insists that this standpoint is esoteric, and forbids any introduction or education into it. Hence, to ordinary consciousness, the absolute remains as unknowable as ever. The problem is then only put back another step: the problem of how to know the absolute turns into the problem of how to gain access to an esoteric and mysterious intuition.

So, given that Schelling has no adequate solution to this dilemma, and also given that Fichte and Schelling are only its victims, the problem still remains of how to find a middle path between its horns. It continues to pose a threat to Hegel, who has no choice but to respond to it as long as he maintains the possibility of absolute knowledge.

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It is in the context of this problem--how to break out of the circle of consciousness--that chapters IV and IV.A. of the PhG become so important. It is here that Hegel intends to make his escape from the circle of consciousness, and it is here that he aims to establish the necessity of absolute knowledge. These chapters are indeed nothing less than the scenario for his attempt to complete Kant's Copernican revolution. They aim to justify the principle of subject-object identity as the basis of absolute knowledge, while at the same time still providing a middle path between the extremes of solipsism and the unknowable thing-in-itself. The success or failure of Hegel's attempt to resurrect metaphysics rests upon the dialectic of these chapters.

A brief look at the context and purposes of chapters IV and IV.A. confirms that they are wrestling with this problem. It is plain that Hegel wants to break through the circle of consciousness, and that he nonetheless still desires to establish the necessary conditions for the realisation of the principle of subject-object identity. The previous dialectic in 'Bewusstsein' has vindicated the Kantian paradigm of knowledge. Self-knowledge has shown itself to be the necessary condition of all knowledge. After passing through several stages where it is apparently conscious of an external object--whether this object be the bare particular of sense certainty, the thing of sense perception or the force of the understanding--the 'Ich' discovers that its consciousness of an object is in fact only its self-consciousness.

In chapter IV of 'Selbstbewusstsein', this 'Ich' steps forward to claim that his self-knowledge is absolute knowledge, that to know anything is to know himself.¹ He now has to test and justify this claim, seeing under what conditions his self-knowledge provides knowledge of reality as a whole. Under consideration, then, is nothing less than solipsism and the idealist circle of consciousness.

This problem is removed by a single argument in chapters IV and IV.A. This argument consists in the dialectic by which the 'Ich' examines, criticises and eventually justifies its claim to be autonomous and independent. This is alternatively the dialectic by which it establishes that it is a rational being, since Hegel holds, like Kant and Fichte, that only a rational being is capable of autonomy, ie. of acting according to self-given laws and ends. Through its experience, the 'Ich' discovers that it is autonomous only when it is recognised by other autonomous selves, and only when it in turn recognises that there are other autonomous selves. In other words, what it learns is this: that it knows that it is a rational being only through mutual recognition. If this dialectic succeeds, though, it does nothing less than break outside the circle of consciousness. The self becomes self-conscious that it is rational only when it recognises that it is not the only rational being, but that there are also other rational beings, and that as rational beings they have a status equal to and independent of its own consciousness. Now it is the same dialectic which demonstrates

1. Ibid., pp. 131-5

the necessity of absolute knowledge, ie. of self-awareness as Geist. According to Hegel, self-awareness as Geist arises only from the mutual recognition between two empirical, individual egos, where each acknowledges the equal and independent reality of the other. If two such selves recognise each other as rational beings, then a common self-consciousness arises where the self knows itself in the other as the other knows itself in the self. This single self-identical self-consciousness between distinct selves is nothing less than the concept-- if only the abstract concept--of Geist.¹ It is, as Hegel calls it, 'Ich, das Wir, und Wir, das Ich ist'.²

The dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A. teaches that the self first appears in the broad daylight of the universe as a whole only when he is educated into public life. He realises that his own representations are not all reality and crawls outside his solipsistic shell only when he recognises that there are other rational beings outside him upon whom his status as a rational being depends. For Hegel, the solipsist's downfall is intersubjectivity, ie. the fact that each individual is self-conscious that he is rational only through mutual recognition. This crucial role of intersubjectivity in refuting the solipsist appears readily from the structure of the PhG.

1. In his article 'Hegel's Concept of Geist', R.C. Soloman argues that Hegel's Geist is Kant's unity of apperception without the unwarranted claim that there is one such unity per person. See Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays, pp. 125-150, esp. 150. Although this is correct, it is still not a sufficient account of Hegel's Geist. Soloman ignores the intersubjective dimension of Geist: the fact that Geist arises only with the self-consciousness between distinct individuals. He stresses the universality of Geist, but does not see that this universality has to be embodied in distinct individuals. For Hegel, a purely universal 'Ich', an unindividuated unity of apperception, is only an abstraction.

2. PhG, p. 140

The three chapters of the earlier dialectic of 'Bewusstsein' show that consciousness of an object is in fact self-consciousness.¹ This self-consciousness is still that of the idealist or solipsist, the individual ego who is aware of only his own representations, as is plain from the beginning of chapter IV of 'Selbstbewusstsein'.² And although this ego has his first experience of the independence of his object by the end of chapter IV, where he discovers that his desires cannot consume and dominate every object they come across,³ he still tries to destroy the object by consuming and assimilating it; he does not yet acknowledge its equal and independent reality. Only at the end of chapter IV.A., when the tension between the master and slave resolves in their mutual recognition as rational beings, does the ego formally acknowledge and bow before an external reality on an equal footing with his own consciousness.

This teaching of chapters IV and IV.A. reflects the theme which is basic to Hegel's thought: that the self is self-conscious as Geist only through the mutual recognition between persons in a community; that to know the absolute is to be self-conscious of the universal spirit of a Volk that acts through oneself and everyone else. This theme appears most explicitly in the earlier 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit.⁴ Here Hegel states that intellectual intuition is made objective only in the public life of a Volk, and that subject-object identity is realised only through the mutual recognition between equal and

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1. PhG, pp. 133-4
 2. Ibid., 132-5; cf. p. 143
 3. Ibid., 139
 4. Hegel, Jenaer Schriften, pp. 480-1

independent persons in the state. Sittlichkeit teaches ordinary consciousness the fundamental lesson of philosophy: that all individuals have their identity only in the whole. For Hegel, unlike Kant and Fichte, the universal, rational 'Ich' is not a-social and a-historical--it cannot think and act according to universal laws which hold for all men at all times--but it has to be embodied in a particular culture at a particular epoch in history. The 'Ich' is in fact nothing more than the spirit of a Volk: those common laws, religious beliefs and cultural tradition which are shared by individuals and which give them their sense of belonging to a group. But to eternalise the 'Ich', to de-socialise and de-historicise it--that is to reify an abstraction. Kant and Fichte are once again guilty of hypostasis, and that is because they forget the historical basis of reason: they vainly attempt to leap beyond their own time by universalising what is the result of only a particular age of history.¹

All told, then, the aim of the dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A. is nothing less than to establish a transcendental deduction of absolute knowledge, ie. the self-awareness as Geist. The 'Ich' who has suffered the experience of chapter IV.A., however, is still not in complete possession of such knowledge. He only has the abstract concept of absolute knowledge--he knows that it is self-consciousness as Geist--but he still does not know the concrete forms of its embodiment in

1. In his essay 'Aspekte der Hegelschen Philosophie', Adorno accuses Hegel of reifying the Kantian 'Ich'. See his Drei Studien zu Hegel, pp. 27-8. But Adorno's criticism does not take into account Hegel's insistence that the 'Ich' must embody itself in a particular time and place.

society and history. He has to wait until chapter VI, 'Der Geist', before he finds the embodiment of Geist in the political community of ancient Athens. Nonetheless, the 'Ich' still knows the conditions of absolute knowledge, and he still knows that such knowledge is necessary and that all knowledge is not limited merely to his own representations. He is self-conscious of the goal that he will follow for the rest of the dialectic. At the close of chapter IV, Hegel himself announces the importance of this transition:

'Das Bewusstsein hat erst in dem Selbstbewusstsein, als dem Begriff des Geistes, seinen Wendungspunkt, auf dem es aus dem farbigen Scheine des sinnlichen Diesseits und aus der leeren Nacht des Übersinnlichen Jenseits in den geistigen Tag der Gegenwart einschreitet'.¹

The dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A. is a transcendental deduction in the sense that it conforms to the general pattern of a transcendental argument: it begins with certain putative facts of experience, and then proceeds toward an analysis of their necessary conditions, arguing that these facts could not be without these conditions. Like Kant's transcendental deduction, Hegel begins with the ego's self-awareness that he is rational--a self-awareness on par with Kant's 'Ich denke'--and then discovers the conditions for such self-awareness. Just as Kant argues that such self-consciousness requires the universal and necessary categories, so Hegel contends that it requires the common customs, laws and cultural traditions of a community. Both Hegel and Kant regard objectivity as the necessary condition of the self-consciousness of rationality, only they

1. PhG, p. 140

differ over the conditions of such objectivity. In Kant, objectivity is established through the concept of an object which gives a necessary order to my representations independent of the accidental order of perception; in Hegel, though, objectivity is guaranteed through the recognition of another rational person who has to be treated as an end in himself apart from my own purposes.

But the dialectic is not a transcendental deduction in the Kantian-Fichteian sense where the philosopher reflects upon consciousness and reasons a priori toward its necessary conditions. Hegel rejects this type of transcendental argument in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG when he demands that the philosopher suspend all his own reflections. Rather, his transcendental deduction is realised through the dialectic of ordinary consciousness. This dialectic is not the philosopher's reflection upon consciousness, but consciousness own self-reflection. It is not the philosopher who examines and criticises consciousness by his standards, then, but consciousness examines and criticises itself by its own standards. What establishes the necessary conditions of self-awareness is not the philosopher's a priori reason, but consciousness own experience. The dialectic is nothing more than this self-examination and self-criticism of ordinary consciousness. And, in chapters IV and IV.A., it is the process of self-discovery by which it learns the necessary conditions for the fulfillment of its own self-appointed purpose: the self-knowledge that

it is rational. Through its experience, ordinary consciousness discovers that it has to reject its criteria for the achievement of its purpose, for it finds that these criteria are unsatisfiable and that they mean the complete abandonment of its purpose. The dialectic ends only when it hits upon that criterion which is both satisfiable and consistent with its purpose.¹

What follows in the next two sections is an attempt to reconstruct Hegel's dialectic in chapters IV and IV.A., each section treating one chapter. The aim is to specify those steps by which Hegel breaks out of the circle of consciousness and achieves his transcendental deduction of absolute knowledge. Hegel's dialectic will be reconstructed as a transcendental argument, both from the standpoint of the philosopher (chapter IV) and that of ordinary consciousness itself (chapter IV.A.). This argument will be retraced step by step from its premise to its conclusion. Each step will be seen as a necessary stage to break out of the solipsistic circle of consciousness and to lead ordinary consciousness up to its self-consciousness as Geist.

In order to avoid reconstructing the argument in an historical vacuum, and in order to maintain as accurate a reading of the texts as possible, it has been necessary to consult other versions of the dialectic: those sections entitled 'Die Wahrheit der Gewissheit seiner selbst' and 'Herrschaft und Knechtschaft' in the 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit, the 1805

1. In seeing the dialectic of the PhG as a quest for criteria, I follow Charles Taylor's account of the 'interpretive' dialectic. See his Hegel, pp. 130-140.

Jenaer Realphilosophie and the 1808/09 Nürnbergger Schriften.

Needless, to say, it has also been necessary to put Hegel's argument in a wider historical context and to consider his critical stance toward Kant, Fichte, Schiller and Schelling.

II

A Commentary on Chapter IV

The dialectic of chapter IV is essentially a test of the claims put forward by solipsism and idealism. This is apparent not only from the previous dialectic of 'Bewusstsein', but also from the claims advanced by the 'Ich' who begins chapter IV. After its experience in 'Bewusstsein', the 'Ich' feels justified to assume that its self-knowledge is absolute knowledge, ie. that to know anything is only to know itself. It has discovered through several stages of experience--sense certainty, perception and force and understanding--that its knowledge of an object is simply an externalisation of its self-knowledge. The 'Ich' who begins chapter IV want to prove the result of his previous experience. He aims to establish that everything in his experience is his consciousness of himself and not the consciousness of an external object.¹ This 'Ich' is only an individual self,² and therefore a solipsist who reduces all reality to his own representations,

1. PhG, pp. 134-5

2. Ibid., p. 143

The 'Ich' has to prove, and cannot take for granted, its thesis that all consciousness is self-consciousness. Although self-consciousness has shown itself to be truth of consciousness in the previous dialectic of 'Bewusstsein', this has been established only for abstract stages of consciousness, but not for experience itself. The 'Ich' now has to test its thesis against actual experience, the manifold of objects which are given to the senses. But a problem immediately arises: it does not appear to be self-conscious in its experience since what it senses is independent of its conscious control. Its will and imagination cannot determine the order and variety of its representations. Thus Hegel says that the 'Ich' consists in two opposing moments at this stage: self-consciousness, where it is conscious only of itself; and consciousness, where it is conscious of something distinct from itself, a manifold of given and contingent representations, which it considers only as an appearance.¹ What this ego has to demonstrate now is that it is nonetheless all reality, that it is still self-conscious despite its consciousness in experience. It has to show that these representations are also within its conscious control, and that they are not independent of its will and imagination after all. This is a problem which confronts any idealism: if all reality is only my own consciousness, then how is it possible to explain the origin of my experience, the fact that there are representations which apparently do not depend upon my conscious activity?

1. Ibid., pp. 134-5

This is precisely the problem to which Fichte turns in the Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre, and which he considers most problematic for his idealism. So in setting forth this problem in chapter IV, Hegel is only asking if and how Fichte comes to terms with his own problem.

With the start of chapter IV, the 'Ich' enters into a new realm of experience: it ceases to intuit, perceive or explain (as in chapters I to III), and it begins to act. In short, it moves from the realm of theory into that of practise.¹ The 'Ich' has to begin acting now since action is the decisive test for its thesis that all consciousness is self-consciousness. The task before it is to demonstrate that experience does in fact conform to its conscious control. Hence the 'Ich' has to act: only by acting does it show that what appears in its experience complies with its will. What it proves to be within its circle of consciousness is what it shows to be within its conscious control; but it shows something to be within its conscious control only by acting, by going out and making it evident that it conforms to its will. Action is the only public and overt demonstration of what is within its conscious control. If, through its actions, it cannot show that something conforms to its ends, then it has to admit that it has not proven its thesis. It is then the object which has proven that it has an existence outside consciousness.

In making action into the test of the 'Ich's' thesis, Hegel

1. Ibid., p. 139

almost certainly has in mind Fichte's practical deduction of consciousness in his 1794 Grundlage. Here Fichte argues that the 'Ich'--Hegel's use of this term is an allusion to Fichte--proves that it is all reality only through its actions. The 'Ich' claims that it is all reality, but it finds a 'Nicht-Ich' given in its experience. In order to establish its claim, it has to realise it in action. The 'Ich' has to strive to overcome and control the 'Nicht-Ich'. It justifies its first principle 'Ich=Ich', which declares that all consciousness is self-consciousness, only when its striving makes the 'Nicht-Ich' conform to its rational ends. Thus the dialectic of chapter IV is nothing less than an internal critique of Fichte's idealism. Hegel tests the Fichtean 'Ich' by its own standard: action.

At this early stage of 'Selbstbewusstsein', the 'Ich' knows itself only through actions stimulated by desire (Begehrde). It knows itself through desire rather than through another form of volition, eg. choice or love, since its earlier dialectic in 'Kraft und Verstand' has only brought it up to its self-consciousness as life, and the form of volition appropriate for a merely living: as opposed to a rational being is desire. On this level, then, the 'Ich' knows itself only as a phenomenon with animal desires, and not as a noumenon with a rational will. It is first as a living being and through its animal desires that it attempts to establish its claim that it is all reality. The 'Ich' tries to demonstrate its conscious control over objects by consuming them according to its animal desires.

Although it is not fully self-conscious of its goal at this stage, what the 'Ich' desires is what Fichte's Sittenlehre calls absolute independence.¹ Absolute independence means that the 'Ich' does not depend upon anything outside itself, and that it is purely self-positing or only what it wills itself to be. When the ego attains its absolute independence it has complete control over the non-ego, so that it no longer has a passive sensibility determined by an external cause, and so that all nature conforms to its will. It has made all nature submit to its conscious laws, so that it is conscious of its object only when it is conscious of its own mental activity. Hence the ego realises its absolute independence when it establishes its thesis that all consciousness is self-consciousness and that there is nothing else outside itself.

In order to appreciate the moves behind the dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A., it is important to keep in mind that the ego's constant goal is absolute independence.² For what the ego's experience amounts to throughout the dialectic is only so many attempts to discover the conditions for the fulfillment of this goal. The ego goes through several stages: desire, the life/death struggle, the master/slave conflict; and only in the end with the mutual recognition between equal and independent persons does it learn the conditions for its absolute independence: self-consciousness as Geist. It is only when the ego is self-conscious as Geist that it knows that it is

1. Fichte, Werke, iv. 220-4

2. Hegel's other versions of this dialectic confirm that absolute independence is at stake. See Nürnbergger Schriften in Werke, iv. 120, and the 1830 Enzyklopädie version in Werke, x. 226, #436.

absolute, that it is all reality, and that it is not determined by anything else outside itself. And it is only then that it discovers what it has struggled for all along: absolute independence, complete autonomy where the ego obeys only self-given laws. This has always been known by the philosopher, but only at the end of the dialectic does it become known for consciousness itself. In order to follow Hegel's dialectic in these chapters, then, it is necessary to follow what experience the ego must go through in order to attain its absolute independence.

The ego's first experience is that it cannot attain absolute independence on the level of its animal desire. The aim of desire is to 'negate' its object: it destroys it by consuming and assimilating it, by forcing it to conform to its life processes (digestion, excretion).¹ The ego feels that it shows control over its experience just as long as it destroys objects through its desires. But it soon learns that this is not good enough to satisfy its absolute independence. Desire falls between two uncomfortable extremes. On the one extreme, it still depends upon an independent object, an object which is completely alien to itself since it is something to be completely destroyed. This dependence upon an independent object is inescapable because desire regenerates, and it always requires another object to consume and assimilate. An infinite regress then arises where desire follows upon desire, object upon object. On the other extreme, though, the ego does not depend upon

1. PhG, p. 139

an object, for it has consumed it; but it then only returns to its empty self-identity as an individual. It has not shown that it has control over its experience since it has only brought the object inside itself by consuming it. The ego has not demonstrated that it is all reality, for it has only made an object conform to its individual nature. So the ego confronts either something completely alien to itself or only itself: something alien to itself in that the object is independent of itself and only something to be negated; and only itself in that the object is destroyed and consumed and it returns to its empty self-identity. There is either a subject-object opposition or subject-object identity, but there is no identity in opposition.

After this experience, the philosopher who observes the ego is justified in concluding that there are two conditions for the fulfillment of its absolute independence. The first condition is that the object is independent of the individual ego, and that it is not just negated or destroyed by it. This is necessary to avoid the relapse into individual self-identity, a self-identity which is abstract and opposed to all the determinations of experience. The second condition is that the ego sees his identity in his object, so that it is not completely alien to him. This condition is required so that the ego does not lose its absolute independence and depend upon something else outside itself; otherwise, a subject-object dualism returns and the ego cannot claim to be all reality. What there must

be according to these conditions is something paradoxical: self-consciousness in an other, or what Hegel calls 'die Einheit seiner selbst in seinem Andersein'.¹

So what satisfies these conditions? Only the mutual recognition between equal and independent persons, Hegel answers. Or, in other words: self-consciousness as Geist.² Mutual recognition satisfies the first condition since both persons are equal to and independent of one another, so that the other is independent of the self and not destroyed by it. It also fulfills the second condition because the self is self-conscious only through mutual recognition, so that he sees himself in the other as the other sees himself in the self. This mutual recognition is nothing less than self-consciousness as Geist, though, since Geist first arises with the mutual recognition between equal and independent persons. It is that single act of self-consciousness between two individuals when the self recognises itself in the other as the other recognises itself in the self. Hence Hegel is now in a position to draw his conclusion: the ego realises his absolute independence only through his self-consciousness as Geist.

There is another argument for self-consciousness as Geist as the necessary condition for absolute independence. Such self-consciousness is necessary for absolute independence, and given the experience of consciousness in discovering the conditions for its fulfillment. If absolute independence means

1. PhG, p. 140. Also see Werke iv. 83

2. Pace Kojève, Kommentar, pp. 22-4, the transition from self-awareness through desire to self-awareness through mutual recognition does not require any premise about the nature of human as opposed to animal desire. The need for mutual recognition has a more metaphysical than anthropological basis: that only mutual recognition satisfies the ego's ideal of absolute independence.

that the self does not depend upon anything outside itself, and if its experience as an individual is that it does depend upon something else outside itself (the object of desire), then there is one, and only one, way in which its ideal can be consistent with its experience: through self-consciousness as Geist. Self-consciousness as Geist realises absolute independence since it of necessity incorporates both individual egos within itself, so that, as a whole, it does not have anything outside itself. This keeps to the meaning of absolute independence: the self knows itself in the other, so that it does not depend upon anything alien to itself in depending upon the other. And it accomodates the experience of consciousness: the self recognises that he depends upon an other who has equal and independent status to his own consciousness. What the ego learns through this dialectic is that it cannot satisfy its ideal of independence as an isolated individual, but only as one part of a whole. Such an experience conforms to the general pattern which Hegel lays down for a dialectic: the individual is aufgehoben in a whole. He is aufgehoben in the peculiar double sense of the German: he is both preserved and cancelled. He is preserved as a necessary moment of the whole, but he is cancelled as a one-sided attempt to be all the whole. The individual is preserved within the whole of Geist since Geist arises only with the self-consciousness between independent individual egos; he is also cancelled, though, since no individual alone attains the absolute independence of Geist, not when each always depends upon another to recognise itself.

* * *

Why, though, mutual recognition? Why not some other less formal human relationship to satisfy the ideal of unity in opposition? This is an important question not only for understanding Hegel's argument in the PhG, but also for understanding his philosophical development. For the early Hegel did in fact hold that there was another relationship that satisfied this ideal: love. According to the 1797/8 fragments 'Entwürfe über Religion und Liebe', there is a unity of subject and object, and a unity where both sides nonetheless maintain their equal and independent status, only in love.¹ There is unity in love since the self sees himself in the other as the other sees himself in the self; and there is also difference because the lover has regard for the equal status of the beloved and does not try to dominate him. In casting love in such a role, Hegel proves himself a disciple of the early Schiller. Like Hölderlin, Hegel subscribes to the faith of Julius in Schiller's 1786 Philosophische Briefe. Julius, the despairing and soul-searching young philosopher who writes letters to his older and wiser teacher, Raphael, overcomes the scepticism and ruthless rationalism of the Enlightenment only through his faith in love. If reason de-mystifies his universe, love remystifies it. After the disillusioning attacks of reason, love makes Julius at home in his world again. Love unifies the subject and object, since it is a unity where both the self and other widen, and do not lose, their individual identity. The self desires the happiness of the other just as he desires his own happiness; his happiness is that of the other. If love is

1. Hegel, Werke, i. 242-4

a sacrifice, it is also a joy just because of it. The lover is no longer a self-sufficient egoist, but he internalises the other, so that his self-identity is in the other just as the other's self-identity is in him.¹

But Hegel soon loses his early faith of Julius. The legal and moral relations of Sittlichkeit rapidly gain favour over love. Already in the 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit, Hegel states that subject-object identity is realised not in love, but in the mutual recognition between citizens of a Volk. He explicitly rejects love as a pure unity of subject and object, since it is only a natural bond between male and female, and these partners are not on an equal footing. The male is rational and represents the universal interests of science, business and the community; the female is emotional and intuitive, and acts only in behalf of the individual interests of her family.²

The 1805 Jenaer Realphilosophie puts Hegel at an even further remove from his original faith. Here he contends that it is not love, but only the moral and legal relations of Sittlichkeit which give self-consciousness as a universal, rational self.³

Although love is a unity in opposition where separate persons are self-conscious through one another, it is only a primitive form of love. Lovers are self-conscious only of their particular personalities, and their bond is created only by their passing natural desires.⁴

1. Schiller, Werke, i. 709-13

2. Hegel, Jenaer Schriften, pp. 441-2

3. Hegel, Jenaer Realphilosophie, pp. 200-212

4. Hyppolyte goes astray when he explains the inadequacy of love as its failure to withstand the 'tragic nature of separation'. See Genesis and Structure, p. 165. The problem with love is not that it is a unity without difference. As late as the Philosophie

The mature Hegel has a plausible rationale for his insistence that self-awareness of rationality requires the moral and legal relations of Sittlichkeit. Love, or the desire of the desire of another, is not sufficient to demonstrate rationality, for an animal might also have such desires (eg. a mother cat desires the desires of her kittens since she sacrifices her life for their safety).¹ What is also required is that a person recognises the equal and independent status of another, regardless of his personal love, and even if he despises the personality of the other. Only a rational being has the capacity to treat others as ends in themselves, or to treat them just as he treats himself, just because they are rational beings. For such recognition and treatment means that a person acts not according to his desires, whether they are selfish or generous, but according to the concept of law, a universalisable maxim which obliges him to respect the rights of everyone alike simply as a rational being. For Hegel, though, to act according to the concept of law is the distinctive power of a rational being. And here he simply relies upon a point from Kant's Grundlegung: that it is characteristic of a rational

des Rechts, and certainly in the Jenaer Realphilosophie, Hegel sees love as a unity in opposition. The problem with love is that it is only a primitive and natural form of unity in difference which cannot be fully universal and rational.

2. This is a weak point in Kojève's reading, which explains the transition to rational self-awareness through the desire of desire. See Kommentar, pp. 22-4. The problem is that the desire of desire does not necessarily imply the role of law in mutual recognition, a role which Hegel regards as necessary for the self-awareness of rationality. Kojève does not take into account Hegel's later reckoning with his earlier Schillerian days.

being not only to act in conformity to the law, but to act according to the idea of the law, ie. its universalisability for everyone alike.

III

A Commentary on Chapter IV.A.

Hegel's argument in chapter IV is largely only from the standpoint of the philosopher. Although the self that he observes has had the experience of the futility of desire, and although it has discovered the independence of its object, it has still been left to the philosopher to conclude that the necessary condition of absolute independence is mutual recognition or self-awareness as Geist. What is only for the philosopher in chapter IV, though, must now be confirmed by consciousness itself in chapter IV.A. Through its own self-examination, the ego has to discover the necessity of mutual recognition and self-awareness as Geist. So Hegel's task in chapter IV.A. is to narrate those stages of self-consciousness which emerge from the self's inner experience. What are these stages? And how does their dialectic add up to self-awareness in Geist? How, indeed, does this dialectic resolve those problems which confront Hegel's attempt to resurrect metaphysics?

1. Kant, Schriften, iv. 447-8

The dialectic in IV.A. begins from where it left off in IV. After its experience in IV, the self is now self-conscious of two facts. First, it is self-conscious that it strives after independence, and that what it really desires is not sensual gratification, but autonomy. It still does not know, however, the conditions for the fulfillment of its ideal. But at least this is an advance from the stage of desire. There the self is simply driven by blind impulse, and it is not conscious of its goal, except through a dark feeling. Second, it recognises that it cannot satisfy its ideal on the level of desire. It sees that desire does not liberate, but that it enslaves. Desire forever returns, and it always depends upon another object. The recognition of these two facts now brings the self up to a new stage of self-consciousness, and indeed to a new concept of its self-identity. Since it knows that it strives after autonomy, and since it also knows that its desires are not adequate to such an ideal, it is now self-conscious that it is more than a phenomenon with animal desires, but that it is also a noumenon with a rational will. For Hegel, to be self-conscious that one is autonomous is also to be self-conscious that one is rational. Hegel agrees with Kant's Grundlegung and Fichte's Bestimmung des Gelehrten on the criterion of rationality: what distinguishes a rational from a sensible being is freedom.¹ Freedom is autonomy, the power to act according to self-imposed laws and self-appointed ends. It is only a rational being, though, which acts according to such laws and ends;

1. Cf. Kant, Schriften, iv. 447-8 and Fichte Werke, vi. 305

a sensible being acts according to the laws and ends of nature imposed upon it.

The self now steps forward to confirm his new self-consciousness, his new sense of self-identity. He wants to demonstrate that he is more than a sensible being with animal desires, but that he is also a rational being with a will. His aim is to prove his independence and autonomy.¹ This must be an established public fact, acknowledged before others. Only then does the self know, and not only think, that he is free. Until then, it is possible that he is deluded or insane. He might be only a slave, robot or animal.

This demand for self-knowledge as a rational being is the mainspring of the forthcoming dialectic. The self will have to pass through several stages of experience--the need for recognition, the life/death struggle, the master/slave conflict--before he knows that he is rational. Through this dialectic, the self will break outside his solipsistic circle of consciousness. In the end, he will discover his rational self-knowledge only when he recognises that he is not the only rational being, but that there is another rational being outside himself. The task now at hand, then, is to reconstruct the stages of the self's experience, seeing how each of them is necessary for rational self-knowledge, and noting how they progressively crack the self's solipsistic shell. Let us take each stage in its turn.

1. PhG, p. 144. Also see Enzyklopedie #431, Zusatz, in Werke, x. 220

The first stage: the need for recognition

If the self is to know that he is free, then he must gain the recognition of others. He requires public recognition since he knows that he is free only by acting, by acting according to his chosen ends; but to act, other have to allow him to move as he sees fit, ie. they must recognise him. Otherwise, if they restrain him or interfere with his movements, then he is not free, but only a slave or a hassled animal in the state of nature.¹

Alternatively, the self establishes that he is a rational being only when he acquires the recognition of others. What he demands in order to show that he is rational is not that others satisfy his desires--such a demand is shared by animals--but that they allow him to act according to his own ends, and simply because he has chosen them. Since the self regards himself as free, he wants to be treated as an end in himself; he insists that he be granted the right to according to his own self-chosen ends, and just because he has chosen them. Only recognition, though, satisfies such a demand. For to recognise a person as a rational being is not to be ready to satisfy his wants, but it is to grant him his autonomy. It is to allow him the right to love as he sees fit, and to treat him as an end in himself.

At this stage, it is important to see that when the self demands recognition from an other, he still does not assume that this other is another rational being. This is in fact

1. PhG, pp. 143-4, and Enzyklopädie #430-1 in Werke x. 219-20

precisely what the self has to discover in his forthcoming experience. For all that the self knows now, the other might be a robot or animal. When the self demands recognition from the other, what he is asking for is only non-interference from the other, a right of way to act according to his own ends; he does not want to be treated as a means to satisfy the desires of others, whether these desires belong to a robot, an animal or rational being. After his recent departure from the stage of desire, the self's first inclination is still to treat the other as an obstacle to be overcome and destroyed. Such is his regard for the rational status of others, that he is more inclined to be a cannibal, having the other for his breakfast. It is true: Hegel has already introduced other rational persons into his argument in chapter IV.¹ This has sometimes blinded commentators from seeing the argument against solipsism in IV.A., since Hegel apparently already presupposes the existence of other minds.² Yet this is to ignore the status of Hegel's argument in chapter IV. The introduction of other rational selves in that chapter is only from the standpoint of the philosopher; the self now has to discover from its own experience in IV.A. what the philosopher has already known in IV.³

1. PhG, pp. 139-140

2. For example, Soll assumes that Hegel simply dogmatically introduces other minds in chapter IV to discuss aspects of interpersonal behavior in chapter IV.A. See his An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics, pp. 15-16. Findlay also thinks that the argument against solipsism is already made in chapter IV. See his Hegel: A Re-examination, pp. 96-7

3. PhG, p. 143

The second stage: the life/death struggle

If the self is to gain the recognition of others, he must enter into a life/death struggle with them. He must struggle against others, for they act out of their desires and want to use him as a means to their ends. The others have still not stepped out of the stage of their animal desires. The self cannot establish his freedom, then, unless he defends himself and stops them from interfering with his actions. This struggle has to be nothing short of a life/death issue where the self risks his own life, since it is only in risking his life that he demonstrates that he is a rational being who exists beyond the level of mere biological life and its animal desires.¹

This struggle for recognition is not Hobbes war of all against all. The self fights for recognition of himself as a rational being. He does not compete with others to satisfy his natural desires or to gain power to satisfy them. For Hegel, unlike Hobbes, right arises with the recognition of a person's rational status; it is not simply the permission to indulge in appetites.

The third stage: mercy to the foe

If the self is to gain recognition through the life/death struggle, then he cannot kill his opponent. For to kill his opponent means that he has no one to recognise him. A corpse cannot salute. Hence he must grant his enemy at least his life.²

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1. PhG, p. 144, and Enzyklopädie #431, Werke x. 219-21
 2. PhG, p. 145, and Enzyklopädie #432, Werke x. 221-2

The fourth stage: master versus slave

If, in order to gain recognition, the victor cannot kill his vanquished foe, and if, in order to protect himself from further attack, he cannot grant his foe freedom, then the victor has no choice: he must enslave his foe, making him submit to his demands. The victor and vanquished are not to one another as master and slave. Although the master grants the slave his life, he still does not consider him as his equal or as a rational being. Even though he respects the slave as a living being, eg. he acknowledges the slave's desires by feeding him, he still cannot respect him as a rational being, because he uses the slave as a means to his own ends. The slave is only an animal, an instrument to satisfy his desires. The master has his reason for treating the slave as an animal. After all, the slave prefers his life over death in the struggle for recognition. Hence the slave fails to prove himself a rational being.¹

This master/slave relationship is a crucial step down the road toward mutual recognition. The master has to recognise the independent life of the slave, even if he has not granted him a rational status equal to himself. This is a greater experience of an independent reality than that on the stage of desire. Although desire experiences the independence of its object, that is only because it is caught in an infinite regress; there is no definite object which it still cannot consume, although any object is always succeeded by another. Now, though,

1. PhG, pp. 145-6, and Enzyklopädie #433-5, Werke, x. 223-6

the self has to restrain his desires--such restraint is a great step toward his education as a rational being--and admit that there is one definite object which it cannot consume, its vaquished foe, the slave. It must grant that it is not the only living being, but that there is another living being. The master must respect his slave as a living, if not as a rational being, eg. he must feed him when he is hungry.

The master's recognition of the slave is therefore a decisive step outside the solipsistic circle of consciousness. What is within the circle of consciousness is only what is within the self's conscious control. The self now discovers, however, that there is a living being who is outside his conscious control. This is because he cannot consume this being, making it conform to his desires, but must respect its desires as another living creature. To treat it only as an object of desire, to see it as something within the control of his will and imagination, is to abolish one of the conditions of rational self-knowledge, the recognition of the other. So if the self is to know that it is rational, then it has to recognise another living being, a being who exists outside his own representations, and who has a life similar to his own.

The fifth stage: the collapse of the master/slave relationship

If the self and other are to one another as master and slave, then the master still does not get the required recognition of himself as autonomous and independent. The master degrades the slave to the status of an animal and reduces him to an instrument of his ends. The recognition of the slave is

therefore worthless to him. It is not the free recognition of another rational being, but it is only the humbled submission of an animal. Since the master despises the slave, he does not get the assurance that he is after.¹

Not only does the master/slave relationship not give the master the recognition that he demands, but it also degrades his status as a rational being. The master regresses back to the stage of his animal desires. This is for two reasons: (a) he treats the slave only as a means to his own ends, and as an instrument to satisfy his desires; (b) he simply consumes the products of the slave's labour; he does not gain independence over his objects through labour, like the slave who labours for him, but he depends upon the slave's labour for his idle enjoyments. So if the slave is not worthy of giving recognition, the master is not worthy of receiving it.

The sixth stage: the liberation of the slave

If the master is to gain recognition as a free being, then he has to recognise the slave as a free being. For the master gains reassurance not from the submissive acknowledgement of an inferior, but only from the recognition of an equal. If the master recognises the slave as a free being, then he also ceases to degrade himself to the level of his animal desires. He proves that he is rational because he recognises that another person is an end in himself.²

1. PhG, p. 147, and Enzyklopädie #433, #435, Werke, x. 222-5
2. PhG, pp. 146-150, and Enzyklopädie #435-6, Werke, x. 224-7

There is a hidden Kantian theme lurking behind this stage of the dialectic: that the self demonstrates that he is rational only when he acts according to self-imposed universal laws, laws which oblige him no less than others. If the self acts according to universal laws, there are two reasons why it must be rational: because only a rational being acts according to the idea of the law (ie. its universalisability), and because only he restrains his desires to act for the sake of the law. In the context of the master/slave dialectic, this theme means that the master proves his rationality when he liberates the slave. If he liberates the slave, that shows that he acts according to the universal laws which grant someone else the same rights as himself. The master proves his freedom not by dominating his slave, but by freeing him. For his liberation of the slave proves his autonomy, his power to restrain his desires and to act according to universal laws. This Kantian theme appears, if only obliquely, in a 'Zusatz' to the Enzyklopädie version of the master/slave dialectic, where Hegel comments about the Greeks and Romans failure to achieve true freedom:

'...die antiken Völker, die Griechen und Römer, sich noch nicht zum Begriff der absoluten Freiheit erhoben hatten, da sie nicht erkannten, dass der Mensch als solcher, als dieses allgemeine Ich, als vernünftiges Bewusstsein, zur Freiheit berechtigt ist. Bei ihnen wurde vielmehr der Mensch nur dann für frei gehalten, wenn er als ein Freier geboren war. Die Freiheit hatte also bei ihnen noch nicht die Bestimmung der Natürlichkeit'.

1. Hegel, Werke, x. 223-4, #433 'Zusatz'

This experience brings the dialectic to its conclusion. The self knows that it is rational because another rational being recognises its autonomy. But it also knows that it is rational because it recognises the autonomy of another rational being. In other words, the self knows that it is rational only through mutual recognition. This is nothing less than its self-awareness as Geist, though, since Geist is that unifying act of self-awareness that arises from the mutual recognition between mutual rational beings.

Now the solipsist takes the final step outside the darkness of his circle of consciousness and into the broad daylight of reality. If, on the stage of desire, he acknowledges the reality of an external object, and if, on the stage of the life/death struggle, he grants that there is another living being, now after the master/slave dialectic he recognises the equal and independent reality of another rational being. He finally admits that he is not the only self-conscious being, but that there is another such being. The self acknowledges that the other is not simply his own representations because he sees that the other is outside his conscious control. He cannot consume the other, as if it were an inanimate object; and he cannot treat it as a means to satisfy his desires, as if it were a slave. Rather, he admits that the other is outside his conscious control because it is an end in itself, a being who has a right to live according to his own self-appointed ends, even if they do not agree with the self's own ends. So, for Hegel, to recognise another rational being as an end in himself is the decisive

refutation of solipsism. By such recognition, the solipsist has to concede that not all reality is within his conscious control, and that there is another rational mind outside his own. This is not a new theme to German idealism. In his 1795 Neue Deduktion des Naturrechts, the young Schelling perfectly anticipates Hegel's theme, giving it this striking formulation:

'Wo meine moralische Macht widerstand findet, kann nicht mehr Natur seyn. Schauernd stehe ich still. Hier ist Menschheit! ruft es mir entgegen. Ich darf nicht weiter'.¹

* * *

On the dialectic of chapter IV.A., Hegel rests his final case against solipsism and idealism. If the ego recollects the entire course of its experience since the beginning of chapter IV, what it finds is nothing less than the self-refutation of these standpoints. This self-refutation has gone on behind the back of consciousness, but through its recollection it discovers that it has suffered its violence only by its own hands. The dialectic began with the absolute claim of the idealistic-solipsistic ego: that all reality consists in its own representations, and that to be conscious of anything is to be self-conscious of the individual self. The ego's goal was absolute independence: not to depend upon anything outside itself and to become the whole of reality. After several stages of experience, though--the futility of desire, the life/death struggle, and the master/slave conflict--the ego discovers that it cannot satisfy its ideal as an individual, but only through the

1. Schelling, Werke, i. 173

mutual recognition between itself and another ego, ie. only through its self-awareness as Geist. What it learns through its own self-examination is that one individual cannot be all reality, but that he of necessity depends upon another individual, who exists apart from and prior to himself. The ego finds that it cannot prove its absolute independence unless it recognises the equal and independent reality of another ego. In order to satisfy its ideal of absolute independence, then, the ego has to break outside its own solipsistic circle of consciousness, and it has to admit that it is not all reality. What does fulfill this ideal, it now realises, is nothing less than Geist itself, that intersubjective self-awareness attained through mutual recognition. Only Geist has absolute independence, for it is not one individual ego who depends upon another, but it is the whole of both egos, so that it does not depend upon anything outside itself.

All throughout its dialectic, though, the ego keeps its original standard of knowledge as self-knowledge. It only refutes its theory of the conditions for its fulfillment. It sees that its self-consciousness as an individual cannot satisfy this standard, but only its universal self-consciousness as Geist. By so re-interpreting the standard of self-knowledge, though, Hegel avoids that dilemma which appears to arise in making self-knowledge into the standard of knowledge. If all knowledge is self-knowledge, then it appears as if the self knows himself or nothing; it seems as if he is caught between the awareness of his own representations or an unknowable thing-in-itself. There is no third or middle option where the self knows an independent reality.

Self-awareness as Geist, however, does find the middle path between these options. Since such self-awareness arises only with the mutual recognition between two selves where each acknowledges the equal and independent reality of the other, there is self-knowledge which is also the knowledge of an independent reality. The self knows itself through the other as the other knows itself through the self, and yet the self and other are independent of one another. This self-consciousness is not the awareness of my own representations apart from an other--it is not an abstract subject-object identity in opposition to the subject-object dualism of experience--but it is the awareness of myself through and in another--it is a concrete subject-object identity through and in the subject-object dualism of experience.

When Hegel maintains the standard of self-knowledge throughout the dialectic, he is only remaining true to the spirit of the Kantian philosophy: its principle of subject-object identity. His complaint against Kant and Fichte in the Differenz has only been that they have no method of developing this principle into a system. It remains an abstract principle in opposition to experience. Self-consciousness opposes consciousness of an object. Now, though, Hegel steps forward to claim that he has discovered the method to develop his principle into a system: the phenomenology, the internal dialectic of consciousness. The development of this principle into a system takes place precisely in the dialectic of chapters IV and IV.A. Here the self learns to incorporate the other within himself, so that he is self-conscious through the other. The self is no longer self-conscious in abstraction from his consciousness of an other, but through

his consciousness of an other. There is now a unity-in-opposition, an identity-in-difference, and not just a unity in contrast to opposition, an identity opposed to difference. The philosopher does not simply assert and assure use from an abstract standpoint that there is such a unity-in-opposition, but the dialectic achieves and realises such a unity in fact simply because it is nothing less than the actual experience of consciousness. Thus the spirit of the Kantian philosophy finds its long awaited completion and systematic fulfillment. The scene for this completion of the Copernican revolution has been nowhere else than chapters IV and IV.A. of the PhG.

6.

Hegel's Path toward the Phänomenologie in Jena

Introductory

When did Hegel first conceive his programme to resurrect metaphysics upon the basis of the critique? And what intellectual struggle did he have to go through in arriving at this programme? In raising these questions, the task of the following chapter is far more historical than the previous chapters: to set forth the stages by which Hegel came to conceive and write his PhG. It does not aim to study all the forces behind the development of the PhG, but only those which are relevant to its programme of resurrecting metaphysics.

In re-examining Hegel's development toward the PhG, I have found it necessary to argue against two of my predecessors, Haering and Pöggeler. I want to establish two theses which are in opposition to their theories about the development of the PhG. First, that the programme of constructing the absolute for consciousness does not arise with Hegel's early introductory logic (as Pöggeler believes), but with the Differenz. And, second, that the programme of introducing and educating consciousness up to absolute knowledge arises only in the middle Jena years (1804/05), and not in the first Jena years (as Pöggeler argues) or in the final days of the composition of the PhG (as Haering thinks).

While studying Hegel's intellectual journey toward the PhG, I have also focussed my attention upon some historical influences which are necessary to account for some of the stages and turns in his development. This has meant examining Hölderlin's role in forging the Hegel-Schelling alliance, and Goethe's role in accounting for Hegel's break from Schelling.

Hegel's Discovery of Philosophy in Frankfurt(1800)

Hegel first sets forth the problem which is to preoccupy him in the PhG only two months before his arrival in Jena. While still in Frankfurt, he writes in his famous November 2nd, 1800 letter to Schelling:

'In meiner wissenschaftlichen Bildung, die von untergeordneten Bedürfnissen der Menschen anfang, musste ich zur Wissenschaft vorgetrieben werden, und das Ideal des Jünglingsalters musste sich zur Reflexionsform, in ein System zugleich verwandeln; ich frage mich jetzt, während ich noch damit beschäftigt bin, welche Rückkehr zum Eingreifen in das Leben der Menschen zu finden ist'.¹

In attempting to transform his early ideal into a system, Hegel confronts a serious problem--and, indeed, the problem behind the struggle of his Jena years, whose eventual solution is nothing less than the PhG itself. What is this problem? It soon reveals itself after explaining Hegel's two terms, 'das Ideal des Jünglingsalters' and 'Reflexionsform'.

The ideal of Hegel's youth appears most explicitly in his 1800 Systemfragment: to raise finite to infinite life, so that man is self-conscious in God or aware of himself as a necessary moment of the universe as a whole.² This ideal is the goal of religion, Hegel says, whose feeling of love takes man outside his limited individual nature and unites him with God. Such a goal obviously presupposes that the infinite is

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1. Hegel, Briefe von und an Hegel, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, Meiner, 1952), i. 59-60
 2. Hegel, Werke, i. 421-2

present within the finite, that the subject can be self-conscious in his object, or that the nature of man is already divine, so that his self-consciousness in God is only a question of his becoming more aware of his individual nature.¹ It therefore opposes an infinite which is beyond the finite, a God who transcends human life, or a subject-object dualism which sees the subject and object as distinct types of entity. Hence Hegel's first explicit mention of the term 'das Ideal' identifies it with subject-object identity, the unity of the infinite and finite. The 1797 fragment 'Positiv wird ein Glauben genannt...' equates 'das Ideal' with subject-object identity, with the unity of freedom and nature, and states that such an ideal is divine, the object of every religion.² This ideal is realised only in love, Hegel says, for only in love are the subject (the lover) and the object (the beloved) in a reciprocal relationship where each is self-conscious through the other. Then the 1797 fragment '...welchem Zweck denn alles Uebrige dient...' implicitly identifies 'das Ideal' with the unity of the infinite and finite, for it states that love realises life, where life is understood as the unity of the infinite and finite.³ Hegel has already stated that love realises the ideal, though, so that he appears to equate the ideal with life, the unity of the infinite and finite.⁴

1. Ibid., i. 382, 422

2. Ibid., i. 242, 244

3. Ibid., i. 246, 421

4. There is by no means a prevailing unanimity about the reading of 'das Ideal des Jünglingsalters'. Harris produces a more political reading of Hegel's letter, basing his interpretation upon the meaning of 'das Ideal' as it appears in the revision of the 'Positivität' essay. See his Hegel's Development,

By 'Reflexionsform', Hegel means a concept of reflection or the discursive understanding. In his early years, and throughout his life, Hegel assigns two tasks to reflection, one general and another specific. In its general task, reflection defines the specific nature of a thing, or it identifies the features which distinguish it from all other things. Its concepts are therefore determinations, the properties which distinguish one thing from everything else. Each of its determinations has its meaning only in contrast to another, eg. 'east' locates a specific direction only in contrast to 'west', 'red' pinpoints a distinctive colour only in contrast to 'blue'; or, as Spinoza puts it: Omnis determinitio est negatio. The sphere of reflection then consists in the relations between things--the contrasts and oppositions between them--and not the things in themselves, apart from their relations to one another. Now since the task of reflection is to define or identify the specific nature of a thing, to contrast and distinguish it from all other things, it follows that it separates something from its context, that it abstracts it from its whole. Consequently, reflection analyses or divides a whole into its separate parts, seeing them as independent of one another. It then regards the whole as only the sum of its parts, or a thing as only the conjunction of its properties. Hegel commits himself to this use of 'Reflexion' in his 1800 Systemfragment when he states that each product of reflection is in opposition to another;¹

'Toward the Sunlight' (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 406-7
For a more metaphysical reading, akin to my own, see Pöggeler's
'Hegel's Jenaer Systemkonzeption', pp. 293-5

1. Hegel, Werke, i. 422

and he also adheres to it in the fragment '...welchem Zweck denn alles Uebrige dient...' when he says that the understanding sees the whole as only the conjunction of its parts.¹ This general sense of the word 'Reflexion' probably derives from Herder, who in his 1770 Abhandlung zur Ursprung der Sprache argues that 'Reflexion' or self-awareness has to express itself in language, and that language consists in concepts which distinguish one thing from another.² In its more specific task however, reflection separates two particular things from one another: the subject and object. It refers to the standpoint of the Kantian intellectus archetypus, where there is a dualism between universal and particular, possibility and actuality. Hegel sees reflection in this specific role in his 1798/99 Geist des Christenthums, where he says that it objectifies things, making them independent of the subject who is aware of them.³ This specific sense of reflection apparently stems from Schiller and Kant. According to Schiller's 1794 Aesthetische Briefe, reflection is man's self-awareness, and it arises only when he separates himself from an external nature.⁴ And in his 1790 Kritik der Urteilskraft Kant uses 'Reflexion' to refer to 'das reflektierende Urteilskraft', whose task is to find the universal when the particular is given; such a task arises, Kant explains, only when there is a dualism between the concepts of the understanding, which are universal and necessary, and the manifold of empirical laws, which are particular and contingent.⁵

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1. Ibid., i. 246
 2. Herder, Werke, v. 34-5
 3. Hegel, Werke, i. 370
 4. Schiller, Werke, ii. 503-4
 5. Kant, Schriften, v. 179-181

Now, after considering the meaning of these two terms, the problem before Hegel ought to be readily apparent. He demands that his ideal be expressed in the form of reflection, a system of distinct concepts. But then a contradiction arises. If the ideal is the unity of the infinite and finite, where the universe as a whole (the infinite) and each of its parts (the finite) are inseparable from one another, then to put it in the form of reflection is to dissolve that unity; for reflection separates the finite parts from the infinite whole and makes them self-sufficient apart from it and one another. And if the ideal is subject-object identity, then to express it in the terms of reflection is to destroy that identity, since reflection separates the subject and object, giving them an independent existence apart from one another. The purpose of religion--raising finite to infinite life--is thwarted as long as it remains in the grip of reflection; for reflection confines men to the realm of the finite, where each thing is in opposition to another, and where the infinite is only an unattainable ideal beyond the finite. The problem before Hegel, then, is to grasp the absolute in thought, to comprehend the infinite not through the feeling of religion but the concepts of philosophy. Yet the task he sets for himself appears self-defeating, because thought destroys the absolute in the very act of conceiving it.

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Although there are a few earlier hints,¹ Hegel's letter to Schelling marks a turning point in his development, a break with the previous direction of his thought. In his earlier Frankfurt manuscripts, and even up until his 1800 Systemfragment, written at most only two months before his letter to Schelling, Hegel denies that his ideal is expressible in systematic form. He argues that reflection cannot grasp life, and he insists that only the feeling of religion, not the thought of philosophy, grasps the absolute. In his 1797 'Entwürfe', for example, he writes that love excludes all the oppositions of the understanding, uniting in an indivisible whole what reflection has divided.² Then in the 1798/99 Geist des Christenthums, he states that it is contradictory to expect reflection to comprehend the absolute; for reflection knows only the finite and limited, and 'das Unendliche kann nicht in diesem Gefässe getragen werden'.³ Since the divine is pure life, the unity of the infinite and finite, he says that it is necessary to avoid all of reflection's expressions about it, which only attribute some opposition to it.⁴ Finally, in his 1800 Systemfragment, he declares that the elevation from finite to infinite life occurs only in religion.⁵

1. One hint is in the 1799/1800 fragment 'Der immer sich vergrössende Widerspruch...' where Hegel states that metaphysics assigns determinations their necessary place in a whole. See Werke, i. 458. Another hint is in the 1800 fragment 'Der Begriff der Positivität einer Religion...' where Hegel envisages a metaphysical treatment 'durch Begriffe' of the relations between the finite and infinite. See Werke i. 255

2. Hegel, Werke, i. 246

3. Ibid., i. 370

4. Ibid., i. 372

5. Ibid., i. 421

Philosophy stops short of religion, because it deals only with abstract thought, which considers only the finite determinations of things. The task of philosophy is then only negative: it establishes the finite character of all thought, and it postulates an infinite which is outside its domain.¹

What distinguishes the Jena from the Frankfurt years, then, is Hegel's new problem of how to express the ideal in systematic form, of how to grasp the absolute through reflection. This problem also marks the beginning of his development toward the PhG, though, since the basic problem of the PhG is nothing less than how to know the absolute through reflection, or how to raise consciousness up to the standpoint of subject-object identity. The problematic of the PhG begins, therefore, only with the onset of the Jena years.

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1. Ibid., i. 422-3

2. Harris states that the 1797 Frankfurt fragment 'Glauben ist die Art...' already contains the germ of the programme of the PhG since it anticipates a critique of beliefs about knowledge which lead to absolute knowledge. See Hegel's Development, p. 314. He refers to the passage at the end of the first paragraph where Hegel states that a unity of opposites, although independent of the opposites that it unites, can be seen to be dependent upon another opposite on its own level, and so on ad infinitum for each new unity of opposites. See Hegel, Werke, i. 251.

But Harris still looks too far ahead. Hegel is far from affirming a dialectic that results in absolute knowledge. This dialectic is in fact an infinite regress which prevents reflection from knowing the absolute. Such a negative dialectic anticipates the task of philosophy in the 1800 System, where philosophy is to show that reflection lapses into an infinite regress in knowing the absolute. See Werke, i. 422-3. This fragment also states that a unity of opposites has to be an object of faith, and that it cannot be known by reflection, which holds opposites apart from one another. See Werke, i. 251.

Why does Hegel finally make philosophy rather than religion into the instrument of absolute knowledge? What repels him away from the feeling of religion, and what attracts him toward the thought of philosophy? Hegel's later discovery of philosophy has its roots in his earlier idea of the purpose and value of religion. He eventually realises that the purpose he assigns to religion cannot be satisfied by faith and feeling, but that it has to be grounded upon thought or the concepts of the understanding. According to his 1792/3 'Fragmente über Religion und Christenthums' and his 1798/99 Geist des Christenthums, the aim of religion is to establish a sense of community a feeling of belonging to a group where each person finds his self-identity by participating in public life. The idea of God is to be nothing less than the spirit of a nation, the basis for its characteristic institutions, traditions and culture. Belief in God is to integrate the individual into the group, so that he conforms to its institutions and traditions. This aim of religion is stated perfectly explicitly toward the end of Der Geist des Christenthums:

'Die Gemeine hat das Bedürfnis eines Gottes, der der Gott der Gemeine ist, in der gerade die ausschliessende Liebe, ihr Charakter, ihre Beziehung dargestellt ist...'¹

Although in the 1795/6 'Positivität' essay Hegel sharply distinguishes church and state, and although he vigorously argues that religious faith ought to be free from state interference, he still regards religion as the basis of the community. In the 1796 fragment 'Jedes Volk hat ihm eigene Gegenstände der Phantasie...', which is appended to the 'Positivität' essay,

1. Hegel, Werke, i. 406

he praises the Greek polis for having a religion which integrates the individual into the social whole, and he regrets the loss of a communal mythology and religion in modern Germany.¹ His position is in fact perfectly consistent. Hegel distinguishes between the nation(Volk)--the common customs, culture and language of a community--and the state(Staat)--laws defending property rights which are backed by force. While religion ought to be the basis of the community, it ought not to be the basis of the state. Hegel does not regard a national religion as a threat to freedom, since he regards the rules of a community as self-given; a state religion, though, is seen as a danger to freedom, because its beliefs are enforced by the law.²

All throughout his pre-Jena years, from Tübingen down to Frankfurt, Hegel persistently stresses that religion creates a sense of community only if it satisfies one condition: that it conforms to individual autonomy. His constant target is 'positivity', ie. a religion based upon authority, which commands beliefs and actions simply because they are prescribed by a sacred text or teacher. Against positivity, Hegel argues that religion has to emerge from the spontaneous feeling, the inner heart and critical understanding of each individual. The spirit of the community has to be the spirit of each individual, so that he realises his nature only when he lives by its religious beliefs and customs, and so that his self-given ends are also

1. Ibid., i. 197f

2. On the need to distinguish between 'Volk' and 'Staat' in the young Hegel, see Pöggeler's 'Hegel, der Verfasser des Ältesten Systemprogrammes des deutschen Idealismus', Hegel-Studien, Beiheft IV (1969), 24-5, Avineri's Hegel's Theory of the Modern State (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972), and Pelczynski's introductory essay to Hegel's Political Writings, trans. Knox (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 56-64

its ends. It is only when religion agrees with such autonomy that it achieves its basic purpose: the overcoming of alienation and the reconciliation of the individual with the group.

According to the early Hegel, then, the problem of religion is to establish a sense of community, a feeling of national identity, which nonetheless remains true to individual autonomy. What Hegel soon realises in his later Frankfurt years, however, is that feeling and intuition are not adequate to this task. There are two difficulties that arise for feeling and intuition. First, they cannot provide a basis for intersubjective agreement or a shared sense of identity since people differ in their intuitions and feelings. Second, some feelings and intuitions are esoteric, the preserve of a select few with innate talents and powers; such esotericism then permits the possibility of an elite, who have the exclusive privilege of fathoming the divine mysteries. This second difficulty is decisive: it means that a religion which appeals to feeling and intuition eventually lapses into positivity, depriving the individual of his autonomy, his right to judge laws and traditions. Hence a religion which bases itself upon feelings and intuitions fails to achieve its purpose: it cannot establish a sense of community since feelings and intuitions are not intersubjective; and it undermines autonomy, the duty of self-thought, since not everyone has the capacity to intuit the religious truths which legitimise the laws and customs of the community.

Now both these difficulties--the loss of intersubjectivity and esotericism--disappear when the truths of religion are grasped through the concepts of the understanding. Since a concept is universalisable, it is both intersubjective and exoteric. A concept is intersubjective, securing agreement among everyone alike, since universalisability is a test which demands nothing more than logical consistency, a standard to which everyone has to consent as a rational being. And a concept is exoteric, belonging to everyone alike just as a rational being, for universalisation is a test which requires only ordinary intelligence and no special gifts or talents.¹ Thus it is discursive thought which fulfills the purpose of religion: it provides the basis for a sense of community since it is intersubjective, and it fulfills the demand for individual autonomy because everyone can judge according to them.

* * *

The first indication of Hegel's emerging discovery of the value of discursive thought appears toward the end of the 1798/99 Der Geist des Christenthums. Here he states that the feeling of love is not sufficient to be the basis of a community. Love cannot remain only a feeling, he insists, but it has to assume some objective or determinate form in the life of the community. It has to embody itself in its art, laws, rituals and institutions; it also has to be the motive for actions and

1. This contrast between intuitive and discursive thought has already been more fully explored in chapter 3, section II, in discussing Hegel's critique of intellectual intuition. If I am right in my diagnosis of Hegel's discovery of philosophy, then the later critique of intellectual intuition only articulates what Hegel had long since in his mind in Frankfurt.

the inspiration for feelings in public life. If the idea of God is to be the basis of the community, then his invisible spirit--the idea of love--has to assume some visible public form, appearing to the consciousness of everyone alike. Otherwise, if the idea of God refers to a transcendental entity, an unknown, mysterious being beyond consciousness, then belief in him becomes positive, justified only by dogma, an appeal to sacred texts and miracles. Now at this point in the argument Hegel's thought takes a crucial turn: he explicitly states that the embodiment and objectification of love requires the understanding.¹ The subject who loves has to be united with his object, and that means, he says, that his feeling has to be united with his understanding and given a universal form. Hegel's argument implies, then, that a religion is consistent with autonomy or self-thought only through the understanding. For he makes it explicit that the idea of God appears to consciousness and assumes objective form only in the understanding, and that such an appearance is necessary to avoid positivity.

Another indication of Hegel's growing recognition of the value of discursive thought comes in the two 1799/1800 drafts for the introduction to the 'Verfassungsschrift', the fragments 'Sollte das politische Resultat...'² and 'Der immer sich vergrössende Widerspruch...'.² Here Hegel admits that the growing individualism of modern civil society is inevitable, and he calls for a new constitution to defend and control it.³ This is surely an advance over

1. Hegel, Werke, i. 405-6, 409

2. For a helpful commentary on these difficult texts, see Harris, Hegel's Development, pp. 434-446

3. Hegel, Werke, i. 453, 458

his earlier Frankfurt years. In one of his first Frankfurt fragments, the 1796 'eine Ethik...', the famous 'Systemprogramme',¹ Hegel wants to completely eradicate and transcend the modern state--'Wir müssen also über den Staat hinaus!', he exclaims. He sees the modern state as only a machine, whose central bureaucracy destroys all freedom by controlling every aspect of life.² His ideal is the resurrection of the community of the Greek polis, where the individual identifies his ends with the group, and where he finds his freedom only by participating in public life. As is evident from the pessimism of the 1796 fragment 'Jedes Volk hat ihm eigene Gegenstände der Phantasie...',³ he laments the individualism of modern civil society, where each individual pursues his own interests to the expense of public ends, because he regards it as a fall from the ideal of the Greek polis. With the beginning of the 'Verfassungsschrift' in 1799, however, Hegel has come to accept the fate of civil society as the inevitable result of the collapse of feudalism and the growing division of labour. Although the later Jena drafts of the 'Verfassungsschrift' continue to criticise the machine state on the same grounds as in 'eine Ethik...', the mere fact that Hegel calls for a central power to defend the property of civil society is a step forward from his earlier Frankfurt years, where Hegel is willing to acknowledge nothing but the solidarity

1. Pöggeler offers some convincing arguments for attributing the ideas of the 'Systemprogramme' to Hegel, which I rely upon here. See his 'Hegel, der Verfasser des ältesten Systemprogrammes des deutschen Idealismus', pp. 17-32

2. Hegel, Werke, i. 234-5

3. Hegel's pessimism is apparent when he asks if there will ever be a new age to reclaim the human ownership of the treasures squandered on heaven, and when he argues that the project of restoring the lost imagery of a nation is doomed to failure. See Werke, i. 209, 200

and homogeneity of the Greek polis. It is no accident that this recognition of the inevitability of civil society is subsequent to, or accompanied by, Hegel's reading and commentary upon Steuart's Inquiry concerning the Principles of Political Economy.¹

Now Hegel's recognition of the emerging individualism of modern civil society brings an important epistemological consequence along with it. This individualism means that the ego is increasingly self-conscious, ie. that he has a concept of himself apart from the group, so that he can identify himself as an independent agent apart from its ends. Such self-consciousness requires, however, the use of the understanding, since, as a faculty of critical thinking, the understanding is necessary for the individual to think for himself. It is indeed his understanding which severs the naive bonds of imagination and feeling by which he identifies himself with the group, for its critical thinking brings all his allegiances into question. It is also the understanding which is necessary for him to achieve his own self-given ends, because it is a prudential faculty for calculating means to ends. This connection between self-consciousness and the understanding is virtually a commonplace by the time of Hegel's Frankfurt years. Several thinkers before him, for reasons similar to his own, had already made such a connection. In his 1794 Aesthetische Briefe, for example, Schiller

1. On the significance of Steuart for Hegel's recognition of the inevitability of civil society, see R. Plant, Hegel, pp. 64-75

sees self-awareness arising only when 'Reflexion' separates oneself from the immediate bonds of nature and the community.¹ Then in the 1795 final version of Hyperion, Hölderlin calls 'der blosse Verstand' the 'Könige des Norden' (ie. modern Europe), and equates the use of the understanding with individual self-consciousness.² And in his 1799 Reden über die Religion, Schleiermacher complains about 'die verständigen und praktischen Menschen' who live according to only their self-interest and practical needs.³ It is in this tradition of thought that Hegel himself calls the new order a 'dürren Verstandesleben'. What all these thinkers have in mind by equating the self-consciousness of the modern individual with the understanding is the intimate link between the individualism of civil society and the Enlightenment. They all see the faculty of self-thought advocated by the Enlightenment as 'Verstand' or 'Reflexion'.

Since Hegel sees that the individualism of civil society depends upon the critical use of the understanding, and since he also admits that such individualism is an inevitable development of the modern era, he is then forced to acknowledge that the legitimacy of the modern community, the reason for adhering to its laws, traditions and culture, has to acquire the consent of the critical understanding. He recognises in his later Frankfurt years that community cannot eradicate civil society, but that it has to accommodate it--and that means that its constitutions and institutions have to withstand the scrutiny of individual self-thought. There is no longer any hope, then,

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1. Schiller, Werke, i. 492-3, 503-4
 2. Hölderlin, Werke, iii. 83
 3. Schleiermacher, Reden, p. 80.

that religion will restore the lost community of the ancient polis. The feelings and intuitions of a folk religion are fine for the ancient Greek, who has never severed himself from the community, and who identifies with it through imagination and sensibility; but they are not a ground of consent or motive for action for the modern self-thinking individual, who is suspicious of all feelings and intuitions, and who insists upon judging everything according to his own understanding. Thus Hegel's growing disenchantment with religion in his later Frankfurt years has its source in his quest for a new basis of political obligation, a basis which meets up to the challenge of the critical understanding of the modern, enlightened individual.

It is not surprising to find, then, that in his first Jena year Hegel replaces religion with philosophy, bestowing upon philosophy the old role of religion. Just as the aim of religion in the earlier fragments is to create a sense of community, so in the 1801 Differenz the aim of a philosophy is to restore totality to the life of men. All the oppositions between men in civil society are to be overcome by a comprehensive philosophical system which shows how all opposites have their meaning only in a whole. If men are only self-conscious of the necessity of totality, of the need for the organic whole of the community, then they will surely realise it in practise; or, as Hegel writes to Niethammer:

'Die theoretische Arbeit...bringt mehr zustande in der Welt als der praktische; ist erst das Reich der Vorstellung revolutioniert, so hält der Wirklichkeit nicht aus'.¹

1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 253

A philosophical system now sets the ideal for political practice. Only philosophy is sure to succeed where religion fails: it addresses itself to the critical understanding of the modern, unenlightened individual. Its system consists in the concepts of the understanding, and these are at least capable of winning rational consent and intersubjective agreement, unlike the intuitions and feelings of religion.

II

The Differenz and the Beginning of the PhG(1801)

In January 1801, Hegel arrives in Jena and settles in comfortably in the Klipstein Garden next door to Schelling. At first, he continues to work on the political studies he began in Frankfurt, and he does not do anything immediately relevant to philosophy. But, probably after discussions with Schelling, he soon starts to write his first major philosophical work, Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie, which is published in July 1801. It is in the Differenz that Hegel first sets forth the problem and programme which eventually develops into the PhG. Pöggeler sees the beginnings of the PhG in Hegel's first lectures on logic and metaphysics, and argues that the 'Wis. d. Er.' arises from the development of the logic. But the Differenz has an indisputable claim to priority over these lectures. It is not only written,

1. Pöggeler, 'Die Komposition der Phänomenologie des Geistes' Hegel-Studien, Beiheft iii (1966), 35-6

but even published months before Hegel's first lectures in Jena, the Winter Semester lectures of 1801/02.

In one opening section of the Differenz, 'Bedürfnis der Philosophie', Hegel determines the task of philosophy, a task which he only finally completes in the PhG itself. The aim of philosophy is to construct the absolute for consciousness, to establish the presence of the absolute within appearance, or the idea of the whole within the oppositions of reflection.¹ The need for philosophy arises, he writes, whenever the oppositions in a culture grow to such an extent that the power of unity disappears from the life of men. These oppositions are either within man himself--the conflict between duty and inclination, reason and sensibility--or between man and society--the conflict between private interest and the public good. The task of philosophy is to overcome these oppositions--to restore man to a harmonious whole, to reconcile him to his community--by re-constructing the idea of the whole for consciousness. Philosophy is to destroy the apparent independence of these opposites and to show that they are only necessary moments of the whole. Hegel then summarises what he means by the need for philosophy by reducing it to two presuppositions: first, that there is an absolute, a whole of which all opposites are only moments; and, second, that consciousness alienates itself from the absolute because it gives opposites a self-sufficient status and fails to see their unity in a whole. The task of philosophy is then to unite these presuppositions: it is to re-unite consciousness

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 25-6

with the absolute by negating the self-sufficiency of the opposites and comprehending them as necessary appearances of the absolute.¹ Such a task of philosophy--to construct the absolute for consciousness by overcoming the oppositions of reflection--is of course nothing less than the task of the PhG itself.

The Differenz anticipates the PhG not only in its statement of the task of philosophy, but also in its exposition of the problem of philosophy. In the next opening section, 'Reflexion als Instrument des Philosophierens', Hegel points out a contradiction which arises when philosophy begins to construct the absolute for consciousness.² The absolute is infinite, the indivisible whole of all reality; but consciousness posits limits, divides a whole into its parts and sees each part as independent of the other. So if the absolute is constructed for consciousness, then it is negated since the infinite is posited as finite and ^{the} indivisible as divisible. Philosophy then faces a serious dilemma. If it constructs the absolute for consciousness, then it negates the absolute's sui generis nature; but if it does not construct it, then the absolute is an unknowable thing-in-itself. The absolute is either inside consciousness--and reduced to the limited and divisible-- or outside consciousness--and an unknowable thing-in-itself. The task of philosophy then appears to be both impossible and necessary: impossible, since the absolute is destroyed in

1. Ibid., ii. 24-5
2. Ibid., ii. 25-6

the very act of knowing it; and necessary to prevent the absolute from turning into an unknowable thing-in-itself. This is indeed the same problem which Hegel faces at the end of his Frankfurt years when he attempts to formulate his ideal in the form of reflection.

After setting forth this problem, Hegel then devises his strategy for resolving it, the strategy which he finally executes in the PhG. He now describes an idea which he fails to articulate in Frankfurt, but which is nothing less than the basic theme of the PhG: that consciousness is self-transcending and self-negating. This idea first appears on the scene when he states in the section entitled 'Reflexion als Instrument des Philosophierens' that reflection has reason within itself as the immanent law of its own destruction. This means that reflection destroys its limits by its own inner necessity, and that it resolves its self-contradictions only when it grasps its opposites as necessary moments of the whole. This is how Hegel first puts forward the idea:

'Insofern die Reflexion sich selbst zu ihrem Gegenstand macht, ist ihr höchstes Gesetz, das ihr von der Vernichtung gegeben und wodurch sie zur Vernunft wird. Sie besteht wie alles im Absoluten, aber als Reflexion ist sie ihm entgegengesetzt; um also zu bestehen, muss sie sich das Gesetz der Selbstzerstörung geben. Das immanente Gesetz, wodurch sie sich aus eigener Kraft, als absolut konstituiere, wäre das Gesetz des Widerspruchs'.¹

Now if reflection is self-negating, as this passage suggests, then there is a middle path between the horns of the dilemma. Both these horns have a common premise which is now brought

1. Ibid., ii. 28

into question: they presuppose that reflection is static, that it cannot transcend its limits, or that it is not prone to self-contradictions. Given this premise, the absolute is either reduced to reflection or unknowable by it. If, however, reflection does have an inner dialectic, then it is possible to know the absolute through reflection without reducing it to finite limits, for reflection negates and transcends its limits in the very act of knowing the absolute. The infinite, indivisible absolute is not forced into the finite, divisible forms of reflection, because reflection negates the finitude and divisibility of its forms through its self-contradictions. And so the path is now clear for Hegel to express his early ideal in the form of reflection. Philosophy can construct the absolute for consciousness thanks to the dialectic of reflection. It does not have to resort to an esoteric intuition, but it only has to make reflection into 'das Instrument des Philosophierens'.¹

After stating the possibility of a dialectic of reflection, Hegel then sketches an account of its mechanism.² The PhG and the Logik will later follow this outline to the letter. This dialectic begins when reflection reflects upon itself

1. Caird states that Hegel's dialectic of reflection is only a negative preparation for the standpoint of philosophy, and that it does not result in a positive insight into the absolute, which requires an intuitive leap. See his Hegel (Edinburgh, Blackwood and Sons, 1883), pp. 55-6. But, although Hegel does demand a leap into the system of philosophy, and although he advocates an intellectual intuition beyond all reflection, he still explicitly maintains that reflection can lead to absolute knowledge through its self-negation; thus he says that the absolute is 'von der Reflexion fürs Bewusstsein produziert'. See Werke, ii. 30

2. Hegel, Werke, ii. 26-30

and examines itself by its own standard of knowledge, the law of identity, $A=A$. Reflection interprets this law so that it states that there is something purely self-identical and self-related, ie. something which has an independent essence and existence with no relations to anything outside itself. What reflection soon discovers through its self-examination, though, is that it cannot satisfy this standard through its procedure of analysis. A conflict arises between its ideal of knowledge and its actual practise. Reflection contradicts itself because, on the one hand, it separates things from one another and gives them a self-sufficient status; and because, on the other hand, it has to admit that these things depend upon one another, for each has its determinate nature only in relation to another thing. Now reflection resolves this contradiction when it recognises that what is self-identical and self-sufficient is not one thing apart from another, but only the whole of all things. It has to conclude that only this whole is self-identical and self-sufficient, for each individual thing depends upon something outside itself, while the whole includes everything within itself, so that it cannot depend upon anything outside itself. Obviously, though, this dialectic cannot stand still and it has to go on at a higher level. Although the whole is independent of everything within itself, it still depends upon another whole on the same level as itself; and so another contradiction arises, and it resolves itself only with a new higher-order whole which unifies both the lesser wholes within itself. The dialectic then continues until it

reaches that whole which encompasses all wholes within itself. Such a whole is nothing less than the absolute, which is alone self-identical and self-sufficient since it has everything within itself and nothing else outside itself. Thus, by its own inner dialectic, reflection has risen up to the absolute standpoint, the knowledge of the whole of reality. This dialectic is internal to reflection since reflection never surrenders its basic standard of self-identity, but only discovers the conditions under which it is fulfilled. In order to realise its standard, though, it has to negate itself by reversing its previous procedure of analysis. Reflection cannot find the self-sufficient and independent by analysis, by dividing a whole into parts, but only by synthesis, by comprehending each part by its necessity in the whole. What is independent and self-sufficient, it now realises, is not the final term of analysis, the smallest part of a whole, but the final term of synthesis, the whole of which everything else is a part.

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At this point, however, a paradox arises. Although the Differenz foreshadows the aim, problem and dialectic of the PhG, it still denies that there can be an introduction to and justification of the standpoint of philosophy--and yet to introduce and justify that standpoint is nothing less than the programme of the PhG. Hegel categorically rules out the possibility of such a programme. He expressly forbids the education of consciousness up to the standpoint of philosophy, insisting that--

despite the dialectic of reflection--it is necessary to enter this standpoint by a leap; and he explicitly prohibits a justification of the system of philosophy, stressing that such a system has to be self-justifying. His main target is Reinhold's problematic method of philosophy, his 'Ergründungs und Begründungs Tendenz' which conceives an introduction to philosophy through the use of pragmatic hypotheses. Such an approach to philosophy forever remains in the forecourt of absolute knowledge, Hegel complains, and it never enters the temple itself. Thus Hegel replies to Reinhold:

'...um in ihr die Philosophie zu gelangen, ist es notwendig, sich a corps perdu hineinzustürzen. Denn die Vernunft...wird allein dadurch zur philosophischen Spekulation, dass sie sich zu sich selbst erhebt und allein sich selbst und dem Absoluten, das zugleich ihr Gegenstand wird, sich anvertraut'.¹

Later on, he continues in a similar vein:

'Wenn die Philosophie, als Ganzes sich und die Realität der Erkenntnisse...in sich selbst begründet: so kommt dagegen das Begründen und Ergründen...weder aus sich heraus, noch in die Philosophie hinein'.²

Pöggeler interprets Hegel's argument against Reinhold so that he does not deny all introductions to the standpoint of philosophy, but only those which remain outside it. He does not see any discrepancy, therefore, between the PhG and the Differenz concerning their attitudes toward introductions; like the Differenz, the PhG rules out an introduction which stays outside the system. Although Pöggeler is correct to point out this similarity between Hegel's earlier and later positions --they both deny introductions which are outside the system--

1. Ibid., ii. 19

2. Ibid., ii. 122

3. See Pöggeler, 'Jenaer Systemkonzeption', p. 308, and 'Zur Deutung der PhG', pp. 278-9

he still overlooks the difference between them. Unlike the PhG, Hegel's denial of introductions in the Differenz is completely categorical: he never envisages an introduction which is inside the system of philosophy; he never considers the possibility that an introduction and justification for consciousness need not be such for the philosopher himself. If he does conceive an introduction within the system, then it still contradicts his claim in the 1802 'Kritik' essay that the standpoint of philosophy is esoteric and indemonstrable. At the time of the Differenz, then, Hegel is far away from the idea of a PhG, the introduction to and justification of the standpoint of philosophy. He is still a colleague of Schelling, insisting upon the necessity of a self-justifying, esoteric intellectual intuition. In order to arrive at the PhG, he will have to eventually break with his categorical and uncompromising stance in the Differenz and 'Kritik' essay.

What accounts for Hegel's categorical dismissal of a programme to introduce and justify the standpoint of philosophy? The answer lies with his conception of philosophy. According to the Differenz, philosophy is knowledge of the absolute, the whole of reality, and to attain such knowledge it is necessary to build a comprehensive system. Now it appears that such a system cannot have an introduction to it, for an introduction has to proceed from some standpoint outside it, so that the system is no longer comprehensive. There equally cannot be a justification of the system, because it has to begin from some premise outside it--otherwise, it begs the question in favour of the system--and that too is contrary

to the comprehensiveness of the system. So a system is either complete and indemonstrable or incomplete and demonstrable. Since the system has to be complete to attain absolute knowledge, however, it follows that the price of such knowledge is indemonstrability. Hegel also rejects the possibility of a single, self-evident first principle which is within the system, and which justifies it by deducing all other propositions within it. For he maintains that no proposition within a system is self-justifying by itself, and that each proposition is true only because of every other. Hence he dismisses Fichte's method of grounding his system upon a single fundamental first principle, and he disapproves of Spinoza's method of beginning his system with self-evident axioms and intuitions.¹ Both Fichte and Spinoza fail to see that a system is organic: that each proposition justifies the whole, and that the whole justifies each proposition.

Hegel is now torn between two conflicting demands in the Differenz. On the one hand, he states that the aim of philosophy is to construct the absolute for consciousness, so that it overcomes the alienation between the absolute and consciousness. On the other hand, though, he argues that there cannot be an introduction and education into the standpoint of philosophy, because philosophy is a comprehensive system with no point outside itself to introduce and justify it. These demands are surely exclusive. If the standpoint of philosophy forbids the introduction and education of ordinary consciousness up to it, then ordinary consciousness will see its standpoint as esoteric

1. Hegel, Werke, ii. 35-41

and dogmatic, an alien authority to which it must submit. So it appears as if Hegel confronts a dilemma. If he permits an introduction and education into the system of philosophy, then he has to admit that his system is incomplete; but if he forbids it, then the standpoint of absolute knowledge is alien to ordinary consciousness. Philosophy cannot both build a comprehensive system and construct the absolute for ordinary consciousness.

This conflict proves to be a potent force behind the development of the PhG. The path out of its dilemma gives birth to nothing less than the idea of a 'Wis. d. Er.'. In order to avoid the dilemma, Hegel has to conceive an introduction to the standpoint of philosophy which not outside, but inside the system itself. Such an introduction will regard the dialectic of consciousness as the construction of the system, and not only as a negative preparation for entrance into it. The system of philosophy will not be constructed by the philosopher, then, but by a self-organising, self-systematising ordinary consciousness. This introduction will also distinguish between the standpoint of the philosopher who observes consciousness and that of consciousness itself, so that what is an introduction for consciousness is not also for the philosopher, who knows that its dialectic is only the self-appearance of the absolute. Now the idea of such an introduction is precisely that of the 'Wis. d. Er.', a 'Weg zur Wissenschaft' which is 'Wissenschaft selbst'.¹ Yet in the Differenz Hegel lacks such

1. PhG, p. 74

an idea; he is still torn by a conflict for which he has no solution.

III

The Formation of the Hegel-Schelling Alliance(1801/02)

Shortly after his arrival in Jena, Hegel enters into a philosophical alliance with his old friend from the Tübinger Stift, Schelling. Their alliance appears on several fronts. The Differenz forges their partnership by spelling out the differences between Fichte's and Schelling's systems of philosophy, and by defending the superiority of Schelling's system over Fichte's. Then, during the Winter Semester 1801/02, Hegel and Schelling conduct a Disputatorium together, a public debate where they defend some of the characteristic these of their philosophy.¹ Around the same time, beginning in December 1801, Hegel and Schelling co-edit a philosophical journal entitled Kritisches Journal der Philosophie, whose avowed aim is to destroy the prevailing 'Unphilosophie' and 'Reflexionsphilosophie'. The weapons of the Journal are, as Hegel puts it, the 'whip, cudgel, and sword'. Such is the feeling of unity between the co-editors that none of their articles are signed. The partnership is

1. Rosenkranz thinks that the Disputatorium does not take place, despite Hegel's and Schelling's announcements in the lecture catalogue. See Hegel's Leben, p. 161. However, F. Nicolini has brought forward strong evidence that it was actually held. See his 'Aus Schellings und Hegels Disputatorium im Winter 1801/02', Hegel-Studien, ix (1974) 43-8

short-lived, however, and virtually comes to a complete halt by the Winter of 1803/04. The Journal prints its last issue in the spring of 1803, and Schelling leaves Jena for Würzburg in May 1803, cutting off all possibility of working directly with Hegel.

What is Hegel's relationship to Schelling during their collaboration? How does Hegel see himself vis-à-vis Schelling? It is misleading to entertain the hypothesis--as some do¹--that Hegel is only the disciple of Schelling, the older pupil of a younger teacher. This simply ignores too many facts: that Schelling breaks with Fichte probably because of Hegel's Differenz; that Schelling's ideas about philosophy and the absolute undergo a basic change from 1801 to 1803 due to Hegel's influence; that in the Kritisches Journal and Differenz Hegel never refrains from expressing views which are obviously at odds with Schelling; and that Hegel and Schelling arrive at many of their central tenants apart from one another, before their association in Jena.² Hegel himself protests vehemently against the accusation in the Stuttgarter Allgemeinen Zeitung that he is only 'ein rüstiger

1. Kroner, for example, says that Hegel sees himself as the 'pupil and disciple' of Schelling. See his introduction to Hegel's Early Theological Writings (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p.21

2. Concerning Hegel's role in Schelling's break with Fichte, see Lukacs, Der junge Hegel, ii. 380-409. And concerning Hegel's influence upon Schelling in Jena see Klaus Düsing 'Spekulation und Reflexion: Zur Zusammenarbeit Schellings und Hegels in Jena', Hegel-Studien, v (1969), 95-128, and Haym Hegel und seine Zeit, p. 213.

Vorfechter' for Schelling's views; he replies in the most uncompromising terms, calling his accuser a liar.¹ Rather than a student/teacher relationship, it is far more accurate to consider the Hegel-Schelling alliance as a temporary partnership of two equal and independent thinkers whose paths are about to diverge.²

The key to Hegel's relation to Schelling, and indeed the essential bond of the Hegel-Schelling alliance, is suggested by the introductory manifesto to the Kritisches Journal, the essay 'Ueber das Wesen der philosophischen Kritik'. Here Hegel states that the aim of the critique is to establish and defend the 'idea of philosophy', that universal and necessary standard of reason which is present within every true philosophy. He criticises the fashionable trend toward individualism in philosophy, where each philosopher proclaims his philosophy, a system which is peculiar to himself alone. There is but one single philosophy, Hegel insists, since philosophy is the product of reason, and reason is universal, identical in the thought of everyone alike. All philosophies are identical in principle, then, and the differences between them are only as systems. Hence in the Differenz Hegel advocates the system, not the philosophy of Schelling; and he prefers Schelling's system because it remains true to the principle of reason (ie. subject-object identity) while Fichte's system fails to express it.³ Now this attitude toward philosophy explains how Hegel

1. For the full text of Hegel's reply, see H. Bucher, 'Hegel und das Kritische Journal'

2. Lukacs, Der junge Hegel, ii. 407

3. Kaufmann ignores Hegel's distinction between philosophy

and Schelling see their partnership. They regard themselves as the selfless representatives of the single true philosophy, a philosophy which is purely universal, the property of neither Hegel nor Schelling, but all rational beings. This is why they do not sign their articles in the Journal, and this is why Hegel protests so strongly when he is seen only as an advocate of Schelling's personal views. Hegel does not think that he is compromising himself in defending Schelling's system, then, because he does not believe that he has personal views as a philosopher, and because he thinks that he represents philosophy in general through Schelling. Hence Haym goes too far in Hegel und seine Zeit when he states that Hegel identifies his philosophy with Schelling's;¹ given Hegel's and Schelling's idea of philosophy, it is just as true to say that Schelling identifies his philosophy with Hegel's.

Why is it, though, that Hegel ever allies himself with Schelling in the first place? What views do Hegel and Schelling have in common before their alliance which makes their association so natural and necessary? What unites them is not so much a common doctrine with clear principles and well worked-out arguments, but a shared critical reaction to Kant's and

and a system, and he then finds an inconsistency between the Differenz, where Hegel supposedly defends Schelling's 'philosophy', and the 'Kritik' essay, where he says that philosophy is universal and impersonal. See his Hegel: A Re-interpretation (Garden City, Doubleday, 1966), p. 55. Kaufmann then suggests that the 'Kritik' essay offers a veiled criticism of Schelling, even though he recognises that it is the introduction to their joint venture. There is no inconsistency between the Differenz and 'Kritik' essay, however, since in the Differenz Hegel is explicit that he prefers Schelling's system, not his philosophy.

1. Haym, Hegel und seine Zeit, p. 151

Fichte's idealism. Both object to Fichte's reduction of subject-object identity to the self-consciousness of the finite ego, and they argue that subject-object identity is realised only in the idea of life. Both regret the reappearance of the mind-body dualism in the Kantian-Fichtean distinction between reason and sensibility, and they advocate a mind-body monism whose unifying category is that of life. Both abhor the degraded status that Kant and Fichte give to nature, where it is only an appearance created by the understanding or an obstacle of the will; they maintain that nature is an organism, a hierarchy of self-organising, self-generating living beings which is an end in itself and which exists apart from consciousness. This critical stance toward idealism already begins to emerge in Hegel's 1797 'Entwürfe über Religion und Liebe' and 1800 'Systemfragment'; it is more explicitly worked out, though, in Schelling's writings of the same period, the 1799 Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie, the 1800 System des transcendentalen Idealismus and especially the 1801 essay 'Ueber den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie'. Hegel and Schelling probably develop their critical attitude apart from one another, since these texts are written while

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1. Nauen suggests that what unites Hegel and Schelling against Fichte is their common political views. See his Revolution, Idealism and Human Freedom (Hague, Nijhoff, 1971), p. viii. Although this is perhaps one bonding factor--as the 'Systemprogramme' suggests--it cannot be the main one, as Nauen implies, for the main struggle against Fichte in the Kritisches Journal is on the level of metaphysics and epistemology. And, indeed, Hegel and Schelling hardly share similar political views in the later days of their collaboration. Hegel's serious attempt to integrate civil society into the body politic in the 1802 Naturrecht essay has to be compared to Schelling's hostile and dismissive reaction in his 1803 Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums. Cf. Hegel, Werke, ii. 494f and Schelling, Werke, iii. 281-3, 336-8.
 2. See Hegel, Werke i. 242, 426-7, and Schelling, Werke, ii. 272, 340-1, 718f.

Hegel is in Frankfurt and Schelling in Jena, and while their correspondence lapses.

Beside their critical stand toward Kant and Fichte, though, Hegel and Schelling do share one general and basic principle, a principle which acts as the main platform in their philosophical campaign, and which unites them against the dominant influences of their day (Kant, Fichte and Jacobi): that the absolute is knowable and within experience. They both contend that the absolute is not an unknowable thing-in-itself, as in Kant, that it is not the unattainable goal of an infinite striving, as in Fichte, and that it is not a mysterious object of faith, as in Jacobi. They do not regard the absolute as beyond human life and experience, an infinite which transcends the finite; rather, they see it as present and revealing itself in human consciousness and activity, the infinite which is omnipresent within the finite. Since this principle is so controversial, and since it is so contrary to the prevailing Kantian-Fichtean-Jacobian atmosphere, an alliance to defend it appears to be necessary, the only chance of its ever receiving a hearing. Such a controversial principle sets Hegel and Schelling against the prevalent orthodoxy to such an extent that it must indeed create a strong feeling of solidarity between them. Here again Hegel and Schelling probably arrive at this principle independently of one another. In his 1797 'Entwürfe', Hegel states that the absolute or subject-object identity reveals itself in the feeling of life which is the gospel of the

Christian religion; and in his 1800 System des transcendentalen Idealismus, Schelling writes that the absolute manifests and realises itself only in the creative activity of the artist. So at a time when they are not in direct contact or collaboration with one another, they both maintain that the absolute appears in some form to consciousness. Nonetheless, although Hegel and Schelling share this basic principle, they still differ radically from one another about the nature of the absolute and how it is known. While for Schelling the absolute is known through art, for Hegel it is known through religion; and while Schelling states in his 1801 Darstellung meines Systems that the absolute is pure identity, Hegel is explicit in his 1800 'Systemfragment' that it is the identity of identity and non-identity. It is not until their collaboration in Jena, and probably under Hegel's influence, that they both claim that the absolute is known through philosophy or speculative reason.¹ And it is not until Jena that Hegel begins to convince Schelling that the absolute is not only pure identity, but the identity of identity and non-identity. Yet differences over these matters--the nature of the absolute and how it is known--

1. That Hegel influences Schelling in these respects is the thesis of Klaus Düsing in 'Spekulation und Reflexion'. Although Düsing offers several plausible grounds for his thesis that Hegel influences Schelling to accept the concept of speculation, he still has not established a convincing case. He does not have a sufficient rely to Schelling's claim that he lectures on the philosophy of identity in the Winter Semester of 1800/1801, before his collaboration with Hegel. Although this does not ryle out the possibility of Hegel's influence, it also does not make it appear probable, given that Hegel arrives in Jena only in the Winter of 1801. There is still some ground, then, for Dilthey's claim that the sketch for the 1801 Darstellung does not arise from Hegel's influence. See Dilthey's Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels in Werke, iv. 206.

remain throughout the Jena years, and it is precisely over them that Hegel and Schelling eventually part company.

There is a remarkable correspondence, then, between Hegel's and Schelling's views before their partnership in Jena, considering that they have not seen or corresponded with one another in several years,¹ and considering that their earlier interests are quite divergent, with Hegel absorbed in the question of the origin of positivity and Schelling preoccupied with developing the details of his Naturphilosophie. This correspondence becomes perfectly comprehensible, though, as soon as one recognises that they are under a common influence: their old colleague from the Tubinger Stift, Hölderlin. It is Hölderlin who is the first to go beyond Fichte in making Sein and not the Ich into the first principle of philosophy. Thus he argues in a letter to Hegel written in January 1795--at least two years before Hegel, and three years before Schelling espouse a similar argument--that the absolute cannot be the Ich.² For the absolute is all reality and has nothing outside itself, Hölderlin reasons, while the Ich must have something outside itself, because it is of necessity conscious, and consciousness requires a dualism between subject and object, ego and non-ego. He then makes a similar point in the 1795 fragment 'Ueber Urtheil und Seyn': subject-object identity cannot be in

1. It is not possible to accurately judge how long Hegel and Schelling are out of touch with one another. Schelling's last surviving letter before Hegel's Jena years is written on June 20th, 1795, and in his November 2nd, 1800 letter to Schelling, Hegel refers to 'eine Trennung mehrerer Jahre'. See Hegel, Briefe, i. 58

2. Hölderlin, Werke, vi/i. 154-5

the Ich, for the Ich is defined in terms of self-consciousness, and self-consciousness is possible only through the separation of subject and object, through the split between the ego knowing itself and the ego known.¹ Hölderlin is also the first to postulate knowledge of the absolute. While Hegel is still in the grips of the Kantian limits of reason in his 1795/96 fragment 'Ein positiver Glaube...',² and while Schelling still admits that the absolute is only the object of faith and infinite striving in his 1795 Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie,³ Hölderlin is busy expounding the idea that the absolute appears to consciousness through an aesthetic intuition. Hence he writes to Schiller on September 9th, 1795 that the unity of subject and object in the absolute appears to an aesthetic intuition, and he sees such an intuition as an escape from the infinite striving of practice and the infinite regresses of thought.⁴ Only a few months later, in a letter to Niethammer written on February 24th, 1796, he states that an intellectual intuition is the only means of uniting the subject and object while explaining the dualism between them; he is explicit that this intuition is theoretical, and that it does not require the aid of practical reason, ie. the infinite striving of the Fichtean ego.⁵ Hölderlin is indeed also the first to oppose Fichte's concept of nature. Already in 1795, in the early metrical version of Hyperion, three years before Schellings

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1. Ibid., iv/i. 216-7
 2. Hegel, Werke, i. 194-6
 3. Schelling, Werke, i. 140
 4. Hölderlin, Werke, vi/i. 180-1
 5. Ibid., vi/i. 202-3

Weltseele and two before Hegel's fragment 'Positiv wird ein Glauben genannt..', which reflect similar sentiments, he protests against the image of nature as an obstacle to the will. The blindness of such youthful enthusiasm is now plain:

'Unschuldiger Weise hatte mich die Schule des Schiksaals und der Weisen ungerecht und tyrannisch gegen die Natur gemacht. Der gänzliche Unglaube, den ich gegen alles hegte, was ich aus ihren Händen empfieng, lies keine Liebe in mir gedeihen. Der reine freie Geist glaubt ich könne sich nie nie mit den Sinnen und ihrer Welt versöhnen und es gebe keine Freude als die des Siegs...Ich achtete der Hülfe nicht, womit die Natur dem grossen Geschäfte der Bildung entgegenkömmt, denn ich wollte allein arbeiten, ich nahm die Bereitwilligkeit, womit sie der Vernunft die Hände bietet, nicht an, denn ich wollte sie beherrschen.'¹

The early poems 'An die Natur', 'An die Unerkannte' and 'An den Aether' express the same theme. They do not see nature as a dead mass of matter, but as having a 'Seele' or 'Herz' of its own. Nature is not regarded as the obstacle to the self's hopes and longings, but as the first and last source of their satisfaction. It is only in nature that the self finds what he needs most: 'Eine Stelle noch für meine Tränen/ Eine Welt für meine Liebe'.²

In all these respects, then, Hölderlin proves himself to be the predecessor of Hegel and Schelling. There is also good reason to believe, though, that it is also Hölderlin who impresses these ideas upon Hegel and Schelling. Schelling visits Hölderlin twice in Tübingen in the Summer and December of 1795, and once in Frankfurt in April 1796; and, although they do not record their discussions, it is at least known that they discuss philosophy.³ Of course, as he is still the disciple of Fichte,

1. Ibid., iii. 186

2. Ibid.,

3. For a reconstruction of the themes and issues discussed by Hölderlin and Schelling, see E. Mueller, Hölderlin: Studien

Schelling does not immediately agree with Hölderlin's anti-Fichteian stance--'Wir sprachen nicht immer akkordierend miteinander', Hölderlin writes to Niethammer,¹ referring to his talks with Schelling--but it is not hard to see that Hölderlin's ideas are eventually of great value to Schelling's own development. From 1797 onwards, Schelling's attempt to give an independent foundation to his Naturphilosophie apart from Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre moves him further away from Fichte and toward the position which Hölderlin already outlines for him in 1796. Hölderlin is also in touch with Hegel during these years, seeing him in Homburg in early 1797. It is especially through Isaak Sinclair, a friend of Hölderlin's who appropriates many of his ideas, that Hegel hears of Hölderlin's anti-Fichteian arguments.² When Sinclair visits Hegel in Frankfurt in early 1797, Sinclair argues for many of his friends ideas, recording his discussions with Hegel.³ It is probable that these arguments have a decisive influence upon Hegel, judging from the Hölderlian themes in his 1797/98 'Entwürfe über Religion und Liebe'. So, given the formative influence of Hölderlin upon Hegel and Schelling before their Jena alliance, it is perfectly justifiable to talk about Hölderlin as the ghostly third partner who forms the alliance. Perhaps he is even considered as a candidate for

zur Geschichte seines Geistes (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1944), pp. 146-173. For Hölderlin's influence upon Schelling, see E. Cassirer's 'Hölderlin und der deutsche Idealismus' in Hölderlin, ed. Kellertat (Tübingen, Mohr, 1961), pp.

1. Hölderlin, Werke, vi/i. 203

2. For Sinclair's position vis-a-vis Hegel and Hölderlin, see H. Hegel, 'Reflexion und Einheit: Sinclair und "der Bund der Geister"--Frankfurt 1795-1800', Hegel-Studien, Beiheft ix (1973) 91-106

3. For the details of Sinclair's discussion with Hegel, see D. Henrich's 'Hegel und Hölderlin' in Hegel im Kontext (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967), pp. 22-29. For Hegel's early alliance with Hölderlin, see Hoffmeister Hölderlin und Hegel (Tübingen, Mohr, 1921), pp.

a contribution to the Journal.¹ Sadly, though, such a third collaborator was never to be. Shortly after leaving Jena in 1803, Schelling writes to Hegel of the sorry sight of Hölderlin, who is already showing signs of 'Verrückung'.²

IV

Hegel's Early Introductory Logic(1802/03)

During the years of his partnership with Schelling, Hegel delivers three lecture courses on logic and metaphysics, at first in the Winter Semester 1801/02, and then in the Summer Semester 1802 and Winter Semester 1802/03.³ These lectures are largely devoted to the theme of the foundation of and introduction to speculative philosophy.⁴ This theme appears to be at odds with Hegel's earlier claim in the Differenz and 'Kritik' essay that the standpoint of philosophy is esoteric and indemonstrable. The conflict, however, is only apparent. Although these lectures attempt to introduce the understanding into speculative philosophy, the introduction is in fact perfectly consistent with Hegel's dogmatism and esotericism. They are still far removed from that introduction to philosophy which Hegel develops later on in the PhG.

1. Hartmut Buchner argues convincingly that it is wrong to assume that Hegel and Schelling saw themselves as the only possible contributors to the Journal. See his 'Hegel und das Kritische Journal', pp. 110-111. Perhaps--and here only speculation is possible--Hölderlin was considered.

2. Hegel, Briefe, i. 71

3. The lecture lists are reprinted in H. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente zu Hegels Jenaer Dozententätigkeit(1801-1807)', Hegel-Studien iv (1967) 53-6

4. Kimmerle, Op. cit., p. 81

This is easily established by examining one of the remaining fragments of Hegel's early lectures.

This fragment is preserved by Rosenkranz in Hegel's Leben,¹ and is an excerpt from a lecture on logic and metaphysics, possibly delivered in the Winter Semester 1802/03.² Hegel opens his lecture by saying that he intends to consider philosophy in 'eine propädeutische Rücksicht'. He then presents the plan for a logic which is to serve as the introduction to philosophy. The aim of this logic, he writes, is to begin with the finite and to proceed from its negation to the infinite. It presents all the forms of the understanding—the categories, forms of judgment and syllogisms—in their rational order, grading them in a hierarchy according to how they reflect the truths of reason. After organising these forms into a system, the logic then describes the understanding's abortive attempt to know the absolute through constructing a formal or abstract identity.

1. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, pp. 190-2

2. On the dating of this excerpt, see H. Kimmerle, Das Problem der Abgeschlossenheit des Denkens, 'Hegel's System der Philosophie in den Jahren 1800-1804', Hegel-Studien, Beiheft viii (1970), 39, 51, and Pöggeler, 'Die Komposition der PhG', p. 38. The problems with dating this excerpt are more complex, though, than either Kimmerle or Pöggeler realise. They ignore Rosenkranz's dating which brings theirs into question. Rosenkranz states that this excerpt belongs to a lecture officially entitled 'speculativen Philosophie', which puts it in the Winter Semester 1803/04, the only Winter Semester lecture properly called 'philosophiae speculativae systema'. See Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, p. 189. Nonetheless, pace Rosenkranz, I have still followed Pöggeler's and Kimmerle's dating. And for two reasons. (1) The 1803/04 lecture already includes logic within the system—the lecture notice states 'philosophiae speculativae systema, complectens a) Logicam et Metaphysicam'—and no longer regards it as only an introduction to the system. (2) Hegel explicitly refers to his course as a 'Collegium über Logik und Metaphysik', which suggests that it belongs to a set of lectures with such a title, thus putting it in either of the earlier Winter Semesters (according to the lecture catalogue).

The main task of the logic is to destroy all the forms of the understanding through reason, to get them out of the way to prepare the ground for the speculative knowledge of reason. Hegel then announces that his lecture will proceed in the following order: first he will expose the finitude of the thought of the understanding; then he will consider the forms of the understanding in their rational order; and finally he will negate these finite forms through reason.

Such an introductory logic is indeed a new development for Hegel. Despite making reflection into the instrument of philosophy, the Differenz still does not regard its programme as an introduction to philosophy. It also does not consider the instrument of reflection to be logic. Although Hegel admits that logic can be the instrument of reflection and that it can construct the absolute for consciousness,¹ he still has a sceptical attitude toward logic. His reservations about logic are all part of his polemic against Reinhold and Bardili, who attempt to base metaphysics upon logic. This early distinction between reflection and logic is of the first importance for the genesis of the PhG. It means that the first programme for a PhG--the Differenz's plan for making reflection into the instrument of philosophy--is not necessarily a logic. It is misleading to assume, then, that the PhG has its origins in Hegel's early introductory logic.

1. Hegel, Werke, i. 122-3

Nonetheless, Pöggeler regards this introductory logic as the beginning of the PhG. He holds that the 'Wis. d. Er.' arises from the logic by eventually taking over its role as an introduction to metaphysics.¹ The logic is already a PhG, he insists, because it is the education of the understanding up to absolute knowledge.² Just like the PhG, the logic destroys the claims of finite knowledge and through their negation rises up to the knowledge of the infinite. Pöggeler does not see any essential difference, then, between Hegel's earlier and later introductions to philosophy; he regards the introductory programme of the logic as the same as that in the PhG. Since he considers the programme of the logic to be so similar to the PhG, he assumes that the project of a PhG is already in evidence in the early Jena years, and that it does not arise from a break with Hegel's earlier position during his alliance with Schelling.³

But Pöggeler ignores some of the basic differences between the early logic and the PhG. Although Pöggeler's point against Haering is perfectly valid--that the concern with an introduction to and justification of philosophy is present throughout the Jena years, and not only in the hectic Summer of 1806--there are still basic differences between Hegel's earlier and later introductions to and justifications of philosophy. These differences make it questionable to assume that the introductory logic is the beginning of the 'Wis. d. Er.'. There are at least two respects in which the dialectic of the logic is in fact the very opposite of that in the PhG. (1) While the dialectic of the PhG

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1. Pöggeler, 'Die Komposition der PhG', pp. 35-6
 2. Pöggeler, Op. cit., p. 40
 3. Pöggeler, 'Zur Deutung der PhG', pp. 278-9

has a positive result in that the negation of reflection of necessity leads to absolute knowledge, the dialectic of the logic has only a negative result in that the negation of reflection only destroys and clears away finite thought without of necessity creating absolute knowledge. And, further, if the dialectic of the PhG produces a determinate negation which preserves the forms of finite knowledge, the dialectic of the logic creates an abstract negation which completely negates and abstracts from all finite forms. Thus Hegel states explicitly in his lectures that the task of logic is simply to remove reflection out of the way, so that it is no hindrance to reason.¹ He also writes that the knowledge of reason is only negative insofar as it belongs to logic.² Although Hegel does state that the logic proceeds from the negation of finite knowledge to infinite knowledge, as Pöggeler points out, there is nothing in this statement that commits him to the claim that the negation of finite thought of necessity leads to infinite knowledge. It is still open for him to say-- as Hegel does indeed say in the 'Kritik' essay, only less than a year before his lecture--that it is necessary to leap into the standpoint of philosophy, to 'a coros perdu hineinstürzen'. The dialectic of the logic is only a negative preparation for philosophy, then, and it does not have the positive result of the dialectic of the PhG. (2) While the dialectic of the PhG is the internal critique of reflection, the self-examination and self-criticism of consciousness, the dialectic of the logic is only an external critique of reflection through speculative reason. The critique of reflection as it appears in the logic simply assumes

1. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, p. 191.

2. Rosenkranz, Op. cit., p. 191

the dogmatic and esoteric standpoint of critique as outlined in the 1802 'Kritik' essay. This external and dogmatic critique of reflection is apparent from Hegel's descriptions of the logic. He says that the forms of the understanding are negated 'durch die Vernunft', and that it is necessary to keep 'das Urbild der Vernunft' in mind in considering how the understanding attempts to copy reason. The forms of the understanding, he also remarks, are not self-organising, but they are arranged 'wie sie aus der Vernunft hervortreten'.¹ Now in both these respects the introductory programme of the logic is perfectly consistent with Hegel's claim in the Differenz and 'Kritik' essay that the standpoint of philosophy is esoteric and indemonstrable. Since the logic is only a negative preparation for philosophy which does not of necessity produce absolute knowledge, it neither justifies philosophy nor makes it accessible to absolute knowledge. It is only a preparation for the leap into philosophy, and philosophy still remains dogmatic and esoteric for those who cannot make that leap.

The dialectic of the introductory logic is thus the very inverse of that in the PhG. This makes it extremely misleading to equate their introductory roles and to see the logic as the forerunner of the PhG. So rather than arising from the logic, the PhG has to break with it. When, in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG, Hegel demands an internal dialectic, and when he stresses the importance of determinate as opposed to abstract negation, he is only reacting against and distancing himself from

1. Rosenkranz, Cp. cit., p. 190

his own earlier introductory logic. His target is undoubtedly its dogmatic and purely sceptical dialectic.

It is important to see that the project of an introductory logic is a Hegel-Schelling joint venture, and that it is not a point where Hegel already breaks from Schelling. In his 1803 Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums, the basis for lectures which are delivered in Summer 1802, simultaneously with Hegel's second lecture course on logic and metaphysics, Schelling sets forth the idea of a dialectic which is to be the introduction to philosophy. This dialectic is remarkably similar to Hegel's introductory logic--and so similar that Schelling must have worked on it with Hegel. As for Hegel, so for Schelling, the dialectic does not produce a positive insight into the absolute, but it is only a negative preparation for absolute knowledge, which still requires such an intuitive leap. It is purely sceptical, completely destroying all the forms of reflection so that they are no hindrance to reason. Schelling's dialectic is also an external critique of the understanding by the philosopher, who already possesses absolute knowledge. Schelling insists that only a select few who have special powers of imagination are able to effectively wield the dialectic. Most important of all, though, Schelling also sees his introductory dialectic as a logic, and not a purely formal logic, but a sceptical logic.² Such a logic does not yet exist, he regrets, implying that one ought to be created--and presumably by his colleague Hegel, who is busy expounding just such a logic at the same time.

1. Schelling, Werke, iii. 288-292

2. Ibid., iii. 291

The Turning Point: Hegel's 1803/04 'Philosophie des Geistes'

After Schelling's departure from Jena in May 1803, the Kritisches Journal ceases publication, having printed its last issue in the same month. With the collapse of the Journal, the Hegel-Schelling alliance also comes to an end, if not de jure, at least de facto. Although Hegel and Schelling still intend to continue their joint venture despite the distance between them,¹ and although they even have specific future articles in mind,² all their plans come to naught. There are no more editions of the Journal, and the Hegel-Schelling alliance effectively falls apart. The reason for the disappearance of the Journal does not lie in an open break between Hegel and Schelling-- they still think of themselves as collaborators as late as 1807³-- but in their new philosophical interests and pre-occupations. After having prepared the ground for the new philosophy through its criticisms and reviews, the Journal's work is over, its task is complete.⁴ The time is now ripe to build the new philo-

1. See H. Buchner, 'Hegel und das Kritische Journal', pp. 112-115

2. See Hegel's August 16th, 1803 letter to Schelling where he asks him for a contribution on Jacobi. Hegel, Briefe, i. 74

3. See Hegel's May 3rd, 1807 letter to Schelling where he replies to Schelling's request to contribute to his new journal, Jahrbücher der Medizin als Wissenschaft. Hegel, Briefe, i. 130

4. Schelling intimates that the critical work of the Journal is over in the course of explaining the need for his new Jahrbücher. See the 'Vorrede' to the Jahrbücher in Schelling, Werke iv. 66. Also see Buchner, 'Hegel und das Kritische Journal', pp. 114-5

sophy upon the cleared grounds. Both Hegel and Schelling then begin to devote their energies to the construction of the system of philosophy itself. Thus Schelling writes his great 1804 System der gesamten Philosophie; and Hegel begins to lecture on 'Philosophiae universae delinieationem' in the Summer Semester of 1803, announcing along with his lectures an 'Enzyklopädie' of philosophy.¹ Yet Hegel and Schelling never work together on the system of philosophy itself--and, indeed, the merely critical task of the Journal never committed them to such collaboration. It is precisely this new pre-occupation with the system of philosophy, though, which pushes Hegel and Schelling further apart from one another. Their alliance had been from the very beginning mainly negative, a common defense against the hostile forces of the day. Now that they begin to turn to the positive task of constructing the system of philosophy, however, all their differences regarding the nature of the absolute, and how it is known, cannot help but to raise their ugly heads. For Hegel, this concern with the system of philosophy also has to go along with a renewed interest in the foundation and justification of speculative philosophy. What this means, however, is that Hegel eventually has to reject all the cardinal tenants about philosophy that he held with Schelling in the Kritisches Journal.

It is indeed in his 1803/04 Winter Semester lectures on the 'System der spekulativen Philosophie' that Hegel begins to move away from Schelling and toward his own system of philosophy. These lectures mark the beginning--if only the beginning--

1. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', p. 54

of the turning point toward the PhG. Their most significant result is the 1803/04 'Philosophie des Geistes', which are part of the so-called Realphilosophie I,¹ and which probably form the basis for some of the 1803/04 lectures.² The 'Philosophie des Geistes' is an important advance toward the PhG, providing basic aspects of its programme and much of its subject matter. Here Hegel's aim is nearly identical to the 'Wis. d. Er.': to construct the stages of consciousness which are necessary for absolute knowledge. Thus for the first time he speaks explicitly of 'die Erhebung zum Geiste', of raising 'empirisches Bewusstsein' to 'absolutes Bewusstsein'.³ His goal is to describe the education of consciousness up to its self-awareness as Geist. He begins with the empirical, individual self, who appears on such primitive stages of consciousness as sensation and desire, and he ends with the universal, rational self, who comes to self-consciousness through the mutual recognition and public life of the community. Although the sequences of the stages of consciousness are rarely similar to the PhG, some of the stages themselves are nearly identical, eg. the pure immediacy of 'Empfindung' is akin to that of 'sinnliche Gewissheit' in the PhG, and 'die Begierde' plays the same role in the formation of self-consciousness in both works.

Of course, in his 1802/03 System der Sittlichkeit, Hegel had already embarked upon a programme similar to his 'Philo-

1. Hegel, Jenaer Realphilosophie I: Die Vorlesungen 1803/04, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Leipzig, Meiner, 1932), pp. 195-268

2. Kimmerle argues that this material probably forms the basis for some of the 1803/04 lectures. See Das Problem der Abgeschlossenheit, p. 256

3. Hegel, Realphilosophie I, pp. 201-2

sophie des Geistes', and he had already conceived most of the stages of consciousness which appear in it. Although it is not as explicit as the 'Philosophie des Geistes', the aim of the System der Sittlichkeit is the same as that of the PhG: to construct the stages of consciousness which are necessary for absolute knowledge. The stages of consciousness educate the ego up to his self-consciousness in the life of a community; but such self-consciousness also amounts to nothing less than absolute knowledge since it is made into the criterion of intellectual intuition. Nonetheless, although the System der Sittlichkeit is the predecessor of the 'Philosophie des Geistes', the later work still represents a definite advance over the earlier work in its progress toward the PhG. The new step forward in the 'Philosophie des Geistes' is the explicit appearance of the concept of consciousness (Bewusstsein),¹ which Hegel sees as the primary form for the existence of Geist,² and as the mediating agency between the individual and absolute ego.³ Unlike the System der Sittlichkeit, whose preconceived formalism is heavily imposed upon its subject matter, consciousness is now seen as self-organising and self-negating, as rising up to the absolute through its own inner necessity. What the philosopher knows about consciousness has to become for consciousness itself. This new concept of consciousness appears most explicitly in the crossed out paragraph to the fragment 'Die erste Form der Existenz des Geistes...'.⁴ Here Hegel plainly

1. On the significance of the concept of consciousness, see Kimmerle Das Problem, pp. 256-262

2. Hegel, Realphilosophie I, p. 197

3. Ibid., p. 199

4. This fragment is #65 in Kimmerle's chronology. See Kimmerle, 'Zur Chronologie', p. 143

implies that consciousness is self-negating and self-organising:

'Diese Mitte oder das Bewusstsein muss sich realisieren... Seine wahrhafte Existenz ist, dass in ihm die Individualität, die das Individuum aus der tierischen Existenz mitbringt, dass diese sich aufhebe, dass das Bewusstsein sei, als die tierischen Organismus sich unterwerfend, negativ, und positiv als absolutes Bewusstsein in ihm selbst organisiere, als dies reine Bewusstsein sich selbst entgegenseetze und sein Entgegenseetze aufhebe'.¹

The lines 'das Bewusstsein muss sich realisieren' are telling: they demand nothing less than a 'Wis. d. Er.', where consciousness educates itself up to absolute knowledge.

A programme of raising consciousness up to the absolute, and a concept of consciousness as the self-organising, self-educating agency between the individual and universal ego. Such are the great strides that the 'Philosophie des Geistes' takes down the road toward the 'Wis. d. Er.'. And yet they still do not take it far enough. There are at least two more crucial steps to go before the 'Wis. d. Er.'. The first step is that Hegel has to see the 'Philosophie des Geistes' as not only the first part of the system, but also as the introduction and education into it. The propaedeutic aim of the 'Wis. d. Er.' is still not apparent in the 'Philosophie des Geistes'. The second step is that Hegel has yet to conceive his idea of the experience of consciousness. Although the 'Philosophie des Geistes' does regard consciousness as self-organising and self-negating, and although one stage of consciousness evolves into another according to its own inner necessity, there is still little to be seen of the dialectic of consciousness, of its internal contradictions. The stages of consciousness are

1. Hegel, Realphilosophie I, p. 199 (my italics).

psychological--eg. they consider the formation of the understanding through language or the development of self-consciousness through labour--or they are sociological--eg. they treat the individual's education into his family and the role of mutual recognition in the formation of self-consciousness-- but they are not epistemological--ie. consciousness still does not make claims to knowledge. It does not set up a standard of knowledge and make claims about its object which it tests by its own standard. And yet the idea that consciousness is self-examining and self-criticising, that it of necessity makes claims to knowledge and tests itself by its own standards, is fundamental to the dialectic and the experience of consciousness. This failure to formulate the idea of the experience of consciousness is all the more in evidence when Hegel still follows Schelling's method of construction. Just as in the System der Sittlichkeit, although using less of a formal apparatus, Hegel erects the 'Potenzen' of consciousness, and constructs rather than simply describes the stages of consciousness. And, indeed, an epistemology is ruled out by Hegel's purely psychological and sociological purpose in the 'Philosophie des Geistes': to present the psychological and sociological pre-conditions which must prevail before consciousness arrives at such a sophisticated stage as to make a claim to knowledge.

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So Hegel has to take two more steps before he turns the 'Philosophie des Geistes' into the 'Wis. d. Er.': he has to

see it, and not the logic, as the introduction to philosophy, an introduction which is not outside the system, but internal to it; and he has to conceive its stages of consciousness in epistemological terms. He begins to take both these steps in the short fragment 'Anmerkung: Die Philosophie...', written in the Summer of 1804.¹ This fragment consists in two remarks about the beginning of philosophy, which were probably appended to his introductory logic. Each remark makes a point that is significant for converting the 'Philosophie des Geistes' into the 'Wis. d. Er.'. (1) In the first remark, Hegel finally recognises that an introduction to the system of philosophy need not be outside it, but that it can be within it. He distinguishes between the standpoint of the philosopher, who sees everything from within the system, and the standpoint of consciousness itself, which sees itself outside the system. Although he argues that there cannot be a beginning or introduction to the system from the standpoint of the philosopher, he now acknowledges that there can be one for consciousness itself.² This is just the point which he failed to see in the Differenz when he denied the possibility of an introduction into philosophy, and which he now at last fully admits. This is a new insight, a discovery which he did not hit upon even in his introductory logic, which he saw as only the preparation for the system, and not as the first part of the system itself. The path is now clear, then, for a 'Wis. d. Er.', a 'Weg zur Wissenschaft' which is 'Wissenschaft selbst'. (2) In the second remark, Hegel gives birth to the idea of the experience of consciousness. He

1. See, Kimmerle, 'Zur Chronologie', 162-3

2. Hegel, Realphilosophie I, 265-6

commits himself to undertaking nothing less than the task of the 'Wis. d. Er.'. Here he faces the same predicament which he sets forth later on in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG,¹ and whose solution compels him to embark upon 'die Darstellung des erscheinenden Wissens', ie. the phenomenological description of consciousness own dialectic. This predicament arises when the standpoint of philosophy appears to be refuted by ordinary experience. While the standpoint of philosophy maintains its speculative principle of subject-object identity, consciousness challenges it by referring to its experience, where it sees nothing but a subject-object dualism. In order to refute philosophy, consciousness simply points to a basic fact about its experience: that the subject does not have conscious control over his representations, whose variety and existence do not depend upon his will and imagination. Now, against this apparent empirical refutation of philosophy, Hegel wants to establish the pure and immediate nature of experience in contrast to its already mediated and interpreted nature in consciousness. He insists that philosophy cannot be refuted by experience, and that it in fact only reveals its true nature. And so he writes:

'Allein es ist damit wie mit allem sogenannten Erfahren beschaffen; nämlich es wird nicht die reine unmittelbare Erfahrung, sondern die begriffene Erfahrung ausgesprochen; und eine Erfahrung, welche ausgeführt wird, dass sie einer deutlichen Erkenntnis der Philosophie widerspreche, muss geradezu geleugnet werden; indem in der wahrhaften Erfahrung auch nichts vorkommen kann, was in Wahrheit der Philosophie [widerspricht]'.²

This aim to justify philosophy through experience, though, is

1. Ibid., 264-8
2. Ibid., 268

precisely the task of the 'Wis. d. Er.' itself.

Now it is Hegel's discovery of the idea of the experience of consciousness which is decisive for transforming the 1803/04 'Philosophie des Geistes' into the 'Wis. d. Er.'. He now sees that the stages of consciousness have their own legitimate claim to knowledge, and that philosophy has to reckon with this claim if it is to justify itself. This recognition of the claims of consciousness has two fundamental consequences. (1) It means that the stages of consciousness are not only psychological and sociological, but that they are also epistemological. Any account of how consciousness raises itself up to the standpoint of philosophy will have to be dialectical, then, describing the internal contradictions of consciousness. This is because the standpoints of philosophy and consciousness are now seen to be in conflict; hence consciousness can educate itself up to philosophy only through its internal contradictions. (2) It also means that the logic is no longer a suitable introduction to philosophy. The problem with the logic is that it abstracts from all the lower stages of consciousness, and these have their own claim to knowledge, which cannot be ignored if philosophy is to justify itself.¹ The logic already presupposes subject-object identity or self-consciousness, since thought obviously has to be its own object to examine the categories, forms of judgement and syllogisms. The standpoint of the logic cannot be purely presuppositionless, then, for it assumes that the subject has already overcome lower stages of consciousness where he is in

1. For a further account of Hegel's reasons for choosing a 'Phänomenologie' over a 'Logik', see R. Bubner, 'Problemggeschichte und Sinn einer Phänomenologie', Hegel-Studien v (1969), 143-151

opposition to his object. This is indeed the point which Hegel stresses later on in the preface to the second edition of the Logik:

'In der Tat, setzt das Bedürfnis sich mit dem reinen Gedanken zu beschäftigen einen weiten Gang voraus, den der Menschengesit durchgemacht haben muss...'¹

The Logik requires, he then goes on to explain, 'die Abstraktion von dem Stoffe des Anschauens, Einbildens, usf.'. But it is just this presupposition of the logic--that thought is capable of becoming its own object--which cannot be taken for granted if there is going to be an introduction to the standpoint of philosophy. Hence the introductory role of the logic soon begins to disappear in the later Jena years. The lecture notice for the Winter Semester 1803/04 no longer sees the logic as only a preliminary to the system, but as the first part of the system itself.² The instrument of reflection by which philosophy constructs the absolute is no longer the logic, then, but the experience of consciousness itself.

The 'Wis. d. Er.' arises, then, from the synthesis of two programmes: the 1803/04 'Philosophie des Geistes', and the 1802/03 introductory logic. It takes over the stages of consciousness of the 'Philosophie des Geistes' on the one hand, while it assumes the introductory role of the logic on the other hand. What makes these programmes merge is Hegel's discovery in the Summer of 1804 of the experience of consciousness. He now recognises that consciousness has a prima facie claim against the speculative standpoint of philosophy, and that philosophy has to seriously

1. Hegel, Logik, i. 12
2. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', p. 54

consider this claim if it is to not turn into a dogmatic authority. This insight forces Hegel to shift the introductory role of the logic onto the 'Philosophie des Geistes', for an introduction to philosophy obviously has to first deal with the primitive claims of consciousness before it embarks upon such a sophisticated undertaking as a logic. The same insight also compels him to see the stages of consciousness in the 'Philosophie des Geistes' as dialectical, as ascending to the standpoint of philosophy through their inner contradictions. Such a 'Philosophie des Geistes', though, which is an introduction to philosophy, and which deals with the dialectical stages of the experience of consciousness, is nothing less than the 'Wis. d. Er.'.

VI

Hegel's 'New Start' and the Break with Schelling: the 1804/05 Winter Semester Lectures

After the Summer of 1804, with its pregnant discovery of the idea of the experience of consciousness, Hegel begins to re-think the whole question of the foundation of the system of speculative philosophy. The fragment 'Anmerkung: Die Philosophie...' shows that he has already hit upon the fatal flaw in the old foundation of intellectual intuition: ordinary consciousness appeal to its experience. This recognition of the experience of ordinary consciousness has a decisive effect upon the justification of the system of philosophy. It means that

its rationale can no longer be an esoteric, indemonstrable intellectual intuition, whose validity is only brought into question by consciousness. A new foundation for the system is necessary, then, which does not beg questions against consciousness, and which establishes that its experience requires the speculative principle of subject-object identity.

The first indication that Hegel is re-building the foundation for his system comes in his September 29th, 1804 letter to Goethe. Here Hegel writes that the goal of his forthcoming lectures--the 1804/05 Winter Semester lectures on 'totam philosophiae scientiam'--is nothing less than a 'rein wissenschaftlichen Bearbeitung der Philosophie'.¹ The emphasis is now upon an approach which is purely 'wissenschaftlich'. This is in contrast to Hegel's earlier approach, the method of construction, which gives free reign to an arbitrary and fanciful use of analogy. The new demand for 'Wissenschaft' also appears in Hegel's 1804/05 Winter Semester lecture notice, which no longer reads 'Das System der spekulativen Philosophie', as in the Winter Semester 1803/04, but 'Die ganze Wissenschaft der Philosophie'.² The omission of the word 'spekulativen' from the title is significant: 'spekulativen' derives from the Latin root 'speculare', which is synonymous with the Latin verb for 'intuit', 'intuo'. The new title suggests, then, that the basis for the system is no longer an intellectual intuition. This is indeed confirmed by the 1804/05 Logik, Metaphysik und

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1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 85
 2. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', p. 54

Naturphilosophie, which drops the use of Schelling's method of construction, whose basis is intellectual intuition. The new term 'Wissenschaft' also has ineradicable Kantian-Fichtean connotations, implying that the system is based upon rigorous deductions which satisfy the demands of the critique of knowledge.¹

It is in the 1804/05 Winter Semester lectures that Hegel makes the 'new start' for his system and presents some of the ideas for his forthcoming 'Wis. d. Er.'. These lectures indeed mark Hegel's decisive break with Schelling, if not in name, at least in principle. Although Hegel warmly praises Schelling's contribution to philosophy, and although he is careful to distinguish Schelling's philosophy from the shallowness, excesses and aberrations of his disciples, he now brings forward ideas and arguments about the method and task of philosophy which are the very opposite of those he held during his alliance with Schelling. Almost on all fronts, these lectures sever Hegel's bond with Schelling and overturn the old concept of philosophy in the Kritisches Journal. Here is the first attack upon the pure immediacy of intellectual intuition; here is the first criticism of dogmatism and esotericism; here is the first protest against the formalism of Schelling's method of construction; and here is the first call for a new justification of the first principle of philosophy, the principle of subject-object identity.

1. The significance of Hegel's letter and the title of the lecture notice are further explained by Kimmerle in 'Die Entwicklung des Hegel'schen Denkens in Jena', Hegel-Studien, Beiheft iv (1969), pp. 43-4. Also see Kimmerle, 'Zur Chronologie', p. 167.

All that remains of these lectures are a few fragments preserved by Rosenkranz.¹ Sadly, he does not give their precise dates, although it is not hard to establish that, on the basis of content, lecture notices and letters, they belong to the 1804/05 Winter Semester. This dating is substantiated by the following points. (1) Rosenkranz states that these lectures belong to the gesamt System, and that they are delivered ex dictatis. This puts them either in the Winter Semester 1803/04 or Winter Semester 1804/05, which both lecture on the system of philosophy ex dictatis.² No other semester lectures ex dictatis on the whole system. The lecture notice for the Summer Semester 1804 also lists 'philosophiae systema universum', but there is no term ex dictatis, and Rosenkranz states that these lectures do not take place (at least there is no surviving 'Zuhörerliste' for them). So the question is then: which Winter Semester, 1803/04 or 1804/05? (2) The answer is that it is probably the Winter Semester 1804/05. These lectures contain a critique of the formalism and foreign terminology of the Naturphilosophie. They must be given in the Winter Semester 1804/05, then, since the 1803/04 Naturphilosophie still employs Schelling's method of construction, while the 1804/05 Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie is free of this method and develops Hegel's own philosophical terminology. The critique of the foreign vocabulary of the Naturphilosophen in these lectures is also redolent of the 'Briefentwurf' to Voss, written in May 1805, where Hegel states that his aim is to translate philo-

1. See Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, pp. 178-189
 2. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', p. 54

sophy into his own 'Muttersprache'.¹ (3) More evidence for the 1804/05 Winter Semester comes from Hegel's September 1804 letter to Goethe, which states that he is now embarking upon a more 'wissenschaftlich' approach to philosophy. This goes hand-in-hand with the 1804/05 Winter Semester lecture notice which states 'Die ganze Wissenschaft der Philosophie' rather than just 'System der spekulativen Philosophie' as in the Winter Semester 1803/04. (4) Still more evidence comes from one of the fragments where Hegel refers to Schelling's idea of the 'Abfall'--a sure reference to Schelling's Philosophie und Religion, which is not published until March 1804.² Schelling's idea of the Abfall is a new development and peculiar to this work, so that it is unlikely that Hegel knew of it beforehand directly from Schelling.

The problem of dating put aside, it is now time to turn to these fragments themselves, and to see all the points where they break with Hegel's earlier thought during his alliance with Schelling.

In the first place, Hegel now reverses his previous position about the status of philosophy vis-a-vis ordinary consciousness. While the 1802 'Kritik' essay sees the standpoint of philosophy as dogmatic, esoteric and indemonstrable, these lectures now insist that philosophy has to be justified before and made accessible to ordinary consciousness. According to Rosenkranz, Hegel's initial aim in these lectures is didactic: to make his system less technical and more comprehensible to

1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 100

2. See Schelling's April 7th, 1804 letter to Eschenmeyer in Schelling, Briefe und Dokumente, iii. 71

his audience.¹ While in his first lectures Hegel presents his system in all its abstractness and obscurity, he now realises that it has to be much simpler and clearer if his audience is to understand it. He therefore cuts down on the formal apparatus of his deductions, and devotes much time to making his transitions easier to follow. Such a didactic enterprise plainly anticipates the PhG itself: to introduce and educate consciousness up to the standpoint of philosophy. But this 'didactic modification of the system', as Rosenkranz calls it, is not only a pedagogic device to make the system more comprehensible: Hegel also insists that philosophy has to be in principle exoteric and justified before ordinary consciousness. The introduction to his logic and metaphysics, Rosenkranz reports, have as their theme the need for philosophy, its justification and connection with life and the sciences.² Their main concern is to defend the whole business of speculative philosophy.³ They criticise Fichte and Schelling because they simply postulate the first principle of philosophy, although the first business of philosophy is to justify this principle.⁴ Significantly, Hegel accuses not only Fichte, but also Schelling of not systematically developing his first principle.

1. In his article 'Zur Entwicklung des Hegelschen Denkens in Jena', p. 33, Kimmerle suggests that, in putting forward his idea of a didactic modification of the system, Rosenkranz presupposes a false belief that Hegel's system is already complete and written during the Frankfurt years. But, although Rosenkranz does wrongly believe this, his idea is still valid as long as Hegel has lectured in previous semesters on a draft of his system; it is not necessary for Rosenkranz to assume that the system is complete.

2. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, p. 179

3. Ibid., p. 188

4. Ibid., pp. 188-9

Along with this demand for a justification of speculative philosophy, Hegel also protests against the romantic cult of genius, the idea that philosophy is esoteric, the province of a select few:

'Es ist kurz zu bemerken, dass die Philosophie als Wissenschaft der Vernunft durch die allgemeine Weise ihres Seins für Alle ist. Es gelangen nicht Alle zu ihr, aber hiervon ist nicht die Rede, so wenig alle Menschen dazu gelangen, Fürsten zu sein. Das Emstörrende, das einige Menschen über andern stehe, liegt allein darin, wenn behauptet wird, als ob sie, durch die Natur verschieden, Wesen anderer Art wären'.¹

Secondly, Hegel now turns his back upon intellectual intuition and claims that there must be a conceptual knowledge of the absolute. The demand of reason, he says in discussing the conditions for learning philosophy, is that one does not only believe the truth, but that one also knows it; and to know the truth, he adds, it is not enough to intuit it, but it is also necessary to conceive it.² He recognises that mediation--the expression of intuitions and feelings into universal concepts--is necessary to give a determinate and precise form to knowledge. Thus he criticises those Naturphilosophen who appeal to their intuitions and feelings, but who do not bother to systematically develop them and to express them into exact concepts. What these philosophers fail to realise, he says in a passage which anticipates the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, is that their insights are only as deep as their explicit expression into concepts is wide:

'Das klare Element ist das Allgemeine, der Begriff, der eben so tief als ausgebreitet in seiner nichts verhüllenden Offenbarung'.³

He then introduces his notion of der Begriff as the mediator between life and thought:

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1. Ibid., p. 187
 2. Ibid., pp. 181-2
 3. Ibid., p. 183

'Aber der Begriff sei selber der Vermittler zwischen sich und dem Leben, indem er das Leben in sich, den Begriff im Leben finden lehre'.¹

This, too, anticipates the 'Vorrede' to the PhG, foreshadowing Hegel's later claim that 'der Begriff' is 'das Leben der Sache'. The introduction of the notion of 'der Begriff' is extremely significant, for Hegel is now breaking with the romantic's idea that concepts cannot grasp life because they dissect and destroy it. Since das Leben is often used as a synonym for the absolute in the Frankfurt and Jena years, Hegel is now explicitly affirming a conceptual knowledge of the absolute.

Thirdly, Hegel begins to criticise Schelling's method of construction and hints at his own emerging phenomenological method. His critique of construction appears in the guise of an attack upon the bombastic foreign terminology of the Naturphilosophen. He complains that their terminology is needlessly technical, and that it appears impressive only because it borrows obscure foreign words. Such a terminology, he remarks, is only a disguise for a real lack of thought.² What Hegel singles out for censure, though, is the method of the Naturphilosophen: they indiscriminately apply their pre-fabricated terminology to a subject matter without examining it for its own sake.³ He calls their method 'Formalismus'--a label he will use later on in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG--and contrasts it with 'die Begriffe', which are the movement of the subject matter itself. Sadly, there is no surviving excerpt where Hegel discusses his own method. However, given his remarks about 'der Begriff' as the mediator between

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1. Ibid., p. 182
 2. Ibid., pp. 183-4
 3. Ibid., pp. 183-5

life and thought and as the movement of its subject matter, it is very likely that he already has some of the basic outlines of his own method already in mind.

Fourthly, and finally, for the the first time Hegel openly criticises Schelling's concept of the absolute.¹ His target is Schelling's idea of the Abfall: that the finite has its origin in a fall or leap away from the infinite. The problem with this idea, Hegel argues, is that it sees the finite as only in an indifferent, contingent relation with the infinite, so that it fails to explain the necessary connection between them. The finite is a necessary moment of the infinite, though, and the infinite expresses and manifests its nature only through the finite. The problem of philosophy is then to explain how it is that the infinite realises itself only in the finite, so that to say that there is only a contingent connection between them is to simply ignore the problem. This critique of Schelling goes hand-in-hand with some of the private remarks in Hegel's Wastebook-- a compilation of aphorisms, excerpts and experiment notes--which Hegel began to write down after Schelling's departure from Jena.² Here Hegel finally states what must have been obvious all along: that Schelling's absolute is inadequate because it fails to accommodate difference and the existence of determinate particulars. Referring explicitly to the Naturphilosophen, but no doubt also to Schelling, Hegel invents and then varies his famous damning metaphor:

'Das Absolute: in der Nacht alle Kuhe schwarz.--Das absolute Erkennen ist der grosse Besen, der alles wegfegt, qui fait la maison nette'.³

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1. Ibid., p. 188
 2. Ibid., p. 198
 3. Hegel, Werke, ii. 561

He then stresses that it is important to preserve differences within the whole:

'Nicht nur die Einsicht in die Abhängigkeit des Einzelnen vom Ganzen, sondern ebenso, dass jedes Moment selbst, unabhängig vom Ganzen, das Ganze ist, dies ist das Vertiefen in der Sache'.¹

* * *

Why is it, though, that Hegel rejects his early concept of philosophy? Why does he no longer attempt to justify the standpoint of philosophy through a dogmatic and esoteric intellectual intuition? Or, in short: what is the main reason for his break with Schelling? The answer lies with that all-consuming concern of Hegel's Jena years: the foundation and justification of speculative philosophy. All throughout the Jena years, this interest comes readily to the fore: it is in the general reflections or opening sections of the Differenz, the 1802/03 lectures on logic and metaphysics, the 1804 fragment 'Anmerkung: Die Philosophie...', the 1804/05 lectures on the system of philosophy, and finally in the 'Einleitung' to the PhG itself. Around the Summer of 1804, or definitely by the Winter Semester 1804/05, though, this pre-occupation compels Hegel to renounce his earlier concept of philosophy during his collaboration with Schelling. Now Hegel has to reject the esotericism, dogmatism and indemonstrability of the standpoint of intellectual intuition: simply because he finds it an inadequate foundation and justification of speculative philosophy. The problem is that philosophy cannot prove itself to be a superior standpoint to ordinary consciousness if it only appeals to an esoteric and indemonstrable intellectual

1. Ibid., ii. 554

intuition; for, as Hegel himself points out in the Summer of 1804, ordinary consciousness has just as much a right to appeal to its own experience, which contradicts that of philosophy. An irreconcilable conflict then arises: philosophy proclaims its principle of subject-object identity, while consciousness protests, referring to its own experience of a subject-object dualism. There is now only a stalemate, however, and so philosophy surely has not proven itself against ordinary consciousness. And it is to no avail for philosophy to simply condemn ordinary consciousness, Hegel now realises, for that only begs the question against it. So what is needed is nothing less than a new foundation and justification for philosophy. This new foundation will have to establish that philosophy is necessary according to the standpoint of consciousness itself. It will have to fully acknowledge consciousness' right of self-thought, its right to believe only that which agrees with the critical exercise of its own understanding. To recognise the right of self-thought, though, means that philosophy will have to surrender all its privileges against ordinary consciousness. For if philosophy has to justify itself before ordinary consciousness, then it will surely have to drop its claims to authority, it will have to surrender its pretensions to esoteric insight, and it will certainly have to admit the need for a demonstration of its speculative principles.

Hegel's chapter on Schelling in his retrospective Geschichte der Philosophie, written some twenty years after his 1804/05 Winter Semester lecture, confirms that his break with Schelling has its source in his concern with the foundation of speculative philosophy. The constant refrain of Hegel's lecture is that Schelling has not

built an adequate basis for his principle of subject-object identity. Although Schelling has made a great contribution to philosophy in his advocacy of the principle of subject-object identity, he has still not justified and carried through with his principle. The main weakness of Schelling's philosophy, Hegel explicitly says, is that it only postulates this principle without proving it.¹ An intellectual intuition is a weak foundation for this principle, he argues, because it is not convincing against someone who does not have it.² If philosophy appeals to its intuition of subject-object identity, it is just as easy for the understanding to demonstrate that there is a subject-object dualism from its experience.³ Schelling is also criticised for his failure to appreciate the dialectical nature of the understanding, and for his view of the understanding as consisting only in fixed concepts.⁴

Another force which compels Hegel to break with Schelling is nothing less than his early ideal of a philosophical system in the Differenz. After re-thinking the issue of the foundation of philosophy, Hegel finally recognises that he can achieve his ideal only if the system is introduced to, and justified before, ordinary consciousness. According to the Differenz, the aim of a system of philosophy is to overcome consciousness' alienation from the absolute; it is to make men self-conscious of the infinite whole which is omnipresent in their finite individual lives. The need for such a system arises, Hegel teaches, when the op-

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1. Hegel, Werke, xx. 435-6
 2. Ibid., xx. 428, 434
 3. Ibid., xx. 436
 4. Ibid., xx. 436

positions of cultural life grow to such an extent that they make the awareness of unity and totality disappear from the life of men. A system reconciles consciousness with the absolute, since it overcomes these oppositions by showing how all opposites have their meaning only within a whole. While re-considering the problem of the foundation of philosophy in 1804, Hegel returns to this old ideal with renewed energy. Thus Rosenkranz reports that the introductions to his 1804/05 lectures defend 'das Bedürfnis der Philosophie',¹ a sure reference to the task of a system in the Differenz. After re-affirming his old ideal, though, Hegel now fully grasps what he failed to see in the Differenz and 'Kritik' essay: that his ideal can be fulfilled only if the system includes an introduction to, and justification before, ordinary consciousness. If, per contra, consciousness has no access to or justification for the system, then it will regard it as alien to itself, a self-enclosed topsy-turvy world which it enters only through a leap or by walking on its head. And, furthermore, if the only rationale for the system is an esoteric and dogmatic intellectual intuition, which contradicts the standpoint of ordinary consciousness, then consciousness will protest against the system, seeing it as a hostile and repressive authority. In short: the system will not overcome consciousness' alienation from the absolute, for consciousness will rebel against the very system which is to reconcile it to the absolute. Supposing, however, that the system does reconcile consciousness to the absolute, then it will have to introduce and justify itself before ordinary consciousness. The system will have to submit

1. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, p. 179

to consciousness self-thought, so that consciousness discovers the necessity of the system from within itself, according to the critical exercise of its own understanding. Surely, though, once consciousness has discovered the absolute from within itself, according to the self-examination of its own consciousness, it will no longer be alienated from the absolute, but it will in fact be self-conscious in it. So when, and only when, a system allows for consciousness right of self-thought will it achieve its ultimate end: the reconciliation with the absolute.

Now this new recognition of the right of self-thought, of consciousness legitimate demand to exercise its own critical understanding if it is to reconcile itself with the absolute, is the decisive force behind Hegel's break with Schelling. If a system of philosophy has to satisfy the tribunal of self-thought, then all the new demands that Hegel makes upon philosophy in his 1804/05 Winter Semester lectures follow of necessity. Since a system has to justify itself before ordinary consciousness, it will have to be exoteric and demonstrable, and anything but esoteric and indemonstrable; it will also have to be constructed by consciousness itself, and not by the abstract reasoning of the philosopher; and, finally, its justification will have to be through the dialectic of the understanding rather than through an intellectual intuition. What makes Hegel finally recognise this right of self-thought, though, is nothing less than his concern with the foundation of speculative philosophy. Plainly, philosophy has a strong foundation only insofar as it proves its necessity to the critical understanding of consciousness.

Although Hegel's recognition of the right of self-thought is new to his later Jena years (1804-06) by comparison with his earlier Jena years (1801-03), it is still important to note that such recognition is nothing new to Hegel. Rather, it is only a return to the old theme of the 1795/6 'Positivität' essay. Just as the 'Positivität' essay protests against authority and esotericism in religion in behalf of freedom of the individual, so the 'Wis. d. Er.' argues against authority and esotericism in philosophy in behalf of the right of self-thought. The only change from the Berne and Jena years is that, while Hegel once saw the great enemy of positivity in religion, he now sees it in philosophy. This is only because the goal of religion in the Frankfurt years--consciousness reconciliation with the absolute, the raising of finite to infinite life--is now made into the task of philosophy itself. So, despite the break of the later Jena years, there is still good reason for seeing continuity and progressive evolution in Hegel's thought. The break with Schelling is only due to the re-discovery of positivity in philosophy, and that is only all too predictable from Hegel's earliest years.

VII

Goethe and Hegel: Crossroads in Jena

Although Hegel's break with Schelling is predictable enough from the development of his own thought, the question still arises: is there perhaps an external influence upon Hegel during this crucial time, a stimulus which helps him to focus his own thoughts and to go down his own path away from Schelling?

There is good evidence to suggest that there is indeed such an influence, and that it is no less a figure than Goethe himself. The mainstay of the evidence consists in this: that Goethe's views about philosophical method, and his criticisms of the Naturphilosophen, are nearly identical to Hegel's in the 'Vorrede' and 'Einleitung' to the PhG, though they were formulated well before the publication of the PhG in 1807. The similarity is so remarkable that it is at least plausible to assume that there is some direct influence. Now such an influence, if it exists, helps to explain an especially puzzling aspect behind Hegel's break with Schelling: his sudden conversion in philosophical method. While the 1803/04 Naturphilosophie employs all the a priori formalism of Schelling's method of construction, the 1804/05 Winter Semester lectures deplore this formalism and insist upon a more phenomenological approach. It is precisely in respect to philosophical method, though, that Goethe is likely to have been an influence upon Hegel. Goethe is an early critic of Schelling's method of construction, and he stubbornly maintains a phenomenological method in his Morphologie and Farbenlehre. It is also known, however, that Goethe and Hegel have meetings and hold philosophical discussions during the early Winter of 1803. So it appears plausible to assume that Goethe is an influence upon Hegel during this crucial time. Let us now examine in more detail the evidence for this conjecture.

A brief look at Goethe's essays and fragments on philosophical method reveals a methodology which is decidedly phenomenological and strikingly similar to Hegel's in the PhG. Like Hegel, Goethe shows himself to be a champion of internal teleology, ie.

standing an organism as an end in itself or according to its own inner purposes, and not as a means to an end or according to the purpose of something outside itself. The early 1784/85 Studie nach Spinoza, for example, insists that a living thing has to be understood by its own ends, that that it cannot be measured by an external observer.¹ Then in the 1792 essay 'Der Versuch als Vermittler von Subjekt und Objekt', Goethe states that the task of science is to know the object in itself, according to its own ends and not its use for human ends.² No less than Hegel, Goethe is also the advocate of a purely objective understanding of a subject matter. The 'Der Versuch...' essay argues that the philosopher has to derive his standard of judgment not from his knowledge of the object, but from the object itself.³ The philosopher has to proceed as if he were an indifferent and divine being, Goethe maintains, since he has to renounce all his anthropocentric wishes and preconceptions. Just as Hegel demands that the philosopher exercise restraint (Enthaltsamkeit) in the face of his subject matter, so Goethe declares that his special virtue is renunciation (Entäusserung), self-control in holding back all human standards and purposes.⁴ Nowhere is Goethe's advocacy of a purely objective standpoint more apparent, though, than in his late 1823 'Bedeutende Fördernis' essay. Here he describes his thinking as 'gegenständlich': it enters into its subject matter and grasps it from within, so that thought and intuition merge.⁵ Like Hegel, he rejects Fichte's maxim 'Merke auf dich selbst' as the first rule of philo-

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1. Goethe, Werke, xiii. 7
 2. Ibid., xiii. 10-11
 3. Ibid., xiii. 10
 4. Ibid., xiii. 10
 5. Ibid., xiii. 37

sophy, and counters it by saying that man knows himself only by knowing the world upon which he depends.¹ Goethe and Hegel are also at one about the goal of their scientific or philosophical investigations: the unity of subject and object, universal and particular, thought and intuition. Thus in his 1798/99 essay 'Erfahrung und Wissenschaft' Goethe states that the final goal of his experiments is that point where theory and experience merge, where the subject appropriates and internalises the universality which is inherent in his object.² And in his 1817 essay 'Die anschauende Urteilskraft' Goethe makes Kant's intellectual intuition into the ideal of all his experiments.³

It is not only Goethe's views about philosophical method, but also his criticism of the method of the Naturphilosophie that anticipates Hegel. Like Hegel in the Wastebook and 'Vorrede' to the PhG, Goethe rejects the Naturphilosophen's superficial use of analogy to construct broad generalisations about nature.⁴ The problem with analogy, Goethe argues, is that it discovers only the abstract generalities about things and ignores the differences between them. It does not consider the particular for its own sake, but only order it into a pre-conceived universal. No less than Hegel, Goethe insists that, although the universe is a unity, it is also necessary to appreciate the differences between things. He deplores those Naturphilosophen who ignore the particular and throw it into an abyss where all things are identical with one another. Each individual thing, he stresses,

1. Ibid., p. 38

2. Ibid., p. 24

3. Ibid., p. 30-1

4. See Hofmeister, Goethe und der deutsche Idealismus (Leipzig, Meiner, 1932), pp. 38-42

has its existence in itself, and its particularity must not disappear in an absolute which is only empty self-identity, $A=A$, a night when all cows are black.¹ As Hegel will soon argue after him, Goethe also maintains that Schelling's method of construction is too a priori. It proceeds in the wrong direction: it begins with the universal and applies it to the particular, while the proper method is to begin with the particular and to consider it for its own sake, so that the universal emerges from its inner necessity.²

Such are the basic similarities between Goethe's and Hegel's views on philosophical method. Although Hegel never explicitly acknowledges a debt to Goethe on any of these grounds, there is still one point where he explicitly agrees with Goethe: the theory of colour. In his Wastebook and Jenaer Naturphilosophie, Hegel defends Goethe's theory of colour and even designs experiments to support it. On one occasion, a meeting with Goethe in August 1806, Hegel and Goethe in fact collaborate on an experiment.³ Now Hegel's defense of Goethe's theory of colour is not a side issue concerning the details of the Naturphilosophie, but it is an issue of the first philosophical importance. At stake is a basic issue of scientific method: Goethe opposes his more inductive and phenomenological method to Newton's more mathematical and deductive method. He accuses Newton of forcing phenomena into abstract and pre-conceived moulds and not examining them for their own sake. Here lies, then, a deep lesson for Hegel. For

1. Goethe, Werke, xiii.

2. See Goethe's February 21st, 1798 letter to Schiller in Briefe, Hamburger Ausgabe, ed. K.R. Mandelkow (Hamburg, Wegner, 1955) ii. 333

3. See Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen, ed. G. Nicolini (Hamburg, Meiner, 1970), p. 73

is not Schelling's method of construction guilty of the same error? Surely, it is hypocritical to criticise Newton for using an a priori and deductive method while still employing the method of construction oneself, which is obviously no less a priori and deductive. It is quite plausible to assume, then, that Hegel's doubts about the method of construction begin with his defense of Goethe against Newton. It is not surprising that Hegel's later criticism of Schelling and the Naturphilosophen in the 'Vorrede' to the PhG repeat some of the points that Goethe makes against Newton.

At first sight, it appears as if Hegel never had the opportunity to learn Goethe's views on philosophical method. Even though most of Goethe's views were formulated from 1784 to 1789, long before the publication of the PhG in 1807, they largely remained in letters and fragments, and were not published until much later, beginning in the 1820's. If Goethe had a direct influence upon Hegel, then, it would have to be through direct face-to-face discussion. There are good reasons to believe, though, that such discussions took place—and, indeed, just before the time of Hegel's turn away from Schelling. According to the entries in Goethe's Tagebuch, Hegel visits Goethe first in October 21st, 1801, but twice during the eventful Winter of 1803, first on the 26th of November 1803, and then on the 3rd of December 1803, just before the decisive 1803/04 Winter Semester lectures.¹ Although neither Goethe nor Hegel record anything of their conversations, it is at least known that they concern philosophy. Goethe writes Hegel after both the Winter 1803 meetings,

1. Ibid., pp. 60-73.

asking Hegel to review a book for the Jena Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung, and stating that such a review will give them further occasion to continue their 'interessanten Unterhaltungen'.¹ Sadly, Goethe's letter never mentions the book's title--it only refers to a 'beikommende Schrift'--and Hegel never writes the review, for reasons best known to himself.²

Although Hegel never explicitly acknowledges a debt to Goethe over the question of philosophical method, it is noteworthy that he does express a general debt to Goethe and hints that it concerns methodology. In a letter to Goethe written on April 24th, 1825, long after the heady days of Jena, Hegel writes:

'...denn wenn ich den Gang meiner geistigen Entwicklung übersehe, sehe ich Sie überall darein verflochten und mag mich einen Ihrer Söhne nennen; mein Inneres hat gegen die Abstraktion Nahrung zur widerhaltenden Stärke von Ihnen erhalten'.³

The phrase beginning '...gegen die Abstraktion' is telling.

In retrospect, Hegel saw the entire PhG as a struggle against abstraction, pitting the concrete method of his phenomenology against such abstract methods as Schelling's construction. Thus in making plans for a new edition of the PhG, Hegel writes just before his death:

'Eigenthümliche frühere Arbeit--auf die damalige Zeit bezüglich--in Vorrede: das abstrakte Absolute herrschte damals'.⁴

1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 452

2. It is a mystery why Hegel never writes the review, especially after two requests from Goethe, and considering that Hegel has to be on Goethe's better side as the Rector of the University of Jena.

Hoffmeister thinks that the review might have been written, and conjectures that Hegel might have reviewed a book by a Herr Troxler. See his remark to his edition of Hegel's Briefe, i. 452 But the register of reviewers for the Jena Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung shows no entry for Hegel for the years 1804 and 1805, the likely years of its composition. See Die Rezensenten der Jenaischer Allgemeinen Literatur Zeitung, 1804-1813, ed. K. Bulling (Weimar, Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1962), 49-102. The book by Troxler is reviewed by a Herr Schmidt. See *ibid.*, p. 51

3. Hegel, Briefe, iii. 83

4. PhG, p. 578

So, weighing up all these facts, it is at least plausible, if not probable, that Hegel did come under the spell of the great Denkmeister of Weimar during the composition of the PhG. It is perhaps because of Goethe, then, that Hegel felt encouraged to go against all the contemporary forces to do battle against 'das abstrakte Absolute'. If this is true, though, it means revising the customary image of Hegel's philosophical isolation after the conclusion of his collaboration with Schelling.¹

XIII

The Final Days: the Composition of the PhG, 1804-1807

Our story nears its close. After or during the Summer of 1804 with its discovery of the idea of the experience of consciousness, Hegel begins to write the 'Wis. d. Er.'. Almost all the evidence suggests that--pace Haering--the composition of the PhG proceeds according to a single original plan. The only problem is that Hegel loses himself in the detail and seriously misjudges its length. There is no conclusive evidence, though, for Haering's thesis that Hegel's intentions change during its composition. There is nothing that proves that Hegel at first intends the PhG to be only an introduction to the system, and that in the end he makes it into the first part of the system itself. This is indeed refuted by Hegel's statement in the 'Einleitung' that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is a 'Weg zur Wissenschaft' which

1. See, for example, Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben, p. 198

is a 'Wissenschaft selbst'. And there is nothing that establishes that Hegel originally plans to exclude history from the 'Wis. d. Er.', and that he at first sees it as nothing more than epistemology. If anything, the evidence indicates the contrary.

Judging from all the available sources and Kimmerle's recent dating of the Jena manuscripts, Hegel gradually writes the PhG throughout the later Jena years, from 1804 to 1806. It is likely that Hegel begins writing the 'Wis. d. Er.' as early as the Summer of 1804. At least Rosenkranz reports that Hegel presents his concept of the experience of consciousness in the introductions to his 1804 lectures on logic and metaphysics.¹ This must be in either the Summer Semester 1804 or the Winter Semester 1804/05, for Hegel lectures on logic and metaphysics on both occasions;² it cannot be earlier, though, assuming that Hegel writes the fragment 'Anmerkung: Die Philosophie...', which develops the idea of the experience of consciousness merely in rudimentary form, only in the Summer of 1804. If not as early as the Summer of 1804, the fragment 'Das absolute Wissen...' definitely shows that Hegel is writing the PhG in May 1805.³ Then the fragment 'Die Wissenschaft...', which is written in the Summer of 1805, reveals that Hegel is already at work on the draft of the final chapter of the PhG.⁴ Gabler, a student who attends Hegel's final lectures in Jena, reports that Hegel lectures on the PhG in the Winter Semester 1805/06, which he says already appears in its complete form.⁵ Certainly, the historical

1. Ibid., p. 202

2. See Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', p. 54

3. For the dating of this manuscript, see Kimmerle 'Zur Chronologie', pp. 167-8

4. Ibid., p. 168

5. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', pp. 70-1

sections of the PhG must already be written by then, since Gabler complains that everyone has difficulty in understanding them because of Hegel's omission of concrete historical detail. Finally, Hegel writes to Niethammer that the first half of the PhG is already being printed in February 1806.¹ The second half is sent to the publisher in October 1806, and the manuscript of the 'Vorrede' is finally delivered to the publisher in January 1807. Only in March 1807 is the PhG finally ready to be sent to the bookshops.

All these facts fly in the face of Haering's claim that Hegel conceives the first half of the PhG only in the Winter Semester 1805/06, and that he decides to write the second and more historical half only in the Summer of 1806. The main support that he musters in behalf of his thesis is the lecture notice for the Winter Semester of 1806/07, which is probably written weeks or even months before its publication.² This notice states that Hegel is to lecture according to his forthcoming book, the Spekulativen Philosophie or Logik und Metaphysik, which is to be preceded by an introductory 'Phänomenologie'. Apparently, Hegel still does not know the length of the PhG as late as the Summer of 1806, and still sees it as the introduction to the Logik und Metaphysik, which are all to comprise a single volume. Now Haering infers from this notice that Hegel decides to extend and write the second half of the PhG only after August 1806, only months before sending it to the publisher in

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1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 113
 2. Kimmerle, 'Dokumente', pp. 55-6

October 1806, and while the first half is already submitted for publication. It is supposedly only after August 1806, then, that Hegel expects the PhG to fill a single volume, and to be not only the introduction to the system, but the first part of the system itself.

It is obvious, however, that Haering's case amounts to little more than the proverbial mountain built on a mole hill. All the conclusions that he draws about Hegel's change in intentions--the switch from an introduction to the first part of the system, the change from an epistemological 'Wis. d. Er.' to a more historical PhG--are simple non sequiters. It certainly does not follow from the lecture notice that Hegel originally plans to exclude history from the 'Wis. d. Er.'; it equally does not follow that the 'Wis. d. Er.' is at first only an introduction to the system. All that the lecture notice entails is that Hegel still does not know the size of the PhG, and that he wrongly estimates that it will be short enough to fit into a single volume along with the Logik und Metaphysik. Since the contract with the publisher is lost, it is not possible to know the expected size of the first volume, so that there is no way of measuring the seriousness of Hegel's mistake. This explanation for the mistake is given by Hegel himself. He complains to Schelling about 'die unselige Verwirrung' behind the composition of the PhG.¹ He locates the problem in 'das Hineinarbeiten in das Detail!'. Evidently, then, he misjudges the size of the PhG simply because he did not expect to go into such detail.

1. Hegel, Briefe, i. 161, Hegel an Schelling, May 1st, 1807

Nowhere, though, does Hegel attribute the confusion to a problem in the structure or to a change in plans. Although he fears that the view of the whole is not apparent, that is only because of the concentration upon detail, and not because of any fundamental lack of unity in the work.

Whatever Hegel's final reservations about the PhG, he never suggests that he finds it a work without unity and structure. Hegel travels to Bamberg in November 1806 to supervise the printing of the work, and he reports that he finds everything better than he thought.¹ He even envisages a second edition which will throw much of the ballast overboard and make the ship more buoyant and light.² Ultimately, though, the PhG is probably a disappointment to him in the light of his main ambitions. It is not his whole system, which he had long hoped to publish; and he admits to Schelling that it never goes beyond the stage of an introduction into medium rem.³ Nonetheless, as an introduction and justification of the standpoint of speculative philosophy, there can be no doubt that the PhG is the crowning achievement of his Jena years. The creation of such an introduction and justification is his main struggle ever since the beginning of his heady Jena days. Now, with the publication of the PhG, that struggle is finally over.

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1. Ibid., i. 129, Hegel an Fromann November 17th, 1806
 2. Ibid., i. 136, Hegel an Niethammer, January 16th, 1807
 3. Ibid., i. 161, Hegel an Schelling, May 1st, 1807

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