REASON AND REVOLUTION

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HEGEL AND THE RISE OF SOCIAL THEORY

HERBERT MARCUSE

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with Supplementary Chapter

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TO

MAX HORKHEIMER

AND THE

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Preface

THE content of a truly philosophical work does not remain unchanged with time. If its concepts have an essential bearing upon the aims and interests of men, a fundamental change in the historical situation will make them see its teachings in a new light. In our time, the rise of Fascism calls for a reinterpretation of Hegel's philosophy. We hope that the analysis offered here will demonstrate that Hegel's basic concepts are hostile to the tendencies that have led into Fascist theory and practice.

We have devoted the first part of the book to a survey of the structure of Hegel's system. At the same time, we have tried to go beyond mere restatement and to elucidate those implications of Hegel's ideas that identify them closely with the later developments in European thought, particularly with the Marxian theory.

Hegel's critical and rational standards, and especially his dialectics, had to come into conflict with the prevailing social reality. For this reason, his system could well be called a *negative philosophy*, the name given to it by its contemporary opponents. To counteract its destructive tendencies, there arose, in the decade following Hegel's death, a *positive philosophy* which undertook to subordinate reason to the authority of established fact. The struggle that developed between the negative and positive philosophy offers, as we have attempted to show in the second part of this book, many clues for understanding the rise of modern social theory in Europe.

There is in Hegel a keen insight into the locale of progressive ideas and movements. He attributed to the American rational spirit a decisive role in the struggle for an

adequate order of life, and spoke of 'the victory of some future and intensely vital rationality of the American nation . . .' Knowing far better than his critics the forces that threatened freedom and reason, and recognizing these forces to have been bound up with the social system Europe had acquired, he once looked beyond that continent to this as the only 'land of the future.'

In the use of texts, I have frequently taken the liberty of citing an English translation and changing the translator's rendering where I thought it necessary, without stipulating that the change was made. Hegelian terms are often rendered by different English equivalents, and I have attempted to avoid confusion on this score by giving the German word in parenthesis where a technical term was involved.

The presentation of this study would not have been possible without the assistance I received from Mr. Edward M. David who gave the book the stylistic form it now has. I have drawn upon his knowledge of the American and British philosophic tradition to guide me in selecting those points that could and that could not be taken for granted in offering Hegel's doctrine to an American and English public.

I thank the Macmillan Company, New York, for granting me permission to use and quote their translations of Hegel's works, and I thank the following publishers for authorizing me to quote their publications: International Publishers, Longmans, Green and Co., Charles H. Kerr and Co., The Macmillan Co., The Viking Press, The Weekly Foreign Letter (Lawrence Dennis).

My friend Franz L. Neumann, who was gathering material for his forthcoming book on National Socialism, has given me constant advice, especially on the political philosophy.

Professor George H. Sabine was kind enough to read the chapter on Hegel's Philosophy of Right and to offer valuable suggestions.

I am particularly grateful to the Oxford University Press, New York, which encouraged me to write this book and undertook to publish it at this time.

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PART I

The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy

Introduction

1. The Socio-Historical Setting

German idealism has been called the theory of the French Revolution. This does not imply that Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel furnished a theoretical interpretation of the French Revolution, but that they wrote their philosophy largely as a response to the challenge from France to reorganize the state and society on a rational basis, so that social and political institutions might accord with the freedom and interest of the individual. Despite their bitter criticism of the Terror, the German idealists unanimously welcomed the revolution, calling it the dawn of a new era, and they all linked their basic philosophical principles to the ideals that it advanced.

The ideas of the French Revolution thus appear in the very core of the idealistic systems, and, to a great extent, determine their conceptual structure. As the German idealists saw it, the French Revolution not only abolished feudal absolutism, replacing it with the economic and political system of the middle class, but it completed what the German Reformation had begun, emancipating the individual as a self-reliant master of his life. Man's position in the world, the mode of his labor and enjoyment, was no longer to depend on some external authority, but on his own free rational activity. Man had passed the long period of immaturity during which he had been victimized by overwhelming natural and social forces, and had become the autonomous subject of his own development. From now on, the struggle with nature and with social

organization was to be guided by his own progress in knowledge. The world was to be an order of reason.

The ideals of the French Revolution found their resting place in the processes of industrial capitalism. Napoleon's empire liquidated the radical tendencies and at the same time consolidated the economic consequences of the revolution. The French philosophers of the period interpreted the realization of reason as the liberation of industry. Expanding industrial production seemed capable of providing all the necessary means to gratify human wants. Thus, at the same time that Hegel elaborated his system, Saint-Simon in France was exalting industry as the sole power that could lead mankind to a free and rational society. The economic process appeared as the foundation of reason.

Economic development in Germany lagged far behind that in France and England. The German middle class, weak and scattered over numerous territories with divergent interests, could hardly contemplate a revolution. The few industrial enterprises that existed were but small islands within a protracted feudal system. The individual in his social existence was either enslaved, or was the enslaver of his fellow individuals. As a thinking being, however, he could at least comprehend the contrast between the miserable reality that existed everywhere and the human potentialities that the new epoch had emancipated; and as a moral person, he could, in his private life at least, preserve human dignity and autonomy. Thus, while the French Revolution had already begun to assert the reality of freedom, German idealism was only occupying itself with the idea of it. The concrete historical efforts to establish a rational form of society were here transposed to the philosophical plane and appeared in the efforts to elaborate the notion of reason.

The concept of reason is central to Hegel's philosophy.

He held that philosophical thinking presupposes nothing beyond it, that history deals with reason and with reason alone, and that the state is the realization of reason. These statements will not be understandable, however, so long as reason is interpreted as a pure metaphysical concept, for Hegel's idea of reason has retained, though in an idealistic form, the material strivings for a free and rational order of life. Robespierre's deification of reason as the *Être suprême* is the counterpart to the glorification of reason in Hegel's system. The core of Hegel's philosophy is a structure the concepts of which—freedom, subject, mind, notion—are derived from the idea of reason. Unless we succeed in unfolding the content of these ideas and the intrinsic connection among them, Hegel's system will seem to be obscure metaphysics, which it in fact never was.

Hegel himself related his concept of reason to the French Revolution, and did so with the greatest of emphasis. The revolution had demanded that 'nothing should be recognized as valid in a constitution except what has to be recognized according to reason's right.' [1] Hegel further elaborated this interpretation in his lectures on the Philosophy of History: 'Never since the sun had stood in the firmament and the planets revolved around it had it been perceived that man's existence centres in his head, i.e. in Thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality. Anaxagoras had been the first to say that Νοῦς governs the World; but not until now had man advanced to the recognition of the principle that Thought ought to govern spiritual reality. This was accordingly a glorious mental dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of this epoch.' [2]

In Hegel's view, the decisive turn that history took with

[1] *Ueber die Verhandlung der Württembergischen Landstände*, in *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. Georg Lasson, Leipzig 1913, p. 198.

[2] *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibbree, New York 1899, p. 447.

the French Revolution was that man came to rely on his mind and dared to submit the given reality to the standards of reason. Hegel expounds the new development through a contrast between an employment of reason and an uncritical compliance with the prevailing conditions of life. 'Nothing is reason that is not the result of thinking.' Man has set out to organize reality according to the demands of his free rational thinking instead of simply accommodating his thoughts to the existing order and the prevailing values. Man is a thinking being. His reason enables him to recognize his own potentialities and those of his world. He is thus not at the mercy of the facts that surround him, but is capable of subjecting them to a higher standard, that of reason. If he follows its lead, he will arrive at certain conceptions that disclose reason to be antagonistic to the existing state of affairs. He may find that history is a constant struggle for freedom, that man's individuality requires that he possess property as the medium of his fulfillment, and that all men have an equal right to develop their human faculties. Actually, however, bondage and inequality prevail; most men have no liberty at all and are deprived of their last scrap of property. Consequently the 'unreasonable' reality has to be altered until it comes into conformity with reason. In the given case, the existing social order has to be reorganized, absolutism and the remainders of feudalism have to be abolished, free competition has to be established, everyone has to be made equal before the law, and so on.

According to Hegel, the French Revolution enunciated reason's ultimate power over reality. He sums this up by saying that the principle of the French Revolution asserted that thought ought to govern reality. The implications involved in this statement lead into the very center of his philosophy. Thought ought to govern reality. What men think to be true, right, and good ought to be realized in

the actual organization of their societal and individual life. Thinking, however, varies among individuals, and the resulting diversity of individual opinions cannot provide a guiding principle for the common organization of life. Unless man possesses concepts and principles of thought that denote universally valid conditions and norms, his thought cannot claim to govern reality. In line with the tradition of Western philosophy, Hegel believes that such objective concepts and principles exist. Their totality he calls reason.

The philosophies of the French Enlightenment and their revolutionary successors all posited reason as an objective historical force which, once freed from the fetters of despotism, would make the world a place of progress and happiness. They held that 'the power of reason, and not the force of weapons, will propagate the principles of our glorious revolution.' [3] By virtue of its own power, reason would triumph over social irrationality and overthrow the oppressors of mankind. 'All fictions disappear before truth, and all follies fall before reason.' [4]

The implication, however, that reason will immediately show itself in practice is a dogma unsupported by the course of history. Hegel believed in the invincible power of reason as much as Robespierre did. 'That faculty which man can call his own, elevated above death and decay, . . . is able to make decisions of itself. It announces itself as reason. Its law-making depends on nothing else, nor can it take its standards from any other authority on earth or in heaven.' [5] But to Hegel, reason cannot govern reality unless reality has become rational in itself.

[3] Robespierre, quoted by Georges Michon, *Robespierre et la guerre révolutionnaire*, Paris 1937, p. 134.

[4] Robespierre in his report on the cult of the Être suprême, quoted by Albert Mathiez, *Autour de Robespierre*, Paris 1936, p. 112.

[5] Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. H. Nohl, Tübingen 1907, p. 89.

This rationality is made possible through the subject's entering the very content of nature and history. The objective reality is thus also the realization of the subject. It is this conception that Hegel summarized in the most fundamental of his propositions, namely, that Being is, in its substance, a 'subject.' [6] The meaning of this proposition can only be understood through an interpretation of Hegel's *Logic*, but we shall attempt to give a provisional explanation here that will be expanded later.[7]

The idea of the 'substance as subject' conceives reality as a process wherein all being is the unification of contradictory forces. 'Subject' denotes not only the epistemological ego or consciousness, but a mode of existence, to wit, that of a self-developing unity in an antagonistic process. Everything that exists is 'real' only in so far as it operates as a 'self' through all the contradictory relations that constitute its existence. It must thus be considered a kind of 'subject' that carries itself forward by unfolding its inherent contradictions. For example, a stone is a stone only in so far as it remains the same thing, a stone, throughout its action and reaction upon the things and processes that interact with it. It gets wet in the rain; it resists the axe; it withstands a certain load before it gives way. Being-a-stone is a continuous holding out against everything that acts on the stone; it is a continuous process of becoming and being a stone. To be sure, the 'becoming' is not consummated by the stone as a conscious subject. The stone is changed in its interactions with rain, axe, and load; it does not change itself. A plant, on the other hand, unfolds and develops itself. It is not now a bud, then a blossom, but is rather the whole movement from bud through blossom to decay. The plant constitutes and preserves itself in this movement. It comes much nearer to being an actual

[6] See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, London (The Macmillan Company, New York), 1910, p. 15.

[7] See below, pp. 63 ff., 123 ff.

'subject' than does the stone, for the various stages of the plant's development grow out of the plant itself; they are its 'life' and are not imposed upon it from the outside.

The plant, however, does not 'comprehend' this development. It does not 'realize' it as its own and, therefore, cannot reason its own potentialities into being. Such 'realization' is a process of the true subject and is reached only with the existence of man. Man alone has the power of self-realization, the power to be a self-determining subject in all processes of becoming, for he alone has an understanding of potentialities and a knowledge of 'notions.' His very existence is the process of actualizing his potentialities, of molding his life according to the notions of reason. We encounter here the most important category of reason, namely, freedom. Reason presupposes freedom, the power to act in accordance with knowledge of the truth, the power to shape reality in line with its potentialities. The fulfillment of these ends belongs only to the subject who is master of his own development and who understands his own potentialities as well as those of the things around him. Freedom, in turn, presupposes reason, for it is comprehending knowledge, alone, that enables the subject to gain and to wield this power. The stone does not possess it; neither does the plant. Both lack comprehending knowledge and hence real subjectivity. 'Man, however, knows what he is,—only thus is he real. Reason and freedom are nothing without this knowledge.' [8]

Reason terminates in freedom, and freedom is the very existence of the subject. On the other hand, reason itself exists only through its realization, the process of its being made real. Reason is an objective force and an objective reality only because all modes of being are more or less modes of subjectivity, modes of realization. Subject and

[8] *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig 1938, p. 104.

object are not undered by an impassable gulf, because the object is in itself a kind of subject and because all types of being culminate in the free 'comprehensive' subject who is able to realize reason. Nature thus becomes a medium for the development of freedom.

The life of reason appears in man's continuous struggle to comprehend what exists and to transform it in accordance with the truth comprehended. Reason is also essentially a historical force. Its fulfillment takes place as a process in the spatio-temporal world, and is, in the last analysis, the whole history of mankind. The term that designates reason as history is mind (*Geist*) which denotes the historical world viewed in relation to the rational progress of humanity—the historical world not as a chain of acts and events but as a ceaseless struggle to adapt the world to the growing potentialities of mankind.

History is organized into different periods, each marking a separate level of development and representing a definite stage in the realization of reason. Each stage is to be grasped and understood as a whole, through the prevailing ways of thinking and living which characterize it, through its political and social institutions, its science, religion and philosophy. Different stages occur in the realization of reason, but there is only one reason, just as there is only one whole and one truth: the reality of freedom. 'This final goal it is, at which the process of the world's history has been continually aiming, and to which the sacrifices that have ever and anon been laid on the vast altar of the earth, through the long lapse of ages, have been offered. This is the only final aim that realizes and fulfills itself; the only pole of repose amid the ceaseless chain of events and conditions, and the sole true reality in them.' [9]

An *immediate* unity of reason and reality never exists. The unity comes only after a lengthy process, which be-

[9] *Philosophy of History*, pp. 19-20.

gins at the lowest level of nature and reaches up to the highest form of existence, that of a free and rational subject, living and acting in the self-consciousness of its potentialities. As long as there is any gap between real and potential, the former must be acted upon and changed until it is brought into line with reason. As long as reality is not shaped by reason, it remains no reality at all, in the emphatic sense of the word. Thus reality changes its meaning within the conceptual structure of Hegel's system. 'Real' comes to mean not everything that actually exists (this should rather be called appearance), but that which exists in a form concordant with the standards of reason. 'Real' is the reasonable (rational), and that alone. For example, the state becomes a reality only when it corresponds to the given potentialities of men and permits their full development. Any preliminary form of the state is not yet reasonable, and, therefore, not yet real.

Hegel's concept of reason thus has a distinctly critical and polemic character. It is opposed to all ready acceptance of the given state of affairs. It denies the hegemony of every prevailing form of existence by demonstrating the antagonisms that dissolve it into other forms. We shall attempt to show that the 'spirit of contradicting' is the propulsive force of Hegel's dialectical method.[10]

In 1793, Hegel wrote to Schelling: 'Reason and freedom remain our principles.' In his early writings, no gap exists between the philosophical and the social meaning of these principles, which are expressed in the same revolutionary language the French Jacobins used. For example, Hegel says the significance of his time lies in the fact that 'the halo which has surrounded the leading oppressors and gods of the earth has disappeared. Philosophers demon-

[10] Hegel himself once characterized the essence of his dialectic as the 'spirit of contradicting' (Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, October 18, 1827).

strate the dignity of man; the people will learn to feel it and will not merely demand their rights, which have been trampled in the dust, but will themselves take them, —make them their own. Religion and politics have played the same game. The former has taught what despotism wanted to teach, contempt for humanity and the incapacity of man to achieve the good and to fulfill his essence through his own efforts.' [11] We even encounter more extreme statements, which urge that the realization of reason requires a social scheme that contravenes the given order. In the *Erstes Systemprogramm des Deutschen Idealismus*, written in 1796, we find the following: 'I shall demonstrate that, just as there is no idea of a machine, there is no idea of the State, for the State is something mechanical. Only that which is an object of freedom may be called an idea. We must, therefore, transcend the State. For every State is bound to treat free men as cogs in a machine. And this is precisely what it should not do; hence, the State must perish.' [12]

However, the radical purport of the basic idealistic concepts is slowly relinquished and they are to an ever increasing extent made to fit in with the prevailing societal form. This process is, as we shall see, necessitated by the conceptual structure of German idealism, which retains the decisive principles of liberalistic society and prevents any crossing beyond it.

The particular form, however, that the reconciliation between philosophy and reality assumed in Hegel's system was determined by the actual situation of Germany in the period when he elaborated his system. Hegel's early philosophical concepts were formulated amid a decaying German Reich. As he declared at the opening of his pamphlet

[11] Hegel, Letter to Schelling, April 1795, in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. Karl Hegel, Leipzig 1887.

[12] *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, ed. J. Hoffmeister, Stuttgart 1936, p. 219 f.

on the German Constitution (1802), the German state of the last decade of the eighteenth century was 'no longer a State.' The remains of feudal despotism still held sway in Germany, the more oppressive because split into a multitude of petty despotisms, each competing with the other. The Reich 'consisted of Austria and Prussia, the Prince-Electors, 94 ecclesiastical and secular princes, 103 barons, 40 prelates, and 51 Reich towns; in sum, it consisted of nearly 300 territories.' The Reich itself 'possessed not a single soldier, its yearly income amounting to only a few thousand florins.' There was no centralized jurisdiction; the Supreme Court (*Reichskammergericht*) was a breeding ground 'for graft, caprice, and bribery.' [13] Serfdom was still prevalent, the peasant was still a beast of burden. Some princes still hired out or sold their subjects as mercenary soldiers to foreign countries. Strong censorship operated to repress the slightest traces of enlightenment.[14] A contemporary depicts the current scene in the following words. 'Without law and justice, without protection from arbitrary taxation, uncertain of the lives of our sons, and of our freedom and our rights, the impotent prey of despotic power, our existence lacking unity and a national spirit . . .—this is the status quo of our nation.' [15]

In sharp contrast to France, Germany had no strong, conscious, politically educated middle class to lead the struggle against this absolutism. The nobility ruled without opposition. 'Hardly anyone in Germany,' remarked Goethe, 'thought of envying this tremendous privileged mass, or of begrudging them their happy advantages.' [16]

[13] T. Perthes, *Das Deutsche Staatsleben vor der Revolution*, Hamburg 1845, pp. 19, 34, 41. See also W. Wenck, *Deutschland vor hundert Jahren*, Leipzig 1887.

[14] K. T. von Heigel, *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs des Grossen bis zur Auflösung des alten Reichs*, Stuttgart 1899 ff., vol. I, p. 77.

[15] J. Müller, in von Heigel, op. cit., p. 115.

[16] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in: *Werke, Cottasche Jubiläumsausgabe*, vol. XXII, p. 51.

The urban middle class, distributed among numerous townships, each with its own government and its own local interests, was impotent to crystallize and effectuate any serious opposition. To be sure, there were conflicts between the ruling patricians and the guilds and artisans. But these nowhere reached the proportions of a revolutionary movement. Burghers accompanied their petitions and complaints with a prayer that God protect the Fatherland from 'the terror of revolution.' [17]

Ever since the German Reformation, the masses had become used to the fact that, for them, liberty was an 'inner value,' which was compatible with every form of bondage, that due obedience to existing authority was a prerequisite to everlasting salvation, and that toil and poverty were a blessing in the eyes of the Lord. A long process of disciplinary training had introverted the demands for freedom and reason in Germany. One of the decisive functions of Protestantism had been to induce the emancipated individuals to accept the new social system that had arisen, by diverting their claims and demands from the external world into their inner life. Luther established Christian liberty as an internal value to be realized independently of any and all external conditions. Social reality became indifferent as far as the true essence of man was concerned. Man learned to turn upon himself his demand for the satisfaction of his potentialities and 'to seek within' himself, not in the outer world, his life's fulfillment.[18]

German culture is inseparable from its origin in Protestantism. There arose a realm of beauty, freedom, and morality, which was not to be shaken by external realities and

[17] von Heigel, op. cit., pp. 305-6.

[18] See *Studien über Autorität und Familie. Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung*, Paris 1936, p. 136 ff., and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Paris 1936, vol. v, p. 188 ff.

struggles; it was detached from the miserable social world and anchored in the 'soul' of the individual. This development is the source of a tendency widely visible in German idealism, a willingness to become reconciled to the social reality. This reconciliatory tendency of the idealists constantly conflicts with their critical rationalism. Ultimately, the ideal that the critical aspects set forth, a rational political and social reorganization of the world, becomes frustrated and is transformed into a spiritual value.

The 'educated' classes isolated themselves from practical affairs and, thus rendering themselves impotent to apply their reason to the reshaping of society, fulfilled themselves in a realm of science, art, philosophy, and religion. That realm became for them the 'true reality' transcending the wretchedness of existing social conditions; it was alike the refuge for truth, goodness, beauty, happiness, and, most important, for a critical temper which could not be turned into social channels. Culture was, then, essentially idealistic, occupied with the *idea* of things rather than with the things themselves. It set freedom *of thought* before freedom *of action*, morality before practical justice, the inner life before the social life of man. This idealistic culture, however, just because it stood aloof from an intolerable reality and thereby maintained itself intact and unsullied, served, despite its false consolations and glorifications, as the repository for truths which had not been realized in the history of mankind.

Hegel's system is the last great expression of this cultural idealism, the last great attempt to render thought a refuge for reason and liberty. The original critical impulse of his thinking, however, was strong enough to induce him to abandon the traditional aloofness of idealism from

history. He made philosophy a concrete historical factor and drew history into philosophy.

History, however, when comprehended, shatters the idealistic framework.

Hegel's system is necessarily associated with a definite political philosophy and with a definite social and political order. The dialectic between civil society and the state of the Restoration is not incidental in Hegel's philosophy, nor is it just a section of his *Philosophy of Right;* its principles already operate in the conceptual structure of his system. His basic concepts are, on the other hand, but the culmination of the entire tradition of Western thought. They become understandable only when interpreted within this tradition.

We have thus far attempted in brief compass to place the Hegelian concepts in their concrete historical setting. It remains for us to trace the starting point of Hegel's system to its sources in the philosophical situation of his time.

2. The Philosophical Setting

German idealism rescued philosophy from the attack of British empiricism, and the struggle between the two became not merely a clash of different philosophical schools, but a struggle for philosophy as such. Philosophy had never ceased to claim the right to guide man's efforts towards a rational mastery of nature and society, or to base this claim upon the fact that philosophy elaborated the highest and most general concepts for knowing the world. With Descartes, the practical bearing of philosophy assumed a new form, which accorded with the sweeping progress of modern technics. He announced a 'practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us . . . we can employ them in all

those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.' [19]

The achievement of this task was, to an ever increasing extent, bound up with the establishment of universally valid laws and concepts in knowledge. Rational mastery of nature and society presupposed knowledge of the truth, and the truth was a universal, as contrasted to the multifold appearance of things or to their immediate form in the perception of individuals. This principle was already alive in the earliest attempts of Greek epistemology: the truth is universal and necessary and thus contradicts the ordinary experience of change and accident.

The conception, that the truth is contrary to the matters of fact of existence and independent of contingent individuals, has run through the entire historical epoch in which man's social life has been one of antagonisms among conflicting individuals and groups. The universal has been hypostatized as a philosophical reaction to the historical fact that, in society, only individual interests prevail, while the common interest is asserted only 'behind the back' of the individual. The contrast between universal and individual took on an aggravated form when, in the modern era, slogans of general freedom were raised and it was held that an appropriate social order could be brought about only through the knowledge and activity of emancipated individuals. All men were declared free and equal; yet, in acting according to their knowledge and in the pursuit of their interest, they created and experienced an order of dependence, injustice and recurring crises. The general competition between free economic subjects did not establish a rational community which might safeguard and gratify the wants and desires of all men. The life of men was surrendered to the economic

[19] *Discourse on Method*, part VI, in: *Philosophical Works*, ed. E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, Cambridge 1931, vol. I, p. 119.

mechanisms of a social system that related individuals to one another as isolated buyers and sellers of commodities. This actual lack of a rational community was responsible for the philosophical quest for the unity (*Einheit*) and universality (*Allgemeinheit*) of reason.

Does the structure of individual reasoning (the subjectivity) yield any general laws and concepts that might constitute universal standards of rationality? Can a universal rational order be built upon the autonomy of the individual? In expanding an affirmative answer to these questions, the epistemology of German idealism aimed at a unifying principle that would preserve the basic ideals of individualistic society without falling victim to its antagonisms. The British empiricists had demonstrated that not a single concept or law of reason could lay claim to universality, that the unity of reason is but the unity of custom or habit, adhering to the facts but never governing them. According to the German idealists, this attack jeopardized all efforts to impose an order on the prevailing forms of life. Unity and universality were not to be found in empirical reality; they were not given facts. Moreover, the very structure of empirical reality seemed to warrant the assumption that they could never be derived from the given facts. If men did not succeed, however, in creating unity and universality through their autonomous reason and even in contradiction to the facts, they would have to surrender not only their intellectual but also their material existence to the blind pressures and processes of the prevailing empirical order of life. The problem was thus not merely a philosophical one but concerned the historical destiny of humanity.

The German idealists recognized the concrete historical manifestations of the problem; this is clear in the fact that all of them connected the theoretical with the *practical* reason. There is a necessary transition from Kant's anal-

ysis of the transcendental consciousness to his demand for the community of a *Weltbürgerreich,* from Fichte's concept of the pure ego to his construction of a totally unified and regulated society (*der geschlossene Handelsstaat*); and from Hegel's idea of reason to his designation of the state as the union of the common and the individual interest, and thus as the realization of reason.

The idealistic counterattack was provoked not by the empiricist approaches of Locke and Hume, but by their refutation of general ideas. We have attempted to show that reason's right to shape reality depended upon man's ability to hold generally valid truths. Reason could lead beyond the brute fact of what is, to the realization of what ought to be, only by virtue of the universality and necessity of its concepts (which in turn are the criteria of its truth). These concepts the empiricists denied. General ideas, said Locke, are 'the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs . . . When therefore we quit particulars, the generals that rest are only the creatures of our own making . . .' [20] For Hume, general ideas are abstracted from the particular, and 'represent' the particular and the particular only.[21] They can never provide universal rules or principles. If Hume was to be accepted, the claim of reason to organize reality had to be rejected. For as we have seen, this claim was based upon reason's faculty to attain truths, the validity of which was not derived from experience and which could in fact stand against experience. ' 'Tis not . . . reason, which is the guide of life, but custom.' [22] This conclusion of the empiricist investigations did more than

[20] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* book III, ch. 3, section ii, in: *Philosophical Works,* ed. J. A. St. John, London 1903, vol. II, p. 14.

[21] *A Treatise of Human Nature,* book I, part I, section VII, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford 1928, pp. 17 ff.

[22] Hume, *An Abstract of A Treatise of Human Nature,* published for the first time in 1938, Cambridge University Press, p. 16.

undermine metaphysics. It confined men within the limits of 'the given,' within the existing order of things and events. Whence could man obtain the right to go beyond not some particular within this order, but beyond the entire order itself? Whence could he obtain the right to submit this order to the judgment of reason? If experience and custom were to be the sole source of his knowledge and belief, how could he act against custom, how act in accordance with ideas and principles as yet not accepted and established? Truth could not oppose the given order or reason speak against it. The result was not only skepticism but conformism. The empiricist restriction of human nature to knowledge of 'the given' removed the desire both to transcend the given and to despair about it. 'For nothing is more certain, than that despair has almost the same effect upon us as enjoyment, and that we are no sooner acquainted with the impossibility of satisfying any desire, than the desire itself vanishes. When we see, that we have arrived at the utmost extent of human reason, we sit down contented.' [28]

The German idealists regarded this philosophy as expressing the abdication of reason. Attributing the existence of general ideas to the force of custom, and the principles by which reality is understood, to psychological mechanisms, was, to them, tantamount to a denial of truth and reason. Human psychology, they saw, is subject to change—is, in fact, a domain of uncertainty and chance from which no necessity and universality could be derived. And yet, such necessity and universality were the sole guarantee of reason. Unless, the idealists declared, the general concepts that claimed such necessity and universality could be shown to be more than the product of imagination, could be shown to draw their validity neither from experience nor from individual psychology, unless,

[28] Hume, *Treatise*, Introduction, p. xxii.

in other words, they were shown applicable to experience without arising from experience, reason would have to bow to the dictates of the empirical teaching. And if cognition by reason, that is, by concepts that are not derived from experience, means metaphysics, then the attack upon metaphysics was at the same time an attack upon the conditions of human freedom, for the right of reason to guide experience was a proper part of these conditions.

Kant adopted the view of the empiricists that all human knowledge begins with and terminates in experience, that experience alone provides *the material* for the concepts of reason. There is no stronger empiricist statement than that which opens his *Critique of Pure Reason*. 'All thought must, directly or indirectly, . . . relate ultimately to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensibility, because in no other way can an object be given to us.' Kant maintains, however, that the empiricists had failed to demonstrate that experience also furnishes the means and modes by which this empirical material is organized. If it could be shown that these principles of organization were the genuine possession of the human mind and did not arise from experience, then the independence and freedom of reason would be saved. Experience itself would become the product of reason, for it would then not be the disordered manifold of sensations and impressions, but the comprehensive organization of these.

Kant set out to prove that the human mind possessed the universal 'forms' that organized the manifold of data furnished to it by the senses. The forms of 'intuition' (space and time) and the forms of 'understanding' (the categories) are the universals through which the mind orders the sense manifold into the continuum of experience. They are *a priori* to each and every sensation and impression, so that we 'get' and arrange impressions under these forms. Experience presents a necessary and universal

order only by virtue of the *a priori* activity of the human mind, which perceives all things and events in the form of space and time and comprehends them under the categories of unity, reality, substantiality, causality, and so on. These forms and categories are not derived from experience, for, as Hume had pointed out, no impression or sensation can be found that corresponds to them; yet experience, as an organized continuum, originates in them. They are universally valid and applicable because they constitute the very structure of the human mind. The world of objects, as a universal and necessary order, is produced by the subject—not by the individual, but by those acts of intuition and understanding that are common to all individuals, since they constitute the very conditions of experience.

This common structure of the mind Kant designates as 'transcendental consciousness.' It consists of the forms of intuition and of understanding, which, in Kant's analysis, are not static frames, but forms of operation that exist only in the act of apprehending and comprehending. The transcendental forms of intuition or outer sense synthesize the manifold of sense data into a spatio-temporal order. By virtue of the categories, the results of this are brought into the universal and necessary relations of cause and effect, substance, reciprocity, and so on. And this entire complex is unified in the 'transcendental apperception,' which relates all experience to the thinking ego, thereby giving experience the continuity of being 'my' experience. These processes of synthesis, *a priori* and common to all minds, hence universal, are interdependent and are brought to bear *in toto* in every act of knowledge.

What Kant calls the 'highest' synthesis, that of transcendental apperception, is the awareness of an 'I think,' which accompanies every experience. Through it, the thinking ego knows itself as continuous, present, and

active throughout the series of its experiences. The transcendental apperception, therefore, is the ultimate basis for the unity of the subject and, hence, for the universality and necessity of all the objective relations.

Transcendental consciousness depends on the material received through the senses. The multitude of these impressions, however, becomes an organized world of coherent objects and relations only through the operations of transcendental consciousness. Since, then, we know the impressions only in the context of the *a priori* forms of the mind, we cannot know how or what the 'things-in-themselves' are that give rise to the impressions. These things-in-themselves, presumed to exist outside of the forms of the mind, remain completely unknowable.

Hegel regarded this skeptical element of Kant's philosophy as vitiating to his attempt to rescue reason from the empiricist onslaught. As long as the things-in-themselves were beyond the capacity of reason, reason remained a mere subjective principle without power over the objective structure of reality. And the world thus fell into two separate parts, subjectivity and objectivity, understanding and sense, thought and existence. This separation was not primarily an epistemological problem for Hegel. Time and again he stressed that the relation between subject and object, their opposition, denoted a concrete conflict in existence, and that its solution, the union of the opposites, was a matter of practice as well as of theory. Later, he described the historical form of the conflict as the 'alienation' (*Entfremdung*) of mind, signifying that the world of objects, originally the product of man's labor and knowledge, becomes independent of man and comes to be governed by uncontrolled forces and laws in which man no longer recognizes his own self. At the same time, thought becomes estranged from reality and the truth becomes an impotent ideal preserved in thought

while the actual world is calmly left outside its influence. Unless man succeeds in reuniting the separated parts of his world and in bringing nature and society within the scope of his reason, he is forever doomed to frustration. The task of philosophy in this period of general disintegration is to demonstrate the principle that will restore the missing unity and totality.

Hegel sets forth this principle in the concept of reason. We have attempted to sketch the socio-historical and the philosophical roots of this concept which effect a tie between the progressive ideas of the French Revolution and the prevailing currents of philosophical discussion. Reason is the veritable form of reality in which all antagonisms of subject and object are integrated to form a genuine unity and universality. Hegel's philosophy is thus necessarily a system, subsuming all realms of being under the all-embracing idea of reason. The inorganic as well as the organic world, nature as well as society, are here brought under the sway of mind.

Hegel considered philosophy's systematic character to be a product of the historical situation. History had reached a stage at which the possibilities for realizing human freedom were at hand. Freedom, however, presupposes the reality of reason. Man could be free, could develop all his potentialities, only if his entire world was dominated by an integrating rational will and by knowledge. The Hegelian system anticipates a state in which this possibility has been achieved. The historical optimism that it breathes provided the basis for Hegel's so-called 'pan-logism' which treats every form of being as a form of reason. The transitions from the *Logic* to the *Philosophy of Nature,* and from the latter to the *Philosophy of Mind* are made on the assumption that the laws of nature spring from the rational structure of being and lead in a continuum to the laws of the mind. The realm of mind

achieves in freedom what the realm of nature achieves in blind necessity—the fulfillment of the potentialities inherent in reality. It is this state of reality which Hegel refers to as 'the truth.'

Truth is not only attached to propositions and judgments, it is, in short, not only an attribute of thought, but of reality in process. Something is true if it is what it can be, fulfilling all its objective possibilities. In Hegel's language, it is then identical with its 'notion.'

The notion has a dual use. It comprehends the nature or essence of a subject-matter, and thus represents the true thought of it. At the same time, it refers to the actual realization of that nature or essence, its concrete existence. All fundamental concepts of the Hegelian system are characterized by the same ambiguity. They never denote mere concepts (as in formal logic), but forms or modes of being comprehended by thought. Hegel does not presuppose a mystical identity of thought and reality, but he holds that the right thought represents reality because the latter, in its development, has reached the stage at which it exists in conformity with the truth. His 'pan-logism' comes close to being its opposite: one could say that he takes the principles and forms of thought from the principles and forms of reality, so that the logical laws reproduce those governing the movement of reality. The unification of opposites is a process Hegel demonstrates in the case of every single existent. The logical form of the 'judgment' expresses an occurrence in reality. Take, for example, the judgment: this man is a slave. According to Hegel, it means that a man (the subject) has become enslaved (the predicate), but although he is a slave, he still remains man, thus essentially free and opposed to his predicament. The judgment does not attribute a predicate to a stable subject, but denotes an actual process of the subject whereby the latter becomes something other than itself. The sub-

ject *is* the very process of becoming the predicate and of contradicting it. This process dissolves into a multitude of antagonistic relations the stable subjects that traditional logic had assumed. Reality appears as a dynamic in which all fixed forms reveal themselves to be mere abstractions. Consequently, when in Hegel's logic concepts pass from one form to another, this refers to the fact that, to correct thinking, one form of being passes to another, and that every particular form can be determined only by the totality of the antagonistic relations in which this form exists.

We have emphasized the fact that, to Hegel, reality has reached a stage at which it exists in truth. This statement now needs a correction. Hegel does not mean that everything that exists does so in conformity with its potentialities, but that the mind has attained the self-consciousness of its freedom, and become capable of freeing nature and society. The realization of reason is not a fact but a task. The form in which the objects immediately appear is not yet their true form. What is simply given is at first negative, other than its real potentialities. It becomes true only in the process of overcoming this negativity, so that the birth of the truth requires the death of the given state of being. Hegel's optimism is based upon a destructive conception of the given. All forms are seized by the dissolving movement of reason which cancels and alters them until they are adequate to their notion. It is this movement that thought reflects in the process of 'mediation' (*Vermittlung*). If we follow the true content of our perceptions and concepts, all delimitation of stable objects collapses. They are dissolved into a multitude of relations that exhaust the developed content of these objects and terminate in the subject's comprehensive activity.

Hegel's philosophy is indeed what the subsequent reaction termed it, a negative philosophy. It is originally mo-

tivated by the conviction that the given facts that appear to common sense as the positive index of truth are in reality the negation of truth, so that truth can only be established by their destruction. The driving force of the dialectical method lies in this critical conviction. Dialectic in its entirety is linked to the conception that all forms of being are permeated by an essential negativity, and that this negativity determines their content and movement. The dialectic represents the counterthrust to any form of positivism. From Hume to the present-day logical positivists, the principle of this latter philosophy has been the ultimate authority of the fact, and observing the immediate given has been the ultimate method of verification. In the middle of the nineteenth century, and primarily in response to the destructive tendencies of rationalism, positivism assumed the peculiar form of an all-embracing 'positive philosophy,' which was to replace traditional metaphysics. The protagonists of this positivism took great pains to stress the conservative and affirmative attitude of their philosophy: it induces thought to be satisfied with the facts, to renounce any transgression beyond them, and to bow to the given state of affairs. To Hegel, the facts in themselves possess no authority. They are 'posited' (*gesetzt*) by the subject that has mediated them with the comprehensive process of its development. Verification rests, in the last analysis, with this process to which all facts are related and which determines their content. Everything that is given has to be justified before reason, which is but the totality of nature's and man's capacities.

Hegel's philosophy, however, which begins with the negation of the given and retains this negativity throughout, concludes with the declaration that history has achieved the reality of reason. His basic concepts were still bound up with the social structure of the prevailing system, and in this respect, too, German idealism may be said

to have preserved the heritage of the French Revolution.

However, the 'reconciliation of idea and reality,' proclaimed in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right,* contains a decisive element that points beyond mere reconciliation. This element has been preserved and utilized in the later doctrine of the negation of philosophy. Philosophy reaches its end when it has formulated its view of a world in which reason is realized. If at that point reality contains the conditions necessary to materialize reason in fact, thought can cease to concern itself with the ideal. The truth now would require actual historical practice to fulfill it. With the relinquishment of the ideal, philosophy relinquishes its critical task and passes it to another agency. The final culmination of philosophy is thus at the same time its abdication. Released from its preoccupation with the ideal, philosophy is also released from its opposition to reality. This means that it ceases to be philosophy. It does not follow, however, that thought must then comply with the existing order. Critical thinking does not cease, but assumes a new form. The efforts of reason devolve upon social theory and social practice.

* * *

Hegel's philosophy shows five different stages of development:

1. The period from 1790 to 1800 marks the attempt to formulate a religious foundation for philosophy, exemplified in the collected papers of the period, the *Theologische Jugendschriften.*

2. 1800-1801 saw the formulation of Hegel's philosophical standpoint and interests through critical discussion of contemporary philosophical systems, especially those of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Hegel's main works of this period are the *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie, Glauben und Wissen,* and other articles in the *Kritische Journal der Philosophie.*

3. The years 1801 to 1806 yielded the *Jenenser* system, the

earliest form of Hegel's complete system. This period was documented by the *Jenenser Logik und Metaphysik, Jenenser Realphilosophie,* and the *System der Sittlichkeit.*

4. 1807, the publication of the *Phenomenology of Mind.*

5. The period of the final system, which was outlined as early as 1808-11 in the *Philosophische Propädeutik,* but was not consummated until 1817. To this period belong the works that make up the bulk of Hegel's writing: *The Science of Logic* (1812-16), the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817, 1827, 1830), the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), and the various Berlin lectures on the Philosophy of History, the History of Philosophy, Esthetics, and Religion.

The elaboration of Hegel's philosophic system is accompanied by a series of political fragments that attempt to apply his new philosophical ideas to concrete historical situations. This process of referring philosophical conclusions to the context of social and political reality begins in 1798 with his historical and political studies; is followed by his *Die Verfassung Deutschlands* in 1802; and continues right through to 1831, when he wrote his study on the English Reform Bill. The connecting of his philosophy with the historical developments of his time makes Hegel's political writings a part of his systematic works, and the two must be treated together, so that his basic concepts are given philosophical as well as historical and political explanation.

I

Hegel's Early Theological Writings (1790-1800)

If we wish to partake of the atmosphere in which Hegel's philosophy originated, we must go back to the cultural and political setting of Southern Germany in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. In Württemberg, a country under the sway of a despotism that had just consented to some slight constitutional limitations on its power, the ideas of 1789 were beginning to exert a strong impact, particularly on intellectual youth. The period of that earlier cruel despotism seemed to have passed: the despotism under which the whole country was terrorized by constant military conscriptions for foreign wars, heavy arbitrary taxations, the sale of offices, the establishment of monopolies that plundered the masses and enriched the coffers of an extravagant prince, and sudden arrests that followed the slightest suspicions or stirrings of protest.[1] The conflicts between Duke Charles Eugene and the estates were mitigated by an agreement in 1770, and the most striking obstacle to the functioning of a centralized government was thus removed; but the result was only to divide absolutism between the personal rule of the duke and the interests of the feudal oligarchy.

The German enlightenment, however, this weaker counterpart of the English and French philosophy that had shattered the ideological framework of the absolutist state, had filtered into the cultural life of Württemberg: the

[1] See Karl Pfaff, *Geschichte des Fürstenhauses und Landes Wirtemberg*, Stuttgart 1839, Part III, section 2, pp. 82 ff.

duke was a pupil of the 'enlightened despot,' Frederick II of Prussia, and in the latter period of his rule he indulged in an enlightened absolutism. The spirit of the enlightenment went forward in the schools and universities that he promoted. Religious and political problems were discussed in terms of eighteenth century rationalism, the dignity of man was extolled, as was his right to shape his own life against all obsolete forms of authority and tradition, and tolerance and justice were praised. But the young generation that was then attending the theological University of Tübingen—among them Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin --was above all impressed by the contrast between these ideals and the miserable actual condition of the German Reich. There was not the slightest chance for the rights of man to take their place in a reorganized state and society. True, the students sang revolutionary songs and translated the *Marseillaise;* they perhaps planted liberty trees and shouted against the tyrants and their henchmen; but they knew that all this activity was an impotent protest against the still impregnable forces that held the fatherland in their grip. All that could be hoped for was a modicum of constitutional reform, which might better balance the weight of power between the prince and the estates.

In these circumstances, the eyes of the young generation turned longingly towards the past and particularly to those periods of history in which unity had prevailed between the intellectual culture of men and their social and political life. Hölderlin drew a glowing picture of ancient Greece, and Hegel wrote a glorification of the ancient city-state, which at points even outshone the exalted description of early Christianity that the theological student set down. We find that a political interest time and again broke into the discussion of religious problems in Hegel's early theological fragments. Hegel ardently strove

to recapture the power that had produced and maintained, in the ancient republics, the living unity of all spheres of culture and that had generated the free development of all national forces. He spoke of this hidden power as the *Volksgeist:* 'The spirit of a nation, its history, religion and the degree of political freedom it has reached cannot be separated one from the other, neither as regards their influence nor as regards their quality; they are interwoven in one bond . . .' [2]

Hegel's use of the *Volksgeist* is closely related to Montesquieu's use of the *esprit général* of a nation as the basis for its social and political laws. The 'national spirit' is not conceived as a mystical or metaphysical entity, but represents the whole of the natural, technical, economic, moral, and intellectual conditions that determine the nation's historical development. Montesquieu's emphasis on this historical basis was directed against the unjustifiable retention of outmoded political forms. Hegel's concept of the *Volksgeist* kept these critical implications. Instead of following the various influences of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Herder, and Kant on Hegel's theological studies, we shall limit ourselves to the elaboration of Hegel's main interest.

Hegel's theological discussion repeatedly asks what the true relation is between the individual and a state that no longer satisfies his capacities but exists rather as an 'estranged' institution from which the active political interest of the citizens has disappeared. Hegel defined this state with almost the same categories as those of eighteenth century liberalism: the state rests on the consent of individuals, it circumscribes their rights and duties and protects its members from those internal and external dangers that might threaten the perpetuation of the whole. The individual, as opposed to the state, possesses the in-

[2] *Theologische Jugendschriften,* p. 27.

alienable rights of man, and with these the state power can under no circumstances interfere, not even if such interference may be in the individual's own interest. 'No man can relinquish his right to give unto himself the law and to be solely responsible for its execution. If this right is renounced, man ceases to be man. It is not the state's business, however, to prevent him from renouncing it, for this would mean to compel man to be man, and would be force.' [3] Here is nothing of that moral and metaphysical exaltation of the state which we encounter in Hegel's later works.

The tone slowly changed, however, within the very same period of Hegel's life and even within the same body of his writings, and he came to consider it as man's historical 'fate,' a cross to be borne, that he accept social and political relations that restrict his full development. Hegel's enlightened optimism and his tragic praise of a lost paradise were replaced by an emphasis on historical necessity. Historical necessity had brought about a gulf between the individual and the state. In the early period they were in a 'natural' harmony, but one attained at the expense of the individual, for man did not possess conscious freedom and was not master of the social process. And the more 'natural' this early harmony was, the more easily could it be dissolved by the uncontrolled forces that then ruled the social world. 'In Athens and Rome, successful wars, increasing wealth, and an acquaintance with luxury and greater convenience of life produced an aristocracy of war and wealth' that destroyed the republic and caused the complete loss of political liberty.[4] State power fell into the hands of certain privileged individuals and groups, with the vast mass of the citizens pursuing only their private interest without regard for the common

[3] Ibid., p. 212. [4] Ibid., p. 222.

good; 'the right to security of property' now became their whole world.[5]

Hegel's efforts to comprehend the universal laws governing this process led him inevitably to an analysis of the role of the social institutions in the progress of history. One of his historical fragments, written after 1797, opens with the sweeping declaration that 'security of property is the pivot on which the whole of modern legislation turns,'[6] and in the first draft to his pamphlet on *Die Verfassung Deutschlands* (1798-9), he states that the historical form of 'bourgeois property' (*bürgerliches Eigentum*) is responsible for the prevailing political disintegration.[7] Moreover, Hegel maintained that the social institutions had distorted even the most private and personal relations between men. There is a significant fragment in the *Theologische Jugendschriften*, called *Die Liebe*, in which Hegel states that ultimate harmony and union between individuals in love is prevented because of the 'acquisition and possession of property as well as rights.' The lover, he explains, 'who must look upon his or her beloved as the owner of property must also come to feel his or her particularity' militating against the community of their life—a particularity that consists in his or her being bound up with 'dead things' that do not belong to the other and remain of necessity outside of their unity.[8]

The institution of property Hegel here related to the fact that man had come to live in a world that, though molded by his own knowledge and labor, was no longer his, but rather stood opposed to his inner needs—a strange world governed by inexorable laws, a 'dead' world in which human life is frustrated. The *Theologische Jugendschriften* present in these terms the earliest formulation

[5] Ibid., p. 223.
[6] *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, p. 268.
[7] Ibid., p. 286.
[8] *Theologische Jugendschriften*, pp. 381-2.

of the concept of 'alienation' (*Entfremdung*), which was destined to play a decisive part in the future development of the Hegelian philosophy.

Hegel's first discussion of religious and political problems strikes the pervasive note that the loss of unity and liberty—a historical fact—is the general mark of the modern era and the factor that characterizes all conditions of private and societal life. This loss of freedom and unity, Hegel says, is patent in the numerous conflicts that abound in human living, especially in the conflict between man and nature. This conflict, which turned nature into a hostile power that had to be mastered by man, has led to an antagonism between idea and reality, between thought and the real, between consciousness and existence.[9] Man constantly finds himself set off from a world that is adverse and alien to his impulses and desires. How, then, is this world to be restored to harmony with man's potentialities?

At first, Hegel's answer was that of the student of theology. He interpreted Christianity as having a basic function in world history, that of giving a new 'absolute' center to man and a final goal to life. Hegel could also see, however, that the revealed truth of the Gospel could not fit in with the expanding social and political realities of the world, for the Gospel appealed essentially to the individual as an individual detached from his social and political nexus; its essential aim was to save the individual and not society or the state. It was therefore not religion that could solve the problem, or theology that could set forth principles to restore freedom and unity. As a result, Hegel's interest slowly shifted from theological to philosophical questions and concepts.

Hegel always viewed philosophy not as a special science but as the ultimate form of human knowledge. The need

[9] Ibid., p. 244.

for philosophy he derived from the need to remedy the general loss of freedom and unity. He explicitly stated this in his first philosophical article. 'The need for philosophy arises when the unifying power [*die Macht der Vereinigung*] has disappeared from the life of men, when the contradictions have lost their living interrelation and interdependence and assumed an independent form.' [10] The unifying force he speaks of refers to the vital harmony of the individual and common interest, which prevailed in the ancient republics and which assured the liberty of the whole and integrated all conflicts into the living unity of the *Volksgeist*. When this harmony was lost, man's life became overwhelmed by pervasive conflicts that could no longer be controlled by the whole. We have already mentioned the terms in which Hegel characterized these conflicts: nature was set against man, reality was estranged from 'the idea' and consciousness opposed to existence. He next summarized all these oppositions as having the general form of a conflict between subject and object,[11] and in this way he connected his historical problem to the philosophical one that had dominated European thought since Descartes. Man's knowledge and will had been pushed into a 'subjective' world, whose self-certainty and freedom confronted an objective world of uncertainty and physical necessity. The more Hegel saw that the contradictions were the universal form of reality, the more philosophical his discussion became—only the most universal concepts could now grasp the contradictions, and only the ultimate principles of knowledge could yield the principles to resolve them.

At the same time, even the most abstract of Hegel's concepts retained the concrete denotation of his questions.

[10] 'Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems,' in *Erste Druckschriften*, ed. Georg Lasson, Leipzig 1913, p. 14.
[11] Ibid., p. 13.

Philosophy was charged with a historical mission—to give an exhaustive analysis of the contradictions prevailing in reality and to demonstrate their possible unification. The dialectic developed out of Hegel's view that reality was a structure of contradictions. The *Theologische Jugendschriften* still covered the dialectic over with a theological framework, but even there the philosophical beginnings of the dialectical analysis can already be traced.

The first concept Hegel introduces as the unification of contradictions is the concept of life.

We might better understand the peculiar role Hegel attributed to the idea of life if we recognize that for him all contradictions are resolved and yet preserved in 'reason.' Hegel conceived life as mind, that is to say, as a being able to comprehend and master the all-embracing antagonisms of existence. In other words, Hegel's concept of life points to the life of a rational being and to man's unique quality among all other beings. Ever since Hegel, the idea of life has been the starting point for many efforts to reconstruct philosophy in terms of man's concrete historical circumstance and to overcome thereby the abstract and remote character of rationalist philosophy.[12]

Life is distinguished from all other modes of being by its unique relation to its determinations and to the world as a whole. Each inanimate object is, by virtue of its particularity and its limited and determinate form, different from and opposed to the genus; the particular contradicts the universal, so that the latter does not fulfill itself in the former. The living, however, differs from the nonliving in this respect, for life designates a being whose different parts and states (*Zustände*) are integrated into a complete unity, that of a 'subject.' In life, 'the particular . . . is at the same time a branch of the infinite tree of

[12] See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipzig 1921, vol. IV, pp. 144 ff.

Life; every part outside the whole is at the same time the whole, Life.' [13] Each living individual is also a manifestation of the whole of life, in other words, possesses the full essence or potentialities of life. Furthermore, though every living being is determinate and limited, it can supersede its limitations by virtue of the power it possesses as a living subject. Life is at first a sequence of determinate 'objective' conditions—objective, because the living subject finds them outside of its self, limiting its free self-realization. The process of life, however, consists in continuously drawing these external conditions into the enduring unity of the subject. The living being maintains itself as a self by mastering and annexing the manifold of determinate conditions it finds, and by bringing all that is opposed to itself into harmony with itself. The unity of life, therefore, is not an immediate and 'natural' one, but the result of a constant active overcoming of everything that stands against it. It is a unity that prevails only as the result of a process of 'mediation' (*Vermittlung*) between the living subject as it is and its objective conditions. The mediation is the proper function of the living self as an actual subject, and at the same time it *makes* the living self an actual subject. Life is the first form in which the substance is conceived as subject and is thus the first embodiment of freedom. It is the first model of a real unification of opposites and hence the first embodiment of the dialectic.

Not all forms of life, however, represent such a complete unity. Only man, by virtue of his knowledge, can achieve 'the idea of Life.' We have already indicated that for Hegel a perfect union of subject and object is a prerequisite to freedom. The union presupposes a knowledge of the truth, meaning thereby a knowledge of the potentialities of both subject and object. Man alone is able to transform objective conditions so that they become a medium

[13] *Theologische Jugendschriften*, p. 307.

for his subjective development. And the truth he holds frees not only his own potencies, but those of nature as well. He brings the truth into the world, and with it is able to organize the world in conformity with reason. Hegel illustrates this point in the mission of John the Baptist, and for the first time advances the view that the world is in its very essence the product of man's historical activity. The world and all 'its relations and determinations are the work of the ἀνθρώπου φωτός, of man's self-development.' [14] The conception of the world as a product of human activity and knowledge henceforth persists as the driving force of Hegel's system. At this very early stage, we can already discover the features of the later dialectical theory of society.

'Life' is not the most advanced philosophic concept that Hegel attained in his first period. The *Systemfragment,* in which he gives a more precise elaboration of the philosophic import of the antagonism between subject and object and between man and nature, uses the term mind (*Geist*) to designate the unification of these disparate domains. Mind is essentially the same unifying agency as life—'Infinite Life may be called a Mind because Mind connotes the living unity amid the diversity . . . Mind is the living law that unifies the diversity so that the latter becomes living.' [15] But although it means no more than life, the concept mind lays emphasis on the fact that the unity of life is, in the last analysis, the work of the subject's free comprehension and activity, and not of some blind natural force.

The *Theologische Jugendschriften* yield yet another concept that points far into Hegel's later logic. In a fragment entitled *Glauben und Wissen,* Hegel declares, 'Unification and Being [*Sein*] are equivalent; the copula "is"

[14] Ibid., p. 307. [15] P. 347.

in every proposition expresses a unification of subject and predicate, in other words, a Being.' [16] An adequate interpretation of this statement would require a thorough discussion of the basic developments in European philosophy since Aristotle. We can here only intimate some of the background and content of the formulation.

Hegel's statement implies that there is a distinction between 'to be' (*Sein*) and being (*Seiendes*), or, between determinate being and being-as-such. The history of Western philosophy opened with the same distinction, made in answer to the question, What is Being? which animated Greek philosophy from Parmenides to Aristotle. Every being around us is a determinate one: a stone, a tool, a house, an animal, an event, and so on. But we predicate of every such being that it *is* thus and so; that is, we attribute being to it. And this being that we attribute to it is not any particular thing in the world, but is common to all the particular beings to which it can be attributed. This points to the fact that there must be a being-as-such that is different from every determinate being and yet attributable to every being whatsoever, so that it can be called the real 'one' in all the diversity of determinate beings. Being-as-such is what all particular beings have in common and is, as it were, their substratum. From this point, it was comparatively easy to take this most universal being as 'the essence of all being,' 'divine substance,' 'the most real,' and thus to combine ontology with theology. This tradition is operative in Hegel's *Logic*.

Aristotle was the first to regard this being-as-such that is attributed alike to every determinate being not as a separate metaphysical entity but as the process or movement through which every particular being molds itself into what it *really* is. According to Aristotle, there is a distinction that runs through the whole realm of being

[16] P. 383.

between the essence (οὐσία) and its diverse accidental states and modifications (τὰ συμβεβηκότα). Real being, in the strict sense, is the essence, by which is meant the concrete individual thing, organic as well as inorganic. The individual thing is the subject or substance enduring throughout a movement in which it unifies and holds together the various states and phases of its existence. The different modes of being represent various modes of unifying antagonistic relations; they refer to different modes of persisting through change, of originating and perishing, of having properties and limitations, and so on. And Hegel incorporates the basic Aristotelian conception into his philosophy: 'The different modes of being are more or less complete unifications.' [17] Being means unifying, and unifying means movement. Movement, in turn, Aristotle defines in terms of potentiality and actuality. The various types of movement denote various ways of realizing the potentialities inherent in the essence or moving thing. Aristotle evaluates the types of movement so that the highest type is that in which each and every potentiality is fully realized. A being that moves or develops according to the highest type would be pure ἐνέργεια. It would have no material of realization outside of or alien to itself, but would be entirely itself at every moment of its existence. If such a being were to exist, its whole existence would consist in thinking. A subject whose self-activity is thought has no estranged and external object; thinking 'grasps' and holds the object as thought, and reason apprehends reason. The veritable being is veritable movement, and the latter is the activity of perfect unification of the subject with its object. The true Being is therefore thought and reason.

Hegel concludes his presentation in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* with the paragraph from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in which the veritable being is

[17] P. 384.

explained to be reason. This is significant as more than a mere illustration. For, Hegel's philosophy is in a large sense a re-interpretation of Aristotle's ontology, rescued from the distortion of metaphysical dogma and linked to the pervasive demand of modern rationalism that the world be transformed into a medium for the freely developing subject, that the world become, in short, the reality of reason. Hegel was the first to rediscover the extremely dynamic character of the Aristotelian metaphysic, which treats all being as process and movement—a dynamic that had got entirely lost in the formalistic tradition of Aristotelianism.

Aristotle's conception that reason is the veritable being is carried through by sundering this being from the rest of the world. The νους-θεός is neither the cause nor creator of the world, and is its prime mover only through a complicated system of intermediaries. Human reason is but a weak copy of this νους-θεός. Nevertheless, the life of reason is the highest life and highest good on earth.

The conception is intimately connected with a reality offering no adequate fulfillment of the proper potentialities of men and things, so that the fulfillment was located in an activity that was most independent of the prevailing incongruencies of reality. The elevation of the realm of mind to the position of the sole domain of freedom and reason was conditioned by a world of anarchy and bondage. The historical conditions still prevailed in Hegel's time; the visible potentialities were actualized in neither society nor nature, and men were not free subjects of their lives. And since ontology is the doctrine of the most general forms of being and as such reflects human insight into the most general structure of reality, there can be little wonder that the basic concepts of Aristotelian and Hegelian ontology were the same.

II

Towards the System of Philosophy (1800-1802)

1. The First Philosophical Writings

In 1801, Hegel began his academic career in Jena, then the philosophic center of Germany. Fichte had taught there until 1799, and Schelling was appointed professor in 1798. Kant's social and legal philosophy, his *Metaphysik der Sitten,* had been published in 1799, and his revolutionizing of philosophy in his three *Critiques of Reason* still exerted a prime influence on intellectual life. Quite naturally, therefore, Hegel's first philosophical articles centered about the doctrines of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, and he formulated his problems in terms of the currents of discussion among the German idealists.

As we have seen, Hegel took the view that philosophy arises from the all-embracing contradictions into which human existence has been plunged. These have shaped the history of philosophy as the history of basic contradictions, those between 'mind and matter, soul and body, belief and understanding, freedom and necessity,' contradictions that had more recently appeared as those between 'reason and sense' (*Sinnlichkeit*), 'intelligence and nature,' and, in the most general form, 'subjectivity and objectivity.'[1] These were the very concepts that lay at the root of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* and the ones Hegel now dissolved in his dialectical analysis.

The first concept Hegel subjected to dialectical re-interpretation was that of reason. Kant had made the basic

[1] *Erste Druckschriften,* p. 13.

distinction between reason (*Vernunft*) and understanding (*Verstand*). Hegel gave both concepts new meaning and made them the starting point of his method. For him, the distinction between understanding and reason is the same as that between common sense and speculative thinking, between undialectical reflection and dialectical knowledge. The operations of the understanding yield the usual type of thinking that prevails in everyday life as well as in science. The world is taken as a multitude of determinate things, each of which is demarcated from the other. Each thing is a distinct delimited entity related as such to other likewise delimited entities. The concepts that are developed from these beginnings, and the judgments composed of these concepts, denote and deal with isolated things and the fixed relations between such things. The individual determinations exclude one another as if they were atoms or monads. The one is not the other and can never become the other. To be sure, things change, and so do their properties, but when they do so, one property or determination disappears and another takes its place. An entity that is isolated and delimited in this way Hegel calls 'finite' (*das Endliche*).

Understanding, then, conceives a world of finite entities, governed by the principle of identity and opposition. Everything is identical with itself and with nothing else; it is, by virtue of its self-identity, opposed to all other things. It can be connected and combined with them in many ways, but it never loses its own identity and never becomes something other than itself. When red litmus paper turns blue or day changes to night, a here and now existent ceases to be here and now, and some other thing takes its place. When a child becomes a man one set of properties, those of childhood, is replaced by another, those of manhood. Red and blue, light and dark, childhood and manhood, eternally remain irreconcilable oppo-

sitions. The operations of understanding thus divide the world into numberless polarities, and Hegel uses the expression 'isolated reflection' (*isolierte Reflection*) to characterize the manner in which understanding forms and connects its polar concepts.

The rise and spread of this kind of thinking Hegel connects with the origin and prevalence of certain relationships in human life.[2] The antagonisms of 'isolated reflection' express real antagonisms. Thinking could come to understand the world as a fixed system of isolated things and indissoluble oppositions only when the world had become a reality removed from the true wants and needs of mankind.

Isolation and opposition are not, however, the final state of affairs. The world must not remain a complex of fixed disparates. The unity that underlies the antagonisms must be grasped and realized by reason, which has the task of reconciling the opposites and 'sublating' them in a true unity. The fulfillment of reason's task would at the same time involve restoring the lost unity in the social relations of men.

As distinguished from the understanding, reason is motivated by the need 'to restore the totality.'[3] How can this be done? First, says Hegel, by undermining the false security that the perceptions and manipulations of the understanding provide. The common-sense view is one of 'indifference' and 'security,' 'the indifference of security.'[4] Satisfaction with the given state of reality and acceptance of its fixed and stable relations make men indifferent to the as yet unrealized potentialities that are not 'given' with the same certainty and stability as the objects of sense. Common sense mistakes the accidental appearance of things for their essence, and persists in believing that there is an immediate identity of essence and existence.[5]

[2] Ibid., pp. 14-15. [3] P. 16. [4] P. 22. [5] Pp. 22-3.

The identity of essence and existence, *per contra,* can only result from the enduring effort of reason to create it. It comes about only through a conscious putting into action of knowledge, the primary condition for which is the abandonment of common sense and mere understanding for 'speculative thinking.' Hegel insists that only this kind of thinking can get beyond the distorting mechanisms of the prevailing state of being. Speculative thinking compares the apparent or given form of things to the potentialities of those same things, and in so doing distinguishes their essence from their accidental state of existence. This result is achieved not through some process of mystical intuition, but by a method of conceptual cognition, which examines the process whereby each form has become what it is. Speculative thinking conceives 'the intellectual and material world' not as a totality of fixed and stable relations, but 'as a becoming, and its being as a product and a producing.' [6]

What Hegel calls speculative thinking is in effect his earliest presentation of dialectical method. The relation between dialectical thinking (reason) and isolating reflection (understanding) is clearly defined. The former criticizes and supersedes the fixed oppositions created by the latter. It undermines the 'security' of common sense and demonstrates that 'what common sense regards as immediately certain does not have any reality for philosophy.' [7] The first criterion of reason, then, is a distrust of matter-of-fact authority. Such distrust is the real skepticism that Hegel designates as 'the free portion' of every true philosophy.[8]

The form of reality that is immediately given is, then, no final reality. The system of isolated things in opposition, produced by the operations of the understanding,

[6] P. 14.
[7] Ibid., p. 22.
[8] 'Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie,' in op. cit., p. 175.

must be recognized for what it is: a 'bad' form of reality, a realm of limitation and bondage. The 'realm of freedom,' [9] which is the inherent goal of reason, cannot be achieved, as Kant and Fichte thought, by playing off the subject against the objective world, attributing to the autonomous person all the freedom that is lacking in the external world, and leaving the latter a domain of blind necessity. (Hegel is here striking against the important mechanism of 'internalizing' or introversion, by which philosophy and literature generally have made liberty into an inner value to be realized within the soul alone.) In the final reality there can be no isolation of the free subject from the objective world; that antagonism must be resolved, together with all the others created by the understanding.

The final reality in which the antagonisms are resolved Hegel terms 'the Absolute.' At this stage of his philosophical development he can describe this absolute only negatively. Thus, it is quite the reverse of the reality apprehended by common sense and understanding; it 'negates' common-sense reality in every detail, so that the absolute reality has no single point of resemblance to the finite world.

Whereas common sense and the understanding had perceived isolated entities that stood opposed one to the other, reason apprehends 'the identity of the opposites.' It does not produce the identity by a process of connecting and combining the opposites, but transforms them so that they cease to exist as opposites, although their content is preserved in a higher and more 'real' form of being. The process of unifying opposites touches every part of reality and comes to an end only when reason has 'organized' the whole so that 'every part exists only in relation to the whole,' and 'every individual entity has meaning and significance only in its relation to the totality.' [10]

[9] 'Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems,' p. 18.
[10] Ibid., p. 21.

The totality of the concepts and cognitions of reason alone represents the absolute. Reason, therefore, is fully before us only in the form of an all-embracing 'organization of propositions and intuitions,' that is, as a 'system.' [11] We shall explain the concrete import of these ideas in the next chapter. Here, in his first philosophical writings, Hegel intentionally emphasizes the negative function of reason: its destruction of the fixed and secure world of common sense and understanding. The absolute is referred to as 'Night' and 'nothing,' [12] to contrast it to the clearly defined objects of everyday life. Reason signifies the 'absolute annihilation' of the common-sense world.[13] For, as we have already said, the struggle against common sense is the beginning of speculative thinking, and the loss of everyday security is the origin of philosophy.

Hegel gives further clarification to his position in the article 'Glauben und Wissen,' in which he contrasts his conclusions to those of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* The empirical principle that Kant retained by making reason dependent on 'given' objects of experience is here rejected completely. In Kant, Hegel declares, reason is limited to an inner realm of the mind and is made powerless over 'things-in-themselves.' In other words, it is not really reason but the understanding that holds sway in the Kantian philosophy.

On the other hand, Hegel makes special mention of the fact that Kant did overcome this limitation at many points. For example, the notion of an 'original synthetic unity of apperception' recognizes Hegel's own principles of the original identity of opposites,[14] for the 'synthetic unity' is properly an activity by which the antagonism between subject and object is produced and simultaneously overcome.

[11] Pp. 25, 34-5. [12] P. 16. [13] P. 17.
[14] 'Glauben und Wissen,' in op. cit., p. 240.

Kant's philosophy therefore 'contains the true form of thought' as far as this concept is concerned, namely, the triad of subject, object, and their synthesis.[15]

This is the first point at which Hegel makes the claim that the triad (*Triplizität*) is the true form of thought. He does not state it as an empty schema of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but as the dynamic unity of opposites. It is the proper form of thought because it is the proper form of a reality in which every being is the synthetic unity of antagonistic conditions.

Traditional logic has recognized this fact in setting forth the form of the judgment as *S* is *P*. We have already hinted at Hegel's interpretation of this form. To know what a thing really is, we have to get beyond its immediately given state (*S* is *S*) and follow out the process in which it turns into something other than itself (*P*). In the process of becoming *P*, however, *S* still remains *S*. Its reality is the entire dynamic of its turning into something else and unifying itself with its 'other.' The dialectical pattern represents, and is thus 'the truth of,' a world permeated by negativity, a world in which everything is something other than it *really* is, and in which opposition and contradiction constitute the laws of progress.

2. The First Political Writings

The critical interests of dialectical philosophy are clearly illustrated by Hegel's important political pamphlets of this period. These show that the condition in which the German Reich found itself after its unsuccessful war with the French Republic had a place at the root of Hegel's early works.

The universal contradictions that, according to Hegel,

[15] Ibid., p. 247.

animate philosophy concretely exist in the antagonisms and disunity among the numerous German states and estates and between each of these and the Reich. The 'isolation' that Hegel had demonstrated in his philosophical articles is manifest in the stubborn way in which not only each estate but practically each individual pursues his own particular interest without any consideration for the whole. The consequent 'loss of unity' has reduced the Imperial power to complete impotence and left the Reich an easy prey to any aggressor.

> Germany is no longer a state . . . If Germany were still to be called a state, its present condition of decay could only be called anarchy, were it not for the fact that her component parts have constituted themselves as states. It is only the remembrance of a past tie and not any actual union that gives them the appearance of unity . . . In her war with the French Republic Germany has come to realize that she is no longer a state . . . The obvious results of this war are the loss of some of the most beautiful of the German lands, and of some millions of her population, a public debt (even larger in the south than in the north) which carries the agonies of the war into peace-time, and the result that besides those who have fallen under the power of conquerors and foreign laws and morals, many states will lose their highest good in the bargain, that is, their independence.[16]

Hegel goes on to examine the basis for the disintegration. The German constitution, he finds, no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic state of the nation. The constitution is a vestige of an old feudal order that has long since been replaced by a different order, that of individualistic society.[17] The retention of the old form of constitution in the face of the radical change that has taken place in all social relations is tantamount to maintaining a given condition simply because it is given. Such

[16] 'Die Verfassung Deutschlands,' in *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 3-4.
[17] Ibid., p. 7, *note*.

a practice is opposed to every standard and dictate of reason. The prevailing ordering of life is in sharp conflict with the desires and needs of society; it has lost 'all its power and all its dignity' and has become 'purely negative.' [18]

And, Hegel continues, that which persists in this 'merely empirical manner,' without being 'adapted to the idea of reason,' cannot be regarded as 'real.' [19] The political system has to be destroyed and transformed into a new rational order. Such a transformation cannot be made without violence.

The extreme realism of Hegel's position shows through the idealistic framework and terminology. 'The notion of and insight into necessity are much too weak to effect action. The notion and the insight are accompanied by so much distrust that they have to be justified by violence; only then does man submit to them.' [20] The notion can be justified by violence only in so far as it expresses an actual historical force that has ripened in the lap of the existing order. The notion contradicts reality when the latter has become self-contradictory. Hegel says that a prevailing social form can be successfully attacked by thought only if this form has come into open contradiction with its own 'truth,' [21] in other words, if it can no longer fulfill the demands of its own contents. This is the case with Germany, Hegel holds. There, the champions of the new order represent historical forces that have outgrown the old system. The state, which should perpetuate the common interest of its members in an appropriate rational form—for such alone would be its 'truth'—does not do this. For this reason, the rulers of the state speak falsely when they defend their position in the name of the common interest.[22] Their foes, not they, represent the common

[18] P. 139. [19] P. 3. [20] P. 136. [21] P. 140. [22] Ibid.

interest, and their notion, the idea of the new order they uphold, is not merely an ideal but the expression of a reality that no longer endures in the prevailing order.

Hegel's point is that the old order has to be replaced by a 'true community' (*Allgemeinheit*). *Allgemeinheit* means at one and the same time, first, a society in which all particular and individual interests are integrated into the whole, so that the actual social organism that results accords with the common interest (community), and, second, a totality in which all the different isolated concepts of knowledge are fused and integrated so that they receive their significance in their relation to the whole (universality). The second meaning is obviously the counterpart of the first. Just as the conception of disintegration in the sphere of knowledge expresses the existing disintegration of human relations in society, so the philosophical integration corresponds to a social and political integration. The universality of reason, represented by the absolute, is the philosophical counterpart of the social community in which all particular interests are unified into the whole.

A real state, Hegel holds, institutionalizes the common interest and defends it in all external and internal conflicts.[23] The German Reich, Hegel declares, does not have this character.

> Political powers and rights are not public offices set up to accord with the organization of the whole, nor are the acts and duties of the individual determined by the needs of the whole. Each particular part of the political hierachy, each princely house, each estate, town, corporation, and so on, in short, everyone who has rights in or duties toward the state has acquired them through his own power. The state, in view of the encroachment on its own power, can do no more than confirm that it has been deprived of its power . . .[24]

[23] Pp. 13, 17-18. [24] P. 10.

Hegel explains the breakdown of the German state by contrasting the feudal system with the new order of individualist society that succeeded it. The rise of the latter social order is explained in terms of the development of private property. The feudal system proper integrated the particular interests of the different estates into a true community. The freedom of the group or of the individual was not essentially opposed to the freedom of the whole. In modern times, however, 'exclusive property has completely isolated the particular needs from each other.' [25] People speak of the universality of private property as if it were common to all of society and therefore, perhaps, an integrating unity. But this universality, says Hegel, is only an abstract legal fiction; in reality, private property remains 'something isolated' that has no relation to the whole.[26] The only unity that can be achieved among property owners is the artificial one of a universally applied legal system. Laws, however, stabilize and codify only the existing anarchic conditions of private ownership and thus transform the state or the community into an institution that exists for the sake of particular interests. 'Possession existed prior to law and did not originate from law. That which had already been privately appropriated was made a legal right . . . German constitutional law is therefore in the proper sense private law, and political rights are legalized forms of possession, property rights.' [27] A state wherein the antagonistic private interests are thus made pre-eminent in all fields may not be called a true community. Moreover, Hegel declares, 'The struggle to make the state power into private property dissolves the state and brings about the destruction of its power.' [28]

The state, taken over by private interests, must nevertheless at least assume the appearance of a true community

[25] P. 9, *note.* [26] P. 11, *note.* [27] Ibid. [28] P. 13.

in order to put down general warfare and to defend equally the property rights of all its members. The community thus becomes an independent power, elevated above the individuals. 'Each individual wishes to live, through the state's power, with his property secure. The power of the state appears to him . . . as something alien that exists outside of him.' [29]

Hegel in this period carried his criticism of the structure of modern society so far that he obtained an insight into the mechanism by which the state becomes an independent entity over and above the individuals. He reworked the pamphlet on the German Constitution several times, and its final form shows a distinct weakening of his critical attitude. Gradually, the 'higher' form of state that is to replace the outmoded one (exemplified by Germany) takes form as an absolute or power state. The reforms Hegel demands are the creation of an effective Reich army, wrested from the control of the estates and placed under the unified command of the Empire, and the centralization of all bureaus, finance, and law. The idea of a strong centralized state, we must note, was at that time a progressive one, which aimed to set free the available productive forces that were being hampered by the existing feudal forms. Four decades later, Marx emphasized in his critical history of the modern state that the centralized absolutistic state was a material advance over the feudal and semi-feudal state forms. Consequently, the proposal that such an absolute state be set up is not itself a sign that Hegel's critical attitude was weakening. We note the weakening, rather, in the consequences Hegel draws from his conception of the absolute state. We shall develop these briefly.

In the article on the German Constitution, there appears, for the first time in Hegel's formulations, a distinct

[29] P. 18, *note*.

subordination of right to might. Hegel was eager to free his centralized state from any and all limitations that might hinder its efficiency, and he therefore made the state interest superior to the validity of right. The fact is clearly shown in Hegel's remarks on the foreign policy of his ideal state:

Right, he says, pertains to 'the state's interest,' laid down for and granted to the state by contracts with other states.[30] In the continuously changing constellations of power, one state's interest must sooner or later clash with that of another. Right then confronts right. War, 'or whatever it might be,' must then decide not which right is true and just, 'for both sides have a true right, but which right shall yield to the other.'[31] We shall find the same thesis, greatly elaborated, in the *Philosophy of Right.*

A further consequence drawn from the conception of the power state is a new interpretation of freedom. The basic idea is retained, that the ultimate freedom of the individual will not contradict the ultimate freedom of the whole, but will be fulfilled only within and through the whole. Hegel had placed great stress on this point in his article on the difference between Fichte's and Schelling's systems, in which he said that the community that conforms to reason's standard must be conceived 'not as a limitation on the individual's true freedom but as an expansion of it. The highest community is the highest freedom, in its power and in its exercise of it.'[32] Now, however, in the study of the German Constitution, he states: 'The stubbornness of the German character has not permitted the individuals *to sacrifice* their special interests to the society, or to unite in a common interest and find their freedom in fully *submitting* to the higher power of the state.'[33]

[30] P. 100.
[31] P. 101.
[32] *Erste Druckschriften*, p. 65.
[33] *Schriften zur Politik*, pp. 7 f.

The new element of sacrifice and submission now overshadows the earlier idea that the individual's interest is fully to be preserved in the whole. And, as we shall see, Hegel has here in effect taken the first step that leads to his identifying freedom with necessity, or submission to necessity, in his final system.

3. The System of Morality

At about the same time, Hegel wrote the first draft of that part of his system known as the Philosophy of Mind. This draft, the so-called System of Morality (*System der Sittlichkeit*), is one of the most difficult in German philosophy. We shall sketch its general structure and limit the interpretation to those parts that disclose the material tendencies of Hegel's philosophy.

The system of morality, like all the other drafts of the *Philosophy of Mind*, deals with the development of 'culture,' by which is meant the totality of man's conscious, purposive activities in society. Culture is a realm of mind. A social or political institution, a work of art, a religion, and a philosophical system exist and operate as part and parcel of man's own being, products of a rational subject that continues to live in them. As *products* they constitute an objective realm; at the same time, they are subjective, created by human beings. They represent the possible unity of subject and object.

The development of culture shows distinct stages that denote different levels of relation between man and his world, that is, different ways of apprehending and mastering the world and of adapting it to human needs and potentialities. The process itself is conceived as ontological as well as historical; it is an actual historical development as well as a progression to higher and truer modes of being. In the gradual working out of Hegel's philoso-

phy, however, the ontological process gains greater and greater predominance over the historical, and to a large extent is eventually detached from its original historical roots.

The general scheme is as follows. The first stage is an immediate rapport between the isolated individual and given objects. The individual apprehends the objects of his environment as things he needs or desires; he uses them to fulfill his wants, consuming and 'annihilating' them as food, beverages, and so on.[34] A higher level is reached in the cultural process when human labor molds and organizes the objective world, no longer simply annihilating things but preserving them as enduring means for the perpetuation of life. This stage presupposes a conscious association of individuals who have organized their activity on some plane of division of labor so that there is a constant production to replace what is used up. This is the first step towards a community in societal life and towards universality in the sphere of knowledge. To the extent that the individuals associate themselves as having a common interest, their conceptions and volitions become influenced and are guided by the notions they hold in common, and hence approach the universality of reason.

The forms of association differ according to the different degrees of integration that are achieved in them. The integrating agency is first the family, then the social institutions of labor, property, and law, and finally the state.

We shall not deal with the concrete social and economic concepts with which Hegel fills this scheme, since we shall encounter them again in the *Jenenser* drafts of the *Philosophy of Mind*. We only wish to emphasize here that Hegel describes the various social institutions and relations as a system of contradicting forces, originating from the mode

[34] *Schriften zur Politik*, pp. 430 ff.

of social labor. That mode of labor transforms the particular work of the individual, pursued for the gratification of his personal wants, into 'general labor,' which operates to produce commodities for the market.[35] Hegel calls this last 'abstract and quantitative' labor and makes it responsible for the increasing inequality of men and wealth. Society is incapable of overcoming the antagonisms growing out of this inequality; consequently, the 'system of government' has to concentrate on the task. Hegel outlines three different systems of government, in fact, each of which constitutes an advance on the other in fulfilling the task. They are intrinsically related to the structure of the society over which they rule.

The general picture of society is one in which 'the system of wants' is a 'system of mutual physical dependence.' The individual's labor fails to guarantee that his wants will be attended to. 'A force alien to the individual and over which he remains powerless' determines whether or not his needs will be fulfilled. The value of the product of labor is 'independent of the individual and is subject to constant change.' [36] The system of government is itself of this anarchic kind. What governs is nothing but 'the unconscious blind totality of needs and the modes of their fulfillment.' [37]

Society must master its 'unconscious and blind fate.' Such mastery, however, remains incomplete so long as the general anarchy of interests prevails. Excessive wealth goes hand in hand with excessive poverty, and purely quantitative labor pushes man 'into a state of utmost barbarism,' especially that part of the population that 'is subjected to mechanical labor in the factories.' [38]

The next stage in government, represented as a 'system of justice,' balances the existing antagonisms, but does so only in terms of the prevailing property relations. Govern-

[35] Pp. 428-38. [36] P. 492. [37] P. 493. [38] P. 496.

ment here rests upon the administration of justice, but it administers the law with 'complete indifference to the relation in which a thing stands to any particular individual's needs.' [39] The principle of freedom, namely, that 'the governed are identical with the governing,' cannot be fully realized because the government cannot do away with conflicts among particular interests. Liberty therefore appears only in 'the law courts, and in the discussion and adjudication of litigations.' [40]

Hegel barely sketched the third system of government in this series. It is, however, most significant that the main concept in its discussion is 'discipline' (*Zucht*). 'The great discipline is expressed in the general morals . . . and in the training for war, and in the trial of the true value of the individual in war.' [41]

The quest for the true community thus terminates in a society governed by utmost discipline and military preparation. The true unity between the individual and common interest, which Hegel demanded as the sole aim of the state, has led to an authoritarian state that is to suppress the increasing antagonisms of individualistic society. Hegel's discussion of the various stages of government is a concrete description of the development from a liberal to an authoritarian political system. This description contains an immanent critique of liberalist society, for the gist of Hegel's analysis is that liberalist society necessarily gives birth to an authoritarian state. Hegel's article on Natural Law,[42] probably written shortly after the outline of the System of Morality, applies this critique to the field of political economy.

Hegel examines the traditional system of political economy and finds it to be an apologetic formulation of the

[39] P. 499. [40] P. 501. [41] P. 502.
[42] 'Ueber die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts,' in op. cit., pp. 329 ff.

principles that govern the existing social system. The character of that system, Hegel again says, is essentially negative, for the very nature of the economic structure prevents the establishment of a true common interest. The task of the state, or of any adequate political organization, is to see to it that the contradictions inherent in the economic structure do not destroy the whole system. The state must assume the function of bridling the anarchic social and economic process.

Hegel attacks the doctrine of natural law because he says, it justifies all the dangerous tendencies that aim to subordinate the state to the antagonistic interests of individualist society. The theory of the social contract, for example, fails to note that the common interest can never be derived from the will of competing and conflicting individuals. Moreover, natural law works with a purely metaphysical conception of man. As he appears in the natural-law doctrine, man is an abstract being who is later equipped with an arbitrary set of attributes. The selection of these attributes changes according to the changing apologetic interest of the particular doctrine. It is, moreover, in line with the apologetic function of natural law that most qualities that characterize man's existence in modern society are disregarded (for example, the concrete relations of private property, the prevailing modes of labor, and so on).

The first draft of Hegel's social philosophy, then, already enunciated the conception underlying his entire system: the given social order, based upon the system of abstract and quantitative labor and upon the integration of wants through the exchange of commodities, is incapable of asserting and establishing a rational community. This order remains essentially one of anarchy and irrationality, governed by blind economic mechanisms—it remains an order of ever repeated antagonisms in which all

progress is but a temporary unification of opposites. Hegel's demand for a strong and independent state derives from his insight into the irreconcilable contradictions of modern society. Hegel was the first to attain this insight in Germany. His justification of the strong state was made on the ground that it was a necessary supplement to the antagonistic structure of the individualist society he analyzed.

III

Hegel's First System (1802-1806)

THE *Jenenser* system, as it is called, is Hegel's first complete system, consisting of a logic, a metaphysic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of mind. Hegel formulated it in his lectures at the University of Jena from 1802 to 1806. These lectures have only recently been edited from Hegel's original manuscripts and published in three volumes, each of them representing a different stage of elaboration. The *Logic* and the *Metaphysics* exist in but one draft each, the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Mind* in two.[1] The considerable variations between these will be neglected here, since they have no bearing on the structure of the whole.

We have chosen to deal only with the general trend and organization of the whole, and with the principles that guide the development of the concepts. The content of the particular concepts will be discussed when we reach the different sections of the final system.

1. THE LOGIC

Hegel's *Logic* expounds the structure of being-as-such, that is, the most general forms of being. The philosophical tradition since Aristotle designated as categories the concepts that embrace these most general forms: substance,

[1] *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie* (1802), ed. G. Lasson, Leipzig 1923. Cited here as *Jenenser Logik.—Jenenser Realphilosophie* I (1803-4), ed. J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig 1932. *Jenenser Realphilosophie* II (1805-6), ed. J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig 1931.

affirmation, negation, limitation; quantity, quality; unity, plurality, and so on. Hegel's *Logic* is an ontology in so far as it deals with such categories. But his *Logic* also deals with the general forms of *thought,* with the notion, the judgment, and the syllogism, and is in this respect 'formal logic.'

We can understand the reason for this seeming heterogeneity of content when we remember that Kant, too, treated ontology as well as formal logic in his *Transcendental Logic,* taking up the categories of substantiality, causality, community (reciprocity), together with the theory of judgment. The traditional distinction between formal logic and general metaphysics (ontology) is meaningless to transcendental idealism, which conceives the forms of being as the results of the activity of human understanding. The principles of thought thus also become principles of the objects of thought (of the phenomena).

Hegel, too, believed in a unity of thought and being, but, as we have already seen, his conception of the unity differed from Kant's. He rejected Kant's idealism on the ground that it assumed the existence of 'things-in-themselves' apart from 'phenomena,' and left these 'things' untouched by the human mind and therefore untouched by reason. The Kantian philosophy left a gulf between thought and being, or between subject and object, which the Hegelian philosophy sought to bridge. The bridge was to be made by positing one universal structure of all being. Being was to be a process wherein a thing 'comprehends' or 'grasps' the various states of its existence and draws them into the more or less enduring unity of its 'self,' thus actively constituting itself as 'the same' throughout all change. Everything, in other words, exists more or less as a 'subject.' The identical structure of movement that thus runs through the entire realm of being unites the objective and subjective worlds.

With this point in mind, we can readily see why logic and metaphysics are one in the Hegelian system. The *Logic*, it has often been said, presupposes an identity of thought and existence. The statement has meaning only in so far as it declares that the movement of thought reproduces the movement of being and brings it to its true form. It has also been maintained that Hegel's philosophy puts notions in an independent realm, as if they were real things, and makes them move around and turn into each other. It must be said in reply that Hegel's *Logic* deals primarily with the forms and types of being as comprehended by thought. When, for example, Hegel discusses the passage of quantity into quality, or of 'being' into 'essence' he intends to show how, when actually comprehended, quantitative entities turn into qualitative ones, and how a contingent existence turns into an essential one. He means to be dealing with real things. The interplay and motility of the notions reproduces the concrete process of reality.

There is, however, yet another intrinsic relation between the notion and the object it comprehends. The correct notion makes the nature of an object clear *to us*. It tells us what the thing is in itself. But while the truth becomes evident to us, it also becomes evident that the things 'do not exist in' their truth. Their potentialities are limited by the determinate conditions in which the things exist. Things attain their truth only if they negate their determinate conditions. The negation is again a determination, produced by the unfolding of previous conditions. For example, the bud of the plant is the determinate negation of the seed, and the blossom the determinate negation of the bud. In its growth, the plant, the 'subject' of this process, does not act on knowledge and fulfill its potentialities on the basis of its own comprehending power. It rather endures the process of fulfillment

passively. Our notion of the plant, on the other hand, comprehends that the plant's existence is an intrinsic process of development; our notion sees the seed as potentially the bud and the bud as potentially the blossom. The notion thus represents, in Hegel's view, the real form of the object, for the notion gives us the truth about the process, which, in the objective world, is blind and contingent. In the inorganic, plant, and animal worlds, beings differ essentially from their notions. The difference is overcome only in the case of the thinking subject, which is capable of realizing its notion in its existence. The various modes of being may thus be ordered according to their essential difference from their notions.

This conclusion is the source of the basic divisions of Hegel's *Logic*. It starts with the concepts that grasp reality as a multitude of objective things, simply 'being,' free from any subjectivity. They are qualitatively and quantitatively connected with each other, and the analysis of these connections hits upon relations that can no longer be interpreted in terms of objective qualities and quantities but requires principles and forms of thought that negate the traditional concepts of being and reveal the *subject* to be the very substance of reality. The whole construction can be understood only in the mature form Hegel gave it in the *Science of Logic;* we shall limit ourselves here to a brief description of the basic scheme.

Every particular existent is essentially different from what it could be if its potentialities were realized. The potentialities are given in its notion. The existent would have true being if its potentialities were fulfilled and if there were, therefore, an identity between its existence and its notion. The difference between the reality and the potentiality is the starting point of the dialectical process that applies to every concept in Hegel's *Logic*. Finite things are 'negative'—and this is a defining characteristic

of them; they never are what they can and ought to be. They always exist in a state that does not fully express their potentialities as realized. The finite thing has as its essence 'this absolute unrest,' this striving 'not to be what it is.' [2]

Even in the abstract formulations of the *Logic* we can see the concrete critical impulses that underlie this conception. Hegel's dialectic is permeated with the profound conviction that all immediate forms of existence—in nature and history—are 'bad,' because they do not permit things to be what they can be. True existence begins only when the immediate state is recognized as negative, when beings become 'subjects' and strive to adapt their outward state to their potentialities.

The full significance of the conception just outlined lies in its assertion that negativity is constitutive of all finite things and is the 'genuine dialectical' moment [3] of them all. It is 'the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement.' [4] The negativity everything possesses is the necessary prelude to its reality. It is a state of privation that forces the subject to seek remedy. As such, it has a positive character.

The dialectical process receives its motive power from the pressure to overcome the negativity. Dialectics is a process in a world where the mode of existence of men and things is made up of contradictory relations, so that any particular content can be unfolded only through passing into its opposite. The latter is an integral part of the former, and the whole content is the totality of all contradictory relations implied in it. Logically, the dialectic has its beginning when human understanding finds itself unable to grasp something adequately from its given quali-

[2] *Jenenser Logik*, p. 31.
[3] *Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, The Macmillan Company, New York 1929, vol. I, p. 66.
[4] Ibid., vol. II, p. 477.

tative or quantitative forms. The given quality or quantity seems to be a 'negation' of the thing that possesses this quality or quantity. We shall have to follow Hegel's explanation of this point in some detail.

He begins with the world as common sense views it. It consists of an innumerable multitude of things—Hegel calls them 'somethings' (*Etwas*), each of them with its specific qualities. The qualities the thing has distinguish it from other things, so that if we want to separate it off from other things we simply enumerate its qualities. The table here in this room is being used as a desk; it is finished in walnut, heavy, wooden, and so on. Being a desk, brown, wooden, heavy, and so on, is not the same as just being a table. *The* table is not any of these qualities, nor is it the sum total of them. The particular qualities are, according to Hegel, at the same time the 'negation' of the table-as-such. The propositions in which the table's qualities are predicated of it would indicate this fact. They have the formal logical structure *A* is *B* (that is, not *A*). 'The table is brown' expresses also that the table is other than itself. This is the first abstract form in which the negativity of all finite things is expressed. The very being of something appears as other than itself. It exists, as Hegel puts it, in its 'otherness' (*Anderssein*).

The attempt to define something by its qualities, however, does not end in negativity, but is pushed a step further. A thing cannot be understood through its qualities without reference to other qualities that are actually excluded by the ones it possesses. 'Wooden,' for example, is meaningful only through the relation to some other, non-wooden material. The meaning of 'brown' requires that the meaning of other colors that are contraries of brown be known, and so on. 'The quality is related to what it excludes; for it does not exist as an absolute, for itself, but exists in such a way that it is for itself only in

so far as some other [quality] does not exist.' [6] We are at every point led beyond the qualities that should delimit the thing and differentiate it from some other thing. Its seeming stability and clarity thus dissolve into an endless chain of 'relations' (*Beziehungen*).

The opening chapters of Hegel's *Logic* thus show that when human understanding ventures to follow out its conceptions, it encounters the dissolution of its clearly delimited objects. First, it finds it completely impossible to identify any thing with the state in which it actually exists. The effort to uncover a concept that truly identifies the thing for what it is plunges the mind into an infinite sea of relations. Everything has to be understood in relation to other things, so that these relations become the very being of that thing. This infinitude of relations, which seems to portend the failure of any attempt to capture the thing's character, becomes for Hegel, quite to the contrary, the first step in true knowledge of the thing. That is, it is the first step if properly taken.

The process is discussed by Hegel through an analysis of 'infinity.' This is differentiated into two kinds, 'bad' and 'real' infinity. The bad or spurious infinite is, so to speak, the wrong road to the truth. It is the activity of trying to overcome the inadequacy of a definition by going to more and more of the related qualities entailed, in the hope of reaching an end. The understanding simply follows out the relations, as each is entailed, adding one to the next in the vain effort to exhaust and delimit the object. The procedure has a rational core, but only inasmuch as it presupposes that the essence of the object is made up of its relations to other objects. The relations cannot, however, be grasped by the 'spurious infinity' of mere 'added connections' (*Und-Beziehungen*) by which common sense links one object with another.

[6] *Jenenser Logik*, p. 4.

The relations must be apprehended in another way. They must be seen as created by the object's own movement. The object must be understood as one that itself establishes and 'itself puts forth the necessary relation of itself to its opposite.' [6] This would presuppose that the object has a definite power over its own development so that it can remain itself in spite of the fact that every concrete stage of its existence is a 'negation' of itself, an 'otherness.' The object, in other words, must be comprehended as a 'subject' in its relations to its 'otherness.'

As an ontological category, the 'subject' is the power of an entity to 'be itself in its otherness' (*Bei-sich-selbst-sein im Anderssein*). Only such a mode of existence can incorporate the negative into the positive. Negative and positive cease to be opposed to each other when the driving power of the subject makes negativity a part of the subject's own unity. Hegel says the subject 'mediates' (*vermittelt*) and 'sublates' (*aufhebt*) the negativity. In the process the object does not dissolve into its various qualitative or quantitative determinations, but is substantially held together throughout its relations with other objects.

This is the mode of being or existence that Hegel describes as 'real infinity.' [7] Infinity is not something behind or beyond finite things, but is their true reality. The infinite is the mode of existence in which all potentialities are realized and in which all being reaches its ultimate form.

The goal of the *Logic* is herewith set. It consists on the one hand in demonstrating the true form of such a final reality and, on the other, in showing how the concepts that try to grasp that reality are led to the conclusion that it is the absolute truth. Hegel announced in his criticism of the Kantian philosophy that the task of logic was 'to develop' the categories and not merely 'to

[6] Ibid., p. 32. [7] Ibid., pp. 30-34.

assemble' them. Such an endeavor would be possible of fruition only if the objects of thought have a systematic order. That order, Hegel says, is derived from the fact that all modes of being attain their truth through the free subject that comprehends them in relation to its own rationality. The arrangement of the *Logic* reflects this systematic comprehension. It starts with the categories of immediate experience, which apprehend only the most abstract forms of objective being (of material things, that is), namely, Quantity, Quality, and Measure. These are the most abstract, since they view every object as externally determined by other objects. Simple connection prevails in this case because the various modes of being are here externally connected with each other, and no being is comprehended as having an intrinsic relation to itself and to the other things with which it interacts. For example, an object is taken as constituting itself in the processes of attraction and repulsion. According to Hegel, this is an abstract and external interpretation of objectivity since the dynamic unity of a being is here conceived as the product of some blind natural forces over which it exercises no power. The categories of simple connection are thus farthest from any recognition of the substance as 'subject.'

The categories Hegel treats in the second section of the *Logic* under the general title of Relation (*Verhältnis*) come one step closer to the goal. Substantiality, Causality, and Reciprocity do not denote abstract and incomplete entities (as did the categories of the first section), but real relations. A substance is what it is only in relation to its accidents. Likewise, a cause exists only in relation to its effects, and two interdependent substances only in their relation to each other. The connection is intrinsic. The substance—the all-embracing category of this group—de-

notes a movement much more intrinsic than the blind force of attraction and repulsion. It possesses a definite power over its accidents and effects, and through its own power it establishes its relation to other things, thus having the ability to unfold its own potentialities. It does not, however, possess knowledge of these potentialities and therefore does not possess the freedom of self-realization. Substantiality still denotes a relation of objects, of material things, or, as Hegel says, a relation of being. To grasp the world in its veritable being we must grasp it with the categories of freedom, which are to be found only in the realm of the thinking subject. A transition is necessary from the relation of being to the relation of thought.

The latter relation refers to that between the particular and the universal in the notion, the judgment, and the syllogism. To Hegel, it is not a relation of formal logic, but an ontological relation, and the true relation of all reality. The substance of nature as well as history is a universal that unfolds itself through the particular. The universal is the natural process of the genus, realizing itself through the species and individuals. In history, the universal is the substance of all development. The Greek city-state, modern industry, a social class—all these universalities are actual historical forces that cannot be dissolved into their components. On the contrary, the individual facts and factors obtain their meaning only through the universal to which they belong. The individual is determined not by his particular but by his universal qualities, for instance, by his being a Greek citizen, or a modern factory worker, or a bourgeois.

Universality, on the other hand, is no 'relation of being' since all being—as we have seen—is determinate and particular. It can be understood only as a 'relation of thought,' that is, as the self-development of a comprehensive and comprehending subject.

In traditional philosophy, the category of universality has been treated as a part of logic, dealt with in the doctrine of the notion, the judgment and the syllogism. To Hegel, however, these logical forms and processes reflect and comprise the actual forms and processes of reality. We have already hinted at Hegel's ontological interpretation of the notion and the judgment. Fundamental in this context is his treatment of the definition. Within the logical tradition, the definition is the relation of thought that grasps the universal nature of an object in its essential distinction from other objects. According to Hegel, the definition can do this only because it reproduces (mirrors) the actual process in which the object differentiates itself from other objects to which it is related. The definition must express, then, the movement in which a being maintains its identity through the negation of its conditions. In short, a real definition cannot be given in one isolated proposition, but must elaborate the real history of the object, for its history alone explains its reality.[8] The real definition of a plant, for instance, must show the plant constituting itself through the destruction of the seed by the bud and of the bud by the blossom. It must tell how the plant perpetuates itself in its interaction and struggle with its environment. Hegel calls the definition 'the self-preservation' and explains this usage: 'In defining living things their characteristics must be derived from the weapons of attack and defense with which these things preserve themselves from other particular things.'[9]

In all these cases, thought seizes the real relations of the objective world and presents us with the knowledge of what the things are 'in themselves.' These real relations thought has to ferret out because they are hidden

[8] Cf. *Science of Logic*, vol. 1, p. 61.
[9] *Jenenser Logik*, p. 109.

by the appearance of things. For this reason, thought is more 'real' than its objects. Moreover, thought is the existential attribute of a being that 'comprehends' all objects, in the twofold sense that it understands and comprises them. The objective world comes to its true form in the world of the free subject, and the objective logic terminates in the subjective logic. In the *Jenenser* system, the latter is treated in the section on Metaphysics. It expounds the categories and principles that comprehend all objectivity as the arena of the developing subject, that is, as the arena of reason.

The rough outlines we have provided of Hegel's main ideas will be more clearly elaborated when we discuss the final system of logic. Hegel's first logic already manifests the endeavor to break through the false fixity of our concepts and to show the driving contradictions that lurk in all modes of existence and call for a higher mode of thought. The *Logic* presents only the general form of the dialectic, in its application to the general forms of being. The more concrete applications appear in Hegel's *Realphilosophie*, particularly in his social philosophy. We shall not dwell now on the difficult transition from the *Logic* and *Metaphysics* to the *Philosophy of Nature* (which will be discussed with the final logic), but shall pass directly to the *Jenenser Philosophy of Mind*, which deals with the historical realization of the free subject, man.

2. The Philosophy of Mind

The history of the human world does not begin with the struggle between the individual and nature, since the individual is really a later product in human history. The community (*Allgemeinheit*) comes first, although in a ready-made, 'immediate' form. It is as yet not a rational

community and does not have freedom as its quality. Consequently, it soon splits up into numerous antagonisms. Hegel calls this original unity in the historical world 'consciousness,' thus re-emphasizing that we have entered a realm in which everything has the character of the subject.

The first form consciousness assumes in history is not that of an individual but of a universal consciousness, perhaps best represented as the consciousness of a primitive group with all individuality submerged in the community. Feelings, sensations, and concepts are not properly the individual's but are shared among all, so that the common and not the particular determines the consciousness. But even this unity contains opposition; consciousness is what it is only through its opposition to its objects. To be sure, these, as objects of consciousness, are 'comprehended objects' (*begriffene Objekte*), or objects that cannot be divorced from the subject. Their 'being comprehended' is part of their character as objects. Either side of the opposition, consciousness or its objects, thus has the form of subjectivity, as do all the other types of opposition in the realm of mind. The integration of the opposing elements can only be an integration within subjectivity.

The world of man develops, Hegel says, in a series of integrations of opposites. In the first stage, the subject and its object take the form of consciousness and its concepts; in the second stage, they appear as the individual in conflict with other individuals; and in the final stage they appear as the nation. The last stage alone represents the attainment of a lasting integration between subject and object; the nation has its object in itself; its effort is directed solely towards reproducing itself. Corresponding to the three stages are three different 'media' of integration: language, labor, and property.

	SUBJECT	MEDIUM	OBJECT
1	Consciousness	Language	Concepts
2	Individuals or Groups of Individuals	Labor	Nature
3	Nation Community of Individuals	Property	Nation Community of Individuals

Language is the medium in which the first integration between subject and object takes place.[10] It is also the first actual community (*Allgemeinheit*), in the sense that it is objective and shared by all individuals. On the other hand, language is the first medium of individuation, for through it the individual obtains mastery over the objects he knows and names. A man is able to stake out his sphere of influence and keep others from it only when he knows his world, is conscious of his needs and powers, and communicates this knowledge to others. Language is thus also the first lever of appropriation.

Language, then, makes it possible for an individual to take a conscious position *against* his fellows and to assert his needs and desires against those of the other individuals. The resulting antagonisms are integrated through the process of labor, which also becomes the decisive force for the development of culture. The labor process is responsible for various types of integration, conditioning all the subsequent forms of community that correspond to these types: the family, civil society, and the state (the latter two terms appear only later in Hegel's philosophy). Labor first unites individuals into the family, which appropriates as 'family property'[11] the objects that provide for its

[10] *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, pp. 211 ff.
[11] Ibid., pp. 221 f.

subsistence. The family, however, finds itself and its property among other property-owning families. The conflict that develops here is not between the individual and the objects of his desire, but between one group of individuals (a family) and other similar groups. The objects are already 'appropriated'; they are the (actual or potential) property of individuals. The institutionalization of private property signifies, to Hegel, that the 'objects' have finally been incorporated into the subjective world: the objects are no longer 'dead things,' but belong, in their totality, to the sphere of the self-realization of the subject. Man has toiled and organized them, and has thus made them part and parcel of his personality. Nature thus takes its place in the history of man, and history becomes essentially human history. All historical struggles become struggles between groups of property-owning individuals. This far-reaching conception completely influences the subsequent construction of the realm of mind.

With the advent of the various property-owning family units there begins a 'struggle for mutual recognition' of their rights. Since property is looked upon as an essential and constitutive element of individuality, the individual has to preserve and defend his property in order to maintain himself as an individual. The consequent life-and-death struggle, Hegel says, can come to an end only if the opposed individuals are integrated into the community of the nation (*Volk*).

This transition from family to nation corresponds roughly to the transition from 'a state of nature' to a state of civil society, as the political theories of the eighteenth century conceived it. Hegel's interpretation of the 'struggle for mutual recognition' will be explained in our discussion of the *Phenomenology of Mind*, in which it becomes the entering wedge for freedom. The consequence of the struggle for mutual recognition is a first real inte-

gration that gives the groups or individuals in conflict an objective common interest. The consciousness that achieves this integration is again a universal (the *Volksgeist*), but its unity is no longer a primitive and 'immediate' one. It is rather a product of self conscious efforts to make the existing antagonisms work in the interest of the whole. Hegel calls it a mediated (*vermittelte*) unity. The term mediation here manifests its concrete significance. The activity of mediation is no other than the activity of labor. Through his labor, man overcomes the estrangement between the objective world and the subjective world; he transforms nature into an appropriate medium for his self-development. When objects are taken and shaped by labor, they become part of the subject who is able to recognize his needs and desires in them. Through labor, moreover, man loses that atomic existence wherein he is, as an individual, opposed to all other individuals; he becomes a member of a community. The individual, by virtue of his labor, turns into a universal; for labor is of its very nature a universal activity: its product is exchangeable among all individuals.

In his further remarks on the concept of labor, Hegel actually describes the mode of labor characteristic of modern commodity production. Indeed, he comes close to the Marxian doctrine of abstract and universal labor. We encounter the first illustration of the fact that Hegel's ontological notions are saturated with a social content expressive of a particular order of society.

Hegel states, 'the individual satisfies his needs by his labor, but not by the particular product of his labor; the latter, to fill his needs, has to become something other than it is.' [12] The particular object becomes a universal one in the process of labor—it becomes a commodity. The universality also transforms the *subject* of labor, the la-

[12] Ibid., p. 238

borer, and his individual activity. He is forced to set aside his particular faculties and desires. Nothing counts in the distribution of the product of labor but 'abstract and universal labor.' 'The labor of each is, with regard to its content, universal for the needs of all.' Labor has 'value' only as such a 'universal activity' (*allgemeine Tätigkeit*): its value is determined by 'what labor is for all, and not what it is for the individual.' [13]

This abstract and universal labor is connected with concrete individual need through the 'exchange relationships' of the market.[14] By virtue of the exchange, the products of labor are distributed among individuals according to the value of abstract labor. Hegel, therefore, calls exchange 'the return to concreteness'; [15] through it the concrete needs of men in society are fulfilled.

Hegel is obviously striving for an exact understanding of the function of labor in integrating the various individual activities into a totality of exchange relationships. He touches the sphere in which Marx later resumed the analysis of modern society. The concept of labor is not peripheral in Hegel's system, but is the central notion through which he conceives the development of society. Driven by the insight that opened this dimension to him, Hegel describes the mode of integration prevailing in a commodity-producing society in terms that clearly foreshadow Marx's critical approach.

He emphasizes two points: the complete subordination of the individual to the demon of abstract labor, and the blind and anarchic character of a society perpetuated by exchange relationships. Abstract labor cannot develop the individual's true faculties. Mechanization, the very means that should liberate man from toil, makes him a slave of

[13] Ibid.
[14] *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, p. 215.
[15] Ibid.

his labor. 'The more he subjugates his labor, the more powerless he himself becomes.' The machine reduces the necessity of toil only for the whole, not for the individual. 'The more mechanized labor becomes, the less value it has, and the more the individual must toil.' [16] 'The value of labor decreases in the same proportion as the productivity of labor increases . . . The faculties of the individual are infinitely restricted, and the consciousness of the factory worker is degraded to the lowest level of dullness.' [17] While labor thus changes from the self-realization of the individual into his self-negation, the relation between the particular needs and labor, and between the needs and the labor of the whole, takes the form of 'an incalculable, blind interdependence.' The integration of conflicting individuals through abstract labor and exchange thus establishes 'a vast system of communality and mutual interdependence, a moving life of the dead. This system moves hither and yon in a blind and elementary way, and like a wild animal calls for strong permanent control and curbing.' [18]

The tone and pathos of the descriptions point strikingly to Marx's *Capital*. It is not surprising to note that Hegel's manuscript breaks off with this picture, as if he was terrified by what his analysis of the commodity-producing society disclosed. The last sentence, however, finds him formulating a possible way out. He elaborates this in the *Realphilosophie* of 1804-5. The wild animal must be curbed, and such a process requires the organization of a strong state.

Hegel's early political philosophy is reminiscent of the origins of political theory in modern society. Hobbes also founded his Leviathan State upon the otherwise unconquerable chaos, the *bellum omnium contra omnes,* of

[16] *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, I, p. 237.
[17] Ibid., p. 239. [18] Ibid., p. 240.

individualistic society. Between Hobbes and Hegel, however, lies the period in which the absolutist state had unleashed the economic forces of capitalism, and in which political economy had uncovered some of the mechanisms of the capitalist labor process. Hegel had indulged in a study of political economy. His analysis of civil society got to the root structure of modern society and presented elaborate critical analysis, whereas Hobbes got and used intuitive insight. And even more, Hegel discovered in the upsurge of the French Revolution principles that pointed beyond the given framework of individualist society. The ideas of reason and freedom, of a unity between the common and the particular interest, denoted, for him, values that could not be sacrificed to the state. He struggled all his life to render them consonant with the necessity of 'controlling and curbing.' His attempts to solve the problem are manifold, and the final triumph goes not to the Leviathan, but to the rational state under the rule of law.

The second *Jenenser Realphilosophie* goes on to discuss the manner in which civil society is integrated with the state. Hegel discusses the political form of this society under the heading of 'Constitution.' Law (*Gesetz*) changes the blind totality of exchange relations into the consciously regulated apparatus of the state. The picture of the anarchy and confusion of civil society is painted in even darker colors than before.

> [The individual] is subject to the complete confusion and hazard of the whole. A mass of the population is condemned to the stupefying, unhealthy and insecure labor of factories, manufactories, mines, and so on. Whole branches of industry which supported a large bulk of the population suddenly fold up because the mode changes or because the values of their products fall on account of new inventions in other countries, or for other reasons. Whole masses are thus abandoned to helpless poverty. The conflict between vast wealth and vast pov-

city steps forth, a poverty unable to improve its condition. Wealth becomes . . . a predominant power. Its accumulation takes place partly by chance, partly through the general mode of distribution . . . Acquisition develops into a many-sided system which ramifies into fields from which smaller business cannot profit. The utmost abstractness of labor reaches into the most individual types of work and continues to widen its sphere. This inequality of wealth and poverty, this need and necessity turn into the utmost dismemberment of will, inner rebellion and hatred.[19]

But Hegel now stresses the positive aspect of this degrading reality. 'This necessity which means complete hazard for the individual existence is at the same time the preservative. The State power intervenes; it must see to it that every particular sphere [of life] is sustained, it must search out new outlets, must open channels of trade in foreign lands, and so on . . .'[20] The 'hazard' that prevails in society is not mere chance, but the very process by which the whole reproduces its own existence and that of each of its members. The exchange relations of the market provide the necessary integration without which isolated individuals would perish in the competitive conflict. The terrible struggles within the commodity-producing society are 'better' than those between wholly unrestricted individuals and groups—'better,' because they take place on a higher level of historical development and imply a 'mutual recognition' of individual rights. The 'contract' (*Vertrag*) expresses this recognition as a social reality. Hegel views the contract as one of the foundations of modern society; the society is actually a framework of contracts between individuals.[21] (We shall see, however, that he later takes great pains to restrict the validity of contracts to the sphere of civil society—that is, to the economic and social relations—and to exclude them as having a function

[19] *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, pp. 232-3.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Pp. 218 f.

between states.) The assurance that a relation or a performance is secured by a contract—and that the contract will be kept under all circumstances—alone makes the relations and performances in a commodity-producing society calculable and rational. 'My word must be good not for moral reasons,' but because society presupposes that there are mutual obligations on the part of its members. I do my work under the condition that another does likewise.[22] If I break my word, I break the very contract of society and not only hurt a particular person but the community; I place myself outside of the whole which can alone fulfill my right as an individual. Therefore, says Hegel, 'the universal is the substance of the contract.'[23] Contracts not only regulate individual performance, but the operation of the whole. The contract treats individuals as free and equal; at the same time it considers each not in his contingent particularity but in his 'universality,' as a homogeneous part of the whole. This identity of the particular and the universal is, of course, not yet realized. The proper potentialities of individuals are, as Hegel has pointed out before, far from preserved in civil society. Consequently, force must stand behind every contract. The threatened application of force, and not his own voluntary recognition, binds the individual to his contract. The contract thus involves the possibility of breach of the contract and the revolt of the individual against the whole.[24] Crime signifies the act of revolt, and punishment is the mechanism through which the whole restores its right over the rebellious individual. The recognition of the rule of law represents that stage of integration in which the individual reconciles himself with the whole. The rule of law differs from the rule of contracts in so far as it takes into account 'the self of the individual in his existence as well as in his knowledge.'[25] The individual knows that he

[22] Pp. 219-20. [23] P. 226. [24] P. 221. [25] P. 225.

can exist only by force of the law, not only because it protects him, but because he sees it to represent the common interest, which, in the last analysis, is the sole guarantee of his self-development. Individuals perfectly free and independent, yet united in a common interest—this is the proper notion of the law. The individual is 'confident' that he finds 'himself, his essence' in the law and that the law preserves and sustains his essential potentialities.[26]

Such a conception presupposes a state whose laws really manifest the free will of associated individuals, as if they had assembled and decided upon the best legislation for their common interest. The law could not otherwise express the will of each and at the same time 'the general will.' Given that common decision, the law would be a true identity between the individual and the whole. Hegel's conception of law envisages such a society; he is describing a goal to be attained and not a prevailing condition.

The gap between ideal and reality, however, narrows slowly. The more realistic Hegel's attitude towards history becomes, the more he endows the present with the greatness of the future ideal. But whatever the outcome of Hegel's struggle between philosophical idealism and political realism, his philosophy will not accept any state that does not operate by the rule of law. He can accept a 'power state,' but only in so far as the freedom of the individuals prevails therein and the state's power enhances their proper power.[27]

The individual can be free only as a political being. Hegel thus resumes the classical Greek conception that the *Polis* represents the true reality of human existence. Accordingly, the final unification of the social antagonisms is achieved not by the reign of law, but by the political institutions that embody the law: by the state proper. What

[26] P. 248.

[27] See below, pp. 200 ff.

is the form of government that best safeguards this embodiment and is therefore the highest form of unity between the part and the whole?

Preliminary to his answer of this question, Hegel sketches the origin of the state and the historical roles of tyranny, democracy, and monarchy. He repudiates the theory of the social contract[28] on the ground that it assumes that 'the general will' is operative in the isolated individuals prior to their entry into the state. As against the social contract theory he stresses that 'the general will' can arise only out of a long process, which culminates in the final regulation of the social antagonisms. The general will is the result and not the origin of the state, the state originates through an 'outside force' that impels the individuals against their will. Thus, 'all states are founded through the illustrious power of great men.'[29] And Hegel adds, 'not by physical force.' The great founders of the state had in their personality something of the historic power that coerces mankind to follow out its own course and to progress thereby; these personalities reflect and bear the higher knowledge and the higher morality of history even if they as individuals are not conscious of it, or even if they are driven by quite other motives. The idea which Hegel is here introducing appears later to be the *Weltgeist*.

The earliest state is of necessity a tyranny. The state forms Hegel now describes have both a historical and a normative order: tyranny is the earliest and the lowest, hereditary monarchy the latest and highest form.[30] Again, the standard by which the state is evaluated is the success it has in producing a proper integration of individuals into the whole. Tyranny integrates individuals by negating them. But it does have one positive result: it disciplines

[28] *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, II, pp. 245 6.
[29] Ibid., p. 246. [30] Pp. 246-53.

them, teaches them to obey. Obeying the person of the ruler is preparatory to obeying the law. 'The people overthrow tyranny because it is abject, detestable, and so on; in reality, however, because it has become superfluous.' [31] Tyranny ceases to be historically necessary once the discipline has been accomplished. It is then succeeded by the rule of law, that is, by democracy.

Democracy represents a real identity between the individual and the whole; the government is one with all the individuals, and their will expresses the interest of the whole. The individual pursues his own particular interest, hence he is the 'bourgeois'; but he also occupies himself with the needs and tasks of the whole, hence he is the *citoyen*.[32]

Hegel illustrates democracy by reference to the Greek city-state. There, the unity between the individual and the general will was still fortuitous; the individual had to yield to the majority, which was accidental in its turn. Such a democracy therefore could not represent the ultimate unity between the individual and the whole. 'The beautiful and happy freedom of the Greeks' integrated individuals into an 'immediate' unity only, founded on nature and feeling rather than on the conscious intellectual and moral organization of society. Mankind had to advance to a higher form of the state beyond this one, to a form in which the individual unites himself freely and consciously with others into a community that in turn preserves his real essence.

The best guardian of such a unity, in Hegel's opinion, is hereditary monarchy. The person of the monarch represents the whole elevated above all special interests; monarch by birth, he rules, as it were, 'by nature,' untouched by the antagonisms of society. He is, therefore, the most stable and enduring 'point' in the movement of the

[31] Pp. 247-8. [32] P. 249.

whole.[33] 'Public opinion' is the tie that binds the spheres of life and controls their course. The state is neither an enforced nor a natural unity, but a rational organization of society through its various 'estates.' In each estate the individual indulges his own specific activity and yet serves the community. Each estate has its particular place, its consciousness, and its morality, but the estates terminate in the 'universal' estate, that is, in the state functionaries who attend to nothing except the general interest. The functionaries are elected and each 'sphere [town, guild, and so on] administers its own affairs.' [34]

More important than these details are the questions, What qualities does hereditary monarchy possess that justify its place of honor in the philosophy of mind? How does this state form fulfill the principles that guided the construction of that philosophy? Hegel looked upon hereditary monarchy as the Christian state *par excellence,* or, more strictly, as the Christian state that came into being with the German Reformation. To him this state was the embodiment of the principle of Christian liberty, which proclaimed the freedom of man's inner conscience and his equality before God. Hegel thought that without this inner freedom the outer freedom democracy was supposed to institute and protect was of no avail. The German Reformation represented to his mind the great turning point in history that came with the pronouncement that the individual was really free only when he had become self-conscious of his inalienable autonomy.[35] Protestantism had established this self-consciousness, and shown that Christian liberty implied, in the sphere of the social reality, submission and obedience to the divine hierarchy of the state. We shall deal further with this matter when we reach the *Philosophy of Right.*

One question still to be answered affects the whole struc-

[33] P. 250. [34] P. 251. [35] P. 251.

ture of Hegel's system. The historical world, in so far as it is built, organized, and shaped by the conscious activity of thinking subjects, is a realm of mind. But the mind is fully realized and exists in its true form only when it indulges in its proper activity, namely, in art, religion, and philosophy. These domains of culture are, then, the final reality, the province of ultimate truth. And this is precisely Hegel's conviction: the absolute mind lives only in art, religion, and philosophy. All three have the same content in a different form: Art apprehends the truth by mere intuition (*Anschauung*), in a tangible and therefore limited form; Religion perceives it free of such limitation, but only as mere 'assertion' and belief; Philosophy comprehends it through knowledge and possesses it as its inalienable property. On the other hand, these spheres of culture exist only in the historical development of mankind, and the state is the final stage of this development. What, then, is the relation between the state and the realm of absolute mind? Does the rule of the state extend over art, religion, and philosophy, or is it rather limited by them?

The problem has been frequently discussed. It has been pointed out that Hegel's attitude underwent several changes, that he was first inclined to elevate the state above the cultural spheres, that he then co-ordinated it with or even subordinated it to them, and that he then returned to the original position, the predominance of the state. There are apparent contradictions in Hegel's statements on this point even within the same philosophical period. In the second *Jenenser Realphilosophie* he declares that the absolute mind 'is at first the life of a nation in general; however, the Mind has to free itself from this life,' [86] and he says, moreover, that with art, religion, and philosophy, 'the absolute free Mind . . . produces a different world, one in which it has its proper form, where its work is

[86] P. 253.

accomplished, and where the Mind attains the intuition of its own as its own.' [37] Contrary to these statements, Hegel says in his discussion of the relation between religion and the state that 'the government stands above all; it is the Mind which knows itself as the universal essence and reality . . .' [38] Furthermore, he calls the state 'the reality of the kingdom of heaven . . . The State is the spirit of reality, whatever appears within the State must conform to it.' [39] The meaning of these contradictions and their possible solution can be made clear only through an understanding of the constitutive role of history in Hegel's system. Here, we shall attempt but a preliminary explanation.

Hegel's first system already reveals the outstanding traits of his philosophy, especially its emphasis on the universal as the true being. We indicated in our introduction the socio-historical roots of this 'universalism,' showing that its base was the lack of a 'community' in individualist society. Hegel remained faithful to the heritage of the eighteenth century and incorporated its ideals into the very structure of his philosophy. He insisted that the 'truly universal' was a community that preserved and fulfilled the demands of the individual. One might interpret his dialectic as the philosophic attempt to reconcile his ideals with an antagonistic social reality. Hegel recognized the great forward surges that must be generated by the prevailing order of society—the development of material as well as cultural productivity; the destruction of obsolete power relations that hampered the advance of mankind; and the emancipation of the individual so that he might be the free subject of his life. When he stated that every 'immediate unity' (which does not imply an opposition between its component parts) is, with regard to the possibilities of human development, inferior to a unity pro-

[37] P. 263. [38] P. 267. [39] P. 270.

duced by integrating real antagonisms, he was thinking of the society of his own time. The reconciliation of the individual and the universal seemed impossible without the full unfolding of those antagonisms which push the prevailing forms of life to a point where they openly contradict their content. Hegel has described this process in his picture of modern society.

The actual conditions of modern society are the strongest instance of dialectic in history. There is no doubt that these conditions, however they might be justified on the ground of economic necessity, contradict the ideal of freedom. The highest potentialities of mankind lie in the rational union of free individuals, that is, in the universal and not in fixed particularities. The individual can hope to fulfill himself only if he is a free member of a real community.

The enduring quest for such a community amidst the haunting terror of an anarchic society is at the back of Hegel's insistence upon the intrinsic connection between truth and universality. He was thinking of the fulfillment of that quest when he designated the true universality as the end of the dialectical process and as the final reality. Time and again, the concrete social implications of the concept of universality break through his philosophic formulations, and the picture of an association of free individuals united in a common interest comes clearly to light. We quote the famous passage in the *Aesthetics:*

> True independence consists alone in the unity and in the interpenetration of both the individuality and the universality with each other. The universal acquires through the individual its concrete existence, and the subjectivity of the individual and particular discovers in the universal the unassailable basis and the most genuine form of its reality . . .
>
> In the Ideal [state], it is precisely the particular individuality which ought to persist in inseparable harmony with the substantive totality, and to the full extent that freedom and

independence of the subjectivity may attach to the Ideal the world-environment of conditions and relations should possess no essential objectivity apart from the subject and the individual.[40]

The *Philosophy of Mind,* and in fact the whole of the Hegelian system, is a portrayal of the process whereby 'the individual becomes universal' and whereby 'the construction of universality' takes place.

[40] *The Philosophy of Fine Arts,* trans. F. P. R. Osmaston, George Bell and Sons, London 1920, vol. I, pp. 243 f.

IV

The Phenomenology of Mind (1807)

HEGEL wrote the *Phenomenology of Mind* in 1806 in Jena while the Napoleonic armies were approaching that city. He finished it as the battle of Jena sealed the fate of Prussia and enthroned the heir of the French Revolution over the powerless remnants of the old German Reich. The feeling that a new epoch in world history had just begun pervades Hegel's book. It marks his first philosophical judgment on history and draws its final conclusions from the French Revolution, which now becomes the turning point of the historical as well as the philosophical way to truth.

Hegel saw that the result of the French Revolution was not the realization of freedom, but the establishment of a new despotism. He interpreted its course and its issue not as a historical accident, but as a necessary development. The process of emancipating the individual necessarily results in terror and destruction as long as it is carried out by individuals *against* the state, and not *by* the state itself. The state alone can provide emancipation, though it cannot provide *perfect* truth and *perfect* freedom. These last are to be found only in the proper realm of mind, in morality, religion, and philosophy. We have already encountered this sphere as the realization of truth and freedom in Hegel's first *Philosophy of Mind*. There, however, they were founded on an adequate state order and remained in an intrinsic connection with it. This connection is all but lost in the *Phenomenology of Mind*. The

state ceases now to have an all-embracing significance. Freedom and reason are made activities of the pure mind and do not require a definite social and political order as a pre-condition, but are compatible with the already existing state.

We may assume that his experience of the breakdown of liberal ideas in the history of his own time drove Hegel to take refuge in the pure mind, and that for philosophy's sake he preferred reconciliation with the prevailing system to the terrible contingencies of a new upheaval. The reconciliation that now takes place between philosophical idealism and the given society announces itself not so much as a change in the Hegelian system as such, but as a change in the treatment and function of the dialectic. In the preceding periods the dialectic was oriented to the actual process of history rather than to the end-product of this process. The sketchy form of the *Jenenser Philosophy of Mind* strengthened the impression that something new could yet happen to the mind, and that its development was far from concluded. Furthermore, the *Jenenser* system elaborated the dialectic in the concrete process of labor and of social integration. In the *Phenomenology of Mind* the antagonisms of this concrete dimension are leveled and harmonized. 'The world becomes Mind' takes on the meaning not only that the world in its totality becomes the adequate arena in which the plans of mankind are to be fulfilled, but also means that the world itself reveals a steady progress towards the absolute truth, that nothing new can happen to mind, or, that everything that does happen to it eventually contributes to its advancement. There are, of course, failures and repulses; progress by no means takes place in a straight line, but is produced by the interplay of ceaseless conflicts. The negativity, as we shall see, remains the source and the motive power of the movement. Every failure and every setback, however, pos-

sesses its proper good and its proper truth. Every conflict implies its own solution. The change in Hegel's point of view becomes manifest in the unshakable certainty with which he determines the end of the process. The mind, despite all deviations and defeats, despite misery and deterioration, will attain its goal, or, rather, has attained it, in the prevailing social system. The negativity seems to be a *secure* stage in the growth of mind rather than the force that goads it beyond; the opposition in the dialectic appears as a wilful play rather than a struggle of life and death.

Hegel conceived the *Phenomenology of Mind* as an introduction to his philosophical system. During the execution of the work he altered his original plan, however. Knowing that he would not be able to publish the rest of his system in the near future, he incorporated large parts of it into his introduction. The extreme difficulties that the book offers are, to a great extent, due to this procedure.

As an introductory volume, the work intends to lead human understanding from the realm of daily experience to that of real philosophical knowledge, to absolute truth. This truth is the same that Hegel had already demonstrated in the *Jenenser* system, namely, the knowledge and process of the world as mind.

The world in reality is not as it appears, but as it is comprehended by philosophy. Hegel begins with the experience of the ordinary consciousness in everyday life. He shows that this mode of experience, like any other, contains elements that undermine its confidence in its ability to perceive 'the real,' and force the search to proceed to ever higher modes of understanding. The advance to these higher modes is thus an internal process of experience and is not produced from without. If man pays strict attention to the results of his experience, he will abandon one type of knowledge and proceed to another;

he will go from sense-certainty to perception, from perception to understanding, from understanding to self-certainty, until he reaches the truth of reason.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* thus presents the immanent history of human experience. This is not, to be sure, the experience of common sense, but one already shaken in its security, overlaid with the feeling that it does not possess the whole truth. It is an experience already en route to real knowledge. The reader who is to understand the various parts of the work must already dwell in the 'element of philosophy.' The 'We' that appears so often denotes not everyday men but philosophers.

The factor that determines the course of this experience is the changing relation between consciousness and its objects. If the philosophizing subject adheres to its objects and lets itself be guided by their meaning, it will find that the objects undergo a change by which their form as well as their relation to the subject alters. When experience begins, the object seems a stable entity, independent of consciousness; subject and object appear to be alien to one another. The progress of knowledge, however, reveals that the two do not subsist in isolation. It becomes clear that the object gets its objectivity from the subject. 'The real,' which consciousness actually holds in the endless flux of sensations and perceptions, is a universal that cannot be reduced to objective elements free of the subject (for example, *quality, thing, force, laws*). In other words, the real object is constituted by the (intellectual) activity of the subject; somehow, it essentially 'pertains' to the subject. The latter discovers that it itself stands 'behind' the objects, that the world becomes real only by force of the comprehending power of consciousness.

This is, however, at first nothing but a re-statement of the case of transcendental idealism, or, as Hegel says, it is a truth only 'for us,' the philosophizing subjects, and

not yet a truth manifested in the objective world. Hegel goes further. He says, self-consciousness has yet to demonstrate that it is the true *reality;* it must actually make the world its free realization. Referring to this task, Hegel declares the subject to be 'absolute negativity,' signifying that it has the power to negate every given condition and to make it its own conscious work. This is not an epistemological activity and cannot be carried out solely within the process of knowledge, for that process cannot be severed from the historical struggle between man and his world, a struggle that is itself a constitutive part of the way to truth and of the truth itself. The subject must make the world its own doing if it is to recognize itself as the only reality. The process of knowledge becomes the process of history.

We have already reached this conclusion in the *Jenenser Philosophy of Mind.* Self-consciousness carries itself into the life-and-death struggle among individuals. From here on, Hegel links the epistemological process of self-consciousness (from sense-certainty to reason) with the historical process of mankind from bondage to freedom. The 'modes or forms [*Gestalten*] of consciousness' [1] appear simultaneously as objective historical realities, 'states of the world' (*Weltzustände*). The constant transition from philosophical to historical analysis—which has often been criticized as a confusion, or an arbitrary metaphysical interpretation of history—is intended to verify and demonstrate the historical character of the basic philosophical concepts. All of them comprehend and retain actual historical stages in the development of mankind. Each form of consciousness that appears in the immanent progress of knowledge crystallizes as the life of a given historical epoch. The process leads from the Greek city-state to the French Revolution.

[1] *Phenomenology of Mind,* trans. J. B. Baillie, London (The Macmillan Company, New York), 1910, vol. I, p. 34.

Hegel describes the French Revolution as the unloosing of a 'self-destructive' freedom, self-destructive because the consciousness that strove here to change the world in accordance with its subjective interests had not yet found its truth. In other words, man did not discover his real interest, he did not freely place himself under laws that secure his own freedom and that of the whole. The new state created by the Revolution, Hegel says, only altered the external form of the objective world, making it a medium for the subject, but it did not achieve the subject's *essential* freedom.

The achievement of the latter takes place in the transition from the French revolutionary era to that of German idealist culture. The realization of true freedom is thus transferred from the plane of history to the inner realm of the mind. Hegel says: 'absolute freedom leaves its self-destructive sphere of reality [that is, the historical epoch of the French Revolution] and passes over into another realm, that of the self-conscious mind. Here, freedom is held to be true in so far as it is unreal . . .'[2] This new realm had been a discovery of Kant's ethical idealism. Within it, the autonomous individual gives himself the unconditional duty to obey universal laws that he imposes upon himself of his own free will. Hegel did not, however, regard this 'realm' as the final abode of reason. The conflict that developed from Kant's reconciliation of the individual with the universal, a conflict between the dictate of duty and the desire for happiness, forced the individual to seek the truth in other solutions. He looks for it in art and religion and finally finds it in the 'absolute knowledge' of dialectical philosophy. There, all opposition between consciousness and its object is overcome; the subject possesses and knows the world as its own reality, as reason.

[2] Ibid., p. 604.

The *Phenomenology of Mind* in this way leads up to the *Logic*. The latter unfolds the structure of the universe, not in the changing forms that it has for knowledge that is not yet absolute, but in its true essence. It presents 'the truth in its true form.' [3] Just as the experience with which the *Phenomenology* began was not everyday experience, the knowledge with which it ends is not traditional philosophy, but a philosophy that has absorbed the truth of all previous philosophies and with it all the experience mankind has accumulated during its long trek to freedom. It is a philosophy of a self-conscious humanity that lays claim to a mastery of men and things and to its right to shape the world accordingly, a philosophy that enunciates the highest ideals of modern individualist society.

After this brief preliminary survey of the broad perspective of the *Phenomenology of Mind*, we now turn to a discussion of its principal conceptions in greater detail.

The Preface to the *Phenomenology* is one of the greatest philosophical undertakings of all times, constituting no less an attempt than to reinstate philosophy as the highest form of human knowledge, as 'the Science.' We shall here limit ourselves to its main points.

Hegel starts with a critical analysis of the philosophic currents of the turn of the eighteenth century, and proceeds to develop his concept of philosophy and philosophic truth. Knowledge has its source in the vision that essence and existence are distinct in the various cognitive processes. The objects it gets in immediate experience fail to satisfy knowledge, because they are accidental and incomplete, and it turns to seek the truth in the *notion* of objects, convinced that the right notion is not a mere subjective intellectual form, but the essence *of things*. This,

[3] P. 35.

however, is but the first step of knowledge. Its major effort is to demonstrate and expound the relation between essence and existence, between the truth preserved in the notion and the actual state in which things exist.

The various sciences differ from each other by the way in which the objects they deal with are related to their truth. This is confusing unless one bears in mind that for Hegel truth signifies a form *of existence* as well as of knowledge, and that, consequently, the relation between a being and its truth is an objective relation of things themselves. Hegel illustrates this conception by contrasting mathematical and philosophical knowledge. The essence or 'nature' of the right-angle triangle is that its sides are related just as the Pythagorean proposition has it; but this truth is 'outside' the triangle. The proof of the proposition consists in a process carried on solely by the knowing subject. '. . . the triangle ... . is taken to pieces, and its parts made into other figures to which the construction gives rise in the triangle.' [4] The necessity for the construction does not arise from the nature or notion of the triangle. 'The process of mathematical proof does not belong to the object; it is a function that takes place outside of the matter in hand. The nature of a right-angled triangle does not break itself up into factors in the manner set forth in the mathematical construction which is required to prove the proposition expressing the relation of its parts. The entire process of producing the result is an affair of knowledge which takes its own way of going about it.' [5] In other words, the truth about mathematical objects exists outside of themselves, in the knowing subject. These objects, therefore, are in a strict sense untrue and unessential 'external' entities.

The objects of philosophy, on the other hand, bear an intrinsic relation to their truth. For example, the princi-

[4] P. 40. [5] P. 39.

ple that 'the nature of man requires freedom and that freedom is a form of reason' is not a truth imposed upon man by an arbitrary philosophical theory, but can be proved to be the inherent aim of man, his very reality. Its proof is not advanced by the external process of knowledge but by the history of man. In philosophy, the relation of an object to its truth is an actual happening (*Geschehen*). To come back to the example, man finds that he is *not* free, that he is separated from his truth, leading a fortuitous, untrue existence. Freedom is something he must acquire by overcoming his bondage, and he acquires it when he eventually knows his true potentialities. Freedom presupposes conditions that render freedom possible, namely, conscious and rational mastery of the world. The known history of mankind verifies the truth of this conclusion. The notion of man is his history, as apprehended by philosophy. Thus, essence and existence are actually interrelated in philosophy, and the process of proving the truth there has to do with the existing object itself. The essence arises in the process of existence, and conversely, the process of existence is a 'return' to the essence.[6]

Philosophical knowledge aims only at the 'essentials' that have a constitutive bearing upon man's destiny and that of his world. The sole object of philosophy is the world in its true form, the world as reason. Reason, again, comes into its own only with the development of mankind. Philosophic truth, therefore, is quite definitely concerned with man's existence; it is his innermost prod and goal. This, in the last analysis, is the meaning of the statement that truth is immanent in the object of philosophy. The truth fashions the very existence of the object and is not, as in mathematics, indifferent to it. Existing in truth is a matter of life (and death), and the way to truth is

[6] P. 39.

not only an epistemological but also a historical process.

This relation between truth and existence distinguishes the philosophic method. A mathematical truth may be arrested in one proposition; the proposition is true and its contradictory is false. In philosophy, the truth is a real process that cannot be put into a proposition. 'The abstract or unreal is not its element and content, but the real, what is self-establishing, has life within itself, existence in its very notion. It is the process that creates its own moments in its course, and goes through them all; and the whole of this movement constitutes its positive content, and its truth.' [7] No single proposition can grasp this process. For instance, the proposition, 'The nature of man is freedom in reason,' is, if taken by itself, untrue. It omits all the facts that make up the meaning of freedom and of reason, and that are assembled in the whole historical drive towards freedom and reason. Furthermore, the proposition is false in so far as freedom and reason can only appear as the result of the historical process. The conquest of bondage and irrationality, and hence bondage and irrationality themselves, are essential parts of the truth. Falsehood here is as necessary and real as truth. The falsehood must be conceived as the 'mistaken form' or untruth of the real object—this object in its untrue existence; the false is the '*otherness,* the negative aspect of the substance,' [8] but none the less a part of it and hence constitutive in its truth.

The dialectical method conforms to this structure that the philosophic object has, and attempts to reconstruct and follow its real movement. A philosophic system is true only if it includes the negative state and the positive, and reproduces the process of becoming false and then returning to truth. As a system of this kind, the dialectic is the true method of philosophy. It shows that the object with

[7] Pp. 43-4. [8] P. 36.

which it deals exists in a state of 'negativity,' which the object, through the pressures of its own existence, throws off in the process of regaining its truth.

If, then, in philosophy, no single proposition is true apart from the whole, in what sense is the whole system true? The dialectical system alters the structure and meaning of the proposition and makes it something quite different from the proposition of traditional logic. The latter logic, to which Hegel alludes as 'the logic of common sense,' meaning the logic of traditional scientific method as well, treats propositions as consisting of a subject, which serves as a fixed and stable base, and a predicate attached to it. The predicates are the accidental properties, or, in Hegel's language, 'determinations' of a more or less fixed substance.

As a contrast to this view of the proposition, Hegel sets the 'speculative judgment' in philosophy.[9] The speculative judgment does not have a stable and passive subject. Its subject is active and develops itself into its predicates. The predicates are various forms of the subject's existence. Or, to state it somewhat differently, what happens is that the subject 'goes under' (*geht zu Grunde*) and turns into the predicate. The speculative judgment thus shakes 'the solid base' of the traditional proposition 'to its foundations, and the only object is this very movement of the subject.'[10] For example, the proposition God is Being, taken as a speculative judgment, does not mean that the subject, God, 'possesses' or 'supports' the predicate 'Being' among many other predicates, but that the subject, God, 'passes' into Being. 'Being' here is 'not predicate but the essential nature' of God. The subject God 'seems to cease to be what He was when the proposition was put forward, viz. a fixed subject,' and to become the predicate.[11] Whereas the traditional judgment and proposition imply

[9] P. 61. [10] P. 59. [11] P. 61.

a clear distinction of subject from predicate, the speculative judgment subverts and destroys 'the nature of judgment or of the proposition in general.' It strikes the decisive blow against traditional formal logic. The subject becomes the predicate without at the same time becoming identical with it. The process cannot be adequately expressed in a single proposition; 'the proposition as it appears is a mere empty form.' [12] The locus of truth is not the proposition, but the dynamic system of speculative judgments in which every single judgment must be 'sublated' by another, so that only the whole process represents the truth.

The traditional logic and the traditional concept of truth are 'shaken to their foundations' not by philosophic fiat but by insight into the dynamic of reality. The speculative judgment has for its content the objective process of reality in its essential, 'comprehended form,' not in its appearance. In this very basic sense, Hegel's change from traditional to material logic marked the first step in the direction of unifying theory and practice. His protest against the fixed and formal 'truth' of traditional logic was in effect a protest against divorcing truth and its forms from concrete processes; a protest against severing truth from any direct guiding influence on reality.

In Germany, idealistic philosophy championed the right of theory to guide practice. For idealistic philosophy represented the most advanced form of consciousness that then prevailed, and the idea of a world permeated with freedom and reason had no securer refuge than was offered by this remote sphere of culture. The subsequent development of European thought cannot be understood apart from its idealist origins.

A thorough analysis of the *Phenomenology of Mind*

[12] P. 65.

would require more than a volume. We may forego that analysis, since the latter parts of the work deal with problems we have already outlined in the discussion of the *Jenenser* system. We shall confine our interpretation to the opening sections, which elaborate the dialectical method in great detail and set the pattern for the entire work.[13]

Knowledge begins when philosophy destroys the experience of daily life. Analysis of this experience is the starting point of the search for truth. The object of experience is first given through the senses and takes the form of sense-knowledge or sense-certainty (*sinnliche Gewissheit*). Characteristic of this kind of experience is the fact that its subject as well as its object appears as an 'individual this,' here and now. I see this house, here at this particular place and at this particular moment. The house is taken as 'real' and seems to exist *per se*. The 'I' that sees it seems to be unessential, 'can as well be as *not* be,' and 'only knows the object because the object exists.' [14]

If we analyze a bit, we see that what is known in this experience, what sense-certainty holds as its invariant own amid the flux of impressions, is not the object, the house, but the Here and the Now. If I turn my head, the house disappears and some other object appears, which, with another turn of my head, will likewise disappear. To keep hold of and to define the actual content of sense-certainty I must refer to the Here and Now as the only elements that remain permanent in the continuous change of objective data. What is the Here and Now? *Here* is a house, but it is likewise not a house but a tree, a street, a man, and so on. Now is daytime, but somewhat later now is night, then morning, and so on. The Now remains identical

[13] Compare J. Loewenberg's excellent analysis in his two articles on the Phenomenology of Mind, in *Mind*, vol. XLIII and XLIV, 1934-5.

[14] P. 92.

throughout the differences of day, night, or morning. Moreover, it is Now just because it is neither day, nor night, nor any other moment of time. It preserves itself through the negation of all other moments of time. In other words, the Now exists as something negative; its being is a non-being. The same holds true for Here. Here is neither the house nor the tree nor the street, but what 'is and remains in the disappearance of the house, tree, and so on, and is indifferently house, tree.' [15] That is to say, the Now and the Here are something *Universal.* Hegel says an entity 'which is by and through negation, which is neither this nor that, which is a *not-this,* and with equal indifference this as well as that—a thing of this kind we call a Universal.' The analysis of sense-certainty thus demonstrates the reality of the universal and develops at the same time the philosophic notion of universality. The reality of the universal is proved by the very content of the observable facts; it exists in their process and can be grasped only in and through the particulars.

This is the first result we obtain from philosophical analysis of sense-certainty: it is not the particular, individual object, but the universal that is 'the truth of sense-certainty, the true content of sense-experience.' [16] The result implies something more astonishing. Sense-experience holds it self-evident that the object is the essential, 'the real,' while the subject is unessential and its knowledge dependent upon the object. The true relation is now found to be 'just the reverse of what first appeared.' [17] The universal has turned out to be the true content of experience. And the locus of the universal is the subject and not the object; the universal exists 'in knowledge, which formerly was the non-essential factor.' [18] The object is not *per se;* it is 'because I know it.' The certainty of sense experi-

[15] P. 94. [16] Ibid. [17] P. 95. [18] Ibid.

ence is thus grounded in the subject; it is, as Hegel says, banished from the object, and forced back into the 'I.'

Further analysis of sense-experience reveals that the 'I' goes through the same dialectical process as the object, showing itself to be something universal. At first, the individual I, my ego, seems the sole stable point in the flux of sense data. 'The disappearance of the particular Now and Here that we mean is prevented by the fact that I keep hold of them.' I assert that it is daytime and that I see a house. I record this truth, and someone else reading it later may assert that it is night and that he sees a tree. 'Both truths have the same authenticity' and both become false with a change of time and place. The truth, therefore, cannot attach to a particular individual I. If I say I see a house here and now, I imply that everyone could take my place as subject of this perception. I assume 'the I *qua* universal, whose seeing is neither the seeing of this tree nor of this house, but just seeing.' Just as the Here and Now are universal as against their individual content, so the I is universal as against all individual I's.

The idea of a universal I is an abomination to common sense, though everyday language makes constant use of it. When I say 'I' see, hear, and so on, I put everybody in my place, substitute any other I for my individual I. 'When I say "I," "this individual," I say quite generally "all I's," everyone is what I say, everyone is "I," this individual I.'

Sense-experience thus discovers that truth lies neither with its particular object nor with the individual I. The truth is the result of a double process of negation, namely, (1) the negation of the 'per se' existence of the object, and (2) the negation of the individual I with the shifting of the truth to the universal I. Objectivity is thus twice 'mediated' or constructed by consciousness and henceforward remains tied to consciousness. The development of

the objective world is throughout interwoven in the development of consciousness.

Common sense resents such a destruction of its truth and claims that it can indicate the exact particular Here and Now it means. Hegel accepts the challenge. 'Let us, then, see how that immediate Here and Now which is shown to us is constituted.' [19] When I point to a particular Now, 'it has already ceased to be by the time it is pointed out. The Now that is, is other than the one indicated, and we see that the Now is just this—to be when it no longer is.' Pointing to the Now is thus a process involving the following stages: (1) I point to the Now and assert that it is thus and so. 'I point it out, however, as something that has been.' In so doing, I cancel the first truth and assert (2) that the Now *has been,* and that such is the truth. But what has been, *is not.* Thus, (3) I cancel the second truth, negate the negation of the Now, and assert it again as true. This Now, however, which results from the whole process, is not the Now that common sense first meant. It is indifferent to present or past. It is the Now that is past, the one that is present, and so on, and is in all this one and the same Now. In other words, it is something universal.

Sense-experience has thus itself demonstrated that its real content is not the particular but the universal. 'The dialectic process involved in sense-certainty is nothing else than the mere history of its process—of its experience; and sense-certainty itself is nothing else than simply this history.' [20] Experience itself passes to a higher mode of knowledge, which aims at the universal. Sense-certainty turns into perception.

Perception (*Wahrnehmung*) is distinguished from sense-certainty by the fact that its 'principle' is universality.[21] The objects of perception are things (*Dinge*), and things

[19] P. 98. [20] P. 100. [21] P. 104.

remain identical in the changes of Here and Now. For example, I call this thing I perceive here and now 'salt.' I refer not to the particular heres and nows in which it is present to me but to a specific unity in the diversity of its 'properties' (*Eigenschaften*). I refer to the 'thinghood' of the thing. The salt is white, cubical in shape, and so on. These properties in themselves are universal, common to many things. The thing itself seems to be nothing but the 'simple togetherness' of such properties, their general 'medium.' But it is more than such simple togetherness. Its properties are not arbitrary and exchangeable, but rather 'exclude and negate' other properties. If the salt is white and pungent, it cannot be black and sweet. The exclusion is not an arbitrary matter of definition; on the contrary, the definition is dependent on the data offered by the thing itself. It is the salt that excludes and negates certain properties that contradict its 'being salt.' The thing is thus not a 'unity indifferent to what it is, but . . . an *excluding*, repelling unity.' [22]

So far, the object seems to be a definite one, which perception merely has to accept and to 'take unto itself' passively. Perception, like sense-experience, first gathers the truth from the object. But, like sense-experience also, it discovers that the *subject* itself constitutes the objectivity of the thing. For when perception attempts to determine what the thing really is, it plunges into a series of contradictions. The thing is a unity and at the same time a multiplicity. The contradiction cannot be avoided by assigning the two aspects to each of the two factors of perception, so that unity is attached to the consciousness of the subject and the multiplicity to the object. Hegel shows that this would only lead to new contradictions. Nor does it help to assume that the thing is *really* a unity and that the multiplicity is produced by its relation to other

[22] P. 108.

things.[23] All such attempts to escape the contradiction only serve to demonstrate that it is inescapable and constitutes the very content of perception. The thing is in itself unity and difference, unity in difference. Hegel's further analysis of this relationship leads to a new determination of universality. The real universal contains diversity and at the same time maintains itself as an 'excluding and repelling' *unity* in all particular conditions. In this way, the analysis of perception goes beyond the point reached in the analysis of sense-experience. The universal now denoted as the true content of knowledge bears a different character. The unity of the thing is not only determined but constituted by its relation to other things, and its thinghood consists in this very relation. The salt, for example, is what it is only in relation to our taste, to the food to which it is added, to sugar, and so on. The thing salt, to be sure, is more than the mere 'togetherness' of such relations; it is a unity in and for itself, but this unity exists only in these relations and is nothing 'behind' or outside them. The thing becomes itself through its opposition to other things; it is, as Hegel says, the unity of itself with its opposite, or, of being-for-itself with being-for-another.[24] In other words, the very 'substance' of the thing must be gleaned from its self-established relation to other things. This, however, is not within the power of perception to accomplish; it is the work of (conceptual) *understanding*.

The analysis of perception produced 'unity in difference' or the 'unconditioned universal' as the true form of the object of knowledge, unconditioned because the unity of the thing asserts itself despite and through all delimiting conditions. When perception attempted to grasp the real content of its object, the 'thing' turned out to be a self-constituting unity in a diversity of relations to other

[23] P. 117. [24] P. 119.

things. Hegel now introduces the concept of force to explain how the thing is held together as a self-determining unity in this process. The substance of the thing, he says, can only be understood as force.

The concept of force takes in all the elements that philosophic analysis has so far found to be characteristic of the real object of knowledge. Force is itself a relation, the elements of which are distinct and yet not separate from each other; it is in all conditions not contingent but necessarily determined by itself.[25] We shall not follow the details of Hegel's discussion of this concept, but shall limit ourselves to its conclusions.

If we take the substance of things to be force, we actually split reality into two dimensions. We transcend the perceptible properties of things and reach something beyond and behind them, which we define as 'the real.' For, force is not an entity in the world of perception; it is not a thing or quality we can point to, such as white or cubical. We can only perceive the effect or expression of it, and for us its existence consists in this expression of itself. Force is nothing apart from its effect; its being consists entirely in this coming to be and passing away. If the substance of things is force, their mode of existing turns out to be appearance. For, a being that exists only as 'vanishing,' one that 'is *per se* straightway non-being, we call . . . a semblance (*Schein*).'[26] The term appearance or semblance has for Hegel a twofold meaning. It means first that a thing exists in such a way that its existence is different from its essence; secondly, it means that that which appears is not *mere* seeming (*blosser Schein*), but is the expression of an essence that *exists* only *as appearing.*

[25] See the *Jenenser Logik*, p. 50. Force 'combines in itself the two sides of the relation, the identity and the difference . . . Conceived as Force, the substance is Cause in itself . . . Force is the very determinateness that makes the substance this determinate substance and at the same time posits it as relating itself to its opposite.'

[26] *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 136.

In other words, the appearance is not a non-being but is the appearance of the essence.

The discovery that force is the substance of things gives the process of knowledge insight into the realm of essence. The world of sense-experience and perception is the realm of appearance. The realm of essence is a 'supersensible' world beyond this changing and evanescent realm of appearance. Hegel calls this early vision of the essence 'the first and therefore imperfect manifestation of Reason'—imperfect because consciousness still finds its truth, 'in the form of an object,' that is, as something opposed to the subject. The realm of essence comes forth as the 'inner' world of things. It remains 'for consciousness a bare and simple beyond, because consciousness does not as yet find itself in it.'

But truth cannot remain eternally out of reach of the subject if man is to escape from an untrue existence in an untrue world. The ensuing analysis therefore buckles down to the task of showing that behind the appearance of things is the subject itself, who constitutes their very essence. Hegel's insistence that the subject be recognized behind the appearance of things is an expression of the basic desire of idealism that man transform the estranged world into a world of his own. The *Phenomenology of Mind* accordingly follows through by merging the sphere of epistemology with the world of history, passing from the discovery of the subject to the task of mastering reality through self-conscious practice.

The concept of force leads to the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. If the essence of things is conceived as force, the stability of the objective world dissolves into an interplay of movement. The concept, however, means more than a mere play. A force wields a definite power over its effects and remains itself amid its various manifestations. In other words, it acts according to

an inherent 'law,' so that, as Hegel puts it, the truth of force is 'the *law* of Force' (*das Gesetz der Kraft*).[27] The realm of essence is not, as it first seemed, a blind play of forces, but a domain of permanent *laws* determining the form of the perceptible world. While the multiplicity of these forms seems at first to require a corresponding multitude of laws, further analysis discloses that the diversity is but a deficient aspect of the truth, and knowledge, in setting out to unify the many laws into an over-arching single law, succeeds in this early phase in gleaning the general form of such. Knowledge finds that things exist under a law if they have 'gathered and preserved all the moments of their appearance' into their inner essence and are capable of preserving their essential identity in their relations to all things. This identity of the 'substance,' as we have already indicated, must be understood as the specific work of a 'subject' that is essentially a constant process of 'unification of opposites.'[28]

The previous analysis has disclosed that the essence of things is force, and the essence of force, law. Force under law is what characterizes the self-conscious subject. The essence of the objective world thus points to the existence of the self-conscious subject. Understanding finds nothing but *itself* when it seeks the essence behind the appearance of things. 'It is manifest that behind the so-called curtain, which is to hide the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless *we ourselves* go behind there, as much in order that we may thereby see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen.'[29] The truth of understanding is self-consciousness. The first chapter of the *Phenomenology* has come to a close and the history of self-consciousness begins.

Before we follow this history, we must evaluate the general significance of the first chapter. The reader learns

[27] Ibid., p. 142. [28] See above, p. 69. [29] Ibid., p. 162.

that behind the curtain of appearance is not an unknown thing-in-itself, but the knowing subject. Self-consciousness is the essence of things. We usually say this is the step from Kant to Hegel, that is, from critical to absolute idealism. But to say only that is to omit the purpose that drove Hegel to make this transition.

The first three sections of the *Phenomenology* are a critique of positivism [30] and, even more, of 'reification.' To begin with the latter, Hegel attempts to show that man can know the truth only if he breaks through his 'reified' world. We borrow the term 'reification' from the Marxist theory, where it denotes the fact that all relations between men in the world of capitalism appear as relations between things, or, that what in the social world seem to be the relations of things and 'natural' laws that regulate their movement are in reality relations of men and historical forces. The commodity, for instance, embodies in all its qualities the *social* relations of labor; capital is the power of disposing over men; and so on. By virtue of the inversion, the world has become an alienated, estranged world, in which man does not recognize or fulfill himself, but is overpowered by dead things and laws.

Hegel hit upon the same fact within the dimension of philosophy. Common sense and traditional scientific thought take the world as a totality of things, more or less existing *per se,* and seek the truth in objects that are taken to be independent of the knowing subject. This is more than an epistemological attitude; it is as pervasive as the practice of men and leads them to accept the feeling that they are secure only in knowing and handling objective facts. The more remote an idea is from the impulses, interests, and wants of the living subject, the more true it becomes. And this, according to Hegel, is the ut-

[30] Positivism is used as a general term for the philosophy of 'common sense' experience.

most defamation of truth. For there is, in the last analysis, no truth that does not *essentially concern* the living subject and that is not the subject's truth. The world is an estranged and untrue world so long as man does not destroy its dead objectivity and recognize himself and his own life 'behind' the fixed form of things and laws. When he finally wins this *self-consciousness,* he is on his way not only to the truth of himself but also of his world. And with the recognition goes the doing. He will try to put this truth into action and *make* the world what it *essentially* is, namely, the fulfillment of man's self-consciousness.

This is the impulse animating the opening sections of the *Phenomenology.* True practice presupposes true knowledge and the latter is endangered above all by the positivist claim. Positivism, the philosophy of common sense, appeals to the certainty of facts, but, as Hegel shows, in a world where facts do not at all present what reality can and ought to be, positivism amounts to giving up the real potentialities of mankind for a false and alien world. The positivist attack on universal concepts, on the ground they cannot be reduced to observable facts, cancels from the domain of knowledge everything that may not yet be a fact. In demonstrating that sense-experience and perception, to which positivism appeals, in themselves imply and mean not the particular observed fact but something universal, Hegel is giving a final immanent refutation of positivism. When he emphasizes time and again that the universal is pre-eminent over the particular, he is struggling against limiting truth to the particular 'given.' The universal is more than the particular. This signifies in the concrete that the potentialities of men and things are not exhausted in the given forms and relations in which they may actually appear; it means that men and things are all they have been and actually are, and yet more than all this. Setting the truth

in the universal expressed Hegel's conviction that no given particular form, whether in nature or society, embodies the whole truth. Moreover, it was a way of denouncing the isolation of men from things and of recognizing that their potentialities could not be preserved except in their redintegration.

In the treatment of self-consciousness, Hegel resumes the analysis begun in the *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenenser Philosophy of Mind*,[31] of the relation between the individual and his world. Man has learned that his own self-consciousness lies behind the appearance of things. He now sets out to realize this experience, to prove himself master of his world. Self-consciousness thus finds itself in a 'state of desire' (*Begierde*): man, awakened to self-consciousness, desires the objects around him, appropriates and uses them. But in the process he comes to feel that the objects are not the true end of his desire, but that his needs can be fulfilled only through association with other individuals. Hegel says, 'self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.' [32] The meaning of this rather strange statement is explained in the discussion of lordship and bondage that follows it. The concept of labor plays a central role in this discussion in which Hegel shows that the objects of labor are not dead things but living embodiments of the subject's essence, so that in dealing with these objects, man is actually dealing with man.

The individual can become what he is only through another individual; his very existence consists in his 'being-for-another.' The relation, however, is by no means one of harmonious co-operation between equally free individuals who promote the common interest in the pursuit of their own advantage. It is rather a 'life-and-death struggle'

[31] See above, pp. 57, 77.

[32] *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 175.

between essentially unequal individuals, the one a 'master' and the other a 'servant.' Fighting out the battle is the only way man can come to self-consciousness, that is, to the knowledge of his potentialities and to the freedom of their realization. The truth of self-consciousness is not the 'I' but the 'We,' 'the ego that is We and the We that is ego.' [33]

In 1844 Marx sharpened the basic concepts of his own theory through a critical analysis of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind.* He described the 'alienation' of labor in the terms of Hegel's discussion of master and servant. Marx was not familiar with the stages of Hegel's philosophy prior to the *Phenomenology,* but he nevertheless caught the critical impact of Hegel's analysis, even in the attenuated form in which social problems were permitted to enter the *Phenomenology of Mind.* The greatness of that work he saw in the fact that Hegel conceived the 'self-creation' of man (that is, the creation of a reasonable social order through man's own free action) as the process of 'reification' and its 'negation,' in short, that he grasped the 'nature of labor' and saw man to be 'the result of his labor.' [34] Marx makes reference to Hegel's definitive insight, which disclosed to him that lordship and bondage result of necessity from certain relationships of labor, which are, in turn, relationships in a 'reified' world. The relation of lord to servant is thus neither an eternal nor a natural one, but is rooted in a definite mode of labor and in man's relation to the products of his labor.

Hegel's analysis actually begins with the 'experience' that the world in which self-consciousness must prove itself is split into two conflicting domains, the one in which man is bound to his labor so that it determines his whole

[33] Ibid., p. 174.
[34] *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe,* Erste Abteilung, Band 3. Berlin 1932, p. 150.

existence, and the other in which man appropriates and possesses another man's labor and becomes master by the very fact of this appropriation and possession. Hegel denotes the latter as the lord and the former as the bondsman.[85] The bondsman is not a human being who happens to labor, but is essentially a laborer; his labor is his being. He works on objects that do not belong to him but to another. He cannot detach his existence from these objects; they constitute 'the chain from which he cannot get away.'[86] He is entirely at the mercy of him who owns these objects. It must be noted that according to this exposition, dependence of man on man is neither a personal condition nor grounded in personal or natural conditions (viz. inferiority, weakness, and so on), but is 'mediated' by things. In other words, it is the outcome of man's relation to the products of his labor. Labor so shackles the laborer to the objects that his consciousness itself does not exist except 'in the form and shape of thinghood.' He becomes a thing whose very existence consists in its being used. The being of the laborer is a 'being-for-another.'[87]

Labor is, however, at the same time the vehicle that transforms this relationship. The laborer's action does not disappear when the products of his labor appear, but is preserved in them. The things labor shapes and fashions fill the social world of man, and function there as objects of labor. The laborer learns that his labor perpetuates this world; he sees and recognizes himself in the things about him. His consciousness is now 'externalized' in his work and has 'passed into the condition of permanence.' The man who 'toils and serves' thus comes to view the independent being as himself.[88] The objects of his labor are no longer dead things that shackle him to other men, but products of his work, and, as such, part and parcel of his

[85] *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 182.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., p. 181.
[88] P. 186.

own being. The fact that the product of his labor is objectified does not make it 'something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work; for just that form is his pure self-existence, which therein becomes truly realized.' [39]

The process of labor creates self-consciousness not only in the laborer but in the master as well. Lordship is defined chiefly by the fact that the lord commands objects he desires without working on them.[40] He satisfies his type of need through having someone, not himself, work. His enjoyment depends upon his own freedom from labor. The laborer he controls delivers to him the objects he wants in an advanced form, ready to be enjoyed. The laborer thus preserves the lord from having to encounter the 'negative side' of things, that on which they become fetters on man. The lord receives all things as products of labor, not as dead objects, but as things that bear the hallmark of the subject who worked on them. When he handles these things as his property, the lord is really handling another self-consciousness, that of the laborer, the being through whom he attains his satisfaction. The lord in this wise finds that he is not an independent 'being-for-himself,' but is essentially dependent on another being, upon the action of him who labors for him.

Hegel has so far developed the relation of lordship and bondage as a relation each side of which recognizes that it has its essence in the other and comes to its truth only through the other. The opposition between subject and object that determined the forms of mind hitherto described has now disappeared. The object, shaped and cultivated by human labor, is in reality the objectification of a self-conscious subject. 'Thinghood, which received its shape and form through labor, is no other substance than consciousness. In this way, we have a new mode [*Gestalt*]

[39] P. 187. [40] P. 182.

of self-consciousness brought about. We have now a consciousness which . . . *thinks* or is free self-consciousness.'[41] Why this rather sudden identification of the free self-consciousness with the 'consciousness which thinks'? Hegel goes on to a definition of thinking that answers this question in the basic terms of his philosophy. He says, the subject of thinking is not the 'abstract ego' but the consciousness that knows that it is the 'substance' of the world. Or, thinking consists in knowing that the objective world is in reality a subjective world, that it is the objectification of the subject. The subject that really thinks comprehends the world as 'his' world. Everything in it has its true form only as a 'comprehended' (*begriffenes*) object, namely, as part and parcel of the development of a free self-consciousness. The totality of objects that make up man's world have to be freed from their 'opposition' to consciousness and must be taken up in such a way as to assist its development.

Hegel describes thinking in terms of a definite kind of existence. 'In thinking, I am free, because I am not in an other, but remain simply and solely in touch with myself; and the object . . . is in undivided unity my being-for-myself; and my procedure in comprehending is a procedure within myself.'[42] This explanation of freedom shows that Hegel is connecting this basic concept with the principle of a particular form of society. He says that he is free who, in his existence with others, remains solely with himself, he who holds his existence, as it were, as his own undisputed property. Freedom is self-sufficiency and independence of all 'externals,' a state wherein all externality has been appropriated by the subject. The fears and anxieties of competitive society, seem to motivate this idea of freedom, the individual's fear of losing him-

[41] P. 190. [42] P. 191.

self and his anxiety to preserve and secure his own. It leads Hegel to give the predominant position to the 'element of thought.'

Indeed, if freedom consists in nothing but complete self-sufficiency, if everything that is not entirely mine or myself restricts my freedom, then freedom can only be realized in thinking. We must therefore expect Hegel to treat stoicism as the first historical form of self-conscious freedom. The stoic mode of existence seems to have overcome all the restrictions that apply in nature and society. 'The essence of this consciousness is to be free, on the throne as well as in fetters, throughout all the dependence that attaches to its individual existence . . .'[43] Man is thus free because he 'persistently withdraws from the movement of existence, from activity as well as endurance, into the mere essentiality of thought.'

Hegel goes on to say, however, that this is not real freedom. It is only the counterpart of 'a time of universal fear and bondage.' He thus repudiates this false form of freedom and corrects his statement quoted above. 'Freedom in thought takes only pure thought as its truth, but this lacks the concrete filling of life. It is, therefore, merely the notion of freedom, not living freedom itself.'[44] The sections on stoicism in which these statements appear show the play of conflicting elements in his philosophy. He has demonstrated that freedom rests in the element of thought; he now insists on an advance from freedom in thought to 'living freedom.' He states that the freedom and independence of self-consciousness is therefore but a transitory stage in the development of mind towards real freedom. The latter dimension is reached when man abandons the abstract freedom of thought and enters into the world in full consciousness that it is 'his own' world. The 'hitherto negative attitude' of self-consciousness towards

[43] P. 193. [44] P. 193.

reality 'turns into a positive attitude. So far it has been concerned merely with its own independence and freedom; it has sought to keep itself "for itself" at the expense of the world or its own actuality . . .'[45] Now, 'it discovers the world as its own new and real world, which in its permanence possesses an interest for it.' The subject conceives the world as its own 'presence' and truth; it is certain of finding only itself there.[46]

This process is the process of history itself. The self-conscious subject attains his freedom not in the form of the 'I' but of the We, the associated We that first appeared as the outcome of the struggle between lord and bondsman. The historical reality of that We 'finds its actual fulfillment in the life of a nation.'[47]

We have indicated the subsequent course of the mind in the first pages of this chapter. At the end of the road, pure thought again seems to swallow up living freedom: the realm of 'absolute knowledge' is enthroned above the historical struggle that closed when the French Revolution was liquidated. The self-certainty of philosophy comprehending the world triumphs over the practice that changes it. We shall see whether this solution was Hegel's last word.

The foundations of the absolute knowledge that the *Phenomenology of Mind* presents as the truth of the world are given in Hegel's *Science of Logic,* to which we now turn.

[45] P. 223. [46] Ibid. [47] P. 341.

V

The Science of Logic (1812-16)

THE striking difference between Hegel's Logic and the traditional logic has often been emphasized in the statement that Hegel replaced the formal by a material logic, repudiating the usual separation of the categories and forms of thought from their content. Traditional logic treated these categories and forms as valid if they were correctly formed and if their use was in conformity with the ultimate laws of thought and the rules of the syllogism —no matter what the content to which they were applied. Contrary to this procedure, Hegel maintained that the content determines the form of the categories as well as their validity. 'But it is the nature of the content, and that alone, which lives and progresses in philosophic cognition, and at the same time it is the inner reflection of the content which posits and originates its determinations.' [1] The categories and modes of thought derive from the process of reality to which they pertain. Their form is determined by the structure of this process.

It is in this connection that the claim is often made that Hegel's logic was new. Novelty is supposed to consist in his use of the categories to express the dynamic of reality. In point of fact, however, this dynamic conception was not a Hegelian innovation; it occurs in Aristotle's philosophy where all forms of being are interpreted as forms and types of movement. Aristotle attempted exact

[1] *Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, The Macmillan Company, New York 1929, vol. 1, p. 36.

philosophical formulation in dynamic terms. Hegel simply reinterpreted the basic categories of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and did not invent new ones.

We must note in addition that a dynamic philosophy was enunciated in German philosophy prior to Hegel. Kant dissolved the static forms of the given reality into a complex of syntheses of 'transcendental consciousness,' while Fichte endeavored to reduce 'the given' to a spontaneous act of the ego. Hegel did not discover the dynamic of reality, nor was he the first to adapt philosophical categories to this process. What he did discover and use was a definite form of dynamic, and the novelty of his logic and its ultimate significance rest upon this fact. The philosophical method he elaborated was intended to reflect the actual process of reality and to construe it in an adequate form.

With the *Science of Logic,* we reach the final level of Hegel's philosophic effort. Henceforward, the basic structure of his system and its ground concepts remain unaltered. It might therefore be appropriate briefly to review this structure and these concepts along the lines of Hegel's exposition of them in the prefaces and the introduction to the *Science of Logic.*

Sufficient notice has not been given to the fact that Hegel himself introduces his logic as primarily a critical instrument. It is, first of all, critical of the view that 'the material of knowledge exists in and for itself in the shape of a finished world apart from Thinking,' that it exists as 'something in itself finished and complete, something which, as far as its reality is concerned, could entirely dispense with thought.' [2] Hegel's first writings have already shown that his attack on the traditional separation of thought from reality involves much more than an epistemological critique. Such dualism, he thinks, 'is tantamount

[2] Ibid., vol. I, p. 54.

to a compliance with the world as it is and a withdrawal of thought from its high task of bringing the existing order of reality into harmony with the truth. The separation of thought from being implies that thought has withdrawn before the onslaught of 'common sense.' If, then, truth is to be attained, the influence of common sense must be swept away and with it the categories of traditional logic, which are, after all, the philosophical categories of common sense that stabilize and perpetuate a false reality. And the task of breaking the hold of common sense belongs to the dialectical logic. Hegel repeats over and over that dialectics has this 'negative' character. The negative 'constitutes the quality of dialectical Reason,' [3] and the first step 'towards the true concept of Reason' is a 'negative step'; [4] the negative 'constitutes the genuine dialectical procedure.' [5] In all these uses 'negative' has a twofold reference: it indicates, first, the negation of the fixed and static categories of common sense and, secondly, the negative and therefore untrue character of the world designated by these categories. As we have already seen, negativity is manifest in the very process of reality, so that nothing that exists is true in its given form. Every single thing has to evolve new conditions and forms if it is to fulfill its potentialities.

The existence of things is, then, basically negative; all exist apart from and in want of their truth, and their actual movement, guided by their latent potentialities, is their progress towards this truth. The course of progress, however, is not direct and unswerving. The negation that every thing contains determines its very being. The material part of a thing's reality is made up of what that thing *is not,* of what it excludes and repels as its opposite. "The one and only thing *for securing scientific progress*

[3] P. 36. [4] P. 56. [5] P. 66.

. . . is knowledge of the logical precept that Negation is just as much Affirmation as Negation, or that what is self-contradictory resolves itself not into nullity, into abstract Nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content . . .'[6]

Contradiction, or the concrete form of it we are discussing, the opposition, does not displace the actual identity of the thing, but produces this identity in the form of a process in which the potentialities of things unfold. The law of identity by which traditional logic is guided implies the so-called law of contradiction. *A* equals *A* only in so far as it is opposed to non-*A*, or, the identity of *A* results from and contains the contradiction. *A* does not contradict an external non-*A*, Hegel holds, but a non-*A* that belongs to the very identity of *A;* in other words, *A* is *self*-contradictory.

By virtue of the negativity that belongs to its nature each thing is linked with its opposite. To be what it *really* is it must become what it is not. To say, then, that everything contradicts itself is to say that its essence contradicts its given state of existence. Its proper nature, which is, in the last analysis, its essence, impels it to 'transgress' the state of existence in which it finds itself and pass over to another. And not only that, but it must even transgress the bounds of its own particularity and put itself into universal relation with other things. The human being, to take an instance, finds his proper identity only in those relations that are in effect the negation of his isolated particularity—in his membership in a group or social class whose institutions, organization, and values determine his very individuality. The truth of the individual transcends his particularity and finds a totality of conflicting relations in which his individuality fulfills itself.

[6] Pp. 64-5.

We are thus led once more to the universal as the true form of reality.

The logical form of the universal is the notion. Hegel says that the truth and essence of things lives in their notion. The statement is as old as philosophy itself, and has even seeped into popular language. We say that we know and hold the truth of things in our ideas about them. The notion is the idea that expresses their essence, as distinguished from the diversity of their phenomenal existence. Hegel draws the consequence of this view. 'When we mean to speak of things, we call the Nature or essence of them their Concept,' but at the same time we maintain that the concept 'exists only for thought.' [7] For, it is claimed, the concept is a universal, whereas all that exists is a particular. The concept is thus 'merely' a concept and its truth merely a thought. In opposition to this view, Hegel shows that the universal not only *exists,* but that it is even more actually a reality than is the particular. There *is* such a universal reality as man or animal, and this universal in fact makes for the existence of every individual man or animal. 'Every human individual, though infinitely unique, is so only *because* he belongs to the class of man, every animal only *because* it belongs to the class of animal. Being-man, or being-animal, is the Prius of their individuality.' [8] The biological and psychological processes of the human and animal individual are, in a strict sense, not its own but those of its species or kind. When Hegel says that every human individual is first man, he means that his highest potentialities and his true existence center in his being-man. Accordingly, the actions, values, and aims of every particular individual or group have to be measured up against what man can and ought to be.

[7] P. 44. [8] P. 45.

The concrete importance of the conception becomes obvious when contrasted with modern authoritarian ideology in which the reality of the universal is denied, the better to subjugate the individual to the particular interests of certain groups that arrogate to themselves the function of the universal. If the individual were nothing but the individual, there would be no justifiable appeal from the blind material and social forces that overpower his life, no appeal to a higher and more reasonable social ordering. If he were nothing but a member of a particular class, race, or nation, his claims could not reach beyond his particular group, and he would simply have to accept its standards. According to Hegel, however, there is no particularity whatsoever that may legislate for the individual man. The universal itself reserves that ultimate right.

The content of the universal is preserved in the notion. If the universal is not just an abstraction but a reality, then the notion denotes that reality. The formation of the notion, too, is not an arbitrary act of thinking, but something that follows the very movement of reality. The formation of the universal, in the last analysis, is a historical process and the universal a historical factor. We shall see, in Hegel's *Philosophy of History,* that the historical development from the Oriental to the modern world is conceived as one in which man makes himself the actual subject of the historical process. Through the negation of every historical form of existence that becomes a fetter on his potentialities, man finally gets for himself the self-consciousness of freedom. The dialectical notion of man comprehends and includes this material process. This notion therefore cannot be put in a single proposition or a series of propositions that claims to define the essence of man in accordance with the traditional law of identity. The definition requires a whole system of propositions that

tagonistic relations, governed by the creative power of contradiction. These relations appear as the *essence* of being. The essence, therefore, emerges as the process that negates all stable and delimited forms of being and negates as well the concepts of traditional logic which express these forms. The categories Hegel uses to unfold this essence comprehend the actual structure of being as a unification of opposites which requires that reality be interpreted in terms of the 'subject.' The logic of objectivity thus turns into the logic of subjectivity which is the true '*notion*' of reality.

There are several meanings of the term notion that appear in the exposition.

1. Notion is the 'essence' and 'nature' of things, 'that which by thinking is known in and of things' and 'what is really true in them.' [12] This meaning implies a multitude of notions to correspond to the multitude of things they denote.

2. Notion designates the rational structure of being, the world as *Logos,* reason. In this sense, the notion is 'one, and is the essential basis' and the actual content of the *Logic.*[13]

3. Notion in its true form of existence is 'the free, independent and self-determining Subjective, or rather the Subject itself.' [14] It is this sense of the term that Hegel means when he says, 'The character of Subject must be expressly reserved for the Notion.' [15]

The *Science of Logic* opens with the well-known interplay of Being and Nothing. Unlike the *Phenomenology of Mind,* the *Logic* does not begin with the data of common sense, but with the same philosophical concept that brought the *Phenomenology* to a close. Thinking, in its quest for the truth behind the facts, seeks a stable base for orientation, a universal and necessary law amid the endless flux and diversity of things. Such a universal, if

[12] P. 55. [13] P. 48. [14] P. 75. [15] P. 72.

it is really to be the beginning and the basis for all subsequent determinations, must not itself be determinate, for otherwise it would be neither first nor the beginning. The reason it could not be determinate if it is to be a beginning lies in the fact that everything determinate is dependent on that which determines it, and hence is not prior.

The first and indeterminate universal that Hegel posits is being. It is common to all things (for all things are being), therefore, the most universal entity in the world. It has no determination whatsoever; it is pure being and nothing else.

The *Logic* thus begins, as the whole of Western philosophy began, with the concept of being. The question, What is Being? sought that which holds all things in existence and makes them what they are. The concept of being presupposes a distinction between determinate being (something; *Seiendes*) and being-as-such (*Sein*), without determinations.[16] Daily language distinguishes being from determinate being in all the forms of judgment. We say a rose is a plant; he is jealous; a judgment is true; God is. The copula 'is' denotes being, but being that is quite different from a determinate being. The 'is' does not point to any actual thing that could be made the subject of a determinate proposition, for in determining being as such and such a thing, we would have to use the selfsame 'is' which we are attempting to define, a patent impossibility. We cannot define being as some thing since being is the predicate of every thing. In other words, every thing *is,* but being *is not* some thing. And what is not some thing is nothing. Thus, being is 'pure indeterminateness and vacuity'; it is no thing, hence nothing.[17]

In the attempt to grasp being we encounter nothing.

[16] See above, pp. 40 f.

[17] *Science of Logic,* vol. 1, p. 94.

Hegel uses this fact as an instrumentality to demonstrate the negative character of reality. In the foregoing analysis of the concept of being, being did not 'turn into' nothing, but both were revealed as identical, so that it is true to say every determinate being contains the being as well as the nothing. According to Hegel, there is not a single thing in the world that does not have in it the togetherness of being and nothing. Everything *is* only in so far as, at every moment of its being, something that as yet *is not* comes into being and something that is now passes into not-being. Things *are* only in so far as they arise and pass away, or, being must be conceived as becoming (*Werden*).[18] The togetherness of being and nothing is thus manifest in the structure of all existents and must be retained in every logical category: 'This unity of Being and Nothing, as being the primary truth, is, once and for all, the basis and the element of all that follows: therefore, besides Becoming itself, all further logical determinations . . . and in short all philosophic concepts, are examples of this unity.'

If this is the case, logic has a task hitherto unheard of in philosophy. It ceases to be the source of rules and forms for correct thinking. In fact, it takes rules, forms, and all the categories of traditional logic to be false because they disregard the negative and contradictory nature of reality. In Hegel's logic the content of the traditional categories is completely reversed. Moreover, since the traditional categories are the gospel of everyday thinking (including ordinary scientific thinking) and of everyday practice, Hegel's logic in effect presents rules and forms of false thinking and action—false, that is, from the standpoint of common sense. The dialectical categories construct a topsy-turvy world, opening with the identity of being and nothing and closing with the notion as the true reality. Hegel

[18] Ibid., p. 118.

plays up the absurd and paradoxical character of this world, but he who follows the dialectical process to the end discovers that the paradox is the receptacle of the hidden truth and that the absurdity is rather a quality possessed by the correct schema of common sense, which, cleansed of their dross, contains the latent truth. For the dialectic shows latent in common sense the dangerous implication that the form in which the world is given and organized may contradict its true content, that is to say, that the potentialities inherent in men and things may require the dissolution of the given forms. Formal logic accepts the world-form as it is and gives some general rules for theoretical orientation to it. Dialectical logic, on the other hand, rejects any claim of sanctity for the given, and shatters the complacency of those living under its rubric. It holds that 'external existence' is never the sole criterion of the truth of a content,[19] but that every form of existence must justify before a higher tribunal whether it is adequate to its content or not.

Hegel said the negativity of being is 'the basis and the element' of all that ensues. Progress from one logical category to another is stimulated by an inherent tendency in every type of being to overcome its negative conditions of existence and pass into a new mode of being where it attains its true form and content. We have already noted that the movement of categories in Hegel's logic is but a reflection of the movement of being. Moreover, it is not quite correct to say that one category 'passes into' another. The dialectical analysis rather reveals one category *as* another, so that the other represents its unfolded content—unfolded by the contradictions inherent in it.

The first category that participates in this process is quality. We have seen that all being in the world is determinate; the first task of the logic is to investigate this

[19] P. 124.

determinacy. Something is determinate when it is qualitatively distinct from any other being. 'By virtue of its quality Something is opposed to an Other: it is variable and finite, and determined as negative, not only in contrast with an Other, but simply in itself.' [20] Every qualitative determination is in itself a limitation and therefore a negation. Hegel gives this old philosophic statement a new content in linking it with his negative conception of reality.[21] A thing exists with a certain quality—this means that it excludes other qualities and finds itself limited by the ones it has. Moreover, every quality is what it is only in relation to other qualities, and these relations determine the very nature of a quality. Thus, the qualitative determinates of a thing are reduced to relations that dissolve the thing into a totality of other things, so that it exists in a dimension of 'otherness.' For instance, the table here in this room is, if analyzed for its qualities, not the table but a certain color, material, size, tool, and so on. It is, Hegel says, in respect of qualities, not being-for-itself, but 'being-for-other' (*Anderssein, Sein-für-Anderes*). As against this otherness stands what the thing is in itself (its being a table), or, as Hegel calls it, its 'Being-in-itself' (*Ansichsein*). These are the two conceptual elements with which Hegel constructs every being. It must be noted that for Hegel these two elements cannot be detached from one another. A thing in itself is what it is only in its relations with others, and, conversely, its relations with others determine its very existence. The traditional idea of a thing-in-itself behind phenomena, an outer world separated from the inner, an essence permanently removed from reality, is rendered absurd by this conception, and philosophy emerges as definitely joined to the concrete reality.

We return to our analysis of quality. Determinate being

[20] P. 121. [21] See above, pp. 123 f.

is more than the flux of changing qualities. Something preserves itself throughout this flux, something that passes into other things, but also stands against them as a being for itself. This something can exist only as the product of a process through which it integrates its otherness with its own proper being. Hegel says that its existence comes about through 'the negation of the negation.' [22] The first negation is the otherness in which it turns, and the second is the incorporation of this other into its own self.

Such a process presupposes that things possess a certain power over their movement, that they exist in a certain self-relation that enables them to 'mediate' their existential conditions.[23] Hegel adds that this concept of mediation is 'of the utmost importance' because it alone overcomes the old metaphysical abstractions of Substance, Entelechy, Form, and so on, and, by conceiving the objective world as the development of the subject, paves the way for a philosophical interpretation of concrete reality.

Hegel attributes to the thing a permanent relation to itself. 'Something is in itself in so far as it has returned to itself from Being-for-Other.' [24] It is then an 'intro-reflected' being. Intro-reflection is a characteristic of the subject, however, and in this sense the objective 'something' is already 'the beginning of the subject,' [25] though only the beginning. For, the process by which the something sustains itself is blind and not free; the thing cannot manœuver the forces that shape its existence. The 'something' is hence a low level of development in the process that culminates in a free and conscious subject. 'Something determines itself as Being-for-Self and so on, till finally, as Notion, it receives the concrete intensity of the subject.' [26]

[22] *Science of Logic*, vol. I, p. 128.
[23] Pp. 127-8.
[24] P. 132.
[25] P. 128.
[26] Ibid.

Hegel continues by pointing out that the thing's unity with itself, which is the basis for its determinate states, is really something negative, because it results from the 'negation of the negation.' The objective thing *is* determined; it passes into a new mode of being by *suffering* the action of manifold natural forces; hence, the 'negative unity' that it has is not a conscious or active unity, but a mechanical one. Owing to its lack of real power, the thing simply 'collapses into that simple unity which is Being,' [27] a unity that is not the result of a self-directed process of its own. The thing, engaged though it is in continuous transitions into other things and states, is subject *to* change and not the subject *of* change.

The sections that follow outline the manner in which the unity of a thing may develop. They are difficult to understand because Hegel applies to the objective world categories that find their verification only in the life of the subject. Concepts like determination, mediation, self-relation, ought, and so on, anticipate categories of subjective existence. Hegel nevertheless uses them to characterize the world of objective things, analyzing the existence of things in terms of the existence of the subject. The net result is that objective reality is interpreted as the field in which the subject is to be realized.

Negativity appears as the difference between being-for-other and being-for-self within the unity of the thing. The thing as it is 'in itself' is different from the conditions in which it actually exists. The actual conditions of the thing 'oppose' or stand in the way of its working out its proper nature. This opposition Hegel denotes as that between determination (*Bestimmung*), which now takes on the meaning of the 'proper nature' of the thing, and talification (*Beschaffenheit*), which refers to the actual state or condition of the thing. The determination of a

[27] P. 128.

thing comprises its inherent potentialities 'as against the external conditions which are not yet incorporated in the thing itself.' [28]

When, for instance, we speak of the determination of man, and say that that determination is reason, we imply that the external conditions in which man lives do not agree with what man properly is, that his state of existence is not reasonable and that it is man's task to make it so. Until the task is successfully completed, man exists as a being-for-other rather than a being-for-self. His talification contradicts his determination. The presence of the contradiction makes man restive; he struggles to overcome his given external state. The contradiction thus has the force of an 'Ought' (*Sollen*) that impels him to realize that which does not as yet exist.

As we have said, the objective world, too, is now treated as a participant in the same kind of process. The thing's transition from one talification to another, and even its passage into another thing, are interpreted as motivated by the thing's own potentialities. Its transformation does not occur, as first appeared, 'according to its Being-for-other,' but according to its proper self.[29] Within the process of change, every external condition is taken into the thing's proper being, and its other is 'posited in the thing as its own moment.' [30] The concept of negation, too, undergoes revision in Hegel's exposition at this point. We have seen that the various states of a thing were interpreted as various 'negations' of its true being. Now, since the thing is conceived as a kind of subject that determines itself through its relations to other things, its existent qualities or talifications are barriers or limits (*Grenzen*) through which its potentialities must break. The process of existence is simply the contradiction between talifications and potentialities; hence, to exist and to be limited

[28] P. 136. [29] P. 137. [30] P. 138.

are identical. 'Something has its Determinate Being only in Limit' [31] and the 'Limits are the principle of that which they limit.'

Hegel summarizes the result of this new interpretation by saying that the existence of things is 'the unrest of Something in its Limit; it is immanent in the Limit to be the contradiction which sends Something on beyond itself.' [32] We have herewith reached Hegel's concept of finitude. Being is continuous becoming. Every state of existence has to be surpassed; it is something negative, which things, driven by their inner potentialities, desert for another state, which again reveals itself as negative, as limit.

> When we say of things that they are finite, we mean thereby . . . that Not-Being constitutes their nature and their Being. Finite things are; but their relation to themselves is that they are related to themselves as something negative, and in this self-relation send themselves on beyond themselves and their Being. They are, but the truth of this Being is their end. The finite does not only change, . . . it perishes; and its perishing is not merely contingent, so that it could be without perishing. It is rather the very being of finite things that they contain the seeds of perishing as their own Being-in-Self [*Insichsein*], and the hour of their birth is the hour of their death.[33]

These sentences are a preliminary enunciation of the decisive passages in which Marx later revolutionized Western thought. Hegel's concept of finitude freed philosophic approaches to reality from the powerful religious and theological influences that were operative even upon secular forms of eighteenth-century thought. The current idealistic interpretation of reality in that day still held the view that the world was a finite one because it was a created world and that its negativity referred to its sinfulness. The struggle against this interpretation of 'negative' was therefore in large measure a conflict with religion

[31] P. 140. [32] Pp. 140-41. [33] P. 142.

and the church. Hegel's idea of negativity was not moral or religious, but purely philosophical, and the concept of finitude that expressed it became a critical and almost materialistic principle with him. The world, he said, is finite not because it is created by God but because finitude is its inherent quality. Correspondingly, finitude is not an aspersion on reality, requiring the transfer of its truth to some exalted Beyond. Things are finite in so far as they are, and their finitude is the realm of their truth. They cannot develop their potentialities except by perishing.

Marx later laid down the historical law that a social system can set free its productive forces only by perishing and passing into another form of social organization. Hegel saw this law of history operative in all being. 'The highest maturity or stage which any Something can reach is that in which it begins to perish.' [84] It is clear enough from the preceding discussion that when Hegel turned from the concept of finitude to that of infinity he could not have had reference to an infinity that would annul the results of his previous analysis, that is, he could not have meant an infinity apart from or beyond finitude. The concept of the infinite, rather, had to result from a stricter interpretation of finitude.

As a matter of fact, we find that the analysis of objective things has already taken us from the finite to the infinite. For the process in which a finite thing perishes and, in perishing, becomes another finite thing, which repeats the same, is in itself a process *ad infinitum,* and not only in the superficial sense that the progression cannot be broken. When a finite thing 'perishes into' another thing, it has changed itself, inasmuch as perishing is its way of consummating its true potentialities. The incessant perishing of things is thus an equally continuous negation of their finitude. It is infinity. 'The finite in perish-

[84] Vol. II, p. 246.

ing, in this negation of its self, has reached its Being-in-Self [*Ansichsein*], and therefore has gained its proper self . . . Thus it passes beyond itself only to find itself again. This self-identity, or negation of negation, is affirmative Being, is the other of the Finite, . . . is the Infinite.' [35]

The infinite, then, is precisely the inner dynamic of the finite, comprehended in its real meaning. It is nothing else but the fact that finitude 'exists only as a passing beyond' itself.[36]

In an addendum to his exposition Hegel shows that the concept of finitude yields the basic principle of idealism. If the being of things consists in their transformation rather than in their state of existence, the manifold states they have, whatever their form and content may be, are but moments of a comprehensive process and exist only within the totality of this process. Thus, they are of an 'ideal' nature and their philosophical interpretation must be idealism.[37] 'The proposition that the finite is of ideal nature constitutes Idealism. In philosophy idealism consists of nothing else than the recognition that the finite has no veritable being. Essentially every philosophy is an idealism, or at least has idealism for its principle . . .' [38] For, philosophy starts when the truth of the given state of things is questioned and when it is recognized that that state has no final truth in itself. To say 'that the finite has no veritable being' does not mean that the true being must be sought in a transmundane Beyond or in the inmost soul of man. Hegel rejects such flight from reality as 'bad idealism.' His idealistic proposition implies that the current forms of thought, just because they stop short at the given forms of things, must be changed into other

[35] Vol. I, p. 149. [36] P. 159.

[37] Hegel employs the original historical sense of 'ideal.' An existent is 'of an ideal nature' if it exists not through itself, but through something else.

[38] P. 168.

forms until the truth is reached. Hegel embodies this essentially critical attitude in his concept of ought. The 'ought' is not a province of morality or religion, but of actual practice. Reason and law inhere in finitude, they not only ought to, but must be realized on this earth. 'In actual fact, Reason and Law are at no such sorry pass as that they merely "ought" to be; . . .—nor yet is Ought in itself perpetual, nor finitude (which would be the same) absolute.' [39] The negation of finitude is at the same time the negation of the infinite Beyond; it involves the demand that the 'ought' be fulfilled in this world.

Accordingly, Hegel contrasts his concept of infinity with the theological idea of it. There is no reality other than or above the finite; if finite things are to find their true being, they must find it through their finite existence and through it alone. Hegel calls his concept of infinity, therefore, the very 'negation of that beyond which is in itself negative.' His infinite is but the 'other' of the finite and therefore dependent on finitude; it is in itself a finite infinity. There are not two worlds, the finite and the infinite. There is only one world, in which finite things attain their self-determination through perishing. Their infinity is in this world and nowhere else.

Conceived as the 'infinite' process of transformation, the finite is the process of being-for-self (*Fürsichsein*). A thing is for itself, we say, when it can take all its external conditions and integrate them with its proper being. It is 'for itself' if it 'has passed beyond the Barrier and its Otherness in such a manner that, thus negating them, it is infinite return upon itself.' [40] Being-for-itself is not a state but a process, for every external condition must continuously be transformed into a phase of self-realization, and each new external condition that arises must be subjected to this treatment. Self-consciousness, Hegel says, is

[39] P. 149. [40] P. 171.

the 'nearest example of the presence of infinity.' On the other hand, 'natural things never attain a free Being-for-self'; they remain being-for-other.[41]

This essential difference between the object's mode of existence and that of a conscious being results in limiting the term 'finite' to things that do not exist for themselves and do not have the power, therefore, to fulfill their potentialities through their own free, conscious acts. Owing to their lack of freedom and consciousness, their manifold qualities are 'indifferent' to them,[42] and their unity is a quantitative unit rather than a qualitative unity.[43]

We shall omit the discussion of the category of quantity and turn directly to the transition from being to essence, which brings the First Book of the *Science of Logic* to a close. The analysis of quantity discloses that quantity is not external to the nature of a thing but is itself a quality, namely, measure (*Mass*). The qualitative character of quantity finds expression in Hegel's famous law that quantity passes into quality. Something might change in quantity without the slightest change in quality, so that its nature or properties remain one and the same, while it increases or diminishes in a given direction. Everything 'has some play within which it remains indifferent to this change . . .'[44] There comes a point, however, at which the nature of a thing alters with a mere quantitative change. The well-known examples of a heap of grain which ceases to be a heap if one grain after the other is removed, or of water which becomes ice when a gradual decrease of temperature has reached a certain point, or of a nation which, in the course of its expansion, suddenly breaks down and disintegrates: all these examples do not

[41] *Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences*, § 96, Addition (*The Logic of Hegel*, trans. W. Wallace, Oxford 1892, p. 179).
[42] *Science of Logic*, vol. I, p. 192.
[43] P. 199.
[44] P. 387.

cover the full meaning of Hegel's proposition. We must understand also that he aimed it against the ordinary view that the process of 'arising and passing away' was a gradual (*allmählich*) one, he aimed it at the view that *natura non facit saltum*.[45]

A given form of existence cannot unfold its content without perishing. The new must be the actual negation of the old and not a mere correction or revision. To be sure, the truth does not drop full-blown from heaven, and the new must somehow have existed in the lap of the old. But it existed there only as potentiality, and its material realization was excluded by the prevailing form of being. The prevailing form has to be broken through. 'The changes of Being' are 'a process of becoming other which breaks off graduality and is qualitatively other as against the preceding state of existence.'[46] There is no even progress in the world: The appearance of every new condition involves a leap; the birth of the new is the death of the old.

The *Science of Logic* opened with the question, What is Being? It set afoot the quest for categories that could enable us to grasp the truly real. In the course of the analysis, the stability of being was dissolved into the process of becoming and the enduring unity of things was seen to be a 'negative unity,' which could not be known from quantitative or qualitative aspects but rather involved the negation of all qualitative and quantitative determinates. For, every determinate property was seen to contradict what things are 'for themselves.' Whatever the enduring unity of being 'for itself' may be, we know that it is not a qualitative or quantitative entity that exists anywhere in the world, but is rather the negation of all determinates. Its essential character is therefore negativity; Hegel calls it also 'universal contradiction,' existing

[45] Ibid. [46] P. 389.

as it does 'by the negation of every existing determinateness.' [47] It is 'absolute negativity' or 'negative totality.' [48] This unity, it appears, is such by virtue of a process wherein things negate all mere externality and otherness and relate these to a dynamic self. A thing is for itself only when it has posited (*gesetzt*) all its determinates and made them moments of its self-realization, and is thus, in all changing conditions, always 'returning to itself.' [49] Hegel calls this negative unity and process of self-relation the essence of things.

The question What is Being? is answered in the statement that 'the truth of Being is Essence.' [50] And to learn what essence is, we have merely to collect the results of the preceding analysis:

1. The essence has 'no determinate Being.' [51] All the traditional proposals about a realm of ideas or substances have to be discarded. The essence is neither something in nor something above the world, but rather the negation of all being.

2. This negation of all being is not nothing, but the 'infinite movement of Being' beyond every determinate state.

3. The movement is not a contingent and external process, but one held together by the power of self-relation through which a subject posits its determinates as moments of its own self-realization.

4. Such a power presupposes a definite being-in-self, a capacity for knowing and reflecting upon the determinate states. The process of the essence is the process of reflection.

5. The subject that the essence reveals itself to be is not outside the process nor is it its unchangeable substratum; it is the very process itself, and all its characters

[47] P. 394. [48] P. 403. [49] P. 404. [50] Vol. II, p. 16. [51] P. 17.

are dynamic. Its unity is the totality of a movement that the Doctrine of Essence describes as the movement of reflection.

It is of the utmost importance to know that for Hegel reflection, like all the characters of essence, denotes an objective as well as subjective movement. Reflection is not primarily the process of thinking but the process of being itself.[52] Correspondingly, the transition from being to essence is not primarily a procedure of philosophical cognition, but a process in reality. Being's 'own nature' 'causes it to internalize itself,' and being, thus 'entering into itself becomes Essence.' This means that objective being, if comprehended in its true form, is to be understood as, and actually is, subjective being. The subject now appears as the substance of being, or being pertains to the existence of a more or less conscious subject, which is capable of facing and comprehending its determinate states and thus has the power to reflect upon them and shape itself. The categories of the essence cover the whole realm of being, which now manifests itself in its true, comprehended form. The categories of the Doctrine of Being reappear; determinate being is now conceived as existence and later as actuality; the 'something' as thing and later as substance, and so on.

Reflection is the process in which an existent constitutes itself as the unity of a subject. It has an essential unity that contrasts with the passive and changeable unity of the something; it is not determinate but determining being. All determination is here 'posited by the Essence itself' and stands under its determining power.

If we examine what Hegel attributes to the process of essence and what he discusses under the heading of Determinations of Reflection, we find the traditional ultimate laws of thought, the laws of identity, variety, and contra-

[52] Vol. II, p. 16.

diction. Added under a separate head is the law of ground. The original meaning of these laws and their actual objective content was a discovery made by the Hegelian logic. Formal logic cannot even touch their sense; the separation of the subject matter of thought from its form cuts the very ground from under truth. Thought is true only in so far as it remains adapted to the concrete movement of things and closely follows its various turns. As soon as it detaches itself from the objective process and, for the sake of some spurious precision and stability, tries to simulate mathematical rigor, thought becomes untrue. Within the *Science of Logic,* it is the Doctrine of Essence that provides the basic concepts that emancipate dialectical logic from the mathematical method. Hegel undertakes a philosophic critique of mathematical method before he introduces the Doctrine of Essence—in his discussion of quantity. Quantity is only a very external characteristic of being, a realm in which the real content of things gets lost. The mathematical sciences that operate with quantity operate with a content-less form that can be measured and counted and expressed by indifferent numbers and symbols. But the process of reality cannot be so treated. It defies formalization and stabilization, because it is the very negation of every stable form. The facts and relations that appear in this process change their nature at every phase of the development. 'Our knowledge would be in a very awkward predicament if such objects as freedom, law, morality, or even God himself, because they cannot be measured and calculated, or expressed in a mathematical formula, were to be reckoned beyond the reach of exact knowledge, and we had to put up with a vague generalized image of them . . .'[53] Since it is not only philosophy but every other true field of inquiry that aims

[53] *Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences,* § 99, Addition (*The Logic of Hegel,* trans. W. Wallace, p. 187).

at knowledge of such contents, the reduction of science to mathematics means the final surrender of truth:

> When mathematical categories are used to determine something bearing upon the method or content of philosophic science, such a procedure proves its preposterous nature chiefly herein, that, in so far as mathematical formulae mean thoughts and conceptual distinctions, such meaning must first report, determine and justify itself in philosophy. In its concrete sciences, philosophy must take the logical element from logic and not from mathematics; it must be a mere refuge of philosophic impotence when it flies to the formations which logic takes in other sciences, of which many are only dim presentiments and others stunted forms of it, in order to get logic for philosophy. The mere employment of such borrowed forms is in any case an external and superficial procedure: a knowledge of their worth and of their meaning should precede their use; but such knowledge results only from conceptual contemplation, and not from the authority which mathematics gives them.[54]

The Doctrine of Essence seeks to liberate knowledge from the worship of 'observable facts' and from the scientific common sense that imposes this worship. Mathematical formalism abandons and prevents any critical understanding and use of facts. Hegel recognized an intrinsic connection between mathematical logic and a wholesale acquiescence in facts, and to this extent anticipated more than a hundred years of the development of positivism. The real field of knowledge is not the given fact about things as they are, but the critical evaluation of them as a prelude to passing beyond their given form. Knowledge deals with appearances in order to get beyond them. 'Everything, it is said, has an Essence, that is, things really are not what they immediately show themselves. There is therefore something more to be done than merely rove from one quality to another and merely to advance from

[54] *Science of Logic*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 231.

qualitative to quantitative, and vice versa; there is a permanent in things, and that permanent is in the first instance their Essence.' [55] The knowledge that appearance and essence do not jibe is the beginning of truth. The mark of dialectical thinking is the ability to distinguish the essential from the apparent process of reality and to grasp their relation. The laws of reflection that Hegel elaborates are the fundamental laws of the dialectic. We pass now to a brief summary of these.

Essence denotes the unity of being, its identity throughout change. Precisely what is this unity or identity? It is not a permanent and fixed substratum, but a process wherein everything copes with its inherent contradictions and unfolds itself as a result. Conceived in this way, identity contains its opposite, difference, and involves a self-differentiation and an ensuing unification. Every existence precipitates itself into negativity and remains what it is only by negating this negativity. It splits up into a diversity of states and relations to other things, which are originally foreign to it, but which become part of its proper self when they are brought under the working influence of its essence. Identity is thus the same as the 'negative totality,' which was shown to be the structure of reality; it is 'the same as Essence.' [56]

Thus conceived, the essence describes the actual process of reality. 'The contemplation of everything that *is* shows, in itself, that in its self-identity it is self-contradictory and self-different, and in its variety or contradiction, self-identical; it is in itself this movement of transition of one of these determinations into the other, just because each in itself is its own opposite.' [57]

Hegel's position involves complete reversal of the tra-

[55] *Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences*, § 112, Addition (*The Logic of Hegel*, trans. W. Wallace, p. 208).
[56] *Science of Logic*, vol. II, p. 38.
[57] Ibid.

ditional laws of thought and of the kind of thinking derived from them. We cannot express this identity of things in a proposition that distinguishes a permanent substratum and its attributes from its opposite or contrary. The variety and the opposites are for Hegel part of the thing's essential identity, and, to grasp the identity, thought has to reconstruct the process by which the thing becomes its own opposite and then negates and incorporates its opposite into its own being.

Hegel returns time and again to accent the importance of this conception. By virtue of the inherent negativity in them, all things become self-contradictory, opposed to themselves, and their being consists in that 'force which can both comprehend and endure Contradiction.' [58] *'All things are contradictory in themselves'*—this proposition, which so sharply differs from the traditional laws of identity and contradiction, expresses for Hegel 'the truth and essence of things.' [59] 'Contradiction is the root of all movement and life,' all reality is self-contradictory. Motion especially, external movement as well as self-movement, is nothing but 'existing contradiction.' [60]

Hegel's analysis of the Determinations of Reflection marks the point at which dialectical thinking can be seen to shatter the framework of the idealist philosophy that uses it. So far, we note that the dialectic has yielded the conclusion that reality is contradictory in character and a 'negative totality.' As far as we have penetrated into the Hegelian logic, dialectic has appeared as a universal ontological law, which asserts that every existence runs its course by turning into the opposite of itself and producing the identity of its being by working through the opposition. But a closer study of the law reveals historical implications that bring forth its fundamentally critical motivations. If the essence of things is the result of such

[58] Vol. II, p. 68. [59] P. 66. [60] P. 67.

process, the essence itself is the product of a concrete development, 'something which has become [*ein Gewordenes*].'[61] And the impact of this historical interpretation shakes the foundations of idealism.

It may very well be that the developed antagonisms of modern society impelled philosophy to proclaim contradiction to be the 'definite fundamental basis of all activity and self-movement.' Such an interpretation is fully supported by the treatment accorded decisive social relationships in Hegel's earlier system (for example, in the analysis of the labor process, the description of the conflict between the particular and the common interest, the tension between state and society). There, the recognition of the contradictory nature of social reality was prior to the elaboration of the general theory of the dialectic.

But in any case, when we do apply the Determinations of Reflection to historical realities, we are driven almost of necessity to the critical theory that historical materialism developed. For, what does the unity of identity and contradiction mean in the context of social forms and forces? In its ontological terms, it means that the state of negativity is not a distortion of a thing's true essence, but its very essence itself. In socio-historic terms, it means that as a rule crisis and collapse are not accidents and external disturbances, but manifest the very nature of things and hence provide the basis on which the essence of the existing social system can be understood. It means, moreover, that the inherent potentialities of men and things cannot unfold in society except through the death of the social order in which they are first gleaned. When something turns into its opposite, Hegel says, when it contradicts itself, it expresses its essence. When, as Marx says, the current idea and practice of justice and equality lead to injustice and inequality, when the free exchange of equiva-

[61] P. 62.

lents produces exploitation on the one hand and accumulation of wealth on the other, such contradictions, too, are of the essence of current social relations. The contradiction is the actual motor of the process.

The Doctrine of Essence thus establishes the general laws of thought as laws of destruction—destruction for the sake of the truth. Thought is herewith installed as the tribunal that contradicts the apparent forms of reality in the name of their true content. The essence, 'the truth of Being,' is held by thought, which, in turn, is contradiction.

According to Hegel, however, the contradiction is not the end. The essence, which is the locus of the contradiction, must perish and 'the contradiction resolve itself.' [62] It is resolved in so far as the essence becomes the ground of existence. The essence, in becoming the ground of things, passes into existence.[63] The ground of a thing, for Hegel, is nothing other than the totality of its essence, materialized in the concrete conditions and circumstances of existence. The essence is thus as much historical as ontological. The essential potentialities of things realize themselves in the same comprehensive process that establishes their existence. The essence can 'achieve' its existence when the potentialities of things have ripened in and through the conditions of reality. Hegel describes this process as the transition to actuality.

Whereas the preceding analysis was guided by the fact that the proper potentialities of things cannot be realized

[62] Vol. II, p. 60.

[63] Ibid., pp. 70-73: Hegel explains this relation in his analysis of the Law of Ground. His discussion has a twofold aim: (1) It shows the Essence operative in the actual existence of things; and (2) it cancels the traditional conception of the Ground as a particular entity or form among others. Hegel acknowledges that the 'principle of sufficient reason [or Ground]' implies the critical view that Being 'in its immediacy is declared to be invalid and essentially to be something posited.' He holds, however, that the reason or Ground for a particular being cannot be sought in another likewise particular being.

within the prevailing forms of existence, the analysis of actuality discloses that form of reality in which these potentialities have come into existence. Essential determinations do not here remain outside of things, in the shape of something that ought to be but is not, but are now materialized in their entirety. Despite this general advance embodied in the concept of actuality, Hegel describes actuality as a process totally permeated by conflict between possibility and reality. The conflict, however, is no longer an opposition between existent and as yet non-existent forces, but between two antagonistic forms of reality that co-exist.

A close study of actuality reveals that it is first contingency (*Zufälligkeit*). That which *is* is not what it is of necessity; it might exist in some other form as well. Hegel does not refer to some empty logical possibility. The multitude of possible forms is not arbitrary. There is a definite relation between the given and the possible. Possible is only that which can be derived from the very content of the real. We are here reminded of the analysis previously made in connection with the concept of reality. The real shows itself to be antagonistic, split into its being and its ought. The real contains the negation of what it immediately is as its very nature and thus 'contains . . . Possibility.' [64] The form in which the real immediately exists is but a stage of the process in which it unfolds its content, or the given reality is 'equivalent to possibility.' [65]

The concept of reality has thus turned into the concept of possibility. The real is not yet 'actual,' but is at first only the possibility of an actual. Mere possibility belongs to the very character of reality; it is not imposed by an arbitrary speculative act. The possible and the real are in a dialectical relation that requires a special condition in order to be operative, and that condition

[64] *Science of Logic*, vol. II, p. 175. [65] Ibid., p. 177.

must be one in fact. For instance, if the existing relations within a given social system are unjust and inhuman, they are not offset by other realizable possibilities unless these other possibilities are also manifested as having their roots within that system. They must be present there, for example, in the form of an obvious wealth of productive forces, a development of the material wants and desires of men, their advanced culture, their social and political maturity, and so on. In such a case, the possibilities are not only real ones, but represent the true content of the social system as against its immediate form of existence. They are thus an even more real reality than the given. We may say in such a case that 'the possibility is reality,' and that the concept of the possible has turned back into the concept of the real.[66]

How can possibility be reality? The possible must be real in the strict sense that it must exist. As a matter of fact, the mode of its existence has already been shown. It exists as the given reality itself taken as something that has to be negated and transformed. In other words, the possible is the given reality conceived as the 'condition' of another reality.[67] The totality of the given forms of existence are valid only as conditions for other forms of existence.[68] This is Hegel's concept of real possibility, set forth as a concrete historical tendency and force, so as definitely to preclude its use as an idealistic refuge from reality. Hegel's famous proposition that 'the fact [*die Sache*] *is* before it *exists*'[69] can now be given its strict meaning. Before it exists, the fact 'is' in the form of a condition within the constellation of existing data. The existing state of affairs is a mere condition for another constellation of facts, which bring to fruition the inherent poten-

[66] Ibid.
[67] *Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences*, § 146.
[68] *Science of Logic*, vol. II, p. 179.
[69] P. 105.

tialities of the given. 'When all the conditions of a fact are present, it enters into existence.' [70] And at such a time, also, the given reality is a real possibility for transformation into another reality. 'The Real Possibility of a case [*einer Sache*] is the existing multiplicity of circumstances which are related to it.' [71] Let us revert to our case of a social system as yet unrealized. Such a new system is really possible if the conditions for it are present in the old, that is, if the prior social form actually possesses a content that tends towards the new system as to its realization. The circumstances that exist in the old form are thus conceived not as true and independent in themselves, but as mere conditions for another state of affairs that implies the negation of the former. 'Thus Real Possibility constitutes the totality of conditions; an Actuality . . . which is the Being-in-Self of some Other . . .' [72] The concept of real possibility thus develops its criticism of the positivist position out of the nature of facts themselves. Facts are facts only if related to that which is not yet fact and yet manifests itself in the given facts as a real possibility. Or, facts are what they are only as moments in a process that leads beyond them to that which is not yet fulfilled in fact.

The process of 'leading beyond' is an objective tendency immanent in the facts as given. It is an activity not in thought but in reality, the proper activity of self-realization. For, the given reality holds the real possibilities as its content, 'contains a duality in itself,' and is in itself 'reality and possibility.' In its totality as well as in its every single aspect and relation, its content is enveloped in an inadequacy such that only its destruction can convert its possibilities into actualities. 'The manifold forms of exist-

[70] Ibid. [71] P. 179. [72] P. 180.

ence are in themselves self-transcendence and destruction, and thus are determined in themselves to be a mere possibility.' [73] The process of destroying existing forms and replacing them by new ones liberates their content and permits them to win their actual state. The process in which a given order of reality perishes and issues into another is, therefore, nothing but the self-becoming of the old reality.[74] It is the 'return' of reality to itself, that is, to its true form.[75]

The content of a given reality bears the seed of its transformation into a new form, and its transformation is a 'process of necessity,' in the sense that it is the sole way in which a contingent real becomes actual. The dialectical interpretation of actuality does away with the traditional opposition between contingency, possibility, and necessity, and integrates them all as moments of one comprehensive process. Necessity presupposes a reality that is contingent, that is, one which in its prevailing form holds possibilities that are not realized. Necessity is the process in which that contingent reality attains its adequate form. Hegel calls this the process of actuality.

Without a grasp of the distinction between reality and actuality, Hegel's philosophy is meaningless in its decisive principles. We have mentioned that Hegel did not declare that reality is rational (or reasonable), but reserved this attribute for a definite form of reality, namely, actuality. And the reality that is actual is the one wherein the discrepancy between the possible and the real has been overcome. Its fruition occurs through a process of change, with the given reality advancing in accordance with the possibilities manifest in it. Since the new is therefore the freed truth of the old, actuality is the 'simple positive unity' of those elements that had existed in disunity within the

[73] P. 180. [74] P. 183. [75] P. 184.

old; it is the unity of the possible and the real, which in the process of transformation 'returns only to itself.' [76]

Any purported difference between various forms of the actual is but an apparent one, because actuality develops *itself* in all the forms. A reality is actual if it is preserved and perpetuated through the absolute negation of all contingencies, in other words, if all its various forms and stages are but the lucid manifestation of its true content. In such a reality, the opposition between contingency and necessity has been overcome. Its process is *of necessity,* because it follows the inherent law of its own nature and remains in all conditions the same.[77] At the same time, this necessity is *freedom* because the process is not determined from outside, by external forces, but, in a strict sense, is a self-development; all conditions are grasped and 'posited' by the developing real itself. Actuality thus is the title for the final unity of being that is no longer subject to change, because it exercises autonomous power over all change—not simple identity but 'self-identity.' [78]

Such a self-identity can be attained only through the medium of self-consciousness and cognition. For only a being that has the faculty of knowing its own possibilities and those of its world can transform every given state of existence into a condition for its free self-realization. True reality presupposes freedom, and freedom presupposes knowledge of the truth. The true reality, therefore, must be understood as the realization of a knowing *subject.* Hegel's analysis of actuality thus leads to the idea of the subject as the truly actual in all reality.

We have reached the point where the Objective Logic turns into the Subjective Logic, or, where subjectivity emerges as the true form of objectivity. We may sum up Hegel's analysis in the following schema:

[76] P. 184. [77] P. 184. [78] P. 186.

The true form of reality requires freedom.

Freedom requires self-consciousness and knowledge of the truth.

Self-consciousness and knowledge of the truth are the essentials of the subject.

The true form of reality must be conceived as subject.

We must note that the logical category 'subject' does not designate any particular form of subjectivity (such as man) but a general structure that might best be characterized by the concept 'mind.' Subject denotes a universal that individualizes itself, and if we wish to think of a concrete example, we might point to the 'spirit' of a historical epoch. If we have comprehended such an epoch, if we have grasped its notion, we shall see a universal principle that develops, through the self-conscious action of individuals, in all prevailing institutions, facts, and relations.

The concept of the subject, however, is not the last step of Hegel's analysis. He now proceeds to demonstrate that the subject is *notion*. He has shown that the subject's freedom consists of its faculty to comprehend what is. In other words, freedom derives its content from the knowledge of the truth. But the form in which the truth is held is the *notion*. Freedom is, in the last analysis, not an attribute of the thinking subject as such, but of the truth that this subject holds and wields. Freedom is thus an attribute of the notion, and the true form of reality in which the essence of being is realized is the notion. The notion 'exists,' however, only in the thinking subject. 'The Notion, in so far as it has advanced into such an existence as is free in itself, is just the Ego, or pure self-consciousness.' [79]

Hegel's strange identification of the notion and the ego

[79] P. 217.

or subject can be understood only if we bear in mind that he considers the notion to be the activity of comprehending (*Begreifen*) rather than its abstract logical form or result (*Begriff*). We are reminded of Kant's transcendental logic in which the highest concepts of thought are treated as creative acts of the ego that are ever renewed in the process of knowledge.[80] Instead of dwelling on Hegel's elaboration of this point,[81] we shall attempt to develop some of the implications of his concept of the notion.

According to Hegel, the notion is the subject's activity and, as such, the true form of reality. On the other hand, the subject is characterized by freedom, so that Hegel's Doctrine of the Notion really develops the categories of freedom. These comprehend the world as it appears when thought has liberated itself from the power of a 'reified' reality, when the subject has emerged as the 'substance' of being. Such liberated thought has eventually overcome the traditional separation of the logical forms from their content. Hegel's idea of the notion reverses the ordinary relation between thought and reality, and becomes the cornerstone of philosophy as a critical theory. According to common-sense thinking, knowledge becomes the more unreal the more it abstracts from reality. For Hegel, the opposite is true. The abstraction from reality, which the formation of the notion requires, makes the notion not poorer but richer than reality, because it leads from the facts to their essential content. The truth cannot be gleaned from the facts as long as the subject does not yet live in them but rather stands against them. The world of facts is not rational but has to be *brought* to reason, that is, to a form in which the reality actually corresponds to the truth. As long as this has not been accomplished, the truth rests with the abstract notion and not with the

[80] See above, pp. 21 ff.
[81] *Science of Logic*, vol. II, pp. 280 ff.

concrete reality. The task of abstraction consists in the 'transcendence and reduction of reality [as from mere appearance] to the essential, which manifests itself in the Notion only.' [82] With the formation of the notion, abstraction does not desert, but leads into actuality. What nature and history actually are will not be found in the prevailing facts; the world is not that harmonious. Philosophical knowledge is thus set against reality, and this opposition is expressed in the abstract character of the philosophical notions. 'Philosophy is not meant to be a narrative of what happens, but a cognition of what is true in happenings, and out of the body of truth it has to comprehend that which in the narrative appears as mere happening.' [83]

Philosophical cognition is superior to experience and science, however, only in so far as its notions contain that relation to truth which Hegel grants only to dialectical notions. Mere transpassing of the facts does not distinguish dialectical knowledge from positivistic science. The latter, too, goes beyond the facts; it obtains laws, makes predictions, and so forth. With all the apparatus of its procedure, however, positivistic science stays within the given realities; the future it predicts, even the changes of form to which it leads never depart from the given. The form and content of scientific concepts remain bound up with the prevailing order of things; they are static in character even when they express motion and change. Positivist science also works with abstract concepts. But they originate by abstraction from the particular and changing forms of things and fix their common and enduring characters.

The process of abstraction that results in the dialectical notion is quite different. Here, abstraction is the reduction of the diverse forms and relations of reality to the actual process in which they are constituted. The chang-

[82] P. 222. [83] P. 223.

concrete reality. The task of abstraction consists in the 'transcendence and reduction of reality [as from mere appearance] to the essential, which manifests itself in the Notion only.' [82] With the formation of the notion, abstraction does not desert, but leads into actuality. What nature and history actually are will not be found in the prevailing facts; the world is not that harmonious. Philosophical knowledge is thus set against reality, and this opposition is expressed in the abstract character of the philosophical notions. 'Philosophy is not meant to be a narrative of what happens, but a cognition of what is true in happenings, and out of the body of truth it has to comprehend that which in the narrative appears as mere happening.' [83]

Philosophical cognition is superior to experience and science, however, only in so far as its notions contain that relation to truth which Hegel grants only to dialectical notions. Mere transpassing of the facts does not distinguish dialectical knowledge from positivistic science. The latter, too, goes beyond the facts; it obtains laws, makes predictions, and so forth. With all the apparatus of its procedure, however, positivistic science stays within the given realities; the future it predicts, even the changes of form to which it leads never depart from the given. The form and content of scientific concepts remain bound up with the prevailing order of things; they are static in character even when they express motion and change. Positivist science also works with abstract concepts. But they originate by abstraction from the particular and changing forms of things and fix their common and enduring characters.

The process of abstraction that results in the dialectical notion is quite different. Here, abstraction is the reduction of the diverse forms and relations of reality to the actual process in which they are constituted. The chang-

[82] P. 222. [83] P. 223.