

INTRODUCTION
TO THE
READING OF
HEGEL

Alexandre Kojève

Edited by Allan Bloom

Translated by James H. Nichols, Jr.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE READING OF
HEGEL

BY ALEXANDRE KOJÈVE

LECTURES ON THE

Phenomenology of Spirit

ASSEMBLED BY RAYMOND QUENEAU

Edited by Allan Bloom

Translated from the French by

James H. Nichols, Jr.

Basic Books, Inc., Publishers

NEW YORK LONDON

CONTENTS

1	In Place of an Introduction	3
2	Summary of the First Six Chapters of the <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>	31
	<i>Complete Text of the First Three Lectures of the Academic Year 1937-1938</i>	
3	Summary of the Course in 1937-1938	71
	<i>Excerpt from the 1938-1939 Annuaire of the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences religieuses</i>	
4	Philosophy and Wisdom	75
	<i>Complete Text of the First Two Lectures of the Academic Year 1938-1939</i>	
5	A Note on Eternity, Time, and the Concept	100
	<i>Complete Text of the Sixth through Eighth Lectures of the Academic Year 1938-1939</i>	
6	Interpretation of the Third Part of Chapter VIII of the <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> (conclusion)	150
	<i>Complete Text of the Twelfth Lecture of the Academic Year 1938-1939</i>	
7	The Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method in Hegel	169
	<i>Complete Text of the Sixth through Ninth Lectures of the Academic Year 1934-1935</i>	
	Appendix	261
	<i>The Structure of the Phenomenology of Spirit</i>	

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The original French edition of *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel* consists of notes and transcripts of lectures, delivered by Alexandre Kojève from 1933 to 1939 at the École des Hautes Études, collected and edited by the poet and novelist Raymond Queneau, of the Académie Goncourt. Its first chapter (and the first in this translation) was written by Kojève and published in the January 14, 1939, issue of *Mesures*. The present translation includes slightly under one half of the original volume: the passages translated correspond to pp. 9-34, 161-195, 265-267, 271-291, 336-380, 427-443, 447-528, and 576-597 of the French text. The selections for this edition were made with two goals in mind: to present the outlines of Kojève's interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and to present the most characteristic aspects of his own thought.

The translation tries to preserve as much as possible of Kojève's style and terminology, which are determined at least in part by his careful attempt to preserve and explain the meaning of Hegel's own precise terminology. Some of the oddities consequently present in the translation should perhaps be mentioned. Many of Kojève's translations of Hegelian terms are not the customary ones, but represent his interpretation of their meaning. For example, he renders *Moment*, *Sein* (in one of its meanings), and *Wesen* as *élément-constitutif*, *être-donné*, and *réalité-essentielle*; these interpretations are maintained in the English as "constituent-element," "given-being," and "essential-reality." Kojève often translates single words of Hegel by several words joined with hyphens; this has sometimes been followed in the translation, but at other times (when great awkwardness or confusion might result) it has not. Kojève's use of capitalization has been preserved throughout. Kojève has also invented several French words, thus making it necessary to invent some English ones, such as "thingness" for

chosité (for *Dingheit*) and "nihilate" for *néantir*. Of course, it is often impossible to use consistently one translation for each French term. To give two of many examples: *supprimer* (for *Aufheben*) has usually been translated "overcome," but sometimes "do away with"; and *Sentiment de soi* (for *Selbst-Gefühl*) has been translated "Sentiment of self," but sometimes *sentiment* is translated "feeling."

Page and line references to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* are to the Hoffmeister edition (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952). Citations of other works of Hegel are from the Lasson-Hoffmeister edition (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1905-).

I should like to express my thanks to Kenley and Christa Dove, who kindly made available for this edition their translation of Kojève's "Structure of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" and their correlation of the page and line references to J. B. Baillie's English translation [*The Phenomenology of Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 2nd ed.], which will be of great usefulness to the English reader (see Appendix). I am obliged to the Danforth Foundation for a summer grant that enabled me to complete the revision of the translation. Finally, I should like to thank my mother for her considerable help with various stages of the manuscript.

JAMES H. NICHOLS, JR.

1

IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION*

Hegel . . . erfasst die *Arbeit* als das *Wesen*, als das sich bewährende Wesen des Menschen.

Karl Marx

[Man is Self-Consciousness. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals, which do not go beyond the level of simple Sentiment of self. Man becomes conscious of himself at the moment when—for the “first” time—he says “I.” To understand man by understanding his “origin” is, therefore, to understand the origin of the I revealed by speech.

[Now, the analysis of “thought,” “reason,” “understanding,” and so on—in general, of the cognitive, contemplative, passive behavior of a being or a “knowing subject”—never reveals the why or the how of the birth of the word “I,” and consequently of self-consciousness—that is, of the human reality. The man who contemplates is “absorbed” by what he contemplates; the “knowing subject” “loses” himself in the object that is known. Contemplation reveals the object, not the subject. The object, and not the subject, is what shows itself to him in and by—or better, as—the act of knowing. The man who is “absorbed” by the object that he is contemplating can be “brought back to himself” only by a Desire; by the desire to eat, for example. The (conscious) Desire of a being is what constitutes that being as I and reveals it as such by moving it to say “I . . .” Desire is what transforms Being, revealed to itself by itself in (true) knowledge, into an

* A translation with commentary of Section A of Chapter IV of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, entitled: “Autonomy and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Mastery and Slavery.”

The commentary is in brackets. Words joined by hyphens correspond to a single German word.

“object” revealed to a “subject” by a subject different from the object and “opposed” to it. It is in and by—or better still, as—“his” Desire that man is formed and is revealed—to himself and to others—as an I, as the I that is essentially different from, and radically opposed to, the non-I. The (human) I is the I of a Desire or of Desire.

[The very being of man, the self-conscious being, therefore, implies and presupposes Desire. Consequently, the human reality can be formed and maintained only within a biological reality, an animal life. But, if animal Desire is the necessary condition of Self-Consciousness, it is not the sufficient condition. By itself, this Desire constitutes only the Sentiment of self.

[In contrast to the knowledge that keeps man in a passive quietude, Desire dis-quiets him and moves him to action. Born of Desire, action tends to satisfy it, and can do so only by the “negation,” the destruction, or at least the transformation, of the desired object: to satisfy hunger, for example, the food must be destroyed or, in any case, transformed. Thus, all action is “negating.” Far from leaving the given as it is, action destroys it; if not in its being, at least in its given form. And all “negating-negativity” with respect to the given is necessarily active. But negating action is not purely destructive, for if action destroys an objective reality, for the sake of satisfying the Desire from which it is born, it creates in its place, in and by that very destruction, a subjective reality. The being that eats, for example, creates and preserves its own reality by the overcoming of a reality other than its own, by the “transformation” of an alien reality into its own reality, by the “assimilation,” the “internalization” of a “foreign,” “external” reality. Generally speaking, the I of Desire is an emptiness that receives a real positive content only by negating action that satisfies Desire in destroying, transforming, and “assimilating” the desired non-I. And the positive content of the I, constituted by negation, is a function of the positive content of the negated non-I. If, then, the Desire is directed toward a “natural” non-I, the I, too, will be “natural.” The I created by the active satisfaction of such a Desire will have the same nature as the things toward which that Desire is directed: it will be a “thingish” I, a merely living I, an animal I. And this natural I, a function of the natural object, can

In other words: the Platonic-Hegelian ideal of Wisdom is valid only for the *Philosopher*.

Now we understand better the significance of the more precise statement that I made, namely, that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel presupposes not only the fact that man is *essentially* self-conscious, but also the fact that man's self-consciousness naturally and necessarily tends to *extend* itself as much as possible. This more precise statement means, quite simply, that Hegel presupposes the existence of the *Philosopher*: for the dialectical movement of the *Phenomenology* to come to its end, marked by the idea—and the realization—of Wisdom, of absolute Knowledge, at each dialectical turning point there must be a *Philosopher* who is ready to become *conscious* of the newly constituted reality. Indeed, it is the *Philosopher*, and only he, who wants to *know* at all costs where he is, to *become aware* of what he is, and who does not go on any further before he has become aware of it. The others, although self-conscious, close themselves up within the range of things of which they have already become conscious and remain impervious to new facts in themselves and outside of themselves. For them: "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Or, in other words: "they stick to their principles." (Also, for them: "a war is always a war"; and "all dictatorships are alike.") In short, it is not by *themselves*, but through the *Philosopher* that they become aware—and even so, reluctantly—of an *essential* change in the "situation"—that is, in the World in which they live and, consequently, in themselves.

Therefore, the man whom the *Phenomenology* has in view—that is, the man who necessarily comes to the Platonic-Hegelian ideal of the Wise Man and is supposed some day to be able to realize this ideal—is not man simply. It is solely the *Philosopher*.

We can now state the notion of "Philosophy" precisely. If Philosophy is Love of Wisdom, if to be a *Philosopher* means to want to become a Wise Man, the Wise Man that the *Philosopher* wants to become is *necessarily* the Platonic-Hegelian Wise Man—that is, the perfect and satisfied man who is essentially and completely *conscious* of his perfection and satisfaction. Indeed, it is obvious that Philosophy can be nothing other than a form of self-consciousness. If the Sciences, for example, Mathematics, relate to the real which gives them a content (i.e., a meaning) through

the intermediary of space-time, Philosophy relates to the real only through Self-Consciousness. Without this pivot of Self-Consciousness, so-called "metaphysical" philosophical speculations are just as "formal," empty of content—that is, deprived of every kind of *meaning*—as the speculations of pure mathematics. Therefore, Philosophy that is something other than a simple "mental game" comparable to a card game implies and presupposes the ideal of Wisdom understood as full and perfect Self-Consciousness.

Now we can bring the Philosopher and the Wise Man face to face.

FIRST: If Wisdom is the art of *answering* all questions that can be asked concerning human existence, Philosophy is the art of *asking* them; the Philosopher is the man who always ends up asking a question that he can no longer answer (and that he can answer, when he wants to answer it at all costs, only by ceasing to be a Philosopher, without thereby becoming a Wise Man: that is, by answering either with something that is in *contradiction* with the rest of his discourse, or with an appeal to an *incomprehensible* and ineffable "unconscious").

SECOND: If the Wise Man is the man who is *satisfied* by what he is—i.e., by that of which he becomes *conscious* in himself, the Philosopher becomes conscious of his state of *nonsatisfaction*; the Philosopher is essentially a *discontented* man (which does not necessarily mean an unhappy man); and he is discontented, as Philosopher, by the sole fact of not *knowing* that he is satisfied. If we want to be nasty, we can say that the Philosopher is discontented because he does not know what he *wants*. But if we want to be just, we must say that he is discontented because he does not *know* what he wants. He has desires, like everyone. But the satisfaction of his desires does not satisfy him, as Philosopher, as long as he does not *understand* them, that is, as long as he does not fit them into the coherent *whole* of his discourse that reveals his existence—that is, as long as he does not *justify* them (generally, but not necessarily, this justification takes the form of a so-called "moral" justification). And that is why the ideal of unconscious "Wisdom" or "satisfaction" does not exist for the Philosopher: the simple fact of not *understanding* his well-being, his pleasure, his joy, or his happiness, or even his "ecstasy," would suffice to make him discontented, unsatisfied. Now, if conscious satisfaction

finds expression in *identity* to self, consciousness of nonsatisfaction provokes and reveals a *change*: the Philosopher is the man who *changes*, essentially; and who changes *consciously*, who *wants* to change, who wants to become and to be *other* than he is, and wants all this solely because he does not *know* that he is satisfied by what he is. Now, since self-consciousness finds expression in a *discourse* (*Logos*) and since a discourse that reveals a *change* is called a dialectical discourse, we can say that every Philosopher is necessarily a dialectician.²

THIRD: If the Wise Man serves as the model for himself and for others (which means: for Philosophers, that is, for those who tend toward the ideal realized by the Wise Man), the Philosopher is, so to speak, a negative model: he reveals his existence only in order to show that one must not be like him, to show that man wants to be not Philosopher, but Wise Man. Hence the Philosopher changes because he *knows* what he ought *not* to be and what he *ought* to become. In other words, he realizes a *progress* in his changes.³

Therefore, the Philosopher's dialectical discourse, which reveals his change, reveals a progress. And since every *revealed* progress has a *pedagogical* value, it can be said, in summary, that every Philosophy is necessarily (as Plato saw very well) a pedagogical dialectic or a dialectical pedagogy, which starts with the first question relative to the existence of the one who asks it and finally ends, at least in principle, in Wisdom, that is, in the answer (if only virtual) to *all* possible questions.

The fact that a man has decided to *read* the *Phenomenology* proves that he loves Philosophy. The fact that he *understands* the *Phenomenology* proves that he is a Philosopher, since, by reading and understanding it, he actually makes the consciousness he had of himself *grow*. As a Philosopher, he is interested in himself and not

² His dialectic, according to the first definition of Wisdom, can be reduced in the final analysis to a series of questions (relating to his existence) and answers.

³ It is obvious, by the way, that if the term "progress" is meaningful only in relation to a *conscious* change, every conscious change is necessarily a progress. Indeed, given that Self-Consciousness implies and presupposes *memory*, it can be said that every change in the domain of Self-Consciousness means an *extension* of Self-Consciousness. Now, I do not believe that progress can be defined otherwise than in the following manner: there is progress from A to B, if A can be understood from B but B cannot be understood from A.

Phenomenology is concerned is not man simply, but the Philosopher (or more exactly, the *Phenomenology* is concerned with the various human types only to the extent that these types are integrated in the person of the Philosopher who analyzes himself in it—that is, in the person of Hegel, who wonders, “What am I?”). No wonder, then, that Hegel manages to prove to the man who reads the *Phenomenology* (and who is consequently himself a Philosopher) that man as he is described in the *Phenomenology* tends (ever more consciously) toward the ideal of Wisdom and at last realizes it. Indeed, the man who gives a *complete* answer to the question “What am I?” is by definition a Wise Man. That is to say that in *answering* (in the strict sense of the word) the question “What am I?” one necessarily answers, not “I am a Philosopher,” but “I am a Wise Man.”⁵

Therefore: the answer to the question asked in the *Phenomenology* is at the same time the proof of the *reality* of Wisdom, and hence a refutation of Plato and of Theology in general *by fact*. The whole question, therefore, is to know if the answer given at the end of the *Phenomenology*, or more exactly by the *entirety* of this work (or by its first seven chapters), is truly a *total* answer, an answer to *all* possible questions relating to human existence, and consequently to the existence of him who asks them. Now, Hegel believes that he proves the *totality* of the answer by its *circularity*.

This idea of circularity is, if you will, the *only* original element introduced by Hegel. The definition of Philosophy and Wisdom that he gives or presupposes is that of *all* philosophers. The assertion that Wisdom is *realizable* had already been made by Aristotle. The Stoics even asserted that Wisdom was already *realized*. And it is more than likely that certain Epicureans spoke of the Wise Man in the first person. However, none of these thinkers indicated a sufficient *criterion* for the determination of the Wise Man. In practice, they always settled for the fact of *satisfaction*: either in its subjective aspect (“immobility,” absence of desires, and so on); or in its objective aspect of identity to oneself, of conscious agreement with oneself (which is usually presented from the ethical

⁵ And the Discourse of the man who *knows* that he is Wise is no longer the *Phenomenology*, which is still a philosophy (i.e., the discourse of one who *aspires* to Wisdom), but the finished *Science*—i.e., the *Encyclopaedia*.

point of view). But no one ever succeeded in proving that the pretender to Wisdom actually realized fullness of *Self-Consciousness*. Now, we have seen that without *this* aspect of Wisdom, the ideal itself is no longer meaningful.

Hegel, I believe, is the first one to find *an* answer (I do not say "the answer") to the question of knowing whether the understanding that one has of *oneself*, and consequently the understanding that one has in *general*, is, or is not, *total, unable to be surpassed, unable to be modified*—that is, *universally and definitively valid or absolutely true*. According to him, *this answer is given by the circularity of the understanding or knowledge*. The Wise Man's "absolute Knowledge" is *circular*, and *all* circular knowledge (only *one* such knowledge is possible) is the "absolute Knowledge" of the Wise Man.

To ask any question whatsoever leads sooner or later, after a longer or shorter series of answers-questions, to one of the questions found within the circular Knowledge that the Wise Man possesses. To start with this question and to proceed logically *necessarily* leads to the starting point. Thus it is clear that *all* possible questions-answers have been exhausted; or, in other words, a *total* answer has been obtained: each part of the circular Knowledge has for its answer the *whole* of this knowledge, which—being circular—is the entirety of *all* Knowledge.

It is known that Hegel asserted that his knowledge is circular, and that *circularity* is the *necessary and sufficient* condition of *absolute truth*—that is, of *complete, universal, and definitive* (or "eternal") truth. But people generally forget (and only in the *Phenomenology* do they learn) that the conception of circularity, like every Hegelian conception, has a double aspect: *an ideal* or, if you will, abstract aspect; and a *real* or, if you will, concrete or "existential" aspect. And it is only the entirety of both aspects that constitutes what Hegel calls the *Begriff* (the concrete concept).

The *real* aspect of the "circularity" of Wisdom is the "circular" *existence* of the Wise Man. In the Wise Man's absolute Knowledge, each question is its own answer, but is so only because he goes through the *totality* of questions-answers that forms the entirety of the System. Likewise, in his existence, the Wise Man remains in *identity* with himself, he is closed up in himself; but he

remains in *identity* with *himself* because he passes through the *totality* of *others*, and he is *closed up* in himself because he *closes up the totality of others* in himself. Which (according to the *Phenomenology*) means, quite simply, that the only man who can be Wise is a Citizen of the *universal and homogeneous* State—that is to say, the State of the *Tun Aller und Jeder*, in which each man exists only through and for the whole, and the whole exists through and for each man.

The absolute Knowledge of the Wise Man who realizes perfect self-consciousness is an answer to the question, "What am I?" The Wise Man's real existence must therefore be "circular" (that is to say, for Hegel, he must be a Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State) in order that the knowledge that reveals this existence may itself be *circular*—i.e., an absolute truth. Therefore: only the Citizen of the perfect State can realize absolute Knowledge. Inversely, since Hegel supposes that every man is a Philosopher—that is, made so as to become *conscious* of what he is (at least, it is only in these men that Hegel is interested, and only of them that he speaks)—a Citizen of the perfect State always eventually understands himself in and by a circular—i.e., absolute—knowledge.

This conception entails a very important consequence: *Wisdom can be realized, according to Hegel, only at the end of History.*⁶

This too is universally understood. It was always known that for Hegel, not only does the coming of Wisdom complete History,⁷ but also that this coming is possible only at the end of History. This is known, but why this is true is not always very well understood. And one cannot understand this as long as one does not know that the Wise Man must necessarily be *Citizen* of the *universal* (i.e., *nonexpandible*) and *homogeneous* (i.e., *non-transformable*) State. And one cannot know this until one has understood that this State is nothing other than the real basis (the "substructure") of the circularity of the absolute System: the

⁶ For according to the analyses of the *Phenomenology*, the State in question necessarily marks the end of the history of humanity (that is, of humanity that is self-conscious or aspires to this consciousness).

⁷ Which is trivial, for if *everything* is known, there is actually no longer any means of *making progress* or of changing (that is, for the *Philosopher*; but only for him does this problem exist).

Citizen of this State, as active Citizen, *realizes* the circularity that he *reveals*, as contemplative Wise Man, through his System.⁸

Therefore, for Hegel there is a double criterion for the *realization* of Wisdom: on the one hand, the universality and homogeneity of the State in which the Wise Man lives; and on the other hand, the *circularity* of his Knowledge. On the one hand, IN the *Phenomenology*, Hegel has described the perfect State: the reader need only observe the historical reality in order to see that this State is real, or at least to be convinced of its imminent realization. On the other hand, BY the *Phenomenology*, Hegel has shown that his knowledge is circular. And that is why he believed he could assert that he actually realized in his person the ideal of all Philosophy—that is, the ideal of Wisdom.

What is our attitude with respect to all this?

I said that we are faced with three, and only three, possibilities. I believe we can eliminate the first without *discussion*. First, because strictly speaking, it *cannot be discussed*; and next, because the very fact of our study of the *Phenomenology* proves that *silent* satisfaction (to which this first possibility finally reduces)

⁸ Starting from this conception, we understand Hegel's attitude toward Plato. According to Hegel, Plato was right in denying the possibility of the Wise Man. For Plato's "Ideal" State (which according to Hegel, moreover, merely reflects the real State of his time) is not the universal and homogeneous State; the Citizen of this State, therefore, is not "*circular*," and hence the knowledge of this Citizen, which reveals his Citizen's reality, is not circular either. Accordingly, the attempt to assert the possibility of the Wise Man within this *imperfect* State made it necessary to transform the very ideal of Wisdom into the caricature of the Stoic and Skeptic "Wise Man." Hegel has shown in the *Phenomenology* that these would-be "Wise Men" are not at all conscious of themselves. And as soon as such a "Wise Man" becomes self-conscious, he immediately sees that he does not realize perfection. He even sees that he cannot realize it. And thus it is that, becoming a Christian, he thinks that perfection has been realized outside of the World and Man, by God. Thus, the would-be "Wise Man," having become a Christian, rediscovers the Platonic, or better, theological, conception. But he *re-discovers* Plato; therefore he is more *conscious* than Plato. That is to say, he knows *why* he cannot be a Wise Man; he knows that he cannot be a Wise Man because the State in which he exists is not perfect. He can then have the idea of a perfect State and try to *realize* it. And at the moment he does this, he will become (by ceasing to be a Platonist and a Christian) a Hegelian; more exactly—he *will be* Hegel, the *real* Wise Man, the *successful* Aristotelian, Stoic, and Skeptic. If you please, this is Plato again: Hegelian philosophy is a *theo-logy*; however, its God is the Wise Man.

neither an error nor a truth is an idea, or, if you prefer, an ideal. This idea can be transformed into *truth* only by negating *action*, which will destroy the World that does not correspond to the idea and will create by this very destruction the World in conformity with the ideal. In other words, one can accept the anthropology of the *Phenomenology*, even with the knowledge that the perfect man (the Wise Man) with whom it is finally concerned is not yet realized, only on the condition that one wants to *act* with a view to the realization of the Hegelian State that is indispensable to the existence of this man—to act, or at least to *accept* and “justify” such an action, if it is done by someone, somewhere.

However, this by no means exempts us from studying the second Hegelian criterion, that of *circularity*.

Still less, given that it is infinitely more important than the first. In the first case—end of History, perfect State—what is involved is a verification of *fact*, that is to say, of something essentially *uncertain*. In the second—circularity—what is involved is a logical, rational analysis, in which no divergence of opinion is possible. Accordingly, if we see that Hegel’s system actually is circular, we must conclude in spite of appearances (and perhaps even in spite of common sense) that *History is completed* and consequently that the State in which this system could be realized is the perfect State. This, by the way, is what Hegel himself did, as we know. After the fall of Napoleon, he declared that the Prussian State (which, in other respects, he detests) was the definitive or perfect State. And he could not do otherwise, given that he was convinced of the circularity of his system.

Therefore, the whole question for us reduces to this: if the *Phenomenology* is actually circular, we must accept it outright, along with everything that follows from it; if it is not, we must consider it as a hypothetical-deductive whole, and verify all the hypotheses and deductions one by one.⁹

One must begin, therefore, by studying the *Phenomenology*

⁹ Moreover, it is not sufficient that the *Phenomenology* be circular: the *Logic* (or the *Encyclopaedia*) must be so, too; and, what is much more important, the System in its *entirety*, that is to say, the *entirety* of the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia*, must also be circular. Now, it is precisely there that the non-circularity of Hegel’s system is perfectly obvious. But here I can say so only in passing and without proof.

human *freedom* (that is to say, the idea of Man himself, since man without freedom is but an animal).

We do not need to define freedom here.⁶

We all have "an idea of what it is," as we say; even if we do not know how to *define* freedom. And the "idea" that we have of it is sufficient to enable us to say this:

The free act is situated, so to speak, *outside* of the line of temporal evolution. The *hic et nunc*, represented by a point on this line, is *determined, fixed, defined* by the past which, through it, determines the future as well. The *hic et nunc* of the free act, on the other hand, is *unexplainable*, on the basis of its past; it is not fixed or determined by it. Even while existing in space-time, the being endowed with freedom must be able to *detach* itself from the *hic et nunc*, to rise *above* it, to take up a *position* in relation to it. But the free act is related to the *hic et nunc*: it is effected in given determined conditions. That is to say: the *content* of the *hic et nunc* must be preserved, while being *detached* from the *hic et nunc*. Now, that which preserves the content of a perception while detaching it from the *hic et nunc* of sensation is precisely the Concept or the Word that has a meaning. (This *table* is bound to the *hic et nunc*; but the *meaning* of the words "this table" exists everywhere and always). And that is why everyone agrees that only a *speaking* being can be free.⁷

As for Plato, who believes that virtue can be taught, and taught through dialectic—i.e., through Discourse—obviously the free act, for him, has the same nature as the act of conceptual understanding: for him, they are but two complementary aspects of one and the same thing.

Now, for Plato the Concept is (1) *eternal*, and (2) it is *related* to Eternity, which (3) is *outside* of Time. The application of this definition of the Concept to the free act leads to the following results:

Just as the Concept is not related to the temporal reality in which *doxa* reigns, so the free act, too, is impossible in *this* reality. In and

⁶ In point of fact, either this word has no meaning, or else it is the *Negativity* of which Hegel speaks, and which a Descartes and a Kant had in view without speaking of it explicitly. But no matter.

⁷ Hegel, it is true, reverses this assertion and says that only a free being can speak; but he too maintains the close connection between language and freedom.

geometrical theory, which can at most operate with the notion of purely incorporeal "movement" (as Descartes does), but not with the notion of force: this System admits kinematics or phoronomy, but excludes dynamics. Consequently, it does not explain biological phenomena, in which Time is *constituent*. And in relation to the human World, this System at best explains "angelic" existence, but deprives historical life, that is, Man's *temporal* existence, of any meaning and value.

SEVENTH LECTURE

I have discussed at some length the Platonic conception, which corresponds to possibility II, 1, *a*.

Let us now move on to Aristotle—that is, to possibility II, 1, *b*.

Aristotle saw Plato's difficulties. And at the same time he made a great discovery. Just like Plato, Aristotle defines the Concept as eternal. That is, he defines it as a relation to something else. And this something else for him, as for Plato, is not Time but Eternity. (*Epistēmē* exists only in the cosmos in which there are ideas—i.e., eternal entities, having Eternity as their *topos*.) But Aristotle saw what Plato seems not to have seen; namely, that Eternity is not *outside* of Time, but *in* Time. At the very least, there is something eternal in Time.

In fact, Plato reasoned as follows: All real dogs change; the concept "dog," on the other hand, remains identical to itself; therefore it must be related to an Eternity situated outside of real dogs—that is, outside of Time. (This Eternity is the "idea" of dog, and consequently, in the final analysis, the Idea of ideas.) To which Aristotle answered: to be sure, the concept "dog" is related to Eternity; but Eternity subsists *in* Time; for if real *dogs* change, *the* real dog—that is, *the species* "dog"—does not change. Since the species is *eternal*, even though it is placed *in* Time, it is possible to relate the Concept to Eternity *in* Time. Therefore there is an

absolute Knowledge relating to the temporal World, to the extent that this World implies Eternity. In other words, Plato forgot that in Heracleitus' river there are permanent eddies. First of all, they are the animals and the plants. The eternal or immutable axis of the "eddies" is the *telos* or the entelechy; and this same entelechy is what appears, in relation to the Concept, as the Idea of the "eddy." But there are also planets, and finally the Cosmos. Hence Aristotle says: Time itself is *eternal*. It is circular,⁹ but the circle is gone around again and again, eternally.¹⁰ Therefore the Cosmos has the same structure as does the animal. The Aristotelian System thus gives an explanation of life and a biological conception of the World.

Theologically speaking, the conception that relates the eternal Concept to Eternity in Time equals *Polytheism*. To be sure, Aristotle is too far removed from the totemic mentality to assert that animals and plants are gods. But when he says that the planets are gods, he maintains a greater agreement with his system than does Plato with his. But, all things considered, the difference is not very important: mono- or poly-theism—in both cases we are dealing with a *theo*-logical knowledge. The cosmic revolution is eternally repeated; and it is solely because there is an *eternal* repetition that there is an absolute Knowledge relating to the Cosmos. Now, it is one and the same Eternity that manifests itself in and through the eternal return of Time. In other words, there is a supreme god, the God properly so-called, who maintains the Cosmos in its identity and thus makes conceptual Knowledge possible. And, while manifesting itself through the course of Time, this divine Eternity differs essentially from everything that is in Time. At most, man can speak of himself too, taken as species, when he speaks of God. It remains nonetheless true that the difference is *essential* between him, taken as historical individual, and the eternal God of whom he speaks. Once more, then, as in Plato, it is an absolute Knowledge of *Bewusstsein*, and not of *Selbst-Bewusstsein*. (For the species has no *Selbst-Bewusstsein*, no *Selbst* or *Self*; at the most, it says "we," but not "I.")

⁹ As in Hegel.

¹⁰ Whereas in Hegel the circuit is made only once.

Therefore, the Aristotelian System explains Man's biological existence but not his truly human—i.e., historical—existence. And we see this even better by turning to the anthropological level—that is, by posing the problem of *freedom*.

To be sure, Aristotle talks about freedom. But everyone talks about freedom. Even Spinoza! But if it is not to be a word-game, if the true notion of freedom (made explicit in the Hegelian conception, as it is formulated in the *Phenomenology*) is sought, it must be admitted that it is not compatible with Aristotle's System. As a matter of fact, we know that this System excludes, by definition, a *creative* God. (By definition, for Eternity in Time signifies: *eternity* of the World, *return*, and *eternal* return.) Now, where there is no place for God's creative action, there is still less place for Man's creative action: Man undergoes History, but does not create it; therefore he is not *free* in Time. On this point, Aristotle does not go beyond Plato. But his System is still less acceptable than the Platonic System, for it excludes even the *transcendent* free act. In fact, since Eternity is in Time, and the eternal Concept is related to Eternity in Time, all possibility of going outside of Time is excluded. One is *outside* of Time only by being *in* Time. A temporal existence that one could *choose* outside of Time would be conceptually *unknowable*, because it would not be *eternal* in Time, whereas the Concept can be related only to an *Eternity* in Time. In short: to the extent that Man changes, he does not know; and not *knowing*, he is not free (by definition); and to the extent that he *knows*, he does not change and hence is not free either, in the usual sense of the word.

Indeed, for Aristotle as for Plato, one can have an absolute Knowledge of Man only by relating Man to Eternity. The individual soul is too small to be known, Plato says in the *Republic*: to know it, one must see it enlarged—that is, one must contemplate the City. Now for Aristotle, Plato's eternal State is but a utopia; in actual fact, all States sooner or later change and perish; hence there is no absolute political Knowledge relating to *one* of the possible forms of the State. But, happily, there is a closed cycle in the transformation of States, which is *eternally* repeated. Therefore this cycle can be understood *conceptually*; and by speaking of it, one can grasp the different States and Man himself through

concepts. To be sure. But if all this is true, History has nothing to do with what is called "History" today; and in this History, Man is anything but free.

Therefore, by replacing geometry with biology, the Aristotelian variant of the Platonic System explains Man as animal, but does not explain him as historical and free individual; it does not even explain him—as Plato did—as fallen Angel.

Alongside the great philosophies there have always been more or less barbaric or barbarized theories. The Platonic-Aristotelian notion of the Concept has also been barbarized: either by a vulgar and absurd denial, or by a distorted acceptance.

The *vulgar denial* consists in saying that the Concept, far from being eternal, is just as temporal as any other thing existing in Time. It is our possibility IV, of which I shall not speak, since it does away with the very idea of a true or genuine Knowledge. It is Skepticism or Relativism, which Plato denounced under the name of "Sophistic"; which Kant criticized, calling it "Empiricism"; and which Husserl quite recently denounced once more under the name of "Psychologism." Let us speak no further about it.

Let us rather say a few words about the *distorted acceptance*, which is no less absurd, although less *obviously* absurd. People who hold this view continue to say that the Concept is eternal. But while being eternal, it is in Time; which means, they say, that it is related to what is in Time—i.e., to the temporal. (Not to Time, but to the temporal—i.e., to what is *in* Time.) And being related to the temporal, it is related to it in Time, existing—in Time—*before* the temporal properly so-called. It is the well-known notion of the *a priori* or the "innate idea" that *precedes* experience.

This "apriorism" (called "Dogmatism" by Kant) is what the famous first sentence of the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* is directed against: there is no doubt, Kant says (more or less), that experience—i.e., the temporal reality—always precedes in time the concept that appears in time as *my* Knowledge. And indeed there can be no possible doubt on this subject. Vulgar Apriorism begins from a supposed fact and ends in a truly untenable conception: on the gnoseological level as well as on the anthropological level (where the notorious "free will" is discussed).

One need only develop this Apriorism somewhat in order to come either to Skepticism or Relativism, or to Kant; or, finally, to the return to Plato and Aristotle.

Kant, like every philosopher worthy of the name, knows full well that the Concept can neither be defined as temporal, nor be related to the temporal (which, by the way, amounts to the same thing); for him, as for Plato and Aristotle, the Concept is *eternal*. Now, being *eternal* and not *Eternity*, the Concept must be *related* to something, and *related* in the strict sense of the term—that is, related to something *other* than itself. But, seeing the difficulties that Plato and Aristotle encountered by relating the eternal Concept to Eternity, Kant had the unheard-of audacity to relate it to Time (and not, of course, to the temporal—i.e., to what is *in* Time).

The whole Kantian conception is summed up in this celebrated sentence: "without intuition the concept is empty; without the concept intuition is blind."

But before speaking of this Kantian formula, I want to mention in a few words another solution to the problem, namely, Spinoza's.

As I have already said, Spinoza's System is the perfect incarnation of the absurd. (And that is why, when one tries to "realize" his thought, as we say, one experiences the same feeling of dizziness as when one is faced with a paradox of formal logic or set theory.)

Now, a particularly curious thing: *absolute* error or absurdity is, and must be, just as "circular" as the truth. Thus, Spinoza's (and Parmenides') absolute Knowledge must be symbolized by a closed circle (without a central point, of course): Figure 12. Indeed, if Spinoza says that the Concept is Eternity, whereas Hegel says that it is Time, they have this much in common: the Concept is not a *relationship*. (Or, if you like, it is in relation only to itself.) Being and (conceptual) Thought are one and the same thing, Parmenides said. Thought (or the Concept) is the attribute of Substance, which is not different from its attribute, Spinoza says. Therefore, in both cases—that is, in Parmenides-Spinoza and in Hegel—there is no "reflection" *on* Being. In both cases, Being itself is what reflects on itself in and through, or—better yet—as,

Concept. Absolute Knowledge that reflects the totality of Being, therefore, is just as closed in itself, just as "circular," as Being itself in its totality: there is nothing outside of the Knowledge, as there is nothing outside of Being. But there is an essential difference: Parmenides-Spinoza's Concept-Being is *Eternity*, whereas Hegel's Concept-Being is *Time*. Consequently, Spinozist absolute Knowledge, too, must *be* Eternity. That is to say that it must exclude Time. In other words: there is no need of Time to realize it; the *Ethics* must be thought, written, and read "in a trice." And that is the thing's absurdity. [Plotinus, however, accepts this consequence.]

This absurdity was already denounced by Plato in his *Parmenides*. If Being is truly one (or more exactly, the One)—i.e., if it excludes diversity, all diversity—and therefore all change—i.e., if it is Eternity that *annuls* Time—if, I say, Being is the One, a man could not *speak* of it, Plato remarks. Indeed, Discourse would have to be just as *one* as the Being that it reveals, and therefore could not go beyond the single word "one." And even that. . . . For *Time* is still the crucial question. Discourse must be *intemporal*: now, if he has not the time, man cannot even pronounce a *single* word. If Being is *one*, or, what amounts to the same thing, if the Concept *is* Eternity, "absolute Knowledge" reduces for Man to absolute *silence*.¹¹

I say: for Man. That is, for the speaking being that lives in Time and needs time in order to live and to speak (i.e., in order to think by means of the Concept). Now, as we have seen, the Concept *as such* is not (or at least does not seem to be) necessarily attached to Time. The universe of Concepts or of Ideas can be conceived of as a universe of *Discourse*: as an eternal Discourse, in which all the elements coexist. [This is what Plotinus says.] And as a matter of fact, there are (it seems) *nontemporal* relations, between Concepts: all Euclid's theorems, for example, exist simultaneously within the entirety of his axioms. [And Plotinus insists on this fact.] Hence there would be a nontemporal *Discourse*.¹² The *idea* of the Spinozist System, then, is not absurd: quite simply, it is the idea of *absolute* Knowledge. What is absurd is that this System is

¹¹ Plato accepts this: the One is ineffable.

¹² Just as there are nontemporal movements, as Descartes correctly remarks.

supposed to have been fabricated by a *man*, who in actual fact needed *time* in order to fabricate it. [Accordingly, in Plotinus, this system belongs to the eternal Intelligence.] Or else, again: the *System* can exist outside of Time; but, starting from temporal existence, there is no *access* to this System. (The Spinozist System is Hegel's *Logik*, for which there would not and could not be a *Phenomenology* that "leads" to it; or else, it is Descartes' System, to which one could not find access through a *Discourse on Method*.)

The *Ethics* is made in accordance with a method of which an account *cannot* be given in *human* language. For the *Ethics* explains everything, except the possibility for a man living in time to write it. And if the *Phenomenology* explains why the *Logik* appears at a certain moment of history and not at another, the *Ethics* proves the impossibility of its own appearance at *any* moment of time whatsoever. In short, the *Ethics* could have been written, *if it is true*, only by God himself; and, let us take care to note—by a nonincarnated God.

Therefore, the difference between Spinoza and Hegel can be formulated in the following way: Hegel *becomes* God by thinking or writing the *Logik*; or, if you like, it is by becoming God that he writes or thinks it. Spinoza, on the other hand, must *be* God from all eternity in order to be able to write or think his *Ethics*. Now, if a being that *becomes* God in time can be called "God" only provided that it uses this term as a metaphor (a correct metaphor, by the way), the being that has always *been* God is God in the proper and strict sense of the word. Therefore, to be a Spinozist is actually to replace God the Father (who has no Son, incidentally) by Spinoza, while maintaining the notion of divine transcendence in all its rigor; it is to say that Spinoza is the transcendent God who speaks, to be sure, to human beings, but who speaks to them as eternal *God*. And this, obviously, is the height of absurdity: to take Spinoza seriously is actually to be—or to become—mad.

Spinoza, like Hegel, identifies Man (that is to say, the Wise Man) and God. It seems, then, that in both cases it could be said indifferently either that there is nothing other than God, or that there is nothing other than Man. Now in point of fact, the two assertions are not identical, and if the first is accepted by Spinoza,

is not found in Spinoza. But the thing itself is there. Setting aside Parmenides, Spinoza is the only philosopher who understood that the principle of all or nothing is valid for Knowledge: either one knows everything, or else one knows nothing; for one sees that one truly knows something only by seeing that one knows everything. And that is why the study of Spinoza is so instructive, despite the *absurdity* of his point of view. Spinoza sets up the ideal of *total*, or "systematic," or "circular," Knowledge. However, *his System is impossible in Time*. And Hegel's whole effort consists in creating a Spinozist System which can be written by a *man* living in a *historical* World. And that is why, while admitting with Spinoza that the Concept is not a *relation*, Hegel identifies it not with Eternity, but with Time. (On this subject see the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, pp. 19ff.)

We shall see later what this means. For the moment, I want to underline once more that the symbols of both systems are identical. They differ only in their *source* (which is not seen in the drawing): doing away with the small or the large circle. And again, this indeed corresponds to the reality. It is understandable that a *temporal* Knowledge could finally embrace the *totality* of becoming. But it is not understandable that an *eternal* Knowledge could absorb everything that is in Time: for the simple reason that it would absorb us ourselves. It would be the absolute Knowledge of *Bewusstsein*, which would have completely absorbed *Selbstbewusstsein*. And this, obviously, is absurd.

I shall stop here. To know what the identification of the Concept with Eternity means, one must read the whole *Ethics*.

Let us proceed, or return, to Kant.

Kant agrees with Plato and Aristotle (in opposition to Parmenides-Spinoza and Hegel) that the Concept is an *eternal* entity, in *relation* with something *other* than itself. However, he relates this eternal Concept not to Eternity, but to Time.

We can say, moreover, that Kant defines the Concept as a *relation* precisely because he sees the impossibility of Spinozism (just as Plato had done to avoid the impossibility of Eleaticism). Perhaps he did not read Spinoza. But in the "Transcendental Deduction of the Categories" and in the "Schematismus" he says why the

other conceptions of the relation between the Concept and Time.

The aim of Hegel's philosophy is to give an account of the fact of History. From this it can be concluded that the Time that he identifies with the Concept is *historical* Time, the Time in which human history unfolds, or better still, the Time that realizes itself (not as the motion of the stars, for example, but) as universal History.¹⁸

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel is very radical. As a matter of fact (at the end of the next to last paragraph of the book and at the beginning of the last, page 563), he says that Nature is Space, whereas Time is History. In other words: there is no natural, cosmic Time; there is Time only to the extent that there is *History*, that is, *human* existence—that is, *speaking existence*. Man who, in the course of History, reveals Being by his Discourse, is the "empirically existing Concept" (*der daseiende Begriff*), and Time is nothing other than this Concept. Without Man, Nature would be *Space*, and *only* Space. Only Man is in Time, and Time does not exist outside of Man; therefore, Man is Time, and Time is Man—that is, the "Concept which is there in the [spatial] empirical existence" of Nature (*der Begriff der da ist*).

But in his other writings, Hegel is less radical. In them, he admits the existence of a cosmic Time.¹⁹ But in so doing, Hegel identifies cosmic Time and historical Time.²⁰

But for the moment, no matter. If Hegel identifies both Times, if he admits only one Time, we can apply everything that he says about Time in general to *historical* Time (which is all that interests us here).

Now, curiously enough, the crucial text on Time is found in the "Philosophy of Nature" of the *Jenenser Realphilosophie*. Mr. Alexandré Koyré has done a translation and commentary of this

¹⁸ Therefore, the identification of Time and the Concept amounts to understanding History as the history of human *Discourse* which reveals Being. And we know that actually, for Hegel, *real* Time—i.e., universal History—is in the final analysis the history of *philosophy*.

¹⁹ It may be that it is actually impossible to do without Time in Nature; for it is probable that (biological) life, at least, is an *essentially* temporal phenomenon.

²⁰ This, in my opinion, is his basic error; for if life is a temporal phenomenon, biological Time surely has a structure different from that of historical or human Time; the whole question is to know how these two Times coexist; and they probably coexist with a cosmic or physical Time, which is different from both in its structure.

text in an article which resulted from his course on the writings of Hegel's youth: a conclusive article, which is the source and basis of my interpretation of the *Phenomenology*. Here I shall merely reproduce in a few words the principal consequences implied by Mr. Koyré's analysis.

The text in question clearly shows that the Time that Hegel has in view is the Time that, for us, is historical (and not biological or cosmic) Time. In effect, this Time is characterized by the primacy of the Future. In the Time that pre-Hegelian Philosophy considered, the movement went from the Past toward the Future, by way of the Present.²¹ In the Time of which Hegel speaks, on the other hand, the movement is engendered in the Future and goes toward the Present by way of the Past: Future → Past → Present (→ Future). And this is indeed the specific structure of properly *human*—that is, *historical*—Time.

In fact, let us consider the *phenomenological* (or better, anthropological) projection of this *metaphysical* analysis of Time.²² The movement engendered by the Future is the movement that arises from Desire. This means: from specifically human Desire—that is, creative Desire—that is, Desire that is directed toward an entity that does not exist and has not existed in the real natural World. Only then can the movement be said to be engendered by the Future, for the Future is precisely what does not (yet) exist and has not (already) existed. Now, we know that Desire can be directed toward an absolutely *nonexistent* entity only provided that it is directed toward another Desire taken as Desire. As a matter of fact, Desire is the presence of an *absence*: I am thirsty because there is an *absence* of water in me. It is indeed, then, the presence of a future in the present: of the future act of drinking.

²¹ It may be that the Time in which the Present takes primacy is cosmic or physical Time, whereas biological Time would be characterized by the primacy of the Past. It does seem that the physical or cosmic object is but a simple *presence* (*Gegenwart*), whereas the fundamental biological phenomenon is probably *Memory* in the broad sense, and the specifically human phenomenon is without a doubt the *Project*. Moreover, it could be that the cosmic and biological forms of Time exist as Time only in relation to Man—that is, in relation to historical Time.

²² On the ontological level, the problem would be to study the relations between Thesis = Identity, Antithesis = Negativity, and Synthesis = Totality. But I shall not talk about this.

To desire to drink is to desire something (water) that *is*: hence, it is to act in terms of the present. But to act in terms of the desire for a *desire* is to act in terms of what does not (yet) exist—that is, in terms of the future. The being that acts thus, therefore, is in a Time in which the Future takes primacy. And inversely, the Future can really take primacy only if, in the real (spatial) World, there is a being capable of acting thus.

Now, in Chapter IV of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel shows that the Desire that is directed toward another Desire is necessarily the Desire for *Recognition*, which—by opposing the Master to the Slave—engenders *History* and moves it (as long as it is not definitively overcome by Satisfaction). Therefore: by realizing itself, the Time in which the Future takes primacy engenders History, which lasts as long as *this* Time lasts; and this Time lasts only as long as History lasts—that is, as long as human acts accomplished with a view to social *Recognition* are carried out.

Now, if Desire is the presence of an *absence*, it is not—taken as such—an empirical *reality*: it does not exist in a positive manner in the natural—i.e., spatial—Present. On the contrary, it is like a gap or a “hole” in Space: an emptiness, a nothingness. (And it is into this “hole,” so to speak, that the purely temporal Future takes its place, within the spatial Present.) Desire that is related to Desire, therefore, is related to nothing. To “realize” it, therefore, is to realize nothing. In being related only to the Future, one does not come to a reality, and consequently one is not really in motion. On the other hand, if one affirms or accepts the present (or better, spatial) real, one *desires* nothing; hence one is not related to the Future, one does not go beyond the Present, and consequently one does not move either. Therefore: in order to realize itself, Desire must be related to a reality; but it cannot be related to it in a positive manner. Hence it must be related to it *negatively*. Therefore Desire is necessarily the Desire to *negate* the real or present given. And the reality of Desire comes from the negation of the given reality.²³ Now, the *negated* real is the real that has *ceased* to be: it is the *past* real, or the *real* Past. Desire determined by the

²³ The *desire* to drink is an *absence* of water, but the quality of this desire (thirst) is determined not by *absence* as such, but by the fact that it is an absence of *water* (and not of something else), and this desire *realizes* itself by the “negation” of *real* water (in the act of drinking).

Future appears, in the Present, as a reality (that is, as satisfied Desire) only on the condition that it has negated a real—that is, a Past. The manner in which the Past has been (negatively) formed in terms of the Future is what determines the quality of the real Present. And only the Present thus determined by the Future and the Past is a human or historical Present.²⁴ Therefore, generally speaking: the historical movement arises from the Future and passes through the Past in order to realize itself in the Present or as temporal Present. The Time that Hegel has in view, then, is human or historical Time: it is the Time of conscious and voluntary action which realizes in the present a Project for the future, which Project is formed on the basis of knowledge of the past.²⁵

Therefore, we are dealing with historical Time, and Hegel says that this "Time is the Concept itself which *exists empirically*." For the moment let us disregard the term "Concept." Hegel says, then, that Time is something, an X, that *exists empirically*. Now, this assertion can be deduced from the very analysis of the Hegelian notion of (historical) Time. Time in which the Future takes primacy can be realized, can *exist*, only provided that it *negates* or annihilates. In order that Time may exist, therefore, there must

²⁴ Indeed, we say that a moment is "historical" when the action that is performed in it is performed in terms of the idea that the agent has of the future (that is, in terms of a Project): one decides on a future war, and so on; therefore, one acts in terms of the future. But if the moment is to be truly "historical," there must be change; in other words, the decision must be negative with respect to the given: in deciding for the future war, one decides against the prevailing peace. And, through the decision for the future war, the peace is transformed into the past. Now, the present historical act, launched by the idea of the future (by the Project), is determined by this past that it creates: if the peace is sure and honorable, the negation that relegates it to the past is the act of a madman or a criminal; if it is humiliating, its negation is an act worthy of a statesman; and so on.

²⁵ As an example of a "historic moment" let us take the celebrated anecdote of the "Rubicon." What is there in the present properly so-called? A man takes a walk at night on the bank of a small river. In other words, something extremely banal, nothing "historic." For even if the man in question was Caesar, the event would in no sense be "historic" if Caesar were taking such a walk solely because of some sort of insomnia. The moment is historic because the man taking a nocturnal walk is thinking about a coup d'état, the civil war, the conquest of Rome, and worldwide dominion. And, let us take care to notice: because he has the project of doing it, for all this is still in the future. The event in question, therefore, would not be historic if there were not a real presence (Gegenwart) of the future in the real World (first of all, in Caesar's brain). Therefore, the present

The real presence of the future in the real World is the true present in the present. To believe that a thought is "sensational"

also be something other than Time. This other thing is first of all Space (as it were, the place where things are stopped). Therefore: no Time without Space; Time is something that is in Space.²⁶ Time is the negation of Space (of diversity); but if it is something and not nothingness, it is because it is the negation of Space. Now, only that which really exists—that is, which *resists*—can be really negated. But Space that resists is full: it is extended matter, it is real Space—that is, the natural World. Therefore, Time must exist in a World: it is indeed, then, something which "*ist da*," as Hegel says, which is *there* in a Space, and which is *there* in empirical Space—that is, in a sensible Space or a natural World. Time annihilates this World by causing it at every instant to sink into the nothingness of the past. But Time is nothing but this annihilation of the World; and if there were no real World that was annihilated, Time would only be pure nothingness: there would be no Time. Hence Time that *is*, therefore, is indeed something that "exists empirically"—i.e., exists in a real Space or a spatial World.

Now, we have seen that the presence of Time (in which the Future takes primacy) in the real World is called Desire (which

is "historical" only because there is in it a relation to the future, or more exactly, because it is a function of the future (Caesar taking a walk because he is thinking of the future). And it is in this sense that one can speak of a primacy of the future in historical Time. But this is not sufficient. Suppose that the person taking a walk is a Roman adolescent who is "dreaming" of worldwide dominion, or a "megalomaniac" in the clinical sense of the word who is constructing a "project," otherwise identical to Caesar's. Immediately, the walk ceases to be a "historic event." It is historic solely because it is Caesar who, while taking a walk, is thinking about his project (or "making up his mind," that is, transforming a "hypothesis" without any precise relation to real Time into a concrete "project for the future"). Why? Because Caesar has the possibility (but not the certainty, for then there would be no future properly so-called, nor a genuine project) of realizing his plans. Now, his whole past, and only his past, is what assures him of this possibility. The past—that is, the entirety of the actions of fighting and work effected at various present times in terms of the project—that is, in terms of the future. This past is what distinguishes the "project" from a simple "dream" or "utopia." Consequently, there is a "historic moment" only when the present is ordered in terms of the future, on the condition that the future makes its way into the present not in an immediate manner (unmittelbar; the case of a utopia), but having been mediated (vermittelt) by the past—that is, by an already accomplished action.

²⁶ I said that Desire—that is, Time—is a "hole"; now, for a "hole" to exist, there must be a space in which the hole exists.

but because Caesar could count on helpers could he form his project.

is directed toward another Desire), and that this Desire is a specifically human Desire, since the Action that realizes it is Man's very being. The real presence of Time in the World, therefore, is called *Man*. Time is Man, and *Man is Time*.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel does not say this in so many words, because he avoids the word "man." But in the Lectures delivered at Jena he says: "*Geist ist Zeit*" ("*Spirit is Time*"). Now, "Spirit" in Hegel (and especially in this context) means "human Spirit" or *Man*, more particularly, collective Man—that is, the People or State, and, finally, Man as a whole or humanity in the totality of its spatial-temporal existence, that is, the totality of universal History.

Therefore, Time (that is, historical Time, with the rhythm: Future → Past → Present) is Man in his empirical—that is, spatial—integral reality: Time is the History of Man in the World. And indeed, without Man, there would be no Time in the World; Nature that did not shelter Man would be only a real *Space*.²⁷ To be sure, the animal, too, has desires, and it acts in terms of these desires, by negating the real: it eats and drinks, just like man. But the animal's desires are *natural*; they are directed toward what is, and hence they are *determined* by what is; the negating action that is effected in terms of *these* desires, therefore, cannot *essentially* negate, it cannot change the *essence* of what is. Therefore, in its *entirety*—that is, in its *reality*—Being is not modified by these "natural" desires; it does not essentially change because of them; it remains *identical* to itself, and thus it is *Space*, and not Time. To be sure, an animal transforms the aspect of the natural World in which it lives. But it dies and gives back to the earth what it has taken from it. And since the animal is *identically* repeated by its offspring, the changes that it brings about in the World are repeated, too. And hence in its entirety, Nature remains what it is.²⁸ Man, on the other hand, *essentially* transforms the World by the negating Action of his Fights and his Work, Action which arises from *nonnatural* human Desire directed toward an-

²⁷ Of four dimensions.

²⁸ If there is Time, it is biological Time, Aristotle's circular Time; it is *Eternity* in Time; it is Time in which everything changes in order to remain the same thing.

other Desire—that is, toward something that does not exist really in the natural World.²⁹ Only Man creates and destroys *essentially*. Therefore, the natural reality implies Time only if it implies a human reality. Now, man essentially creates and destroys in terms of the idea that he forms of the Future. And the idea of the Future appears in the real present in the form of a Desire directed toward another Desire—that is, in the form of a Desire for social *Recognition*. Now, Action that arises from *this* Desire engenders History. Hence there is *Time* only where there is *History*.

Therefore: "*die Zeit ist der daseiende Begriff selbst*" means: *Time is Man* in the World and his real History. But Hegel also says: "*Geist ist Zeit*." That is to say, *Man is Time*. And we have just seen what this means: Man is Desire directed toward another Desire—that is, Desire for Recognition—that is, negating Action performed for the sake of satisfying this Desire for Recognition—that is, bloody Fighting for prestige—that is, the relation between Master and Slave—that is, Work—that is, historical evolution which finally comes to the universal and homogeneous State and to the absolute Knowledge that reveals complete Man realized in and by this State. In short, to say that *Man is Time* is to say all that Hegel says of Man in the *Phenomenology*. And it is also to say that the existing Universe, and Being itself, must be such that Man thus conceived of is *possible* and can be *realized*. Hence the sentence that identifies Spirit and Time sums up Hegel's whole philosophy, just as the other schematic formulas enumerated above sum up the whole philosophy of a Plato, an Aristotle, etc.

But in those schematic formulas, the *Concept* is what was mentioned. Now, Hegel too says not only "*Geist ist Zeit*," but also "*die Zeit ist der Begriff der da ist*."

To be sure, these are two different ways of saying the same thing. If *Man is Time*, and if *Time is* the "empirically existing Concept," it can be said that *Man is* the "empirically existing Concept." And so, indeed, he is: as the only speaking being in the World, he is Logos (or Discourse) incarnate, Logos become flesh

²⁹ Thus the olive tree of Pericles' time is "the same" olive tree as that of Venizelos' time; but Pericles' Greece is a past that never again becomes a present; and, with respect to Pericles, Venizelos represents a future that as yet has never been a past.

and thus existing as an empirical reality in the natural World. Man is the *Dasein* of the *Begriff*, and the "empirically existing Concept" is Man. Therefore, to say that Time is the "empirically existing Concept" is indeed to say that Time is Man, provided that Man is conceived of as Hegel conceives of him in the *Phenomenology*. Hence everything that Hegel says of Man in the *Phenomenology* is also valid for Time. And inversely, everything that can be said of the "appearance" (*Erscheinung*) or "*Phänomenologie*" of Time (that is, of Spirit) in the World is said by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*.

Therefore, to understand the paradoxical identification of Time and the Concept, one must know the whole of the *Phenomenology*. On the one hand, one must know that the Time in question is human or historical Time—that is, Time in which the Future that determines the Present by way of the Past takes primacy. And on the other hand, one must know how Hegel defines the Concept.³⁰

It remains for me, then, briefly to go over what the Concept, the *Begriff*, is for Hegel.

In Chapter VII of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel said that all *conceptual understanding* (*Begreifen*) is equivalent to a *murder*. Let us, then, recall what he had in view. As long as the Meaning (or Essence, Concept, Logos, Idea, etc.) is embodied in an empirically existing entity, this Meaning or Essence, as well as this entity, *lives*. For example, as long as the Meaning (or Essence) "dog" is embodied in a sensible entity, this Meaning (Essence) *lives*: it is the real dog, the living dog which runs, drinks, and eats. But when the Meaning (Essence) "dog" passes into the *word* "dog"—that is, becomes *abstract* Concept which is *different* from the sensible reality that it reveals by its Meaning—the Meaning (Essence) *dies*: the *word* "dog" does not run, drink, and eat; in it the Meaning (Essence) *ceases* to live—that is, it *dies*. And that is why the *conceptual understanding of empirical reality is equivalent to a murder*. To be sure, Hegel knows full well that it is not necessary to kill a dog in order to understand it through its Concept—that is,

³⁰ The *Hegelian* Concept is identified with *Hegelian* Time. But the *pre-Hegelian* Concept cannot be identified with *pre-Hegelian* Time; nor the *Hegelian* Concept with *pre-Hegelian* Time; nor the *pre-Hegelian* Concept with *Hegelian* Time.

in order to give it a name or define it—nor is it necessary to wait for it actually to die in order to do so.³¹ However, Hegel says, if the dog were not mortal—that is, essentially finite or limited with respect to its duration—one could not detach its Concept from it—that is, cause the Meaning (Essence) that is embodied in the real dog to pass into the nonliving word—into the word (endowed with a meaning)—that is, into the abstract Concept—into the Concept that exists not in the dog (which realizes it) but in the man (who thinks it)—that is, in something other than the sensible reality which the concept reveals by its Meaning. The Concept "dog" which is my Concept (of the dog), the Concept, therefore, which is something other than the living dog and is related to a living dog as to an external reality—this abstract Concept is possible only if the dog is essentially mortal. That is, if the dog dies or is annihilated at every instant of its existence. Now, this dog which is annihilated at every instant is precisely the dog which endures in Time, which at every instant ceases to live or exist in the Present so as to be annihilated in the Past, or as Past.³² If the dog were eternal, if it existed outside of Time or without Time, the Concept "dog" would never be detached from the dog itself. The empirical existence (*Dasein*) of the Concept "dog" would be the living dog, and not the *word* "dog" (either thought or spoken). Hence, there would be no *Discourse* (Logos) in the World; and since the empirically existing Discourse is solely Man (actually speaking Man), there would be no Man in the World. The Concept-word

³¹ Let us note, however, that a conceptual or "scientific" understanding of the dog actually leads, sooner or later, to its *dissection*.

³² Therefore: for Aristotle there is a concept "dog" only because there is an *eternal* real dog, namely, the *species* "dog," which is always in the present; for Hegel, on the other hand, there is a concept "dog" only because the real dog is a *temporal* entity—that is, an essentially finite or "mortal" entity, an entity which is annihilated at every instant: and the Concept is the permanent support of this nihilation of the spatial real, which nihilation is itself nothing other than *Time*. For Hegel too, then, the Concept is something that is preserved ("eternally," if you will, but in the sense of: as long as Time lasts). But for him, it is only the *Concept* "dog" that is preserved (the Concept—that is, the temporal nihilation of the real dog, which nihilation actually lasts as long as Time lasts, since Time is this nihilation as such); whereas for Aristotle, the real *dog* is what is preserved (eternally, in the strict sense, since there is *eternal* return), at least as *species*. That is why Hegel explains what Aristotle cannot explain, namely, the preservation (in and by Man) of the Concept of an animal belonging, for example, to an *extinct* species (even if there are no fossil remains).

detaches itself from the sensible *hic et nunc*; but it can thus detach itself only because the *hic et nunc*—i.e., spatial being—is temporal, because it *annihilates* itself in the Past. And the real which *disappears* into the Past *preserves* itself (as nonreal) in the Present in the form of the Word-Concept. The Universe of Discourse (the World of Ideas) is the permanent rainbow which forms above a waterfall: and the waterfall is the *temporal real* which is annihilated in the nothingness of the Past.³³

To be sure, the Real *endures* in Time as *real*. But by the fact of enduring in *Time*, it is its own *remembrance*: at each instant it realizes its Essence or Meaning, and this is to say that it realizes in

³³ Kant himself saw that conceptual knowledge implied *Memory*, and Hegel maintains this idea (which is Platonic, in the final analysis). For Hegel too, the *Er-innerung*—that is, the internalization of the objective real effected in and by the Concept which reveals this real but is *in me*—is also *Erinnerung*—that is, remembrance. Now, there is Memory only where there is Time, where the real *present* is annihilated through becoming unreal past. Generally speaking, in his theory of the Concept, Hegel merely makes more precise (and consequently transforms) the Kantian theory of the *Schematismus*. For Kant, the Concepts (= Categories) apply to given Being (*Sein*) because Time serves as their “Schema”—that is, as intermediary or “mediation” (*Vermittlung*, in Hegel). But this “mediation” is purely *passive*: Time is contemplation, intuition, *Anschauung*. In Hegel, on the other hand, the “mediation” is *active*; it is *Tat* or *Tun*, Action negating the given, the activity of Fighting and Work. Now, this Negation of the given (of *Sein*) or of the “present” *is* (historical) Time, and (historical) Time *is* this active Negation. In Hegel as in Kant, therefore, Time is what allows the application of the Concept to Being. But in Hegel, this Time that mediates conceptual thought is “materialized”: it is a *movement* (*Bewegung*), and a *dialectical* “movement”—that is, precisely, it is active—hence it *negates*, hence it *transforms* (the given), hence it creates (new things). If Man can understand (reveal) Being by the Concept, it is because he *transforms* (given) Being in terms of this Concept (which is then a Project) and makes it conform to it. Now, the transformation of given Being in terms of the Concept-project is, precisely, conscious and voluntary *Action*, *Tun* which is *Arbeit* and *Kampf*. For Kant, Being *is* in conformity with the Concept, and the “mediation” by Time merely allows one to move from one to the other without modifying either the one or the other. And that is why Kant cannot *explain* this conformity of Being and the Concept: for him, it is a given, that is to say, a *chance* (*transcendentale Zufälligkeit*). Hegel, on the other hand, *explains* this conformity (which for him is a *process* of conforming) by his dialectical ontology: Being *becomes* conformable to the Concept (at the end of History) through the completed totality of negating Action which *transforms* Being in terms of this same Concept. Therefore: in Kant, Time is “schema” and passive “intuition”; in Hegel, it is “movement” and conscious and voluntary “action.” Consequently, the Concept or the *a priori* in Kant is a “notion,” which allows Man to *conform* to given Being; whereas in Hegel, the *a priori* Concept is a “project,” which allows Man to *transform* given Being and *make* it conform.

the Present what is left of it after its annihilation in the Past; and this something that is left and that it re-realizes is its *concept*. At the moment when the present Real sinks into the Past, its Meaning (Essence) *detaches itself* from its reality (Existence); and it is here that appears the possibility of retaining this Meaning *outside* of the reality by causing it to pass into the Word. And this Word reveals the Meaning of the Real which *realizes* in the Present its own Past—that is, this same Past that is “eternally” preserved in the Word-Concept. In short, the Concept can have an empirical existence in the World (this existence being nothing other than human existence) only if the World is *temporal*, only if *Time* has an empirical existence in the World. And that is why it can be said that Time *is* the empirically existing Concept.³⁴

³⁴ On the ontological level, this “metaphysical” (or cosmological) statement means: Being must have a *trinitary* structure, as “Synthesis” or “Totality” which unites “Thesis” or “Identity” with “Antithesis” or “Negativity” (this presence of the *negation* of Being in *existing* Being is, precisely, Time). In order better to understand the identification of the Concept with Time, it is useful to proceed as follows: Let us form the concept of Being—that is, of the *totality* of what *is*. What is the difference between this concept “Being” and Being itself? From the point of view of content, they are identical, since we have made no “abstraction.” And nonetheless, in spite of what Parmenides thought, the concept “Being” is not Being (otherwise, there would be no Discourse, the Concept would not be Logos). What distinguishes Being from the concept “Being” is solely the *Being* of Being itself; for Being as Being *is*, but it does not *exist* as Being in the concept “Being” (even though it “is” present by its content—i.e., as the *meaning* of the concept “Being”). Therefore the concept “Being” is obtained by *subtracting* being from Being: Being minus being equals the concept “Being” (and does not equal Nothingness or “zero”; for the negation of *A* is not Nothingness, but “non-A”—that is, “something”). Now, this subtraction of being from Being, at first sight paradoxical or even “impossible,” is in reality something quite “common”: it is literally done “at every instant” and is called “Time.” For Time is what, at every instant, takes away from Being—i.e., from the totality of what *is* (in the Present)—its being, by causing it to pass into the Past where Being *is* not (or *no longer is*). But for there to be Time, there must “be” a Past (the pure or “eternal” Present is not Time): therefore, the Past and Being that has sunk into the Past (past Being) are not Nothingness; they are “something.” Now, a thing *is* something only in the Present. In order to *be* something, therefore, the Past and past Being must preserve themselves in the Present while ceasing to be present. And the *presence of past* Being is the concept “Being”—that is, Being from which one has taken away the being without transforming it into pure Nothingness. If you will, the concept “Being,” therefore, is the “remembrance” of Being (in both senses: Being is what “remembers,” and it “remembers” its being). But on our present level, one does not generally speak of “memory”; the “memory” that we have in mind is called “Time” (or more exactly “Temporality”—this general “medium” of Being, in which “in addition” to the Present there is something else: the Past—

Therefore: no Concept in the World as long as there is no empirically existing Time in this World. Now, we have seen that the empirical existence of Time in the World is human Desire (i.e., Desire that is directed toward a Desire as Desire). Therefore: no conceptual understanding without Desire. Now, Desire is realized by negating Action: and *human* Desire is realized by the Action of the Fight to the death for pure prestige. And this Fight is realized by the victory of the Master over the Slave, and by the latter's work in the Master's service. This Work of the Slave is what *realizes* the Master's Desire by *satisfying* it. Therefore, and Hegel says so expressly in Chapter IV, no Concept without Work; it is from the Slave's Work that *Denken* and *Verstand*, Understanding and Thought—that is, conceptual understanding of the World—are born.

And now we understand why. It is Work, and only Work, that transforms the World in an *essential* manner, by creating truly *new* realities. If there were only animals on earth, Aristotle would be right: the Concept would be embodied in the eternal species, eternally identical to itself; and it would not exist, as Plato claimed

and the Future; but I shall not talk about the Future here). Therefore: if there is a concept "Being," it is because Being is *temporal* (and one can say that the Concept is Time—i.e., the coexistence of the Present and the Past). Now, it is obvious that Being is "in conformity" with the concept "Being," since the latter is Being itself minus being. One can say, then, that Being is the *being* of the concept "Being." And that is why Being which is (in the Present) can be "conceived of" or revealed by the Concept. Or, more exactly, Being is conceived of at "each instant" of its being. Or else, again: Being is not only Being, but also *Truth*—that is, the adequation of the Concept and Being. This is simple. The whole question is to know where *error* comes from. In order that error be possible, the Concept must be *detached* from Being and *opposed* to it. It is Man who does this; and more exactly, Man is the Concept detached from Being; or better yet, he is the *act* of detaching the Concept from Being. He does so by negating-Negativity—that is, by Action, and it is here that the Future (the Project) enters in. This detaching is equivalent to an inadequation (the profound meaning of *errare humanum est*), and it is necessary to negate or act again in order to achieve conformity between the Concept (= Project) and Being (made to conform to the Project by Action). For Man, therefore, the adequation of Being and the Concept is a *process* (*Bewegung*), and the truth (*Wahrheit*) is a *result*. And only this "result of the process" merits the name of (discursive) "truth," for only this process is Logos or Discourse. (Before its negation by Man, Being does not *speak*, for the Concept *detached* from Being is what is in the Word or Logos, or as Word-logos.) Hegel says all this in a passage in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, which gives the key to understanding his whole system (p. 29, l. 26–p. 30, l. 15).

it did, *outside* of Time and the World. But then it would not be understandable how the Concept could exist outside of the species, how it could exist in the temporal World in the form of a *word*. Therefore, it would not be understandable how Man could exist—Man—i.e., that being which is not a dog, for example, and in which the Meaning (Essence) "dog" nonetheless exists just as much as in the dog, since there is in it the Word-Concept "dog." For this to be possible, Being revealed by the Concept must be essentially temporal—that is, finite, or possessing a beginning and an ending in Time. Now, not the natural object, nor even the animal or plant, but only the product of human Work is essentially temporal. Human Work is what temporalizes the spatial natural World; Work, therefore, is what engenders the Concept which exists in the natural World while being something other than this World: Work, therefore, is what engenders Man in this World, Work is what transforms the purely natural World into a technical World inhabited by Man—that is, into a historical World.

Only the World transformed by human Work reveals itself in and by the Concept which exists empirically in the World without being the World. Therefore, the Concept *is* Work, and Work *is* the Concept. And if, as Marx quite correctly remarks, Work for Hegel is "*das Wesen des Menschen*" ("the very essence of Man"), it can also be said that man's essence, for Hegel, is the Concept. And that is why Hegel says not only that Time is the *Begriff*, but also that it is the *Geist*. For if Work temporalizes Space, the existence of Work in the World is the existence in this World of Time. Now, if Man is the Concept, and if the Concept is Work, Man and the Concept are also *Time*.

If all this holds true, it must *first* be said that there is conceptual understanding only where there is an essentially temporal, that is, historical, reality; and *secondly*, that only historical or temporal existence can reveal itself by the Concept. Or in other words, conceptual understanding is necessarily *dialectical*.³⁵

³⁵ For "dialectical" understanding is nothing other than the historical or temporal understanding of the real. Dialectic reveals the *trinitary* structure of Being. In other words, in and by its dialectic the real reveals itself not *sub specie aeternitatis*—that is, outside of Time or as eternally identical to itself—but as a Present situated between the Past and the Future, that is, as a *Bewegung*, as a

Now, if this holds true and if Nature is only Space and not Time, one would have to conclude that there is no conceptual understanding of Nature. One would understand, in the full sense, only where there is Time—i.e., one would truly understand only History. In any case, it is only History that can and must be understood *dialectically*.

One would have to say so. But Hegel does not. And that, I believe, is his basic error. First of all, there is a vacillation in Hegel. On the one hand, he says that Nature is only Space. On the other, he clearly sees that (biological) life is a temporal phenomenon. Hence the idea that Life (*Leben*) is a manifestation of Spirit (*Geist*). But Hegel also sees, and he is the first to say so in so many words, that truly human existence is possible only by the *negation* of Life (as we know, the Risk of life in the Fight for prestige is *constituent* of Man). Hence an *opposition* of *Leben* and *Geist*. But if this opposition exists, Life is not historical; therefore there is no biological *dialectic*; therefore there is no conceptual understanding of Life.

Now, Hegel asserts that there is such an understanding. He imagines (following Schelling) a *dialectical* biology, and he sets it forth in the *Phenomenology* (Chapter V, Section A, *a*). To be sure, he denies the conceptual understanding or dialectic of non-vital reality. But this merely leads him to say that the real World is a *living* being. Hence his absurd philosophy of Nature, his insensate critique of Newton, and his own "magical" physics which discredited his System in the nineteenth century.

But there is yet more to say. Dialectical understanding applies only to historical reality—that is, to the reality created by Work according to a Project. To assert, as Hegel does, that *all* understanding is dialectical and that the natural World is understandable is to assert that this World is the work of a Demiurge, of a Creator-God conceived in the image of working Man. And this is what Hegel actually says in the *Logik*, when he says that his "Logic" (that is, his ontology) is "the thought of God before the creation

creative movement, or else, again, as a *result* which is a project and as a *project* which is a result—a result which is born of a project and a project engendered by a result; in a word, the real reveals itself in its dialectical truth as a *Synthesis*. (See Chapter 7, "The Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method in Hegel," in this volume.)

of the World." It would follow that Hegel understands the World because the World is *created* according to the Concept that *Hegel* has. And thus we are in the midst of a paradox. Hegelian anthropotheism ceases to be an image; Hegel is actually God, God the creator, and the eternal God. Now, (unless he is mad) a man cannot assert that he created the World. If, then, the thought that is revealed in the *Logik* is the thought that *created* the World, it is certainly not Hegel's thought. It is the thought of a Creator *other* than Hegel, *other* than Man in general; it is the thought of *God*. And therefore the *Logik*, in spite of its title, is not simply logic; like Spinoza's *Ethics*, it is *theo*-logy—that is, the logic, thought, or discourse of *God*.³⁶

But enough of the natural World. Let us note that Hegel realized an immense philosophical progress by identifying the Concept and Time. For by doing this—that is, by discovering *dialectical* knowledge—he found the means of establishing a phenomenology, a metaphysics, and an ontology of *History*—that is, of Man as we conceive of him today and as he is in reality.

Let us see the decisive consequence for Man following from this discovery.

The Concept is Time. Time in the full sense of the term—that is, a Time in which there is a Future also in the full sense—that is, a Future that will never become either Present or Past. Man is the

³⁶ Personally, I do not believe that this is a necessary consequence. I see no objection to saying that the natural World eludes *conceptual* understanding. Indeed, this would only mean that the existence of Nature is revealed by mathematical algorithm, for example, and not by concepts—that is, by *words* having a meaning. Now, modern physics leads in the end to this result: one cannot *speak* of the physical reality without contradictions; as soon as one passes from algorithm to verbal description, one contradicts himself (particles-waves, for example). Hence there would be no *discourse* revealing the physical or natural reality. This reality (as presented as early as Galileo) would be revealed to Man only by the articulated *silence* of algorithm. Physical matter is understood *conceptually* or dialectically (it can be *spoken* of) only to the extent that it is the "raw material" of a product of human work. Now, the "raw material" itself is neither molecules nor electrons, and so on, but wood, stone, and so on. And these are things which, if not living themselves, at least exist on the scale of Life (and of Man as living being). Now, it does seem that algorithm, being *nontemporal*, does not reveal Life. But neither does dialectic. Therefore, it may be necessary to combine Plato's conception (for the mathematical, or better, geometrical, substructure of the World) with Aristotle's (for its biological structure) and Kant's (for its physical, or better, dynamic, structure), while reserving Hegelian dialectic for Man and History.

empirical existence of the Concept in the World. Therefore, he is the empirical existence in the World of a Future that will never become present. Now, this Future, for Man, is his *death*, that Future of his which will never become his Present; and the only reality or real presence of this Future is the *knowledge* that Man has in the present of his future death. Therefore, if Man is Concept and if the Concept is Time (that is, if Man is an *essentially temporal* being), Man is *essentially* mortal; and he is Concept, that is, absolute Knowledge or Wisdom incarnate, only if he *knows* this. Logos becomes flesh, becomes Man, only on the condition of being willing and able to *die*.

And this causes us to understand why possibility III, adopted by Hegel, appears so late in the history of philosophy. To deny that the Concept is eternal, to say that it *is* Time, is to deny that Man is immortal or eternal (at least to the extent that he thinks, to the extent that he is truly a human being). Now, Man accepts his death only *in extremis*; and it was also *in extremis* that philosophy accepted possibility III.³⁷

"Alles endliche ist dies, sich selbst aufzuheben," Hegel says in the *Encyclopaedia*. It is only *finite* Being that dialectically overcomes itself. If, then, the Concept is Time, that is, if conceptual understanding is *dialectical*, the existence of the Concept—and consequently of Being revealed by the Concept—is essentially *finite*. Therefore History itself must be essentially finite; collective Man (humanity) must die just as the human individual dies; universal History must have a definitive end.

We know that for Hegel this end of history is marked by the coming of Science in the form of a Book—that is, by the appearance of the Wise Man or of *absolute* Knowledge in the World. This absolute Knowledge, being the last moment of Time—that is, a moment without a Future—is no longer a temporal moment. If absolute Knowledge *comes into being* in Time or, better yet, as Time or History, Knowledge that *has come into being* is no longer temporal or historical: it is *eternal*, or, if you will, it is *Eternity*

³⁷ Thus we see that the expression "anthropo-theism" is but a metaphor: circular—that is, dialectical—absolute Knowledge reveals *finite* or mortal being; this being, therefore, is not the *divine* being; it is indeed, the *human* being; but Man can know that this is *his* being only provided that he knows that he is *mortal*.

revealed to itself; it is the Substance of Parmenides-Spinoza which reveals itself by a *Discourse* (and not by Silence), precisely because it is the *result* of a historical *becoming*; it is *Eternity engendered* by Time.

And this is what Hegel is going to explain in the text of the Second Stage of the Second Section of the Second Part of Chapter VIII.

being but one of the aspects of subjective activity. For Hegel, on the other hand, the dialectic of the Subject and Object, which is effected inside of the Subject and is described in the *Phenomenology*, is meaningful only if one supposes the existence of an Object properly so-called—that is, an Object external to and independent of the Subject. Or, as Hegel says, one must give the Object “its full freedom (*seine völlige Freiheit*).”

In short, relying on Schelling here, Hegel has just posited (against Fichte) the absolute necessity of a “realist” metaphysics.

In the text that follows (page 563, lines 14–21), Hegel briefly indicates the nature of this “realist” metaphysics, the necessity of which he has just proclaimed.

Knowledge knows (*kennt*) not only itself, but also its Negative, [i.e., it knows] its limit (*Grenze*). To know-or-understand (*wissen*) its limit means: to know (*wissen*) how to sacrifice itself. This sacrifice (*Aufopferung*) is the alienation-or-externalization in which Spirit represents (*darstellt*) its becoming Spirit in the form of a *free contingent process* (*Geschehens*), by intuitively-contemplating (*anschauend*) its pure Self (*Selbst*) as *Time* outside of itself, and likewise its *Given-Being* (*Sein*) as *Space*.

The passage contains, first, a sort of “deduction” of Realism, which can be misunderstood if taken out of context. The passage is directed against Fichte. And in speaking to Fichte, Hegel uses his language here (*Grenze*, and so on). Thus, the text *seems* to speak of an act of the Subject, which posits the Object by positing its own limit. This seems to be pure Fichte—that is, “Idealism.” But a careful reading and a comparison of what Hegel says with what Fichte says elsewhere shows that this is a polemic. First, it is not the *I* or the Subject (*Ich*) that posits the Object or the limit, but *Spirit* (*Geist*). Now, Hegel never tires of repeating (and he will repeat it again a bit further on) that Spirit is not origin or beginning, but end or result. Spirit is revealed Being—that is, a *synthesis* of (objective) Being and its (subjective) Revelation. Not the Subject, but Spirit (and therefore Being) posits itself as Space and Time, or as we shall shortly see, as Nature (= *Sein*) and History (= Man = Subject = *Selbst*). Next, Hegel does not, like Fichte, say that Knowledge “posits” (*setzt*) its “limit” (that is, the Object). He only says that it “knows” (*kennt*) its limit.

Therefore, Hegel means quite simply to say that Knowledge can understand itself—that is, explain or “deduce” itself—only by supposing the existence of a nonknowledge—that is, of a real Object or, better, of an Object external to and independent of the Knowledge that reveals it. And this is exactly the opposite of what Fichte says.

Hence there is no “deduction” of Realism in Fichte’s sense of the word. There is only a “deduction” in the Hegelian sense of the word—that is, an *a posteriori* deduction or a conceptual understanding of what *is*. There is no question, as in Fichte, of deducing the Object or the Real from the Subject or the Idea.¹ Therefore, by starting with Spirit—that is, a *synthesis* of the real and the ideal—Hegel foregoes deducing the one from the other (as he says quite plainly in the text that I have cited from the essay of 1801). He posits—that is, he presupposes—both of them. And he “deduces” them only after the fact, from the Spirit which is their common result. In other words, he only tries to *understand* their relation, which is constituted by the becoming of knowledge, by starting with what according to him is the established fact of absolutely true knowledge, in which the real and the ideal coincide. But he says that, in finding oneself in possession of the Truth—that is, of the “Science” or “System”—one must not forget their origin, which is not coincidence, but opposition and interaction of the independent real and ideal. One must not believe that if Science is Knowledge, Being too is Knowledge (or Subject). Being is Spirit, that is, synthesis of Knowledge *and* the Real. And the “System” itself is not a game carried on by the Subject within itself, but the result of an interaction between Subject and Object; and thus it is a revelation of the Object by the Subject and a realization of the Subject in the Object.

Hegel *starts* with Spirit, which he says is a “result.” And he wants to understand it as a result—that is, to describe it as resulting from its own becoming (*das Werden des Geistes zum Geiste*). Since Spirit is the coincidence of Subject and Object (or as Hegel says: of the *Selbst* and the *Sein*), its becoming is the road that

¹ It is, in fact, absurd to want to “deduce”—that is, to *demonstrate*—Realism. For if one could *deduce* the real from knowledge, Idealism would be right, and there would be no reality *independent* of knowledge.

leads toward this coincidence, along which road, consequently, a *difference* between the two is maintained, an account of which can be given only by a metaphysical *Realism*.

Having said this, Hegel makes two extremely important qualifications. First, Hegel says that "the becoming of Spirit" has the form "*des freien zufälligen Geschehens*." Thus he repeats what we have known for a long while: namely, that the "deduction" is possible only after the fact or *a posteriori*, as we say. To say that the Spirit's becoming is "contingent and free" is to say that, starting with Spirit which is the end or result of becoming, one can reconstruct the path of the becoming, but one can neither foresee its path from its beginning, nor deduce the Spirit from it. Since Spirit is the identity of Being and the Subject, one can deduce from it the earlier opposition of the two and the process that overcomes that opposition. But starting with the initial opposition, one can deduce neither its being finally overcome, nor the process that leads to it. And that is why this process (in particular, History) is a free (*frei*) series of contingent (*zufällig*) events.

Secondly, Hegel says that, in its becoming, Spirit (that is, the revealed Totality of Being) is necessarily double: it is on the one hand Self (*Selbst*) or Time, and on the other, static Being (*Sein*) or Space. And this is very important.

First, it is a new assertion of Realism. For it is quite obvious that Realism is necessarily dualist, and that an ontological dualism is always "realist."² The whole question is to know how to define the two terms that are ontologically opposed in Realism. Now, Hegel says that they must be opposed as Time and Space. And, in saying this, he somehow sums up his whole philosophy and indicates what is truly new in it. Now, taken by itself, this assertion seems paradoxical. No one has ever thought of dividing the totality of Being into Space and Time. To the extent that (Western) philosophy has been "realist" or, rather, "dualist," it has divided the totality of Being into Subject and Object, into Thought and Reality, and so on. But we know that for Hegel Time is the Concept. With that, instead of being paradoxical, Hegel's division,

² The assertion that everything is Object or "matter" is equivalent to the assertion that everything is Subject or "spirit"; the "materialist" and the "idealist" or "spiritualist" assertions coincide, because both are equally empty of meaning.

quite to the contrary, seems commonplace: it is the Cartesian opposition (to mention by name only Descartes) of Extension and Thought. But in fact, Hegel made a great discovery when he replaced the term "Thought" with the term "Time." But I have already tried to show this, and I shall not return to it again.

The text in question is interesting, however, for yet another reason. In it, Hegel identifies Space and *Sein*, static Given Being; this is commonplace and quite Cartesian. On the other hand, the identification of Time and the *Selbst* (the Self)—that is, Man—is new. But this is the Hegelian conception of Man = Action = Negativity, which we know and need not talk about now. What I would like to underline is that Hegel here *opposes* the Self (= Time) to *Sein* (= Space). Man, therefore, is *Nicht-sein*, Nonbeing, Nothingness.³ To oppose Time to Being is to say that time is nothingness. And there is no doubt that Time must actually be understood as an *annihilation* of Being or Space. But if Man is Time, he himself is Nothingness or annihilation of spatial Being. And we know that for Hegel it is precisely in this annihilation of Being that consists the Negativity which is Man, that Action of Fighting and Work by which Man preserves himself in spatial Being while *destroying* it—that is, while *transforming* it by the creation of hitherto unknown new things into a genuine Past—a nonexistent and consequently nonspatial Past. And this Negativity—that is, this Nothingness nihilating as Time in Space—is what forms the very foundation of specifically human existence—that is, truly active or creative, or historical, individual, and free, existence. This Nothingness, too, is what makes Man a *passerby* in the spatial World: he is born and he dies in it as Man. Therefore, there is a Nature without Man—before Man, and after Man—as Hegel will say.

Finally, when this same text is related to Knowledge, it must be said that Man properly so-called—that is, Man *opposed* to single and homogeneous spatial Being, or the historical free Individual whom Hegel calls *Selbst* ("Self")—is necessarily Error and not Truth. For a Thought that does not coincide with Being is

³ Indeed, in the *Logik* the Totality of Being—that is, Spirit—is defined at the outset as Being (*Sein*) and Nothingness (*Nichts*)—that is, as their synthesis, which is Becoming.

false. Thus, when specifically human error is finally transformed into the truth of absolute Science, Man ceases to exist as Man and History comes to an end. The overcoming of Man (that is, of Time, that is, of Action) in favor of static Being (that is, Space, that is, Nature), therefore, is the overcoming of Error in favor of Truth. And if History is certainly the history of human errors, Man himself is perhaps only an error of Nature that "by chance" (freedom?) was not immediately eliminated.

In my opinion, the division of the Totality of revealed Being (or as Hegel says, of Spirit) into Space and Time is neither a paradox, nor a commonplace, but a truth discovered by Hegel. And if this truth is accepted, it must be said that "Realism" in philosophy means, finally, nothing but "Historicism." "Realism" means ontological dualism. And calling the two members of the fundamental opposition "Space" and "Time" introduces the notion of History into philosophy, and thus poses not only the problem of an Anthropology or Phenomenology of historical Man, but also the problem of a Metaphysics and an Ontology of History. To say that philosophy must be "realist," therefore, is in the final analysis to say that it must take account and give an account of the fact of History.

And I believe that this is quite true: If *per impossible*, what is called ontologically "Negativity," metaphysically "Time" or "History," and anthropologically "Action," did not exist, Idealism (= Monism) would be right: it would be superfluous to oppose Being to Thought ontologically, and hence there would be no need to go beyond Parmenides. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that the *Real* properly so-called can be defined otherwise than it has been by Maine de Biran (among others): the Real is what resists. Now, it is perfectly wrong to believe that the Real resists Thought. In point of fact, it does not resist it: it does not even resist false thought; and, as for true thought, it is precisely a coincidence with the Real.⁴ The Real resists Action, and not Thought. Consequently, there is true philosophical "Realism" only where philosophy takes account and gives an account of Action—

⁴Indeed, if I say I can pass through this wall, the wall by no means resists what I say or think: as far as it is concerned, I can say so as long as I please. It begins to resist only if I want to realize my thought by Action—that is, if I actually hurl myself against the wall. And such is always the case.

that is, of History—that is, of Time. And therefore philosophical "Realism," or better, "Dualism," does indeed mean: "Temporalism" or "Historicism."⁵

But let us return to the text.

Having opposed given Being or Space to the Self or Time, Hegel specifies the nature of the two opposed entities, speaking first of Space (page 563, lines 21–25):

This just-mentioned becoming of Spirit [namely], *Nature*, is its living immediate becoming. *Nature*, [that is,] the alienated-or-externalized Spirit, is in its empirical-existence nothing [else] but the

⁵It is meaningless to oppose the knowing Subject to the Object which is known, as "Realism" ordinarily does. For, having opposed them, one no longer understands their union or coincidence in true knowledge. If one wants to take account of the "real," one must not oppose the (natural) World to a "Subject," situated who knows where, and whose sole function is to *know* this World—that is, to reveal it by discourse or concept. One must not oppose Being to *Thought* or to the *knowing* Subject. One must oppose *natural* Being to *human* Being. Or, to use Hegel's language: on the phenomenological level, *Sein* is opposed to *Selbst*; on the metaphysical level, Space to Time; on the ontological level, Identity to Negativity. In other words, one must see something else in Man besides a *knowing* Subject; and one must *oppose* Man to the (natural) World precisely to the extent that he is this other thing (*Anderes*).

True knowledge—and that is what we generally talk about—is selfless (*selbstlos*)—that is, inhuman. In it, the Subject (Thought, Concept, and so on) coincides with the *Object*. And we can say that the *Object* is what reveals itself to itself in and by this knowledge. Indeed, let us suppose that a man understood as "knowing subject" is reduced to the (adequate) understanding of a single particular reality: the reality "dog," for example. Then, he would be nothing other than the revelation of this reality "dog." This is to say that we would be faced with the revealed reality "dog." In other words, we would be faced with the *dog* that is conscious of itself, and not a *man* who is acquiring knowledge of the dog. And in this case we would be faced with a true dog (a *natural* being) and not a *man* in canine form. Putting it otherwise, to use Hegel's language, there would only be (dumb) *Sentiment* of self (*Selbst-gefühl*) and not (speaking) *Consciousness* of self (*Selbst-bewusstsein*). Or, to put it otherwise again, the concept would be embodied in the thing that it reveals and would not exist outside of it as word. Hence "Realism" would not be meaningful, since there would be no separation between the Subject and the Object.

For there to be "Realism," the concept (knowledge) must be opposed to the thing (the object). Now, it is only *human* or "subjective" knowledge that opposes itself to the object to which it is related, by being materialized outside of the object in discourse. But this "subjective" knowledge is by definition a knowledge that does not coincide with the object. Therefore, it is a *false* knowledge. The problem which calls for a "realist" solution, therefore, is the problem of error and not of truth. Now, citing the fact of error makes it necessary to pose the problem of its origin. And, clearly, passive cognitive contemplation, which opens

eternal alienation-or-externalization of its *stable-continuity* (*Bestehens*) and the [dialectical] movement which produces the *Subject*.

Sein or Space is Nature, the nonconscious natural World. And this World is *eternal* in the sense that it is outside of Time. Nature is the *ewige Entäusserung* of the Spirit. Here too there is becoming (*Werden*) or movement: but as in Descartes, the movement in question is nontemporal or geometrical; and the natural changes (biological coming into being) do not transform the *essence* of Nature, which therefore remains eternally identical to itself. This natural "movement" ("evolution") produces, to be sure, the "*Subjekt*"—that is, Man, or more exactly, the animal that will become Man. But Man, once constituted in his human specificity, *opposes* himself to Nature and thus engenders a *new* becoming which essentially transforms natural given Being and is the Time that annihilates it—i.e., he engenders the history of negating Action.

Hegelian "Realism," therefore, is not only ontological, but also metaphysical. Nature is *independent* of Man. Being eternal, it subsists before him and after him. It is in it that he is *born*, as we have just seen. And as we shall soon see, Man who *is* Time also *disappears* in spatial Nature. For this Nature *survives* Time.⁶

itself to the object and makes it accessible, cannot explain the origin of error that eludes and conceals the object. If, then, the seat of error or false knowledge, or rather, knowledge opposed to the object, is man or the "subject," he must have something else for support in addition to passive contemplation of the given. And this other thing, in Hegel, is called Negativity, Time, and Action (*Tat, Tun, Handeln*). (Hence it is not by chance that man makes errors when he loses his *sang-froid*, hurries, or hasn't enough time, or when he obstinately persists in saying no).

Therefore, "Realism" is meaningful only to the extent that one opposes the natural World or given Being (*Sein*) revealed by the Concept—that is, Being with the Knowledge of Being—to Man understood as Action that negates given Being. To put it otherwise, it can also be said that Knowledge (Revelation) is indifferently related both to natural Being and to human Being, both to Space and to Time, both to Identity and to Negativity; hence there is no opposition between Being and Knowledge; an opposition exists only between (known) *natural* Being or *Sein*, and (known) *human* Being or *Tun*; as for error and "subjective" knowledge in general—they *presuppose* this *ontological* opposition.

⁶ The disappearance of Man at the end of History, therefore, is not a cosmic catastrophe: the natural World remains what it has been from all eternity. And therefore, it is not a biological catastrophe either: Man remains alive as animal in *harmony* with Nature or given Being. What disappears is *Man properly so-called*—that is, *Action* negating the given, and Error, or in general, the Subject

Sein or *Raum* is eternal, or rather nontemporal, Nature. The opposite entity, which is *Selbst* (that is, Man) or *Zeit*, is nothing other than History.

This is what Hegel now says (page 563, lines 26–30):

As for the other aspect of the Spirit's becoming, [which is] *History*, [it] is the becoming which *knows-or-understands* [and which] *mediates* itself;—[it is] Spirit alienated-or-externalized in (*an*) Time. But this alienation-or-externalization is just as much the alienation-or-externalization of itself;—the negative-or-negating-entity (*Negative*) is the negative-or-negating-entity of itself.

The *Selbst*—that is, Man properly so-called or the free Individual, *is* Time; and Time is History, and *only* History. (Which,

opposed to the Object. In point of fact, the end of human Time or History—that is, the definitive annihilation of Man properly so-called or of the free and historical Individual—means quite simply the cessation of Action in the full sense of the term. Practically, this means: the disappearance of wars and bloody revolutions. And also the disappearance of *Philosophy*; for since Man himself no longer changes essentially, there is no longer any reason to change the (true) principles which are at the basis of his understanding of the World and of himself. But all the rest can be preserved indefinitely; art, love, play, etc., etc.; in short, everything that makes Man *happy*. Let us recall that this Hegelian theme, among many others, was taken up by Marx. History properly so-called, in which men ("classes") fight among themselves for recognition and fight against Nature by work, is called in Marx "Realm of necessity" (*Reich der Notwendigkeit*); *beyond* (*jenseits*) is situated the "Realm of freedom" (*Reich der Freiheit*), in which men (mutually recognizing one another without reservation) no longer fight, and work as little as possible (Nature having been definitively mastered—that is, harmonized with Man). Cf. *Das Kapital*, Book III, Chapter 48, end of the second paragraph of § III.

Note to the Second Edition

The text of the preceding note is ambiguous, not to say contradictory. If one accepts "the disappearance of Man at the end of History," if one asserts that "Man remains alive as animal," with the specification that "what *disappears* is Man *properly so-called*," one cannot say that "all the rest can be preserved indefinitely: art, love, play, etc." If Man becomes an animal again, his arts, his loves, and his play must also become purely "natural" again. Hence it would have to be admitted that after the end of History, men would construct their edifices and works of art as birds build their nests and spiders spin their webs, would perform musical concerts after the fashion of frogs and cicadas, would play like young animals, and would indulge in love like adult beasts. But one cannot then say that all this "makes Man *happy*." One would have to say that post-historical animals of the species *Homo sapiens* (which will live amidst abundance and complete security) will be *content* as a result of their artistic, erotic and playful behavior, inasmuch as, by definition, they will be contented with it. But there is

furthermore, is *das wissende Werden*, "the knowing becoming" of the Spirit—that is, in the final analysis, philosophical evolution.) And Man is essentially *Negativity*, for Time is *Becoming*—that is, the *annihilation* of Being or Space. Therefore Man is a Nothingness that nihilates and that preserves itself in (spatial) Being only by *negating* being, this Negation being Action. Now, if Man is Negativity—that is, Time—he is not eternal. He is born and he dies as Man. He is "*das Negative seiner selbst*," Hegel says. And we know what that means: Man overcomes himself as Action (or *Selbst*) by ceasing to *oppose* himself to the World, after creating in it the universal and homogeneous State; or to put it otherwise, on the cognitive level: Man overcomes himself as *Error* (or "Subject" *opposed* to the Object) after creating the Truth of "Science."

In the following texts which end Chapter VIII and thus the *Phenomenology* as a whole, Hegel states his conception of History

more. "The *definitive annihilation of Man properly so-called*" also means the definitive disappearance of human Discourse (*Logos*) in the strict sense. Animals of the species *Homo sapiens* would react by conditioned reflexes to vocal signals or sign "language," and thus their so-called "discourses" would be like what is supposed to be the "language" of bees. What would disappear, then, is not only Philosophy or the search for discursive Wisdom, but also that Wisdom itself. For in these post-historical animals, there would no longer be any "[discursive] *understanding of the World and of self.*"

At the period when I wrote the above note (1946), Man's return to animality did not appear unthinkable to me as a prospect for the future (more or less near). But shortly afterwards (1948) I understood that the Hegelian-Marxist end of History was not yet to come, but was already a present, here and now. Observing what was taking place around me and reflecting on what had taken place in the world since the Battle of Jena, I understood that Hegel was right to see in this battle the end of History properly so-called. In and by this battle the vanguard of humanity virtually attained the limit and the aim, that is, the *end*, of Man's historical evolution. What has happened since then was but an extension in space of the universal revolutionary force actualized in France by Robespierre-Napoleon. From the authentically historical point of view, the two world wars with their retinue of large and small revolutions had only the effect of bringing the backward civilizations of the peripheral provinces into line with the most advanced (real or virtual) European historical positions. If the sovietization of Russia and the communization of China are anything more than or different from the democratization of imperial Germany (by way of Hitlerism) or the accession of Togoland to independence, nay, the self-determination of the Papuans, it is only because the Sino-Soviet actualization of Robespierrian Bonapartism obliges post-Napoleonic Europe to speed up the elimination of the numerous more or less anachronistic sequels to its pre-revolutionary past. Already, moreover, this process of elimination is more advanced in the North American

precisely. And this shows that, for Hegel, the introduction of History into philosophy is his principal and decisive discovery.

First, Hegel says the following (page 563, lines 30-39):

This becoming [that is, History] represents (*stellt dar*) a [dialectical] sluggish-and-inert (*träge*) movement and succession of Spirits. [It is] a gallery of images, each one of which, [being] endowed with the complete richness of spirit, moves with such sluggishness-and-inertia precisely because the Self must make its way into and digest this total richness of its substance. Given that the completion-or-perfection of Spirit consists in the Knowledge-or-understanding of what *it is*, [that is, of] its substance,—this Knowledge is its *act-of-going-inside-of-itself* in which it leaves its empirical-existence and transmits its concrete-form to internalizing-Memory (*Erinnerung*).

This is plain, and there is little to add: Each stage of Becoming—that is, each historical World—is "*mit dem vollständigen Reichthum des Geistes ausgestattet.*" This is to say: never, at any moment of

extensions of Europe than in Europe itself. One can even say that, from a certain point of view, the United States has already attained the final stage of Marxist "communism," seeing that, practically, all the members of a "classless society" can from now on appropriate for themselves everything that seems good to them, without thereby working any more than their heart dictates.

Now, several voyages of comparison made (between 1948 and 1958) to the United States and the U.S.S.R. gave me the impression that if the Americans give the appearance of rich Sino-Soviets, it is because the Russians and the Chinese are only Americans who are still poor but are rapidly proceeding to get richer. I was led to conclude from this that the "American way of life" was the type of life specific to the post-historical period, the actual presence of the United States in the World prefiguring the "eternal present" future of all of humanity. Thus, Man's return to animality appeared no longer as a possibility that was yet to come, but as a certainty that was already present.

It was following a recent voyage to Japan (1959) that I had a radical change of opinion on this point. There I was able to observe a Society that is one of a kind, because it alone has for almost three centuries experienced life at the "end of History"—that is, in the absence of all civil or external war (following the liquidation of feudalism by the roturier Hideyoshi and the artificial isolation of the country conceived and realized by his noble successor Yiyeasu). Now, the existence of the Japanese nobles, who ceased to risk their lives (even in duel) and yet did not for that begin to work, was anything but animal.

"Post-historical" Japanese civilization undertook ways diametrically opposed to the "American way." No doubt, there were no longer in Japan any Religion, Morals, or Politics in the "European" or "historical" sense of these words. But *Snobbery* in its pure form created disciplines negating the "natural" or "animal" given which in effectiveness far surpassed those that arose, in Japan or elsewhere, from "historical" Action—that is, from warlike and revolutionary Fights or from forced Work. To be sure, the peaks (equalled nowhere else) of specifically Japa-

Time, is there a Spirit existing outside of the human historical World. Therefore, there is no transcendence; History is the becoming of Spirit, and the Spirit is nothing but this historical becoming of Man.

As for the goal of History—it is *Wissen*, Knowledge of self—that is, Philosophy (which finally becomes Wisdom). Man creates an historical World only in order to *know* what this World is and thus to *understand* himself in it. Now, I have already said that the concept “Dog,” for example, can break away from the real *dog* and be materialized in the *word* “Dog,” or, in other words, that there can be conceptual or discursive *knowledge* (*Wissen*) of the dog, only because the dog dies or becomes Past. And such is also the case, as Hegel has just said, for Man and his historical World. One can *understand* an historical World only because it is *historical*—that is, temporal and consequently finite or mortal. For one understands it truly—that is, conceptually or philosophically—only in “*Erinnerung*”: it is the *memory* (*Erinnerung*) of a past real which is the *internalization* (*Er-innerung*) of this real—i.e., the passing of its “meaning” (or “essence”) from the

nese snobbery—the Noh Theater, the ceremony of tea, and the art of bouquets of flowers—were and still remain the exclusive prerogative of the nobles and the rich. But in spite of persistent economic and political inequalities, all Japanese without exception are currently in a position to live according to totally *formalized* values—that is, values completely empty of all “human” content in the “historical” sense. Thus, in the extreme, every Japanese is in principle capable of committing, from pure snobbery, a perfectly “gratuitous” *suicide* (the classical *épée* of the samurai can be replaced by an airplane or a torpedo), which has nothing to do with the *risk* of life in a Fight waged for the sake of “historical” values that have social or political content. This seems to allow one to believe that the recently begun interaction between Japan and the Western World will finally lead not to a rebarbarization of the Japanese but to a “Japanization” of the Westerners (including the Russians).

Now, since no animal can be a snob, every “Japanized” post-historical period would be specifically human. Hence there would be no “definitive annihilation of Man properly so-called,” as long as there were animals of the species *Homo sapiens* that could serve as the “natural” support for what is human in men. But, as I said in the above Note, an “animal that is *in harmony* with Nature or given Being” is a *living* being that is in no way human. To remain human, Man must remain a “Subject *opposed* to the Object,” even if “Action negating the given and Error” disappears. This means that, while henceforth speaking in an *adequate* fashion of everything that is given to him, post-historical Man must continue to *detach* “form” from “content,” doing so no longer in order actively to transform the latter, but so that he may *oppose* himself as a pure “form” to himself and to others taken as “content” of any sort.

it is the conceptual or philosophical *understanding* of the past that is preserved in and by this "naive" Memory, this understanding being the *Phenomenology*. It follows that for Hegel, the *Phenomenology* cannot be understood without a previous knowledge of real history, just as history cannot be truly *understood* without the *Phenomenology*. It was right for me, then, to talk about Athens, Rome, Louis XIV . . . and Napoleon, in my interpretation of the *Phenomenology*. As long as one does not see the historical facts to which this book is related, one understands nothing of what is said in it. But the *Phenomenology* is something other than a "universal history" in the common sense of the word. History *narrates* events. The *Phenomenology* *explains* them or makes them *understandable*, by revealing their human *meaning* and their *necessity*. This is to say that it *reconstructs* ("deduces") the *real* historical evolution of humanity in its humanly *essential* traits. It reconstructs them *a priori*, by "deducing" them from anthropogenetic Desire (*Begierde*) that is directed toward another Desire (and thus is Desire for Recognition) and that realizes itself through Action (*Tat*) negating given-Being (*Sein*). But, once more, this "*a priori*" construction can be carried out only *after the fact*. It is first necessary that *real* History be completed; next, it must be *narrated* to Man;⁷ and only then can the Philosopher, becoming a Wise man, *understand* it by reconstructing it "*a priori*" in the *Phenomenology*. And this same phenomenological *understanding* of History is what transforms the Philosopher into a Wise man; for it is what definitively overcomes Time, and thus makes possible the adequate revelation of *completed* and *perfect*, that is, eternal and immutable, Being—a revelation effected in and by the *Logik*.

One more remark, concerning the quotation from Schiller (taken from his poem "Freundschaft") with which the *Phenomenology* ends. This is not a word-for-word quotation. And the modifications made (consciously or not) by Hegel are revealing.

I shall not dwell on the fact that Hegel says "*Geisterreich*" instead of "*Seelenreich*," although this substitution (which is very "modern") is extremely significant. What is especially important

⁷ Moreover, there is no real history without historical *memory*—that is, without oral or written *Memoirs*.

is that Hegel says "*dieses* Geisterreich" instead of "*das ganze* Seelenreich." By this change, he means to exclude the "Angels" of which Schiller speaks; he means to underline that eternal or infinite Being—that is, the absolute Spirit (which, in Schiller, is God), arises solely from the totality of human or historical existence. Therefore, the temporal past of eternal Being is *human*, and *only* human. If one wants to talk about "God" in Hegel, therefore, one must not forget that this "God's" past is Man: it is a Man who has become "God," and not a *God* who has become Man (and who, moreover, again becomes God). And the third modification of Schiller's text by Hegel has the same meaning. Schiller says: "*die* Unendlichkeit"; Hegel writes: "*seine* Unendlichkeit." Thus the *Phenomenology* ends with a radical denial of all transcendence. Revealed-infinite-eternal-Being—that is, the absolute Spirit—is the infinite or eternal being of this same Being that existed as universal History. This is to say that the Infinite in question is *Man's* infinite. And hence the "Science" that reveals this infinite-Being is a Science of Man in two ways: on the one hand, it is the result of History—that is, a product of Man; and on the other, it talks about Man: about *his* temporal or historical becoming (in the *Phenomenology*), and about *his* eternal being (in the *Logik*). Therefore "Science" is indeed *Selbst-bewusstsein*, and not *Bewusstsein*. And the Wise Man, as he comes to the end of the *Phenomenology*, can say that the "Science" properly so-called that he is now going to develop (in the *Logik*) is truly *his* Science or *his* Knowledge.

But, as I have already said several times, the Wise Man can speak of *Science* as *his* Science only to the extent that he can speak of *death* as *his* death. For, as he proceeds to the *Logik*, the Wise Man *completely* abolishes Time—that is, History—that is, his own truly and specifically human reality, which already in the *Phenomenology* is but a *past* reality: he definitively abandons his reality as a free and historical Individual, as Subject opposed to the Object, or as Man who is essentially something other (*Anderes*) than Nature.

Hegel himself knows this full well. And he knew it at least as early as 1802. For in his essay of 1802 entitled *Glauben und Wissen*, there is a passage in which he plainly says so, and which I would like to cite in ending my commentary on the *Phenomenology*.

it implies a negative or negating element: namely, the active negation of the given, the negation which is at the foundation of every bloody fight and of all so-called "physical" work.

Hegel does not need a God who would reveal the truth to him. And to find the truth, he does not need to hold dialogues with "the men in the city," or even to have a "discussion" with himself or to "meditate" *à la Descartes*. (Besides, no purely verbal discussion, no solitary meditation, can lead to the truth, of which Fighting and Work are the only "criteria.") He can find it all alone, while sitting tranquilly in the shade of those "trees" which taught Socrates nothing, but which teach Hegel many things about themselves and about men. But all this is possible only because there *have been* cities in which men had discussions against a background of fighting and work, while they worked and fought for and because of their opinions (cities, moreover, which were surrounded by these same trees whose wood was used in their construction). Hegel no longer discusses because he benefits from the discussion of those who preceded him. And if, having nothing more *to do*, he has no *method* of his own, it is because he profits from all the actions effected throughout history. His thought simply reflects the Real. But he can do so only because the Real is dialectical—that is, imbued with the negating action of fighting and work, which engenders thought and discourse, causes them to move, and finally realizes their perfect coincidence with the Real which they are supposed to reveal or to describe. In short, Hegel does not need a dialectical *method* because the truth which he incarnates is the final result of the real or active dialectic of universal History, which his thought is content to reproduce through his discourse.

From Socrates-Plato until Hegel, Dialectic was only a philosophical method without a counterpart in the real. In Hegel there is a real Dialectic, but the philosophical method is that of a pure and simple description, which is dialectical only in the sense that it describes a dialectic of reality.

In order better to understand the meaning of and the reason for this truly revolutionary transposition, one must be willing to make the philosophical experiment which Hegel proposes to the reader of the *Phenomenology* in its first Chapter. Look at your watch, he says, and note that it is, let us say, noon. Say it, and you will have enunciated a truth. Now write this truth on a piece of paper: "It

is more than a reality: it is a *revealed* reality; it is the reality *plus* the revelation of the reality through discourse. Therefore, in the heart of the truth, there is a *difference* between the real and the discourse which reveals it. But a difference is *actualized* in the form of an *opposition*, and a discourse *opposed* to the real is, precisely, an error. Now a difference that was never actualized would not really be a difference. Therefore, there is really a *truth* only where there *has been* an error. But error exists really only in the form of human discourse. If man, then, is the only one who can err really and live in error, he is also the only one who can incarnate truth. If Being in its totality is not only pure and simple Being (*Sein*), but Truth, Concept, Idea, or Spirit—this is only because it implies in its real existence a human or articulate reality, which is capable of erring and of correcting its errors. Without Man, Being would be mute: it would be *there* (*Dasein*), but it would not be *true* (*das Wahre*).

The example given by Hegel shows how man manages to create and to preserve an error in Nature. Another example, which is not found in Hegel but which illustrates his thought well, permits us to see how man succeeds in transforming into truth the error which he was able to preserve as error in the real.

Let us suppose that, in the Middle Ages, a poet wrote in a poem: "*at this moment* a man is flying over the ocean." This was without a doubt an error, and it remained such for many centuries. But if we now reread that sentence, we are most likely reading a truth, for it is almost certain that *at this moment* some aviator is over the Atlantic, for example.

We previously saw that Nature (or given Being) can make a human truth false (which man nonetheless succeeds in preserving indefinitely as error). And now we see that man can transform his own error into truth.⁶ He began with an error (whether voluntary or not is unimportant) by speaking of the terrestrial animal of the species *homo sapiens* as a flying animal; but he finished with the statement of a truth by speaking of the flight of an animal of that species. And it was not the (erroneous) discourse that changed

⁶ One could say that, by inventing the airplane, man corrects the "error" of Nature, which created him without wings. But that would only be a metaphor: to say that is to anthropomorphize Nature. Error, and hence truth, exists only where there is language (*Logos*).

Inversely, one can truly create only by *negating* the given real. For this real is somehow omnipresent and dense, since there is nothing (nothing but Nothingness) outside of it or other than it; hence there is, so to speak, no place for newness in the World; rising up from Nothingness, newness can penetrate into Being and exist only by taking the place of given-Being—that is, by negating it.

In the dialectical interpretation of Man—i.e., of Freedom or Action—the terms “negation” and “creation” must, moreover, be taken in the full sense. What is involved is not replacing one given by another given, but overcoming the given in favor of what does not (yet) exist, thus realizing what was never given. This is to say that Man does not change himself and transform the World for himself in order to realize a conformity to an “ideal” given to him (imposed by God, or simply “innate”). He creates and creates himself because he negates and negates himself “without a preconceived idea”: he becomes other solely because he no longer wants to be the same. And it is only because he no longer wants to be *what he is* that what he will be or will be able to be is an “ideal” for him, “justifying” his negating or creative action—i.e., his change—by giving it a “meaning.” Generally speaking, Negation, Freedom, and Action do not arise from thought, nor from consciousness of self or of external things; on the contrary, thought and consciousness arise from Negativity which realizes itself and “reveals” itself (through thought in Consciousness) as effective free action.

In fine, Negativity (or Freedom) which realizes and manifests itself as creative Action is Man who, while living in the natural World, continues to be himself and yet is not always (or “necessarily”) the same. Hence we can say that dialectical Anthropology is the philosophic science of Man as he appears in the (pre-philosophic) Judaeo-Christian conception—that is, of Man who is supposed to be able to *convert himself*, in the full sense of the word, or to become essentially and radically *other*. According to this conception, Man who was created perfect can nevertheless radically pervert this innate or given nature; but essentially perverted Man can repudiate the “old Adam” and thus become the “new Adam,” different from the first but still more perfect than he; Man can “overcome” the hereditary sin which nonetheless deter-

2 2
 death in combat or by killing himself after his defeat). The Master makes the Slave work in order, by the Slave's work, to satisfy his own desires, which as such are "natural" or animal desires (in satisfying them the Master differs from an animal only in that he satisfies them without effort, the necessary effort being supplied by the Slave; thus, unlike an animal, the Master can live a life of "enjoyment"). But, to satisfy those desires of the Master, the Slave had to repress his own instincts (to prepare food that he will not eat, even though he desires to eat it, and so on), he had to do violence to his "nature," hence to negate or "overcome" himself as *given*—that is, as animal. Consequently, as an auto-negating Act, Work is an auto-creative act: it realizes and manifests Freedom—that is, autonomy toward the given in general and the given which one is oneself; it creates and manifests the humanity of the worker. In and by Work, Man negates himself as animal, just as he does in and by Fighting. That is why the working Slave can essentially transform the natural World in which he lives, by creating in it a specifically human technical World. He works according to a "project" which does not necessarily result from his own innate "nature"; he realizes through work something that does not (yet) *exist* in him, and that is why he can create things that exist nowhere else but in the World produced by his work: artifacts or works of art—that is, things that Nature never produces.

The "manufactured objects" created by the active auto-negations of the working Slave enter into the natural World and hence transform it *really*. In order to preserve himself in the reality of this transformed (= humanized) World, the Slave himself must change. But since *he* is the one who transformed the given World by working in it, the change which he seems to *undergo* in consequence is in fact an *auto-creation*: it is he who changes himself, who *creates* himself as other than he was *given* to himself. And that is why Work can raise him up from Slavery to Freedom (which will, however, be different from the freedom of the idle Master).

Thus, in spite of appearances, the Slave works *for himself* (also). To be sure, the Master profits from his work. Having negated his animal nature by the Risk accepted in the Fight for Recognition, the Master realized his humanity. He can therefore, like a Man—as opposed to an animal—assimilate the specifically human products

richet). Man "did not remain an immediate thing" (*unmittelbare Sache*), Hegel says in that passage, because "he is only what he has done" (*getan*)—that is, because he acted by negating himself as given. But he is a concrete reality, which "appears" or "makes itself known" (*erkennen lässt*) through a "sign" (*Zeichen*), because he is a product (*Werk*) produced with the given, in which what is negated, consequently, was preserved. Now, this preservation of what is negated in Man is accomplished in and by the remembrance of the very one who negated it. And that is why Man is a dialectical human reality only to the extent that he is historical, and he is historical only by remembering his past which he has surpassed.

In short, to describe Man as a dialectical entity is to describe him as a negating Action that negates the given within which it is born, and as a Product created by that very negation, on the basis of the given which was negated. And on the "phenomenological" level this means that human existence "appears" in the World as a continuous series of fights and works integrated by memory—that is, as History in the course of which Man freely creates himself.

Thus Hegelian Dialectic gives a philosophic account of the two fundamental categories implied in pre-philosophic Judaeo-Christian anthropology, which, when secularized, became modern anthropology: namely, the categories of Freedom and Historicity. This Dialectic also permits us to understand why these two categories are in fact inseparable. It is obvious, indeed, that there is History—i.e., creative or unforeseeable evolution—only where there are free agents; and that Freedom is realized only by the creation of a specifically human, i.e. historical, World. Now, Dialectic shows us that Negativity (= Freedom) differs from Nothingness only to the extent that it is inserted into Totality (= historical synthesis, in which the future is incorporated in the present through the intermediary of the past), and that the real is Totality, instead of pure Identity, only to the extent that it implies its own negation (which, precisely, frees it from itself taken as given). History is what it is—that is, Totality or Synthesis, or, better, creative evolution or progress, and not a pure and simple tautology or an "eternal return"—because it is the unity of essentially different constituent elements—i.e., elements created by negation of the

elements which preceded them and hence independent with respect to them, or free.

Now, Judaeo-Christian and modern anthropology (more or less explicitly) implies a third fundamental category, inseparable from the other two, which is the category of Individuality: in this anthropology Man is a historical free Individual. And Hegel's philosophic anthropology accepts this conception of Man. Thus, in the passages cited, there was always a concern for the Individual, for human Individuality.

In contradistinction to an animal, a plant, or an inanimate thing, a human being is not only a simple "exemplar" or just another representative of a natural "species," interchangeable with the other representatives. (And Hegel often insists on the fact that the French expression "*une espèce de . . .*," applied to a man, has a pejorative sense.) A man is supposed to be "the only one of his kind," by being essentially different from all other men. And at the same time he is supposed to have, in his irreplaceable uniqueness, a positive value even more absolute or universal than that which belongs to a "species" as such.²⁸ Now, this universal value attributed to something absolutely unique is precisely the value which characterizes Individuality, since such a value is attributed only to it.

In Hegel's terminology, the Individuality which characterizes human existence is a synthesis of the Particular and the Universal. Insofar as this existence "manifests" itself on the "phenomenal" level, Individuality "appears" as active realization of the specifically human desire for Recognition (*Anerkennen*). According to Hegel, Man is truly human (that is, free and historical) only to the extent that he is recognized as such by others (at the limit, by all others) and that he himself recognizes them in turn (for one can be truly "recognized" only by a man whom one recognizes oneself). And we can say that social Recognition is what distinguishes Man, as spiritual entity, from animals and everything that is merely Nature. Now, it is in and by the universal recognition of human particularity that Individuality realizes and manifests itself.

²⁸ Thus, for example, it does not seem evil at all to kill or destroy some representative or other of an animal or vegetable species. But the extermination of an entire species is considered almost a crime.

in its Identity with itself. And this Particularity is a *given* or a "thesis," or, better, a given-being (*Sein*). For what exists at the beginning (in spite of the opinion of "creationists" of every sort, beginning with Plato) is not the Universal, but the Particular: not, for example, *table* in general or *any* animal whatsoever, but *this* particular table and *this* particular animal. However (at least in the World of *which one speaks*—that is, in the World in which Man lives), one can *negate* the Particularity of the existing entity by detaching it from its given *hic et nunc* and causing it to move from the natural Cosmos into the Universe of discourse. Thus, for example, *this* table, which is now here, can become the "general" notion of *Table*, which in some way exists always and nowhere (except "in thought"); and *this* animal can become the "abstract" notion of *an* Animal. But what constitutes the concrete reality (of the World inhabited by Man) is neither the particular entities by themselves nor the universal notions which correspond to them, taken separately. The concrete reality is the whole or the Totality of particular entities revealed by discourse having universal (or true) content, and of general (or better, generic) concepts realized in the spatial-temporal World by the *hic et nunc* of particularities. And it is only as particular realization of a universal concept or as "representative" of a species or kind that a given real entity is an "individual." (Likewise, the Concept would be a pure abstraction—that is, pure nothingness—if it did not correspond to given-Being; and the identifying Particularity implied in this Being is what differentiates general concepts by "individualizing" them.)

But when it is a matter of purely natural real particular entities (i.e., animals, plants, or inanimate things), the universalizing negation is accomplished only in and by the thought (or Discourse) of Man—that is, *outside* of the entities themselves. And that is why one can say that the natural entity, in itself, is only particular: it is universal at the same time, and hence "individual," only through and for the Man who thinks or talks about it. Thus Individuality (and hence Dialectic in general) can "appear" only in the human *science* of nature, but not in Nature itself. The purely natural entity *is* not, strictly speaking, an Individual: it is Individual neither in itself, nor through itself, nor for itself. Man, on the contrary, is individual (and hence dialectical) in himself and through himself, as well as for himself. He is individual *for*

Let us abstract from the fact that this passage asserts that *every* finite entity is dialectical and is *necessarily* dialectical. That is an imprecision of language or an extremely serious error, which I would not want to dwell upon. Let us remember only that, taking the context into account, the passage asserts that only a *finite* entity can be dialectical, that every entity that is (or can be) dialectical is necessarily finite in its very being, as well as in its objective reality and in its "phenomenal" empirical existence. To say that Man is dialectical, therefore, is not only to say that he is individual, free, and historical, but also to assert that he is essentially finite. Now, the radical finiteness of being and of reality "appears" on the human "phenomenal" level as that thing which is called *Death*.¹ Consequently to say that Man "reveals" himself as *historical free Individual* (or as "Personality") and that he "appears" as essentially *mortal* in the strict and full sense of the term is to express one and the same thing in different ways: a historical free individual is necessarily mortal, and a truly mortal being is always a historical free individual.

To remove the paradoxical aspect of this assertion, it must immediately be said that for Hegel human death is something essentially other than the finiteness of purely natural beings. Death is a *dialectical* finiteness. The dialectical being—that is, Man—is the only one who is *mortal* in the strict sense of the word. The death of a human being is essentially different from the "end" of an animal or plant, as well as the "disappearance" of a thing by simple "wear and tear."

In a fragment of the young Hegel (1795?), devoted to an analysis of Love (edited by Nohl, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*, Tübingen, 1907), we find a passage relating to death, in which the principle themes which he was to develop later already appear (page 379, last paragraph, and page 381):

Given that Love is a sentiment (*Gefühl*) of the living (*Lebendigen*), Lovers can distinguish themselves [from one another] only in the sense that they are mortal, [that is, in the sense] that they think this possibility of separation, [and] not in the sense that something may really be separated, not in the sense that a possibility joined to an existing being (*Sein*) is a reality (*Wirkliches*). There is no [raw or given] matter in Lovers [as Lovers], they are a living Whole [or a spiritual Whole, for at that time Hegel identified Life and Spirit];

[that] Lovers have an independence-or-autonomy (*Selbständigkeit*), [a] proper-or-autonomous (*eigenes*) vital-principle, means only: they can die. A plant has salts and earthy parts, which bring with them their own or autonomous laws for their action; [a plant] is the reflection of a foreign-entity (*Fremden*), and one can only say: a plant can be corrupted (or rot, *verwesen*). But Love tends to overcome dialectically (*aufzuheben*) even this distinction-or-differentiation (*Unterscheidung*), this possibility [taken] as pure (*blosse*) possibility, and to give unity to mortality (*Sterbliche*) itself, to make it immortal . . . This results in the following stages: a single independent unit (*Einige*), beings that are separated from one another, and those that are again made into a unit (*Wiedervereinigte*). The newly reunited are again separated, but in the child the union (*Vereinigung*) itself remains without separation (*ungetrennt worden*).

To understand the whole bearing of this "romantic" text, one must know that, at the time when it was written, Hegel for a while believed he had found the specifically human content of Man's existence in Love, and that it was by analyzing the relationship of Love that he first described the Dialectic of this existence, which distinguishes it from purely natural existence. To describe Man as Lover was then, for Hegel, to describe Man as specifically human and essentially different from the animal.

In the *Phenomenology*, Love and the desire for love have become Desire for recognition and Fighting to the death for its satisfaction, with all that follows from it—that is, History which ends in the coming of the satisfied Citizen and the Wise Man. Mutual Recognition in Love has become social and political Recognition through Action. And therefore the "phenomenal" Dialectic is described no longer as a dialectic of love, but as a historical dialectic, in which the objective realization (*Verwirklichung*) of Recognition in the sexual act and the child (mentioned in the last sentence of the passage cited) is replaced by its objective realization in Fighting, Work, and historical progress ending in the Wise Man.³² In the *Phenomenology*, "the single independent unit" of

³² The "romantic" and "vitalist" origins of the dialectic of Recognition and Fighting appear clearly in the "formal" description of this dialectic found in the Introduction to Chapter IV of the *Phenomenology* (page 135, second line from the bottom—page 138, line 20). The close ties to the passage cited above from his youthful writing are obvious. Love (human Love) too is a desire for Recognition:

the passage just cited is Man (or, more exactly, pre-human man) before the Fight, animated by the Desire for Recognition, which (in the beginning) is the same for all men. "The beings that are separated from one another" are the Master and the Slave who are created in and by the "first" Fight, and who are essentially different from one another. Finally, the "newly reunited" is no longer either the sexual act or the child, but the satisfied Citizen and the Wise Man, who "synthetize" Mastery and Slavery, and who result from the whole of humanity's historical evolution, as integrating totality of the "dialectical movement" of Fighting and Work. Generally speaking, the complete and adequate "revelation" of the dialectical human reality is no longer Love, which is a unified total given "sentiment of the living," but Wisdom or Science—

the lover wants to be *loved*, that is, recognized as absolute or *universal* value in his very *particularity*, which distinguishes him from all others. Hence Love realizes (to a certain extent) Individuality, and that is why it can (to a certain extent) procure Satisfaction. In any case it is a specifically human phenomenon, for in Love one desires another *desire* (the *love of the other*) and not an empirical reality (as, for example, when one simply "desires" someone). What Hegel (implicitly) reproaches Love for in the *Phenomenology* is on the one hand its "private" character (one can be *loved* by only a very few persons, whereas one can be universally *recognized*), and on the other hand its "lack of seriousness," since Risk of life is absent (only this Risk is a truly objective realization of the specifically human content which essentially distinguishes Man from the animal). Not presupposing Risk, Love (= amorous Recognition) does not presuppose Action in general. Therefore it is not Action (*Tun*) or Product (*Werk*) that are recognized in Love as absolute values, but given-Being (*Sein*)—i.e., precisely that which is not truly human in Man. (As Goethe said: one loves a man not because of what he *does* but for what he *is*; that is why one can love a dead man, for the man who *does* truly nothing would already be like a dead man; that is also why one can love an animal, without being able to "recognize" the animal: let us remember that there have never been duels between a man and an animal—or a woman; let us also remember that it is "unworthy of a man" to dedicate himself entirely to love: the legends of Hercules, Samson, and so on.) Consequently, even a man "happy in love" is not fully "satisfied" as long as he is not universally "recognized." In accepting the point of view of the *Phenomenology*, one would have to say that Man can truly *love* (which no animal can do) only because he has already created himself *beforehand* as human being through the Risk incurred in a Fight for Recognition. And that is why only Fighting and Work (born from the Desire for Recognition properly so-called) produce a specifically human *objective-reality* (*Wirklichkeit*), a technical and social, or better, historical, World; the *objective-reality* of Love is purely natural (sexual act, birth of the child): its human content always remains purely internal or private (*innerlich*). History, and not Love, is what *creates* Man; Love is only a secondary "manifestation" of Man who already exists as human being.

that is, the discursive or conceptual understanding of the Totality of Being given to Man and created by him.

But in both "phenomenological" descriptions of the human Dialectic, *death* plays a primordial role. For already, in the writing of his youth, Hegel asserts that Lovers (who "manifest" the human in Man) can distinguish themselves, the one from the other, and from everything that is not they, only to the extent that they are *mortal*: and this is to say that it is only as *mortals* that they possess an *Individuality*, since Individuality necessarily implies and presupposes a Particularity which is "the only one of its kind in the world." Likewise, it is only thanks to *death* that Lovers have an independent or autonomous, or better, *free* existence. Finally, it is again because of the *mortality* of Lovers that Love realizes itself as dialectical "re-union" of the "beings that are separated"—that is, as Synthesis or Totality unfolded and integrated in *Time*, in the form as a series of consecutive generations or a *historical* evolution (the "Synthesis" of Lovers being the Child). Now, we know that, in his mature writings, Hegel maintains this indissoluble bond between Death on the one hand, and Individuality, Freedom, and Historicity on the other.

But what is especially important to underline is that the "romantic" text radically opposes the *death* of Man (= of Lovers) to the simple disappearance or "decomposition" of purely natural entities (everything that Hegel says there about plants applies to animals and inanimate things as well). The finiteness and actual disappearance of natural entities (the "death" of an animal, for example) are determined, in a necessary and unequivocal fashion, by laws that are *alien* (*Fremdes*) to them, or, if you will, by the natural place (*topos*) which they occupy in the given Cosmos. The death of Man (= of Lovers), on the other hand, is an *immanent* law, an *auto-overcoming*: it is truly *his* death—that is, something that is proper to him and belongs to him as his own, and which can consequently be known by him, wanted or negated by him. The "death" of the natural being exists only "in itself or for us"—that is, for Man who is conscious of it: the finite natural being itself knows nothing of its own finiteness. Death, on the other hand, also exists *for* Man, it is "in and for itself": Lovers "*think* of the possibility of separation" in and by their death. And that is why Man (= Lovers) alone is capable of *wanting* the infinity and

thing but a historical drama whose end is unknown. Seriousness enters into a historical situation and transforms a given existential situation into a "historical" one only to the extent that Man can definitively fail to achieve his human destiny, to the extent that History can fail to attain its end; and this is possible only if History is limited in and by Time, and hence if Man who creates it is mortal. It is solely because of the essential finiteness of Man and of History that History is something other than a tragedy, if not a comedy, played by human actors for the entertainment of the gods, who are its authors, who hence know its outcome, and who consequently cannot take it seriously, nor truly tragically, just like all the actors themselves when they know that they are playing roles that have been given to them. The finiteness of every historical action—that is, the possibility of an absolute failure—is what engenders the seriousness characteristic of a man's actual participation in History: a seriousness that allows Man who is creating History to do without any spectator besides himself.³⁸

In fine, then, human death does indeed present itself as a "manifestation" of Man's freedom, individuality, and historicity—that is, of the "total" or dialectical character of his being and his existence. More particularly, death is an "appearance" of Negativity, which is the genuine motor of the dialectical movement. But if death is a manifestation of Man's dialecticity, it is because it overcomes him *dialectically*—that is, while preserving and sublimat-

³⁸ The solution proposed by Plato, and taken up by Kant, is not satisfactory either. According to Plato-Kant, each man, although eternal or immortal, chooses (outside of Time) a determined particular existence, which he lives for a certain time. But it is obvious that such a temporal existence is in no way truly *historical*. The seriousness inheres, at most, in the "transcendental choice": its temporal realization is but a comedy, of which it is hard to say why and for whom it is played, the content and the outcome being known ahead of time. Furthermore, if the eternal man plays only one temporal role, it is because there is something (in fact, God) that prevents him from playing others (especially if the one he played turns out badly): therefore he is not *free* as eternal. Moreover, it is not clear why transworldly man chooses one role rather than another, nor why he chooses a "bad" role (unless he chooses "by chance"—i.e., precisely without any freedom at all). Thus Calvin was correct in saying that, in the Platonic hypothesis, the choice of role is necessarily *determined* by God, and not by the one who seems to make it. Finally, if each man can choose any role at all, and if the exclusion of the roles other than the one he has chosen is imposed on him by God, it is God who particularizes man's universality, and therefore man is an *individual* only for and through God.

thing, that he is essentially temporal in his very being, which thus, in truth, is *action* (ontological level).⁴¹

In summary:

Hegelian Dialectic is not a *method* of research or of philosophical exposition, but the adequate description of the *structure* of Being, and of the realization and appearance of Being as well.

To say that Being is dialectical is first to say (on the ontological level) that it is a *Totality* that implies *Identity* and *Negativity*. Next, it is to say (on the metaphysical level) that Being realizes itself not only as *natural World*, but also as a *historical* (or human) *World*, these two Worlds exhausting the totality of the objective-real (there is no divine World). It is finally to say (on the phenomenological level) that the objective-real empirically-exists and appears not only as inanimate thing, plant, and animal, but also as essentially temporal or *mortal historical free individual* (who *fights* and who *works*). Or, to put it otherwise, to say that there is *Totality*, or *Mediation*, or *dialectical Overcoming*, is to say that in addition to *given-Being*, there is also *creative Action* which ends in a *Product*.

⁴¹ God and the afterlife have always been denied by certain men. But Hegel was the first to try to formulate a complete *philosophy* that is atheistic and finitist in relation to Man (at least in the great *Logik* and the earlier writings). He not only gave a correct description of *finite* human existence on the "phenomenological" level, which allowed him to use the fundamental categories of Judaeo-Christian thought without any inconsistency. He also tried (without completely succeeding, it is true) to complete this description with a metaphysical and ontological analysis, also radically atheistic and finitist. But very few of his readers have understood that in the final analysis dialectic meant atheism. Since Hegel, atheism has never again risen to the metaphysical and ontological levels. In our times Heidegger is the first to undertake a complete atheistic philosophy. But he does not seem to have pushed it beyond the phenomenological anthropology developed in the first volume of *Sein und Zeit* (the only volume that has appeared). This anthropology (which is without a doubt remarkable and authentically philosophical) adds, fundamentally, nothing new to the anthropology of the *Phenomenology* (which, by the way, would probably never have been understood if Heidegger had not published his book): but atheism or ontological finitism are implicitly asserted in his book in a perfectly consequent fashion. This has not prevented certain readers, who are otherwise competent, from speaking of a Heideggerian theology and from finding a notion of an afterlife in his anthropology.