

Summary of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* – Todd McGowan

G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).

<Preface>

Hegel begins with the problem of a preface for a philosophical work, because a preface only states or asserts and philosophy doesn't operate in this way. Philosophy doesn't operate through assertions, which is why a preface is inappropriate to it. (Nonetheless, Hegel is beginning with a preface which is operating assertorically.) Hegel defines philosophy as the movement toward truth, rather than as a fight between competing systems. We fail to see this because we fail to see how truth comes out of error. To see this, we must see the importance of necessity for the whole. What is important is not the end point of philosophy, but the process, the movement toward the end. The end is nothing without this process of getting to it (which is why Hegel doesn't just write the "Absolute Knowing" section and leave it at that). But likewise the aim is nothing without its realization in action. An unrealized aim is meaningless. It is easy to just judge other thinkers and their systems, but this judging isn't philosophy. The interaction of these systems is dialectical, i.e., they are each necessary for the system which follows and pushes off of them (they each have their own local validity). Truth can only be known systematically, not empirically. An isolated truth is not truth at all. Only the accomplishment of the system can justify the entire project or system and its truth (and thus can justify the assertions of the preface, which is what Hegel's entire system will do). But in order to construct the science (*Wissenschaft*), one must begin with an assertion—there's no getting around it.

Romantics have stressed the importance of intuition for philosophy, rather than of the concept of the absolute. They have also tried to turn philosophy into a source of uplifting and edification; this isn't the job of philosophy. This emphasis on intuition rather than the concept indicates a prejudice in the favor of feeling as against the "cold march of necessity." To feel the concept is always empty, because it is just an undifferentiated multiplicity. The power of spirit is only as great as its expression; there is no great inexpressible sense of spirit that we can connect with through feeling. Spirit is always changing, always moving forward (though slowly). As forms of life have changed, consciousness at first has failed to grasp not only the new content, but more the new form, which forces a revolution in consciousness. This new world, however, is only visible after it has arrived—it moments *will have been* moments, but aren't until after it has become fully actualized. Only a few can grasp the concept of a new world, because, qua new world, it is not yet exoteric. Science, however, does grasp this concept. This sets up a continuing battle between science and its opponents. The opponents of science have one way of understanding everything, a form into which they fit every content that they encounter. This kind of formalism exists in philosophy as well, with the absolute conceived of an A=A (by Fichte, whom Hegel doesn't mention by name here). Such philosophers see the absolute idea expressed in everything, hence they cannot see its historicity, or the varying ways in which it gets (re)presented. They simply create an abstract and monotonous universality, which they attribute everything to. This system has no content—form is all determinative. In addition, all difference gets destroyed here.

Everything depends, for Hegel, on the importance of grasping truth in terms not just of substance, but of subject also. This is the key to all his philosophy. There is no original unity but rather an original self-division of what is substantial. In this way, Hegel redefines substance as what must necessarily also be self-contradictory, just like the subject. Reality is not experienced in its immediacy, but as mediated process. In-itself, life seems like an untroubled unity with itself, but life never remains in this untroubled unity because it doesn't remain in-itself. The in-itself is driven to be for-itself, to be subject as well as substance, because of its self-division, its being at odds with itself. This self-division is what life is. The subject is the negator of the real; this is the source of its experience. But subject only becomes concrete in and through its interaction with the object. The truth is the whole, but the whole can't be abstracted from the form of becoming in which it appears. Thus, form is just as important as content.

We recoil from the idea of mediation, because we don't want to think of the absolute as divided. That is, Hegel commits a sacrilege by allowing mediation (movement) within the absolute. But for him, one cannot separate the movement toward truth from the truth itself. Mediation is just becoming, and all that truth is in fact its becoming-truth. (Which is why you can't just read the "Absolute Knowing" chapter.) What this means is that the beginning and the ending are the same, but only because in the beginning is purpose (or, as Alexandre Kojève would say, "desire"), the purpose unto the end. Desire has a role in reason (*Vernunft*), because reason is purposive activity (and hence reason, for Hegel, cannot be the disinterested activity that we tend to conceive it as). Purpose is in fact the subject (could we perhaps see this as a reconception of subject from "I think" to "I desire" in a way that anticipates Sigmund Freud].

The subject is self-movement, but we tend to posit it as a fixed point and then attribute predicates to it. Because subject is this self-movement, philosophy can only be expressed as a system that lays out all the movements of subjectivity. Fixed philosophical principles are always just as false as they are true. But to refute them, one cannot attack them from the outside but one must inhabit them from the inside. The refutation must be developed from the principle itself. One can always accomplish this refutation of philosophical principles, because the true isn't a principle, but a system. This system—the development of spirit—is science. Science, however, must provide the individual with a ladder to attain to its standpoint (which is what the *Phenomenology of Spirit* attempts to provide). The antithesis of science consists in knowing objects as other—science sees this as an absence of spirit—but this situation is one in which consciousness feels itself at home (with objects as other). The demand of science is a demand that natural consciousness do a violence to itself—to walk on its head. The *Phenomenology* is the demand coming-to-be of science out of natural consciousness and its self-violence (or masochism). (What propels this violence to the self that occurs in this trajectory? It must be the subject's desire.) We can't just begin with the absolute standpoint of science, but

must work to it, thus rehashing the earlier stages of spirit. But now they are more easily travelled because we implicitly know them. Nonetheless, this process demands patience. Through this experience, the individual must pass through the same movements as the general history of spirit. This experience must be recollected in-itself to be converted into the form of being-for-self.

This conversion involves defamiliarization. Hegel believes that common sense is self-deception, and this is the deception which natural consciousness is enmeshed in. Common sense is a sign that something is too close to be adequately known, too familiar. The analysis of an idea means taking away this element of familiarity. This separation of the idea from itself is, however, not imposed upon it, but is the result of its self-division. This activity of dissolution is the power of the understanding (*Verstand*), which breaks the force of the familiar with its negativity, that is, with its acquaintance with death. Understanding, a faculty that Hegel takes over from Immanuel Kant, is what splits the world up into discrete entities. This division of thing is the introduction of death into them. The subject is a being of death that it brings to bear on things through its understanding. Spirit doesn't shun death—which is the most horrible thing—but gains its truth by enduring it. As Hegel says, “spirit ... wins to its truth only when it finds itself utterly torn asunder (*in der absoluten Zerrissenheit*). Only by facing the negative can Spirit dialectically overcome—that is, transform death into life, the negative into being. It is spirit that does this. Without this “tarrying with the negative” we have nothing (inexcusably translated by Terry Pinkard into “lingering with the negative”). This power is subject, which supersedes immediacy in order to grasp every determinateness which it encounters as mediated, and thus to move to a real immediacy, an immediacy which *is* its mediation.

The problem—and its especially a modern problem—is that abstraction is the basic mode of thinking for individuals. The individual can only be freed from this morass of abstraction through grasping the development of pure essences (which is science). This development of the concept is not merely a contingent or haphazard development, but a necessary one. This development is *experience*. Experience is, in other words, the process of spirit becoming other to itself and then suspending this otherness. A gap exists between subject and substance, between knower and known; this gap is the negative, their shared defect, which moves both of them. A disparity exists between subject and itself, and between substance and itself, and it is through this disparity that they relate to each other. Because what happens outside of it is really its own doing, substance is essentially subject. With this recognition, spirit attains itself and takes itself for its object. This is absolute knowing. In the oneness of this knowing, knowing (subject) and being (substance) are united. But this raises the question: why dilly-dally with the negative or the false? Why not just get to the true straight away?

The negative process is necessary because that is the nature of truth; truth is not like a stamped coin, it must be arrived at. Just as there is nothing “true,” there is neither anything false in itself or evil in itself. Falseness is a moment on the way toward truth, not something distinct from truth. Dogmatism incorrectly wants to see truth as a fixed proposition, rather than as something which comes into being, which is arrived at. Hence, falsity and negativity are essential points of truth. But once we have arrived at truth, true and false end up being false distinctions, because anything that was false is a part of what is true at this point. Truth is thus not a proposition to be zealously defended; it is something that moves, and the knowing of it is not external to it (or else it is not the knowing of it). Even obvious truths—like historical facts—aren't truths that exist in isolation and can just be stated. There are no easy answers even to easy questions for Hegel.

Even mathematical truths have a movement to them, which is why one doesn't *know* them if one only has them memorized. But mathematical truths are not the model for philosophical ones—as Immanuel Kant claimed in his apotheosis of mathematics—because what drives their movement is only apparent after the proof is finished. We can't see the necessity in why the proof takes its particular path and not another. The necessity is only external (imposed from without), not internal to the proofs themselves. This is a defect resulting from mathematical material itself. All mathematical propositions are dead because one element in them (space) is non-actual. This is why mathematics is pure formalism (both sides of its cognition are not actual, i.e., self-divided). The content does not drive the form in mathematics, but the content and form have a merely external relation to each other. Mathematics thus runs up against relations (like pi) which elude its ability to use mathematical determination. Mathematics deals solely with magnitude, but what upsets the stability of magnitude is the “sheer unrest” of life itself. That is, mathematics has no way of accounting for time and the way in which time is constantly disrupting all equality and unity. Hegel sees time as the concept.

Philosophy, in contrast to mathematics, deals only with essential determinations—with an internal necessity—and not with inessential ones. The essential is not the permanent (which mathematics thinks it is dealing with) but the evanescent. Hegel compares the true to a Bacchanalian revel in which each member collapses as soon as he drops out, so the revel equally appears as a calm repose. Mathematics keeps truth external to its material and thus keeps truth static. Philosophy sees the movement of truth and thus the way in which truth is internal to its material. Truth is the result of a movement, and this movement must find an adequate expression in thought. We might use the triadic form (universal, particular, singular) to grasp this movement, but we must avoid conceiving this form lifelessly, as Kant has, creating a table of categories from it. This ends up being pure formalism, which just gives a predicate to every form it encounters. Hegel is really attacking here Kant's valuation of the understanding, which Hegel finds fault with because the understanding is a purely formal and not a dialectical structure. Objects are simply subsumed into different categories, without regard for this self-movement or specificity. This formalism ends up leading to a conception of the subject as absolute (that is, as an undifferentiated absolute), in which all determinations get subsumed. Hegel sees this as akin to monochromatic painting.

Science, however, does not work this way. It understands that a being that immediately is has a self-movement in which it becomes other. In this way, content determines itself, rather than being determined externally by a table of categories. The limitation of the understanding is precisely that it offers us only a table of contents without content itself. The understanding never submits itself to the thing, but insists upon remaining aloof. Scientific cognition surrenders itself to the thing and expresses its inner necessity. This total absorption into the content, characteristic of science, is at the same time a return into its own

inwardness. That is, it finds its self-identity in otherness. Just where the other—determinateness—thinks it pursues only its self-interest and self-preservation, it is actually pursuing its own self-dissolution, and thus contributing to the whole. This is what spirit grasps.

Even common understanding itself involves a becoming something more—and this something more is reason (*Vernunft*). Science is able to discern reason and point it out, though it usually isn't well-received, because there is a shame involved in admitting the truth of an alien authority. The thinking of the concept also requires strenuous effort, which is why it isn't popular. It doesn't involve arguing, because arguing is a negative which fails to see the positive within it. It is done only to augment the vanity of the knowing I. Speculative thinking doesn't just argue with other positions, but insists on producing a determinate negation, that is, a negation which has a positive content as well. Common thinking—or representation (*Vorstellung*)—fails to achieve a determinate negation because it views subject as passively related to predicate or content. The arguing subject views its subjectivity as something unrelated to what it is arguing about (its content or predicate), but it is in fact the movement of the subject that is itself the object. So, the content is not just a predicate, but substance, the whole—and thus intimately bound up with the knowing subject.

The problem with ordinary propositional thinking (subject = predicate or $x = y$) is that its form is always a barrier to the unity of the concept, because it forces us to see an external relation where there is an internal one. Herein lies the difficulty of philosophy: philosophy must use propositions and propositional thinking and at the same time destroy propositions. Speculative propositions are different, because they express both identity and difference. Philosophy takes us from ordinary propositions to speculative ones—or it shows us how the speculative proposition emerges out of and then destroys the ordinary proposition, which wants to keep subject and predicate apart.

Everyone believes that they can argue about philosophy, that it requires so special competence. But the other common attitude is to dismiss philosophy as visionary dreaming. This is all the person of common sense can do when she comes up against a person she doesn't agree with—just dismiss the other. Philosophy, on the other hand, is never simply dismissive. Anyone who just dismisses the other violates their humanity, because human nature only exists in a community of minds, and by dismissing the other, one is exiling them from this community, saying that they are unworthy of inhabiting it. There is no royal road—or short-cut—to philosophy. One can't just read reviews or prefaces to philosophical works (or commentaries on them) to learn philosophy. (One can't, in short, just read *Hegel for Beginners* and then know Hegel.) Scientific insight demands the labor of the concept (and the labor of the negative—a willingness to despair). The truth of this science will prevail when it should. Truth always forces itself upon the world when its time has come, not before (as Thomas Kuhn will later argue about natural sciences in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). The problem for the reception of truth isn't the public (which can admit that it doesn't understand and take the blame itself), but the spokespersons for the public, who blame the author if they can't understand. But still, the rejection of one individual's work is unimportant, because the individual has only a small share in the work of spirit, and this share is shrinking all the time in the modern world.

<Introduction (46-57)>

We can't just examine how knowledge works before beginning to know, because we're always already implicated in the process of knowing when we begin to study knowledge. This is the problem with Immanuel Kant's attempt to discover how we know before beginning to know. To find out how we know, one must dive in and start knowing (just like learning how to swim, an analogy Hegel uses in the *Encyclopedic Logic*). The difficulty is that the instrument we use to know changes the thing that is known, so it does seem logical to try to rectify this defect by knowing the instrument and thus taking into account how it deforms the thing known. But if we remove that which in our knowing deforms, we remove our knowledge altogether, because it is through that deforming that we ever arrive at the thing known. The deforming is the knowledge.

This skepticism about knowing presupposes a duality between the knower and the thing known and sees this as an absolute division. For this skepticism, cognition is on one side and the absolute on the other, and never the twain shall meet. This isn't a fear of error, as it claims to be, but is actually a fear of truth. Natural consciousness—which is skeptical in this way—fears truth because truth involves the loss of itself. Science, however, begins with the error of natural consciousness and then liberates itself from it. The road of this liberation is a series of configurations of consciousness, through which consciousness develops, through which it is educated. The untruth of each configuration is not just an empty negativity, but a determinate negation, which thus gives rise to a new form. The final goal is the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where object and concept correspond. This movement of consciousness doesn't come from the outside—from us—but it done to consciousness by itself. Consciousness is always going beyond itself, beyond its own limits. It is self-transcending or ecstatic (as Jean-Paul Sartre would later develop in *Being and Nothingness*).

Consciousness opposes itself to any satisfaction that it receives. Satisfaction only inaugurates another type of dissatisfaction. Consciousness, in other words, constantly does violence to itself and never allows itself to remain secure or untroubled. Sentimentality, in contrast, is the attempt to see everything as good in its kind. This is precisely what reason rejects in never seeing a mere kind as good. Similarly, the argument that all truth is just particular is a flight from reason, though reason can't argue with it, because this position has totally abandoned the universal and thus the possibility for argument. In the inquiry into the concept that will follow, Hegel doesn't offer a standard against which things can be compared. Rather, they must be compared with themselves. The investigation compares consciousness with itself.

When we inquire into what something is in-itself, we are really asking what it is for-us. What is in-itself is at the same time what is for-us. Within itself, consciousness establishes a standard, a being-in-itself or true, against which it measures what it knows. The examination is only seeing if consciousness lives up to its own idea, whether its concept (of the true) corresponds to its object. But concept and object are within consciousness itself. Consciousness defines itself through opposition, through what it is not. For Hegel, the knowledge of an object and the object itself are indistinguishable. Hegel clearly rejects a correspondence

theory of truth because we have to know both our measuring rod for truth and the idea we have. Consciousness is comparing within itself and seeking an internal adequacy.

If the knowledge of that object changes, then the object changes. Experience is precisely the testing of knowledge and the object. Through experience, we come to realize that what we thought was an in-itself was only an in-itself for consciousness (or, what we thought was a truth ends up being only a relative truth, relative to the position or knowledge of consciousness at the time it held it to be true). When this kind of reversal happens, we think we come across a new object, but this encounter is really just a reversal or change in consciousness. Consciousness, however, fails to grasp this change as a change in itself, and thus can only see it as the emergence of a new object. Only when consciousness is able to grasp the new object as itself—or when knowledge has identified appearance with essence—will it reach absolute knowing.

<A. Consciousness>

“I. Sense Certainty”

Sense certainty is an attitude of pure receptivity—not imposing anything upon what is known. It is immediate—apprehension without comprehension. It appears as the truest knowledge, as that which most respects the object. It is a relation of one particular I to one particular “this.” The simple immediacy or pure being of the “this” constitutes its truth. This pure being, however, splits up into two “thises”—the I and the object. At first, we posit the I as inessential and the “this” as essential because I is the source of the determination of the “this.” The determinations of the “this” are “here” and “now” (where it is and when it is). Sense certainties (“this” and “here” and “now”) seem to be the most fundamental kinds of knowledge; in reality, they are the poorest and most abstract (though they seem concrete). All sense certainty can say is “it is”; this is a very finite knowledge, and also the most mediated (the most subject to consciousness). Thus, a truth of sense certainty might be “now is night.” But the truths of sense certainty cannot be written down—thus they are not truths at all (or not for very long), because a truth cannot lose anything by being written down. A truth that can’t be communicated thus isn’t a truth at all. (Hegel here proclaims that inner feeling is not truth—a claim that someone like Soren Kierkegaard would certainly object to. Perhaps this is the one point at which, in the whole system, one can disagree with Hegel.) Truth, for Hegel, is utterly social. It must be able to be communicated and must be communicated. Sense certainty wants at all costs to avoid a universal, because a universal would violate the particular it is attempting to experience in its immediacy. Sense certainty wants to revel in the particularity of the particular. But once we say a word about it—even a “this,” which abides even in the vanishing of what it refers to—we put the object in the terms of the universal. Even though we only mean to communicate a particular, language is “more truthful” and communicates a universal. The form of our speaking trumps the content and communicates the universal despite our particularist intent. In this way, sense certainty loses the particularity of the object that it was supposed to prize. Pure being turns out to be not an immediacy, but a universal.

Once we have a universal which abides with the vanishing of the object, however, what was essential undergoes a shift: the I now becomes the essential and the object the inessential. The truth of the object is now *my* truth; “now” is day because I see it as day. But another I sees “now” as night and proclaims that to be truth. I can’t just restrict my truth to my particular I, even though this may be what I *mean* to do; I can’t just say what I mean (but, on the other hand, I always say what I *really* mean).

Thus, my own private meaning becomes inessential in the face of the universal, which becomes the essential. The problem with the truths of sense certainty (“this” and “here” and “now”) is that one can never get any distance from them. Sense certainty, in other words, can only be a purely transient knowledge. As soon as I point out the “now,” the now I was referring to has gone. The “now” becomes a series of “nows,” just as the “here” becomes a series of “heres” that have their significance in reference to others nows and heres. Whenever I proclaim a truth of sense certainty, I always miss it. Consciousness always sublates such a truth and thus arrives at a new position. The truth of sense certainty is really a completely abstract and totally universal truth. But once I begin to distinguish between one “here” and a group of other “heres,” I discover a particular out of the universal. In this, I am pointing out, and thus I discover difference. What began as sense certainty has thus become an act of perception (because of the necessity of the universal within sense certainty itself). The discovery of the universal operating within sense certainty determines the move to perception, which incorporates universality into its perspective. The contradiction that arises for sense certainty between the insistence on particularity and the formulation of the universal disappears in perception.

“II. Perception”

Perception doesn’t deny universality; it openly uses universals as properties. It begins by elevating the perceived over the perceiver (who becomes the inessential). Under perception, an object can have properties, universals, unlike for sense certainty. The perceiving consciousness just passively receives the input from the objects, which is a thing with many universal properties. What is perceived in a property which persists even when it is not. (That is, perception recognizes the thing continues to have that property even when it is not being perceived, unlike in sense certainty.) But things have many properties, and these properties don’t relate to each other, are indifferent to each other. This means that the thing is just a collection of diverse and indifferent properties—an “also” or medium that holds the different properties. But if the thing is just a collection of indifferent properties, an “also,” then it isn’t determinate (and thus has nothing to distinguish it from other “alsos”). The indeterminate thing has nothing to allow it to stand out as a thing. Thus, a contradiction arises between the determination of the thing and its constitution through indifferent properties. The thing is determinate only as a one. Perceiving consciousness posits truth in the object, and error in itself (that is, if there is any error, it is a failure of perception, not a failure in the thing). But a contradiction arises because the one is supposed to be the essential, but what is determinate is the property rather than the one. What is the one as distinct from its properties? Nothing. (Interestingly, this is George Berkeley’s critique of any attempt to talk about material things, which is why for him there are only ideas, not material things.)

Perception tries to solve this contradiction by seeing the diversity as the product of the perceiving consciousness, rather

than of the object. The diversity is in us the medium, not in the one (the thing) itself. We see the different properties, but the thing-in-itself is a unified one. This unity the thing possesses intrinsically is in-itself. But consciousness then sees that the object is unified as it relates to other objects, by certain determinative characteristics. This means that the object is nothing in itself, only something in its relation to other objects. The object is no longer an independent object, but exists only in its dependence on the other, the other which provides it its identity. Consciousness must at this point make itself responsible for the unity or oneness of the thing—now attributing its diversity to the thing-in-itself. But it now knows that the thing isn't diverse in itself. Hence, it is able to recognize that the thing isn't self-identical.

It presents one face to consciousness and another face to itself (thus Kant's division of the thing into the appearance and the thing in itself). The thing is a one and is diversified, but in order to solve this contradiction, consciousness sees the thing as unified *because* its diversity or otherness is outside of it. However, in this way the thing loses its independence; it comes to exist as this specific thing only through its relation to other things. This relation becomes the essential quality of the thing. That is, the being-for-self of the thing is at the same time its being-for-another. At this point, consciousness enters the realm of the understanding (*Verstand*) and moves beyond "sound common sense" (which confines itself to perception). Perceptual consciousness is constantly setting up something as true, then setting it aside, and setting up something else as true. It is always in flux (like common sense). This is a result of its attempt to perceive the thing in isolation, which falls into contradiction with itself as isolation depends on relation. Thus comes the need for an entire framework in which to understand the object, since it cannot be understood in isolation. This is the task of the understanding, which thinks the object through its relations.

"III. Force and the Understanding: Appearance and the Supersensible World"

This is the most difficult section of the entire *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The difficulty derives from Hegel's attempt to integrate a critique of Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation and Immanuel Kant's theoretical philosophy, while also demonstrating why all consciousness must simultaneously be self-consciousness. The understanding marks a major advance on perception because it starts with the unconditioned universal. But it still does not arrive at the concept, which connects subject and predicate in a way that the understanding doesn't.

The understanding doesn't see itself in its object. We, who are watching this development, can see the involvement of consciousness in the object, but consciousness itself cannot. Consciousness actually becomes consciousness through its awareness of the fully developed object. It takes essence as objective, and it sees the objects as they exist in their unity. That is, the understanding recognizes that the being-for-self of an object is the same as its being-for-another. The understanding grasps the necessity of relation for the constitution of the object. The apple is what it is through not being the orange, for example.

But this means that things aren't really independent of each other at all—or distinct entities. The understanding sees the interaction of objects as the play of forces—and thus the forces are interdependent. Force is the movement of one thing into another (which means that the move from the dialectic of one thing and a plurality of things to force is the same as the move, in the *Science of Logic*, from the dialectic of being and nothing to becoming). The force has difference within itself, because it is always becoming an other, realizing itself in the other as other. Force is the universal medium in which matters subsists; matters are only moments of force. Unlike the thing, force is itself other, or it is ecstatic. Thinking in terms of forces is a way of grasping the interconnection of things. But the other of the force is itself another force, so we have a duality of forces. One force has its determination as a force only through another force. For instance, if gravity didn't confront a countervailing force, everything would simply collapse together. Force requires an opposing force that it doesn't account for in itself. This difference between two forces is itself a vanishing moment. The two forces are each posited by the other. Their being is a pure positedness or a vanishing. In other words, force is always vanishing and so has no immediate or independent existence. The realization of a force *is* the loss of its reality. That is, a realized force is no longer a force. The truth of a force is only the thought of it, and we arrive at the understanding's concept for the first time.

Force is just a mediating play which unites consciousness with the true essence of things. Force is an appearance, beneath which—at the level of the supersensible—lies the inner truth. This inner is the truth, but it is opposed to consciousness. The true world is not the sensible world, but the supersensible beyond. But we only know this beyond—the inner being—through the medium of appearance. This beyond, however, is necessarily a void, precisely because consciousness conceives of it as a beyond. It is a holy of the holies and cannot be besmirched by any content. But this supersensible beyond, in fact, comes from the world of appearance. This is Hegel's great insight: the great beyond is constituted by the here and now of mere appearances. The understanding connects with the supersensible beyond through the medium of the play of forces. But the play of forces is not really a play of separate forces (since, as we have seen, they are interdependent). Hence, this realm of appearance is a realm of absolute flux, which contains only universal difference.

Hegel claims that this universal difference is the law of force. Law governs how the forces all relate to each other through their differences. The medium of the play of forces is thus a world of appearance beyond which there is the law. The world of the law is the supersensible beyond, and the law stabilizes the flux of appearance. The problem with law is that if there is just one law, then it can't account for disparate content. Such a law—like universal attraction (as articulated by Isaac Newton)—ends up reducing all content to itself. In other words, it explains too much. It does have the advantage of replacing the pure contingency of relations and seeing a unity in the diversity. However, the content of the concept as law is indifferent to its being. The existence of positive and negative electricity doesn't follow necessarily—but only contingently—from the concept of them. Law expresses relations, but it doesn't express essential relations. Law has a contingent relationship between form and content, which causes a contradiction to emerge between form and content. Time and space, for instance, are related in the law of gravity, but their relation to each other is external. The law ends up creating difference, but this difference isn't in the thing-in-itself, but rather in the law itself. (This is David Hume's critique of causality, in a sense, when he argues that we see a causality in objects through our own habit, not because there is really a causality in objects.)

Law is tautological: it expresses difference in content (space is distinct from time—independent of it), and immediately turns around and expresses their relatedness (and thus their lack of difference and independence). This tautological gesture is what Hegel—and the rest of us—call explanation. Explanation explains nothing, but it does give rise, through its alternation between unity and difference, to the same flux at the level of the supersensible beyond (the level of the law) as we have seen existing on the level of appearance (the play of forces, the sensible level). We thus discover a second law, the law of appearance: that differences arise from no differences, or that the self-same repels itself.

Things are thus not self-identical even when they are; they have difference within them. Whatever appears to be one thing is really its opposite. The actual world is an inverted world (just as Christ pointed out in the gospels). Punishment is only the appearance of punishment, but is actually a benefit for the criminal (because it reconciles the crime with the community). But the inverted, supersensible world couldn't exist without its opposite, the world of appearance. We see that it contains its opposite within itself. The difference between the supersensible world and its other (its inversion) is present not outside, but within the supersensible world itself. The self-identical is thus, at the same time, the self-opposed. Things are, in other words, self-sundering while they are self-identical.

This idea puts us in the realm of self-consciousness, because it is consciousness that, as we have seen, is constantly going beyond itself in a movement of self-sundering. Consciousness of things must grasp them as self-sundering. This is only possible if consciousness is, at the same time, self-consciousness, since subjectivity is the recognition of its self-division. Explaining things—which is tautological—is enjoyable because we are always in effect communing with ourselves through the medium of the things we are explaining. The contradiction in things between the self-identical of the law and the self-sundering of the thing finds its resolution in subjectivity, which contains this division within itself. Consciousness must be self-consciousness because our object is ourselves, even when we are trying to think about things. Self-consciousness is itself self-repelling, which is why Johann Fichte, one of Hegel's key predecessors, was able to begin his philosophy with the $I=I$, and discover both identity and difference in it. When we go beyond the curtain meant to conceal the inner world--the supersensible beyond--from us, we discover that we produce what is there to be seen, that it is us, not just the seeing of it. Understanding moves to self-consciousness because it realizes that all along it is only experiencing itself ("the lawgiver of nature," as Immanuel Kant puts it), so itself must become its object of consciousness.

<B. Self-Consciousness>

"IV. Truth of Sense Certainty"

The move to self-conscious indicts all the previous forms of consciousness as kinds of deception. They all considered the object in itself. But an object only is as it is for an other, or for consciousness. Previously, truth was always for consciousness something other than itself--no longer. In itself and for an other turn out, here, to be the same thing. Or, in-itself never remains purely in-itself. Self-consciousness is that which gives objects life. Self-consciousness is desire, because it is a return out of the world of objects back into consciousness itself. The sensuous world is now only appearance, and the earlier moment of consciousness only exists now in its supersession. Self-consciousness is a reflection in itself, and through this reflection the object has become life. It characterizes the object only as negative, something to be overcome--thus its attitude of desire. Life, for self-consciousness, is a continual splitting of itself into differences and then the dissolution of these differences. Life in fact preserves itself only through this development and dissolution. Because of this splitting, life points to something other than itself, i.e., to consciousness. For consciousness, life is the reflected unity (not the simple unity of sense certainty) of the creation and dissolution of difference. Self-consciousness is only itself in the attempt to supersede its dependence on life (which is its genus). This is why self-consciousness is desire: it attains its self-certainty only through superseding the other that presents itself to self-consciousness as independent life. It encounters an other, which appears to be independent, and self-consciousness must affirm nothingness for itself as the truth of the other; self-consciousness becomes certain of itself through the negation of the other (also through the negation of the independence of the other). [Can there be a self-consciousness already sure of itself which then does not need to negate the independence of the other, but can know without negating? Hegel would say not.] But self-consciousness runs into a problem, because it needs the other to validate its existence, and if it negates the other it loses simultaneously this validation. This is why desire is perpetual; it keeps reproducing itself as desire, but never achieves its object. Every negation--what is involved with desire--of the other only brings disappointment, because it needs the object to negate itself, which only another self-consciousness can do. Nature doesn't get the job done. Thus, only in another self-consciousness can self-consciousness find its desire for negation both satisfied and sustained--an inanimate object can only be canceled and thus re-create/destroy the desire of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness only exists for another self-consciousness. Only in this relationship can it find its desire recognized.

{A. Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage (111-119)}:

Self-consciousness exists only in its recognition by another self-consciousness. It comes out of itself when it faces itself as another self-consciousness. Without the other, there is no possibility for self-awareness because the existence of the other forces one to articulate oneself. This, however, creates a problem: the self-consciousness must supersede the other in order assert its identity; the uncanceled existence of the other threatens the identity of the self-consciousness. Every action of self-consciousness involves this other self-consciousness. The action of one is actually the action of two. This split in two self-consciousnesses is akin to the split of one force into two. Self-consciousness begins as certain of itself through the exclusion of everything other. But this other is another self-consciousness (in this case), which means that each self-consciousness's certainty is limited (i.e., its certain of itself but not of the other self-consciousness). Each self-consciousness desires the recognition of the other in order to overcome this threat. But in order to gain recognition self-consciousness must show its mastery of its objective mode--that it isn't dependent at all, even on natural life itself.

The self-consciousnesses must prove themselves in a life and death struggle; they must kill the other, and risk their life in the process. The risk of life affirms that self-consciousness is independent of life, that it is a being-for-itself rather than a dependent being. The independence of subjectivity can only be demonstrated through risking one's life. In this way, self-consciousness shows that it regards everything other than itself—even its own life—as inessential and unimportant. Risk of life must involve an attempt to kill the other. The other is a self-externality that must be destroyed; the death of the other destroys being that is not itself. But killing each other wouldn't result in the promised self-consciousness, precisely because self-consciousness requires the recognition of another self-consciousness. Death is pure negation, not a determinate negation. Death only cancels without preserving, so it doesn't provide sublation (or *Aufhebung*, which is what produces determinate negation).

Rather than kill each other, self-consciousnesses enter into the master-slave (*Herr* and *Knecht*, lord and servant) dialectic, as the means of supplying that validation and recognition. The master has its self-consciousness affirmed by the slave, who gives in out of fear of death. The master becomes the master only when the future slave gives up in order not to die. This experience with death teaches self-consciousness the importance of life. The slave has an existential moment of absolute dread before death that the master does not have, which enables the slave to develop an awareness of the real stakes of life and death that the master always lacks. In addition, the slave works on things (negates them), but the master enjoys the fruits of this work. The master is independent of things, enjoying them without having to work on them. The master relates only negatively to the thing (in enjoying it). The slave cannot free itself from its dependence on things (life), while the master has. The master doesn't experience the independence of the thing (or its resistance to work). For the master, the thing is nothing. The master also receives its recognition from the consciousness of the slave. But as soon as the slave submits, then the slave's consciousness becomes inessential, and thus the recognition of the master gets undercut, being no longer being the recognition from another independent self-consciousness, but from a contingent, dependent being. [From this dialectic, Jean-Paul Sartre derives his famous "Concrete Relations with Others" in his *Being and Nothingness* (1943).] One obtains recognition from one not worthy of giving it at the moment that this other enters the position of giving it. It's a vicious circle that leads to mastery to a contradictory conclusion.

At the moment of receiving recognition from the slave, the master also finds that its consciousness—as lordship is obtained—becomes dependent on the slave's (so the master hasn't achieved independence at all). Thus, only the slave develops an independent consciousness. Alexandre Kojève rightly calls mastery an "existential impasse," whereas the consciousness of the slave achieves emancipation from things and thus independence. This is a consciousness achieved through three things: the absolute dread that the slave feels (which engenders the submission to the master in the first place), the slave's service to the master (through which the slave rids itself of its attachment to natural existence), and, perhaps most importantly, the slave's labor (the negation of the object, and the transformation of the natural object into something permanent). The laborer remakes the object in her own image and thereby achieves the independent self-consciousness that the master cannot achieve (because she is dependent on the slave). The slave thus sees itself in the independence of the created object. The formative activity of labor transforms things into my products. It becomes the way in which one discovers that one has a mind of one's own. But labor without having experienced absolute fear doesn't provide freedom because freedom requires internal negativity. Absolute fear allows negative being to be internal, and not merely external, as it is with labor alone.

{B. Freedom of Self-Consciousness: Stoicism, Skepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness}

Independent self-consciousness—the result of the slave's existential victory in the master/slave struggle for recognition—realizes itself in the independence of thought. The slave's freedom is a freedom of thought. In thought, self-consciousness is free of the bonds or even the concerns of the world. This independence first realizes itself in the form of stoicism. Stoicism is the retreat of consciousness into itself. It values pure thought in itself, not the world. It is the freedom of thinking (as in "nobody can make me think something, no matter how much they control my body"). The stoic's consciousness sees itself as totally free, whatever its worldly situation. Thought is seen as the essential, the outside world as the inessential. This freedom is utterly dismissive of its external situation. Thus, stoicism is a philosophy of both princes (Marcus Aurelius) and slaves (Epictetus). It arises in a time of culture and a time of slavery (the Roman Empire). But the freedom of the stoics is contentless because it has no concrete reality in which it is realized; it all exists in the mind. The stoical demand to isolate oneself in one's thought never offers any content to that thought. In answer to the question "what should I do?" the stoic replies, "just think"—never saying what to think about. Stoicism offers no determinate content for thought, even though it conceives of thought as site of the essential. All content is actually on the side of the world (which the stoic condemns as inessential). The end is always thinking itself. This is why Hegel finds stoicism, in the last instance, very tedious. It is merely the concept of freedom, not freedom itself. Stoicism fails to actualize its freedom. The self-identity of the stoical thought is purely formal. The Stoical consciousness sees itself as the negation of all that exists, as a retreat from the world [which is why Hegel has such contempt for stoicism, which is what he calls a "monkish" philosophy].

Skepticism takes this one step further, realizing the logic which for stoicism was just pretense. The world becomes inessential and unreal: what was for stoicism merely a concept, an article of faith, now becomes a truth. Skepticism condemns everything in objective reality as inessential and uncertain. For the skeptic, we can have no knowledge of the world. Skepticism continually creates confusion, disrupting every attempt at knowing anything. But herein lies its contradiction. Skepticism contains a contradiction within itself because it renounces seeing and hearing, and yet itself sees and hears in order to know what it must renounce. The skeptic says one thing, yet the result of its action says something else. If we watch the behavior of the skeptic, we see the contradiction. The skeptic proclaims the nullity of obedience, yet obeys anyway. Hegel compares the skeptic to a little kid who always says B if you say A. Skepticism creates a duality in itself, through its negation of the other (stoicism was more of a simple freedom of itself). When the skeptic turns on itself—and recognizes the inessential in itself—then it perceives that the duality is within, not between itself and the nullity of the external world. This dual inner world thus produces

the unhappy consciousness.

Unhappy consciousness feels its duality, feels itself to be both transient (meaningless) and permanent (meaningful). The inessential and the essential exist within self-consciousness itself, and the internal struggle between them is what makes unhappy consciousness unhappy. The unhappy consciousness feels itself to be a particular, but it is troubled by the knowledge of the unchangeable, which it feels exiled from. The unhappy consciousness wants to unite its particularity with the unchangeable—this is its object and its essential reality. Unhappy consciousness constantly grasps its own nothingness (as in the skeptical gaze turning on itself). It itself is the inessential, and it constantly strives for the essential—the unchangeable (or the ideal)—which it never reaches. Unhappy consciousness goes through three stages, which are akin to the figures of the trinity. First, it feels the essential to be the unchangeable that is utterly alien to it (God the Father). Secondly, it sees the unchangeable in a form of individuality like itself (Christ the Son). Thirdly (and this is its self-overcoming), it recognizes itself in the unchangeable (the Holy Spirit). But for unhappy consciousness itself, its hope of uniting with the unchangeable beyond is constantly frustrated. Its desire is hysterical. It brings together in itself pure thought and individuality. Unhappy consciousness cannot find what it seeks, because it seeks a beyond, and if it were to find it, it wouldn't be a beyond. It, in other words, is working against itself a priori.

Unhappy consciousness only has this problem because it posits the real as the unchangeable essence: this is the source of its magnificent defeat. For it there are two worlds: this world which is null, and a real world which is beyond. This beyond, because it is beyond, is the reality that consciousness can never cancel (or fulfill its desire for). So what we really have here is a master/slave struggle taking place within self-consciousness (with the unchangeable as the master and the finite self as the slave). All power to effect substantial change lies in this other (the beyond), and the beyond gets all the credit. Any change unhappy consciousness effects is inessential (merely of this world). But just as the slave is the truth of the master, unhappy consciousness recognizes it is itself is the truth of the beyond, simply because it grasps the nothingness of itself. All truth is on the other side, and so thus the unchangeable must itself be individual. Unhappy consciousness doesn't yet at this point recognize itself in the unchangeable, only a particular individual (the incarnation of Christ) as the unity of unchangeable beyond and the finite. However, unhappy consciousness only comes upon the grave of the unchangeable in this way (as did the Crusades) and thus can only conclude that for it "God is dead."

The unchangeable is an individual, but not me. What's worse, that individual is dead. This death is the surrender of the unchangeable of its bodily form (Christ's sacrifice), and unhappy consciousness looks upon this surrender (which results in a unity of the unchangeable and unhappy consciousness) as a pure gift, which it has done nothing to earn. But unhappy consciousness is not so powerless as it presents itself to be. For one thing, even its giving thanks is an action, despite its claims. In this thanks which pretends to renounce its own action, unhappy consciousness actually asserts itself and its power. Giving thanks is the act of unhappy consciousness that it does not avow as an act. It asserts that it itself is the unchangeable, but this causes unhappy consciousness to feel great wretchedness. Unhappy consciousness ends up getting joy out of its own unhappiness. It begins to feel defilement with all its bestial functions—and it can't escape this feeling—though this feeling of defilement actually becomes a source of pleasure. This feeling of defilement and the feeling of the poverty of its actions only exist vis-a-vis the internal relation to the unchangeable, which is not defiled and which can act efficaciously. So, a mediated relation—it can't be direct, because then they would be the same—must exist between unhappy consciousness and the unchangeable, in order for unhappy consciousness to feel as it does. This mediator is the priest, who is a forerunner of reason. The figure of the mediator within unhappy consciousness links the here and now to the internal beyond, the inessential to the essential. The priest gives advice and thus, through the priest, consciousness surrenders its own will, which divests it of its own *I*—turning consciousness into a thing and giving it an objective existence. Here, we can see the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness: the *I* is itself the objective world that we know. The subject is not apart from the world but manifests itself in the world. The *I* sees itself in the other of the world.

<C. (AA.) Reason>

"V. The Certainty and Truth of Reason"

The middle term which mediates the link between unhappy consciousness and the essential (the unchangeable beyond) is reason. Reason is the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness, the recognition that they are the same. Reason is the self at peace with the world, precisely because the self finds itself in the world, as the world. Reason is the consciousness certainty of being all reality—thus no more unhappy consciousness, no more unchangeable to worry about. Reason is the recognition that *I* is the object for *I*—thus Fichte's *I=I*, the starting point for his philosophy (a self-identical *I*, an *I* that posits itself as an *I*). But the difference between reason here and Fichte's philosophy is that reason has developed; it has a history. This is not just some pure idealism, a la Fichte and the tradition of German idealism. The result without its history is nothing. But reason begins by only asserting that it is all reality, not by comprehending this. Reason begins, in other words, as assertion of identity. Being and self-consciousness are here the same, but not as potentially being-able-to-be-compared, rather as really and truly in and for themselves. In other words, mind and reality didn't just develop in synch [as someone like Galileo—and even Descartes—claim]. Consciousness is both itself and its reality; it is not that the mind just makes reality in its own image (which would be a nondialectical way of conceiving it).

As the certainty of being all reality, reason is the category (which is the unity of self-consciousness and being). The category is pure and universal—I am everything—but it also is made up of a variety of laws. The category itself is fixed, but reason is constantly searching for the object in-itself of the category (which is not fixed). Through the category, reason appropriates the object and thus acquires its self-certainty. But this appropriation of the object never actually gets the thing-in-itself, and so reason is condemned—we see this clearly in Kant—to be a perpetual searching. But if it is a searching, then reason, which is itself all reality, cannot be all reality (or it wouldn't have to search). What reason has—its "mine"—is

empty, and it searches for something to fill it up. Reason is a desperate search which seeks but can never, qua reason, find.

{A. Observing Reason}

Reason seeks its other, but knows it there would only possess itself, so it seeks its own infinitude, to expand itself infinitely. It wants to plant a symbol of itself everywhere [like Americans planting a flag on the moon]. We try to dissect the thing, to dig into it in order to find ourselves in it, but we can never dig deep enough. The fact that reason seeks itself in things indicates that it has yet to make itself an object for consciousness. It only does this through the mediation of the thing as an object. Reason, when observing objects, enters into a unity with them, which it doesn't yet understand. It transforms the sensuous being of objects into concepts, i.e., into what is itself. It makes the form of being into the form of its own thought.

[a. Observation of Nature]

Observation is different from perception because it seeks universals, not sensuous particulars. Observing reason begins by describing one object after another and is constantly looking for new objects in nature (like the astronomer trying to discover a new planet). In every different thing, observing reason seeks its essential aspect. Observing reason's distinctions, however, don't, in the last instance, hold up, as we see with things that are chemical. The distinction between objects—what reason accomplishes with its descriptions of the things—break down into each other. This is a problem, because the object must prove reason's law and not fail to fit into it. What does not appear to reason or fit within its law is not. There is no should be; if it should be, it is. Hegel here stresses his antipathy towards the "ought" [which forms the basis of both Kant and Fichte's moral philosophy]. The actual is rational, as Hegel will later say in the *Philosophy of Right*. Everything must prove the law if the law is to be rational; otherwise, we will have a contradiction—an irrational law. Reason determines its universal laws by analogy. That is, it figures that if something is true in a great many cases, it will be true in all like cases. This kind of reasoning is faulty [as Hume made clear again and again, in his refutation of induction], but reason accepts laws with this kind of basis. In fact, this is the basis of all of reason's laws. And then observing reason tests its law with experiments to determine if the law is a concept. All experiment is an effort to free the law from its link to sensuous being (resulting from it having its origin in sensuous being). In this way, for instance, electricity gets dissociated from its appearance as lightning and acquires the universality of a natural law. All experiments aim at freeing universals, giving them an independent existence. The result of experimenting is the pure law, one freed from sensuous being. The pure law is a concept present in being, a concept which doesn't dissolve—as with inorganic nature—in its relation to an other, in its being-for-another. Thus, the object of the pure law is necessarily organic nature.

The forms of inorganic nature have a greater freedom than those of organic nature, which exist on their own account. Reason attempts to understand organisms on the basis on their environment (the structure of fishes from the water, birds from the air, etc.), but one can't derive laws in this manner, because there is nothing necessary about this relationship and thus there is no law governing it. There is, for instance, no law that says the water as a milieu must produce the scales on the fishes' bodies. The concept of the sea does not imply the concept of the structure of fishes. We only discover necessity—i.e., reason—in the end of the organism (in what it does). The organism *is* its action, what it seeks as its end, but we can only grasp this in the end itself. The organism itself has freedom insofar as it is ignorant of the necessity of its end, which is in reality driving its behavior. Observing reason distinguishes between this end and the organism in-itself, though this is a false distinction. The organism is really only its end. But reason views its self as that which comes being its beginning and its end. Reason views the activity of the organism in this middle between beginning and end as exempt from the teleological law. But this is really a devaluation of the organism, making it worse than a machine because it makes the organism outside of the law. In truth, the end of the organism doesn't fall outside of it: it is its end. Observing reason misses this, however. For it, interior and exterior are distinct, and the exterior is the expression of the interior.

Thus, observing reason looks to the outer shape in order to discover the inner (which is the concept of the organism). The inner is sensibility (the nervous system), the outer is irritability (the muscular system), and their union is reproduction, which preserves the individual and the species. Observation is able to see the laws of the inner (sensibility) and the outer (irritability) but not the laws connecting them. We can try to determine the relation between sensibility and irritability as standing in an inverse ratio of their magnitude (as one increases, the other decreases). But laws of magnitude like inverse ratios don't actually tell us anything; they are purely tautological. This is the problem with formulating laws based on purely formal antitheses. We can try to understand the shape of the organism—the unity of the inner and the outer—as its essence. But we only know this shape through anatomy, which must have a dead organism. The shape of the organism is never the shape of a living organism (which is always moving) but a dead one. The universal in the organism is in its movement, which is why observing nature can't formulate a law for organic nature. In the organism's unity, all determinations are dissolved in its movement. The organism has no inert aspects; it is pure transition or process. No law can be developed here because a law requires necessary relations, and in a pure transition the only relations are contingent ones. The organism only displays its determinateness as a flux. The solution for observing reason is to translate its perceptions about the organism into different language: an "animal with strong muscles" becomes an "animal organism of high irritability." But this tells us nothing and is merely formal. Consideration of the relation between inner and outer ends up leading us nowhere, so we turn to considering the organism from the standpoint of the outer alone.

We could consider the shape, but the fails with organic being. So we turn back to inorganic nature. (What we are really doing in considering the relation inner and outer again, this time in terms of the inorganic instead of the organic.) The inner of the shape of the inorganic is specific gravity (number). But specific gravity of an inorganic thing does not totally comprise the thing. It remains indifferent to other properties, such as the thing's cohesion. The difference in numerical quantities (specific gravity), in other words, doesn't coincide with differences in other properties. Because the properties don't relate to each other (or relate to each other only indifferently and contingently), they can't be an expression of the concept (which involves only necessary

relations). The inorganic seemed to offer some hope of comparing inner and outer, which is why we turned back to it. It has determinateness, even though this determinateness is only present as a property. The organic being, however, is a singular individual and thus pure negativity which destroys any fixed determinateness that the inorganic might have. The organic, too, has number (a magnitude), but this is indifferent to its vitality, its life. Number seems to mark the transition between the universal (genus) and the individual, but this quantitative difference is itself inessential. Thus, in organic life, the universal and the individual are indifferent to each other. We don't find a universal individual in organic nature, as we do among humans, because there is nothing to mediate the gap between universal and individual. Consequently, organic nature, unlike consciousness, has no system. The whole is not present in individuals. This means that we can't discover the concept in organic nature; all we can do is make clever remarks and indicate interesting connections.

[b. Observation of self-consciousness in its purity and in its relation to external actuality. Logical and psychological laws]

The universal now is life itself, the flux of organic life. Because life is process, formal laws get called into question, and reason has to turn back on itself and its formal laws (because of their inadequacy in grasping life as flux). They have content (unlike the laws of the understanding), but the specificity of their content prevents them from acting as absolutes for reason. The problem is not that they are formal, but that they are pure content (just observing itself, and observing, as Hegel says, is not knowing). The laws of thought are part of the discipline of psychology, which tries to derive the individual from her cultural milieu. Culture, state, and other apparatuses form the individual in a certain mold. The individual is culturally created. But this creation is not what makes the individual—it is rather how she reacts against/with her culture. The individual either accepts the influx from the culture or resists. This is the measure of individuality. Influence itself isn't determinative; it is either accepted or rejected. This is why the culturalist psychological laws tell us nothing. Observing reason tries to say that the environment produced this individual, but this environment isn't environment in general (otherwise all individuals would be alike, not individual); rather, it is the environment of that individual, that individual's environment. This is tautology.

[c. Observation of the relation of self-consciousness to its immediate actuality. Physiognomy and Phrenology]

Observation must turn to the individual, now that we see that the environment *is* the individual's own. We look for an expression of individuality and find it in the body. The look of the body (physiognomy) expresses the inner without being made into an otherness (like labor), i.e., into something both for us and for others. The shape of the body is at the same time the determination of nature and what one has made oneself. It unites what is inherited or innate and what is individual. Speech and work, on the other hand, express the inner both too much (being directly the inner) and too little (becoming something beyond the particular individual who acted). Our words and our work can always be misconstrued and made into something not ours. Not so our body. Palmistry takes the hand as the expression of what the individual does and finds her there. But the organ (the hand) or the handwriting (which is examined) is not the final expression of the individual, only a mediation, a middle term, between the inner and its expression. The physiognomist looks to the expression on an individual's face and discerns her character. The mistake in this is to take the expression as an immediate expression. An expression can be feigned. It is not itself a deed, which cannot be feigned (because even the feigning itself is a deed). The physiognomist focuses on potentialities of character—what an individual could or might be. It discerns intentions, but intention is inessential. An individual *is* her deed. The deed is the realization of being; it resolves all questions about what the individual what it means is its action, whereas the physiognomist gets caught up in what is meant and never gets beyond this. This is the refutation of physiognomy (which sees in the form of the body what self-consciousness really means). The deed eliminates all speculation about the true inexpressible essence by giving expression to something. This inexpressible itself only exists insofar as we don't go behind the curtain and look for it. Any consideration of the inexpressible—what is meant—is pure conjecture, and is as liable to be right as the housewife who says that it always rains when I do my washing.

Phrenology takes the outer aspect as a mere thing. We locate spirit in the skull, because this is where the living brain must display itself (in the dead skull). The shape of each is not necessarily related to the other. The brain has the determination of being-for-self, but the skull has the determination of existence. The skull, in other words, is (objective). This outer existence is indifferent to spirit, and yet it houses spirit. The brain, as a physical entity, isn't spirit, and yet it is. Spirit is a bone. The immediate existence of spirit is the skull-bone which in which it is condemned to manifest itself. This is the true insight of phrenology. The skull-bone reminds us of our immediate being. But we can't discover anything determinate from phrenology (like a correlation between bumps and specific mental properties). Spirit is itself indifferent to the formations of the skull. The bump on the skull, according to phrenology, indicates an original disposition—an ought. But what ought to be and isn't has no reality. Every ought affirms both itself and its opposite, so the particular bump provides us no determinateness whatsoever (which is what the concept demands). The phrenologist regards the bone of a person—the material undergirding of the subject—as all of their reality. The proper response would be to beat in the skull of the phrenologist, in order to show him that, for a person, the bone itself is nothing (that something far more is at stake). Still, the phrenologist has a key insight—so close, yet so far. The being of spirit is a bone, an object. That is the recognition that unhappy consciousness comes to when it made itself into a thing. Self-consciousness is itself a thing. This is the great insight of reason. Once this has been recognized, reason can no longer be content with pure observation, because its object is explicitly itself. Nonetheless, spirit is forced to manifest itself in a dead object, as the organ of urination is the same as that of procreation. This is nature's approximation of the concept, which shows the identity of the highest and the lowest. But Hegel sees a fundamental limitation in phrenology's claim that "spirit is a bone," because it reduces the transcendence of spirit to its material origin. This position is impossible to refute, so one must, Hegel jokes, smash the head of the phrenologist in order to prove to this fraud that spirit really is more than just a bone.

{B. The Actualization of Rational Self-Consciousness Through Its Own Activity}

Self-consciousness now is aware of being in itself objective reality. It sees itself in the object, thanks to phrenology. But active reason is only aware of itself, at first, as an individual, not yet as spirit. Reason is the individual's activity, but this only takes place in the medium of an entire nation, not isolated from it or in opposition to it. Thus, our satisfaction is dependent on others, just as theirs is on us. We share customs with other individuals, which tells us that in making ourselves into things, we retain our being-for-self. In antiquity, all that was required was pure obedience to the law, because spirit did not yet reflect on itself (and thus know itself). There was no conception of the individual (or individual freedom) in antiquity, which is why the only task for the subject was obedience to the law. In antiquity, due to the absence of the free individual, the law appears as something given, not something coming from oneself. But today, once an individual becomes aware of herself as individual, the unity with the spirit as the given law is lost. Thus, the individual places itself in opposition to customs and the law. The truth is on the side of the I. The individual seeks its happiness in an ethical substance, which it has not yet found. Self-consciousness feels the pain of this divorce from ethical substance which it looks for. It feels on its own, in opposition to the given actuality. It tries to realize itself, through action, in order to recover its happiness. Only in the state governed by reason is this action possible. There, individuality becomes a self-expression. Finally, in the reason-governed state, that self-expression is consistent with the laws of the state. [Here we see the distance between Hegel's conception of freedom and the standard liberal conception, which thinks of freedom as the ability to do what one wants. Hegel sees genuine freedom as possible only through the state that constitutes the individual as a free subject. Freedom outside of the state would be unthinkable for him.]

[a. Pleasure and Necessity]

The problem at this point is that self-consciousness is aware of being all objective reality, but that awareness is completely within the mind: it has yet to be realized in actual existence, in an objective being. The desire of self-consciousness is to not conquer or destroy otherness, but to make objectivity, which as long as it is other is unreal, the same reality as itself, to take it in. Self-consciousness takes up everything for itself and enjoys it. Self-consciousness, in other words, here eats everything. In attaining its pleasure, self-consciousness becomes objective to itself. Self-consciousness is here hedonistic, but this hedonism contains its own negation within itself, because this type of pleasure reveals its own smallness in its consumption. In its relentless consumption, self-consciousness becomes aware that it is never satisfied. Nothing is ever enough, and necessity or fate represents a limit to this endless striving after more to consume. So, the hedonist feels most painfully the sting of necessity (of death). This creates a feeling of dread which follows closely after hedonism [thus, perhaps, the apocalyptic dread we see today is the product of late capitalism and its culture of consumption]. Pure individual pleasure alienates because it represents a contentless freedom; the hedonist feels the weight of necessity predominating his pleasure. Existing just for pleasure leaves one lifeless. And self-consciousness feels the meaninglessness of the individual--caused by an attempt to find realization in this way. Self-consciousness feels the command to enjoy itself as an alien imperative, in which it loses itself. It experiences itself as necessity.

[b. The law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit]

This necessity which self-consciousness feels within itself is felt as the law of the heart. It is the universality of law combined with being inner (thus the name). It is a kind of synthesis of pleasure and necessity. Self-consciousness is confronted by a world which is other, a real world, in which its law is not realized (because it is only a law of the heart). No longer seeking a purely individual pleasure, the law of the heart seeks the pleasure of all humanity. The law of the heart feels the ordering of the world as something which oppresses individuals and does violence to them. The external order is an obstacle in the way of the law of the heart, which, once established, would ensure the pleasure of all. The law of the heart proclaims constantly its interest in the welfare of all humanity, whereas it condemns the existing external law as false precisely insofar as it is divorced from the heart. The heart itself is even more important than necessity. However, if the law of the heart gets carried out—actualized—everything changes. As an actuality, it never remains the law of the heart. Through its actualization it acquires being and becomes universal. As universal, it no longer belongs to the particular individual—as the law of the subject's own heart. In realizing its own law of the heart, the individual thus becomes universal. (When you win, you lose in the game of the law of the heart.) The law of the individual becomes that of the community of individuals—a plurality. This forces self-consciousness to cease seeing itself as individual—because its laws become per force universals.

Then, each law of the heart competes with every other one for hegemony—creating frenzy and chaos. But in addition to the contradiction between different laws of the heart, there is the even greater contradiction of the actualization of the law of the heart making it into a universal and thus something distanced from the heart. This creates a madness, the result of what is taken to be essential (the heart) being shown to be completely inessential. Thus, the law of the heart turns into the fanatic on the street corner, raving about the universal order as a perversion of the law of the heart (without recognizing the complicity of this position in the perversion). The truth of this law of the heart is always only the intended; any attempt to test or actualize this law invalidates it. But the whole point of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to see what a position is when we make it actual. With the law of the heart, actualization is self-destruction. Recognizing this contradiction, self-consciousness must come to see the public law or ordinance as its own (a law of all hearts), but this law is, as the raving fanatic said, a perversion of the law of the heart. The public law is the result of competing individual laws. In this society, there is a constant war between individual laws of the heart, and individuality contradicts itself because it must oppose itself to individuality when it attacks another law of the heart. Individuality thus comes to see itself as the problem. Hence, individuality itself must be sacrificed in order to remedy the perversion of the law. The self-sacrifice is virtue, which sets itself against the competing self-interests which have become the way of the world. The self-sacrifice of virtue resolves the contradiction of the law of the heart by abandoning the self, which was the stumbling block for the law of the heart.

[c. Virtue and the way of the world]

Virtue knows the chaos of individualism, and thus agrees to satisfy its individuality in the terms of the universal. Virtue sacrifices the self for the sake of the society. Though its self-sacrifice, it opposes itself to the way of the world, in which individuals only seek their own pleasure and enjoyment. Virtue opposes universal interest to self-interest, in hopes of stemming the perversion. Consciousness (as virtue) has now grasped the necessity of the universal law, but it remains only a blind necessity. The universal is true for virtue only on the basis of virtue's faith. Virtue hasn't determined universality from itself but only assumed it as a necessity. And virtue only wills the good (the universal law); it doesn't accomplish it, but merely continues without end its opposition to the way of the world. Virtue demands giving up individuality for the sake of the universal, but it constantly sees failures of virtue everywhere, which it inveighs against.

This is a perverted process of the universal. Virtue wants to perfect the world, but it is still set up as opposed to it—the alienation remains. Virtue says that the universal is good, but yet wants to hold up an ideal to work toward—so it contradicts itself, because it is disconnected from the world. Hegel's critique of virtue is a critique of all reformers, who want to better the world through the demand for self-sacrifice but fail to see how their position really involves an investment in virtue for the sake of virtue, not for the sake of what it will bring about when actualized. Virtue doesn't want to win because it wants to remain virtuous. This is its contradiction, the contradiction that damns projects of reform. The knight of virtue thus engages in a sham-fight against the way of the world, a fight which will never involve the sacrifice of virtue itself (which would make it a real, serious fight), because what virtue values is its self-sacrifice. In other words, virtue will sacrifice everything but its own self-sacrifice, like the self-sacrificing parent willing to give up everything but the position of giving up everything. Because virtue fights a sham-fight, the way of the world always wins.

Virtue is just virtuous talk, talk which doesn't accomplish anything save inflating self-consciousness in its own eyes. Virtue can never make itself clear because it is completely inward; it sacrifices itself, rather than actualizing itself. This refusal to actualize itself is the cardinal sin in Hegel's eyes. And in sacrificing individuality, virtue loses all chance of bringing the good into existence. It is only through individuality—which is an actualization—that what exists only in principle (the universal) is realized. Here, the importance of individuality for Hegel is quite clear, despite all the critics who accuse him of neglecting the individual altogether. The individuality of the way of the world—which seemed to be individuals acting only in their self-interest—is actually more on the side of the universal than virtue. The individuals of the way of the world actually work for the realization of the universal while pursuing their self-interest. This is the point where Hegel takes up an idea from Adam Smith, articulated in his famous book *The Wealth of Nations*. For Smith, capitalism involves individuals benefiting the whole by pursuing their own private interests. This is the position that Hegel calls the way of the world, and he finds it superior to that of virtue because, despite not consciously thinking about the universal, it does actually act rather than insist on its own virtue.

{C. Individuality Which Takes Itself To Be Real In and For Itself}

Reason now has grasped the interfusion of universal and individual—individual as the realization of the universal. Reason has now ceased to look at ideals, and looks now at actualization. Action no longer involves opposition or an other, but only itself. This means that objective truth is no longer divided from subjective certainty, because the separation between self and world that is acted upon has been overcome. Action changes nothing; it is simply manifestation of what is already there.

[a. The spiritual animal kingdom and deceit, or the “matter in hand” itself]

Action is that by which an individual knows itself, makes itself actual. The concept of this individuality is a result (of an action). Even though individuality appears originally as something determinate (given by nature), this is not a limitation for consciousness, because this limitation of original determinateness is overcome through action. The original determinateness is just the milieu in which the action takes place—a kind of necessary background to it—and its importance is completely dissolved in the action. Action simply translates a being that is initially implicit into something explicit. Without acting, an individual cannot know what it is: the deed allows the individual to be for-itself, to take itself as an object of knowledge. The act is thus everything about the individual. Once it has been accomplished, it retroactively determines everything about that individual. To demand that individuals act other than they do is to demand that they be other persons. But because the act has such weight for the individual, it seems that beginning to act would be very difficult, since only in the end do we grasp what we were in the beginning. This is really a false problem, however, as Hegel sees it. Just jump in and act; wherever one begins will always be the correct beginning, because the end is already there in the choice of the beginning (so there is nothing contingent about the beginning, no need to fret about it [in the way that the obsessional neurotic does]).

Since every deed expresses an individuality, there is no such thing, then, as a bad deed—because this involves invalid comparisons to the deeds of others (and thus moving beyond the individual itself). The individual's world is her product; she has made this world [just like the woman by the sea in the Wallace Stevens's “The Idea of Order at Key West”]. Thus, guilt over actions makes no sense at all; one can only legitimately find joy in one's deeds, because there one finds oneself. What is more, one cannot even rightly lament the state of the world, as it is the individual's own product. Whatever happens to the individual is something that it has done itself. Through work (action), the individual universalizes itself, and what was particular becomes universal (for-others). In the work, the original nature of the I which performs the work is dissolved into something which has a reality for everyone (and everyone makes of it what they will). Thus, the work appears to the I as an alien reality. So, individuality realizes itself in its work, but at the same time vanishes in that work. Work is the objectification of consciousness, but it also exposes consciousness, reveals it. Consciousness becomes what it is in truth, and its empty concept of itself (its ideals, for instance) vanishes. Everything vanishes in the completed work, even the means chosen to accomplish it. The individual willing that led to the accomplishment of the work vanishes, which means that there is a divorce between doing and being, between willing and achieving (because willing here only has a contingent relation to achieving). In other words, I might have

done a certain deed for the right reason, but then again I might not have, and whatever reason I had ends up not mattering in the face of the accomplished deed itself, because the deed is everything.

But this experience of the contingency of purpose is itself only a contingent experience. The importance of the work is only for-consciousness, and it vanishes in consciousness. In this vanishing, there is also a vanishing of the vanishing (the willing that disappeared in the action). The work is only for-consciousness, and as such it is true work, which is the unity of doing and being. This unity is indifferent to a contingent failure of unity. It is the heart of the matter for the individual—the individual's thing. The thing is the "matter in hand" of consciousness, what each individual consciousness concerns itself with. Whether the thing is accomplished or not, consciousness honestly concerns itself with its thing. In the matter in hand, all particular moments are abandoned—means, end, action, and reality all dissolve into the single matter in hand or thing. The matter in hand is a kind of universal genus, which has all those moments as predicates. Everything here brings satisfaction because it is self-produced (similar to the disobedient children who are happy to be punished simply because they have triggered the punishment and it is thus their own doing).

We can here distinguish between good and bad, with bad being only what is no work at all. But the problem is that this act of simply declaring all reality to be the result of my action becomes a way of not accomplishing my work. Consciousness is always busy, but never really in earnest about its action because it always knows that its result will be its own, whatever that may be. Though the individual is here "honest consciousness"—trying to realize its thing even if it hasn't—this honesty isn't as honest as it pretends. There is a contradiction between the individual action and what results from it. Whenever the individual claims that her action is universal—for the matter in hand—we can see that it is really just done to display their own action, not the matter in hand. And conversely, when an individual claims to be acted solely for itself, it is unknowingly working for the universal. By the very act of bringing something into the light of day, the individual is proclaiming its universality and that it is not done just for themselves. Thus, the claim "I'm just doing it for me" is always, for Hegel, a lie, even if it may be an unconscious one. The matter in hand is immediately for others, and well as for the individual. Therefore, consciousness learns, through its work, that it is not purely subjective—or individualized—but implicated in the social. Its matter in hand or thing becomes, in this way, a moral imperative. All are entitled to share in it; it is for everyone, but still for everyone as individuals, not as spirit. The moral imperative is the result of the contradiction between the individuality of the matter at hand and its necessarily universal actualization. The moral law renders the universality explicit.

[b. Reason as lawgiver]

The individual remains, but becomes a universal self. Its thing is now something universal—the moral law. And reason knows the moral law immediately; it knows what is right and good. The first imperative we discover is that "everyone ought to speak the truth." Hegel focuses on what Kant emphasizes in his discussion of the moral imperative. But we quickly see that this imperative violates itself, because it doesn't say what it really means (which is that everyone should speak the truth *if* they know the truth). But if we add this corrective to the imperative, we make it something relative and particular, taking away its universality. Its content, which is supposed to be necessary, becomes entirely contingent upon the knowledge of the individual. The second commandment—"love thy neighbor as thyself"—is even more flawed. We need to add that we should love the neighbor *intelligently*, in a way that actually does the neighbor some good. But the most substantial beneficence is that of the state, in contrast with which my individual beneficence is worthless. Hence, this imperative about loving thy neighbor is just a recipe for sentiment. It doesn't have any effect in actuality, which is why we cannot find it satisfying. Even active love of the neighbor is nothing in the face of the power of the state; it's feckless. Acts of individual charity to my neighbor are also utterly contingent. They can be immediately undone; they can backfire; they can help at the wrong time; etc. All ethical imperatives fail because they stop at the "ought." Hegel is here attacking Kant's ethics, showing how it is enmeshed in intractable contradictions when it tries to determine positive content. So, this ethical position must become purely formal. As such, Kant's categorical imperative is just a tester of maxims; it has no positive content.

[c. Reason as testing laws]

The universal no longer imposes itself on the content of its laws, but is merely formal. It compares the content of each law with itself and considers whether it is tautological. Thus, one content becomes just as acceptable as another, because the essence of ethics is just the law being identical with itself. Kant's prohibition against stealing, for instance, never accounts for the ground assumptions made: namely, it requires that one accept private property as a given. And in themselves, when we developed them as concepts, both the idea of private property and the idea of non-property (or communal property) are self-contradictory. Possession, for instance, contradicts the universality of thinghood. But if we just take property as simple, it isn't self-contradictory; however, in this case, the law fits every case equally well and ceases to really be a law anymore. It is law as pure tautology: because one has property, one should not steal, because this would undermine the idea of property. This law tells us only what is self-evident, but not whether or not we should have property in the first place. Both law-giving and law-testing are just developed forms of "honest consciousness," which tries its best to do what's right. But all the content for this right is given in advance by the human world in which we live, and it is given not just as an "ought" but as something which *is* valid. These are the laws we sense immediately to be true—the givens of our human world. (What Antigone sees as the unwritten laws of the gods.) Right here is absolute and steadfast. There is no doubt about it, and it doesn't need to be tested by individual reason.

<(BB.) Spirit>

"VI. Spirit"

Reason becomes spirit when it becomes aware of being all reality and all the world, and the world being all of it. Spirit is the transcendence of the purely individual into the universal. Spirit is the actuality of ethical substance. As substance, it is

self-identical; however, it doesn't yet know itself as subject. Everything form of consciousness before spirit has been an abstraction. The shapes of spirit are not merely shapes of consciousness—as the previous ones were—but actualities. Spirit is an actuality, a living ethical world (and not just a product of consciousness).

{A. The True Spirit. The Ethical Order}

Spirit is divided into its universal essence and its individualized reality, because though it is a realized essence, this realization requires individual action. The universal raises the individual's action to the level of the ethical, while the individual lowers the universal into its realized end. Spirit's ethical order is thus divided into a divine (universal) and a human (individual) law, which together make it up.

[a. The ethical world. Human and Divine Law: Man and Woman]

The simple substance of spirit as ethical is divided into an antithesis of universality and individuality. As a substance, spirit is a nation, and as a consciousness, it is the citizens of the nation. This consciousness embodied in the citizens is the universality of known, human law. This ethical power is clearly manifest in the nation—and is opposed to individual being-for-self. Thus, the manifest human law comes into conflict with the hidden, inner divine law. This law is present in the family, which insists upon the particular against that human law which works for only the universal. The immediate consciousness of self in other takes place in the family. It is the first ethical situation. What binds the family together is its concern for preserving the individual—not love or economics. The community demands that the individual for universality and thus has a negative relation to the family. The family and community are at odds, as individual and universal. It is at the point when the individual gets submerged into pure universality—at the time of her death, a complete loss of individuality—that the family insists upon the family member's individuality, through honoring the dead. This is precisely what Antigone insists upon for her brother. The family transforms the death from something that happened to the person—a natural occurrence—into something done or accomplished. In this way death becomes the supreme work of the individual. Without the familial recognition of this death, it would just be an empty loss of individuality in the universal—something purely negative. The destruction becomes, instead, something that the family does. This duty to the dead is the divine law, which Hegel sees as accomplished through the great figure of Antigone.

Government, on the other hand, is constantly reminding the family that it only exists as a part of a larger whole (something family tries to deny to itself). War is universal's way of reminding the individual (and the family) of its dependence. Hegel, for this reason, sees an ethical dimension to war: it reminds us of the basis of our subjectivity in the community, of the priority of the community over the individual. Spirit uses war to break up the attempt to return to a natural (i.e., non-spiritual) existence, an existence without a universal law or a community in which that law is manifest. The divine law of the family, however, is on its own side beset with some problems. The child is the realization of the parents—and thus their passing away, being transcended. The husband/wife relation therefore has its actualization in an alien reality (the child). The bond between brother and sister, however, doesn't have this alienation, which makes it the ultimate bond [such as the one between Antigone and Polyneices, as well as the bond between Hegel and his sister Christiane.] In the family, the divine law is upheld by women. Men have an ethical commitment to the community as well as to the family (to the human as well as divine law), so it is only the woman who wholly embodies the divine law represented by the family. The wife has an ethical relation to the husband and to her children, but this ethical obligation is universal, an obligation regardless of the particularity of the husband and the children (and if she had new ones, she would have the same obligation to them). The sister's bond to the brother, however, is not indifferent to particularity because the sister sees herself in the brother. The brother must leave the ethical life of the family for the ethical life that is "conscious of itself and actual"—that of the community—and thus enters the realm of human law. The sister remains the guardian of the divine law and the family's ethical life. The man gives up the enjoyment of his individuality in the family in order to attain his self-consciousness as a citizen. The divine and the human law mutually authenticate each other, and the union of man and woman binds them together. Ethics is no longer found lying at hand by the individual, but now realized by self-consciousness, because that self-consciousness is not limited to the individual. Both man and woman each have their part to play in this ethical substance.

[b. Ethical action. Human and Divine Knowledge. Guilt and Destiny]

Each individual in this ethical substance has their particular role to play within the universal. Human right is now determined not by the individual, but by the community as such. This lack of isolation means that there is no mediation between the universal and the individual. Each individual knows their ethical duty immediately, and the two laws seem to exist as complementary. But everything changes when they are acted upon; then, the contradictions become apparent, even to the spirit itself. The ethical community leads to contradiction when one acts within it. Ethical consciousness here is entirely certain of what it must do—no debating or weighing options. We can see this is the decisiveness that characters act with in the tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Ethical consciousness, when it acts, collides with the other ethical consciousness—as Antigone collides with Creon. However, consciousness *thinks* it is colliding with reality the stubbornness of reality rather than an opposed ethical consciousness, precisely because it believes itself the only ethical position (since it is not at all self-doubting about its position). Ethical consciousness thus always realizes itself in a deed, but this deed is always a crime, conflicting with one law or another (divine or human, which are always at odds with each other). It violates one of the laws because it is necessarily one-sided. It can never be innocent, involved as it is in an either/or situation, where whatever side it's on always offends the other side. No deed can carry out the ethical demands of both (divine and human) laws due to divine law insisting on the family as right and human law insisting on the society as the ultimate basis for right. To value one absolutely is not to value the other. But the ethical consciousness never sees its own guilt while it is acting, only afterwards (like Oedipus at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannus*

or throughout *Oedipus at Colonus*). The suffering which follows from the deed forces ethical consciousness to acknowledge that it has erred. [This is certainly true for Oedipus, but definitely *not* for Antigone, who seems to who Hegel is thinking of through much of this. Antigone never doubts that she has acted rightly.]

Both sides end up destroying each other, and absolute right is accomplished with the destruction and guilt of both sides. In this way, destiny asserts its claim. The problem is that the community (human law), even when it triumphs over the family and the individual (divine law), ends up losing, because it has its basis, though it doesn't know this, in divine law. If the community fails to recognize the right of the family, families will cease to recognize its human law, and the community needs the families to supply it with citizens. The community only sustains itself by absorbing families. When families (i.e., individuals) begin to get rebellious, the community uses war to acquaint the individual with its own worthlessness and also with its importance to the preservation of the whole (which the individual is fighting for). Thus, war seems to work in two contradictory directions in assisting the community assert its right over the individual. But once it engages in war, the ethical community participates in its own downfall. If it triumphs, it is only for contingent or natural reasons—like the bravery of its individual warriors, its greater natural resources, etc. War is never an ethical struggle. In war, the ethical nation only preserves itself through luck. It loses its determinateness and thus ceases to be a living spirit. Ethical substance falls apart due to its own contradiction: it needs war to assert its priority over the family and individual, but war ends up being the death of ethical substance. It survives war only by chance.

[c. Legal Status]

This lifeless spirit created by the destruction of ethical substance is nothing but a mass of disconnected and equal persons (with *person* understood as a term of legal status only). The individual withdraws in itself and becomes a personality. Each person is just an atom, without connection to others. This is the liberal conception of the person as isolated from all others, with the connection only existing externally. This position involves an independence of consciousness relative to the world. The concept of legal rights is actually a flight from reality—in the manner of stoicism. But now stoicism's flight from reality is itself actualized, made real, in the form of the person with legal rights. Like the stoic, each *person* is empty, contentless, and is living a wholly contingent existence. The person is recognized as a person regardless of the content of their character. This group of individuals can only be bound by another individual (a lord or emperor) who holds all the authority. But this lord is merely a formal self as well, and so can't control the powers that it has. The lord lives a wholly excessive existence, and the lord's only relation to its subjects is a negative one (destroying them). All the subjects are bound to the lord, though they only have a negative relation to this lord as well as to each other. But at least as person an actuality of self has developed which was not present in the merely ethical substance of spirit in its immediacy. Ethical substance is here alienated from itself and thus appears for the first time as subject. But the individual—seen in the form of pure abstraction as *person*—has become completely inessential, though legal status meant to make the individual essential. Legal status produces the opposite of what it proclaims about itself and thereby dissolves as a possibility.

{B. Self-Alienated Spirit. Culture}

Self-consciousness now confronts the world (which is spiritual, i.e., its own work, the product of self-consciousness itself) as something alien. Self-consciousness doesn't find its own individual realization in the real world. This world, which is the product of self-consciousness itself, seems like violence inflicted from outside it (even though it isn't, in reality). Since self-consciousness has a double relation to this world—as its own work and as something alien—it must conceive the real order as something false and inessential, and the essential ethical order as a beyond. This is a move akin to the breaking up of ethical substance into divine and human law. This pure beyond exists not actually but for faith. The actual world, in contrast, becomes the world of pure intellectual insight and then Enlightenment, which opposes itself to faith and the world of the beyond.

/I. The World of Self-Alienated Spirit/

There are two worlds of spirit—its world of self-alienation (reality) and its unalienated, essential world (the beyond). This other world is at this point only an other to self-alienated spirit, and so only faith (an escape from the real world), not yet religion, which is the self-consciousness of the absolute. Faith fails to rise to the level of religion because it sees the beyond as an escape from the real world rather than as the site of the transcendence that belongs to this real world, which is what religion understands.

[a. Culture and its realm of reality]

Self-consciousness is only real insofar as it alienates itself from itself. Alienation is not a miserable fact to be avoided but the fundamental gesture of self-consciousness. The existence of the world of culture is dependent upon this self-alienation of self-consciousness. Culture thus becomes the measure of the spirit's reality—the more cultured, the less natural, the more real. Through culture, an individual acquires a certain standing within the spiritual world, a standing that is not immediate as is legal right. This is why culture is more concrete than legal right. Culture's contradiction itself resolves that of legal right. One's standing must be acquired through the mediation of culture. One becomes cultured by setting aside the natural. Getting away from nature thus becomes a getting to spirit's real existence. Moving away from is really a moving toward. Individuality is not rooted in natural characteristics, but in the actual existence of the universal. Without the universal—in its particular, natural existence—individuality is unrealized and thus purely imaginary. There is no natural individuality, for Hegel. Culture is precisely this process of actualization. Though it first appears as something alien which must be learned or acquired, self-consciousness proceeds to make culture its own through its acculturation. Thus, the self only knows itself in culture as a transcended self. The life of spirit is, for Hegel, a life of constant disruption and alienation. Each moment of spiritual life stirs its opposite into

existence and equally receives its own existence from that opposite. Thinking tries to arrest this constant disruption and movement by calling essences either “good” or “bad,” but essences do not remain fixed in this way—thus rendering such judgments obsolete the minute they are rendered. We call the aspect of spirit which endures and is constant “good,” and we call that essence which is nothing in-itself “bad.”

In terms of the spiritual community, state power (the absolute foundation of the community) is good, and wealth is bad (because it is the assertion of particularity over universality). But the judgment against wealth is premature. Wealth, though pursued out of self-interest, actually does benefit the whole and not just the particular self-interest. [Here again, Hegel shows the influence of Adam Smith and the notion of the invisible hand of the market developed in the *Wealth of Nations*.] Whatever work is done to create wealth cannot but also benefit the community as well as the individual. This shows the judgment of wealth as “bad” to be incorrect. The judgment is also relative, because, from the perspective of the individual, state power is restrictive and thus bad, whereas wealth offers enjoyment. The point is that we can judge both state power and wealth both ways. Once we see the judgments as relative, what becomes important is the attitude one takes up toward both state power and wealth. One can take up a relation of equality or disparity: either one is like them or one is not like them. If one is like them, one is noble consciousness. If one is not, one is ignoble or base consciousness (because there is a disparity between consciousness and essence).

Noble consciousness is conscious of being itself the essence of the substance it confronts in the judgment. It is thus the heroism of service, sacrificing its individuality for universal, acting for the interests of the ruling power. But this heroism of service is only manifest in noble consciousness offering advice or counsel to state power. What is offered or sacrificed isn’t something essential, but something inessential. All it really offers is chatter about the general good, but not anything really essential. This is just self-interest in the guise of universal interest. One must always be suspicious of its counsel, and it is always on the verge of revolt, because it hasn’t wholly or essentially committed itself, keeping its particularity in reserve.

The only true sacrifice of the individual self to the universal would be in death. The death of noble consciousness shows that it really was noble. But language must accomplish the sacrifice explicit in death. In language, the I comes into being as a being-for-others, as having a real existence and as a universal self-consciousness. Speech begets universality. When one is heard, one becomes a universal self and no longer a pure for-itself. Speech teaches each self-consciousness the importance of mediation for their existence. Language is the middle term between state power and self-sacrificing noble consciousness. However, only one side of this unity is a self—the side of noble consciousness—and hence all the speech which shapes the relation between the two comes from that side. In this way, silent service and self-sacrifice develops into service through flattery. This flattery simply speaks the name of the monarch; it is constantly telling the monarch who the monarch is, that she or he is the monarch. Through this constant praise, the monarch finds reassurance of an identity as monarch. But the monarch’s name also isolates this figure. State power becomes nothing but the monarch’s name, and the real power exists in the interests which surround the monarch—in wealth. Hegel’s insistence on the powerless of the monarch, of the reduction of the monarch to a bare name, anticipates his thesis about the role of the monarch in the *Philosophy of Right* in 1820, where the monarch does nothing but dot the i’s and cross the t’s of the state constitution.

When noble consciousness acts like it is sacrificing itself for the universal, it is really aiming for elevating its own self-interest. It gains control over state power through wealth. The problem with wealth, however, is that it is an inessential being-for-self with no intrinsic worth of its own. It is only essential as a being-for-another (when it is used to buy things). The spirit of wealth is able to become universal through sacrificing itself, but, nonetheless, what it makes essence is something inessential, without any being for-itself. In this way, the language of wealth is like the language of flattery. Everything gets inverted in language: good becomes bad and bad becomes good. This world of inversion is the world of culture. In the world of pure culture, everything is the opposite of what it seems. Everything spirit might say about itself in the world of culture is a self-perversion. Spirit, however, expresses itself here in its mockery or derision of every judgment. This is wit, which thrives on saying the opposite of what is meant. Everything that is said can get turned around into its opposite; there is nothing unequivocal, beyond the reach of the perversion of language. At this point, the initial judging function of culture completely falls apart. We can no longer employ the judgments “good” or “bad” because they are quickly turned into their opposites. What appears as good ends up being bad, and vice versa. The plain mind with its simple morality thus has no real recourse against this perverted consciousness. It can respond only with isolated anecdotes of the good and the noble. The problem with supplying anecdotes in this way is that goodness and nobility are thereby isolated from the universal: this is a severe indictment of the community as a whole, showing its bankruptcy. But the plain mind needn’t worry: the spirit of culture dissolves itself. It ends up turning in on itself in self-mockery and self-derision. Culture makes everything—including itself—into a contradiction, and thus expresses truth. Every pursuit becomes vain for culture. It recognizes the vanity of power and wealth, but it continues to pursue them anyway. Culture is thus a kind of fetishistic disavowal.

[b. Faith and pure insight]

Culture—the self-alienation of spirit—is at this point alienated from itself (through its turning the proclivity for internal contradiction). There is now beyond the alienated real world a world of pure thought (from which the world looks alienated). What is essential thus lies beyond the actual world, but it is not just an essence in thought (like that of stoicism). Though beyond the actual, it is an actual essence. This essence is the faith of culture. Faith here is not yet religion, because though it is essential, it does not yet have an actual existence. Faith is the positivity of culture rather than a development within religion. It has a content, but it has no insight into that content. All the insight lies on the other side, in the position that opposes faith. Faith has just taken over the content of culture, which is not faith’s own content, a content for-itself. Insight is relegated to the other side of culture, the negative side, and it manifests itself as pure insight or pure thought. This pure insight has no positive content of its own; it is wholly negative. All the content lies on the side of faith. What pure insight has in common with faith is

that both are pure and both are a retreat from the actual world of culture (which is hopelessly corrupt and contradictory) into a world of pure consciousness. The turn to pure insight and faith is an attempt to find a way beyond the contradiction that upends the position of culture.

Both faith and pure insight share a similar development: each begins in-itself, then develops in antithesis to the actual world, and then is related in pure consciousness to the other. For the object of faith, this three-stage development can be seen in the progression from Father to Son to Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a return of the eternal substance of faith to itself, but a return as knowing spirit (or subject). Faith is itself the essence of spirit, while pure insight is the self or subject of spirit. This is why they come relate to each other in the figure of the Holy Spirit, wherein the object of faith attains knowledge of itself. Pure insight is driven to make itself universal, to make everything that exists into the concept, to leave nothing in existence outside of the concept. In other words, pure insight wants to make a world in which everything real is rational. In the realm of pure insight, individuals become important insofar as they are universalized—that is, educated. Pure Insight tells every self-consciousness to be for themselves what they are in themselves; this means that they should be reasonable.

/II. Enlightenment/

The particular enemy of pure insight is faith. It promises to eliminate all confusion and blindness which are the result of faith. Pure insight only becomes active—and only remains necessary—insofar as it struggles with belief. Pure insight needs a content for its argumentation because it itself is contentless. Like stoicism, which needs the external world that it despises for its entire content, pure insight gains its content from faith. So it turns out that pure insight needs the enemy which it so vociferously condemns. When it wins, it loses and becomes completely unnecessary.

[a. The struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition]

Both faith and pure insight are pure consciousness. Their opposition is a purely formal one. Pure insight has no content of its own, because whatever content it has at any moment in continually vanishing as pure insight takes up a negative relation towards it. Pure insight's content is faith: it sees the priests as the deceivers of the masses. The priests, in turn, are only the tools of despots in power. [This description of pure insight's critique operates exactly like the Marxist critique of religion and all ideology in general.] Pure insight's critique is effective because it operates stealthily, like an infection. It pushes reason into everything, and forces faith to begin to defend itself uses reason, at which time pure insight has defeated the enemy from within. But the problem with pure insight is that the only attitude it can take towards anything is a negative one—and this includes itself. Pure insight must adopt a negative attitude toward pure insight. Its negativity is absolute, which means that it contains its otherness within itself. We can see this in the contention of pure insight that only what is rational is actual. What isn't rational—what isn't pure insight—is not. So when pure insight believes it is attacking an other, it is really attacking itself, insofar as it does not acknowledge the existence of an other to itself. Since for it knowledge and object of knowledge are the same thing, pure insight can never condemn something as a lie, because it would be condemning itself.

Nonetheless, Enlightenment does condemn error, specifically it condemns faith as error. It accuses faith of taking for an absolute being what is only a product of its own consciousness. Enlightenment views God as a pure projection of self-consciousness. But this charge against faith is actually true about Enlightenment itself. Enlightenment also sees—as we noticed above—faith as manipulation of the masses. This creates a contradiction: the object of faith is at once the product of consciousness and something false which is imposed on that consciousness from without (by the priests). This idea that faith is a result of manipulation is, for Hegel, an idea not worthy of the Enlightenment. The people cannot be deceived about something essential, like the object of faith, although they can, of course, be deceived about minor matters. The object of faith (God) can never be something alien imposed upon a people. It must be a product of their own consciousness. [Here, Hegel is completely against Freud, for whom religions cannot be counted among the mass delusions of humanity, and Marx, who sees religion as the opiate of the masses.] Hegel asserts here that it is consciousness, in effect, that requires God, which is why God is not something alien imposed upon a people. But at the same time, we cannot simply see God as a projection of our consciousness.

According to the Enlightenment, faith stupidly worships a thing (a stone or a piece of wood), but the stupidity here is on the part of the Enlightenment, which falls victim to sense-certainty. Faith doesn't worship the object, the senseless thing, but the absolute which it symbolizes. Enlightenment also attacks the validity of faith's historical evidence (the scriptural accounts, etc.), but again it fails to recognize faith. Faith is not based upon historical evidence. But the moment that faith responds to this charge trying to defend the historical evidence, it has succumbed to Enlightenment. It thus falls victim to the corruption of Enlightenment, its foe.

On the level of faith's action, however, it remains pure. Pure insight finds the self-sacrifice of consciousness for its faith foolish. Enlightenment can only understand sacrifice for gain, not pure self-sacrifice for the absolute. But this is again a contradiction within pure insight: it always argues for rising above one's natural existence, but it doesn't really believe this to be possible when faith claims to do it. Enlightenment thus shows itself to faith as denying the possibility of its purity—either in action or in intention. Thus, the negative role of Enlightenment ends up in contradiction, but it does have a positive role.

Enlightenment frees the individual from the chains of her sensuous nature. Through the work of pure insight, sensuous nature becomes useful for the absolute. Everything finite becomes useful. Enlightenment produces a new epoch of utilitarianism, in which everything is appreciated on the basis of its usefulness. Just as the natural world is useful, so is the human world, and we use each other, while also making ourselves useful. Everything is useful because everything partakes of the absolute essence. The absolute is in everything, but this conception is abhorrent to faith. And it is true that Enlightenment has wronged faith in its analysis of it. Despite this, however, Enlightenment is on the side of the concept, precisely because it sees the whole and is always making the requisite connections between the elements of the whole. This is why, according to Hegel, pure insight has an "absolute right" over and against faith, because faith keeps things apart which Enlightenment brings together. Enlightenment

performs the noble task of disturbing faith's calm self-assurance and pretension. Even though Enlightenment wrongly condemns faith's self-sacrifice, it does rightly remind faith that there is something a bit unreal about this self-sacrifice, in that it isn't wholly a sacrifice. Faith sacrifices one particular pleasure, but it still continues to enjoy a multitude of others. In a critique such as this, Enlightenment eliminates faith's non-conceptual one-sidedness (i.e., its thoughtlessness). Enlightenment shows faith how all its thoughts of heaven were really thoughts of earth transposed onto heaven. It shows faith that it is really akin to Enlightenment itself, though it is a dissatisfied version of Enlightenment. But faith doesn't endure this reduction of heaven to earth without a lament for something lost. Even Enlightenment itself feels some dissatisfaction, because its realization always involves a loss of the individual self into its usefulness.

[b. The truth of Enlightenment]

Pure insight actualizes itself in the pure thing—a thing with no determinations and which is absolute being. Pure insight thus distinguishes between itself and absolute being (which is not something other but an unrecognized product of the pure insight itself). In other words, Enlightenment still lacks the realization that it is one with the object. This causes it to be divided, alienated from itself. Enlightenment which was opposed to faith is now opposed to itself. But this alienation is a benefit to Enlightenment and allows it to be victorious over faith, because it is the thing that has allowed self-consciousness of spirit to be possible in the first place. Enlightenment now consists of two factions: one calls absolute being “God” and the other calls it “matter” (or “nature”). But these are actually the same; the beyond and pure matter end up being the same thing. Hegel is here proclaiming the unrecognized identity of being and thinking. Being and thinking are the same because pure being is nothing but an abstraction. Pure being and pure thought are both the same and are both abstractions. They involve pure abstraction or pure self-thinking. Pure insight continually alternates between pure thought and pure being; this alternating is an alternating between being-for-self and being-for-another, which is the very movement explicit in the reduction of a thing to its use. Thus, we come to the moment of utility: objects are seen by pure insight as useful, but use still implies alienation from the objects. As object of use, however, the objects of pure insight are constantly vanishing, insofar as they get used. The useful object of pure insight is thus completely evanescent. Though the being-for-self of pure insight is present in the useful object, it is overcome by the other elements in the object—its being-in-itself and it being-for-another. Nonetheless, pure insight does attain its satisfaction in utility and in the useful object. It represents the Enlightenment's victory over belief; the world of heaven has become the earth, insofar as in the useful object truth and actuality are united in a single presence.

/III. Absolute Freedom and Terror/

Once heaven gets transplanted to earth, the world becomes the manifestation only of the universal will. The world becomes useful to consciousness. The world itself is wholly spiritual. Because the world is here spirit's own will, spirit attains absolute freedom—an absence of restraint. In this reign of absolute freedom, every individual becomes responsible for the action of the whole, because it is a reflection of universal will. There is no isolated, individual deed, removed from the universal will. Single and universal will are no longer separated. Nonetheless, the deed itself of the universal will must be performed by an individual will, though in accomplishing the deed it is conscious of doing nothing individual, only something universal. It submerges itself in the universal. But because the universal will must be actualized in an individual, all other individuals necessarily feel themselves excluded from it in actuality, even though it is universal in terms of will. Absolute and universal has therefore a negative relation to individuals: it tries to eliminate everything individual. It has only this negative manifestation, as a pure destructiveness, and it consigns the individual to a meaningless and horrible death. But whatever individual will which rules as the government is necessarily perceived as a faction and not as universal will. Thus, the universal will perceives every government as guilty. In addition, the universal will takes everything opposed to it as its enemy, and what is opposed to realized universal will is only intention. There could never be any apparent or actual evidence of opposition to the universal will, since such opposition is by definition not realized. Hence, suspicion of oppositional intention passes for actual guilt.

Because absolute freedom produces the fear of senseless death in individuals, it recreates the distinctions between individuals which it originally obliterates in the universal will. The meaningless death is a contradiction for the universal will, which insists upon the utility of everything. This singular death falls outside of the universal will. But spirit cannot return to culture, because its will has lost all its determinations in becoming universal. Absolute freedom and the terror of death has made the individual pure—an empty self of pure knowledge and will.

{C. Spirit That Is Certain of Itself. Morality}

Kantian morality has become the outcome of the Reign of Terror. Here, all the objectivity of the world has withdrawn into the pure will of consciousness. This pure will is all being and absolute essence. Kantian morality establishes duty as the path to freedom and thus resolves the contradiction left by the arbitrary violence of absolute freedom. Freedom in duty no longer results in the senseless destruction of individuals for the sake of their freedom.

[a. The moral view of the world]

Duty is the absolute essence of self-consciousness. Moral self-consciousness as duty completely frees itself from nature, which it is indifferent to. But because it is free from nature, nature is also free from it. Hence, both morality is absolute and so is nature, and they exist in a relation of complete indifference to each other. Morality conceives nature as, on the one hand, dependent on it, and, on the other, as independent. If morality leaves nature out of its equation, then it also ignores its own realization, and the realization is an essential part of morality (because it is not pure thought, but also the realization of morality in the world). Morality, in other words, desires to see itself enacted, not just to remain a frame of mind. This means that morality is involved with nature, upon which its possibilities for realization depends. The unity of morality and nature (or morality and

happiness) is not something contingent, but something demanded by reason. This unity is the first postulate of moral consciousness.

Nature is also a sensuous opposition to morality, but even sensuousness is part of the essence of pure will. Morality is in fact the mediation of pure will and sensuousness. The pure will works upon sensuousness, in an effort to get sensuousness to conform to it. The problem is that morality can never fully overcome this oppositional; if it did, it would cease to be morality, which is a striving for realization. Morality can never be fully attained, which is why Kant had to posit an eternal life for its continual progress. The second postulate of morality is the harmony of itself and the sensuous will. But as is clear, this harmony can never be attained without destroying morality itself. In the moral act itself, however, the contradictions of morality are overcome. But the act brings with it its own problems, because a specific moral action is never as pure as the pure moral law. Actually acting is much more complex and multi-faceted than the moral law itself. Pure duty, in short, can never determine a specific duty. In its actual doing of a moral action, consciousness cannot but be individual, rather than universal. Because actual consciousness is necessarily imperfect or individual, morality must be supplemented with grace. Thus, the pure moral consciousness gets posited as something beyond—a divine lawgiver—which then mediates between the pure moral law and the specific duties of particular situations. In this way, perfect morality becomes something unattainable, only existing in a beyond. Moral self-consciousness is thus only imaginary—or, it is only another consciousness in the imagination. It is really that of the self, though unrecognized.

[b. Dissemblance or duplicity]

We now see the fundamental contradiction of moral law: it doesn't want to realize itself in the here and now. It is, in other words, self-serving and duplicitous. Morality doesn't really want the action it calls for; it only wants that harmony that results from such an action in the beyond. By setting up a pure duty that ought to be done, morality ensures that nothing good every will get done. In point of fact, the highest good would actually be the elimination of morality: if it is accomplished, it ceases to be necessary. Morality should desire its own destruction, but it doesn't. It wants to sustain itself, and in that way acts immorally. Similarly, it also dissimulates in its condemnation of sense-nature. It needs the sense-nature to struggle against that it condemns. Even the idea of progress in morality is duplicitous. All morality is supposed to be one—pure duty. If this is the case, how can there be progress in the moral field? Morality is thus really non-morality. All morality really wants is happiness, which is why it posits the necessity of the act of grace to make up for its insufficiency. It lies about its insufficiency in order to allow itself happiness through grace.

The idea that moral people fare badly in the world is often claimed by moralists. Hegel contends that there is no way we could know this because there aren't moral people in the world. The supposedly moral person who claims this is really, Hegel contends, just envious of those who are successful in the world. [This is, of course, precisely Nietzsche's critique of morality—eighty years *after* Hegel.] In order to actualize itself, morality must become other; only in this way does it exist. Moral consciousness tries to blame its imperfection on nature, and is embarrassed by any natural functions. Consciousness recognizes that any interaction with the world necessarily taints its morality, makes it impure. So, it opts to retreat from the world into itself. Moral self-consciousness assumes the position formerly held by the divine lawgiver for itself. Morality becomes pure conscience.

[c. Conscience. The “beautiful soul,” evil and its forgiveness]

In becoming conscience, moral self-consciousness overcomes the division between the moral law and nature. Nature is no longer something opposed to morality: its object is its own action. Conscience knows immediately what duty is. This is different from the pure ethical substance (exhibited in Antigone and Creon) where the individual knows duty immediately. Here, duty is immediate, but it is known and reflected upon, not just something substantial (as for Antigone, who could not explain why duty was a duty). To do my duty here, I must be conscious of doing my duty. This duty is the doer's own conviction and also, at the same time, the absolute universal. Because it is necessarily universal, duty, though based on individual conviction, is always done for the sake of recognition. It is only in this recognition that the deed of duty is made real—and duty is nothing if it is not realized. Conscience knows the case in which it will act and then adopts its conviction and then acts. The problem is, however, the conscience can never know all the circumstances of a case, and thus when it acts, it always acts unconsciously. Conviction must be pure—stemming as it does from consciousness of pure duty—but its action will necessarily be impure. No action is pure; it always involves circumstances that conviction hasn't taken into account. This insistence on the necessary impurity of our acts is one of the keys that separates Hegel's morality from Kant's. For Kant, the moral act must be pure in a way that Hegel believes impossible.

Hegel puts this in another way: conviction can only take its positive content from sense-nature, which lacks the purity of duty. The content of conscience develops in accord with the contingency of one's individual situatedness in history, which means that one's conscience is doomed to be only perspectival, the result of one's own particular disposition. What others may call courage, I may call preserving my life so that I can provide for my family. Every content of conscience thus contains the taint of the determinateness from which the individual consciousness in which it arises. A conflict of consciences develops. If we value actions for the general good over actions for a particular good, we fail to see how actions undertaken for a particular good without fail benefit the universal. There is no way to arbitrate, and thus the duty that conscience realizes is always something contingent. The problem is a contradiction between the conscience which acts (and is sure of itself) and the universal consciousness which recognizes the act (and which is not certain about the act of conscience). In other words, others may very well take the act of conscience to be evil rather than good.

This contradiction is mediated through language. In order for conscience to get its duty recognized, it must declare it as a duty; it must speak. There can be no individual deeds of conscience; in order to realize themselves they must make themselves into universals through speech. Conscience cannot remain individual; it must universalize itself. With the declaration of one's

moral duty, everyone else recognizes one's moral purity. One declares one's moral duty, but this duty has no content to it; it is pure. All one needs to do is to declare it, and whatever the content, it becomes moral duty. Consciousness is thus pure, but it is also impoverished, being without any content. Everything spiritual has withdrawn into the I, but all the I has is a world of pure speech—constant declarations of its moral purity. Consciousness refuses to give up its purity of heart that any interaction with the actual world, other than through its moral proclamations.

But even in this retreat from the world, conscience is still acting, and Hegel considers it here as acting conscience, though it is something different on the inside and on the outside. That is, others—universal consciousness—see the beautiful soul as hypocritical. Even when conscience declares and swears that it is doing its duty, universal consciousness doesn't believe it, because it is opposed to the universal. But it is only a kind of false conscience that opposes itself to the universal, and the universal is right to be hostile to any conscience that declares it has its own law and can ignore the law of others. But in denouncing hypocrisy, the universal acts just like the false conscience: it's all talk and fine sentiments, no action.

The universal sets itself up against the individual who acts as a judging consciousness. A such, it always discerns selfish motives behind every seemingly unselfish moral act. Judging consciousness claims, in short, that every act is selfish. But judging consciousness can't be the moral act because of itself, not necessarily because of the selfishness of the moral act. In its judging, it is always intent upon asserting its superiority, which is exactly what it accuses the consciousness which acts of doing. Hegel compares this to the fact that no one is a hero to one's valet. This is true, but because the valet is a valet, not because of any fault in the hero. The valet focuses on the merely human actions of the hero and doesn't see the greatness that transcends these human moments. In the face of the judge, the acting consciousness confesses its guilt, but the judge, on the other side, fails to confess its guilt. Reconciliation between the two occurs only when the judge also acknowledges her own guilt and sees herself in the acting conscience which she condemns. This is the move of forgiveness, in which pure duty grasps the necessity of evil for it. Once we grasp the necessity of our evil, we arrive on the terrain of religion.

<(CC.) Religion>

"VII. Religion in General"

Religion has been present in the previous forms of consciousness, but only from the standpoint of consciousness, never self-consciousness. It is only in religion that spirit is its own self-consciousness. In religion, spirit represents or pictures itself to itself. The fact that it appears as a representation (or in picture form) leads consciousness to believe that spirit, as the infinite, is something separate from itself, which is finite. All of the previous moments which have been traversed are present within religion. Only the whole, however, exists within time. The moments do not have a separate existence in time. Just like the other forms of spirit, religion has a development in which it assumes different shapes. In religion, spirit's consciousness and self-consciousness—the finite and the infinite—are reconciled, but in the first shape of religion, this is only true immediately.

{A. Natural Religion}

The different shapes that religions appear in are not actually existing differences, but differences which are actual in thought. Religious actuality is the actuality of thought. And as religion develops, it more and more ceases to be an alien object to thought (an object of picture thinking). The self comes to see religion as its own production.

[a. God as Light]

The first religious shape is pure shapelessness—a One which contains in itself all determinations. It is pure Light. Every shape in which this pure light expresses itself is dissolved; none of its shapes have a determinate self. And yet, because it must manifest itself in determinate shapes, these shapes are really the self of pure light—its reality.

[b. Plant and animal]

As pure light dissolves into its different determinations, it becomes a multiplicity of particular spirits, each distinct from each other. At first, this is pantheism, as these different spirits peacefully subsist (in plant religions). But they cannot but begin to view other gods as rivals, and thus pantheism breaks up into a hostile battle between competing religions. Gods now must struggle with each other to assert their legitimacy, and they appear in this struggle in the form of animals. This struggle is, however, self-consuming, and spirit recognizes that the animal-gods—because they are consumed in the struggle—are inessential. Thus, spirit recognizes god as the thing—produced by spirit which becomes the artificer.

[c. The artificer]

The god is now the production of spirit. Spirit produces itself as an object, but as yet fails to recognize its role in this production. In other words, the work of spirit doesn't have spirit inherent in it. The work must take spirit into it as something alien. It is the home for dead spirit (like, for example, the Egyptian pyramids). The artificer creates an outer shell which will serve as a home for spirit, but that shell—the work of the artificer—is itself not yet spirit (though it will be once it becomes a work of art, rather than just the work of the artificer). In the work of the artificer, there exists a distinction between the outer shape and the inner being, but the inner being—the spirit of the artificer—can only manifest itself abstractly. The outer being, meanwhile, is just a husk of nature used to house spirit. But outer and inner are each really the other as well. The artificer demonstrates its consciousness of this by uniting the two in one—the Sphinx, half-human, half-animal. But the sphinx can only express itself in riddles. But in the sphinx the artificer recognizes the identity of outer and inner, of itself and its work. The artificer recognizes that its work is itself spiritualized—a work of art.

{B. Religion in the Form of Art}

On becoming an artist, the artificer becomes a spiritual worker—and the blend of inner being and outer husk is no longer external, but each are the other. This religion of art can only appear in a free nation, where the ethical substance is the substance of all (and not just one or a few). But at first in this free nation, each is contented with their place in the whole. This contentment must be lost for the religion of art to be possible, because it represents a mourning over the loss of the world. Its essence, as art, is above the actual world.

[a. The abstract work of art]

Art begins as immediate and wholly abstract—without self-consciousness. In the first work of art, we see the unity of nature and spirit. The natural guise of the god in the statue of the human form shows this unity. The old natural gods are now remembered only as something which has been overcome—like the Titans. But a division still exists between the work of art and the artist. The sculpted statue of the god does not adequately express the spirit of the artist. When people praise the work of art, the artist knows that it doesn't really express herself, because the response is never anything more than admiration by the people (which implies a distance between themselves and the work which mirrors the distance between the artist and the work). So, the artist turns to the hymn, as a form which allows a more self-consciousness expression, because it utilizes language. The Oracle also uses language, but in a less-developed form than the hymn. The Oracle, however, is always particular to a nation, and its utterance is always contingent. It appears as an alien self-consciousness. It can only tell one what is advantageous, and what is advantageous can never be necessary, only contingent. The hymn, on the other hand, appears as an expression of self-consciousness, not something alien (like the Oracle). The hymn is more appropriate for spirit's expression than the statue because it does not have a separate objective existence, but this also means that it is constantly disappearing in time (after each time it is sung). In the cult, the constant movement of the hymn and the permanence of the statue are reconciled; the cult brings together the movement of finite spirit and the fixity of infinite spirit. In the cult, the self raises itself to the god through the purification of washing and putting on white robes, just as god lowers itself to the humans. The cult requires sacrifice of the self (an animal, say), but this sacrifice is really a sacrifice on the part of the divine (which is symbolized by the animal. Whatever is done by the one is done by the other. In sacrificing and practicing devotion to the god, the nation pays tribute to itself.

[b. The living work of art]

In the religious cult, the votaries commune with their god. Through the mystery of bread and wine in the religious rites, humans are able to experience the mystery of divinity. But because it appears in the form of bread and wine, the mystery is still in nature and not in self-conscious spirit itself. Spirit is still, in other words, alien to the mystery. The human communes with the god outside of the human's self—in festivals which include Bacchic revelries. This communion, however, is a frenzy of enthusiasm and is completely outward—spirit outside of itself. It is only in speech that internal and external can be united. National spirit thus turns to speech to express itself—in the work of literature. But speech universalizes what was the particular spirit of a nation. In literature, the nation thus loses its spiritual particularity.

[c. The spiritual work of art]

All the separate national spirits unite in a single pantheon—language. The gods all exist together, but the bond among them at first only seems to be external. The first universal expression of literature, the epic, expresses this universality in its form (which is present in the content of the national spirits themselves). The specific individual who produces the epic (the Minstrel) disappears as the inessential vis-à-vis a song (the epic), which is the universal. In the epic, the human gets explicitly related to the divine. Even though the humans are seemingly insignificant, they always manage to rouse the interest of the gods. The gods, however, are self-contradictory. If they are immortal, they should be incapable of conflict with each other—what would be the use? Hence, every action of the gods is just a sham-action, just play. They are really governed by the universal, which watches over all the actions, as necessity. Necessity is the forgotten ruler of their world, just like the Minstrel is the forgotten creator of the epic poem itself.

In tragedy, we become conscious of necessity's role. Tragedy subtracts everything personal and accidental which cluttered the epic, and it gives us only necessity. Its characters exist as actual human beings rather than as figures in a narrative. Necessity appears here as fate. The chorus perceives the power of necessity, but only as an alien power against which they are powerless. The common people get their self-expression in the chorus. The chorus can never put anything together; it sees everything in isolation, because it lacks the power of the negative. Necessity appears to it as an alien fate, with which it hopes for, at best, appeasement. The chorus allows the spectators to see their own self-expression writ larger. Tragedy is the form of religion of ethical substance, and ethical substance is split into human and divine law. Thus, in tragedy, there are only two kinds of characters—male (human law) and female (divine law). There are two laws in tragedy, one revealed to consciousness and one not revealed. The character can never become conscious of the unrevealed or nether law until it's too late. This is what happens to Oedipus, who is destroyed when the unrevealed law is revealed. Macbeth is also duped by the duplicitous prophecy of the three sisters. Caution about this kind of duplicity is also the reason for Hamlet's delay. But these two different laws are reconciled in Zeus. The tragic hero thinks that he is following the god that knows, but this ends up being an ambiguous knowledge, which is not at all separate from what is not revealed. In the afterlife of the tragic hero, helped by the forgetful waters of Lethe, the opposition dissolves in the unity of fate. The self-consciousness of tragedy is thus the supreme power of Zeus, the uniter. But the chorus can't see this fate and Zeus as anything but alien. In fate, the individual self becomes meaningless and seems so to the chorus. We recognize the hypocrisy of the individual character (who pretends to be something essential but really is nothing), and tragedy turns into comedy. The audience ceases to believe in tragedy any more, seeing all the heroes as just shamming. So playwrights must start to write comedies.

Comedy reveals to the crowd the contrast between its universality (its idea of itself) and the commonness of its

particular manifestation. All universal pretensions get comically undermined and exposed as pretensions when comedy replaces tragedy. The same thing happens in philosophy: the sophists show the individuality informing Plato's pretensions to universality. The absolute here ceases to be something other. In comedy, the individual knows herself as absolute—that all pretenses to universality come from the individual. Comedy has the great insights of linking together the individual with the universal.

{C. The Revealed Religion}

The religion of art allows spirit to develop from substance to subject. All essentiality here disappears in spirit's self-certainty. All truth is reduced to self-certainty [thus the triumph of the sophists over Plato]. The self becomes itself the absolute, but in the process it loses its essence. Nothing is essential any longer. Pure individuality, as the consciousness of comedy, predominates, but in its triumph, it has lost all its content (because nothing remains essential). The knowledge of this loss is unhappy self-consciousness. We are left with the old works of art, but since we have lost their world, they are no longer spiritualized in themselves. They are dead works of art. So unhappy self-consciousness is left yearning for a new manifestation of spirit. Spirit is at the same time the self-diremption of substance and of subject. It has a real, substantial mother (Mary), and a spiritual father (God). Spirit is the result of a mutual externalization or splitting—God coming down to humans and humans reaching up to God. The believer now sees spirit immediately present to her in a self-conscious being, but this existence of spirit is at first purely immediate. Spirit is here known as a self-conscious being, not as something hidden from consciousness. It is a lifting of concealment—the revelation of divine being. In this divine incarnation we behold the unity of divine and human nature. In this immediate being, God is revealed as he is, attained through pure speculative knowledge.

But because spirit is manifest in an individual self-consciousness, it remains antithetical to the universal. This individual self-consciousness becomes universal only when it can be remembered, when it has been. This is why Christ must die; in that death, the revealed divine being becomes universal, for the whole community in the presence of the Holy Ghost. Spirit manifests itself in three stages of development: essence, the otherness of essence, and the knowledge of the one in the other. Because religion is representative and depicts everything in picture thinking, it sees this self-manifestation of spirit in terms of paternity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Self-consciousness tends to degrade this pictorial representation and to see the absolute as pure spirit. But pure spirit must manifest itself in nature—in its other—in order to become actual spirit. So, spirit must create a world, but this is a creation only from the standpoint of representation or picture thinking, which can necessarily conceive of spirit as separate from its manifestations. Representation fails to see the necessity of the fall, that spirit is nothing without its self-division. This is why revealed religion cannot be the end point of philosophy. In addition, a fall is impossible because the absolute cannot have an other to it, as happens with the fall as it is conceived in representation, which is what revealed religion does. In order to ever become self, God was forced to become alienated from himself. The fall, therefore, is the most fortunate of all events, because it sets up the possibility of actualization. We could see (in speculative, not pictured, terms) Lucifer as the first son of God. The birth of evil is the birth of consciousness. God needs Satan. The representation of revealed religion misses this, which he can see in God's wrath. Evil's break from God creates the very possibility of love. The identity of good and evil is not an identity which is fixed once and for all. This image is a misunderstanding of identity. The copula *is* is insufficient for communicating the identity of identity and difference. *Is* is a lifeless form, inadequate to the expression of speculative identity but we have to make use of it because thought must always express itself.

Spiritual unity, however, means that self-consciousness has grasped the unity of identity and difference. This is Christian love. The religious community sees evil as reconciled with spirit through the forgiveness offered by the death of Christ (around which the spiritual community is organized). But the spiritual community still sees this unity (of good and evil, infinite and finite) as something occurring in one individual—the figure of Christ. With the death of Christ, the particular becomes universal—the concrete universal. This death is experienced as the death of God, and so it is the night of consciousness. Spiritual community fails to identify itself with the unity it identifies with Christ. Thus, for it, reconciliation is always experienced as a nostalgia for the past or as a hope for the future.

<(DD.) Absolute Knowing> “VIII. Absolute Knowing”

In revealed religion, self-consciousness has not yet made itself the object of self-consciousness. Instead, God is the object. This leaves us with a contradiction that only the turn to philosophy can resolve. The form of religious consciousness—the image of Christ—must now be seen as also the product of consciousness. This requires a break from representation and a move to speculative thinking—a recognition of the nothingness of the object, a recognition that the object is just the alienation of the self. This is the great speculative insight of Hegel's philosophy and its final contradiction: my alienation is at once the universal. Self-consciousness becomes absolute knowing when it takes this otherness back into itself as its own otherness. To do this, consciousness must see all things as itself and as not itself. It must integrate this contradiction into all its thinking. This involves seeing the identity of the thing and the I, then seeing the thing as useful, and finally seeing the thing as the self's action. Each thing is not a distinct thing but a process that the thing goes through. Knowledge of existence becomes simply the knowledge of self in self's contradiction with itself. Action is the key to this movement. Action breaks up the simply unity of the concept and then recreates this unity out of a dividedness. Action unifies the two sides of spirit—essence and self, truth and certainty. Essence and actuality coincide in action.

The height of morality—the beautiful soul—clung to the determinateness of the concept as against its fulfilment. The beautiful soul felt as if any fulfilment was a loss of the concept. In the act, however, self-consciousness gives up this idea and actualizes itself in its fulfilment. In this way, spirit ceases to be just an inward spirit and sacrifices the purity of the concept to the negativity of self-sundering. It is only through this self-sundering that spirit breaks out of abstract universality and obtains its actual existence. Absolute knowing is propaedeutic to the act. This act occurs in the form of the concept. The concept is the self's

act, which is a gathering together of all the separate moments of spirit into their unity. Truth thus becomes identical with certainty, which is what the entire trajectory of the *Phenomenology* has tried to achieve. When the concept itself becomes the object of consciousness, we arrive at science (*Wissenschaft*), which is not science in the contemporary understanding of the term but instead philosophical exploration. Science only comes to exist after all the work of consciousness is done—after experience. Once spirit has grasped its concept, it annuls time, because it grasps itself as time. Time is merely the existence of the concept in reality, the coming into existence of the concept. History is thus the externalization of the spirit into time. The accomplishment of this brings about science. Though religion comes first, science or philosophy is spirit's true self-knowledge, because in it spirit is self-consciousness: spirit recognizes itself as substance. The history of philosophy has been the history of increasingly seeing substance as subject, the recognition that substance without subject is just undifferentiated content. In absolute knowing, spirit overcomes difference and wins its freedom. This is the point at which science begins. Science (or the *Logic*) unfolds like the phenomenology, but without the difference between knowledge and truth which is present in the latter. The externalization of spirit, however, is only complete when spirit knows not only itself but its limit. Absolute knowing is the recognition that the limit to our knowing is internal to our knowing, that knowing necessarily involves contradiction. The subject recognizes that it is always at odds with itself and never in harmony. In this way, absolute knowing is the self-sacrifice of spirit. Only thus can absolute knowing or science recognize the development of spirit in nature and history.