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THE BLACKWELL GUIDE TO

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

EDITED BY KENNETH R. WESTPHAL

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To Henry Stilton Harris

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- 9 Cf. Wartenberg (1993). – *Ed.*
- 10 See for example Lacan (2002, 187 n. 14).
- 11 Freud (1933, 111, Lecture 31).
- 12 See *Enc.* §377, *PR* §343R, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (MM 12.272/Sibrec 220).
- 13 These correspondences are examined in detail by Heinrichs (1974). – *Ed.*
- 14 Harris (1997, 2:142 n. 59, 721, 723–4, 747) argues in detail that Hegel's genuine philosophy of history is contained in the *Phenomenology*, and that it is far more historically complete and accurate than has been previously recognized. – *Ed.*
- 15 Hegel's philosophy of history and social theory make much use of the sociological "law of unintended consequences," that unforeseen consequences can result from the same kinds of acts executed by a large number of interacting people. Smith's "invisible hand" is one example of this law. – *Ed.*

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Spirit and Concrete Subjectivity in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Marina F. Bykova

1 Introduction

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is rightly considered one of the most difficult and puzzling works ever written in philosophy. Though Hegel's style contributes to such a perception of the book, the main reason the *Phenomenology* is so difficult to read and comprehend lies in its complex content and the wide range of issues Hegel discusses. As his first major work, Hegel's *Phenomenology* addresses many fundamental questions: metaphysical, epistemological, logico-ontological, and philosophico-historical. Hegel recasts and reformulates problems and issues discussed by his predecessors, from the Greeks to his contemporaries. The *Phenomenology*, however, does not merely integrate the insights of his predecessors; it does so in ways designed to resolve central philosophical problems. Hegel's comprehensive, often unconventional approach to standard problems is very fruitful philosophically, though also complex and challenging. Yet all of these issues, whether traditional or new, are tied together by one central theme: the nature and development of the subject and subjectivity.

The core issue of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and the main topic of the present chapter, is the formation of the socially developed and historically oriented universal subjects of thought, will, and action within the forms of manifest spirit. These forms appear and exist as different "shapes" (*Gestalten*) of the universal ("cosmic") spirit. Hegel aims to uncover the universal and absolute in manifest spirit and to grasp this as the truth of the concrete subjectivity of individual human beings.

The approach taken here differs significantly from the two traditional, prominent interpretations of Hegel, and especially of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. An approach typical of German scholarship starts with the cosmic spirit (*Geist*) and tries to link this grand cosmo-historical perspective with the various stages of

Hegel's *Phenomenology*, showing how forms of consciousness devolve from the "cosmic" spirit that descends upon the world.¹ Exaggerating the "cosmic" dimensions of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, this "top down" interpretation mistakenly downplays (or even ignores) Hegel's account of the individual human being. Most of the literature supporting this view inevitably winds up assimilating what is allegedly "in" Hegel's text to whatever the interpreter presumes to be Hegel's grand story about cosmo-historical spirit.

In contrast, the second approach assigns to Hegel's phenomena of "spirit" an insignificant, secondary role. This approach focuses on the point of view of individual consciousness striving towards absolute knowledge.² According to this "bottom up" approach widely represented in Anglophone discussions, the *Phenomenology* appears as a ladder with numerous rungs that represent the phases of how individual consciousness evolves and progresses towards absolute knowledge. The stages of the *Phenomenology* are then associated with the stages of the development of concrete individual consciousness within various forms (*Gestalten*) of universal spirit and its manifestation in the world. This development, however, is often discussed in purely epistemological terms, while social, philosophical-historical, and other important aspects of this process are greatly discounted or neglected.

Both approaches represent incomplete, one-sided views; both occlude the most important dimensions of Hegel's book, and thus misconceive the real project of the *Phenomenology* and misunderstand how Hegel views a key task of his work. The present chapter attempts to resolve these problems by showing that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel emphasizes both the broad scale of collective and historical phenomena and the specific dimension of the individuals who are said to participate in those phenomena and, in Hegel's view, through whom alone broad-scale collective and historical phenomena occur. Put otherwise, Hegel's main task in the *Phenomenology* is to capture how spirit becomes embodied in the modern world in and through human history and the activity of its real agents, human individuals. Through this process, individual subjectivity becomes concrete by manifesting what is universal and absolute within itself as moments of spirit. To investigate this topic is to investigate subjectivity itself, which Hegel contends must be reconceived in a radically new way.

Hegel's account is properly called a "theory of subjectivity" for several reasons. One is that "philosophy of mind" is too embedded in Cartesian mind-body dualism, and too closely associated with epistemology. Developing a theory of "subjectivity" directly accommodates the integration of cognition and action, including moral agency, the integration of mind and body, and the integration of individual subjects with their natural and social environments. More positively, a theory of subjectivity allows focusing on the active nature of human subjectivity, a point already stressed by Kant's accounts of perceptual and judgmental syntheses, through which alone we are able to identify ourselves as self-conscious persons. In his analysis Kant emphasized that both cognition and action are normatively governed; they cannot be explained merely causally and are thus "spontaneous." These innovations are central to the German Idealists, who accordingly argued

that to understand human subjectivity requires examining how human subjectivity comes to be and develops in and through an individual's interactions with his or her natural and social surroundings. This marks a radical break with the Cartesian picture of the subject. German Idealists view subjectivity not merely as active, but as consisting entirely in activity. Thus the relevant conception of subjectivity is not ontological, but rather functional: the key features of subjectivity are revealed by what it does and how it does it, not by what it is made of. Thus a subject's active involvement (interaction) with the world and its activity of self-development became the focus of philosophical analyses of subjectivity.

2 Hegel's Account of Subjectivity: General Remarks

Hegel's interest in subjectivity arose from his occupation with Fichte and Schelling in Frankfurt (1797–1800) and especially in Jena (1801–1806). His focus on the self in these periods developed in direct response to Fichte's concept of the self-positing 'I' as an unlimited and in principle unchangeable being. Conceived as a simple, original self-identity, Fichte's subject appears fixed, indifferent, and in some way external to the process of its own self-reflection. It appears to be merely formal and lacks a necessary substantive aspect and thus is empty of content and incapable of real development.

Hegel altogether rejects the notion of the self as homogenous and unalterable. Unsatisfied with "abstract" and static interpretation of the self, Hegel attempts to make the self concrete and describes it in its living dynamics. Instead of discussing the self in its original "purity," he wants to grasp it "in action," through its actual manifestations in the world. This significant shift away from Fichte's concept of the self signals a move towards an essentially new approach to the subject and subjectivity – new both for German Idealism and for modern philosophy in general. Hegel's new conception of the self and its self-presentation involves more than its "reaching out" into the real world and actual experience; such a tendency is already recognizable in Fichte's interpretation of the self as the synthesis of both positing (the 'I') and contra-positing (the 'not-I'). The novelty of Hegel's approach to the subject and subjectivity is his view that the self *results from* interacting with the world. In the *Phenomenology* he makes this point in these terms: "only this self-restoring identity or this reflection in otherness within itself – not an *original* or an *immediate* unity as such – is true. It [*sc.* subjectivity] is its own becoming. . . ." (PS 18.24–26/M 10).³

This passage marks three key innovations and gives us a threefold sense of the radicality of Hegel's account of subjectivity. First, by claiming that the self is a *result* and not an "absolute beginning," as Descartes, Fichte, and the early Schelling understood it, Hegel states that subjectivity is the conceptual sum and unity of its own entire development. What constitutes this unity is constituted by the everlasting continuous self-determining growth of the self, the process of "its own becoming." Hegel describes this process as the "path of enculturation" (*Bildung*), which

has two important dimensions: social and cognitive. From the social perspective, this is a historical process that the individual subject undergoes within the social reality and history of its culture. Yet it is equally well the epistemic process or the "route of the natural consciousness" (*PS* 55.35–36/*M* 49) towards true knowledge. Through this process natural consciousness continuously develops into "absolute knowing" or the self-consciousness which encompasses the entire experience that consciousness has made previously. The second idea that Hegel illuminates in the passage quoted above is the conception of the self as comprising its *whole* development. What is true is not something that we start with, nor is it a mere result of a one or another particular development.⁴ Instead, it is a *whole* development taken in its entirety and integrity. In contrast to Schelling, for whom wholeness is the synonym of the totality of facts, Hegel understands this whole not as a sum of all facts but rather as a process of the entire development. Applied to the self, this is the whole process of becoming who one is. The medium of one's becoming is the world. This is the third idea delineated, perhaps indirectly, in the passage under consideration. Since the self is not something given, it must constantly form itself in interaction with the world and continuously create itself by mediating of its self-otherness within itself through this interaction. (Hegel emphasizes this especially in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*.⁵) The self is that to whom the content "returns" as a result of its enrichment and development, the process and the product of its own becoming; it is not merely posited. One's self-relation as subject is no longer viewed by Hegel as something that exists immediately, prior to participating in an intersubjective realm of language and action, but as something that emerges from this experience. In his view, self-identity and self-relation are not originally given or imposed upon human individuals by anything external. Who one is always results from one's active interaction and mediation in and with the world, both natural and social. At the same time, the world itself becomes an essential part of the individual, not just the source, but the basis and necessary condition of its self-awareness. Hegel's *Enzyklopädie* clarifies this issue in the following way:

[The] world confronting the [individual human] soul is not something external to it. On the contrary, the totality of relations in which the individual human soul finds itself constitutes its actual fixity and subjectivity and accordingly has grown together with it just as firmly as, to use a simile, the leaves grow with the tree; the leaves, though distinct from the tree, belong to it so essentially that the tree dies if it is repeatedly stripped of them. (*Enc*, §402Z)

This passage clearly demonstrates the major advance of Hegel's approach to the self and subjectivity over Fichte's. Like the Cartesian *cogito*, the Fichtean self is originally identical with itself through the pure and immediate act of thinking that takes place before, and independently of, any relation to the "not-I." On Fichte's view, the world (the "not-I") that lies outside the ego provides merely the occasion and the useful medium for the ego's activity, but never the necessary or condition of its self-awareness or self-recognition. In Fichte's system, the world is never absorbed into the ego. Though Fichte seeks to show that consciousness is a unified

universe, his two domains of the I and not-I remain separate, and their alleged synthesis is merely a compromise and coexistence, not an integral unity.⁶

Hegel does not simply reject the original unity of the self, he seeks to grasp it as "essentially a *result*" (*PS* 19.13–14/*M* 11). He analyses the world as actually mediating the development, the becoming of the self; it is the realm in which any self and subject grows and develops in all its dimensions, physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally. The relation between the world and the self is not extrinsic; the totality of relations to the world that constitute the self becomes the essential element of its consciousness. The self appears as a synthesis, not merely a coexistence, but an integrated unity in opposition. Hegel thus replaces the Fichtean primal unity and synthesis of mere coexistence constructed on the basis of the principle of identity, "I=I," with a dialectical unity, which is animated by the principle of contradiction. The process of establishing this synthesis Hegel calls "dialectic."

Having its roots in ancient tradition, the term "dialectic" comes from the Greek word for "art of conversation." In Hegel, however, this ancient use of the term becomes secondary. Instead, he considers dialectic the internal process of the *self*-development of the subject and the internal "mechanism" that governs relations among two or more distinct concepts, objects, or events. It is not just a method to apply to some subject matter, but the intrinsic structure of the subject matter itself. "Dialectical" explanations explicate phenomena through analysis of their dialectical relations and specific dynamics. In Hegel's system, the process of the subject's self-development is explained by means of "dialectical contradiction": constitutive oppositions and tensions which become reconciled in a new, advanced stage of development.

It is worth considering Hegel's conception of "dialectical contradiction" a bit more fully here. The traditional (formal-logical) meaning of contradiction is when an unequivocal statement is both true and false at the same time, or when both it and its negation are true. Applied to the world of real things, contradiction is present when something is assigned properties which are not just different, but rather exclude each other so that the existence of the thing itself is jeopardized. As a matter of logical necessity, something cannot have and lack the same property at the same time or have two or more properties that are logically incompatible. Hegel knew formal logic perfectly well and used it masterfully in his philosophical construction. Yet his dialectic goes beyond the formal-logical usage of a number of notions and concepts. Hegel does not object to the formal logical law of non-contradiction; however, this law governs only synchronic relations and thus does not capture the diachronic relations involved in development.⁷ Diachronic relations, in contrast, are subject to the laws of *dialectical* and not formal logic, and the contradictions they display are 'dialectical', or, as Hegel calls them, *reflective-logical* (dialectical) contradictions.⁸ John Barbridge notes that this kind of contradiction "is not the end of reasoning, but rather a clue that something is wrong, pointing toward a solution that will resolve the paradox."⁹

The same dialectical process is portrayed in the *Phenomenology*, but here consciousness itself becomes a concrete object within which the dialectical transition

occurs and becomes manifest. Here the self essentially becomes the synthesis of both contradiction and reconciliation. As for Fichte, for Hegel the self is self-generated activity. But while Fichte could not rationally explain what animates this self-generation, Hegel shows that the self, which is essentially reflective, necessarily displays an "internal conflict" between itself (the "I") and its object (the object of consciousness). This conflict is not a conflict between something internal and what is external. Instead, it demonstrates a dialectic-contradictory relation within consciousness, where each *relatum* appears initially to be irreconcilable with the other. Consciousness, serving as a substance of the self, becomes plunged into the self-contradiction that upsets the balance of its elements, leading to the loss of its original unity and conceptual identity. However, since this relation of negation within the reflective being is "just as much the non-identity (*Ungleichheit*) of the substance with itself" (*PS* 29.35–36/M 21), it has to be "repaired" from within to regain the integrated totality or unity of the substance (consciousness) itself. Hegel thus concludes that the contradiction between consciousness and its object contains the ground of its own reconciliation. The reflective self conciliates itself and the objective world which mirrors its own structure and ultimately becomes "absorbed" into the self. This "reflection into itself" is the activity through which the self continually creates itself. Hence the "internal conflict" within consciousness (the negative as a distinction between the I and its object) becomes the source of movement in any developing self, the movement which actively creates the self. Since the self is never static and its activity never ceases, its being is a chain of reconciled contradictions; it neither stagnates nor suffers obliteration. The self is thus constantly engaged in making itself and becoming what it is. The self's engagement in its own process of becoming itself, "the actual vitality" of the self, Hegel calls subjectivity.

Approaching Hegel's account of subjectivity systematically reveals three major facets. The first facet is "logical," in the modern sense, which includes both formal syllogistic and cognitive judgment. This facet concerns our logical and cognitive capacities to form predicative judgments, e.g. to recognize that a variety of characteristics belong to some one spatio-temporal object or event. The second facet is "concrete"; it concerns the self-consciousness of a living individual. The third facet concerns subjectivity as a species; it integrates the first two facets by explaining how self-conscious individuals can make logical judgments (in the broad sense indicated), and by showing how individual self-consciousness is only possible on the basis of making such judgments.¹⁰

These three facets of subjectivity are reiterated in several prominent aspects of Hegel's philosophy, including his accounts of "dialectic" and "reflection." However, unlike his predecessors, Hegel uniquely integrates all three facets of subjectivity into a complex theory of subjectivity that provides the focal point of many of his writings. Hegel's theory of subjectivity contains two main parts; one concerns "pure" ("absolute") subjectivity, the other concerns "concrete" empirically given subjectivity, the subjectivity of a finite individual. While the first is fully developed in *Logic*,¹¹ the second is a topic of Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie*. Much of the literature on Hegel's theory of subjectivity, including work by leading scholars

written in both Continental as well as Analytic traditions,¹² stresses Hegel's alleged commitment to some basic level of "pure thinking" or "pure subjectivity" that must somehow generate an entire logic and metaphysics out of itself. Such an interpretation reiterates yet again a huge Cartesian circle, which already reappeared in various, often-expanded forms in Locke, Leibniz, Kant, and Fichte. Hegel's approach to "pure (absolute) subjectivity" is indeed indebted to Modern philosophy, though it also transcends it by successfully working out many problems that remained unsolved in previous metaphysics.

Hegel rejects both traditional metaphysics (with its concerns about the substance of God, the universe, and the human soul) and Kant's critique of the same. Hegel's own "ontology" aims to identify and to explicate the conceptual interrelations among our basic concepts and categories, for those interrelations are constitutive of the content or meaning of those concepts or categories, which can be used in accurate and legitimate cognitive judgments only if these interrelations are well understood. For that very reason Hegel's "ontology" is combined with both his theory of subjectivity and his logic. Hegel's logic concerns not only traditional syllogistic logic, but what would now be called material principles of inference. Stressing the novelty of the procedure that Hegel adopts in his logic, John Burbridge shows that Hegel's logic clearly advances the methodology of Kant and his other predecessors. At first glance Hegel's logic "follows Kant in exploring the fundamental concepts that govern all our thinking." It is, however, not limited to the analysis of traditional operations or just finite human thoughts. Its purpose is to demonstrate internal contradictions arising from the limitation of finite human thinking, though also to overcome the finite character of this thinking and achieve knowledge of the infinite (literally, the 'non-limited') or absolute. Consequently, Hegel's logic "grasps not only our own thinking process, but the principles that ultimately govern the world as well."¹³ Hegel thus significantly transcends Modern conceptions of metaphysics and shifts his interest to logic, and on this ground offers a conceptually innovative approach to the "pure" ("absolute") subjectivity that differs fundamentally from traditional concepts of the "pure" self and the Absolute.

Hegel demonstrates that only a detailed and comprehensive logic can provide a theory of "pure" subjectivity and of determinate thought. This "pure" subjectivity must be distinguished from empirically given psychological subjects because it is logical and cognitive, and is thus normative, not merely psychological. Only when viewed as "pure" can this logical theory of subjectivity shed light on the structure of self-consciousness and elucidate the relevant "pure" forms and acts of thought. These latter are interpreted by Hegel as judgments about legitimate logical relations. They are crucial to how we form, grasp, and master our own thoughts. Hegel's speculative theory of "pure" ("absolute") subjectivity thus explicates the "truth," that is, the truth conditions, of statements or judgments. Hence it must take ontology into account, although it is not itself an ontology. Rather, it determines the basis and limits of philosophical ontology.

Although Hegel's account of *pure* subjectivity may be problematic, it would be a mistake to interpret *absolute* subjectivity as a merely abstract logical or psychological phantom. Hegel insists that absolute subjectivity can be understood

only in terms of its relation to individual subjects, to living human beings. And, indeed, his conception of "theoretical" or "logical" thinking is not generated by some kind of "pure" cognitive activity. It is and can only be rooted in the "real" thinking of actual, functioning human subjects, considered logically and cognitively, not merely psychologically. This closes a gap between absolute and concrete subjectivity and makes the latter the main focus of Hegel's analyses.

Consequently, investigations into the concrete subject, the real human individual, lie at the core of Hegel's theory of subjectivity. This first becomes visible in the *Phenomenology* and later reappears and is repeatedly reconfirmed in the *Encyclopaedia* (especially in the 1827 and 1830 editions), in the *Philosophy of Right*, and in Hegel's courses on the various sections of the *Realphilosophie* that he taught in Berlin.¹⁴

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel provides a well-structured account of concrete subjectivity. Although it is elaborated and perhaps somewhat revised in numerous versions of Hegel's later *Realphilosophie*, the general account of concrete subjectivity is already formed and introduced here.¹⁵ Some scholars tend either to dismiss, or at least to seriously discount Hegel's account of subjectivity in the *Phenomenology*. They contend that the *Phenomenology* is an early work that marks Hegel's search for a paradigm and foundation of his philosophical system, so that all concepts and ideas it introduces are preliminary and so cannot elucidate the author's real position. They point to the *Science of Logic* (or less often to the *Encyclopaedia*) as the text in which Hegel first formulates his conception of subjectivity. The *Phenomenology* is then considered only as "experimental" ground, and concepts and ideas which the thinker elaborates in this work are assigned no essential significance except to serve as a kind of exploratory device used for accomplishing a greater goal, namely the goal of a systematic development of philosophy.¹⁶ Although the *Phenomenology* is indeed the first serious philosophical work published by Hegel, that does not reduce its central role and profound significance for Hegel's philosophical system,¹⁷ nor for historical-philosophical development in general.¹⁸ Instead of being a "mere preliminary" work, the *Phenomenology* is a *result* of Hegel's philosophical search undertaken in the Frankfurt and early Jena periods. That was a search for a new model of a systematic theory of consciousness. Unsatisfied by those offered by his predecessors, especially by Fichte, Hegel developed a theory of consciousness capable of escaping the logical circle in which transcendental idealism was trapped by instead explaining consciousness in both its theoretical and empirical history and facticity. The *Phenomenology* is thus a project within his new theory of subjectivity which Hegel develops as the history of self-consciousness.

3 The *Phenomenology* as the Theory of Concrete Subjectivity

The *Phenomenology* is the systematic study ("*Wissenschaft*" or science) of "the experience which consciousness undergoes" (PS 29.18–19/M 21) in its real devel-

oping as it evolves from its mental roots in sense-perception, moves through its first historical beginnings in ancient civilization and growth in the modern world and modern culture, and finally reaches the full apprehension and comprehension of itself in philosophy (introduced as "Absolute Knowing"). The real steps and phases that consciousness undergoes in the process of its development are the different forms of manifest spirit (*Geist*) and how it represents itself in and to the world. For this reason Hegel conceives of the *Phenomenology* as a history of the "shapes (*Gestalten*) of consciousness" by which "spirit develops itself" (PS 29.16/M 21). This relation between the forms of consciousness and "a gallery of images" of spirit is often misunderstood and even mystified. In connection with Hegel, "spirit" too often suggests some transcendent, supra-human being or some kind of presence within the world of the absolute substance. Hegel himself may be guilty of obscuring the meaning of "spirit" due to his idealism and the totalizing tendency of his system. Yet despite any expository excesses, Hegel's philosophy of "cosmic" spirit and its correlation with the development of human consciousness is very realistic and of great importance, especially for understanding Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel stresses the interdependence of "cosmic" spirit and individual consciousness and claims that the development of individual consciousness is nothing but the self-development of spirit. What may appear here as a purely idealistic "cosmic" construction reflects in fact a very concrete and realistic idea. This is the idea that world history concerns the progressive development of the human individual (the self, concrete subjectivity) up to the realization and comprehension of what it truly is, namely spirit (*Geist*) in various forms of its actualization in the world.

Hegel distinguishes three main aspects of spirit: subjective (individual), objective (social), and absolute (historical). This general subdivision later governs Hegel's analysis of spirit in the *Philosophy of Spirit* within the *Encyclopaedia* system. Yet within the *Phenomenology* it has less a structural and more a functional significance. Each of these three aspects of spirit captures a certain sphere of human development and interaction, but only taken together do they reconstruct a human reality as a whole. Although we come to life and strive for self-determination (freedom) as individual "finite spirits" (spirit in its subjective, individual mode), our interaction with other individuals makes us who we are. Through interaction people create communities, which then rise above the particular interests and existence of their members. Through its specific social laws and regulations, communal life (the realm of objective spirit) imposes intricate restrictions on who we are and how we lead our lives, whilst also enabling many otherwise impossible forms of individual activity (e.g., via contractual exchange, genres of art, traditional or regional cuisines). But this dependence of individuals upon the community is in fact an *interdependence*, for the real agents of communal life, namely, those who think, will, and act within the community (the communal spirit), are individuals in mutual interaction. This interaction is not only a social, but also a historical process. Its results do not disappear with time, but re-emerge in modified form through human history and the historical development of human culture. Hence through our involvement with other people within our communities we play

crucial roles in achieving absolute spirit and recognizing its accomplishment. Indeed, as individual subjects we find the world full of meaningful constructs and forms which are present for us as objective and universal historical and cultural phenomena. Although those forms and constructs are at hand, we still must discover and “decode” them for ourselves; we must still make them into events and actions of our own individual conscious experience. This is why, according to Hegel, world history is the history of the development and progression of self-consciousness from its immaturity – manifest in different forms of partial, incomplete knowledge of human individuals – to its full-fledged stage, the true self-realization as universal consciousness, actualized as absolute knowing. The latter is the state of agreement of consciousness with itself when it becomes aware of and realizes its spirit as its own freedom and knowledge. Thus spirit (*Geist*) is the full realization of self-consciousness.

Nevertheless, spirit arises from and becomes real only in and through human subjects and their concrete experiences with the world. Self-consciousness is necessarily mediated through the actual forms of life of individual thinking subjects, because without this “real-life” mediation there is no self-consciousness: the advent of spirit requires encountering what is initially beyond consciousness, comprehending it and incorporating it into one’s self-understanding that includes one’s understanding of the natural, social and historical world in which one lives and develops. Such mediation is thus a condition of the self-realization of spirit and also the very mode of its constitution. This clarifies the meaning of Hegel’s often-mystified concept of self-development of spirit, which in fact consists in the concrete historical processes in which we human beings participate. For this reason the full self-realization of spirit is reached only when a certain level of social and political development of humanity is achieved. This is thus an historical process and must be understood in the context of the historical development of human subjects both in their individual lives and in their social interactions. In Hegel’s view, the progression of both individual and communal forms of human existence are “animated” and in a certain way “directed” by spirit, which is immanent in the world, and in our individual striving for our own freedom and self-understanding.

It is important to stress that despite some metaphysical overtones, Hegel’s position differs from Fichte’s and especially Schelling’s attempt to find “the undifferentiated absolutely unconditional being behind everything.”¹⁹ Hegel’s “spirit” is not something that descends upon the world from without; it is something which develops within the world, and only through our own efforts, even if we do not realize this. Consequently, Hegel’s “spirit” is not a substance or a substrate underlying the concrete individual subject; it is a pure infinite activity of the conscious human individual which gives purpose to itself and to the world. This purposive activity animates all periods of human history, directing it towards the progression and advancement of rational forms of human existence, the path that, Hegel argues, leads to the manifestation of freedom. This is why the development of human individuals appears in the *Phenomenology* as a process of liberation. This process liberates the human subject from its immediacy, naturalness, and its initial

forms of self-certainty, thus making its actual self-formation and self-fulfillment possible. Through this liberation, the subject reveals its universal (“cosmic”) essence and its absolute self-determinations. Hegel shows that our freedom, which is the realization of our capacities as subjects in the world, is a historical and social phenomenon and is necessarily mediated through our interdependence with the “cosmic” spirit.

By examining this interdependence systematically, Hegel addresses issues central to his philosophy. They not only shed light on the project of the *Phenomenology*, but also provide genuine and highly original insights into Hegel’s account of subjectivity. These issues come under four headings, according to Hegel’s main division of the *Phenomenology* into consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit: (1) How we are each able to identify ourselves as (self-)conscious individuals, capable of reflection and propositional attitudes; (2) How we are to justify our legitimate sense of individuality in light of our essential mutual interdependence, our intersubjectivity; (3) How we express ourselves collectively and culturally, and how we can understand such self-expression; and (4) How we can assess the adequacy of our apparent self-knowledge, whether individually or collectively, within our social and cultural context. Each of these inquiries is essential to Hegel’s central concern with the nature and development of human freedom. I shall discuss Hegel’s four inquiries in the order in which they appear in the *Phenomenology*.

3.1 Conscious individuality and spirit

Hegel’s epistemological interest in the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* is not restricted to pure theoretical questions, but concerns our actual production of knowledge through inquiry and investigation.

Hegel holds the (Kantian) thesis that we can only be self-aware by distinguishing ourselves from objects and events of which we are aware. He begins his investigation into consciousness by claiming that, for us to be conscious, two important requirements must be met. Since our consciousness is intentional, there must be an object of consciousness, and a relation with this object must be established. Hegel notes that in consciousness both elements of this relation are not immediate; they are mediated by their established relation and obtain their concreteness only through each other. Hegel states:

in the certainty, as well as in the pure being, both of the two previously mentioned *thises* separate out, one *this* as *I*, and one *this* as *object*. When we reflect on this difference, it is evident that neither the one nor the other is only *immediately* in the sense certainty; rather they are equally well in it as *mediated*. I have the certainty *through* an other, namely the thing; and this is just as well in the certainty *through* an other, namely through ‘I’. (*PS* 64–6–11/*M* 59)

This mediation of the I through “the extant object” gives rise to consciousness, which ultimately “becomes to itself comprehending consciousness (*begreifendsten*)

Bewußtsein") (PS 83.2-3/M 80). Thus both the I's "mere implicit awareness" and its ability to have propositional attitudes (conceptually structured consciousness) are possible only through engagement with extant reality, with objects and events of the material world.

The fact that consciousness evolves only by relating to its objects poses a difficulty. Both the "I" and the object originally appear as independent, unrelated entities. Furthermore, the object which is present as "a mere extant fact" in its immediate, determinate particularity appears alien to consciousness, which in its essence is a reflective activity of universalization and thus necessarily mediated. Nevertheless, the "I" (as the locus of consciousness) "ignores" all the discrepancies, "sacrifices" its independence, and establishes a relation to the object. At the same time, the "I" remains in this unavoidable relationship to the otherness of the object. This situation introduces three difficulties. First, it is not enough simply to postulate a relation between consciousness and its object. It must be explained how this relation is established and what "power" draws consciousness to the object. Second, the object always stands in only one *determinate* relation to consciousness, yet in order to achieve conscious comprehension of the object (to be capable of conceptual consciousness), the "I" must grasp the object in its universalities and thus must be able to know the object in the unity of *all* its relations. Hence, there should be an explanation of this synthesizing ability of consciousness. And finally, third, it must also be explained what gives consciousness the power to remain itself (substantially self-identical) in the face of the relation to the object.

Hegel examines these three issues in the first section of the *Phenomenology*, "Consciousness." His examination results in a highly original account of the role of spirit in the development of human consciousness. Hegel's attention to the three difficulties just noted is indebted to his German predecessors. Kant's account of the synthetic unity of apperception, Fichte's concept of the *Ansatz*, and Schelling's notion of the Absolute (as a pure homogeneous entity enclosed within and mediated only by itself) are different attempts to explain the possibility of consciousness. However, none of these satisfied Hegel, who found them one-sided and limited.

According to Hegel, the "power" that draws consciousness to the object is not a single chimerical act or a temporal action. Instead, this is an unconditionally universal phenomenon, the essential activity that is immanent within consciousness. In the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel discusses this force as the "power of the understanding," which is able to penetrate into "the true background (*Hintergrund*) of things" (PS 88.12-13/M 86) and to reveal this concealed content to consciousness. This force of inquiry is always present in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, though in later chapters Hegel discusses it in terms of self-consciousness, reason, and spirit. What Hegel has in mind here is the power of enculturated reason, which "makes itself into what it is *in itself*" (PS 20.6-7/M 12). This kind of purposive activity not only posits a goal for itself, but also perseveres in its activity as the essential determinant of its being. This activity and an understanding of its constitutive power is not imposed externally; consciousness discovers it *within* itself. The relational "I" is also the reflective "I." It creates itself

through its activity directed towards the world, through which it engages with the world and then absorbs its worldly experiences into itself.

Hegel contends that this ability of individual consciousness for rational activity links it to spirit. Only spirit guarantees the universal character of this activity and the striving towards rational understanding exhibited by each individual consciousness. According to Hegel, spirit animates all periods of human history, articulating successively more rational forms of human existence as it finds expression in the thoughts and actions of human individuals and their societies. In this way, spirit is essential to human life, which Hegel describes as a process of an individual becoming a rational being. Spirit does not determine this process of becoming. Hegel's "I" is a self-generating activity through which it continually creates itself. The principle that animates this process of self-creation is contradiction and the reconciliation of what was initially opposed. Spirit provides a medium and also a universal criterion or standard of the progress the individual makes in this developmental process. Hegel emphasizes that any individual is constituted by mediation and reflection, because these are the acts through which any entity is able to put whatever it encounters into relation with itself: "mediation is nothing but self-moving self-identity, or it is reflection within itself" (PS 19.29-31/M 11). This means that the mediated and reflected self is not the opposite of "cosmic" spirit, but the very mode of its constitution.²⁶ In this way, Hegel makes two important points. First, he again reaffirms the link between the process of becoming of an individual rational being and the self-development of spirit. Second, through their activity of mediation and reflection, human individuals have both an inside and an outside, and only this duality constitutes their "actual livingness and subjectivity."

Hundreds of pages later Hegel writes that, "only the self is to itself its proper object, or the object only has truth in so far as it has the form of the self" (PS 289.18-20/M 324). This statement represents Hegel's understanding of the whole realm of spirit as described in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel here confirms that there is no such entity as the "cosmic" spirit that could be assigned an absolute power and independent existence. Not spirit as such, but the human individual is the real agent acting in the world. The world is then opened to us as the object and context of our own desire for and striving towards self-development. For this reason, the individual self is reflected in every manifestation of "cosmic" spirit. The universality of spirit is only the expression of the historical character of human life and the processes in which we human beings participate. Our consciousness and ability to identify ourselves as beings capable of reflection is a product of our own activity, which requires a great effort on our part. Hegel shows that our inquiry and investigation into the world not only provide genuine knowledge of the world; they also supply self-knowledge concerning what we are able to know and how we are able to know it. However, our independent inquiry as well as our ability to be aware of our own limits require establishing our legitimate sense of individuality and affirmation in view of our mutual interdependence. This issue becomes Hegel's focus in the phenomenological section on "Self-consciousness."

3.2 Subjectivity as intersubjectivity

At the stage of self-consciousness, consciousness finds itself divided. On the one hand, "peering into itself" and relating to itself as to its own object, consciousness acquires a more real form, the form of life. This is the life of the individual consciousness in all its particularity. On the other hand, consciousness also encounters another world, the objective reality in its universal forms of life. According to Hegel, the two worlds – the internal realm of consciousness and the realm of external reality – are not distinct and must be conceived as one integrated world. The unity resulting from the subject's "desiring" relation to the object sustains life itself. The issue Hegel here formulates has great significance for our topic. This is the idea that one's self-certainty can be achieved only by establishing one's real unity with the objective world. By reconciling what is subjective and what is objective, Hegel contends that this unity is nothing other than *freedom* itself. The reconciliation that Hegel has in mind here is not a momentary act; it is a long and complex process. Freedom is a practical achievement; it occurs within the time and on the basis of the living world. Hegel links the realization of freedom with the development of spirit, though by linking it with the phenomenon of *Bildung*, which may be rendered in English as "formation" or "enculturation." The spirit as an infinite activity of self-development and self-contemplation is used by Hegel as equivalent to freedom. In Hegel's view both the "self-development" of spirit and freedom are not only worldly, but also human achievements. They occur in and through human activity over historical time. However, they are not results of an individual enterprise, but rather a collective human undertaking that must be understood as the universal activity of enculturation (*Bildung*). This is an intrapersonal, intersubjective activity which marks a transition to the socio-cultural dimension of individual life.

In "Self-consciousness" this transition only begins to take shape; individual particularity still prevails here. Yet already at this stage of self-consciousness the structures of "universal *Bildung*" appear as essential elements of individual consciousness in its striving for self-certainty (cf. *PS* 118.16/M 122). Hegel makes clear that *Bildung* is a concrete universal process in which we human beings necessarily participate and through which we become aware of ourselves and our natural and social environment. This process can occur only if an individual interacts with other individuals collectively pursuing their own goals. Hence the self can acquire its subjectivity (its sense of self-certainty and individuality) only in and through its own activity, activity that is not only directed towards the world, but is also mediated through relations with other people.

Consequently, Hegel contends that individual self-consciousness is fundamentally linked to intersubjectivity. At the level of self-consciousness, consciousness is defined in negative relation to its object: the "object" of self-consciousness is consciousness itself. This "negative relation" is one's desire for self-certainty, for one's sense of individuality. A difficulty arises from the fact that, in pursuing desire, consciousness tends to destroy (negate) its object, e.g., by consuming it, though

so doing thwarts its own sense of self-certainty. To be both self-conscious and self-certain in relation to an object thus requires an object that retains its independence through negation. The only object that meets this requirement is another self-consciousness. The desire that a self-consciousness has and needs to satisfy in order to obtain a sense of its existence as an individual subject is a desire to be desired by others, namely, a desire for *recognition*.

Self-consciousness exists *in-itself* and *for-itself*, since and thereby it is in and for itself for another [self-consciousness]; that is, it is only as something recognized. The concept of this unity in its duplication, of infinitely realizing itself in self-consciousness, is a manifold and ambiguous limitation, so that its moments must in part be strictly kept distinct, and in part in this distinguishing they must also be taken and known always in its contraposed significance, or as not distinguished. The double significance of what is distinguished lies in the essence of self-consciousness, its infinitude, or its being directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is posited. The detailed exposition of the concept of this spiritual unity within its duplication presents us the movement of *recognition*. (*PS* 109.8–18/M 111)

For self-consciousness there is another self-consciousness; it has come *out of itself*. This has a double significance: *first* it has lost its own self, for it finds itself as an *other* essence; *second*, it has thereby sublated the other, for it does not regard the other as essential, but sees *itself* in the other (*PS* 109.8–23/M 111).

Recognition comes about through a dramatic struggle that arises from the encounter of two self-consciousnesses. Hegel describes this life-and-death struggle in terms of the dynamic master-slave relationship. The ultimate lesson of the master-slave dialectic is that the realization of our capacities as subjects in the world requires the mutual recognition of ourselves as members of a community.

Here Hegel indicates one very basic feature of human subjectivity: that its reality lies not in solitary existence but in interaction with other selves. This interaction is mediated not only by "externality" (the objective world), but also by others and is "an infinite relation of myself to myself . . . in the being of other persons" (*Enc.* §490). According to Hegel, someone acquires the characteristics of subjectivity (Hegel often uses in this context the term "personality") only in the *fact of being recognized* by other people. For Hegel the very phenomenon of recognition is the most important methodological instrument for socializing the self. The process of recognition is a process of establishing important relations between single individuals, relations that are then reflected in their interactions with each other. In these interactions, an individual consciousness becomes aware of its own individuality and also appropriates its universal content and its freedom as the result of its dependence on others. This dependence is not one-sided. The individuals "recognize themselves as mutually recognizing themselves" (*PS* 110.29/M 112). This mutual interdependence is the real framework in which the formation and enculturation (*Bildung*) of the human individual takes place. Hegel shows that the self cannot exist as a solitary individual nor even as an ego that merely coexists with others. The individual self must be engaged in specific relations with others characterized by mutual interest and involvement. Yet relating to other selves is not relating to oneself; it necessarily is and must be recognized as relating

to *others* who are not only distinct from, but are also opposed to oneself. The process of recognition is thus a dialectical progression towards the unity of conflicting entities in which the otherness of what is opposed is not simply consumed, but rather is appropriated in a way that allows development to higher stages of the (historical) involvement and development of consciousness.

The key theme of Hegel's discussion of a struggle for recognition is that subjectivity is mediated through relations with other people. This involves recognizing a very basic feature of our mutual interdependence, even as thinkers, namely our intersubjectivity. Hegel's insight here is that subjectivity is always intersubjectivity, because our subjectivity is necessarily mediated through our relations with others. Our intersubjective life and activity, including our knowledge, he calls "spirit." Hegel points out that in the struggle for recognition, where "one self-consciousness exists for [another] self-consciousness," the "concept of *spirit* is already available for us" (PS 108.29–35/M 110). He continues:

What further becomes for consciousness is the experience of what spirit is, this absolute substance, which, in the perfected freedom and self-sufficiency of its opposition, namely various different self-consciousnesses which are for themselves, is their unity, the *I* that is *we*, and the *we* that is *I*. Consciousness first has its turning point in Self-consciousness, as in the concept of spirit, at which it steps out of the colorful show of the sensuous here and out of the empty night of the supersensible beyond into the spiritual day of the present. (PS 108.35–109.3/M 110–11)

In this passage Hegel reconfirms that the formation of the individual subject is inconceivable without its involvement in the subject–subject relation and interacting with other individuals who are also interested in such interactions. The specifics of mutual interdependence lie in the fact that, although it results from our individual activity, it necessarily has within it fundamental universal elements. This universality is determined by the very character of social connections. Although intersubjective relations are heterogeneous, they always have something in common, viz. common ways of behaving, both bodily and linguistically, without which interaction among individuals cannot occur. What is common in each of us, without which our life would be impossible, is our communal and social nature. This Hegel designates "spirit."

In later chapters of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel further explains the idea of intersubjectivity by highlighting its centrality to human social life in the various forms of its appearance. By examining social dimensions of human individuals, including the customs, practices, and institutions within which individuals become who they are, he shows that individuals and social institutions are mutually interdependent; neither exists nor has the character it does without its proper complement. Yet already in the chapter on self-consciousness, Hegel shapes and underlines the whole concept of intersubjectivity.²¹ Hegel's concept attempts to overcome the atomistic view of the isolated individual who is essentially self-contained and complete prior to his engagement with the world and entering into any relations with other rational beings. The other becomes an indispensable condition for the consciousness and the actualization of one's own freedom. At the same time,

Hegel makes clear that the coexistence of free agents and their interaction presupposes as an *a priori* condition the idea of *community* of individuals that is, not historically, but transcendently prior to these individuals. A "we" grounds the "I"; not only is my freedom possible only by my agency being acknowledged by my community, but the very concept of individuality is a reciprocal concept and can be thought only in relation to another self. Making recognition a crucial element of the progression of the "I" for its sheer self-awareness, Hegel demonstrates that individuals are conscious of themselves only as participants in collective values, endeavors, and institutions, not as atomic individuals, bearers of independent selfhood unto themselves. Unlike Descartes or Fichte, whose approaches to subject and subjectivity can be described in terms of "atomistic individualism," Hegel develops a position of "moderate collectivism."²² On this view, epistemic justification cannot depend simply on the single individual subject. Each epistemic principle must be developed in a justificatory process that must obtain not merely individual but collective validity. It is not sufficient to assess someone's judgment individually; epistemic justification requires mutual assessment of many rational individuals. Thus although individual autonomy and the epistemic conditions of the individual subject are necessary for rational justification, only collective ("universal") autonomy can fully achieve such justification. The same point holds regarding the social practices and principles that govern communal life, which likewise can be justified only in and through interrelations among individuals.

In contrast to Fichte, who also stresses the importance of intersubjective relations for the self's development, but whose understanding of intersubjectivity remains abstract, Hegel contends that intersubjectivity is an active and necessary engagement with concrete communal and social life. He views intersubjectivity as a crucial element of the life of any individual. The self-awareness and the sense of individuality of any subject are mediated by relations to other people. If one's free agency is not acknowledged by other rational subjects, one can not become properly conscious of oneself and one's personality. The relations between self and other are fundamental to human awareness and activity. The otherness that consciousness first experiences as a barrier to its goals is the (apparent) external reality of the natural and social world. This apparent externality blocks individual freedom and independence. Yet this otherness cannot be destroyed without destroying oneself, so there must be some reconciliation between the other and the self so that consciousness grasps itself through the other. This stage of reconciliation involves and requires reciprocal recognition. Through acknowledging the other as another and likewise as a self, one comes to recognize oneself as a free and conscious being. One's consciousness or self-awareness is possible only through mutual recognition by other subjects; this justifies our collective and social nature.²³ This is why the intersubjective activity that animates our spiritual, that is, our communal life takes place in a broad context of social reality and is a crucial part of the process of enculturating the self. The mechanisms of this enculturation as well as the ways we express ourselves collectively and culturally Hegel analyzes in the sections on "Reason" and "Spirit."

3.3 Subjectivity and the social world

Concluding that individual self-understanding is dependent upon a communal understanding, Hegel logically shifts his narrative to overtly historical and social considerations. The main theme of the chapter on "Reason" is the self-realization and self-actualization of the individual in the social realm. Hegel's central question here is how and to what degree we express ourselves collectively. The basic theme of "Reason" is thus the objectification of the subjective. Since this objectification takes place in social reality, Hegel focuses on *socially* objectified, mutable forms of self-realization of individual subjects.

Hegel begins his analysis with an historical excursus into the concept of social reality. He shows that modern understanding of social reality is built upon the concept of "impersonal" universal reason which finds its roots in the idea of the Christian God. In Christianity, God appears as the bearer of the highest truth to which we human beings willingly submit. Human life is thus not just fully dependent on, but gains its meaning only through God and His "pure" existence. Applied to human affairs this idea is reflected in recognition of the fundamental, constitutive role of the "impersonal" (supra-individual) reason for social life.²⁴

Hegel points to the Greek *polis* as the first and perhaps the most striking example of a form of life built on the principle of reason. The ancient city-state displays a social form that is recognized by its participants as constituted by a rational system of law. Thus reason is implicitly identified as the substance of this form of life: in a *polis*, people live bonded by an ethical substance (*sittliche Substanz*), a set of shared practices and standards that undergird Greek social life. The rationality in question has no justificatory value, although it has a practical significance, because it is rational to do things in the customary way. Hegel, for whom the Greeks and the Greek way of life always serve as a positive background for discussion, praises the Greek *polis* as a form of social life in which the individual could achieve his fulfillment in public roles. However, Greek culture counts as "immediate spirit" because it lacks sufficient rational resources to resolve fundamental normative conflicts. Its "substantive unity between the self and the world" is indexed temporal and soon becomes an opposition between the community and individuals. The "ethical power of the state . . . as actual universality is a power opposed to individual being-for-itself" (PS 242.27–30/M 268). This leads to neglecting individuality: "this [particular] individual counts only as an *unactual shadow*" (PS 251.12/M 279).²⁵

According to Hegel, not only the Greek *polis*, but also other pre-modern models of social life neglect individuality, for their social realities are built without regard to individuals' intentions and their own ideas of what is good and right.²⁶ Thus even though individuals are already conscious of themselves as participants in social institutions, no social actualization of rational individuality is possible here. Not only are the individual and the world split, but the social forms of life appear in unreconciled conflict with its individual forms. The capacity to recognize

autonomous individuals as the bearers of collective and social values is the distinguishing mark of modern culture and politics. The basic concepts of law, morality, and religion in the modern age rest on the claim that individuals may act according to their own rationally determined convictions and that social institutions respect these convictions.

Yet, as Hegel shows, Modern culture initially fails to develop a model of social reality that can give appropriate expression to these claims. Neither a Faustian attempt to reconstruct the "true" reality in terms of the "full human life," nor a sentimental belief in the "law of the heart," nor an appeal to "virtue" and altruism is able to provide a model that can explain the self-actualization of individuals in and through social actions and judgments. Hegel argues that Modern culture cannot succeed in principle, for the opposition between individual action and universal ("impersonal") reason is irreconcilable, at least in the form in which it appears in the Modern culture. Hegel interprets this as a sign of a deep crisis in reason, and therefore in modern culture itself. The essence of this crisis he sees in the "individualism" of Modern culture. He explains that in its concern with actualization of individuality within social life, Modern culture focuses on private interests and claims of individuals instead of focusing on social institutions which represent a collective consciousness and universal will. In this way, Modern theories take the individual and its quest for self-actualization individualistically. Even Kant, who comes to the rescue of Modern culture and seems to respond to the challenge of "impersonal" reason by his concept of the "kingdom of ends," which consists of spontaneously acting, self-legislating individuals, does not fully appreciate and consider the manifold mutual dependencies among interacting individuals. For this reason, Hegel argues, although it is important in terms of Modern intellectual development, Modern culture is not able to provide a coherent model for the self-actualization of individuals and thus it cannot serve as an actual guide to action.

The main lesson of Hegel's brilliant if sometimes obscure series of portraits of European life and his critique of Modern models of social reality is that individual self-actualization fails when it uses as its starting point its own individualistic convictions. In real society, the self-actualization of the individual always occurs not only in the context of one's mutual interdependence with other people, but within collective forms of life. As Hegel puts it,

The *single* consciousness . . . is only 'this' extant one, in so far as he is conscious of the universal consciousness within his own being as his [very] being; since his action and existence are the universal custom.

In the life of the people the concept of the actualization of self-conscious reason has in fact its completed reality, to view in the self-sufficiency of the *other* its complete unity with it, or to have as my object this *free beingness* of the other which I find before me, which is the negative of myself, as *my* being for *myself*. (PS 194.14–21/M 212)

Thus individual self-actualization depends not only on desires and decisions of this concrete individual but also on intentions and actions of other practical agents and is necessarily influenced by law, customs, and other social factors.

By conceiving of social reality in this way, Hegel accomplishes several things. First, he reaffirms the idea of intersubjectivity, but now as a medium of self-realization of the individual. The individual self that is real "in and for itself" "presents" or "expresses" itself in the social world through intersubjective activity. Second, in this way Hegel also stresses the social dimensions of human individuals. Social life is the crucial element of any individuality and subjectivity:

[Individuals] are conscious of themselves as being these individual self-sufficient independent beings through their sacrifice of their particularity and by this universal substance being their soul and essence, just as this universal again is their own *being* as particular individuals, or is the work they have brought forth. (PS 194.26-29/M 212-13)

Only in social reality and through participating in social institutions and practices do individuals become who they are. This occurs only when they "sacrifice" their particularity, "give up" their pure individual needs and desires and "dissolve" themselves in the universal, making communal and social goals their own.

The idea of "dissolving" the individual in the universal is often taken as a sign of Hegel's universalism and his emphasis of the universal over the particular. I grant that Hegel is indeed guilty of sometimes not avoiding such a problem, which is due to the absolute character of his idealism. Yet in this particular context Hegel is absolutely right to stress the universality of the social subject. Here he clearly grasps that the practical agent acting on the scene of social reality is not a single subject or a separate individual, but rather an associate within an association of individuals, or, more precisely, individuals organized into a community. This "universal agent" that Hegel calls "a people" bears a "communal" self-consciousness. Hegel does not claim that institutions or collective organizations like civil society or the state have their own consciousness in the sense of having subjective representations or ideas. Although he argues that the community's self-understanding can sometimes be embedded in special individuals who represent the values and goals of a community, he stresses that communal self-consciousness is not the same as individual self-consciousness. They are, however, linked to each other in a specific way. "Communal" self-consciousness, though distinct from individual self-consciousnesses, emerges and develops through interplay among individuals in their conscious interactions within the social sphere. Furthermore, we human beings are not just "situated" in social reality, but rather are immanent in the social world and *produce* the socio-political context which is the theater of our own actions. Communal spirit does not descend upon the world and upon us from without, but emerges from *within* as a product of our own intersubjective (communal) activity through our sustained interactions. This is true even of the individualists' favorite example of individual economic initiative:

The *labor* of the individual for his needs is equally a satisfaction of the needs of others as of his own, and the satisfaction of his own needs he obtains only through the labor of others. — As the individual in his *individual* work already *unconsciously* performs a *universal* work, so again he also performs the universal work as his *essential* object;

the whole becomes, *as a whole*, his work, for which he sacrifices himself and thereby receives himself back from it. (PS 195.1-7/M 213)

This "whole," however, is not something separate from or alien to the individual. Although the individual "sacrifices" its singularity for the universality of the whole, the person's individuality does not simply disappear into communal spirit; it retains its "essential particularity" and independence within the social sphere. This retention of singularity and individuality is guaranteed by the universality of communal spirit itself. In Hegel's own words, "that even the most common functions [of the particular individual] are not for naught, but have actuality, occurs through the universal sustaining medium, through the *might* of the culture people" (PS 194.32-35/M 213).

In this way Hegel stresses that individuals and social institutions are *mutually interdependent*; neither exists nor has its character without the other. Thus, contrary to widespread misunderstanding, Hegel does not subordinate individuals to their communities; both aspects are necessary for each other and dependent upon each other. Just as an individual self cannot achieve its full self-realization without manifesting and actualizing itself in and through social and communal forms of life, the (self)-development of the universal ("communal") self, which *is* spirit, is not possible without individuals' participation in concrete historical and social processes. To appreciate this kind of development is the point of Hegel's philosophy of history, which in the *Phenomenology* is laid out as the philosophy of "cosmic" or world-historical spirit. The exposition of self-development of spirit reveals the communal nature of humanity.

In the chapter on "Reason," Hegel clearly shows that the self-actualization of individuals must be understood in terms of human production of the social context and collective forms of human existence. It would be mistaken, however, to understand this claim as confirming the idea that only collective forces are real and individuality has no independent reality. Quite the contrary, what makes the social world real for Hegel is the individual and his action. Hegel argues that

this universal substance speaks its *universal language* in the customs and laws of its people; yet this extant unchanging essence is nothing other than the expression of the apparently opposed particular individuality itself; the laws express what every individual person *is* and *does* . . . (PS 195.11-15/M 213)

The true agent of the world is not a disembodied universal reason or communal spirit, but the individual in his concrete subjectivity. Social or communal reality is produced by the individual as a manifestation of his own individuality and subjectivity. This is, however, not an automatic but a conscious social activity of the individual subject. Hegel stresses that the individual can be "real" only when he becomes aware of the social order and manifests this awareness in his own social role. According to Hegel, the only sphere where the individual can actualize himself is the sphere of living culture. Historical discussion of culture and its role in self-development of the human individual and humanity is the central theme of Hegel's chapter on "Spirit."

3.4 "Bildung" as a link between individual and universal

Hegel's chapter on "Spirit" is rich in content and examines a broad range of important philosophical issues and concepts. Here I focus on an idea rarely discussed, though essential to our topic, namely Hegel's concept of *Bildung* and its significance for his account of concrete subjectivity. This discussion sheds light on Hegel's response to the issue of how we can discern the adequacy of our apparent self-knowledge (both individual and collective) within our social and cultural context.

In his analyses of social reality, Hegel points out that the social world is not simply a result of our collective enterprise, but is also our *historical* product. Although any individual at any given time participates in this production, we create our social context collectively through our historical actions. The social world is not a making of one individual or any single group; neither is it an outcome of only one (even most noble and commonly esteemed) particular action. It is instead a creation of mankind, the result of generations of activity of human beings through history. This history is a concrete process of human development which itself occurs in social and cultural reality. Each single generation, each historical period, leaves its unique individual traces in this grand process. These traces are depicted in human culture, which, according to Hegel, is never static, but always constantly developing, moving, and changing.

We human individuals stand in complex relations to this spontaneous element. As single subjects we seem to be thrown into a certain social environment and thus encounter the culture as a world that is given to us as "ready-made." Yet in our encounter we necessarily establish relations to what we encounter and thus become engaged in certain activities within our culture. This is the discovery of what we find as "ready-made." This process of discovery is not just a cognitive, but concurrently a practical activity of internalization of what is external. In this way, the individual decodes the meaning(s) of what he encounters. Yet by engaging practically with cultural phenomena, he also produces new objects, situations, and meanings that themselves become events within the culture. These events appear as such not only to the individual agent, but also to other individuals; thus their interactions are mediated by social and cultural objects and events. Hence culture penetrates all spheres of human reality and affairs, and is a collective human undertaking.

In his section on "Spirit" Hegel offers a grand panorama of the historical process of culture, though by focusing on a specific aspect that he considers crucial for the development of human subjectivity. This he calls 'Bildung', meaning the *process of enculturation* mentioned above. By focusing on *Bildung*, Hegel follows many of his great contemporaries,²⁷ yet his approach is novel. The novelty lies in a new meaning assigned to the term by Hegel. In contrast to his contemporaries, Hegel interprets *Bildung* not as an education narrowly construed as what takes place on the individual level, but rather as a universal historical process in which we all are collectively involved and in which we necessarily participate.

Hegel clearly distinguishes between *Kultur* and *Bildung*. While "culture" (*Kultur*), in his view, generally designates whatever is in one's social environment, "enculturation" (*Bildung*) designates whatever one has internalized or (better yet) mastered from and within that environment. Hegel's distinction marks an advance over his predecessors and contemporaries, including Kant and Fichte. Hegel builds on this distinction by emphasizing the process of enculturation, which provides him with the context for addressing distinctions between the integration of, e.g., subject and object, individual and universal, or inner and outer. These processes do not occur or unfold of themselves, but require and occur in actual, historical work by individuals, groups (e.g., production or research groups), or even peoples.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel shows that *Bildung* is a multifaceted phenomenon. Several of Hegel's insights into *Bildung* are especially germane here. The first and most easily identifiable role of *Bildung* in Hegel's work is to label the process of individual cultural (or spiritual) development. The path of the *Phenomenology* as a whole (including its internal transitions) represents the *Bildung* of the individual consciousness, the transformation from its purely natural or unenlightened standpoint of sense-certainty and its lack of self-awareness to the concluding philosophical standpoint, where the individual becomes fully aware of himself through rational reflection on his knowledge and his social role. This is a process by which the "I" develops into concrete subjectivity. This transformation is not a natural biological process, nor is it mere growth, like natural organic growth. *Bildung* necessarily assumes the active involvement of the individual as well as his full conscious commitment; it is an individual's *self-overcoming* of the naturalness and sense-certainty and his *self-development* towards full awareness of himself. Because the individual is not solitary, because his relation to the world is mediated through his relations with other people, *Bildung* is a conscious activity of interdependent individuals.²⁸

The second role of *Bildung* in Hegel's *Phenomenology* concerns how the individual's *Bildung* occurs through his *recapturing* and *appropriating* the "history of the cultural development of the world" (PS 25.7/M 16), which represents the "stages" of the process of enculturation (*Bildungsstufen*) of the "world spirit." Thus the single individual, in the process of his self-enculturation, goes through the stages which the "cosmic" spirit has traversed and in which it has left its traces. So the individual discovers these stages as the great spiritual "conquerors of the past." Hegel writes:

This past existence is already acquired property of universal spirit which constitutes the substance of the individual or his inorganic nature. — In this regard the individual's process of enculturation (*Bildung*), considered from his side, consists in the individual appropriating what thus lies before him, to nourish himself upon his inorganic nature and to take possession of it for himself. (PS 25.7–12/M 16)

The individual, who is "thrown" into and brought up in the culture, is already influenced and constituted by existing culture and its traditional values, norms, and standards. Thus tradition appears as the individual's substance, the constitutive

foundation of his subjectivity. Yet from the start the individual views that tradition as something external and foreign; although in itself, as a social substance, it is a spiritual essence, it does not appear to fit the individual's own spirit and his urge for spiritual independence and freedom. The solution to this real conflict lies in the individual *appropriating* tradition and making it his own, internalized content: what was "inorganic" now becomes part of an individual's "organic" nature. In these terms Hegel discusses the very important issue of individual *internalization* of cultural history. Hegel contends that this process involves a special relation between the single individual and the "cosmic" spirit. Hegel points out that

the task of guiding the individual from his uncultivated standpoint to [the standpoint of] knowing had to be grasped in its universal sense, by considering the universal individual, the world spirit, in its enculturation. (PS 24.13–15/M 16)

Seen from the perspective presented in the *Phenomenology*, the individual views and internalizes cultural history as the *Bildung* of spirit itself. Thus the single individual depends upon the universal spirit both as the source from which individual persons derive much of their identity (in the sense of culturally elaborated values and norms), and also as the framework for evaluation of their achievements. Hegel stresses, however, that there can be no "cosmic" spirit separate from the particular individuals: the former exists, thinks, and acts *only in* concrete individuals, and the spirit's "self-development" is due to the dynamic development and continuous transformation of these individuals. This is why Hegel demands that tradition and cultural history receive their import not merely from the process of the *Bildung* of spirit itself, but rather from the individual's *making* this tradition his own. In this way, the immanent critique of tradition is not only possible; it is for Hegel a crucial source of progress in culture and in human history. Thus the individual remains the ultimate measure and the "absolute form" of the process of enculturation.

At the same time, Hegel warns that the process of *Bildung* is not merely a biographical but a historical human undertaking. It unfolds itself as a social process, on the basis of which alone individuals can reinvestigate various topics and issues to advance our collective knowledge and understanding by better identifying the genuine characteristics of any specific natural or social phenomenon (cf. PS 10–12/M 1–3). In *Bildung*, human individuals not only become knowledgeable about the natural and social world, but also conscious of themselves and their own place within the world.

Fundamental to Hegel's conception of *Bildung* is that it is not automatic, nor is it the mere unfolding of pre-formed potentials. Instead, whatever potentials are realized through *Bildung* are general ones; whatever specific forms they acquire are literally constructed by us, whether individually or collectively, in working through whatever problems we confront or puzzles we seriously investigate. Through this alone do we acquire our essential "second nature" – in this Hegel agrees with both Aristotle and Marx (cf. PS 267.26–37/M 298) – as educated, effective rational agents capable of expressing ourselves in our own actual activi-

ties.²⁹ Such ability for self-expression, either in thought or action, is a vehicle of self-awareness and self-knowledge, when we recognize, assess, and respond to what we have in fact done. This process, diligently pursued, develops our genuine freedom, our intellectual and practical command of ourselves and of our world, both social and natural.³⁰ Thus the process of enculturation (*Bildung*) is central to and provides the basis for both our self-realization and knowledge of our social and natural environment. Furthermore, we are not mere observers nor disinterested, disengaged thinkers. Instead, we are active, effective agents, actual vehicles and loci of that process. This is why both our failures and our successes become part of the context of our further actions, inquiries, or experiments and thus an essential part of our collective (universal) and individual (empirical) subjectivity.

Three very important points directly follow from this discussion. First, it is impossible to understand Hegel's account of concrete subjectivity (and his conception of selfhood) without grasping his concept of *Bildung*. The process of enculturation requires and guarantees conscious activity of the self in Hegel's philosophy, since without this activity there is no *Bildung* and, therefore, no subjectivity at all. Furthermore, *Bildung* appears as a constitutive element of human subjectivity. It is not some kind of additional activity we undertake in order to satisfy some individual desire or to achieve a determinate and temporal goal. Instead, this is the most important mode of our existence in the world. Second, it is a misinterpretation of Hegel's account of *Bildung* to reduce it either to a merely individual intellectual event (education, narrowly construed) or to economic production.³¹ Hegel contends that *Bildung* is a real historical process occurring within the life of any individual, any culture, and (in principle) even the human race. It is a concrete universal process in which we human beings necessarily participate and through which we become aware of ourselves and our natural and social environment. Third, *Bildung* provides a conceptual bridge between distinct and conflicting notions of subject and object, individual and universal, internal and external. The link Hegel forges between the process of individual enculturation and the *Bildung* of "cosmic" spirit indicates the essential interdependence of individual and universal in social, cultural, and historical life. Just as there is no individuality without the individual's participation in universal social and cultural life, there can be no such universal cultural life without activity of individuals. In the process of enculturation, the individual, both as concrete subject and as a collective historical subject, humanity at large, creates culture and at the same time creates himself through culture.

4 Conclusion

Hegel's *Phenomenology* offers a great panorama of the development and embodiment of spirit within the real world. Accomplished in and through the activity of human individuals over historical time, this process exhibits the progression of human self-understanding and freedom. What is described from the perspective of "cosmic" spirit, at the same time takes place and should be understood from

another perspective, as a real development of human individuals. In the *Phenomenology* we observe a double movement: the embodiment and realization of "cosmic" spirit in individuals and the development of individuals raising themselves to "cosmic" spirit. Both movements, though opposite in direction, coincide historically and practically; only taken together can they reconstruct the real process of the historical development of human spirit captured in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. We must read this movement in both directions at once. The individual self becomes who he is by absorbing spirit – in the variety of all its forms and appearances (*Gestalten*) in the world – into his own specific structures, and conversely, spirit reaches its self-realization in and through its embodiment in individuals who interact with each other and the world. According to Hegel, this complex process of mediation between collective spirit and individual spirits is human history.

Grounding his social ontology in the concept of spirit, Hegel presents human history as the history of human community and communal forms of life. He shows that individuals are *communal, social* agents. As a natural creature, conditioned by its biological and physiological configurations, the individual develops all his abilities, skills, and characteristics through his engagement with the culture and community which fosters and educates him through the process of *Bildung*. Yet this dependence of individuals on their community is not one-sided. Just as individuals cannot become who they are without engaging in communal life, there is neither communal life nor human communities without their real agents, human individuals who think, will, and act, and through whose actions alone human history occurs and becomes real. Thus individuals and their communities are mutually interdependent and their developments reciprocally condition and complement each other. This is what Hegel analyzes in the *Phenomenology* in terms of the interrelation of spirit and concrete subjectivity. Hegel maintains that only taken as a mutual process of individual and communal development can we understand universality within human history and preserve the autonomy of its social agents.

Notes

- 1 Cf. Lawith (1991), Theunissen (1970, esp. 59–62), Schmidt (1974), Henrich and Horstmann (1984).
- 2 Cf. Pippin (1999), Rosen (1974), Taylor (2000), Pinkard (2000).
- 3 This statement directly concerns "cosmic" substance as subject. However, Hegel holds the same view about individual subjectivity. This view clearly pervades Hegel's Introduction; it is formulated most directly in these two sentences: "... consciousness is for itself its own *concept*, hence it immediately transcends what is limited, and, since this limitedness belongs to it, it transcends itself" (PS 57.25–27/M 51); "This *dialectical* movement, which consciousness exercises on itself – on its knowledge as well as its object – *inssofar as the new, true object emerges to consciousness* as the result of it, is precisely that which is called *experience*" (PS 60.15–18/M 55).
- 4 In the Preface, Hegel points out that the result does not represent the "actual whole"; the latter is "the result together with its becoming" (PS 10.35–36/M 2).
- 5 Cf. above, pp. 2–6. – Ed.

- 6 For detailed analysis of Fichte's concept of individual subjectivity see Bykova (2008, 131–39).
- 7 Wespahl (1998, 139–40). Cf. above, pp. 10, 14. – Ed.
- 8 One of the best treatments of Hegel's notion of "dialectical" contradiction and its distinction from the formal-logical concept of contradiction is in Wolff (1977, esp. 35–57, 102ff.).
- 9 Burbidge (2006, 38, Footnote 2; cf. 65–6, 72–3).
- 10 For detailed analysis of all three facets of Hegel's account of subjectivity, see Bykova (1991).
- 11 For an extended analysis of the *Science of Logic* as a theory of absolute subjectivity, see Düsing (1984).
- 12 Cf. Horstmann (1990), Fuda (1990), Höle (1998, esp. vol. 1), Pinkard (2000), Pippin (2005, esp. 27–56), Selgel (2005, 391–423).
- 13 Burbidge (2006, 24).
- 14 Perhaps the most interesting in this regard is Hegel's course on the *Philosophy of Spirit* taught in the Winter semester of 1827/1828 (Hegel 1994).
- 15 Some of Hegel's central ideas about "pure" or "absolute" subjectivity also find their roots in the *Phenomenology*, which was originally shaped as a paradigm and first part of Hegel's philosophical system and only later gave way to logic and the *Encyclopedia*.
- 16 Such a position is especially well articulated in Höle (1998, vol. 1). Cf. Halbermas (1999).
- 17 One clear indicator of this is that in both editions of the *Logic*, Hegel states that the *Phenomenology*, uniquely, is the "justification" and "deduction" of the standpoint of the *Logic* (GW 11:20.5–18, 21:32.23–33.3; 11:20.37–21.11, 21:33.20–34.1).
- 18 In his detailed commentary on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Henry Harris points out that Hegel's genuine philosophy of history is in the *Phenomenology* and not in the *Philosophy of World History*, as is traditionally assumed. Harris argues that, "the Science of Experience is properly the speculative philosophy of history as applied to and perfectly exemplified in the history of Western Europe as one self-constituted, and self-conscious (i.e. universally recognized) community. Seen thus, in its proper perspective, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a far more interesting essay in the speculative philosophy of history, than the *Philosophy of World History* as conceived and executed at Berlin in the context of Hegel's mature system. . . . The *Phenomenology* shows us what the *Weltgeist* is; the *Philosophy of World History* appears to take it for granted that we already know that" (Harris 1997, 2:732–3). Coming to agree with Harris's intention to stress the actual significance of the historic development presented in the *Phenomenology*, I still think that its main objectives do not coincide with the aim of the *Philosophy of World History*. In my opinion, Hegel's main concern in the *Phenomenology* is the history of self-consciousness, which purpose lies in the systematic genesis of cognitive capacities of the human mind. In contrast to Fichte and Schelling, who conceived the history of self-consciousness as a development of cognitive capacities as such, Hegel takes this to be a historical process, by which natural consciousness advances in justification of our claims, both cognitive and practical.
- 19 Zoller (2000, 208).
- 20 The same point, though in connection with Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, is stressed by Kenneth Westphal, when he explains Hegel's statement that substance is nothing but interrelation of its accidents (and vice versa): "Hegel stated his view in easily misunderstood metaphysical terms. He states that individuals are related to the ethical order and its powers "as accidents to substance" (§145). This certainly can sound like individuals are subservient to a social whole. However, Hegel held that "substance is in essence the relation of accidents to itself" (§163R). This is to say, substance is essentially the relation among the 'accidents' (properties or members) of something. More

- briefly, he stated that "substance is the totality of its accidents" (§67R). This doctrine is part of Hegel's holistic metaphysics, and it is stated in the section of the *Encyclopaedia* to which Hegel refers in §163R, *Enc.* §150ⁿ (Westphal 1993, 265 n. 5.) Also see Westphal's (1994) annotated excerpts from Hegel's *Phenomenology*, in which he explicates this point in the *Phenomenology*:
- 21 Here, however, he *only explains* the concept, while still setting the stage for a "real performance": a proof that this concept is true of us human beings. This proof is outlined in the chapter on "Spirit" and then further detailed, bringing in more factual historical material in the *Philosophy of Right*. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel develops his proof for intersubjectivity in terms of the concept of a community of free agents. This community is not just an association based on reciprocal recognition, but requires a kind of supra-individual identity that is distinct from and logically prior to the individuals. This supra-individual identity is warranted by intersubjective relations. In the case of a more abstract community of right (at the beginning of the *Philosophy of Right*) the exponent of subjectivity is right itself as the universal substance of the will of the individuals.
- 22 In ascribing this position to Hegel, I follow Kenneth Westphal (2006) who calls Hegel's unique social ontology 'moderate collectivism'. He argues that Hegel "undercut the sterile debate between [atomistic] 'individualism' and 'holism' in social ontology" (*ibid.*, 555) by showing the social character of human individuals and the mutual interdependence of individuals and their communities. For more detailed discussion of this topic, especially in relation to epistemological issues, see Westphal (2003, esp. chapter 10).
- 23 In one important sense, the German term '*das Bewußtsein*' means being conscious or aware of oneself.
- 24 See above, chapter 3, especially regarding "Unhappy Consciousness." — *Ed.*
- 25 Hegel discusses this idea in the *Philosophy of Right*, showing that the issues of subjective freedom and the right of the subject's particularity were missing in antiquity and came into life only in modern times, with the advent of Christianity (cf. *PR* §§124R, 46R, 185). Commenting on Hegel's view, Allegra de Laurentiis (2000, 73) explains that, "Hegel's thesis is not a sweeping claim about antiquity's lack of concern for individual differences. He does not deny that the ancient world was able to discern or even acknowledge individual personality or the idiosyncratic character of people's particular existence. . . . Hegel's point is rather more specific: the ancient world could not tolerate, by penalty of its own disintegration, 'the autonomous development of particularity' (*PR* §185; emphasis by de Laurentiis). It is the *freedom or right to personal subjectivity*, not its contingent *Dasein*, that is ancient philosophy's 'foc.'"
- 26 In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel analyses in detail the failure of the ancient Greek and other pre-modern societies to acknowledge a right or freedom of subjectivity. He shows that personal subjectivity first becomes recognized only in the modern *politēia*, because, contrary to the Greek *polis*, "the principle of the modern state requires that the whole of an individual's activity shall be mediated through his will" (*PR* §299). Thus the subject must be not just engaged in social actions, but must engage in them voluntarily; the action must be "willed" to account for individual autonomy and freedom of subjectivity. This "intentional" character of subject's action was lacking in all pre-modern models of social life.
- 27 It is worth noting that the notion of *Bildung* was central to the German intellectual discourse of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. German romantics, great educators reformers as well as philosophers, each in his own manner, profoundly worked on the concept of *Bildung*; cf. Schmidt (1884–1902, esp. vol. 6).
- 28 *Bildung* is not construed by Hegel as a self-conscious goal of an individual's activity. Although the path of self-formation and self-fulfillment is one that each individual necessarily follows, *Bildung* is not originally set as one's own end or a self-assigned

- collective goal of the community of individuals. It would perhaps be better described as an example of a positive "unintended" consequence, like the one illustrated by Adam Smith's (1904, 4.2.9) metaphor of the "invisible hand." Smith argues that each individual, seeking "only his own gain, . . . [is] led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his [original] intention." The same is true of *Bildung*: acting from "their own self interest" (of gaining their own self-awareness and determining themselves), individuals also promote the end that is the collective (public) interest in becoming enculturated within culture and community. As an instance of Hegel's use of the sociological "law of unintended consequences," *Bildung* is construed as an unanticipated result of individuals' actions. To guarantee its progressive character, Hegel suggests that it must constantly undergo mutual assessment of its principles and occur under the scrutiny of the community.
- 29 As Frederick Neuhouser (2000, 149) notes in this connection, "although it is the essential nature of human beings to be free, freedom does not come naturally to [us]."
- 30 The same idea is more clearly articulated in the *Philosophy of Right*, where Hegel claims that in its "absolute determination" (*Bestimmtheit*), *Bildung* "is liberation and the work of higher liberation, . . . the absolute transition to a no longer immediate and natural, but a spiritual ethical substantiality." For the individual this process means "hard work against the mere subjectivity of behavior, against the immediacy of desire, as well as against the subjective vanity of feelings, and the arbitrariness of suiting oneself" (*PR* §187R).
- 31 For an interpretation of Hegel's notion of *Bildung* in terms of a narrowly construed education, see Münzel (2003, esp. 120–2, 124–6). Even Gadamer (1989, 9–12) tends to this misunderstanding.

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