THE PLOT OF HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY[1]

Hegel is the Aristotle of the modern world.—Wilfrid Sellars

As we are gradually coming to see, Hegel's project was to rethink Aristotle without any appeal to his authority but with a keen sense that the world in which Aristotle thought was not the modern world, the modernity that Hegel, more than any other, has enabled us to comprehend. Oddly, perhaps, it was just Hegel's rethinking of Aristotle and the difference between his world and ours that shaped his concept of modernity.

So there is a barrier, grasped by Hegel more clearly than by any other, between the modernity he has discovered and the world of Aristotle. How was that barrier to be breached? Without such a breach there could be no rethinking of Aristotle, only an 'authoritative' Aristotle, available for exploitation within post-Aristotelian modes of thought.

The problem was to comprehend, in the sense of *Begreifen*, post-Aristotelian modes of thought. How was he to do it? As the only major philosopher with a grasp of all the texts of antiquity in Greek and of post-Hellenic texts in their languages, he made several discoveries. The most important concerned differences between the Hellenic and post-Hellenic universes of discourse. He discovered that certain key post-Hellenic notions that had become critical for post-Hellenic philosophy did not exist in the Hellenic world. Some of these notions were 'consciousness,' 'object,' and 'will.'

Take 'consciousness.' In the post-Hellenic world it designates a mode of awareness that extends from the most determinate to the utterly indeterminate, which is taken to be paradigmatic. In the Hellenic world all awareness is determinate. Aristotle knew of the difference between terms that are determinate and those that are relatively indeterminate. These latter played the role of 'variables' in a mode of discourse that he invented: syllogistic, analytics, later called 'logic.' But indeterminate entities, akin to variables, play no role in Aristotle's physics or first philosophy, two key areas of Aristotelian 'theory.' That is why there is a systematic difference between logic and theory in Aristotle. With the post-Hellenic invention of consciousness as a potentially indeterminate arena of awareness, indeterminate or abstract entities could not be excluded. Hence the conflation of theory and logic.

Or take 'object.' Hegel probably did not know that this term made its way into Western philosophical discourse via a 9th century translation from the Arabic '*mawdu*' into Latin, '*objectum.*' But he grasped the point at issue. Like consciousness, object is a term that ranges from the determinate to the indeterminate, unlike any term (apart from Aristotle's logical variables) in Hellenic Greek. Allow me to repeat for emphasis: the word 'object,' embracing indeterminate entities, has no counterpart in Aristotle's Greek. That is why post-Hellenic thought was able to take a notion restricted to 'logic' in Aristotle and extend it to the realm of 'theory.'

Finally, 'will.' This is the term we use to designate the agency of action. In Hellenic discourse agency is always qualified by some determinate aspect of emotion, intellect, or character. But agency in post-Hellenic discourse comes to indicate agency per se, not necessarily determined by emotion, intellect, or character—in short, abstract willing. Hegel is most emphatic in stressing that such a notion of agency was alien to the ancient world. We usually associate such a concept of agency with Rousseau or Kant but the assertion of a proposition (*Satz*) as true in Frege's logic (as anticipated by Chrysippus) might be more indicative of its nature.

These three post-Hellenic innovations—consciousness, object, will—stood as a barrier to the comprehension of Aristotle and of Hellenic thought more generally. Each in its way invited a conflation of theory (always concerning the determinate) and logic (whose essence concerns indeterminate entities or variables).

Hence the need, if Aristotelian modes of thought were to be recovered in the modern world, for sorting out the differences between theory and logic. This is the task that Hegel undertook in his *PhG*.[2] This paper is another attempt to indicate how he did it.

In 1970 I suggested[3] that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*PhG*) has the compact literary form of dramatic poetry rather than the loose form of a *Bildungsroman*, as it had usually been read. In the meanwhile I have come to see that the *PhG* is the exact philosophical counterpart of a classic tragedy as conceived by Aristotle in the *Poetics* and by Hegel in his *Aesthetics*.[4] But whereas Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedies tend to depart from and develop conflicts between antique spheres of ethical life, the conflict in the *PhG* is between 'logic' and 'theory,' as spelled out in this essay.

My point here is to show how the 'formalist dream' launched by 'Stoicism,' of 'logic' as the key to 'theory,' of 'logical theory,' has generated the drama that Hegel depicts in the *PhG*. The dénouement of the plot is an insight into the millennial conflation of 'logic' with 'theory' and the rewinning of 'theory' as θεωρια under the conditions of 'modernity,' i.e., Hegel's systematic philosophy. This is the 'catharsis' of that tragic drama called the *PhG*. In *PhG* VIII Hegel calls this catharsis "Absolute Knowing" ("*Das absolute Wissen*"). In what follows I try to clarify the, to many, puzzling word 'absolute' as an absolving of the 'Stoic' habit.

One key to the 'Stoic' habit is the conflation of causality with inference, of theory with logic, the presumption that we can, either positively (e.g., Kant) or negatively (e.g., Hume), make the inference explicit.[5] The Stoics (esp. Chrysippus) explicitly conflated physical causality with logical inference.

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[2] *PhG* = Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), with pp. and §§. I have been reluctant to use paragraph numbers for the *PhG* because they suggest a false parallel between the *PhG* and the *Enz.* = Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, 3rd ed., 1830, in which Hegel used numbered paragraphs.

[3] Kenley R. Dove, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method" (= HPM), *Review of Metaphysics*, XXIII, 4, 1970, 615–641.

[4] In 1970, HPM 627n17, following Georg Lukács and Ernst Bloch, I mistakenly took Goethe's *Faust*, a "romantic" rather than a "classic" drama, to be the dramatic model.

[5] For a recent celebration of 'inference,' see Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994). Brandom's principal contrast is between 'inference,' his 'new paradigm,' and 'representation,' which he takes to be 'the

In Chrysippus' account of causality, which anticipates Kant's, the cause is said to be corporeal (or, roughly, empirical) whereas the effect is said to be a non-corporeal 'predicate' ("logical," "in the mind," a "sayable," λεκτον). As Sextus Empiricus reports: "The Stoics say that every cause (αιτιον) is a body which becomes a cause, to a body, of something incorporeal. For instance the scalpel, a body, becomes a cause to the flesh, a body, of the incorporeal predicate (κατηγορημα) 'being cut.' And again, the fire, a body, becomes the cause to the wood, a body, of the incorporeal predicate 'being burnt.'"[6]

To exemplify how language in the habit of 'Stoicism' is presupposed *prior to philosophical interpretation*, consider the following supposedly neutral characterization of the point of departure for a philosophy of language by the excellent Chomskyan Jerrold Katz, chosen almost arbitrarily from the contemporary literature:

> Roughly, linguistic communication consists in the production of some external, publicly observable, acoustic phenomenon whose phonetic and syntactic structure encodes a speaker's inner, private thoughts or ideas and the decoding of the phonetic and syntactic structure exhibited in such a physical phenomenon by other speakers in the form of an inner, private experience of the same thoughts or ideas.[7]

This presupposed linguistic frame of reference, with its fundamental distinction between an 'outer' language (the locus of causes) and an 'inner' language (the locus of effects), was invented and established by the Stoics in the 3rd century BC and has gone virtually unchallenged in the meanwhile, despite the 'private language' controversy in the last century. Hegel in the *PhG* was the first post-Stoic to come to terms with the issue, as I shall try to show. For Aristotle the question did not exist. Hegel's objective in the *PhG* was to get us back to the position of Aristotle with regard to language and logic.[8]

My point is that both Aristotle and Hegel draw a clear line of demarcation between formal logic and theoretical science. Formal logic cannot be made 'natural' and theoretical science cannot be made formally logical. For the formal language of term variables invented by Aristotle, i.e., syllogistic, is what it is by contrast with the natural language used in the theoretical sciences, in which, e.g., το ον λεγεται πολλαχως, "being [as well as all other theoretical entities] is spoken of in many ways." Full-

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received paradigm.' He claims Sellars and Hegel's *PhG* as sources for his new inferentialism but in the *PhG* inference and representation are both correlative features of the 'Form of consciousness,' on which see below.

[6] *Adv. Math.* 9.211 = *SVF* 2.341, A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley, trans., with emendation. The clearest and most recent discussion of Chrysippus in this regard is Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 18–21; 258–271.

[7] Jerrold J. Katz, *The Philosophy of Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 98.

[8] The only Hegel scholar known to me who has grasped the place of language and logic in Aristotle is Eric Weil, "La place de la logique dans la pensée aristotélicienne," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 56, 1951, 283ff. For Aristotle, as I will try to show, 'logic' or as he called it, 'analytics,' is separate from and indeed propaedeutic to 'theory' as a spelling out of the limits of analysis or proto-logic, as misused by Parmenides and Zeno and as exposed by Plato in his *Parmenides*, the touchstone for Aristotle's *Physics*.

For Aristotle, as I argue, 'logic' or 'analytics' is separate from and propaedeutic to theory, not the 'foundation' of 'theory' as urged by Stoicism.

It will be evident that what Hegel calls '*Logik*' in *Wissenschaft der Logik* (= *WdL*, Georg Lasson, ed., Leipzig: Meiner, 1934, 2 vols.) and *Enz.* Part I, is not 'logic' in the sense of this essay. It is rather theory, indeed, it is his reworking of what Aristotle regarded as the highest form of *theoria*, 'First Philosophy,' known since Andronicus' *Corpus Aristotelicum* as 'metaphysics.'

fledged 'logical' inference—what Hegel called '*Richtigkeit*' or 'correctness,' as opposed to '*Wahrheit*' or 'truth'—is only bought at the price of formalism.[9] The point of the *PhG* is to root out the habits and temptations of formalism.

Aristotle's and Hegel's clear line of demarcation between logic and theory can only be grasped in the context of their arguments as a whole. Neither made a 'definitive' statement on the issue. Still, it might be helpful to consider three fairly concise formulations in their own words:

(1) Illuminating passages in Aristotle as to the place of 'logic' vis-à-vis 'theory' are:

> … it is absurd (ατοπον) to be in search of a method when one is already engaged in [theoretical] knowing (*Meta.* II, 3, 995a13).

> And the attempts of some who discuss the terms on which truth should be accepted are due to a lack of education in 'analytics' [later called 'logic']; for they should know these things *already* when they come to a special study [i.e., before taking up a *theoretical science*], and not be enquiring into them while they are pursuing it. Evidently the philosopher, who is theorizing (θεωρουντος) the nature of all entity (ουσια), must *also* [but separately and preliminarily] inquire into the principles (αρχαι) of the syllogism (συλλογιστικως). (*Meta.* IV, 3, 1005b1–7, emphases added.)

(2) Here is Hegel on logic and theory in Aristotle:

> It is not to be believed that Aristotle's speculative theory is conceived, developed, or demonstrated in terms of his logic, the forms of his logical instruments (*Organon*). Had he done so he could not have made a single step towards theory.[10]

It is well known that the *PhG* includes a brief segment in chapter IV entitled "Stoicism" and that Hegel there acknowledges that the term he has chosen corresponds with a phase in the history of spirit (*PhG* 152 = § 198). But the topic of the *PhG* is not history. It is a sequence of shapes (*Gestalten*), or Blumenbergian 'positions,'[11] of consciousness that have, quasi-systematically, like an Aristotelianly conceived tragic plot, a beginning (*PhG* I), a middle (*PhG* II–VII), and an end (*PhG* VIII).[12] These consist in variations upon the root motif of the *PhG*, what Hegel calls 'the Form of consciousness.' A distinguishing characteristic of my interpretation is that I take the 'Form of consciousness'[13] to be even more Stoic than that *Gestalt* explicitly so called.

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9   For an account of the critical role of variables in formal logical inference see LTASH 276–287.
10 *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Jubiläumsausgabe, Vol. 18, Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1965, 414–415.
11 Hans Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966). Translation of the 1976 edition by Robert M. Wallace: *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983). On 'positions' see *Legitimacy*, 300 and 339.
12 Aristotle, *Poetics* 7, 1450b24–34.
13 "*Die Form des Bewußtseins*." See, e.g., *PhG* 490 = § 699, 507 = § 729. In *PhG* VIII it is also assimilated with "*die Form der Gegenständlichkeit*," "the form of objectness," PF 407; *PhG* 549 = § 788: " … es ist allein noch um das Aufheben dieser bloßen Form zu tun, oder vielmehr weil sie dem *Bewußtsein als solchem* angehört, muß ihre Wahrheit schon in den Gestaltungen desselben sich ergeben haben." "All that remains [to be done] is to eliminate this mere form. Or, more precisely, because this form pertains to *consciousness as such*, its truth must have already become evident in the development of the *Gestalten* of consciousness." PF 407. Cf. *WdL* I, 35 and *PhG* 553 = § 795: " … die Form, eine

WHAT IS STOICISM?

Let us consider Stoicism under four aspects: (1) Stoicism as an historical phenomenon, (2) the 'Form' of consciousness as Stoic, (3) Stoicism as a '*Gestalt*' of consciousness (in *PhG* IV, B), and (4) the overcoming of Stoicism (the 'absolution' of Stoicism, 'absolute' knowing, *PhG* VIII).

(1) STOICISM AS AN HISTORICAL PHENOMENON

As an historical phenomenon Stoicism took shape with the invention of the 'Form of consciousness.' As Hegel observes in his lectures on the history of philosophy, we must turn to Sextus Empiricus, a very 'objective' opponent, for an historical grasp of Stoicism. The immediate historical context is the Hellenistic world in the aftermath of the *polis*. That world, for which the beautiful ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of the *polis* was 'no longer' ('*nicht mehr*' in the parlance of the *PhG* V, b), was, in the words of W.H. Auden, "an age of anxiety," an age that possessed the written legacy of the Hellenic world together with the awareness that that world was hopelessly lost. But rather than romantically pining or engaging in the millennial games of '*polis* envy,' all of which presuppose the Stoic 'Form of consciousness,' the Stoics addressed the problem head on and constructed a new post-*politan* frame of reference for the human spirit, namely, 'mind,' a frame that has become 'second nature,' that has endured for more than 2,000 years, and which is the principal topic of the *PhG*.

The Stoic problem was that the Hellenic or *politan* Greeks had achieved a 'discovery of the human spirit' and that this discovery was preserved in writing during the fifth and fourth centuries BC whereas it first took shape under the conditions of illiterate *orality*. These writings make clear that human beings first discovered the spiritual beauty of human life *qua* human as the result of a program of 'upbringing'[14] whose result, for the first time in history, was a class of human beings (admittedly only adult male citizens of a *polis*) whose happiness (*eudaimonia*) was the object of the exercise (as opposed to the 'normal'—that is, pre- and post-*polis*—objectives of domination, enrichment, or salvation). These citizens were habituated for happiness, not by study, but by participation in the domestic rituals of the household (*oikos*) and the public rites of the *polis*. By these means men could be habituated to a life of virtue and made capable of a relatively complete life, a life of happiness.[15] As the ultimate phase of this development, Aristotle was able to articulate the consummatory mode of the happy life, available only to a very few lucky citizens, as the satisfaction of the desire to comprehend, the sheer pleasure of seeing (in Wilfrid Sellars' phrase) 'how the world hangs together in the broadest possible sense,' how every individual thing is a part of the whole by an activity that points, προς εν, to its own perfection (*Meta.* IV, 1). This seeing is what Aristotle called the most complete

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besondere Gestalt des Bewußtseins zu sein … "; "the form of being a *particular Gestalt of consciousness*," *PF* 411; 556 = § 797: " … in der Form einer *Gestalt des Bewußtseins* … "; "in the form of a *Gestalt of consciousness*," *PF* 412; 556 = § 798: " … *Form der Gegenständlichkeit* für das Bewußtsein … "; "*form of objectness* for consciousness," *PF* 413.

14 The word 'education' has become too intellectual, too Stoic, too literate, to translate '*paideia*.'

15 Despite his misdirection of Aristotle scholarship for much of the past century (i.e., his notion that Aristotle 'developed'), Werner Jaeger deserves credit for recognizing that the implicit purpose of the *polis*, unique so far to that way of life, was to bring certain men up to a life of happiness. That is the topic of his magnum opus, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*. Magnificent as the concept of *paideia* is it will always remain repugnant, as elitist, sexist, etc., to those (nearly everyone) imbued with the Stoic tradition.

activity, 'theorizing' (θεωρειν) and what Hegel would later call 'speculation.' The activity of individuals *qua* individuals (τοδε τι) Aristotle called ενεργεια.

Historically, and therefore also inadequately, we may catch sight of the emergence of the 'Form of consciousness' by considering the brief dialogue depicted by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* VIII, 275–277) between a Stoic and a Skeptic. The topic of discussion is how to identify the human spirit. It was not a topic that had arisen for the *politan* Greeks, who first discovered the human spirit and for whom that discovery was a matter of tacit knowledge and oral tradition. For them 'spirituality' was a matter of habituation or *paideia* and did not attach to any given species of animal, not even to the species *anthropos*. In the world of the *polis* the potentiality for human spirituality was only fully[16] realized by a very few males: those who had had the good fortune of being brought up and habituated by *paideia* in a good *polis*. With the demise of the *polis* (ca. 321 BC), the means to habituate *politan* animals was gone. It appears from Sextus' dialogue that the Stoics (he calls them 'the dogmatists') had at first tried to extend the *politan* notion of human spirituality to all members of that animal species which speaks. But they were apparently met by the skeptical objection that that definition could not exclude certain birds like parrots. Sextus then has his Stoic rejoin the argument thus:

> (1) They [the Stoic dogmatists] say that it is not uttered speech (*logos proforikos*) but internal speech (*logos endiathetos*) by which man differs from non-rational animals, for crows and parrots and jays utter articulate sounds. (2) Nor is it by the merely simple impression that he differs (for they too receive impressions), but by impressions produced by [logical] inference and combination. (3) This amounts to his possessing the conception of 'following' [inference] and directly grasping, on account of 'following,' the idea of sign. For sign is itself of the kind 'If this, then that.' (4) Therefore the existence of signs follows from man's nature [the origin of 'speciesism'] and constitution.[17]

This monumental and ground-breaking distinction, between 'uttered speech' and 'internal speech,'[18] between talk and inference, so essential for propositional logic, the 'logical faith,' and human rights, marks the advent of a way of speaking and thinking that will become 'second nature' for philosophy and much else in the West, sedimented and echoed for example in Hobbes' distinction between 'verbal discourse' and 'mental discourse.'

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[16] It is instructive to note that the wives, children, and slaves of citizens were regarded as *more fully* 'spiritual' than resident aliens (metics), some of whom, like the Cephalus who appears in Plato's *Republic* Bk. I, were very rich, and in the case of Cephalus' son, Lysias, very literate. See Aristotle, *Politics* I, 1260a30ff.

[17] Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 8.275–276 (*SVF* 2.223, in part), translation by A. Long & D. Sedley in *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Vol. 1, Cambridge: CUP, 1987, 317–318. This passage is illuminatingly discussed in Jeffrey Barnouw, *Propositional Perception*, Lanham: University Press of America, 2002, 154ff.

[18] Max Mühl, Richard Sorabji, and others have said that the Stoic bifurcation of the *logos* is adumbrated in Plato and Aristotle. As to Aristotle, "εν τη ψυχη," "in the soul," is indeed said at *An. Post.* I, 76b25, as cited by Sorabji *et al.*, but Mühl and Sorabji, like many others, have given a 'Stoic' misreading of Aristotle. Consideration of the same phrase in context at *An. Post.* II, 19, 100a1 and 100a7 will make this clear, especially in light of Aristotle's treatment there of νους as a εξις, or 'habit.' The difference between εν τη ψυχη and λογος ενδιαθετος, a Stoic neologism, is manifest. In short, there is no notion in Aristotle of any sphere of 'human spirituality' or *Geist* that attaches to a biological species and is in any way analogous to the postulation of that substitute for *paideia* spirituality that the Stoics made with their notion of an 'inner *logos*' or mind.

Hegel and others have fully appreciated what I have called the 'emancipatory moment' of Stoicism. The story he tells in his lectures on the philosophy of history would be quite unintelligible without it. It is the vital element for the second step in the celebrated progression of worlds from (A) One is Free, to (B) Some are Free, to (C) All are Free. What sets Hegel apart is his insight into the fact that this story, for all its world-historical importance in the liberation of slaves and, more recently, women, is only a story—that history *qua* history is insusceptible of philosophical comprehension.[19]

Most philosophers in the world of language ('Stoicism') have held that claims to know mentally (inwardly) what lies beyond the mind are either (a) dogmatic and properly to be regarded as mere conjectures—e.g., Sextus, Hobbes, Hume, the later Wittgenstein, Popper—or (b) guaranteed by the benevolent illumination of God the Creator—e.g., Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz. Kant was the first in the Stoic tradition to reject Augustinian illuminationalism as a scandal and challenge conjecturalism by a return to the original (pre-creationalist, i.e., pre-Philonic) Stoic teaching that sensible objects in the mind or consciousness derive their whole and part character from two 'logical' operations or *Verbindungen*: (1) intra-propositional 'predication,' *Zusammensetzung*, and (2) inter-propositional 'connection,' *Verknüpfung*, performed in the realm of the inner *logos* or mind, as in the Stoic account of causation mentioned above.[20]

The proto-Kantian form of Stoicism is not as well known as it deserves to be. Hence I will quote the best formulation of it known to me (it is from Sextus, *Adv. Math.* IX, 352–353 = *SVF* II, 80):

> ... the dogmatists [sc., the Stoics] are accustomed to say that what is external, underlying (υποκειμενον), and sensible (αισθητον) is neither a whole nor a part, but it is we who add the predicate 'whole' or 'part' to it. For 'whole' is a term of relation, since a whole is considered such with reference to the parts. And 'parts' are also relative, for they are considered parts with reference to the whole. But relations obtain in our 'consciousness' (συμμνημονευσει = literally, 'concurrent recollection'), and our consciousness is in us. Accordingly, the whole and the part are in us, and what is external, underlying, and sensible is neither a whole nor a part, but it is a thing of which we predicate our consciousness [or recollection].[21]

I do not wish to suggest that Kant had any knowledge of the above passage from Sextus. I do want to say that Kant's basic argument can be seen to be a 'reoccupation' (in the sense of Blumenberg) of the Stoic 'position' if we understand Stoicism in light of this sophisticated (proto-Kantian)

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[19] Recall Aristotle's *Poetics* 9, on poetry vs. history, and on poetry as 'more philosophical' than history, with which Hegel emphatically agrees. Hegel's reputation as a 'philosopher of history' is one of the leading travesties of recent intellectual history.

[20] See Kant, *KdrV* B 201n, "Alle Verbindung (conjunctio) ist entweder Zusammensetzung (compositio) oder Verknüpfung (nexus)" etc. "All combination (conjunctio) is either composition (compositio) or connection (nexus)" etc.

[21] Translation based on Jason L. Saunders, ed., *Greek and Roman Philosophy after Aristotle*, New York: Free Press, 1966, 67, with emendations and emphases. I do not believe that this anticipation of Kant in Stoicism has ever been pointed out in the scholarly literature. Those Kant scholars to whom I have pointed it out, e.g., Robert Pippin, have responded in astonishment and disbelief.

constructivism rather than in terms of the crude doctrine of the cataleptic impression as the criterion of truth usually associated with the Stoics.

(2) THE 'FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS' AS STOIC

The topic of the *PhG* is the problematic 'Form of consciousness' which emerged from the Stoics' treatment of inner language or mind as the surrogate for *politan paideia*. It is, to my knowledge, the first and only book to address this problem coherently. At one level, the problem can be easily stated, for we are all familiar with skepticism. Consciousness distinguishes from itself a factor to which it also attempts to relate itself. What consciousness distinguishes from itself is said to be 'for it.' What is 'for it' cannot, *ex hypothesi*, be presumed 'in itself' or objectively known without a 'scandalous'[22] belief in divine revelation, which typifies medieval thought, or a naïve belief in the extra-philosophical efficacy of 'the sciences,' a neo-medievalism (sometimes called 'the philosophy of science') that has marked much philosophy since the 17th century. Of course, we all tend to believe that we have objective knowledge. And, to Hegel, we are right so to believe. Our problem is that we try to explicate the rightness of our belief logically, within the 'Form of consciousness.'

Prima facie such formulations are easily shown to involve a dogmatism, namely, that we can distinguish an 'in-itself' within our field of conscious knowledge where all is at bottom 'for consciousness.' The unmasking of this dogmatism is called skepticism, classically formulated by Sextus Empiricus, and much more crudely reformulated by more recent skeptics. It is brought about by showing, using various time-tested means (tropes), that every putative 'in-itself' or criterion for bridging the gap between what is 'for consciousness' and what is 'in itself' is actually a matter of 'for-itself-ness' or irredeemably 'perspectival,' as Nietzsche put it.

Now Hegel, I have suggested, has for the first time located the dialectic of dogmatism *and* skepticism *within* the 'Form of consciousness.' That leads naturally to the question whether he has found a way to subject the '*Form* of consciousness' itself to skeptical refutation. The answer is yes but the way, the *PhG*, is not easy. Instead of a formal skepticism that functions within the opposition of consciousness, there is need for what he calls a "*sich vollbringende Skeptizismus*,"[23] a "thoroughgoing skepticism."[24] There is no operation, no trope, indeed, there is no Sextian list of tropes by which not merely a *Gestalt* of consciousness but also the 'Form of consciousness' might be brought to heel. *Ex hypothesi*, all would be performed *within* the opposition of consciousness and thus leave that Form intact.

But if we could see how consciousness originally posits the opposition of 'in itself' and 'for itself' by which it *is* consciousness and then consider how it undergoes, not as consciousness *per se* but as a *determinate* consciousness, a *Gestalt*, the determinate negation to which it is susceptible *qua* this *Gestalt* of consciousness, then it would be at least in principle possible to consider a sequence of such

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[22] Kant, *KdrV* B xxxix n, " … so bleibt es immer ein Skandal der Philosophie … das Dasein der Dinge außer uns … bloß auf *Glauben* annehmen zu müssen … ."; " … it still remains a scandal of philosophy … that the existence of things outside us … should have to be assumed merely *on faith* … ."

[23] *PhG* 67 = § 78.

[24] *HCE* 14.

determinate *Gestalten* or 'shapes' of consciousness. And if we did not intervene in the process, by dragging in references to history or 'well known' philosophical positions, then it might be possible for such a sequence to plot itself autonomously and perhaps even arrive at a '*Gestalt*' of consciousness for which *any* putative 'in itself' could be seen as merely 'for it.'[25]

It is clear that a thoroughgoing skepticism cannot, like formal skepticism, be performed upon a single *Gestalt*. The question is how an autonomously constituted sequence of *Gestalten*, a *plot* with a beginning, middle, and end, might take shape. To this end there is a distinction in the *PhG* between the *accusative* and *dative* dimensions, between what is *for* consciousness and what is *to* consciousness, between what is '*f ü r das Bewußtsein*' and what is '*d e m Bewußtsein*,'[26] a distinction systematically maintained by Hegel throughout the *PhG* but one that has been noticed by few German scholars[27] and preserved by no translation into any language known to me[28] (except mine[29]). Yet this distinction is the principal clue to the plot of the *PhG*, enabling Hegel's readers to see how the 'Form of consciousness' undergoes a sequence of *Gestalten* that bids fair to begin, develop, and, most importantly, end, like a classical tragedy.

The distinction is first explicitly stated in the Introduction:

In consciousness, one moment is *for an* other; in other words, consciousness in general has the determinacy of the moment of knowledge in it. At the same time, this other is *to* consciousness not only something *for it*; it is also something outside this relationship or *in itself*; the moment of truth.[30]

What formal skepticism unmasks is that in every *Gestalt* of consciousness every putative 'in-itself' can be reduced to a 'for-itself.' All versions of skepticism are variations upon this theme. Hegel's original insight is that any such unmasking is at the same time a hiding of the fact that an 'in-itself' reduced to a 'for-itself' is itself a hidden 'in-itself,' namely a *for*-itself (accusative) *to* consciousness (dative).[31] Within

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[25] The absolution from the 'opposition of consciousness,' from the dialectic of the dative and accusative, is what Hegel calls 'absolute knowing' and sets forth in *PhG* VIII: a 'thoroughgoing' phenomenological 'reduction' or 'epoché,' exceeding Husserl (a radical 'Stoic') by far. On Hegel vs. Husserl see my "Die Epoché der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*" (= Epoché der *PhG*), *Hegel-Studien*, *Beiheft* 11, 1974, 605–621.

[26] The accusative/dative distinction was first explored in Epoché der *PhG* 618–621 and in "Phenomenology and Systematic Philosophy," in M. Westphal, ed., *Method and Speculation in Hegel's Phenomenology*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982, 27ff.

[27] The role of the accusative/dative distinction in the *PhG*, first spelled out in Epoché der *PhG* (1974), is discussed in Klaus Hartmann, ed., *Die ontologische Option* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 233 and 261.

[28] The most recent Italian translation (Hegel, *Fenomenologia dello Spirito*, Vincenzo Cicero, tr., Milan: Bompiani, 2000) sometimes adopts the unfortunate expedient of rendering the dative dimension, '*dem Bewußtsein*,' as '*agli occhi della coscienza*.'

[29] G.W.F. Hegel, "The Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" (K. Dove, translator), in Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (= *HCE*), New York: Harper & Row, 1970, 7ff. *et passim*, reissued, PB, 1990; "Sense Certainty," *PhG* I, *The Philosophical Forum* (= *PF*), XXXII, 4, Winter 2001, 399ff.; "Stoicism," *PhG* IV, B, *PF* XXXVII, 3, 2006, 318ff.; "Absolute Knowing," *PhG* VIII, *PF* XXXII, 4, 407ff. References to my translation of the *PhG* 'Introduction' are designated as *HCE*, to my translations of *PhG* I and VIII as *PF*.

[30] *HCE* 20, with an emendation: the translation of '*Bestimmtheit*' has been changed from 'determination' to 'determinacy,' a difference made apparent in my post-1970 study of *WdL*.

[31] This development, covering the whole *PhG*, is spelled out briefly for the first five *Gestalten* in the next section.

the 'Form of consciousness,' this transition is invisible,[32] both *to* skeptical as well as *to* dogmatic consciousness. But the transition, however hidden, must be made, and the distinction between the 'in-itself' and 'for-itself' must be maintained, else consciousness would no longer be the foundational structure of knowledge, the ultimate elimination of which (*PhG* VIII) is the whole purpose of the *PhG*.

Admission to the audience of this drama is open to those who join the 'phenomenological we.' To join, to play the role of this 'we,' to follow *the plot* we must be able to doubt the viability of the 'Form of consciousness' *per se*. Such doubt cannot eliminate this Form. But, if exercised sustainedly, it can keep 'us' from surreptitiously interrupting the plot, the immanent development from *Gestalt* to *Gestalt*, and thus enable us to comprehend the drama.

(3) STOICISM AS A '*GESTALT* OF CONSCIOUSNESS'

For the purpose of this paper it is essential to convey, however inadequately, some sense of what Stoicism as a *Gestalt* of consciousness in the *PhG* is and how it results from the accusative/dative dialectic. In brief, it is the fifth in the sequence of *Gestalten* that begins with "Sense-Certainty," *PhG* I,[33] and ends with "Absolute Knowing," *PhG* VIII.[34] What follows is an account of these first five *Gestalten* that brings to light the accusative/dative dimensions which shape the plot.

"Sense-Certainty" marks the beginning of this sequence because its presupposed and thus unthematized criterion of truth is the first possible criterion, indeterminate immediacy.[35] This criterion is *to* consciousness in a manner analogous to the way the inward path of logical inference is *to* Chrysippus. Both exemplify the 'logical faith.' What is *for* consciousness are particulars, the particulars of immediate sensation. These particulars are taken to be true insofar as they are an immediate 'this.' As "Sense-Certainty" makes repeated attempts to explain how a particular sensation might be true by virtue of its immediacy, the hitherto unthematized criterion of immediacy *to* consciousness, the 'this,' comes to be *for* consciousness. As *for* consciousness, however, the 'this' as an immediate particular shows itself to be a universal, a 'this' vis-à-vis all particulars, and thus mediated. As so mediating, the 'this' comes to be an in-itself that is now *for* consciousness. *Qua for* consciousness, the erstwhile in-itself *to* consciousness becomes the *new* in-itself *to* consciousness, no longer a particular like what it purports to adjudicate but a universal mediating the sense particulars. Hence the particular 'this' of "Sense-Certainty" becomes the universal 'thing' of "Perception," the previously unthematized criterion of 'immediacy' becomes, *qua for* consciousness, the universal condition (*Be-ding-ung*) in which sense particulars are now to be grasped (taken to be true, *wahrgenommen*, 'perceived,' the *Gestalt* called "Perception," "*Die Wahrnehmung*"), *PhG* II.

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[32] The transition (*Umkehrung*) takes place "behind the back" of the consciousness in question ("*hinter seinem Rücken*"), *PhG* 74 = § 87, *HCE* 25.

[33] *PF* 399ff.

[34] *PF* 407ff.

[35] Not to be confused with the "indeterminate immediacy" with which the *WdL* begins. Here it is the first criterion within the 'opposition of consciousness.' In the *WdL* the 'opposition of consciousness' has been eliminated, as Hegel says, by a comprehended *PhG*. On this topic see my "Hegel's 'Deduction of the Concept of Science'" in R.S. Cohen and M.W. Wartofsky, Boston: D. Reidel, 1984, 27ff.

What is now *for* consciousness is the relation between a universal (as 'the thing') and particulars ('the properties *of* a thing'). What is *to* consciousness, or criteriological, is the presumption that the thing can be the correlation of *its* sensible properties, what had been the 'wild' particulars of "Sense-Certainty." What the *Gestalt* called "Perception" brings to light is that the perceptible thing (the universal) and the perceptible properties (the particulars) should have but do not have any demonstrable correlation *qua* perceptibles. What is the standard *to* this second *Gestalt*, the correlation of sensible particulars with a sensible universal, the thing, as now thematized *for* consciousness, becomes the correlation of sensible particulars with a universal *per se*, i.e., independent of sensible thinghood, or unconditional, which is to say, 'un-thinged' (*un-be-dingt*).[36]

The universal unconditioned by sensibility, the implicit criterion of "Perception," now made explicit or *for* consciousness, becomes, *qua for* consciousness, what is now, in "Understanding" (*PhG* III), *to* consciousness, the new criterion, a universal that not only correlates sensible particulars, like the thing of Perception, but also, behind the veil of appearance, *produces* them: 'force.' As productive of the sensible particulars, however, force must be kept in the 'logical' realm of 'mental discourse' (as a 'noumenon'), behind a 'veil' separating the supersensible logical realm (which is only *to* consciousness) from the empirical realm of particulars *for* consciousness. With consciousness' explanation (*Erklären*) of how this works in consciousness, the veil is thematized (made *for* consciousness) and thus broken.

The result is a *Gestalt* of consciousness, "Self-Consciousness" (*PhG* IV), *to* which the standard of truth is the susceptibility of sensibilia to be drawn across the now-thematized veil and reduced to a unity with consciousness itself. Hegel calls this project of reduction to unity with self 'desire' (*Begierde*).

All objects of self-consciousness as desire are only 'true' insofar as they are reduced to unity with it. The common word for this is 'consumption.' But among the candidates for 'truth' so encountered there are two kinds: simple objects for consumption (e.g., nuts) and objects that are capable of animated submission (some other animals). Nuts, like other animals, may simply be consumed. In the case of other animals (i.e., living beings), this will involve their death. As capable of submission, however, death may be averted. That is, an animate being may, by submission, introject itself between another desiring animate being and what that being aims to consume. This introjection may take the form of 'servitude,' in which, out of fear of death, a desired animal which is potentially consciousness may negate its own desire for the reduction of objects to unity with itself (the truth of 'Understanding') and transfer it (via recognition) to another. By this act one consciousness avoids death and places itself as an intermediator between a dominant consciousness and the realm of things it seeks to dominate and reduce to unity with itself, nature in general. In this intermediating position the self-subordinating consciousness suppresses its own desire to reduce things to unity with itself (the 'truth' of 'Understanding,' *PhG* III) and is, as such, able to mediate the relationship with nature on the part of the dominant animate entity that threatens its life.

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[36] "*Das unbedingt Allgemeine*," "the unconditioned (or un-thinged) universal," *PhG* 102–03 = § 132; 103–04 = § 134; 104 = § 135; and 105–06 = § 136. By contrast consider "*bedingte Allgemeinheit*" or "thinged universality" at *PhG* 100 = § 130.

In this situation, the threatening entity is 'recognized' as something other than mere nature and the threatened entity suspends its own desire vis-à-vis nature thereby to 'serve' the entity (now recognized *as* a consciousness) it fears. Such a state is called 'servitude' and the *Gestalt* feared and served is called 'lordship.' The principal result of this relationship, 'lordship and servitude,' is that the *Gestalt* of the servant, having suspended its desire to merely *labor* upon and consume objects of nature, may '*work*' upon them,[37] i.e., impose its own 'form' upon things which endure, i.e., are not just evanescent things to consume. In this condition the 'servile' *Gestalt* of consciousness has the liberty to discover the forms it has imposed upon natural things with its own desire to consume them suspended.

This is the circumstance in which 'servile' self-consciousness can discover that it is a source of form for natural things and thereby discover that it is a determinate source of form (or determinacy). It should be noted that the lordly mode of self-consciousness has no such potential for self-development because *to* it the servile mode is simply an augmentation of the structure of reducing to unity with itself that was the product of 'Understanding.'

It is therefore the servile mode of self-consciousness that has the potentiality to develop. This development is realized in 'Stoicism,' the situation in which a *Gestalt* of consciousness discovers, by way of the forms it imposes upon things in work, that it has 'a mind of its own.' Once having achieved this state, however, the Stoic *Gestalt* of consciousness cannot distinguish among the forms that it imposes via work upon natural things. It is indeed 'free,' but in an indeterminate manner. It is the first *Gestalt* that can be said to relate itself to determinate things (the objective that eluded "Sense-Certainty," "Perception," and "Understanding") but its resultant condition is empty and abstract. That is the situation of 'Stoicism' as a *Gestalt* of consciousness.

(4) THE OVERCOMING OF 'STOICISM': ABSOLUTION FROM THE 'OPPOSITION OF CONSCIOUSNESS': 'ABSOLUTE KNOWING' (*PhG* VIII)

The title of the last chapter of the *PhG* has proved to be problematic for many readers. Brandom calls it 'alarming.' It has seemed to suggest a knowing *of* the absolute ('God,' 'the infinite,' … etc.) from the standpoint of consciousness. But such knowing would be out of keeping with a book that has announced its path as a 'thoroughgoing skepticism.' Indeed, it would be, in Kant's sense, as it has been for many readers, a 'scandal.' To avoid this difficulty we must remind ourselves that the word 'absolute,' like many others in Hegel, takes its sense by way of contrast with *its* other, here 'relative.' The various *Gestalten* of the 'opposition of consciousness' all involve a contrast between what is relative, *for* consciousness, and what is absolute albeit unthematized, *to* consciousness. In *PhG* VIII this contrast, which constitutes the source of the movement (*Bewegung*, like a *kinesis*) of consciousness throughout the *PhG*, is eliminated and never used again in the system of philosophy, the encyclopedia (*Enz.*), that follows. The dative/accusative contrast is 'mentioned' in the *Anmerkung* to *Enz.* § 418, in

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[37] The *PhG* acknowledges Locke's distinction between "the *labor* of our bodies and the *work* of our hands." As Hannah Arendt notes, in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: UCP, 1958), the distinction labor/work is *implicitly* captured in most European languages. In the *PhG* Hegel was the first to make this distinction conceptual and thus *explicit*. Analogously he was the first, in *Rph*, to distinguish between the state and civil society, a distinction that has lived on in our by now habitual distinction between the political and the social sciences. On this point see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, New York: Oxford UP, 1941.

Hegel's 'theory' of consciousness, but never 'used' in that work, in the *WdL*, or in the *Rph*—Hegel's only other published works.

The 'absolute' that was pictured and thus 'relative' in 'Religion' (*PhG* VII) and grounded in what was *to* consciousness is reënacted in 'Absolute Knowing' as completely *for* consciousness. Through the recollection of *Gestalten* and the development of the Concept, first as a *Gestalt* of consciousness, then as a *Gestalt* that comprehends consciousness, we arrive at 'Absolute Knowing.'

When all that was *to* consciousness is now *for* consciousness, transcendental *logic* is eliminated, what was 'in itself' *to* consciousness is no more, knowing is absolved of its putative *Ding an sich*, even *qua* noumenon, everything is simply *for* consciousness and a purified *theory* may begin. The opposition (*to/for*) of consciousness has been eliminated. The task of the *PhG* is complete.

> This last *Gestalt* of Spirit is *absolute knowing.* It is the Spirit which simultaneously gives its complete and true content the form of Self, and thereby realizes its Concept and also remains within its Concept in this realization; it is Spirit knowing itself in the *Gestalt* of Spirit, *knowing which comprehends.* It is not merely [the] *truth* [to it] which is, *in itself*, fully equivalent to *certainty* [for it]: [here] truth [what was to it] also has the *Gestalt* of Spirit's certainty of itself [for it], it is in its existence, i.e., it is for knowing Spirit in the form of Spirit's self-knowing. Truth is the *content* which in Religion [*qua* to it] is still unequal to its certainty [for it]. But this equivalence [between what is to it and for it] is constituted when the content obtains and preserves the *Gestalt* of Self. What has thereby become the element of existence or the *form of objectness* [*Gegenständlichkeit*] for consciousness is the same as what Essence itself is, namely, the Concept. Spirit *appearing* to consciousness in this element, or what is here the same, Spirit produced in this element by consciousness, *is Science* [theory].[38]

The recollection of previous *Gestalten* here, in contrast with the 'in-itself' of "Religion," in which the previously reduced *Gestalten* were *to* a quasi-absolute consciousness, has brought us to the situation of absolute knowing, where the dative dimension is eliminated and the 'opposition of consciousness' is consequently overcome.

Absolute knowing renders the *Gestalten* of consciousness and their respective in-itselfs comprehensible in that they can be seen *as parts* of a totality that are all *for* consciousness. In every previous transition, including that to *PhG* VII, a successor *Gestalt* tacitly or datively took the phenomenological reduction of its predecessor to perspectival for-itself-ness to be its point of departure as a new *Gestalt* with a new logical criterion. Here the illusion of *logical* inference from the standpoint of consciousness is over because there is no longer a logical point of view or, better, because all logical operations that purport to be theoretical are now seen to involve a point of view. The contrast between aperspectival inference and perspectival candidates for truth is eliminated. The formalist dream of a univocal discourse must yield to a theory in which things are "spoken of in many ways."

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38 *PhG* 556 = § 798, *PF* 413.

This journey makes sense once its destination is reached, as in the dénouement of a classical tragedy. *Contra* Kojève and many other readers, the '*wir*' (we) of the *PhG* does not view the sequence of *Gestalten* from the standpoint of 'absolute knowledge,' as if the 'we' were shot from a pistol. The whole point of the *PhG* is to *enable* the 'we,' skeptical from the outset in light of the "Introduction" but by no means 'absolute,' to *achieve* an absolution from the opposition of consciousness at the end, "Absolute Knowing."

The progression of *Gestalten* of consciousness in the *PhG* is for the 'Form of consciousness' a linear journey, a movement or *kinesis*, "a process that realizes a potentiality in so far as it is a potentiality."[39] Consciousness is in motion (*kinesis*), in time, despite its 'logical' illusion of timelessness; speculation (*theoria*) is *activity* (*energeia*), truly timeless. At each stage or *Gestalt* consciousness retains an in-itself that is *to* it timeless; it believes it has completed its motion and reached its destination, gotten hold of its truth, reached its final standpoint—come to rest. It still shares the 'logical faith.' But the motion of a *Gestalt* in the *PhG*, as of things in Aristotle's *Physics*, is only the realization or actualization of a potential *qua* potential. The end of one motion (*Gestalt*) is only the beginning of the next. One foundation, one in-itself *to* consciousness, is reduced to an in-itself *for* consciousness only to reëmerge as an in-itself *for* consciousness that is now *to* consciousness a new foundation for a sequel *Gestalt*. Until consciousness reaches the stage where it becomes *activity* (*energeia*, *Wirklichkeit*)[40] in absolute knowing it remains in restless perpetual motion, divided between its accusative and dative dimensions. Thus from within the standpoint of the consciousness afflicted with its opposition, its journey is a "way of despair," a motion towards a termination that progressively reëxtends itself over time until it is absolved of the 'opposition of consciousness,' the dative and accusative contrast, in "absolute knowing."

When we reach the standpoint of absolute knowing, the standpoint of science or 'theory' Aristotelianly conceived, of theoretical activity, it becomes clear that experience *in* any *Gestalt* of consciousness is temporal. Each *Gestalt* that instantiates the 'Form of consciousness' undergoes a process that is akin to *kinesis*, involves time, and is incomplete and reiterative. The process that develops *all* the *Gestalten*, the 'Form of consciousness,' which is the *PhG* as a whole, is like the plot (μῦθος) of a classical tragedy. The 'plot' of the *PhG* dramatizes the motion (*kinesis*) of sequential *Gestalten* so 'we' can see that the *PhG in toto* is "a whole that has … a beginning, a middle, and an end."[41] Hence the *PhG* is like the *mimesis*[42] of action (πρᾶξις), the plot that Aristotle takes to be the 'soul' (ψυχή) of tragedy (*Poetics* 6, 1450a37). As involving time, the sequence of *Gestalten* of consciousness is akin to history. But, unlike historical 'stages,' which are hopelessly 'overdetermined,'

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[39] Aristotle, *Phy.* III, 1, 201a10.

[40] Aristotle never provided a 'definition' of *energeia*, as he had of *kinesis* in *Physics* III, 1, "the actualization of a potential *qua* potential." In previous publications I have attempted to fill this gap by defining *energeia* as "the actualization of a potential *qua* actual," with special reference to *Meta.* IX, e.g., 1050a15–17. See WTAH 136. This distinction also pertains to activity in Hegel.

[41] *Poetics* 7, 1450b27. For the analogous function of the three 'principles' in 'theory' according to Aristotle, see *Phy.* I, 7, esp. 191a12–14, and for an explanation of the three principles as the 'soul' of 'theory' in Hegel as well as Aristotle, see WTAH 133–138.

[42] See Kenley R. Dove, "Aristotelian vs. Socratic Mimesis in Hegelian Perspective," in Dieter Wandschneider, ed., *Das Geistige und das Sinnliche in der Kunst*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005, 29ff.

the *Gestalten* of consciousness are, like *kinesis* in Aristotle's physics, susceptible of comprehension. That is the plot of Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

Apart from the adumbration of timeless theorizing in *PhG* VIII, there is not a page of the *PhG* on which one might find anything like 'theory' in the Aristotelian or Hegelian sense.[43] Theory is to be found aplenty in *WdL*, *Enz.*, and *Rph*, where there is no trace of 'Hegel's phenomenological method' and the attendant accusative/dative contrast—not even in the '*PhG*' section of the *Enz.* §§ 413–439.[44]

These systematic works form a cycle, a circle of 'theory' only made evident in the *Enz.*, which, alas, remains, as Hegel left it, a torso. Still, the considerations made here should have clarified somewhat why Hegel's *Enz.* ends and, let us not forget, begins (for it is a cycle) with the following words, here newly translated, from Aristotle:

> Thinking (νοησις) in itself is what is best in itself, and what thinking is in the fullest sense is what is best in the fullest sense. Thinking comprehends itself by participating in thought. By engaging in thought and by thinking, it becomes thought, so that thinking and thought are the same. For thinking (νους) is the capacity to comprise (δεκτικον) thought and entity (ουσια). In comprising both thought and entity it engages in activity and is actualized. It is because of this actuality rather than potentiality that thought seems to partake of the divine. Indeed, the act of theorizing (θεωρια) is most pleasant and best. If then that happiness which we sometimes enjoy is what God always enjoys, this compels our wonder; if it is greater, this compels our wonder even more. And it is so. Indeed, life is divine; for living is the activity (ενεργεια) of thinking, and activity (ενεργεια) is God. And the activity (ενεργεια) of God is in itself living at its best and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that living and life continuous and eternal are divine; this is God.[45]

We must never forget that Aristotle and Hegel's God, unlike that of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is not transcendent.[46] He (it) did not create the world. The reference to "the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence prior to the creation of nature and finite spirit" (*WdL* I, 31) at the beginning of the *Science of Logic* is a Spinozist joke.[47] It is as little a clue to the 'secret of Hegel' as the infamous triad: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Such clues are useful only to those who do not or

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[43] Hence those many books that find Hegel's 'theory' of this or that in the *PhG* will have to be cast into the fire set ablaze by David Hume.

[44] This simple fact, which can be ascertained by any attentive reader, should, in light of the Hegel literature, be astonishing. Of course it will remain unnoticed by any reader oblivious of the accusative/dative contrast that constitutes Hegel's phenomenological method.

[45] *Meta.* XII, 7, 1072b18–30 = Hegel *Enz.* § 577, K. Dove and J. Middleton, trans.

[46] The God Hegel here invokes is the God of Aristotle, a pure immanent *energeia* (ενεργεια), not God the transcendent creator in the Judeao-Christian-Islamic sense, a God totally alien to Aristotle and to Hegel, though Hegel's views on this matter could not be, for obvious reasons, unequivocally expressed.

[47] Hegel loved jokes. His allusion to God prior to the creation of things is fairly obviously an ironic reference to Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding* (in Spinoza's *Works*, London: Bell, 1901, III, 26: " … the understanding of God before He created things," ironic because Spinoza was well known to Hegel, in company with most other contemporary German intellectuals, as a radical anti-creationist.

cannot read Hegel, but know that he was a 'famous' philosopher about whom 'something' must be said.

The Hegel I have sketched in this paper is not famous. He is virtually unknown. I hope to have made plausible that the plot of his *Phenomenology* offers a path to a theory whose pleasures are divine.

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