**Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit**

**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)** is probably the greatest German idealist and one of the outstanding philosophers of Western thought. Hesets himself to address the problem of the Absolute (God) or infinite and the relation between the finite and infinite. His first major work in 1801 when he was at Jena (his degree is from Tubingen where he was friends with Holderlin and Schelling) he compared the writings of Schelling and Fichte and hence gave the impression that he was a disciple of Schelling. With Schelling he edited the *Critical Journal of Philosophy* (1802-03), but his lectures at Jena (which were not published until the 20th c.) already established his independence from Schelling which became clear with the publication of his famous *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The Battle of Jena (where Napoleon won) led to his poverty and eventually a job as Director of the Gymnasium at Nuremberg until 1816 where he also produced the *Science of Logic* (1812-16).

Following the publication of the second volume, he accepted a position at Heidelberg where he published *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (1817) in which he presented the main divisions of philosophy: logic, nature, and spirit. At Heidelberg he also lectured on aesthetics.

In 1818 he went to Berlin until his death of cholera in 1831. Here he wrote *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821), new edition of the *Encyclopedia* (1827-30), and was revising the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. His lectures were eventually published in four volumes on *religion* and *history of philosophy* (3 volumes each) and one volume on the *philosophy of history*.

**The real is the rational and the rational is the real –**

Remarkably, Hegel reacted strongly against the rationalistic theism he heard at Tubingen which he compared unfavorably to the Greek spirit of religion. Hegel thought of the Bible as a product of an alien race out of harmony with the German soul. His point was that the Greek religion was a Volksreligion whereas Christianity seemed something imposed from without. Hegel’s affection for Greek culture and religion was soon modified by Kant (which led him to see the lack of profundity in Greek religion) because Kant expounded an ethics free from religion. Hegel liked Kant ethics and thought it had much in common with Jesus (*Life of Jesus*, 1795) depicting Christ as a *moral teacher* and an expounder of Kantian ethics. Thus, he rejected a view of Christ as a mediator between God and man and as imposing revealed dogma (which if Jesus did, it was not his intent).

The question then arises how did Christianity become transformed into an authoritarian, ecclesiastical, and dogmatic system (see *The Positivity of the Christian religion*, 1795-97) which alienated man from his true self by eliminating freedom of thought and freedom of action? Later Hegel made Judaic legalism the villain (see *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, 1800). Here we have the Jewish God as master and man as slave. In contrast, Jesus preached Christ-God as love which could overcome the alienation of man from God. Jesus rises above Jewish legalism and Kantian moralism: sccording to Hegel, morality should not be imposed but rise spontaneously as an expression of man’s participation in the infinite divine life.

Here we already see the themes that would occupy Hegel later: **alienation and recovery of lost unity.** When he compared Judaism and Christianity he was already unhappy with a *remote transcendent* God and adhered to a notion of *feeling for infinite totality*. The Absolute is infinite life and love and the Absolute is the conscious unity of this life, of unity with the infinite and unity with others. **Note the effort after “wholeness” so alien to scientific materialism, empiricism, individualism, and instrumental reason.**

In 1800 Hegel published *Fragment of a system* which Hermann Nohl and Wilhelm Dilthey erroneously took to be a finished product. Here Hegel struggles with the problem of overcoming oppositions especially between the **finite and infinite**. As spectators, life appears as nature given to our understanding, but nature is transitory and therefore *thought* *thinks nature in terms of unity with the infinite*. This creative unity of nature and the infinite is not a conceptual abstraction but is God (and must also be defined as Spirit since it is neither an external link between finite things, nor a purely abstract concept or abstract universal). Rather infinite life unites all finite things from within, however without annihilating them. Infinite life or Spirit *is a living unity of the manifold.*

Hegel use of the word ‘Spirit’ is important to the development of his philosophy. The question is whether we can conceptually unify the finite and infinite without dissolving either. Hegel in *Fragment of a system* maintains that is not possible. The gulf between the finite and infinite inevitably tends to merge and so reduce one to the other while, if it affirms their unity, it inevitable tends to deny their distinction. We can see the necessity for a synthesis in which the unity does not exclude its distinctions – *but the question is whether we can think that?* Unifying the One and the Many within the One without dissolving the Many can be achieved only in *living, and* not in *thinking*….this is religion. In this sense philosophy is subordinate to religion. Philosophy can show us what is required but it cannot think it. Here Hegel turns to the Christian religion – because the Jews objectified God as being above and outside the finite (which Hegel calls “bad infinity”) but Christ discovered infinite life within himself – hence the *unity can only be lived as Christ lived in a life of love.*

Overcoming the finite and infinite without losing either ***is love*, *not thought*.** Yet it is the task of philosophy to try to *think* what religion *lives* and to accomplish this philosophy must avail itself of a new logic – one that is able to follow the course of life and does not leave opposed concepts in irremediable opposition. **This new logic marks Hegel’s transition from theologian to philosopher.**

**Idealism philosophy**

In Jena Hegel published his comparison of Fichte and Schelling (*Differences between the philosophical systems of Fichte and Schelling*, 1802). He showed that Schelling was an advance on Fichte and in the process Hegel develops his own thought.

Hegel maintains that the *fundamental task/purpose of philosophy* is to reconcile oppositions and divisions (which are always the product of human understanding). In the world of experience, the mind finds only oppositions, contradictions, differences and philosophy seeks to overcome these in different cultural-historical epochs (e.g., soul and body, subject and object, intelligence and nature, etc). Whatever the differences, it is the role of reason to overcome these. That is, the Absolute is to be constructed for consciousness – for synthesis of oppositions must in the long run involve reality as a **whole**.

Of course if the life of the Absolute is to be constructed, we must do so in reflection and the problem with reflection is that it functions as understanding *(Verstand)* and hence it posits even more differences and oppositions. Understanding must therefore be united with transcendental (intellectual) intuition which discovers the interpenetration of ideal and real, idea and being, subject and object, and soul and body. So that reflection (*Verstand*) is raised to the level of reason (*Vernunft*), and we have knowledge that is conceived of as the identity of *Verstand and Vernunft* – this was Schelling.

Hegel was also sympathetic with Fichte’s efforts to overcome the dualisms in Kant – Hegel too does away with the thing-in-itself – and he does so in the way both Fichte and Schelling do namely by invoking intellectual intuition (or the identity of subject and object). In science this identity/intuition becomes the topic of reflection, and in philosophy intellectual intuition makes itself its own object and hence is one with it – it is *speculation*, and Fichte philosophy is the product of speculation/reason. But while Fichte begins with the principle of identity, it is not how his system is constructed. In consciousness only the idea of an objective world (non-ego) is deduced and not the world itself, and we are left in Fichte only with subjectivity (not identity). We are indeed presented with the real world, but nature is only posited as the opposite of the ego – in other words we are left, in Fichte, with a dualism (this is Hegel’s critique of Fichte).

Here is where Schelling comes in. For Schelling the principle of identity is the absolute principle of the whole system. Here philosophy and system coincide: identity is not lost in its parts. That is, Schelling begins with the idea of the Absolute as identity and it persists in the guiding idea of the parts of the system. Thus nature is not simply the opposite of the ideal, but it is, though real, also ideal through and through – nature is visible spirit – and the principle of identity is maintained throughout the whole system.

Transcendental idealism shows how subjectivity objectifies itself; how the ideal is also real.

But Hegel also distinguishes himself from Schelling for it is clear that intellectual intuition does not mean mystical intuition of the dark and impenetrable abyss, as the vanishing point of all differences. Rather it is reason’s *insight into differences* (antitheses) as moments in the one all comprehensive life of the absolute. Thus, in his Jena lectures, Hegel argues that the finite and infinite are set over against each other and there is no passage (synthesis) between them. But in point of fact we cannot think the finite without also thinking the infinite (the concept of the finite is not self-contained but is limited by what is other than itself) and, using Hegel’s language, the finite is not simple negation (of the infinite). Hence, we must negate the negation (the finite is the opposite/negation of the infinite) and in doing so we affirm that the finite is always more than the finite. Thus the finite is a moment in the life of the infinite and from this it follows that to construct the life of the Absolute (which is the task of philosophy) we must do so through the finite showing how the Absolute expresses itself necessarily as Spirit, as self-consciousness *in and through the human mind.* **For the human mind though finite is at the same time more than finite and can attain the standpoint at which it becomes the vehicle of the Absolute’s knowledge of itself.**

This is in harmony to some extent with Schelling but there is also a major difference. For Schelling the Absolute transcends conceptual thought and so we must approach the Absolute negatively by *thinking away* its attributes and distinctions of the finite. In contrast, for Hegel the Absolute is a process of self-expression/manifestation in and through the finite. Hence, in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel rejects Schelling view of the Absolute. This was also the break between Hegel and Schelling. Hegel rejects Schelling’s monotonous formalism and abstract universality (Absolute) as vacuous (“in the night in which all cows are black”). For Hegel the Absolute is not impenetrable, it does not exist above or behind its determinate manifestation: **rather it is its manifestation.**

This point is crucial for understanding Hegel’s philosophy. The subject matter of philosophy is the Absolute, and the Absolute is to the totality (reality as a whole or the universe). Philosophy is concerned with the true and the *true is the whole*. This totality is the whole and it is infinite life in a process of development – or a circle that presupposes its end as its purpose and has its end as its beginning. The Absolute becomes concrete or actual through its development and through its end. Reality is then a teleological process, and the ideal presupposes its whole process and its significance. Philosophy must try to systematically understand this teleological process - as **scientific system**.

If the Absolute is the whole of reality, the whole universe, Hegel is not saying that the Absolute is infinite “substance” (as it was for Spinoza) for Hegel also means that the Absolute is not only substance but *subject* as well. But if the Absolute is subject what is its object? The only answer can be that it is itself the object – *that is, thought thinks itself, self-thinking thought*. To say that the Absolute is Spirit is to say that it is infinite self-luminous or self-conscious subject. This is what Absolute as Spirit means: self-conscious, self-thinking infinite subject.

*The question that may be raised is: is this not Aristotle’s definition of God?* Yes, but Hegel this Absolute Spirit is not a transcendent deity (above/outside reality); rather it is the ***whole of reality as process***. That is, the Absolute is a process of self-reflection and so reality (Absolute) comes to know itself through the human spirit. Now, as we have seen in Fichte, nature is a necessary precondition for human consciousness; the objective without which the subjective does not exist. But for Hegel both the objective and the subjective are both **moments** in the life of the Absolute. Thus, nature is not real in a subjectivist sense; it is the Absolute expressed objectively. ***The philosophical reflection of humanity is the Absolute’s self-knowledge*.** Thus, the **history** of philosophy (of thought) is the process whereby the Absolute, reality as a whole, comes to think itself. In philosophical reason we see the whole history of the cosmos and the whole history of humankind as the self-unfolding of the Absolute – and it is the Absolute’s knowledge of itself.

So Hegel agrees with Aristotle that God is self-thinking thought and that this self-thinking thought is the telos which draws the world as final cause, but whereas Aristotle’s self-thinking thought (prime mover) is already self-conscious and does not depend on the world, Hegel’s self-thinking thought is not a transcendent reality but rather the universe’s (totality) knowledge of itself. The whole process of reality is a teleological movement towards the actualization of self-thinking thought. In other words, the Absolute is immanent in process coming to think itself.

Self-thinking thought is the identity of the real and ideal, of subjectivity and objectivity, even as this identity is definitely not an undifferentiated identity. Spirit sees itself in nature as the *objective* manifestation of the Absolute which is a necessary condition of the Absolute’s own existence. In other words, the Absolute which knows itself as the totality, as the whole process of becoming, is at the same time aware of distinctions in its own life. It knows *identity-in-difference* as the unity which comprises distinguishable phases within itself*. Philosophy is then charged with the task of understanding this life of the Absolute.* **This is to say that philosophy must exhibit systematically the rational dynamic structure, the teleological process, of the movement of Reason in both the sphere of nature and in the sphere of human spirit, which then culminates in the Absolute’s knowledge of itself.** But be careful this task of philosophy does not mean that philosophy must do what science and history already do, rather the knowledge of science and history is presupposed and then philosophy’s task is to make clear the teleological process which is immanent in both scientific and historical knowledge – exhibiting the self-realization of infinite Reason through the finite process of science, and of history.

If infinite Reason actualizes itself in the sphere of nature and the sphere of human spirit (history) then we can distinguish between the eternal **Idea** and the *field of its actualization* (both in nature and human spirit). The Idea or Logos then goes over into nature as objectivity as the antithesis of the Idea, but in the sphere of the human spirit – history – Logos returns to itself in that it is in this sphere that it manifests itself as it **really is**. Hence the Absolute comprises three phases (of its rational dynamic teleological structure in history): the

(1) Idea/Concept/notion,

(2) the sphere of nature, and

(3) the sphere of Spirit.

Similarly philosophy falls into three domains:

(1) logic (metaphysics –studying the Absolute in itself),

(2) philosophy of nature, and

(3) philosophy of Spirit.

When Hegel talks about the eternal Idea manifesting itself as nature and spirit he implies that the Logos possesses an *ontological* status of its own, independent of things. When he does so he frequently invokes the language of religion and speaks of the logos as of God and so gives the impression that the Logos is a transcendent reality manifesting itself in nature. But as we have seen this cannot be so since he rejects, for example, Aristotle’s prime mover and the Judaic-Christian concept of a God as a being outside creation). But the religious language is not accurate here and it is difficult to decide whether the Logos indeed does have an independent ontological status. In any case, philosophy studies

(1) the Absolute “in itself”,

(2) Absolute in Nature “for-itself”, and

(3) the Absolute in Spirit (“in and for itself” in history).

Together they constitute the complete construction of the *life of the Absolute*. It is the task of philosophy to exhibit this life of the Absolute in conceptual form, that is, as a *necessary process of self-actualization - a necessity that is reflected in the philosophical system.*

Thus, philosophy (contra religion) must exhibit the life of the Absolute in *conceptual* form – as a process of self-actualization reflected in the philosophical system which is the whole truth and a faithful reflection of the Absolute. It is in fact the *Absolute’s knowledge of itself* through the human mind – a self-mediated totality – which would be a self-mediation of the Totality. Hence on Hegel’s view there is no question of comparing *absolute philosophy* with the Absolute, *as though the Absolute were purely external to an account of the latter;* rather, *absolute philosophy would be the Absolute’s knowledge of itself.* [That is, the history of thought – of philosophical reflection –is the Absolute’s knowledge of itself.]

But if we say that philosophy must exhibit the life of the Absolute in conceptual form, there at once arises a difficulty. As we have seen, the Absolute is identity-in-difference (e.g., of the infinite and the finite, the One and the Many) but the concept of the infinite and the finite would seem to be mutually exclusive. If philosophy is to exhibit the life of the Absolute conceptually how can it do so in concepts of the understanding that are always mutually exclusive? And even if we allow that its concepts are not well-defined how can we understand the life of the Absolute? Would it not be better to say with Schelling that the Absolute simply *transcends* conceptual thought?

In fact, for Hegel this problem does arise at the level of understanding (*Verstand*) since *Verstand* posits fixed and static concepts, but of course *Verstand* is inadequate for speculative philosophy. Hegel affirms that *Verstand* is important in life (to maintain clarity of concepts of, say, the real and ideal) and science is generally based on *Verstand*. But philosophy when it tries to grasp the life of the Absolute it must pass beyond the opposite concepts (binary concepts) of *Verstand* such that thinking becomes **dialectical**. That is, the mind must penetrate deeper into the concepts (which are categories of reality) and it will then see that concepts pass over and into, or call forth, their opposites. For example, if the mind really tries to think through the concept of the infinite, this concept loses its rigid and self-contained-ness and the concept of the finite emerges. Similarly, when the mind tries to think through the concept of reality as opposed to appearance it will see the absurd or contradictory character of a reality that does not appear or manifests (appear) itself. Again for practical commonsense these concepts are distinct – one thing is distinct from another, and each thing is self-identical, and this is useful – but once we really try to think it we see the absurdity of the notion of a completely isolated thing, and we are forced to negate the original negation.

Thus, in speculative philosophy the mind must elevate itself from the level of understanding to the level of *dialectical thinking* which overcomes the rigidity of the concepts of understanding and sees one concept as passing into its opposite. Only then can it hope to grasp the life of the Absolute in which one moment or phase necessarily passes into another. But obviously if this dialectic is to work then the opposite concepts must have a higher unity or synthesis which annuls their difference. This is the function of reason (Vernunft) to grasp this identity-in-difference. Hence philosophy demands that the understanding is elevated through dialectical thinking to the level of reason (speculative thought) which is capable of apprehending identity-in-difference.

From Hegel’s perspective this is not a question of producing a new logic out of which he then establishes a preconceived view of reality; he sincerely believes that dialectical thought (*reason*) allows for a deeper penetration of the nature of reality than does the *understanding* which only distinguishes things (only makes distinctions). For example, for Hegel it is not a question of insisting that the concept of the finite must pass over into the concept of the infinite simply because of a *preconceived* belief that the infinite exists in and through the finite, rather, *it is his conviction that we cannot really the think the finite at all without relating it to the infinite*. Hence, it is not **we** who do something to the concept (juggling about with it) it is rather the concept itself which loses rigidity and breaks up before the mind’s (subject’s) attentive gaze – and this reveals the nature of the finite.

Hegel has been accused of denying the principle of non-contradiction by suggesting that contradictory concepts (e.g., infinite vs finite) stand together. Hegel reply is that it is precisely in not being satisfied with sheer contradiction (opposition) which forces the mind onwards towards a higher synthesis in which contradiction is overcome. Yet Hegel objected to Fichte claim that contradictions were merely apparent, Hegel argues contradictions are real. Thus the contradictory concepts are *preserved* in their dialectical synthesis even if not in a relation of mutual exclusiveness (binary opposites); rather, they are shown to be essential and complementary in a higher synthesis wherein the contradiction is resolved. Hence, the principle of non-contradiction (logic) is given dynamic formulation in Hegel as a *principle of movement of reason* (rather than the stasic concepts of binary opposites which the understanding yields).

In fact, Hegel does not use the word contradiction in a consistent way. Thus, occasionally we find a verbal contradiction. Such as when the concept of Being is said to pass into or give rise to the concept of Not-being, while the concept of Not-being passes into the concept of Being. This dialectical oscillation then gives rise to the concept of Becoming which synthesizes Being and Not-being. But the meaning of this dialectical performance is easily intelligible (whether we agree with it or not). In any case, Hegel’s contradictions are more like contraries – wherein a one-sided abstraction evokes another which is then overcome in synthesis.

The word synthesis is used for the **moment of identity-in-difference** in a dialectical movement/advance (which is not merely the movement of reason but the movement of Spirit historically). In point of fact, the words thesis, antithesis and synthesis is more characteristic of Fichte than Hegel who seldom uses these words. At the same time, Hegel is obsessed by triads. Thus, in the construction of the Absolute there are three phases: Idea, Nature, and Spirit. Each phase is in turn divided into three. Moreover, the entire system aims at a necessary development. That is, for philosophical reflection one stage reveals itself as demanding the next stage by inner necessity. Thus in theory at least, if we start with the first category of logic, the inner necessity of dialectical development forces the mind to proceed not simply to the final category of logic but also to the ultimate phase of philosophy of Spirit.

This obsession with triads is made even more problematic when Hegel claims that philosophy is necessarily a deductive system of thought (not in the sense of a computing machine for then it would be the product of understanding and not reason). But obviously when he claims that philosophy is concerned with the life of Absolute Spirit (philosophy), to discern the unfolding of this **life in history**, say, apriori deduction is not sufficient, after all the material stuff is not supplied by philosophy but interpreted by philosophy in terms of a teleological pattern which works itself out in the material realm. At the same time the whole dialectical movement of the Hegelian system should, in theory at least, impose itself on the mind by its own inner necessity – otherwise the system could not be its own justification. Yet it is also clear that Hegel comes to philosophy with certain basic convictions:

(1) that the rational is real and the real rational,

(2) that reality is a self-manifestation of infinite reason, and

(3) that infinite reason is self-thinking *Thought* which actualizes itself in the historical process.

Of course Hegel claims that the truth of these convictions must be *demonstrated* (validated) in the system but it is also arguable that the system depends on these prior convictions.

*One could simply interpret Hegel’ theory of the necessity inherent in the dialectical development of the system, as simply one way in which his philosophy satisfies the impulse of the human mind to attain conceptual mastery over the whole wealth of empirical data or to interpret the world as a whole and man’s relation to it.* We could then compare this system to other whole systems (say materialism/positivism or evolutionism). But Hegel precludes this procedure since it does not square with his own estimation of his philosophy. For even if he did not think his system was the final form of the system, he did think it represented *the highest stage which the Absolute’s developing knowledge* has reached up to date (so precluding comparison to other total systems).

This may seem bizarre but we have to keep in mind Hegel’s view of the Absolute as identity-in-difference. The infinite exists in and through the finite and infinite Reason or Spirit knows itself in and through the finite spirit and mind of individual human beings. However, importantly, it is not every sort of finite thinking that develops this self-knowledge of the infinite (obviously, otherwise we would never get to the Absolute). Rather it is human being’s knowledge of the Absolute that is identical with the Absolute’s knowledge of itself even as we can never say that any finite mind’s knowledge of the Absolute is identical with the Absolute’s knowledge of itself. The Absolute’s knowledge of itself transcends any set of finite minds.

We can therefore speak of the human mind rising to **participate in self-knowledge of the Absolute.** This can be interpreted along theistic line (that is, e.g., while God is perfectly luminous to himself and independent of human beings, human beings are capable of participating in God’s self-knowledge). But Father Copelston suggests that human being’s knowledge of the Absolute and the Absolute’s knowledge of itself are two *distinct aspects* of the same reality. But even on this interpretation we can still speak of the finite mind rising to participate in divine self-knowledge, after all, not every sort of idea and thought in man’s mind can be regarded as a moment in the Absolute’s self-knowledge. To achieve this, the finite mind has to rise to the level of what Hegel calls absolute knowledge.

Finite thinking the infinite in accord with levels of consciousness

Hegel claims that we can trace successive levels of consciousness, form the lowest to the highest, and this is what Hegel does in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* which can be described as the history of consciousness. If we consider the mind and its activity in themselves without relation to the object, we are concerned with **psychology**. If however we consider the mind as essentially related to the object (external or internal) we are concerned with **consciousness. Phenomenology is the science of consciousness** in this sense (and hence distinct from psychology as Hegel conceived of psychology). Hegel begins with natural unscientific consciousness and then proceeds to trace the dialectical development of consciousness, showing that lower levels are subsumed in the higher ones until we reach absolute knowledge.

Hence the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an introduction to philosophy, systematically tracing the development of consciousness up the level of what we properly call *philosophical consciousness (reason; knowledge of the Absolute)*. However the book is definitely not an introduction to philosophy in the sense that it is a preparation for doing philosophy since Hegel deemed that impossible*. However the book is a sustained effort in philosophical reflection on the phenomenon of the origins of philosophical consciousness.* [ Hegel’s entire system finds a place for the phenomenology of consciousness as can be seen when he treats religion and art and politics as different phases of consciousness.]

Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* systematically traces the development of consciousness up to the level of philosophical consciousness which is philosophical reflection on its own origins. Hegel does this in three parts:

(1) the first phase of consciousness is consciousness (Bewusstsein) of the object as a sensible thing standing over and against the subject.

 (2) The second phase is that of self-consciousness (Selbstbewusstsein) which essentially involves consciousness of the other (social or communal consciousness).

(3) The third phase is that of Reason (Vernunft) which is the unity namely the synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity (of the first two parts) on a higher level.

Each phase has its own subdivisions but Hegel begins with the spontaneous attitude of consciousness and then proceeds to analyze it. In this analysis the mind is *compelled* to proceed to the next level as a more considered attitude towards consciousness.

Thus, Hegel begins with sense certainty (naïve realism) as the uncritical apprehension of sense objects which appears to naïve consciousness as both the simplest and richest form of knowledge, naïve consciousness feels directly acquainted, through sense apprehension, with a particular thing. The trouble is that when we try to say what it is we *know* in this direct acquaintance (describe of the particular thing) we find ourselves using universals which are applicable to other things as well. We can of course try to pin down the object by using words like “this”, “that” “here”, “now” and some accompanying ostensive gesture but a moment later these same words apply to other objects. Indeed, Hegel argues that indexicals (“this”, “that”) do not have genuine “meaning” (are not universals).

If Hegel is here calling attention to the critical role of language, his main concern is **epistemological**. His claim is that sense-certainty is bogus (it is always of the “here and now”) and for sense certainty to eventually become knowledge it must pass into a level of perception for which the thing is conceived as the *independent* center of distinct properties and qualities. But analysis of this perceptual level of consciousness shows that as long as we remain at the level of sense it is impossible to reconcile the elements of unity and multiplicity which are postulated by this view of objects. The mind therefore passes through various stages to the level of scientific understanding which invokes meta-phenomenal or unobservable entities to explain sense phenomena.

For example, the mind sees sense-phenomena as manifestations of hidden forces but Hegel maintains that the mind cannot rest there and proceeds instead to the ideas of laws. Yet natural laws are ways of ordering and describing phenomena (perceptual appearance, like Kant’s); they (laws of science) are not explicative. Hence, they cannot explain sense-phenomena (sense of being directly acquainted with the world). Hegel obviously does not deny that the concept of natural laws is not useful at an appropriate level but it does not give the sort of knowledge which the mind is seeking.

In the end the mind sees that the whole realm of the meta-phenomenal which has been invoked to explain sense phenomena is a product of the understanding itself (cf. Kant). Consciousness is therefore turned back on itself as the reality behind the veil of phenomena and becomes **self-consciousness**.

Hegel begins with **self-consciousness** in the form of desire (Begierde). The self is still concerned with external objects but it is characteristic of desire that the self subordinates the object to itself (satisfaction) and to appropriate it or even consume it. However, this attitude of desire breaks down when it comes to other selves. The presence of the other is for Hegel essential in coming to *self-consciousness*. Developed self-consciousness can arise only when the self recognizes selfhood in others and in itself (hence, truly social or we-consciousness – of identity-in-difference). But in the dialectical evolution of this phase of consciousness developed self-consciousness is not attained immediately. Rather, Hegel’s study of the successive stages of consciousness up to the level of self-consciousness is one of the more interesting parts of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The existence of another self is a condition of self-consciousness – yet the first spontaneous reaction when we are confronted by another is to assert our own existence in the face of the other. The self desires to annihilate the other (just as it does objects) as a means to triumphing of the self over the other (the self uses the other to satisfy itself). If such a move would be the literal destruction of the other, it would also defeat the self’s own purposes. For self-consciousness requires the recognition of the selfhood of the other (the other must recognize me if I am to be self-conscious), and thus there occurs what Hegel calls a **master-slave** relationship at this level of coming to self-consciousness.

The master is the one who succeeds in obtaining recognition from the other in the sense that he imposes himself as the slave’s value. The slave is the one who sees his own true self in the other (master).

Paradoxically, this original situation changes and it must do so Hegel claims because there are contradictions in it. On the one hand, by not recognizing the slave as a real person the master deprives himself of the recognition of his own freedom which he originally demanded and which is a requirement of his own self-consciousness. The master precisely in being the master therefore debases himself to an infra-human condition. On the other hand, by simply carrying out the master’s will the slave objectifies himself through labor in which transforms material things (manufactures and builds), and thereby gives form to himself and rises to the level of true existence.

The concept of the master-slave relationship has two aspects. (1) It is a stage in abstract dialectical development of consciousness and (2) it must be considered in relation to the course of history. The two dovetail. Human history itself reveals the development of Spirit, the work of the Spirit on the way to its goal – and Hegel calls this particular historical stage “Stoic” consciousness.

However, Stoic consciousness contains inherent contradictions and the master-slave relationship is not really overcome. Rather both Stoics, Marcus Aurelius (master) and Epictetus (slave), must take flight into interiority and exalt the idea of true interior freedom, self-sufficiency (inward turn), leaving their concrete relationship unchanged. Here we see that the negative attitude towards the concrete relational easily passes into *skeptical* consciousness for which the self alone remains while all else (relationship) is subjected to doubt and negation.

The trouble is that skeptical consciousness contains an internal contradiction – that is the skeptic cannot eliminate natural consciousness, and hence affirmation and negation exist in the same attitude (free to seek my satisfaction in the other yet not free in that I am dependent on the other for satisfaction). When this happens, we pass into “unhappy consciousness” which is *divided consciousness*. At this level the master-slave relationship which was not successfully overcome either by Stoic or skeptical consciousness returns in another form as follows.

Thus, in the master-slave relationship the recognition of selfhood and freedom both in oneself and the other were divided **between two consciousnesses** (master and slave): the master recognizes freedom and selfhood only in himself while the slave recognizes freedom and self only in the master. However, in “unhappy consciousness” this division occurs **within one (consciousness) self**; that is, in the tension between the fickle and changing (desiring) self and the ideal changeless self, where the first is something to be denied or repressed and where the second cannot be attained. The latter ideal or true self is then projected into an other-worldly sphere and identified as absolute perfection (e.g. as God existing apart from the world and the finite self), which results in *unhappy alienated* and divided consciousness.

The contradictions or divisions implicit in self-consciousness are overcome in the third phase of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* when the finite subject rises to universal consciousness. At this level self-consciousness no longer takes the form of one-sided awareness of oneself as an ***individual*** *subject* threatened by and in conflict with other self-conscious beings. **Rather there is full recognition of self and the self in others**. This is at least implicitly the awareness of the universal, the infinite Spirit, in and through finite selves, binding them together and yet not annulling them (identity-in-difference). [Note this is genuine community – also psychologically – although that is not Hegel’s claim.] While this awareness is *implicit and imperfectly* developed in *moral consciousness* (in which the one rational will expresses itself in a multiplicity of concrete moral vocations in the social order), this awareness of identity-in-difference, which is characteristic of the life of the Spirit, attains higher and higher expression in developed *religious consciousness* (for which the one divine God is present in all). Here in **religious consciousness**, unhappy consciousness is overcome and the true self is no longer conceived of as ideal and hopelessly alienated, but rather becomes the living core of the actual self which expresses itself in and through its finite manifestations.

This third phase of the phenomenological history of consciousness, which Hegel generally calls Reason, is represented by a synthesis of consciousness (1st phase) and self-consciousness (2nd phase). In the first phase the finite subject is aware of the sensible object as external and heterogenous to itself. In the second phase, the subject’s attention is turned back to itself as finite subject. In the third phase, the subject sees nature as the objective expression of infinite Spirit with which it is then united. Now this latter consciousness can take on different forms.

For example, in developed **religious consciousness** the subject sees nature as the creation and manifestation of God, with whom it is united in the depth of its being and through whom it is united with other selves (we are all part of God’s creation). But the truth of this religious consciousness is expressed **figuratively and pictorially**, where at the stage of philosophical reflection this truth is apprehended **philosophically/conceptually**. Here the finite subject is explicitly conscious of its inmost self as a moment in the life of the infinite and universal Spirit, as a moment of absolute Thought. As such the subject sees nature as its *own* objectification and as a precondition of its own life as actually existing Spirit. This does not mean that nature is merely the product of subjectivity rather the finite subject sees itself as more than finite and as a moment in the innermost life of the absolute Spirit (self-thinking Thought). Or, in other words, absolute knowledge is the phase at which the Absolute thinks itself as identity-in-difference (nature and history) in and through the finite mind of the philosopher.

3rd phase of consciousness: Reason

Just as Hegel develops the three main phases of the phenomenology of consciousness, he also develops the third phase of Reason through a series of dialectical phases.

(1) Reason as gaining a glimpse of its own reflection in nature (through the idea of *finality*, for example),

(2) as turning inwards in the study of formal logic and empirical psychology, and finally (3) as manifesting itself in a series of practical ethical attitudes, ranging from the pursuit of happiness, to criticism of universal moral law dictated by practical reason which follows from the recognition of the fact that universal law stands in need of so many qualifications that it loses all it definite meaning.

This sets the stage for the transition to **concrete moral life in society**.

Here Hegel moves from the unreflective ethical life in which human beings simply follow customs/traditions to the form of culture in which individual are estranged from their unreflective background and pass judgment on it. *The synthesis occurs in developed moral consciousness for which the rational will is not something over and above individuals in society but a common life binding them together as free persons.* The first stage is unreflective (as in Greek society before the sophists), the second is reflective but estranged from society and traditions, and in the third stage the Spirit is ethically sure of itself in the form of community of free persons embodying the general will as a living unity (reminiscent of Rousseau).

This living unity in which each member of the community is for the others a free self demands a explicit recognition of the idea of identity-in-difference, of a life which is present in all as their inner bond of unity though it does not annihilate them as individuals. Thus it demands the explicit recognition of the idea of the concrete universal which differentiates itself into or manifests itself in the particulars uniting them within itself. *In other words, morality passes dialectically into religion*. In religion we see the Absolute Spirit becoming explicitly conscious of itself. But religion of course also has a history. Thus, Hegel distinguishes *natural religion* (wherein the divine is seen in nature), to *religion of art or the beautiful* (such as in Greek religion, self-consciously associated with nature – as in the statue of deity), and finally in *absolute religion* wherein the Absolute is seen as Spirit, nature as divine creation, namely as the expression of the Word. Of course, religion expresses itself in the pictorial/figurative mode and it therefore demands to be transmuted into the **conceptual** (infinite self-thinking). Thought knows itself in nature (as its objectification and the condition of its own actualization), and recognizes in the history of culture with its successive forms and levels its own Odyssey. The Totality (God) comes to know itself through the finite human spirit.

In summary, in the *Phenomenology* Hegel starts at the lowest levels of human consciousness and works dialectically to the level at which the human mind attains the absolute point of view and becomes a vehicle of infinite self-conscious Spirit. The connections between one level and the next are often very loose, logically speaking. And some of the stages are obviously suggested not so much by the demands of a dialectical development as by Hegel’s reflections on the spirits and attitudes of different cultural phases or epochs.

Hegel’s Logic (of the Absolute or pure Thought)

Hegel rejected Schelling’s system of “identity” which holds that the Absolute in itself is for conceptual thought the vanishing point of all differences, an absolute self-identity which cannot be properly described except in negative terms and which can be positively apprehended only in mystical intuition. Unlike Schelling, Hegel is convinced that speculative reason can penetrate the inner essence of the absolute, the essence which manifests itself in nature and history.

The part of philosophy that is concerned with laying bare the inner essence of the Absolute (pure thought) is **logic**. The Absolute which is pure thought is considered apart from its externalization or self-manifestation – and the *science of pure thought is logic* [this is a little strange for obviously logic is here bound up with metaphysics and this is not how we usually think about logic]. Moreover insofar as pure thought is the *“substance”* (so to speak) *of reality*, logic must coincide with metaphysics at least insofar as metaphysics is concerned with the Absolute in itself.

This is in contrast to Kant’s transcendental logic (of the categories) which is limited to the phenomenal world – Hegel, like Fichte and Schelling, abandoned the thing-in-itself resulting in a full-fledged idealism wherein the categories become categories of creative thought. Now if this creative thought is to avoid solipsism, then it must be interpreted as Absolute thought. Hence, the categories become those of Absolute thought – and so also categories of **reality**. In turn a logic that studies categories also becomes metaphysics, disclosing the nature/essence of Absolute thought which manifests itself in nature and history.

While there are times that Hegel speaks of the Absolute in itself as God in Himself this manner of speaking is odd for it makes the logician penetrate the inner essence of a transcendent deity in terms of categories. Hegel’s use of religious language is misleading for while the Absolute is transcendent in the sense that it cannot be identified with any finite or set of finite entities it is not transcendent in the sense that the Christian God transcends the universe. For Hegel’s Absolute is the Totality and this Totality is depicted as coming to know itself through the finite spirit (human beings) in so far as the finite spirit attains the level of Absolute knowledge. Logic is therefore the Absolute’s knowledge of itself in itself; that is, in abstraction from its concrete manifestation of the Absolute in Nature and History. Thus, logic is Absolute Thought’s knowledge of its own essence (an essence which however exists concretely in the process of reality, namely of nature and history). But in his *Logic* Hegel is concerned not with the Absolute as it exists concretely in nature and history but with the Absolute “in itself” as a logical Idea – and this is not a temporal process of nature or history.

The dialectical movement of Hegel’s logic can be illustrated by means of the first three categories.

Hegel begins with the **logic of the** c**oncept of being** because it is the most indeterminate and logically prior concept. He then proceeds to show how this concept passes necessarily into successive concepts until we reach the Absolute Idea, the concept or category of self-knowledge (self-consciousness) which is self-thinking Thought. The concept of being is indeterminate because it passes into the concept of not-being. That is, if we try to think being without any determination at all, we find that we are thinking nothing. The mind passes from being to not-being and from not-being to being. This movement from being to not-being, and it reverse, is a movement of becoming. *Becoming* is the synthesis of being and not-being; becoming is their unity or truth. Being must therefore be conceived as becoming. The concept of the Absolute as being is a concept of the Absolute as becoming, as a process of self-development.

According to our ordinary way of looking at things a contradiction brings us to a full stop: being and not-being are mutually exclusive. But we think this way because we always conceive of being as determinate being and the not-being as the not-being of this determination. However, pure being is indeterminate, empty or vacuous, and it is for this reason that it passes into its opposite of not-being. As we have seen contradiction is for Hegel a positive force that reveals both thesis and antithesis as abstract moments in a higher unity or synthesis. This higher unity is becoming. But this unity of becoming in turn gives rise to a contradiction so that the mind is driven onwards in its search for the meaning of being, that is for the nature and *essence* of the Absolute itself.

Being, not-being (or nothing), and becoming form the first triad of Hegel’s logic, namely the logic of being. Thus, he is concerned with categories of being-in-itself and not with the categories of relation. The three main classes of categories in the logic of being are those of quality (including that of being, not-being, and becoming), quantity, and measure. Measure of described as the synthesis of quality and quantity.

In the second part of the *Logic*, the **logic of essence**, Hegel deduces pairs of related categories such as essence and existence, force and expression, substance and accident, cause and effect, and action and reaction. These categories are called *categories of reflection* because they correspond with reflective consciousness which penetrates beneath the surface, as it were, of being in its **immediacy**. Essence for example is conceived as lying behind appearance, and force is conceived as the reality displayed in its expression. In other words, for reflective consciousness being-in-itself undergoes self-diremption, meaning that it breaks up into related categories.

But the logic of essence does not leave with the division of being into inner essence and outward phenomenal existence, for the last main subdivision is devoted to the category of actuality which Hegel describes as the unity of essence and existence. That is, the actual is the inner essence which ex-ists, namely the force which has found complete expression. If we identify being with appearance, with its external manifestation, this is a one-sided abstraction, as is the identification of being with its hidden essence an abstraction. Being as an actuality is the unity of the inner and outer; it is essence manifesting itself as existence.

It is under the general heading of the category of actuality that Hegel deduces the categories of substance and accident, cause and effect, action and reaction (or reciprocal action). As I said, above, Hegel’s logic is a progressive definition or determination of the nature of the Absolute itself and this may suggest that there is only one cause and one substance namely the Absolute. But this is incorrect (it is Spinozism). For the Absolute actuality is essence manifesting itself in the universe as we know it. The Absolute is not simply the One; it is the One but it is also the Many (nature and history); it is identity-in-difference.

From the logic of essence Hegel passes to the **logic of the concept** which is the third main part of his work on *Logic*. In the **logic of being** each category is at first sight independent even as the dialectical movement of thought breaks down this apparent self-contained-ness. In the **logic of essence** we were concerned with related categories such as cause and effect or the sphere of what Hegel calls “mediation”. But each member of a pair of related categories is conceived as mediated “by another”, that is by something different from itself. For example, the cause is constituted as a cause by passing into its opposite, namely the effect which is conceived as something different from its cause. The synthesis of the spheres of immediacy (being) and of mediation (essence) by another will be the sphere of self-mediation. A being is said to be self-mediating when it is conceived as passing into its opposite yet remaining identical to itself even in this self-opposition. The self-mediating is what Hegel calls the *Concept* or the Notion.

The logic of the concept also has subdivisions. The first is that of “subjectivity” as thought in its formal aspects (this is logic in its ordinary sense). Hegel tries to show how the general idea of being going out from itself and then returning to itself at a higher level is verified in a formal manner in the movement of logical thought. Thus, the unity of the universal concept is divided in the judgment and is reestablished at a higher level in the syllogism. Hegel then turns to the notion of “objectivity”. Here he also finds three moments (analogous to, the universal concept, the judgment, and syllogistic inference) namely mechanism, chemism, and teleology, thereby anticipating the main ideas of the philosophy of nature. But he is concerned here with the concept of the objective rather than with Nature considered as empirically existing. The nature of the Absolute is such that it comprises the concept of self-objectification.

Given the character of Hegel’s dialectic, the third phase of the logic of concept is a synthesis of subjectivity and objectivity. This he calls the Idea. In the Idea the one-sided factors of the formal and material, the subjective and the objective are brought together. But the Idea too has moments or phases. In the final subdivision of the logic of the concept, Hegel considers “life”, “knowledge” and their unity in the absolute Idea, which is then the unity of subjectivity and objectivity enriched with rational life. In other words, the absolute Idea is the concept or category of self-consciousness, personality, self-thinking. Thought which knows itself in its object and its object as itself. It is therefore the category of Spirit (in and for itself, knowing itself as totality).

After all this long dialectical wandering, we find that being has at last been revealed as the absolute Idea, as self-thinking Thought. The Absolute is being, and the meaning of this claim has been now made explicit. The absolute Idea alone is being, eternal life, self-knowing truth, and it is all **truth.** It is one subject matter and content of philosophy as concerned with reality as a whole – where reality is nature and human spirit (history) and the process whereby the Idea or Logos actualizes itself – hence philosophy is always concerned with the Idea.

**If we talk about the logical Idea or Logos manifesting itself I nature and human spirit, then the question arises *what is the ontological status of the logical Idea or Absolute in itself?* If it is not a reality independent of the world how can it be a subsistent Idea? If it is an independent reality how can speak of it as manifesting/actualizing itself in the world?**

At the end of the *Logic* in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel claims that the Idea in its absolute freedom…. resolves to let its moment of particularity….the immediate Idea as its reflected image, go forth freely out of itself as Nature. This implies that nature is ontologically derived from the Idea and that the Idea freely posits Nature. If this is the case then the Idea is a creative Deity – how else could the Idea resolve to do something? However this is religious language and belongs to religious consciousness, not philosophy.

From a philosophical point of view, the Absolute in itself necessarily manifests itself in Nature (obviously it is not constrained to do so by anything external to it and hence the necessity is an inner necessity of nature. The only freedom in the Idea’s self-manifestation is the freedom of spontaneity and hence from this perspective we cannot speak of the Absolute as existing in itself before “creation” (such a claim would be theistic). If Nature is derived ontologically from the Idea, the Idea is not temporally prior to Nature. Rather, the Absolute attains self-consciousness only in the human spirit. This does not mean that human consciousness is identified with divine consciousness – for the Absolute can know itself only through the human mind insofar as this mind reaches beyond finitude and particularity reaching absolute knowledge. But if the Absolute becomes actually existent only in and through the human spirit, the Absolute in itself, the logical Idea, cannot properly be said to resolve to posit Nature, which is the objective precondition for the existence of the sphere of Spirit.

If we exclude theistic interpretations, *how do we conceive of the transition between the logical Idea and Nature?* (Here we have Schelling’s critique that it is impossible to deductively derive nature from an Idea.) Since the Absolute is Totality, and Totality is a teleological process, the actualization of self-thinking Thought, we can then think this process in abstraction. But the Idea then does not exist prior to Nature (e.g., as an efficient cause of Nature). The Idea reflects the goal or result of the process rather than a self-subsistent reality which stands at the beginning. The so-called deduction of Nature form the Idea is really an exhibition of the fact that Nature is a necessary precondition for the realization of the goal of the total process of reality: the Totality’s knowledge of itself in and through the human spirit.

After all, for Hegel the infinite exists in and through the finite: the universe has its being and lives through the particulars. Hence, there is no room in Hegel’s system for an efficient cause which transcends the world. Yet it is also evident that the finite perishes (is but a temporal manifestations of the infinite). But in as much as the Logos is continuous with life, Being actualizes what it potentially is, namely Spirit, and hence we can look on the perishing manifestation of nature as ontologically dependent on one immanent Life, if you like an “outside” to the inside. So that Logos spontaneously expresses itself in or going over into Nature. For Being, the Absolute, the infinite Totality is never a mere collection of things, but one infinite Life, self-actualizing Spirit. It is the universal of universals, and even thought it exists only through particulars, it persist whereas the particulars do not. Hence, it is perfectly reasonable to speak of the Logos as expressing or manifesting itself in finite things, and inasmuch as it is Absolute Spirit which comes to exists as such through the process of its own self-development, material Nature is naturally conceived as its opposite, and the precondition for the attainment of its telos.

This interpretation of Hegel seems to attempt to have things both ways. Thus, on the one hand it is admitted that the logical Idea does not exists as a subsistent reality which creates Nature from the outside; on the other hand, it is claimed that the logical Idea (as the essential structure or meaning of Being as grasped by the metaphysician, represents a metaphysical reality which, though it exists only in its self-manifestation, is in a certain sense prior to its manifestation. So that we cannot exclude metaphysics from Hegel’s system or eliminate the possibility of a certain transcendence – on risk that otherwise we make nonsense of the infinite Absolute. We cannot escape the distinction between the inner and outer, between the one infinite Life, self-actualizing Spirit, and the finite manifestations in and through which it lives and has its being. So we can say that Nature’s derives its reality from the one Life which expresses itself in it. The ambiguity is not surprising or otherwise we would not have philosophy within all its divergent interpretations.

Nature is “in-itself”, in the Idea, divine. But as it exists, its being does not correspond with its concept. In other words, Nature is not itself divine, because as expression in the material world (which is very unlike the Absolute Spirit), it is only inadequately expressed. The Absolute is defined as Spirit and can only manifests itself adequately in the sphere of Spirit, for which Nature is a precondition and its rational structure leaves its imprint on Spirit**. Nature is a slumbering Spirit (Schelling) or visible Spirit, but it is not itself properly Spirit.** Spirit comes about, is awakened, only in consciousness of itself.

Nature is the sphere of necessity whereas Spirit is freedom. Nature is also the sphere of **contingency** and displays no purely rational pattern even as it admits of empirical causality. In other words, empirical causality is not the same as logical deduction of which Nature does not admit. Obviously Nature exists as particular things. But it does not follow that any given particular is logically deducible from the concept of its specific type or any general concept. The **contingency of Nature** is necessary for without contingency there is no Nature. Hegel describes this as the “impotency of Nature” to remain faithful to the determination of the Idea. This notion of impotency is ascribed to Nature not to finite mind’s incapability of giving a rational account of Nature. This is why Hegel sometimes refers to Nature as a **Fall** from the Idea. Hence Nature is not to be deified (and so the regard Nature as “higher” than the creations of human spirit such as works of art or the social institutions). Hegel follows Schelling in granting Nature a status which it did not enjoy under Fichte, yet Hegel does not Romanticize Nature.

The fact remains that Nature is real and a moment in the life of the Absolute (because the Absolute is Totality). Thus, there is an objective Nature (indeed there must be for the Absolute is identity-in-difference – subjectivity and objectivity are both real), yet he finds it difficulty to deal with **contingency** in his system of Absolute Idealism. Hence, there is a Platonic element in Hegel, as if there were an “inside” to Nature namely its rational structure or reflection of the Idea and an outside which is its contingent, irrational, unreal. For the Idea must take the form of objectivity – and objectivity is contingency; the philosopher cannot rid Nature of contingency but the philosopher also cannot cope with the irrational and so unreal. **The rational is real and the real is rational***!* Hence, Hegel is driven to some kind of **dualism** or else to slide over the contingency of Nature.

Nature is treated by philosophy as a system of stages of which the one proceeds necessarily from the other. That is, these stages are a necessary development of concepts (and not the empirical contingency of Nature). Thus when Hegel dismisses *evolutionary theory* it is because a *physical* hypothesis of this kind is irrelevant to the philosophy of Nature which has to do with the dialectic of reason.

The three main divisions of Nature (in *The Encyclopedia*) are mathematics, physics, and organic physics while in *Lectures on Philosophy*, they are mechanics, physics and organics. In both cases Hegel begins with space, with what is most removed from mind or Spirit. Space is pure externality while in the organism we find internality. Subjectivity makes its appearance in animals but not in the form of self-consciousness. Nature thus brings us to the threshold of Spirit, **but only to the threshold**.

Obviously Hegel is not trying to the work of the scientist; rather the philosophy of Nature is trying to finds some rational pattern in nature. In other words, Hegel takes science for granted and it is a matter of fitting the facts of science into some conceptual scheme.

The Absolute as Spirit is the highest definition of the Absolute (Totality): to find this definition is the task of Culture and philosophy – indeed all religion and science have striven to find this point. The Absolute is itself Spirit but it is only potential Spirit. The Absolute for itself, Nature, is Spirit but it is alienated Spirit (God in his otherness). Spirit begins to exist only when it comes to the *human spirit* which is the third part of Hegel’s system – the philosophy of Spirit (in contrast to the philosophy of nature).

The philosophy of Spirit also has three main sub-divisions: the first two parts deal with finite spirit (subjective Spirit), and the third part deals with absolute Spirit, the Logos in its concrete existence as self-thinking Thought.

The first part of the philosophy of Spirit (History) is divided into three parts: anthropology treat the soul as sensing and feeling that is the transition from Nature to Spirit. It reveals the ideality of Nature (self-feeling) but also the sleep of the Spirit (no reflective self-consciousness). Hence the soul is sunk into particularity of feeling (to which the body is externality). Soul and body are inner and outer of the human organism.

From soul Hegel passes to the phenomenology of consciousness (see also the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, above). The soul was the lowest and undifferentiated unity but at the level of consciousness subjective spirit is confronted by the object, first by the bject external to itself and later by itself as “object” in self-consciousness (where self-consciousness is unity at a higher level).

The third section of the subjective Spirit is mind or “spirit” and it considers the powers of the finite spirit as such. We are no longer concerned with the slumbering spirit, the soul of anthropology, or the ego as in phenomenology, but with *psychology* conceived as dialectical deduction of the concepts of the logically successive stages in the activity of the finite spirit itself.

Psychology

Mind or finite spirit is studied both theoretically (intuition, memory, imagination, thought) and practically (feeling, impulse, and will). The actual free will is the unity of the theoretical and practical spirit. Free will exists for itself as free will (the will as conscious of its freedom). This is the will as free intelligence – hence the concept of Spirit in itself is the concept of the rational will (*der vernunftige Wille*).