GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL
The Science of Logic

The purpose of the Cambridge Hegel Translations is to offer translations of the best modern German editions of Hegel's work in a uniform format suitable for Hegel scholars, together with philosophical introductions and full editorial apparatus.

This new translation of *The Science of Logic* by G. W. F. Hegel (also known as his *Greater Logic*) includes Book One (revised 1832), Book Two (1813) of Volume One, and Volume Two (1816). Recent research has given us a detailed picture of the process that led Hegel to his final conception of the System of Philosophy and of the place of the Logic within it. We now understand how and why Hegel distanced himself from Schelling, how radical this break with his early mentor was, and to what extent it entailed a return (but with a difference) to Fichte and Kant. In the introduction to the volume, George di Giovanni presents in synoptic form the results of recent scholarship on the subject, and, while recognizing the fault lines in Hegel's System that allow opposite interpretations, argues that the Logic marks the end of classical metaphysics. The translation is accompanied by a full apparatus of historical and explanatory notes.

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IN MEMORIAM
HENRY SILTON HARRIS
late fellow of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Humanities
scholar, philosopher, humanist, mentor, friend

m'insegnavate come l'uom s'etterna:
e quant'io l'abbia in grado mentr'io vivo
convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna.
Inferno XV, 85–87

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I am of course responsible for any errors.

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GEORGE DI GIOVANNI

Abbreviations

A – /B – = Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cited according to the pagination of the 1781 and 1782 editions (A and B).

AK = *Immanuel Kant. Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Royal Prussian Academy of the Sciences (Berlin: Reimer, 1902–), cited by volume and page number.

GA = *J. G. Fichte – Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. R. Lauth and H. Gliwitzky (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromann-Holzboog, 1962–2005), cited by series number in Roman numerals, volume number, pagination, and when appropriate line number.

GW = *G. W. F. Hegel: Gesammelte Werke*, Deutsche Forschungsgemainschaft (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968–), cited by volume, page, and when appropriate line number.

Miller = *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969).

Moni/Cesa = *G. W. F. Hegel: Scienza della Logica*, Vols. I and II, trans. Arturo Moni (1924–25); revised, Claudio Cesa (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001).

Guyer/Wood = *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Introduction

PROLOGUE

Writing an introduction to a translation of Hegel's Logic is an even more formidable task than the translation itself. There are serious issues that immediately confront the author, and it will not be amiss to indicate them at the start, and also to declare how I have chosen to settle them. First, there is the issue of defining the task that an introduction should perform. An introduction cannot be a step-by-step guide for the neophyte across the intricacies of the Logic. Fortunately, it need not be. There are already guides of this kind available, some classic, others more recent, all good in their different ways.[1] An introduction may be a general statement about the project of the Logic, its place in Hegel's System, and the key concepts that govern the progression of the categories. But general statements of this kind, while of no use to those already in the know, do little in the way of indicating why the Logic is at least an interesting, and as I believe also still significant, philosophical product. It is not clear, in other words, whether such statements do any work at all. They certainly do nothing to motivate a reading of the Logic and may even simply reinforce well-established prejudices. For this reason, I have decided in this introduction to focus on the Logic's problematic nature as such. My claim is that the Logic is to be read as still in line with Kant's Transcendental Logic, though without being "transcendental" in Kant's sense. But once this determination is made, another issue immediately arises. Of course, however philosophically important the Logic might still be, the fact remains that it is a dated document. Why

[1] For instance, in chronological order: G. R. G. Mure, *An Introduction to Hegel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) and *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950); John Burbidge, *Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981); Clark Butler, *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996); John Burbidge, *The Logic of Hegel: An Introduction* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2006); David Gray Carlson, *A Commentary to Hegel's* Science of Logic (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Hegel should ever have wanted to attempt it needs historical explanation. And this I have done with as much detail as space allowed. But the problem is that the moment one departs from a purely historical account and takes a definite stand on the nature of the Logic, one is immediately faced with a host of conflicting interpretations, both classic and recent, and, while one cannot enter in an introduction into an extended polemical debate with them, to ignore them would smack of dogmatism. I have tried to negotiate my way out of this dilemma by bringing out the fault lines in the Logic along which different and even contradictory readings are possible. I neither ignore nor dismiss these readings, even though I perforce refer to them globally. For the classic and more metaphysical of them there was no problem singling out J. M. E. McTaggart as the representative figure. But the state of the recent, in spirit more "hermeneutic" readings is still much too fluid for singling out any representative figure. Hence, although I shall mention the occasional name in footnotes, I shall refer to these more recent developments only in general, without emblematic representation. Between these two extremes, a host of more qualified readings are available in the literature. I hope that, by motivating a study of the Logic, I also motivate a study of all this literature.

Nothing is simple about Hegel's Logic, not even the history of its production. As we shall see, the text that we have represents a work in progress. Hegel did not live to carry out the revision that he had planned for the whole work but accomplished it only in part. There are good exegetical reasons, therefore, for comparing the revised with the corresponding unrevised parts of the text, and also for asking what changes Hegel might have brought to the parts never revised if he had lived to complete the revision. But considerations of this kind demand an already close acquaintance with the text or at least an immediate close perusal of it, and for this reason, with two exceptions which will come up in due time, I relegate them to an appendix.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LOGIC

Hegel's interest in the science of logic dates at least as far back as 1801 when he moved to Jena to assist Schelling, hoping to establish himself in an academic career.[2] There, starting from the 1801/02 winter term, Hegel offered a course on Logic and Metaphysics every year, with the exception

[2] Hegel assisted Schelling in producing the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, in which he also published his first essays. These essays are collected in GW 4.

of the 1805/06 winter term, after which time he left the city. We shall return to these lecture courses in due course. Despite Hegel's repeated announcements during this Jena period of a forthcoming book on the subject,[3] his published work on logic came considerably later. The first part of what was announced as the first volume of a planned two-volume *Science of Logic*[4] was published only in 1812, when Hegel was professor and rector at a gymnasium in Nürnberg. The second part of the same volume came the year after, in 1813.[5] Both parts went under the subtitle of *Objective Logic*, and the second carried the further subtitle "The Doctrine of Essence." The announced second volume was finally published in 1816, still in Nürnberg, in one part and with the subtitle "The Doctrine of the Concept."[6] Another much-abbreviated *Science of Logic* appeared in 1817, as the first part of an *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*[7] which Hegel, who in the meantime (1816) had been appointed as professor at the university in Heidelberg, produced as the textbook for his lecture courses. He published a second, heavily revised edition of this same work in 1827, and yet a third, with minor revisions, in 1830.[8] These two last editions of the Encyclopedia were still published in Heidelberg, even though by that time Hegel had long since moved to Berlin. In this city he had continued to lecture on the subject of logic.[9] We know, moreover, that in 1826 he had begun to give some thought to a new edition of the original Nürnberg work,[10] and in fact, in January of 1831, he submitted to the publishers a heavily revised version of Part I of Volume One of that first *Science of Logic*, that is, the part published in 1812. This new version, now entitled "The Doctrine of Being," came out in print the year after,

[3] He first promised a textbook on the subject in connection with his announcement of a lecture course on Logic and Metaphysics for the summer term of 1802: "*secundum librum sub eodem titulo proditurum*." GW 7, 361. He repeated the promise in the announcement for the winter of 1802.

[4] *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, *Die objektive Logik* (Nürnberg, 1812). GW 11. This is the counterpart of Book I in the 1833 edition and also the Lasson edition.

[5] *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, *Die objektive Logik*; zweites Buch, "Die Lehre vom Wesen" (Nürnberg, 1813). GW 11. This is Book II in the 1833 edition and also in the Lasson edition.

[6] *Wissenschaft der Logik oder die Lehre vom Begriff* (Nürnberg, 1816). GW 12. This is Book III in the 1833 edition and also in the Lasson edition.

[7] *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. Zum Gebrauch seiner Vorlesungen (Heidelberg, 1817). GW 13.

[8] GW 19 and 20.

[9] Notes from the 1831 lectures taken by Hegel's son Karl have been published in the series *Vorlesungen, Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripten*, *Vorlesungen über die Logik*, Band 10, ed. Udo Rameil and H.-Christian Lucas† (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001). Notes from lectures on logic given at Heidelberg in 1817 and taken by the student F. A. Good have been published in the same series, *Vorlesungen über Logik und Metaphysik*, Band 11, ed. Karen Gloy (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992).

[10] Cf. GW 21, 400.

in 1832[11] – posthumously, for in the meantime, on November 14, 1831, Hegel had suddenly died. It was then republished in 1833 by Leopold von Henning, together with Part II of the same Volume One from 1813 and the Volume Two from 1816. In this form the Logic was part of a complete edition of the philosopher's works that his disciples had hastily arranged after his death. It is this text that became the canonical version of Hegel's so-called Greater Logic.[12] It was re-edited by Georg Lasson in 1923,[13] and more recently again – now equipped with a detailed critical apparatus and with Part I of Volume One in both its 1812 and 1832 versions – as Volumes 11, 12, and 21 of the Academy Edition of Hegel's *Gesammelte Werke*.

It is likely that Hegel, had he lived longer, would have revised the rest of this Greater Logic.[14] But all changes apart, whether actual or possible, one thing is certain. As of 1807 at least, and throughout the long subsequent process of publication of *The Science of Logic*, the place of this science as the first of a three-part System of Philosophy that comprises Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit was clear and fixed in Hegel's mind. This, however, was not the case at the beginning of his Jena period. In the first sketches of the System, the one extreme of Logic tended at that time to fall into what he called "Logic *and* Metaphysics," and the other extreme of Philosophy of Spirit tended to fall into Ethics and Religion. Historically and conceptually, therefore, of greater interest than any changes later made to the Logic is precisely how Hegel ever came to merge logic and metaphysics, and how this merger both reflected and made a difference to his conception of both Logic and System. For this, we must consider the earlier texts that have come down to us from the Jena years.

THE GENESIS OF THE LOGIC

It is only recently, since the Academy Edition of the works of Hegel, that we have a reliably complete picture of the development of Hegel's thought

[11] *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Teil, *Die objektive Logik*, erster Band, *Die Lehre vom Sein* (Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1832). GW 21.

[12] *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke*. Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten. Bände III–V. *Wissenschaft der Logic*, ed. Leopold von Henning (Berlin, 1833). The 1832 edition of the "Doctrine of Being" was quickly forgotten, so much so that Georg Lasson, in 1932, was not aware of its existence. He thought that Henning had derived the revised version of the 1812 Part One directly from a manuscript of Hegel intended for publication. For this, see GW 21, 399.

[13] *Sämtliche Werke*, Band III/IV (Leipzig, 1923 and 1932).

[14] But we have no definite indication to that effect. Cf. GW 21, 403. For actual and possible changes, see the Appendix to the translation of the text.

during that formative period. From the beginning, the archaeological problem has been twofold. For one thing, the texts relating to the formation of the Logic and the System have come to us in an unpublished and fragmentary, in some cases extremely fragmentary, form. For another, these texts were badly misdated by Karl Rosenkranz, the one who had direct access to Hegel's literary estate and was the first to report on them.[15] This circumstance interfered with later editions of the surviving texts,[16] even at a time when the editors had already begun to doubt the accuracy of Rosenkranz's dating. Old prejudices die hard. Fortunately these problems have been alleviated lately because of the recovery of hitherto lost manuscripts and the painstaking work of the editors of the *Gesammelte Werke* who have subjected to statistical analysis the progressive changes in Hegel's handwriting during the Jena period. Thus our current dating of texts is as trustworthy as historical methods will allow, and it provides us with a solid basis for a convincing reconstruction of the evolution of Hegel's thought to which the texts themselves give witness.[17] For our purposes, the relevant data are as follows.[18]

1801/02. In the Jena course catalogue of this winter term Hegel announced a private seminar in "Logic and Metaphysics" and also, *gratis*, an "Introduction to Philosophy." As described in the announcement, the seminar would expound a "general or transcendental Logic," that is to say, it would treat "the system of the forms of finitude, or a theory of the objective understanding," which is the source of the usual logical constructions of subjective reflection. But it would then let reason "destroy" these finite forms and thereby move on to Metaphysics where the task of philosophy is finally discharged in its various systematic forms and in

[15] Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Leben: Supplement zu Hegel's Werke* (Berlin, 1844; reprinted, Darmstadt, 1967); "Hegels ursprüngliches System 1798–1806. Aus Hegels Nachlass," *Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch*, ed. Robert Prutz, Leipzig, ii (1844). A reprint of the four volumes of this journal is available (psc@periodicals.com).

[16] *G. W. F. Hegel: Hegels erstes System*, ed. H. Eherenberg and H. Link (Heidelberg, 1915); *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*, ed. George Lasson (Leipzig, 1923); *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1932).

[17] Hermann Nohl was the first to subject Hegel's handwriting to this analysis in connection with his edition of Hegel's early theological writings. *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Hermann Nohl (Tübingen, 1987; reprinted 1968). For the chronology of the Jena period, see "Die Chronologie der Manuskripten Hegels in den Bänden 4 bis 9 [of GW]," in the editorial apparatus of GW 8.348ff. Also: Heinz Kimmerle, "Dokumente zu Hegels Jenaer Dozententätigkeit (1801–1807)," *Hegel-Studien*, 4 (1967), 21–99; *Das Problem der Abgeschlossenheit des Denkens*, *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 8 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1870). For a detailed, English-language study of the period based on the new chronology, see H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts: Jena 1801–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

[18] This is a greatly abbreviated list of the documents we actually have. I list only those required for the subsequent discussion.

accordance with human interests.[19] The brief fragments that we have from these years are of notes that Hegel most likely intended for these announced courses.[20]

We can gather from these fragments that Hegel's "Introduction" would have aimed to make the same point which he was later to repeat in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely that philosophy is its own introduction.[21] But, inasmuch as philosophy is an empirical product of history, it always assumes a subjective shape which, when taken individually, can convey the false impression of being absolute. There is room, therefore, for a critical reflection that would dispel this impression. To perform this clarifying task is precisely the task of an introduction to philosophy. It is simply a matter of bringing to light an absolute content which is already at hand in historically conditioned materials, and which, once brought to light, would stand on its own without the need of historical support. This content is none other than the life of the Absolute, at least as Schelling conceived of the Absolute at the time.[22] Just as the absolute substance[23] first gives a sketch of itself in the idea,[24] then realizes itself in nature by giving itself an articulated body therein, and in spirit finally sums itself up by recognizing itself in this process of externalization, so philosophy must display the idea of the Absolute in cognition, and must then develop it into a philosophy of nature, an ethical system, and finally into a religion that recaptures the simplicity of the original idea. The assumption is that that idea is originally present to the philosopher in intuition, that is, in a still unarticulated immediate awareness. Here we have Hegel's first outline of a system: Idea (Logic and Metaphysics), Nature, Ethics, Religion. Philosophy must re-enact conceptually the process which is the very life of the absolute substance. As Hegel warns, philosophy's main adversary in this task is a spurious metaphysics, the product of bad reflection, which constantly threatens to introduce rigid conceptual distinctions where there are in fact none, and thus pre-empts the possibility of a truly organic grasp of reality. Philosophy's true intention ought to be none other than that "by it and through it we learn how to live."[25]

[19] For the text, see GW 5, *Schriften und Entwürfe (1799–1808)*, ed. T. Ebert, M. Baum, and K. R. Meist (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998), p. 654.
[20] For the fragments, see GW 5, 259–275.
[21] *Phenomenologie des Geistes* (Bamberg & Würzburg, 1807); GW 5, 59–60.
[22] See the second major fragment, GW 5, 262–265. [23] *das absolute Wesen.*
[24] ". . . in der Idee sein Bild gleichsam entwirft." Just how the Absolute accomplishes this, and what "idea" means in this context, is of course one of the problems of Schelling's pantheism.
[25] GW 5, 261.

As for the announced "Logic and Metaphysics,"[26] we learn from the same fragments that the Logic would have played precisely the introductory role of displaying the forms of finite ("bad") reflection. It would show how this reflection, which is the product of the understanding, apes the attempt of reason to generate identity but only ends up with a formalistic counterfeit of it. By overcoming this formalism, logic then makes possible the transition to metaphysics, that is to say, it makes possible "the complete construction of the principle of all philosophy"[27] on the basis of which we can then "construct the possible systems of philosophy."[28] It is in this way, in the medium of consciousness or in spirit, that for Hegel the reality of an otherwise shifting world of appearances becomes a harmonious whole.[29]

1802/03. We have the fair copy of a *System of Ethics* obviously ready for publication but in fact never published. It is complete, though the final pages are sketchy, and there might be two lacunas in the text as it has come down to us.[30] It was composed at a time when Hegel was busy with a number of other projects, all dedicated to ethical issues. He was still working on a manuscript concerning the German Constitution, a project on which he had started even before moving to Jena.[31] He also published an essay on natural law in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*;[32] announced courses on the same subject (summers of 1802 and 1803), and gave two of three announced public lectures on a critique of Fichte's concept of natural law.[33] All evidence leads one to believe that the text is the reworking of notes prepared by Hegel for his announced lecture courses. The fact that it starts quite abruptly makes it likely that it was intended as only one part of a larger compendium of philosophy, and that it was never published because the compendium itself was not ready. In the 1801/02 outline of Hegel's planned System, it would constitute the third part.

[26] GW 5, 269–275. There is evidence that Hegel interrupted the seminar before its official end. Cf. GW 5, 659.

[27] "... das Prinzip aller Philosophie vollständig zu konstruiren." GW 5, 274.

[28] "... wir uns die Möglichen Systeme der Philosophie konstruiren können." GW 5, 274.

[29] "... aber diese sich bewegende Welt ist ohne Bewußtsein der Harmonie; sie ist nur im Geist des Philosophen ein harmonisches." GW 5, 269.

[30] GW 5, 660–661. The text, which is now available in a critical edition in GW 5, was edited and translated by H. Harris and T. M. Knox on the basis of an earlier edition of Georg Lasson (Leipzig, 1913). Cf. *G. W. F. Hegel:* System of Ethical Life *(1802/3) and* First Philosophy of Spirit *(1803/4)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979). For a description of the historical and conceptual context of the text, and an analysis of it, see H. S. Harris's introduction to this translation.

[31] GW 5, 552–553.

[32] "Über die Wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie, und sein Verhältniß zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften." GW 4, 415–464.

[33] The third was never given because, as an unsalaried instructor (*Privatdozent*), he was not allowed to hold lectures *gratis*, and a complaint was lodged against him to that effect. GW 5, 665–666.

The text is dense and intricate, but would not necessarily have been obscure to those who, like Hegel's prospective students, were familiar with Schelling's Identity Philosophy. For it is clear, even from its abrupt opening, that at the time Hegel still shared his mentor's basic assumptions regarding experience.[34] We read in the first lines:

> Knowledge of the Idea of the absolute ethical order depends entirely on the establishment of perfect adequacy between intuition and concept, because the Idea is nothing other than the identity of the two. But if this identity is to be actually known, it must be thought as a made adequacy. But because they are then held apart from one another [as its two sides], they are afflicted with a difference.[35]

The intuition/concept connection is of course Kantian in origin. In Schelling's System, however, it acquires a specialized new meaning. Intuition is no longer restricted to the senses but must be understood rather as the immediate feeling of the totality of reality which is presumably at the origin of consciousness and which conceptualization is then supposed to bring to reflective consciousness. But in fulfilling this function, the concept sets itself up against the intuition, as one particular form of consciousness as against another, and the task thereby arises of regaining the unity of reality as originally intuited. This is a task which is to be discharged in the medium of ideas at different levels of experience. Hegel's essay is an account of how the unity is attained in the particularized context of ethical life. The problem is to think how a people (*Volk*) can regain in the medium of appropriate laws and institutions the natural feeling of self-identity which made it a people originally but which is lost precisely in the attempt to canonize it in reflective laws and institutions. The conclusion of the essay is too sketchy to give any clear idea of how this recovery is finally to be realized. However, if we take Hegel's 1801/02 outline of a System as the norm, the resulting new people (the absolute *Volk*) would be a religious community. This is exactly what Hegel says in a text which we do not have, but which Rosenkranz describes at length and which very likely dates from around this time.[36] Moreover, still taking the 1801/02 outline as the norm, it appears that the interplay of intuition and concept which in this essay Hegel documents only by reference to the life of a society would

[34] This is in no way to imply that Hegel simply followed Schelling. On the contrary, while using Schelling's language, he subtly, and perhaps even inadvertently, gave it new meaning from the beginning.

[35] GW 5, 279.2–6. I am using the Harris and Knox translation, pp. 99–100.

[36] Rosenkranz, *Leben*, pp. 132–141. Harris gives a summary of this text in an Appendix to his translation of the *System of Ethics*, pp. 178–186. According to Harris, it was likely the conclusion of the *Philosophiæ universæ delineatio* of 1803; see GW 6, 340, and Harris's translation, p. 202, note 1.

have to be detected by the philosopher in nature itself, inasmuch as nature constitutes the antecedent of communal existence. It would consist in a process by which the more organic forms of existence incorporate in their internal unity the otherwise dispersed elements of the inanimate forms that precede them. This is a process that ultimately leads to the creation of a social organism, and it is the subject matter of the Philosophy of Nature. Logic, for its part, would critically expose and overcome the type of conceptualization that tends to absolutize the opposition of intuition and concept, while Metaphysics would provide the basic ideal schemas of a reconciliation of the two in real existence.

1803/04. Hegel continued to lecture on his projected system. He announced a *Philosophiæ universæ delineatio* for the 1803 summer term,[37] and a lecture course again on the system of speculative philosophy for the subsequent 1803/04 winter term.[38] We do not know how extensive a use he made for these courses of prior notes, but we do have two extensive though fragmentary manuscripts that are clearly connected to them. One is a text, in parts left incomplete by Hegel himself, of a Philosophy of Nature and a Philosophy of Spirit.[39] The other is the manuscript of a Logic, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Nature, in fair copy but reworked in places, fragmentary in parts and broken off by Hegel himself somewhere in the Philosophy of Nature, just before the stage of "organic nature" would have begun.[40] Both texts are important for different but complementary reasons. Regarding the first, its Philosophy of Spirit differs substantially from the earlier *System of Ethics* in two significant respects. For one thing, it starts with consciousness and not with *Volk*, as the earlier text does. The introduction of this extra element provides a smooth transition from the Philosophy of Nature to that of Spirit which would have been lacking in any intended prior complete System. Consciousness is where organic nature acquires its highest point of concentration by reflecting upon itself and where nature as such thus becomes spirit. When this consciousness develops into language, and language becomes in turn the language of a people, the social character of spirit is then revealed. It is only at this point that Hegel returns in his

[37] GW 6, 340.

[38] "Philosophiae speculativae systema, complectens a) Logicam et Metaphysicam, sive Idealismus transcendentalem, b) philosophiam naturae et c) mentis, ex dictatis exponet." GW 6, 340.

[39] *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, GW 6.

[40] *Jenaer Systementwürfe II*, *Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie (1804/05)*, GW 7. There is an English translation of the Logic and Metaphysics by the Ontario Hegel Group, *G. W. F. Hegel, The Jena System, 1804–5: Logic and Metaphysics*, translation edited by John W. Burbidge and George di Giovanni, with an Introduction by H. S. Harris (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986).

manuscript to social existence, the subject matter of the earlier *System of Ethics*. The manuscript breaks off at the point where this existence assumes the form of labor. We do not know whether Hegel would have proceeded to develop it into the social products of Art and Religion, thereby merging the Ethics and Religion of the 1801/02 outline into one unit as is done in the mature Philosophy of Spirit. But of greater consequence is the other respect in which the text differs from the *System of Ethics*. In the latter work, spirit is treated in the same vein as nature would be, that is, from the speculative standpoint of an objective observer contemplating it at a distance – from the outside, so to speak, as one must indeed do when contemplating nature.[41] With the introduction of consciousness, however, Hegel is now in a position to follow up the development of spirit from within the subjective standpoint of spirit itself – to follow it internally as it would appear to the subject matter itself under observation, namely spirit. Here we have the beginning of a phenomenological analysis of spirit, an especially significant innovation to which we shall return in a moment.

Regarding the other text, one can discern in it a parallel development. Logic and Metaphysics still appear as two separate pieces, as they do in the 1801/02 planned System. Presumably Logic is still intended to be the introduction to Metaphysics.[42] But the distinction between the two tends in fact to disappear. Hegel still seems to think of dialectic in a negative, basically still Kantian sense, as a movement that irrupts from within finite thought revealing the contradictory nature of its determinations when these are held absolutely apart. But this movement, instead of being elicited under the pressure of external critical reflection as one would expect on a purely negative conception of dialectic, now assumes the character of a movement internal to thought as such, and extending to the categories of the Metaphysics as well. It is a movement by which thought develops into ever more complex forms and which can be traced from within thought itself simply by pursuing its internal logic. The net result is that, *de facto*, Logic loses its introductory function. It extends into Metaphysics, thus turning the latter into Logic. The metaphysical constructions that should have given objective expressions (in a kind of conceptual art in the style of Schelling) to the unity of being otherwise only immediately felt in intuition – a unity in which all differentiation is shown to be null – turn instead into reflective conceptual elaborations of forms which the concept itself takes on *as concept*. The concept thus gains in subjective depth, just

[41] This is the standpoint from which ethical matters are dealt with in Chapter 5 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as contrasted with the way they are treated in Chapter 6.
[42] The first pages of the manuscript are missing.

as spirit does in the text of the Philosophy of Spirit. Connecting the two, formal thought and spirit, is the concept of the "infinite" which is now understood as transcending the "finite," not in the sense that it annuls it, but in the sense that it provides the conceptual space within which the finite can emerge in its multifarious forms and yet also be contained by the infinite. As a concept, the "infinite" provides the abstract schema, already attributed by Hegel to consciousness in 1801/02, for transforming the otherwise shifting world of nature into a harmonious whole.[43] What we have, in other words, is a first adumbration of the mature Logic, and, together with the other text, at least the materials for a System divided into Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit. The fact that Hegel did not complete his long since planned System at this time, even though he had manuscripts for it apparently intended for publication, might well indicate that his idea of System was then undergoing radical modifications.

1805/06/07. Two developments, which are the final ones we shall consider here, occurred in these years. Hegel announced a lecture course on *Realphilosophie* (that is, on nature and spirit) several times, but we have secure evidence that he actually gave it only for the 1806 summer term.[44] We also have from these years a manuscript which is also on the subject of *Realphilosophie*, in fair copy but heavily reworked.[45] Of special interest in this text is that in the third and final part of the section on spirit, detailing the structure of a society such as the absolute *Volk* would create, Hegel describes this process of social constitution as one in which nature becomes certain of itself.[46] In other words, while in 1803/04 Hegel provided a smoother transition from nature to spirit by introducing the factor of consciousness and thus adding to nature, so to speak, a new dimension of depth, he now adds to it yet another dimension by conceiving spirit as the place where nature becomes conscious of its being conscious, that is to say, the place where it becomes deliberate about itself or, again, where it becomes a product of spirit. This is a process which is completed in the media of art, religion, and science, in each of which nature assumes a new existence as the subject matter of spirit's interests and activities. But now, Logic is the science of the concept. What is therefore provided at the conclusion of the system is a smooth transition, not just from nature to spirit, but from spirit, or the achieved system, back to the concept, that is to say,

[43] See note 29 above. [44] Cf. GW 8, 318.

[45] *Jenaer Systementwürfe III*, GW 8. There is an English translation of the part on the Philosophy of Spirit. Leo Rauch, *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805–6) with Commentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983).

[46] GW 8, 258.18–20. English trans., p. 155.

back to the beginning of the System which is also its foundation. Logic thus loses whatever vestige of a role it might still have had as an introduction to the system, and regains instead, if one just ignores the "thing-in-itself" of Kant, a function not unlike that of the latter's Transcendental Logic. Just as the categories define the concept of an object in general (*ein Gegenstand überhaupt*) which is then to be given content in both theoretical and practical shape, now the Logic defines the structure of an original conceptual space that makes possible both spirit's interpretation of nature as its prehistory and of itself as forging that same nature into a meaning-generating community. Spirit, in other words, transforms nature into a harmonious whole, and this transformative function is precisely what Hegel had from the beginning declared philosophy's purpose to be. That space is at the origin of experience – is constitutive of it. But it becomes itself the object of reflective awareness only as the ultimate work of spirit, in the medium of the consciousness typical of the consummate community. The philosopher is the one responsible for this Logic, and Logic itself now turns out to be both the basis *and* the final product of the system.

This is the first development. The second has to do with Hegel's publication plans in these years. We know that, in connection with his proposed teaching for the summer terms of 1805 and 1806, Hegel announced the publication of a book that would contain the whole science of philosophy.[47] This promissory note was never honored – at least, not at face value. But then, for the winter term of 1806/07, Hegel announced a course on "logic and metaphysics, or speculative philosophy, premised by a phenomenology of the mind based on the soon to be delivered first part of his book, *The System of Science*."[48] And for the summer term of 1807, when Hegel did not in fact lecture, this announced first part was indeed available at the bookstore. We learn from Rosenkranz that Hegel had been developing, in connection with his introduction to logic and metaphysics, the concept of the experience that consciousness makes of itself. It is now this science of experience, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was given the role, previously attributed to logic, of introducing speculative philosophy, logic included.

Such are the relevant data. An answer to the question of why this shift of perspectives occurred, how phenomenology replaced logic and how this change made a difference to Hegel's conception of logic, cannot avoid an

[47] "... totam philosophiæ scientiam, i.e. philosophiam speculativam (logicam et metaphysicam) naturæ et mentis, ex libro per æstatem prodituro ..." GW 9, 427.

[48] "... logicam et metaphysicam s. philosophiam speculativam, præmissa Phænomenologia mentis ex libri sui, System der Wissenschaft, proxime proditura parte prima." GW 9, 427.

element of interpretation. But there can be little doubt that the shift was associated with the distance that Hegel gradually assumed with respect to Schelling (who, incidentally, left Jena in 1803), or, perhaps more to the point, with his gradual recognition that the supposed intuition of the Absolute on which Schelling's system was based no longer served any function in his own system as this had developed in his hands. And it is at least not unlikely that Fichte's subjectivity (which Hegel had severely criticized in 1801, though not for its being "subjective" but for being "abstractly" subjective)[49] is what provided the extra conceptual factor that cemented his developing system – even though, it must immediately be added, in transcending Schelling Hegel was at the same time also transcending Fichte. The point is that in both Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* (or Science of Knowledge, as Fichte named his philosophy), and Hegel's just published *Phenomenology of Spirit*, there are, to use Fichte's early language, two series of representations: (1) those which are the products of a subject of experience who is engaged in the process of conceptualization, and (2) those of a subject (the philosopher) who reflects upon the representations of the other series and explicates what they truly are the representations of.[50] And for both Fichte and Hegel the upshot of this second reflective series is the same, namely that whatever the experience a subject is engaged in, and whatever the representational medium in which that experience is realized, the theme underlying it or the motivation urging it on is the overarching interest on the part of the subject to construe a world for himself within which he can attain self-identity. This is of course still a play on Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. With reference to Schelling, however, the net result is that truth no longer requires "the establishment of perfect adequacy between intuition and concept," as Hegel himself still thought in the 1802/03 *System of Ethics* – where intuition would entail transcending the realm of conceptualization and thus rejoining the unity of the Absolute. This is a unity in which all distinctions, including that of subject and object that makes consciousness possible, are dissolved.[51]

[49] *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen System der Philosophie*, *Journal of Critical Philosophy* (1801). GW 4, 6.23–7.21; English trans. *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and W. Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), cf. pp. 81–82.

[50] GW 9, 60.33–61.27. J. G. Fichte, *[Zweite] Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797). GA I.4.200. English trans., Daniel Breazeale, *J. G. Fichte: Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 37–38.

[51] G. E. Schulze (the author of *Aenesidemus*, the first skeptical attack on Kant) was very likely an important catalyst in this distancing process. In 1801 Schulze had published a two-volume opus under the title of *Critique of Theoretical Philosophy* in which he again defended the standpoint of

There is no longer any need to invoke such cosmogonic imagery as that of the Absolute giving a sketch of itself in the idea ("in der Idee sein Bild gleichsam entwirft"), as Hegel invoked in 1801/02. Issues of truth are to be resolved within experience itself, on the basis of the adequacy of any given construal of reality for satisfying certain presupposed subjective interests. It is this subjective deepening of experience, clearly reminiscent of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, that made possible for Hegel the transition from logic, as a negative dialectical exercise externally applied to experience, to a phenomenology of experience. This was Fichte's contribution to Hegel – "*Fichtes Verdienst*," as Hegel said in an aphorism dating to the Jena period.[52]

But Hegel had gone beyond Fichte as well. The difference lies in how Hegel conceives the subject on whose series of representations the philosopher applies his reflection. For Fichte, that subject is presumed to be a

common sense and of theoretical skepticism. Hegel reviewed it in 1802, and Schulze responded to his review in the subsequent year with an anonymous essay entitled "Aphorisms Concerning the Absolute." In the essay Schulze skillfully parodied the Identity Philosophy of Schelling to which Hegel still clearly adhered at the time of the review. He pretended to be a disciple of Schelling and pretended to rely on Schellingian principles to criticize what was in fact his own skepticism. He argued, quite consequentially, that since in intuition there is no distinction between subject and object, and yet consciousness requires this distinction, the aim of the philosopher is to achieve a kind of semi-consciousness, a dreamy state so to speak, in which all distinctions are overcome and all doubts therefore disappear. This is the state of mind which Hegel himself was later to deride in the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Using language strongly reminiscent of Schulze's, Hegel described it as a "night in which all cows are black" (GW 9, 17.28–29). Among the many factors that contributed to Hegel's becoming deliberately aware that he was parting company with Schelling, this anonymous publication of Schulze might well have been the most decisive.

For the relevant texts, see the following: G. E. Schulze, *Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1801); [G. W. F. Hegel], "Verhältniß des Skepticismus zur Philosophie, Darstellung seiner verschiedenen Modificationen, und Vergleichung des neuesten mit dem alten," *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* (1802), GW 4. English trans. in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, translated with introductory studies by G. di Giovanni and H. S. Harris; revised edition, G. di Giovanni (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2000); [G. E. Schulze], "Aphorismen über das Absolute, als das alleinige Prinzip der wahren Philosophie, über die einzige mögliche Art es zu erkennen, wie auch über das Verhältniß aller Dinge in der Welt zu demselben," *Neues Museum der Philosophie und Litteratur*, ed. Friedrich Bouterwek, I.2 (1803), 110–148. Reproduced in *Transzendentalphilosophie und Spekulation: Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807), Quellenband*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993).

For a discussion of the episode and further relevant materials, see Kurt Reiner Meist, "'Sich vollbringende Skeptizismus': G. E. Schulzes Replik auf Hegel und Schelling," in *Transzendentalphilosophie und Spekulation: Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807)*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993), pp. 192–230.

[52] It is only in the recent past that this aphorism, jotted down by Hegel in a scrapbook which Rosenkranz entitled "Hegel's Wastebook," was recovered. It reads in full: "Only after the history of consciousness *does one know* through the concept [*durch den Begriff*] *what one has in these abstractions*: Fichte's contribution [*Fichtes Verdienst*]." For the aphorism and how it was lost, see Friedhelm Nicolin, "Unbekannte Aphorismen Hegels aus der Jenaer Periode," *Hegel-Studien*, 4 (1967), 9–19. For a description of the "Wastebook," see Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, pp. 198–201.

pure "I," that is to say, a *cogito* whose whole substance consists precisely in a thought thinking itself, and the sole interest motivating it (inasmuch as one can speak of "motivation" at all in this context) is self-expression. It is an act of unlimited freedom. But any such act, no less than Schelling's Absolute, would escape reflective comprehension. The only evidence for it is the immediate self-awareness that an individual subject presumably gains of himself inasmuch as he agrees to collude with Fichte in the thought experiment which is the *Wissenschaftslehre*. But this self-awareness is unexpressible and therefore ultimately ambiguous. It is an "interest in freedom" alone, therefore, that motivates Fichte's Science and also ought to motivate the commitment of every moral individual to interpret experience as a manifestation of a pure act of freedom.[53] Where Schelling relies on artistic intuition to bring his system to a close, Fichte relies on moral faith. Of course, that supposed freedom never becomes visibly incarnate. Nevertheless, experience is for Fichte not just a matter of *mere* appearance; its objects are not mere semblances of being, as they would have to be in Schelling's system of identity. In Fichte's system, the objects gain depth precisely by being failed attempts to attain the intended pure freedom. They are the products of a freedom *manqué*,[54] and they find their substantiality in precisely this missed goal. It is a negative substantiality, so to speak, but a substantiality just the same, and to this extent the source of a sort of self-satisfaction.

This last is the aspect of Fichte that Hegel could not accept and chided as a form of abstract subjectivism. Hegel's crucial move beyond Fichte is that he takes the subject on whose representations the philosopher exercises his reflection as a historical entity. The task of phenomenology is not to trace in experience the manifestation of freedom ideologically, that is to say, by virtue of a commitment to it in faith, but to do it historically – where by "freedom" Hegel now means nothing transcendent but, in a more transcendental vein, the power that reason demonstrates over nature by transforming what would otherwise be just something physical into an object, by humanizing it through labor, and ultimately by making it re-exist, as Hegel says in the 1805/06 System, as the object of art, religion, and science. Of course, Fichte too recognized this power of reason, but only in its negative aspect. He did not see that this is a power that bears positive effects, and that it attains its total goal in principle the moment

[53] J. G. Fichte, *[Erste] Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797). GA I.4.193–195. English trans., *[First] Introduction to the WL*, Breazeale, *J. G. Fichte: Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, pp. 17–20.

[54] I am shifting into French to allude to the obvious similarities between Jean-Paul Sartre and Fichte.

reason comes on the scene. Like an *a priori*, spirit is either present from the beginning *in toto* or not at all. All that is to be added to its presence – but this is precisely the substance of experience – is for the historical subject to become explicitly aware of it, in effect, of recognizing that the social structures that he might have presumed to be the products of nature, and the accounts that he gives of nature, are in fact from the start the creative productions of reason. It might seem that Hegel is thereby totally devaluing nature. In point of fact, the opposite is the case. It is true that by interpreting nature as its pre-history, spirit invests it with a meaning which it would not otherwise have. But spirit's own content, or the determination of its various meaning-constituting activities, is itself determined by what that same nature happens to be before it is thus implicated in the life of spirit. Issues of truth are no longer, therefore, just a matter of telling a tale that satisfies spirit's subjective interests in spite of nature's apparent witness to the contrary, and even because of it – as it would be the case for Fichte. The satisfaction must be consummated in nature itself, albeit transformed by spirit. This means that the tale, while dictated by spirit, must be shown also to map onto nature as what is given.[55] Hegel's interest in nature was certainly fueled by the examples of Goethe and Schelling. But it acquired in his System a significance specific to him.

History is in Hegel's system the area where spirit and nature overlap. The *Phenomenology* is an account of this history from the standpoint of the historical subject's increasingly explicit consciousness of the work that spirit has already accomplished in nature. This is a progress that culminates with philosophy, as the idea that spirit has of itself. The book that Hegel finally published in 1807 thus answers to Hegel's 1801/02 definition of an introduction to philosophy. Philosophy is its own introduction because reason, which is its subject matter, is self-justifying. But, as an "empirical" (read: historical) product, philosophy is affected by a subjective (read: contingent) element which can obscure its nature to its own eyes and which therefore needs dissipating. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an account of philosophy as the latter came to the explicit consciousness of itself within the confines of that historical episode which we call Western Culture.[56] Its content covers in historical mode the content of the whole system,

[55] Thus prestige is to be gained at the price of risking death, and death is redeemed, not by denying it as a mere transition to another life, but by humanizing it by means of religious ritual. Cf. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, GW 9, 111.18–112.2; 224.14ff.

[56] The *Phenomenology of Spirit* has, and must have, a historical content. Whether one can map its course on to the actual course of the history of the Western world, or whether one should rather treat the book as historical fiction with a philosophical intent, is of course an issue of critical discussion.

and one can see how Hegel could have used the materials of its first three chapters in connection with his lectures on Logic in 1804, as Rosenkranz tells us.[57] In this respect, since the work is governed throughout by the idea of spirit, it also constitutes the First Part of the System of Science, as Hegel surnamed it in 1807. This is a title which was dropped in the second edition of 1832, because it no longer corresponded to the subsequent publication history of the then planned System, and because Hegel later incorporated a much abbreviated version of the Phenomenology in the Encyclopedia as part of the Philosophy of Spirit.[58] It is a title nevertheless appropriate to it, because the *Phenomenology of Spirit* does presuppose as its *a priori* the very idea which it is supposed to bring to explicit consciousness. In principle at least, therefore, it is already science. How the work can be both historical in nature and yet be governed *a priori* is a problem that has vexed its interpreters but need not concern us here. What does concern us here is the converse problem, namely how the Logic which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* presupposes can at once be logic and yet, *as logic*, require a history. Or again, restated in terms of the structure of Hegel's System, the question is how the Logic can be both the starting point of the System *and* its result.

THE IDEA OF THE LOGIC

Hegel's Logic has been interpreted in radically different ways. We shall turn to the more typical of these interpretations in the next section. As I have already indicated, I shall suggest here a way of reading it which is not uncontroversial but, precisely for that reason, will serve to highlight where the fault lines in the history of interpretation lie. On the face of it, Hegel's Logic has all the markings of a classical, pre-critical metaphysics. But this is a false impression, and our first task is to understand in what sense it in fact still falls within the compass of Kant's critical project. For this, we must further elaborate on themes already adumbrated.

The context

Kant's critical move was to approach experience from the standpoint of a subject who is engaged in it, and to take the mental space that this subject brings to it as the originative factor in the whole process of experience.

[57] *Hegels Leben*, p. 202.
[58] See the Preface (dated November 1831) to the 1832 edition of "The Logic of Being." GW 21, 9, Hegel's footnote.

It is its *a priori*. "Mental space" is of course only a metaphor, but an apt one. Just as physical space, as we normally picture it, makes possible the orderly juxtaposition of physical things, so the mind's representational activities, be they imaginative or conceptual, make possible the presence of these same things to the mind as objects. In this extended sense, they constitute a sort of space *sui generis* – a subjective *a priori*, according to Kant. Moreover, the metaphor aptly alludes to a number of other metaphors that Kant himself constantly uses, as for instance "the *realm* of empirical objects," or "the *kingdom* of ends." Now Kant distinguished types of this mental space. One is the space generated by the senses, a sort of bodily *a priori* in the medium of which objects are immediately or intuitively present to the subject of experience. Another is of a logical character, the product of a thought-reflection that defines the concept of an object in general. It defines the minimum that one must be able to say of an object (*Gegenstand*) if it is to be recognized sufficiently *as object* when intuitively given to the senses (if ever given) in the space generated by the latter. Kant's categories are the determinations of this concept.[59] The test of whether together they adequately define a recognizable object is whether, in deploying them as a means for sorting out and connecting together the otherwise undifferentiated content of sense intuition, a subject can retain in the course of experience a sense of self-identity – or again, whether the subject can retain a clear distinction between itself and what is given to it. This self-identity can be taken both abstractly as that of an "I think" in general, and more concretely as of a singular individual that makes his way across a field of experience and therein differentiates between his self and what is given to him. It can therefore also differentiate between the only apparently or merely *subjectively* given and the truly or *objectively* given. In either case, whether taken abstractly or concretely, the self can also be more than just an observer. It can be a *doer* as well, a generator of values, and its identity, therefore, is also a moral one. Here is where a third kind of space comes into play. This is the space of reason,[60] where one can think of what might be, or would have to be, and even ought to

[59] Cf. "Our cognition springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first is the receiving of representations (receptivity of impressions), the second is the power to [re]cognize an object through these representations (spontaneity of the concepts); through the first an object is *given* to us, through the second the object is *thought* with reference to that representation (as mere determination of the mind)." A50/B74. "[The categories] are concepts of an object in general" (*Sie sind Begriffe von einem Gegenstande überhaupt*). B128.

[60] "Space of reason" comes from Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 298–299.

be, as contrasted with what is given in sense experience *de facto*. It is the space where one can project the moral idea of a "kingdom of ends" and also the idea of what is for Kant the unknowable "thing-in-itself." This last idea is the one which his contemporaries found especially troublesome from the beginning, but which nevertheless played an indispensable role in Kant's system at all levels. This it did first of all at the theoretical level. The presence of the "thing-in-itself," as a presumed, empty yet fixed, external point of reference, allowed the experiencing subject to do both: gain the required subjective distance from his own experiences to recognize their subjective character while maintaining a sufficiently robust objective sense of "givenness" for their content by referring to it. The sense of "givenness" is made possible precisely by distinguishing between what are merely subjective impressions and what are, or can at least be interpreted to be, appearances originating in that irreducibly transcendent "other" which is the "thing-in-itself." Phenomenal objectivity might be limited objectivity, but it is objectivity nonetheless.

This is a minimalist account of Kant's critical project. But it is sufficient to understand how and why Fichte would feel obliged to reform it, and why Hegel found Kant's original project as well as Fichte's reform objectionable. For this, we must return to Fichte's *cogito*, or more accurately, to the thought experiment that Fichte urged on his auditors in order to gain entrance into his system.[61] The immediate occasion for the experiment was Fichte's desire to explain why in experience, in determining our objects, we feel constrained to abide by certain rules; in other words, why there is an *a priori* governing our experiences. As he asks, "But what is the basis of the system of those representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity, and what is the basis of this feeling of necessity itself?" And he immediately adds, "Another name for [this system] is 'experience' – whether inner or outer."[62] Whether one explains this "feeling of necessity" as originating in us because of the external influence of a "thing-in-itself," or as an internal *a priori* product of the *cogito* itself, marks the difference according to Fichte between those whom he calls "dogmatists" and the "idealists." To elaborate on this difference is Fichte's main preoccupation. But whether one follows one line of explanation or the other also makes a difference in how one interprets the sense of "being merely given," or of mere facticity, that characterizes in experience the first presence of its objects.[63] This is a

[61] *[First] Introduction to the WL*, pp. 7–8; GA I.4.186–187.
[62] *[First] Introduction to the WL*, p. 8; GA I.4.186.
[63] I am borrowing the term "facticity," *Faktizität*, from the Fichte of 1810. For instance: "Wenn wir bis zur Erklärung dieser Faktizität selbst uns emporschwingen werden, dann werden wir vollendet

feature which we tend to attribute to these objects in abstraction from the subject experiencing them but which in fact implicates the latter from the start, for it denotes a dissatisfaction on the subject's part regarding their presence. It is as if this presence constituted a check on the subject's attempt at controlling *a priori* the space of experience. It therefore generates for the subject both a sense of irreducible "otherness" with respect to the objects and equally the need to transcend this sense – to explain it away.[64] This is the point of Fichte's claim that in experience "form and content are not two separate elements."[65] Now Fichte strenuously wanted to believe that this was also Kant's position.[66] But he was very well aware that when defining the meaning of "being given" – of phenomenal *data* – Kant had relied on the then universally accepted scholastic model of the mind, connecting it with sense impressions whose character was presumed to be essentially passive. But the model provided at best a psychological rather than a critical explanation of "impressions," and it had the unfortunate side-effect of making Kant's theory vulnerable to dogmatic interpretations. His notorious "thing-in-itself," instead of being understood as an ideal term of reference that generates a universal space of reason and is itself a function of the *cogito*, could be taken instead – as in fact it was by many contemporaries – as a sort of hyper-physical entity that externally inflicts on the subject of experience effects over which the latter has no control. In a critical context, however, any appeal to causality, besides being inconsistent with Kant's critical restriction of it to the realm of phenomena (as Aenesidemus had stridently argued),[67] would have had to fall on the

haben" ["If we soar upwards to the explanation of this facticity, then we have come to the end"], WL – 1810, GA II.11: 309.19–20. For a fuller discussion of this aspect of Fichte, which becomes even more prominent after 1800, cf. George di Giovanni "Sacramentalizing the World: On Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre of 1810," in *Grund- und Methodenfragen in Fichtes Spätwerk, Fichte-Studien*, 31, ed. Günter Zöller and Hans Georg von Mainz (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 219–233.

64 Cf.: "Indeed, something becomes contingent for someone precisely insofar as he inquires concerning its basis. To seek a basis or reason for something contingent, one has to look towards something else, something determinate, whose determinacy explains why what is based upon it is determined precisely the way it is . . . " *[First] Introduction to the WL*, p. 9; GA I.4.187, §2.

65 *[First] Introduction to the WL*, p. 28; GA I.4.202.

66 Cf. *[Second] Introduction to the WL*, p. 71; GA I.4.486. But perhaps in this whole passage Fichte is protesting too much for one who professes to believe in Kant unreservedly.

67 Schulze, G. E. [anonymous], *Ænesidemus, oder über der vom Herrn Prof. Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie, nebst einer Verteidigung gegen die Anmassungen der Venunfikritik* (1792), p. 155; English trans. in Giovanni and Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel*, p. 122. Jacobi is generally believed to have been the first to have raised this objection in his Appendix to the dialogue *David Hume* (1787). But in fact his position is much more sophisticated, for Jacobi does not object to the categories being applied to the "thing-in-itself," provided that they remain non-schematized. His point is rather that, because they remain non-schematized, and "thing-in-itself" thus remains a mere idea, Kant cannot

side of a physiological pre-history of experience. It did not explain the phenomenon of brute presence precisely as phenomenon, that is, as an experiential fact of consciousness.

It was to remedy this failure that Fichte undertook his thought experiment, asking his auditors to think simply for the sake of thinking and to reflect on the result. The attempt was intended as an expression of pure freedom. But the result, as reflectively apprehended, had to be a failure – not just because, as a matter of fact, one cannot think without actually thinking *something* in particular, but because the difference between the intended infinite thought and the thought (now an object) *de facto* finitely apprehended is precisely what creates the distance between the subject of experience and his object that makes the experience a conscious one. Without that distance, there is no consciousness. The failure was not, therefore, an unqualified one. For on the assumption that the expression of freedom is the interest motivating all experience, or in more concrete terms, provided that one sees one's own existence in experience as a protracted attempt at self-contained activity, then the fact that in these activities one cannot but take into consideration what at least appears as extraneous circumstances is felt indeed as a constraint, but a constraint which, no less than the formal rules that govern the experience of those circumstances, is itself the product of the original *cogito*. Without the original attempt at purely autonomous activity, there would be no sense of "being constrained." The net result is that the whole realm of experience becomes colored with a moral tinge, exactly what Fichte had of course intended from the start. Experience is a call to transform the otherwise merely brute facts of experience into products of freedom, a call to re-do nature after the image of the Absolute. And this is a process that requires remembering that the "bruteness" of those facts is itself the first product of freedom.[68]

escape absolute subjectivism. On this point, see Birgit Sandkaulen, "Das 'leidige Ding an sich': Kant – Jacobi – Fichte," in *Kant und der Frühidealismus*, ed. Jürgen Stolzenberg (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), 175–201. For an English translation of Jacobi's dialogue, see *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, translated with an Introductory Study, Notes, and Bibliography by George di Giovanni (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1994); includes G. di Giovanni, *The Unfinished Philosophy of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi*, pp. 1–167.

[68] "Nature must gradually be resolved into a condition in which her regular actions bear a fixed and definite relation to that which is destined to govern it – that of man . . . Thus shall Nature ever become more and more intelligible and transparent . . . " *Die Bestimmung des Menschen, dargestellt von Johann Gottlieb Fichte* (Berlin: Voss, 1800), pp. 182–183. English translation, *The Vocation of Man*, trans., ed. Roderick M. Chisholm (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), pp. 103–104. For an extended discussion of this work, see George di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Immediate Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1774–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 8.

Fichte accomplishes this work conceptually, in accordance with his vocation as a philosopher. In an important sense, the work still falls within the compass of Kant's Transcendental Logic, namely inasmuch as its intent is still to produce *a priori* the concept of an object in general or of generating *a priori* the conceptual space that makes the recognition of an object possible. But there is also an equally important difference. In Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, Kant's need to validate the categories by demonstrating that they are found realized in sense experience – the need of a Transcendental Deduction, in other words – no longer arises. To make the point in Kant's terms, Fichte had relativized the distinction, which for Kant was absolute, between understanding and reason.[69] He had extended to the whole realm of experience the claim that for Kant applied unqualifiedly only to the moral realm, namely that conceptualization is essentially a norm-setting function, and that it is therefore wrong to try to validate its products by measuring them against any *given* state of affairs. Or again, Fichte was taking seriously Kant's own theoretical claim that nature is an idea, and that one must approach experience with questions in hand, coercing it to yield already well-rehearsed answers. The idea of construing objects of experience by *applying* categories to a presupposed given content loses all meaning, except perhaps in some artificially restricted context. One must rather *interpret* experience by making sense of its otherwise merely given content in terms of *a priori* conceptual constructs which, though evoking actual situations, draw the only possible content appropriate to them from their place in a system of such constructs, or from experience itself as already idealized. What Kant had said of "respect for the [moral] law," namely that it is the only case of a feeling which is determined *a priori* by reason,[70] now applies across the whole realm of experience.

Starting from his opening interpretation of the meaning of facticity, Fichte proceeds methodically in his *Wissenschaftslehre* to deduce a whole system of the said constructs, both theoretical and practical. But because of the nature itself of the overall project, the interpretation of experience that they provide at each step must remain to the end *only* interpretation, never totally absorbing the factual content it interprets, that is to say, never quite dissolving its facticity. This is of course the price to be paid for setting as the norm of truth the attainment of a freedom which, if ever

[69] "For a full-blown idealism, *a priori* and *a posteriori* are not two different things, but are one and the same thing, simply looked at from two different sides, and they can be distinguished from each other only in terms of the different means one employs in order to arrive at each." *[First] Introduction to the WL*, p. 32; GA I.4.206.

[70] AK V.76.16–17.