II

HEGEL

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was born at Stuttgart. In 1788 he enrolled at the University of Tübingen, studying theology, philology, and philosophy; it was at Tübingen, too, that he became a friend of Schelling and of the poet Hölderlin, both of whom shared his early enthusiasm for the French Revolution. Hegel's development as a philosopher was slow and labious; he made little impression upon his teachers, and for several years after leaving Tübingen he earned his living by taking tutorial posts, first in Berne and later at Frankfurt. While engaged in this somewhat unrewarding work he wrote various papers, mainly on theological subjects; though these are of considerable interest from the point of view of his subsequent thought, he published none of them. In 1801 he obtained a position at the University of Jena, and, after producing a piece on the philosophies of Schelling and Fichte, embarked on the "voyage of discovery" which was to issue in his own masterpiece, The Phenomenology of Spirit (1807). The Battle of Jena, on the eve of which he completed the book, led to the closure of the university, and Hegel had to look for other employment. A short period during which he edited a newspaper at Bamberg was followed by his appointment as rector of a gymnasium at Nuremberg; here he wrote his Science of Logic (1812-16). His reputation as an important and original philosopher was now established. From 1816 to 1818 he occupied a chair at Heidelberg, where he published his Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, and he then moved to Berlin, remaining there as professor of philosophy until his death from cholera in 1831. His Outlines of the Philosophy of Right appeared in 1821, to be succeeded by new editions of the Encyclopaedia in 1827 and 1830. Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy and on the philosophies of art, religion, and history, which he delivered while in Berlin, were all published posthumously.

The range and sweep of Hegel's thinking, and the cumbersome and often repellent manner in which he chose to express it, combine to make him a philosopher of exceptional difficulty. This is true above all of his Phenomenology, called by Marx "the true birthplace and secret of the Hegelian philosophy": it represents a kind of imaginative reconstruction, supplemented by historical allusions, of the different outlooks and attitudes which men, as embodiments of "spirit," adopt at successive stages of their development toward complete knowledge of themselves and their world. The selections from the Phenomenology presented here comprise one of its most arresting and influential discussions; apart from anything else, there are interesting connections with ideas later put forward by Feuerbach and Marx. Like Fichte before him, Hegel held that developed self-consciousness presupposed an awareness, not merely of a phenomenal world, but also of the presence of other conscious beings within that world: the individual can achieve adequate confirmation of his self-identity only through the medium of other persons, in whom he sees himself reflected and from whom he demands recognition. Yet, at the same time, his drive to assert his own freedom and independence causes him in the first instance to seek the destruction of the other, who confronts him as a rival existence. In this way there is engendered, as a kind of unstable compromise, the famous dialectic of master and servant which Hegel analyzes with a wealth of pregnant suggestion and which he also regards as giving rise to further forms of mental and social attitude: stoicism, skepticism, and what is called the "unhappy consciousness." If the first two of these constitute attempts by the unsatisfied subject to attain self-sufficiency through rejecting the world and withdrawing into the inner sanctum of himself, the third involves, by contrast, an explicit recognition of the contradictions that inevitably beset all such efforts. The individual is now aware of himself as a divided personality, in which his changeless ideal nature seems to stand opposed to what he finds when he considers his inescapable entanglement in the shifting conditions of his actual existence in the world. Thus the master-servant situation, originally portrayed as a relationship between separate persons, returns once more; now, however, it takes the form of a duality haunting the consciousness of a single self—a duality which (Hegel further suggests) obtains mythical expression at a certain stage of religious experience, in the notion of a gulf dividing God from man.
The next section is from *The Science of Logic*. In the Phenomenology Hegel claimed to show how spirit, after surmounting a series of partial or incomplete views, finally achieved "absolute knowledge" of itself: the antithesis between subjective consciousness and objective truth was overcome, and thought and reality were seen to coincide. Some of the implications of this became clear in his Introduction to the Logic. Logic, for Hegel, is not a purely formal discipline, indifferent to content, and he accords it a function very dissimilar to that traditionally assigned to it. As the science of thought, it can at the same time be said to treat of reality, for the categories of pure thought in their dialectical development cannot legitimately be distinguished from the inner truth and movement of existence itself.

If logic in one sense deals with the ultimate character of the world, the philosophies of nature and of history are each concerned with different aspects of its concrete or external manifestation. In the concluding selections, taken from his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel speaks of the relations between them, and discusses the manner in which the course of human history can be said to represent a rational process which conforms to a determinate pattern. To avoid confusion, it should be noted that he uses the term "spirit" here in a narrower sense than he does in some other contexts, restricting it to cover the sphere of human thought and behavior which he opposes to that of physical nature or "matter."

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Master and Servant*  *(from Phenomenology of Spirit (1807))

Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or "recognized". The conception of this unity in its duplication, of infinitude realizing itself in self-consciousness, has many sides to it and encloses within it elements of varied significance. Thus its moments must on the one hand be strictly kept apart in detailed distinctiveness, and, on the other, in this distinction must, at the same time, also be taken as not distinguished, or must always be accepted and understood in their opposite sense. This double meaning of what is distinguished lies in the nature of self-consciousness:—of its being infinite, or directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is fixed. The detailed exposition of the notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will bring before us the process of Recognition.

Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First, it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an other being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other.

It must cancel this its other. To do so is the sublation of that first double meaning, and is therefore a second double meaning. First, it must set itself to sublate the other independent being, in order thereby to become certain of itself as true being, secondly, it thereupon proceeds to sublate its own self, for this other is itself.

This sublation in a double sense of its otherness in a double sense is at the same time a return in a double sense into itself. For, firstly, through sublation, it gets back itself, because it becomes one with itself again through the canceling of its otherness; but secondly, it likewise gives otherness back again to the other self-consciousness, for it was

aware of being in the other, it cancels this its own being in the other and thus lets the other again go free.

This process of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this manner been represented as the action of one alone. But this action on the part of the one has itself the double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well. For the other is likewise independent, shut up within itself, and there is nothing in it which is not there through itself. The first does not have the object before it only in the passive form characteristic primarily of the object of desire, but as an object existing independently for itself, over which therefore it has no power to do anything for its own behoof, that object does not per se do what the first does to it. The process then is absolutely the double process of both self-consciousnesses. Each sees the other the same as itself; each itself does what it demands on the part of the other, and for that reason does what it does, only so far as the other does the same. Action from one side only would be useless, because what is to happen can only be brought about by means of both.

The action has then a double extent not only in the sense that it is an act done to itself as well as to the other, but also in the sense that the act sincerer is the act of one as well as of the other regardless of their distinction.

In this movement we see the process repeated which came before us as the play of forces; in the present case, however, it is found in consciousness. What in the former had effect only for us [contemplating experience], holds here for the terms themselves. The middle term is self-consciousness which breaks itself up into the extremes; and each extreme is this interchange of its own determinateness, and complete transition into the opposite. While qua consciousness, it no doubt comes outside itself, still, in being outside itself, it is at the same time restrained within itself, it exists for itself, and its self-externalization for consciousness. Consciousness finds that it immediately is and is not another consciousness, as also that this other is for itself only when it cancels itself as existing for itself, and has self-existence only in the self-existence of the other. Each is the mediating term to the other, through which each mediates and unites itself with itself; and each is to itself and to the other an immediate self-existing reality, which, at the same time, exists thus for itself only through this mediation. They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another.

This pure conception of recognition, of duplication of self-consciousness within its unity, we must now consider in the way its process appears for self-consciousness. It will, in the first place, present the aspect of the disparity of the two, or the break-up of the middle term into the extremes, which, qua extremes, are opposed to one another, and of which one is merely recognized, while the other only recognizes.

Self-consciousness is primarily simple existence for self, self-identity by exclusion of every other from itself. It takes its essential nature and absolute object to be Ego; and in this immediacy, in this bare fact of its self-existence, it is individual. That which for it it other stands as unessential object, as object with the impress and character of negation. But the other is also a self-consciousness; an individual makes its appearance in antithesis to an individual. Appearing thus in their immediacy, they are for each other in the manner of ordinary objects. They are independent individual forms, modes of consciousness that have not risen above the bare level of life (for the existent object here has been determined as life). They are, moreover, forms of consciousness which have not yet accomplished for one another the process of absolute abstraction, of uprooting all immediate existence, and of being merely the bare, negative fact of self-identical consciousness; or, in other words, have not yet revealed themselves to each other as existing purely for themselves, i.e., as self-consciousness. Each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and hence its own certainty of itself is still without truth. For its truth would be merely that its own individual existence for itself would be shown to it to be an independent object, or, which is the same thing, that the object would be exhibited as this pure certainty of itself. By the notion of recognition, however, this is not possible, except in the form that as the other is for it, so it is for the other; each in its self through its own action and again through the action of the other achieves this pure abstraction of existence for self.

The presentation of itself, however, as pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as a pure negation of its objective form, or in showing that it is fettered to no determinate existence, that it is not bound at all by the particularity everywhere characteristic of existence as such, and is not tied up with life. The process of bringing all this out involves a twofold action—action on the part of the other and action on the part of itself. In so far as it is the other's action, each aims at the destruction and death of the other. But in this there is implicated also the second kind of action, self-activity; for the former implies that it risks its own life. The relation of both self-consciousnesses is in this way so constituted that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. They must enter into this struggle, for they must bring their certainty of themselves, the certainty of being for themselves, to the level of objective truth, and make this a fact both
result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another, i.e. as an existent consciousness, consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood. Both moments are essential, since, in the first instance, they are unlike and opposed, and their reflection into unity has not yet come to light, they stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master or Lord, the latter the Servant. *

The master is the consciousness that exists for itself; but no longer merely the general notion of existence for self. Rather, it is a consciousness existing on its own account which is mediated with itself through another consciousness, i.e. a through whose very nature implies that it is bound up with an independent being or with thinghood in general. The master brings himself into relation to both these moments, to a thing as such, the object of desire, and to the consciousness whose essential character is thinghood. And since the master, (a) qua notion of self-consciousness, an immediate relation of self-existence, but (b) is now moreover at the same time mediation, or a being-for-self which is for itself only through an other—he [the master] stands in relation (a) immediately to both (b) mediately to each through the other. The master relates himself to the servant mediately through independent existence, for that is precisely what keeps the servant in thrall; it is his chain, from which he could not in the struggle get away, and for that reason he proved himself to be dependent, to save his independence in the shape of thinghood. The master, however, is the power controlling this state of existence, for he has shown in the struggle that he holds it to be merely something negative. Since he is the power dominating existence, while this existence again is the power controlling the other [the servant], the master holds, par excellence, this other in subordination. In the same way the master relates himself to the thing mediately through the servant. The servant being a self-consciousness in the broad sense, also takes up a negative attitude to things and cancels them, but the thing is, at the same time, independent for him, and, in consequence, he cannot, with his negating get so far as to annihilate it outright and be done with it; that is to say, he merely works on it. To the master, on the other hand, by means of this mediating process, belongs the immediate relation, in the sense of the pure negation of it, in other words he gets the enjoyment. What more desire did not attain, he now succeeds in attaining, viz. to have done with the thing, and find satisfaction in enjoyment. Desire alone

*Translated as Bondman in the original.
did not get the length of this, because of the independence of the thing. The master, however, who has interposed the servant between it and himself, thereby relates himself merely to the dependence of the thing, and enjoys it without qualification and without reserve. The aspect of its independence he leaves to the servant, who labours upon it.

In these two moments, the master gets his recognition through another consciousness, for in them the latter affirms itself as unessential, both by working upon the thing, and, on the other hand, by the fact of being dependent on a determinate existence; in neither case can this other get the mastery over existence; and succeed in absolutely negating it. We have thus here this moment of recognition, viz. that the other consciousness cancels itself as self-existence, and, ipso facto, itself does what: the first does to it. In the same way we have the other moment, that this action on the part of the second is the action proper of the first; for what is done by the servant is properly an action on the part of the master. The latter exists only for himself, that is his essential nature; he is the negative power without qualification, a power to which the thing is naught. And he is thus the absolutely essential act in this situation, while the servant is not so, he is an unessential activity. But for recognition proper there is needed the moment that what the master does to the other he should also do to himself, and what the servant does to himself, he should do to the other also. On that account a form of recognition has arisen that is one-sided and unequal.

In all this, the unessential consciousness is, for the master, the object which embodies the truth of his certainty of himself. But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its motion; for, just where the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved. He is thus not assured of self-existence as his truth; he finds that his truth is rather the unessential consciousness, and the fortuitous unessential action of that consciousness.

The truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the consciousness of the servant. This doubtless appears in the first instance outside itself, and not as the truth of self-consciousness. But just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence.

We have seen what bondage is only in relation to lordship. But it is a self-consciousness, and we have now to consider what it is, in this regard, in and for itself. In the first instance, the master is taken to be the essential reality for the state of bondage; hence, for it, the truth is the independent consciousness existing for itself, although this truth is not taken yet as inherent in bondage itself. Still, it does in fact contain within itself this truth of pure negativity and self-existence, because it has experienced this reality within it. For this consciousness was not in peril and fear for this element or that, nor for this or that moment of time, it was afraid for its entire being; it felt the fear of death, the sovereign master. It has been in that experience naclled to its utmost soul, has trembled throughout its every fibre, and all that was fixed and steadfast has quaked within it. This complete perturbation of its entire substance, this absolute dissolution of all its stability into fluent continuity, is, however, the simple, ultimate nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity, pure self-referent existence, which consequently is involved in this type of consciousness. This moment of pure self-existence is moreover a fact for it; for in the master it finds this as its object. Further, this servant's consciousness is not only this total dissolution in a general way; in serving and toiling the servant actually carries this out. By serving he cancels in every particular aspect his dependence on and attachment to natural existence, and by his work removes this existence away.

The feeling of absolute power, however, realized both in general and in the particular form of service, is only dissolution implicitly; and albeit the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom, consciousness is not therein aware of being self-existent. Through work and labour, however, this consciousness of the servant comes to itself. In the moment which corresponds to desire in the case of the master's consciousness, the aspect of the non-essential relation to the thing seemed to fail to the lot of the servant, since the thing there retained its independence. Desire has reserved to itself the pure negating of the object and thereby unalloyed feeling of self. This satisfaction, however, just for that reason is itself only a state of evanescence, for it lacks objectivity or subsistence. Labour, on the other hand, is desire restrained and checked, evanescence delayed and postponed; in other words, labour shapes and fashions the thing. The negative relation to the object passes into the form of the object, into something that is permanent and remains; because it is just for the labourer that the object has independence. This negative mediating agency, this activity giving shape and form, is at the same time the individual existence, the pure self-existence of that consciousness, which now in the work it does is externalized and passes into the condition of permanence. The consciousness that toils
and serves accordingly attains by this means the direct apprehension of that independent being as its self.

But again, shaping or forming the object has not only the positive significance that the servant becomes thereby aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent; this type of consciousness has also a negative import, in contrast with its first moment, the element of fear. For in shaping the thing it only becomes aware of its own proper negativity, its existence on its own account, as an object, through the fact that it cancels the actual form confronting it. But this objective negative element is precisely the alien, external reality, before which it trembled. Now, however, it destroys this extraneous alien negative, affirms and sets itself up as a negative in the element of permanence, and thereby becomes for itself a self-existent being. In the master, the servant feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact; in fear self-existence is present within himself; in fashioning the thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account (sich und für sich). By the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work; for just that form is his pure self-existence, which therein becomes truly realized. Thus precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider’s mind and ideas involved, the servant becomes aware, through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a “mind of his own”.

For this reflexion of self into self the two moments, fear and service in general, as also that of formative activity, are necessary: and at the same time both must exist in a universal manner. Without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains formal and does not spread over the whole known reality of existence. Without the formative activity shaping the thing, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become objective for itself. Should consciousness shape and form the thing without the initial state of absolute fear, then it has a merely vain and futile “mind of its own”; for its form or negativity is not negativity per se, and hence its formative activity cannot furnish the consciousness of itself as essentially real. If it has endured not absolute fear, but merely some slight anxiety, the negative reality has remained external to it, its substance has not been through and through infected thereby. Since the entire content of its natural consciousness has not tottered and shaken, it is still inherently a determinate mode of being: having a “mind of its own” (der eigene Sinn) is simply stubbornness (Eigeninn), a type of freedom which does not get beyond the attitude of bondage. As little as the pure form can become its essen-

tial nature, so little is that form, considered as extending over particulars, a universal formative activity, an absolute notion; it is rather a piece of cleverness which has mastery within a certain range, but not over the universal power nor over the entire objective reality.