

Part II: Critique of Hegel

§ 19

The culmination of modern philosophy is the Hegelian philosophy. The historical necessity and justification of the new philosophy must therefore be derived mainly from a critique of Hegel's.

§ 20 Philosophy & Theology

According to its historical point of departure, the new philosophy has *the same* task and position in relation to *the hitherto existing philosophy as the latter* had in relation to theology. The new philosophy is the *realisation of the Hegelian philosophy or of all preceding philosophy*, but a realisation which is simultaneously the *negation*, and indeed the *negation without contradiction* of this philosophy.

§ 21

The *contradiction* of the modern philosophy, especially of pantheism, consists of the fact that it is the *negation of theology from the standpoint of theology* or the negation of theology which itself is *again theology*; this contradiction *especially characterises the Hegelian philosophy*.

For modern philosophy, and hence also for Hegel, the non-material being or being as a pure object of the intellect, as a pure being of the intellect, is the only true and Absolute Being, that is, God. Even matter, which Spinoza turns into an attribute of the divine substance, is a metaphysical thing, a pure being of the intellect, for the essential determination of matter as distinguished from the intellect and the activity of thinking – that it is a passive being – is taken away from it. But Hegel

differs from earlier philosophy by the fact that he determines the relationship of the material sensuous being to the non-material being differently. The earlier philosophers and theologians held the true divine being to be detached and liberated from nature; that is, from sensuousness or matter. They situated the toil of abstraction and self-liberation from the sensuous *in themselves* in order to arrive at that which in *itself is free* from the sensuous. To this condition of *being free*, they ascribed the blissfulness of the divine, and to this self-liberation, the virtue of the human essence. Hegel, on the other hand, turned this subjective activity into the *self-activity* of the Divine Being. Even God must subject himself to this toil, and must, like pagan heroes, win his divinity through virtue. Only in this way does the freedom of the Absolute from matter, which is, besides, only a precondition and a conception, become reality and truth. This self-liberation from matter, however, can be posited in God only if matter, too, is posited in him. But how can it be posited in him? Only in this way that he himself posits it. But in God there is only God. Hence, the only way to do this is that he posits *himself* as matter, as non-God; that is, as his otherness. In this way, matter is not an antithesis of the ego and the spirit, preceding them, as it were, in an incomprehensible way; it is the *self-alienation* of the Spirit. Thus, matter itself acquires spirit and intellect; it is taken over into the absolute essence as a moment in its life, formation, and development. But then, matter is again posited as an *untrue* being resembling nothingness in so far as only the being that restores itself out of this alienation, that is, that sheds matter and sensuousness off from itself, is pronounced to be the perfect being in its true form. The natural, material, and sensuous – and indeed, the sensuous, not in the vulgar and moral, but in the metaphysical sense – are therefore even here *something to be negated*, like nature which in theology has been poisoned by the original sin. Indeed, the sensuous is incorporated into reason, the ego, and the spirit, but it is something irrational, a note of discord within reason; it is *the non-ego* in the *ego*, that is, that which *negates* it. For example in

Schelling nature in God is the non-divine in God; it is in God and yet outside him; the same is true of the body in the philosophy of Descartes which, although connected with me, that is, with the spirit, is nevertheless external, and does not belong to me, that is, to my essence; it is of no consequence, therefore, whether it is or is not connected with me. Matter will remain *in contradiction* to what is presupposed by philosophy as the true being.

Matter is indeed posited in God, that is, posited as God, and to posit matter as God is as much as saying, "There is no God," or as much as abolishing theology and recognising the truth of materialism. But the fact remains that the truth of theology is at the same time taken for granted. Atheism, the negation of theology, is therefore negated again; this means that theology is restored through philosophy. God is *God* only through the fact that he overcomes and negates matter; that is, the negation of God. And according to Hegel, it is only the negation of the negation that constitutes the true positing. And so in the end, we are back to whence we had started – in the lap of Christian theology. Thus, already in the most central principle of Hegel's philosophy we come across the principle and conclusion of his philosophy of religion to the effect that philosophy, far from abolishing the dogmas of theology, only restores and mediates them through the negation of rationalism. The secret of Hegel's dialectic lies ultimately in this alone, that it ***negates theology through philosophy in order then to negate philosophy through theology***. Both the beginning and the end are constituted by theology; philosophy stands in the middle as the negation of the first positedness, but the negation of the negation is again theology. At first everything is overthrown, but then everything is reinstated in its old place, as in Descartes. The Hegelian philosophy is the last grand attempt to restore a lost and defunct Christianity through philosophy, and, of course, as is characteristic of the modern era, by *identifying the negation* of Christianity with *Christianity itself*. The much-

extolled speculative identity of spirit and matter, of the infinite and the finite, of the divine and the human is nothing more than the wretched contradiction of the modern era having reached its zenith in metaphysics. It is the identity of belief and unbelief, theology and philosophy, religion and atheism, Christianity and paganism. This contradiction escapes the eye and is obfuscated in Hegel only through the fact that the negation of God, or atheism, is turned by him into an objective determination of God; God is determined as a *process*, and atheism as a moment within this process. But a belief that has been reconstructed out of unbelief is as little true belief – because it is always afflicted with its antithesis – as the God who has been reconstructed out of his negation is a true God; he is rather a self-contradictory, an atheistic God.

§ 22 Kant, Fichte & Hegel

Just as the Divine Being is nothing other than the being of man freed from the limits of nature, so is the essence of *absolute idealism* nothing other than *the essence of subjective idealism freed from the limits, and, indeed, rational limits of subjectivity*, that is, from *sensuousness or objectivity* as such. The Hegelian philosophy can therefore be *directly* derived from the Kantian and Fichtean idealism.

Kant says: “If we regard, as is reasonable, the objects of the senses as *mere phenomena*, then we thereby concede at the same time that underlying them there is a *thing in itself*, even if we do not know its nature excepting its phenomenal form; that is, the way our senses are effected by this unknown something. Hence, by virtue of the fact that it is susceptible to the phenomena, the intellect concedes at the same time the existence of *the things in themselves*, and to that extent we can say that the idea of such entities which underlie the phenomena, that is, the idea of *pure intellectual entities*, is not only permissible but also *inevitable*.” The objects of the senses, of experience, are for the intellect, therefore, *mere*

phenomena and not the truth, they do not satisfy the intellect, or in other words, they *do not correspond to its essence*. Consequently, the intellect is not at all limited in its essence by sensuousness; otherwise, it would take the sensuous things not to be phenomena but the naked truth. What does not satisfy me, also does not limit and restrict me. Yet the beings of the intellect should not be real objects for the intellect! The Kantian philosophy is the contradiction of *subject and object, essence and existence, thinking and being*. In it, essence falls into the sphere of the intellect and existence into that of the senses. *Existence without essence is mere appearance* – these are sensuous things; *essence without existence is mere thought* – these are entities of the intellect and noumena; they are thought of but they lack existence – at least for us – and objectivity; they are things in themselves, the *true* things; only they are not *real* things, and consequently not objects for the intellect, that is, they can neither be determined nor known by the intellect. But what a contradiction to separate the truth from reality and reality from the truth! If we therefore eliminate this contradiction, we have the philosophy of identity in which the *objects of the intellect*, that is, the *objects that are true because they are thought* are also the real objects, in which the essence and constitution of the *objects* of the intellect correspond to the essence and constitution of the intellect or of the subject, and where the subject is no longer limited and conditioned by something existing apart from it and contradicting its essence. But the subject which has nothing more outside itself and consequently no more limits within itself, is no longer a "finite" subject – no longer the ego to which an object is counterposed; it is the Absolute Being whose theological or popular expression is the word "God." Although it is the same subject and the same ego as in subjective idealism, it is nevertheless *without limits* – the ego which therefore no longer seems to be an ego, that is, a subjective being, and for that reason is no longer *called ego*.

§ 23 Objective Thought

The Hegelian philosophy is *inverted*, that is, *theological*, idealism, just as the *Spinozist* philosophy is *theological materialism*. It posited the *essence* of the ego *outside* the ego, that is, in separation from it, and it objectified the ego as substance, as God. But in so doing, it expressed – *indirectly* and in a *reverse order* – *the divinity of the ego*, thus making it, as Spinoza makes matter, into an attribute or form of the divine substance, meaning that *man's consciousness of God* is God's own self-consciousness. That means that the being belongs to God and knowing to man. But the being of God, according to Hegel, is actually nothing other than the being of thought, or thought *abstracted from the ego, that is, the thinker*. The Hegelian philosophy has turned thought, that is, the *subjective* being – this, however, conceived without subject, that is, conceived as a being *different* from it – into the *Divine and Absolute Being*.

The secret of "absolute" philosophy is therefore the secret of theology. Just as theology turns the determinations of man into those of God in that it robs these determinations of the specificity through which they are what they are, so, too, does the absolute philosophy. "To think rationally is to be expected of anybody; in order to think of reason as *absolute*, that is, in order to arrive at the standpoint which I demand, it is necessary to *abstract* from thought. For him, who makes this *abstraction*, reason immediately ceases to be something *subjective*, as it is taken to be by most people; indeed, it itself can no longer be thought of as *something objective*, because something objective or something conceived is possible *only in opposition* to something that thinks, a *complete abstraction* from that which is the case here; thus, through this *abstraction*, reason becomes the true *in-itself* which is situated just at the point where there is no difference between the subjective and the objective." Thus Schelling. But the same applies to Hegel as well, the essence of whose *Logic* is thought

denuded of its determinateness through which it is thought or the activity of subjectivity. The third part of the *Logic* is, and it is even expressly called, the *Subjective Logic*, and yet the forms of subjectivity which constitute its object *are not supposed to be subjective*. The concept, the judgment, the conclusion, indeed even the individual forms of conclusion and judgment such as the problematic or assertive judgment, are not our concepts, judgments, and conclusions; no, they are objective forms existing absolutely and in and for themselves. This is how Absolute Philosophy externalises and alienates from man his own being and his own activity! Hence, the violence and torture that it inflicts on our mind. We are required not to think as our own that which is our own; we are called upon to abstract from the determinateness through which something is what it is, that is, we are supposed to think of it *without sense* and take it in the *non-sense* of the absolute. *Non-sense* is the highest essence of theology – of ordinary as well as of speculative theology.

Hegel's disapprobative remark about the philosophy of Fichte to the effect that everyone believes to have the ego in himself, that everyone is reminded of himself and yet does not find the ego in himself is true of speculative philosophy in general. It takes almost everything in a sense in which it is no longer recognisable to anyone. And the source of this evil is, of course, theology. The Divine and Absolute Being must distinguish itself from finite, that is, real being. But we have no determinations for the Absolute except the determinations of real things, be they natural or human things. How do these determinations become the determinations of the absolute? Only in a way in which they are taken not in their real sense, but in another, that is, a completely opposite, sense. Everything that exists within the finite, exists also in the Absolute; but the way it exists within the finite is *completely different* from the way it exists in the Absolute, where altogether different laws operate than those among us; what is pure non-sense with us is reason and wisdom there. Hence, the boundless

arbitrariness of speculation when it uses the name of a thing, without at the same time recognising the concept which is linked with it. Speculation excuses this arbitrariness by claiming that the names it chooses from the language to serve as its own concepts are only remotely similar to them because "ordinary consciousness" connects them with its own ideas; thus, it shifts the blame to the language. But the fault lies in the matter, in the *principle* of speculation itself. The contradiction that exists between the idea and the concept of speculation, between its name and its subject-matter, is nothing other than the old theological contradiction between the determinations of the divine and the human being; when applied to man, these determinations are taken in a proper and real sense, but when applied to God, they are taken only in a symbolical or analogical sense. Of course, philosophy need not bother about the ideas which vulgar usage or misuse associates with a name; but it must bind itself to the determined nature of things whose signs names are.

§ 24 Being & Thought

The identity of thinking and being which is the *central point* in the *philosophy of identity* is nothing other than a *necessary consequence and unfolding* of the *concept of God* as the being whose concept or essence contains existence. Speculative philosophy has only *generalised and* made into an attribute of thought or of the *concept in general* what theology made into an *exclusive attribute of the concept of God*. The identity of thinking and being is therefore only an expression for the *divinity of reason* – the expression thereof that thought or *reason* is the absolute being or the *comprehensive unity of all truth* and reality, that there is *no antithesis* of reason, that rather reason is everything just as, in strict theology, God is everything; that is, all that essentially and truly is. But a being that is *not distinguished* from thought, that is, a being that is only a *predicate* or determination of reason, or only a *conceived and abstract* being, is, in truth, no being at all. The identity of thinking and being

expresses, therefore, only the *identity of thought with itself*. This means that absolute thought is *unable to cleave itself from itself, that it cannot step out of itself to be able to reach being*. Being remains something of the Beyond. Absolute philosophy has, to be sure, turned *the other world of theology into the world of here and now* for us, but for that matter it has turned the *this-sidedness of the real world* into an over-beyond.

The thought of speculative or absolute philosophy determines being distinct *from itself* as the activity of mediation, *as that which is immediate, as that which is unmediated*. For thought – at least for the thought which we are discussing – being is nothing more than this.

Thought posits being as counterposed to itself, but still *within itself*; it thereby immediately and without difficulty eliminates the opposition between being and itself; for being, as the antithesis of thought *within thought*, is nothing itself but thought. If being is nothing more than that which is unmediated, if unmediatedness alone constitutes its distinction from thought, how easy it is then to demonstrate that the determination of unmediatedness, namely, being, belongs to thought as well! If the essence of being is constituted by what is merely a *determination of thought*, how should being be distinguished from thought?

§ 25

The proof that something is has no other meaning than that it is *not just something thought*. This proof *cannot*, however, be derived *from thought itself*. Should *being* accrue to an object of thought, it must accrue to thought itself.

Kant's example of the difference between a hundred dollars in the imagination and a hundred dollars in reality, which he employs for the purpose of designating the difference between thought and being – Hegel derides it – while dwelling on his critique of the ontological proof, is

essentially quite correct. For the dollars of the imagination I have only in my *head*, whereas the dollars of reality I have in my *hand*; the former exist only *for me*, but the latter also *for others*, they can be felt and seen. Only that which exists at the same time for me and others, whereon I and others agree, which is not merely mine, but is also *common to all*, really exists.

In thought as such I find myself in identity with myself; and I am absolute master; nothing here contradicts me; here I am judge and litigant at the same time, and consequently, here there is no critical difference between the object and my thoughts about it. But if it is a question exclusively of the *being* of an object, then I cannot look only to myself for advice, but rather must hear witnesses *other than myself*. These witnesses that are distinguished from me as a thinking being are the senses. Being is something in which not only I but also others, and above all *the object itself*, participate. Being means being *a subject*, being for itself. And indeed, it is far from being the same thing whether I am a subject or only an object, whether I am a being for myself or only a being for another being; that is, only a thought. Where I am a mere object of imagination and hence no longer myself, where I am like a man after death, there I have to take everything lying down; there anyone can turn a portrait of mine into a true caricature without my being able to protest against it. But if I still exist, then I can put a spoke in his wheel, then I can make him feel and prove to him that between what I am in his idea of me and what I am in reality; that is, that there is a world of difference between what I am as an object for him and what I am as a subject. In thought, I am an absolute subject; I let everything exist only as my object or predicate; that is, as object or predicate of myself as a thinking being. I am intolerant. In relation to the activity of my senses, I am, on the other hand, a liberal; I let the object be what I myself am – a subject, a *real* and *self-activating*

being. Only sense and only sense perception give me something as *subject*.

§ 26 Being & Abstraction

A being that only thinks and *thinks abstractly*, has no idea at all of what being, existence, and reality are. *Thought is bounded by being*, being qua being is not an object of philosophy, at least not of abstract and absolute philosophy. *Speculative philosophy* itself expresses this indirectly in so far as it *equates being with non-being*, that is, *nothing*. But nothing *cannot be an object of thought*.

Being *in the sense in which it is an object of speculative thought* is that which is purely and simply unmediated, that is, undetermined; in other words, there is *nothing to distinguish and nothing to think of in being*. In its own estimation, however, speculative thought is the measure of all reality; it declares as something only that wherein it finds itself active and which provides it with its material. Consequently, being in and for itself is nothing for abstract thought because it is nothing in relation to thought; that is nothing for thought. It is *devoid of thought*. Precisely because of this, being, as drawn by speculative philosophy into its sphere and vindicated as a concept, is a pure spectre that stands in absolute contradiction to real being and to what man understands by being. For what man understands by being – aptly and according to reason – is *existence, being-for-itself, reality, actuality, and objectivity*. All these determinations or names express one and the same thing, but from different points of view. Being in thought, being *without objectivity, without reality, without being for itself*, is of course nothing; in terms of this *nothing*, however, I only express the nothingness of my *own abstraction*.

§ 27 Being & Essence

Being in Hegel's *Logic* is the *being of the old metaphysics* which is predicated of all things *without distinction* because of its underlying assumption that *all things* agree in that they are. But this *undifferentiated being* is only an *abstract idea* or an *idea without reality*. Being is as *differentiated as things themselves*.

For example, a metaphysical theory from the school of Wolff maintains that God, world, man, table, book, and so forth agree with one another in that they are. And Christian Thomasius says: "Being is everywhere the same; only essence is as manifold as things." This being which is everywhere the same, this undifferentiated and contentless being, is also the being of Hegel's *Logic*. Hegel himself observes that the polemic against the identity of being and nothing arises only out of the fact that a definite content is subsumed under being. But precisely the consciousness of being is always and necessarily linked with *definite* contents. If I abstract from the *content* of being and indeed from all content – for whatever is, is a content of being – then naturally I am left with nothing more than the idea of nothing. And hence, when Hegel reproaches vulgar consciousness for subsuming under being something that does not belong to being, that is, to being as the object of *Logic*, then it is rather he himself who must be reproached for subsuming a groundless abstraction under what man's consciousness justifiably and in keeping with the dictates of reason understands by being. Being is *not a general concept that can be separated from things. It is one with that which is*. It is thinkable only as mediated, that is, only through the predicates which constitute the essence of a thing. Being is wherein essence posits itself. ***That which is my essence is my being***. The being of the fish is its being in water, and from this being you cannot separate its essence. Language already identifies being and essence. Only in human life does it happen, but even here only in abnormal and unfortunate cases, that being is separated from essence; only here does it happen that a man's essence is not where his being is, but

also that because of this separation a man is not truly with his soul where he really is with his body. *You are only where your heart is.* But all beings, excepting cases contrary to nature, are glad to be where and what they are; this means that their essence is not separated from their being and their being is not separated from their essence. Consequently, you cannot postulate being as simply self-identical, distinct from essence that varies. The notion of *being resulting from a removal of all essential qualities* from things is only *your notion* of being – a fabricated, invented being, a being *without the essence* of Being.

§ 28 Words & Life

The *Hegelian philosophy* has remained unable to overcome the contradiction of thought and being. The Being with which the Phenomenology begins stands no less than the Being with which the Logic begins in the most direct contradiction to real being.

This contradiction manifests itself in the *Phenomenology* in the form of the "this" and the "general"; for the particular belongs to being, but the general to thought. Now, in the *Phenomenology*, one kind of "this" flows into another kind of "this" in a way indistinguishable for thought. But what an enormous difference there is between a "this" that is the object of abstract thought and a "this" that is the object of reality! *This* wife, for example, is *my* wife, and *this* house is *my* house, although every one speaks, as I do, of his house and his wife, as this house and this wife. The indifference and indistinguishability of the logical "this" is here interrupted and annulled by our sense for the right. Were we to accept the logical "this" in natural law, we would immediately arrive at a community of goods and wives where there is no difference between this one and that one and where every man possesses every woman; we would then come upon a situation where all right has been abolished, for right is grounded only on the reality of the distinction between this and that.

We have before us in the beginning of the *Phenomenology* nothing but the contradiction between the word, which is general, and the object, which is always particular. And the thought, which depends only on the word, will remain unable to overcome this contradiction. But being that is *spoken or thought* is just as far from being real being as the word is from being the object. Were one to reply that being in Hegel is treated not from the practical, as here, but from the theoretical standpoint, then it must be reciprocated that the practical standpoint is precisely what is needed here. *The question of being is indeed a practical question* it is a question in which our being participates – a question of life and death. And if we stick to our being when it comes to law, then we will also not want the *Logic* to take it away from us. Even the *Logic* must recognise our being, unless it would rather persist in its contradiction with real being. Besides, the practical standpoint – the standpoint of eating and drinking – is adopted even by the *Phenomenology* in refuting the truth of sensuous, that is, particular, being. But here, too, I owe my existence by no means to the verbal or the logical bread – to the bread in itself – but always only to *this* bread, the "*non-verbal*." Being, grounded as it is altogether on such non-verbalities, is therefore itself something non-verbal. Indeed, it is that which cannot be verbalised. Where words cease, life begins and being reveals its secret. If, therefore, non-verbality is the same as irrationality, then all existence is irrational because it is always and forever only *this* existence. But irrational it is not. Existence has meaning and reason in itself, without being verbalised.

§ 29 Abstract & Concrete

Thought that "*seeks to reach beyond its other*" – and the "other of thought" is being – is *thought that oversteps its natural boundaries*. This reaching beyond its other on the part of thought means that it *claims for itself that which does not properly belong to thought but to being*. That which belongs to *being is particularity and individuality*, whereas that

which belongs to *thought is generality*. Thought thus lays claim to particularity; it makes the negation of generality, that is, *particularity*, which is the essential form of sensuousness, *into a moment of thought*. In this way, "abstract" thought or abstract concept, which has being *outside itself*, becomes a "concrete" concept.

But how does it come about that man encroaches upon that which is the property of being? Through theology. In God, being is immediately connected with essence or the concept; particularity, or the form of existence, with generality. The "concrete concept" is *God* transformed into *concept*. But how does man arrive from "abstract" to "concrete" or absolute thought; how from philosophy to theology? The answer to this question has already been provided by history in the transition from ancient pagan philosophy to the so-called *neo-Platonic* philosophy; for neo-Platonic philosophy differs from ancient philosophy only in that the former is theology, whereas the latter is philosophy. Ancient philosophy had reason, the "idea" for its constitutive principle; but "the idea was not posited by Plato and Aristotle as the all-containing." Ancient philosophy left something existing outside thought – a residue, as it were, that could not be dissolved in thought. The image of this being existing outside thought is *matter* – the substratum of reality. Reason came up against its own *limit* in matter. Ancient philosophy still moved within the distinction between thought and being; for it, thought, mind, or the idea was not yet the *all-encompassing*; that is, the *only, exclusive, and absolute reality*. The ancient philosophers were men whose *wisdom* still had reference to *the world*; they were physiologists, politicians, zoologists; they were, in short, *anthropologists*, not theologians, or at least only partly theologians. Precisely for that reason, of course, they could not but be partial; that is, limited and defective anthropologists. To the neo-Platonists, on the other hand, matter or the real material world in general is no longer binding and real. Fatherland, family, worldly ties, and goods in general, which the

ancient Peripatetic philosophy still regarded as belonging to man's happiness – all this is nothing for the neo-Platonic sage. To him, death is even better than corporeal life; he holds the body as not belonging to his essence; he translocates blissfulness exclusively in the soul while he detaches himself completely from all corporeal, in short, external things. But where man has nothing left outside himself, there he seeks and finds *everything within himself*. There he puts the imaginary and intelligible world in place of the real world so that the former contains everything that is there in the latter, but only in an *abstract and imagined* way. Even matter is to be found in the immaterial world of the neo-Platonists, but only as something ideated, conceived, and imaginary. And where man has no longer a being that is given outside himself, there he sets up a being in his *thought*, which, although *an ideated entity*, has nevertheless the *qualities of a real entity, which as a non-sensuous entity is at the same time a sensuous being*, and which *as a theoretical object* is at the same time a *practical object*. This being is *God – the highest good* of the neo-Platonists. Only in *being* does man feel satisfied. He therefore overcomes the lack of a real being by substituting an ideated being for it, that is, he now ascribes the essence of the relinquished or lost reality to his conceptions and thoughts; his conception is *no longer* a conception, but the *object* itself; the image is *no longer* an image but the thing itself; reality is now idea and thought. Precisely because he no longer relates himself as a subject to a real world as his object, *his conceptions* become for him *objects, beings, spirits, and gods*. The more abstract he is, and the more negative his attitude is toward the real and the sensuous, the more *sensuous* he is *in his abstractions*. God, the One, the highest object and being arrived at by abstracting from all plurality and diversity, that is, from all sensuousness, is known by contact and direct presence (*parousia*). Indeed, what is the highest, the One, is known equally through *non-cognition* and *ignorance* like that which is the lowest – matter. This means that being that is only ideated and abstract, that is, only non-

sensuous and *super-sensuous*, is at the same time a *sensuous* and really existing being.

Just as by decorporealising himself or by negating the *body* – *the rational limit* of subjectivity – man lapses into a fantastic and transcendent practice, surrounding himself with *corporealised* appearances of spirits and gods; that is, *practically* eliminating the distinction between imagination and sense perception. So also does the *difference between thought and being, subjective and objective, sensuous and non-sensuous, theoretically* disappear when *matter* has no *reality* for him and is *consequently not a boundary* limiting the thinking reason; that is, when reason – the intellectual being, or *the essence of subjectivity in general* – is *in its boundlessness the sole and absolute being* for him. Thought negates everything, but only in order to posit everything in itself. It *no longer has a boundary in anything that exists outside* itself, but precisely thereby it itself *steps out of its immanent and natural limits*. In this way reason, the idea, becomes *concrete*; this means that *what should flow from sense perception is made the property of thought and what is the function and concern of the senses, of sensibility and of life, becomes the function and concern of thought*. This is how the *concrete* is turned into a *predicate* of thought, and being into a mere *determination of thought*; for the proposition "*the concept is concrete*" is identical with the proposition "*being is a determination of thought*." What is imagination and fantasy with the neo-Platonists, Hegel has merely transformed into the concept, or in other words, rationalised. Hegel is not the "German or Christian Aristotle"; he is the German *Proclus*. "*Absolute philosophy*" is the *reborn Alexandrian philosophy*. According to Hegel's explicit characterisation, it is not the Aristotelian nor the ancient pagan philosophy in general, but that of the Alexandrian school that is absolute (although still resting on abstraction from concrete self-consciousness) and Christian philosophy (albeit mixed with pagan ingredients).

It should be further remarked that neo-Platonic theology shows particularly clearly that an object corresponds to its subject and vice versa; that consequently the object of theology is nothing other than the objectified essence of the subject; that is, of man. To the neo-Platonists, God at his highest is the simple, the one, the simple indeterminable and uniform; he is not a being, but rather above being, for being is still something determined due to the fact that it is being; he is not a concept, nor is he intellect, but rather without and above the intellect, for the intellect, too, is something determined by virtue of being intellect; and where there is intellect, there is also distinction and dichotomisation into the thinker and the thought, an activity that cannot take place in that which is absolutely simple. But that which is objectively the highest being for the neo-Platonist, is also subjectively the highest being for him; that which he posits as being in the object, in God, he posits in himself as activity and striving. Having ceased to be distinction, having ceased to be intellect and self, is and means being God. But what God *is*, is precisely what the neo-Platonist strives to *become*; the goal of his activity is to cease "being self, intellect, and reason." Ecstasy or rapture is the highest psychological state that, according to the neo-Platonist, man can achieve. This state, objectified as being, is the Divine Being. Thus, God results from man, but conversely, man does not result from God, at least not originally. This is also shown particularly clearly in the neo-Platonists' characterisation of God as the being who does not stand in need of anything – the blissful being. For in what else has this being without pain and without needs its ground and origin if not in the pain and needs of man? The idea and feeling of blissfulness disappear with the affliction of need and pain. Only contrasted to wretchedness does blissfulness have any reality.

Only in the misery of man lies the birthplace of God. Only from man does God derive all his determinations; God *is* what man *desires* to be;

namely, his own essence and goal imagined as an actual being. Herein, too, lies the distinguishing factor separating the neo-Platonists from the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Sceptics. Existence without passion, bliss, independence from need, freedom, and autonomy were also the goals of these philosophers, but only as virtues of man; this means that these goals were based on the *truth of the concrete and real man*. Freedom and bliss were supposed to belong to this subject as its predicates. Hence, with the neo-Platonists – although they still regarded pagan virtues as true – these predicates became subject; that is, human adjectives were turned into something substantial, into an actually existing being – hence the distinction between the neo-Platonist and Christian theology which transferred man's bliss, perfection, or likeness to God into the beyond. Precisely through this, real man became a mere abstraction lacking flesh and blood, an allegorical figure of the divine being. Plotinus, at least on the evidence of his biographers, was ashamed to have a body.

§ 30 Abstract Realist

The understanding that only the *concrete* concept, that is, *the* concept that contains within itself the nature of the real, is the *true* concept, expresses the recognition of the *truth* of that which is concrete and real. But because from very outset the concept, that is, *the essence of thought*, is also presupposed as *the absolute and as the only true essence*, the real can be recognized only indirectly — only the necessary and essential adjective of the concept. Hegel is a *realist*, but a *purely idealistic* realist, or rather an abstract realist; namely, a realist abstracting from all reality. He *negates* thought — that is, abstract thought — but he does so *while remaining within abstractive thought* with the result that his negation of abstraction still remains abstraction. Only “that which is” is the object of philosophy according to Hegel; however, this “is” is again only something *abstract*, only something *conceived*. Hegel is a thinker who *surpasses* himself in thought. His aim is to capture the thing itself, but only in the

thought of the thing; he wants to be *outside* of thought, but still remaining *within thought* — hence the difficulty in grasping the *concrete* concept.