

CHAPTER IV HEGEL AND THE RATIONALITY OF TRADITION

IV.1. The Problem of Reason and History

It is not surprising that a sketch of the philosophical rehabilitation of tradition which follows Gadamer's lead should begin with Hegel. In the eyes of the classicist, Gadamer, Hegel is the one who discovered the truly speculative core of the Platonic dialogues.¹ Hegel's understanding of the truth of art, which is grasped by the conceptual knowledge of philosophy, is considered by Gadamer not as an idiosyncratic theory, but a moment of the greatest significance.² And Gadamer, the founder of the international Hegel society, finds in Hegel a challenge which ought to be met at every opportunity.³ There can be little doubt that Hegel, along with Heidegger, is central to the development of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

But neither the contribution of Hegel to the understanding of the Platonic dialogues nor to the philosophy of art is of primary importance to Gadamer. Far more important to him is the salient position of Hegel's philosophy of world history, in which the traditional role of philosophy as true conceptual knowledge is affirmed against the analyses of the German historical school. The historical school opposed Hegel as one who advocated an a priori construction of history. More realistic, the school affirmed, is a view of history as the manifestation of the often-irrational currents of life. Not in the grand scheme of the Hegelian system, it was believed, but in the examination of the complexities of life itself, lay the truth of history. For Gadamer, however, the meaning of history for the human spirit and for the knowledge of truth was acknowledged much more profoundly in Hegel's philosophy than in the doctrines of the historical school.⁴ Instead of a mere expression of life, as it was for the historicists of the nineteenth century, philosophy was for Hegel a speculative conceptual knowledge. In Hegel's philosophy the human spirit, venturing outside itself in the search for truth, becomes reconciled to itself. This occurs when it recognizes in its own speculative or reflective concepts what had once seemed to lie outside, what had once seemed alien.⁵ Such philosophy, then, can

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hegel und die antike Dialektik," in Gadamer, Hegels Dialektik. Fünf hermeneutische Studien (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1971), p. 2. Translation: Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies, trans. with an Introduction by P. Christopher Smith (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 6-7.

² Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 93-94; trans., pp. 87-88.

³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Das Erbe Hegels," in Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas, Das Erbe Hegels. Zwei Reden aus Anlass der Verleihung des Hegel-Preises 1979 der Stadt Stuttgart an Hans-Georg Gadamer am 13. Juni 1979 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), p. 84. Translation: "The Heritage of Hegel," in Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1981), p. 63.

⁴ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 186; trans., p. 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 216; trans., p. 202.

be described as the return of the spirit to itself. It returns in that what once seemed outside of it – the reality of life – is now recognized as its very self.

This is the point at which Hegel becomes important for the rehabilitation of tradition. Tradition can seem alien to the one who regards it from the outside. Moreover, the act of studying tradition, or of appropriating it, can seem to be self-alienating. One must apparently alienate oneself from that which is contemporary in order to embrace a tradition as one's own, especially if that tradition stands in opposition to prevailing points of view and practices. Hence Fichte, Hegel's contemporary, could argue that the starting-point of genuine knowledge lies not in self-alienation, but in immediate consciousness. There alone one can learn, because what one knows is as close as one's very self, the product of one's own action.⁶ Hegel opposed Fichte's system, however, and argued that the beginning of science is not the self-identity of the ego. In his Logik, Hegel answered the question of "with what must the science of logic begin?" by means of a critique of all starting-points, including Fichte's. The ego of empirical self-consciousness is not, according to Hegel, a purely self-evident datum. What is needed is rather an examination of the content of that consciousness. When one speaks of the content of consciousness, it can seem that such content is alien to the consciousness which grasps it. Yet Hegel claimed that in what is alien, in what is other than oneself, one encounters oneself most truly. In the alien thought of antiquity, for example, one discovers the rational, and thus one's own self.

But Hegel's movement toward the past as the alien being in which the self is encountered, the movement of thought which is significant for the rehabilitation of tradition, seems to run counter to an earlier tendency which is equally Hegelian. This is Hegel's critique of theological "positivity." We know this from the publication in 1907 of Hegel's early theological writings. The critique of positivity lies in the essay of 1795-1796, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion." Parts of this essay were revised in 1800. The difference between the early form of the essay and its partial revision concerns us here. Hegel conveyed in the revision an attitude which is common to the early form of the essay as well: "A positive religion is contrasted with natural religion," he said, "and this presupposes that there is only one natural religion, since human nature is one and simple, while there may be many positive religions."⁷ Such a statement bears

⁶ "Dieses dem Philosophen angemuthete Anschauen seiner selbst in Vollziehen des Acts, wodurch ihm das Ich entsteht, nenne ich *intellectuelle Anschauung*. Sie ist das unmittelbare Bewusstseyn; dass ich handle, und was ich handle: sie ist das, wodurch ich etwas weiss, weil ich es thue." Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre für Leser, die schon ein philosophisches System haben" (1797-98), in J. G. Fichte, Gesamtausgabe, der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed. Reinhard Lauth and Hans Gliwitsky, 18 vols. in four sections (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog), 1970), section I, vol. 4, pp. 216-217.

⁷ "[E]ine positive Religion wird der natürlichen entgegengesetzt, und damit vorausgesetzt, dass es nur Eine natürliche gebe, weil die menschliche Natur nur Eine ist, dass aber der positiven Religionen viele sein können." Hegels theologische

the clear stamp of the Enlightenment. The positive forms of Christianity, by which Hegel means both Protestantism and Catholicism, are contrasted with the one, natural religion. This natural religion is superior to positive religion in that it is seemingly timeless, not stamped by history as the positive religions are. This is the primary thrust of the manuscript of 1795-96. It applauds natural religion as that in which reason legislates (and does not merely receive) the moral law. Moreover, it criticizes the positive religions for allowing the uncorrupted moral sense to degenerate into a mere art of following an alien moral code.⁸ This manuscript is thoroughly imbued with the Kantian distinction between reason and received morality.

In the fragmentary revision of 1800, however, a new element has been introduced by Hegel. That element can be called an understanding of the role of history within the sphere of reason. An illustration of this is Hegel's distinction between the positive and the accidental. The positive is that aspect of religion which is proclaimed forcibly and which leads to a suppression of freedom. The accidental, on the other hand, is that which is neither abstract reason nor positivity. Rather, it is that aspect of religion which has to do with actions, with people, with memories – what we would call the historical element. “Reason proves their accidentality and claims that everything sacrosanct is eternal and imperishable,” writes Hegel. “But that does not amount to a proof that these religious matters are positive, because imperishability and sacrosanctity may be linked with accidentality and must be linked with something accidental; in thinking of the eternal, we must link the eternal with the accidentality of our thinking.”⁹ The “must” with which this sentence concludes is the necessity of historical mediation. Here, in this revision of 1800, we find prefigured a number of themes of the mature Hegel. There is, first of all, the suggestion that in even the apparently aberrant features of historical religion (the “accidental”) one can trace the eternal. The historical forms of the eternal are utterly entwined with what is accidental. And that accidentality lies both in our thinking as well as in the history itself. Reason is no longer regarded as the purely eternal, but is present in the flux of history.

Jugendschriften, after manuscripts of the Königlich Bibliothek in Berlin, ed. Herman Nohl (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1907), p. 139. Translation: Early Theological Writings, trans. T. M. Knox, with an Introduction, and fragments translated by Richard Kroner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 167.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 212; trans., pp. 85, 144.

⁹ “In einer Religion können Handlungen, Personen, Erinnerungen für heilig gelten; die Vernunft erweist ihre Zufälligkeit; sie fordert, dass dasjenige, was heilig ist, ewig, unvergänglich sei. Damit hat sie aber nicht die Positivität jener religiösen Dinge erwiesen; denn der Mensch kann an das Zufällige und muss an ein Zufälliges Unvergänglichkeit und Heiligkeit knüpfen; in seinem Denken des Ewigen knüpft er das Ewige an die Zufälligkeit seines Denkens.” *Ibid.*, pp. 142-3; trans., p. 171. The translator has misleadingly translated “Handlungen, Personen, Erinnerungen” as “Actions, passions, and associations.”

Thus we see a hint of the means by which Hegel would reconcile what appear to be contradictory tendencies in his thought. The first tendency is toward a rigorous intellectualism. In this the claims of reason are staunchly advocated against those who would claim, as members of the German historical school later did, that the multiplicity of life is fundamentally beyond the grasp of an intellectual unity.¹⁰ The second tendency is towards an embodied conceptuality. What is rational, Hegel taught, is embodied in the actuality of concrete human thought. It does not exist above and beyond humanity in a timeless realm, but is present in the formulation, exchange, and refinement of concepts. Hegel's 1800 revision of his critique of positivity, in which we find a first fusion of the accidental and the eternal, anticipates the full-blown attempts of his major works to reconcile reason and history.

The reconciliation of reason and history is central to the philosophic rehabilitation of tradition. Only if it can be shown that reason and history are in some way reconcilable can we affirm the contribution of tradition to thought. And only if the Christian tradition is compatible with reason can theologians speak of the intelligibility of a faith rooted in history. The problem upon which Hegel exerted his thought is a problem which still vexes contemporary thinkers. It is the problem of the intellectual grasp of the past, a grasp which attempts both to understand the past and to preserve its identity. Understanding the past means translating it into the language and concepts of the present day. Preserving its identity means respecting those alien features which resist translation into present concepts. A truly intellectual grasp entails a willingness to admit the inadequacy of present concepts, and to learn, with Hegel, that one encounters oneself most profoundly in those things which are utterly foreign to oneself. Here we find a key to the philosophic rehabilitation of tradition, and moreover, a clue to the nature of the theology of tradition. To the exploration of the realms which that key unlocks the following exposition of Hegelian thought is dedicated.

In what follows we will apply the philosophy of Hegel to the problem of the philosophic (and theological) rehabilitation of tradition. Our aim will be the further development of the reconciliation of reason and history, of rationality and tradition. There are two major stages in our application of Hegel's thought. The first stage is an examination of the means by which Hegel demonstrated the intelligibility of history. His principal tool was dialectical thought. We shall examine what this dialectical thought is, and give some early examples of its appropriation by Catholic theologians of the Tübingen school. The second stage in our investigation is an inquiry into the ontological basis for the reconciliation of reason and history. That basis is the classical doctrine, taken over by Hegel, of the unity of being and thought. We shall examine arguments by some modern opponents of the Hegelian unity, and show how their opposition is detrimental to the philosophic rehabilitation of tradition. Finally, Hegel's doctrine of the unity of being and thought will be affirmed with qualifications as fundamental to the philosophy and theology of tradition. This affirmation will follow in large measure the

¹⁰ See the earlier section of the dissertation entitled Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Decline of Tradition, especially the sections "Ranke and the Continuity of History," "Historical Force and Its Expression in Droysen," and "Dilthey & the Decline of Tradition."

arguments of Gadamer, and will incidentally suggest some of the ways in which Gadamer's thought differs from that of some of his contemporaries, and that of Hegel as well.

IV.1.A. The Intelligibility of History

The philosophy of Hegel contributes to the rehabilitation of tradition a new attitude toward the past as the embodiment of reason. Hegel was not so rash as Bacon, for example, who regarded past thinking as a source of intellectual idolatry.¹¹ Rather than overcoming received opinion and setting up in its place experimental procedure, as Bacon suggested, Hegel affirmed the rationality of the past. History, and especially the history of philosophy, reveals in his view a meaning which is intelligible. "The sole thought which philosophy brings to the treatment of history," wrote Hegel, "is the simple concept of *Reason*."¹² The task of the philosophical thinker is to encounter in history the traces of reason. And this does not mean, at least at first, that the thinker sits in judgment upon the past, viewing it from the superior position of the present. Rather, it implies that the reason discovered in history is identical with the reason which animates present thought.

This poses the immediate problem, however, of reconciling present thinking with a past which often seems alien and irrational. Bacon again provides us with an example, for he could not reconcile himself to certain aspects of the philosophic past. In his view, natural philosophy had been corrupted in Aristotle's school by logic, and in Plato's philosophy by natural theology.¹³ These elements of the philosophic tradition are incompatible, he believed, with a truly rational interpretation of nature. Bacon makes it clear that the task presented by Hegel, the task of reconciling history and past philosophy with reason, is anything but an easy one. Indeed, Hegel's demand seems impossible. He asks that the thinker should encounter truth in a past whose bond with apparent untruths

¹¹ See in the present dissertation the section entitled "The Doctrine of Idols."

¹² "Der einzige Gedanke, den die Philosophie mitbringt, ist aber der einfache Gedanke der Vernunft, dass die Vernunft die Welt beherrsche, dass es also auch in der Weltgeschichte vernünftig zugegangen sey." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte, with a foreword by Eduard Gans and Karl Hegel, in Sämtliche Werke, Jubiläumsausgabe in twenty volumes, ed. Hermann Glockner et al., 26 vols. in 24, including Glockner's 2-volume Hegel and the 4-volume Hegel-Lexikon (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog), 1958-1964), 11.34 (hereafter cited as Werke). Translation: Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History, trans., with an Introduction, by Robert S. Hartman, The Library of Liberal Arts, Oskar Piest, general editor, vol. 35 (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1953), p. 11. In Hartman's translation, the phrase "to the treatment of history" is an addition, but not a misleading one. The italicization of "reason" is not found in the Glockner edition. The translation of "Gedanke" as "concept" may trick one into thinking that Hegel refers here to the speculative concept.

¹³ Francis Bacon, Novum Organum, I.xcvi.

is adamant. How to answer this demand is one of the central themes of Hegel's philosophy, and marks its particular contribution to the understanding of tradition.

IV.1.A.1. Schleiermacher as a Counter-Example

A comparison of Hegel's understanding of the task presented by tradition with Schleiermacher's understanding is fruitful. We have seen that Schleiermacher sought to interpret the past by a psychological reconstruction of the thought of the writers of antiquity.¹⁴ Gadamer has contrasted Schleiermacher's procedure of reconstruction with Hegel's idea of integration.¹⁵ Two aspects of Schleiermacher's procedure are relevant here. The first is his distrust of the history of reception of the works of antiquity. Interpreters are naive, in his view, to suppose that the received understanding of an ancient artifact is correct. That understanding (of, for example, the Bible) may have been falsified by dogmatic interpretations alien to the intent of the original author. Such a teaching seems, at first glance, nothing more than Protestant orthodoxy – a desire to return to the purity of early Christianity. But Schleiermacher hesitates to assign a privileged position even to the first centuries. In his opinion, the misinterpretation of Christian doctrine – his example is the trinity – began at the very outset, due to a literal interpretation in the Patristic generation of New Testament expressions which were intended as poetic and rhetorical.¹⁶ For Schleiermacher, no part of the reception of the New Testament is normative.

His view can be contrasted with that of Hegel. Not that Hegel regarded the first Christian centuries as normative; like Schleiermacher, he regarded his own age as that which has put him in a superior position for judging Christian doctrine. But in all of history, including the history of the development of the Church, Hegel saw the traces of reason. Consequently, he treated the development of doctrine not as something merely suspect, as something to be opposed to and cancelled by the purity of Christian revelation. Instead, he insisted that the teaching of antiquity is a necessary stage in the progress of thought. To it, one must reconcile oneself. Such reconciliation is a task which does not dilute the strength of thought but intensifies it.

The second aspect of Schleiermacher's procedure, in contrast to which Hegel's contribution becomes apparent, is the effort to create a universal hermeneutics.¹⁷ Schleiermacher sought a universal hermeneutics, we can say, in the sense that he proposed a method of interpretation which is universally applicable. In order to

¹⁴ See the part in this dissertation entitled Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Decline of Tradition, esp. the section entitled "Schleiermacher's Reconstructive Aim."

¹⁵ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 157-161; tr., pp. 146-150.

¹⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Ueber den Gegensatz zwischen der sabellianischen und der athanasianischen Vorstellung von der Trinität" (1822), in Schleiermacher, Sämmtliche Werke, 29 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1835-1960), series I, vol. 2, pp. 485-574. The problem is laid out on p. 488.

¹⁷ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 172-185; trans., pp. 162-173.

overcome the distance between present understanding and past expression, Schleiermacher suggested that the interpreter strive to reconstruct the thought of the ancient author in a process akin to divinization. This procedure has the advantage of leading to a sympathetic entry, via the imagination, into the foreign worlds of antiquity. But a deeper analysis of Schleiermacher's goal makes the problems of his method apparent. For Schleiermacher, the thought of the ancient author is an artistic product in the Kantian sense. It provokes an imaginative reflection unbounded by concepts.¹⁸ In Schleiermacher's procedure, the interpreter is to regard the ancient artifact or text not as the expression of a content for philosophical analysis, but as an expression of the individuality of the ancient author. The hermeneutic task is to ascertain not the truth of what the author thought, but to reconstruct, in an imaginative way, who the author was.¹⁹ In this task, the question of the content of the thought of antiquity is laid aside. Were one to appropriate that thought, it might lead one to adopt a dogmatic point of view. All such viewpoints hinder the interpreter, according to Schleiermacher, and thus render the hermeneutical procedure less than universal.

For Hegel, on the other hand, the content of the thought of antiquity is all-important. To be sure, Hegel opposed, especially in his early theological writings, the acceptance of apparently unintelligible dogmas for the sake of an alien authority, such as the Catholic Church. But his own interpretive procedure, namely, the reconciliation of what is apparently unintelligible through the synthesizing activity of reason, distinguishes him from Schleiermacher. Rather than abstracting from the content of the thought of antiquity, and grasping instead the psychology of the ancient author by means of the imagination, as Schleiermacher proposed, Hegel sought to immerse himself in the ancient thought. He believed, first of all, that such immersion is thoroughly historical. By contrast, the effort to leap over apparently extraneous and distracting details in order to return to what seems primitive and authentic – Schleiermacher's procedure – is an exercise in philosophical naivety. And secondly, Hegel believed that even the concepts of antiquity which seem unintelligible or irrational betray the step of reason in history. In contrast to Schleiermacher's reconstructive procedure, Hegel sought, in Gadamer's phrase, the thoughtful mediation of the historical spirit with present life – the task, in a word, of integration.²⁰ By integrating the thought of antiquity, one would not be simply

¹⁸ See the part of the present dissertation entitled Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Decline of Tradition, esp. the section entitled "Romantic Hermeneutics."

¹⁹ Schleiermacher, Werke, series III, vol. IV, part 2: Dialektik (1839), ed. L. Jonas, "Beilage F" pp. 571-572. Here Schleiermacher describes the kind of dialectic appropriate to "artistic" thinking. He calls this dialectic a "freie Gespräch" in which the thought of the interpreter is provoked by the artistic work, and returns again and again to it. But this dialectic has to do with aesthetic pleasure rather than with conceptual analysis, and so the relation of the thought of the interpreter to that of the art work is, in terms of content, "so gut als gar nicht in Betracht."

²⁰ "Hegel spricht damit eine entschiedene Wahrheit aus, sofern das Wesen des geschichtlichen Geistes nicht in der Restitution des Vergangenen, sondern in der *denkenden Vermittlung mit dem gegenwärtigen Leben* besteht." Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 161; trans., p. 150.

recreating it imaginatively, but rather seeing it for what it is, and reconciling it with one's own view.²¹

IV.1.A.2. The Continuity of History as Spirit

But the task of integration is by no means an easy one to understand. Integration is not a central concept for Hegelian philosophy.²² In order to grasp what this term means for tradition, it is necessary to draw out related concepts in Hegel's work. Gadamer quotes at length the parable with which Hegel introduces his discussion of revealed religion in the 1807 Phenomenology of Spirit.²³ In the parable, Hegel compares the heritage of antiquity to fruit, broken off from a tree, which fate in the form of a maiden offers us.²⁴ There a contrast is drawn between the original situation in which the fruit developed and the later situation in which the maiden offers the fruit. Hegel explains that the fruit represents the art of classical antiquity. At its origin, this art was an expression of ethical life, and the enjoyment of it was a kind of worship. Our present enjoyment of it, however, is too often an external action. We preserve the fruit of antiquity by wiping from it a drop of rain or a speck of dust. In place of the inner elements of the ethical life, those elements in which classical art developed, we erect the dead elements of its external existence. We do so, as Hegel writes, "not in order to live in the past, but to represent them imaginatively."²⁵ Hegel seems to present us with an irreconcilable alternative. The art of the past is either the fruit of the ethical life of

²¹ Pierre-Jean Labarrière makes the point that Hegel's phenomenology is not a logical interpretation of history, but "histoire conçue," that is, history conceived as the union of "logique" and "chronologique." The divorce between the two, whether for aesthetic reasons (history is the beautiful realm which offers freedom for the play of imagination) or for the sake of rationalism (history is that from which reason helps the enlightened person escape), was rejected by Hegel. Labarrière, Structures et mouvement dialectique dans la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel, vol. 13 of the collection Analyse et raisons, directed by Martial Gueroult et al. (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1968), p. 261.

²² The word "Integration" is not an entry in Hermann Glockner's Hegel-Lexikon, vols. 23-26 of Hegel's Werke.

²³ It is significant that the parable occurs at this point in the Phenomenology, as we shall see in the dissertation section below entitled "Kuhn and the Dialectic of Present Appropriation."

²⁴ Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes, with a foreword by Johannes Schulze, in Werke, 2.572-573. Translation: The Phenomenology of Mind, trans., with an Introduction and notes by J. B. Baillie, second ed., revised and corrected throughout (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, and New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), pp. 753-754.

²⁵ "[N]icht um sich in sie hinein zu leben, sondern nur um sie sich vorzustellen." Ibid., 2.573; trans., p. 754. The translation above is my own, and seeks to bring out the ambiguity of the verb "hineinleben," about which more will be said below, in the dissertation section entitled "The Permanent Validity of Every Epoch," footnote 31.

antiquity (which it can only be for the citizen of ancient Greece) or it is a veiled memory of that life (which can never become actual for us, regardless of our historical scholarship). In both cases, it is irrevocably cut off from us.

But there is more to Hegel's parable than these unattractive alternatives. The maiden who offers the fruit, he says, is not merely the nature which gave rise to the art of antiquity. She is also the spirit of fate which has preserved the works of the past and presented them to us. This spirit is our interiorizing of that which, in the art works themselves, is still only external: the spirit which knows itself as self-conscious.²⁶ An analogy can be drawn perhaps between this spirit and tradition. Hegel refuses to legislate, in his description of the spirit, an impassable border between the origin of the art of antiquity and our present apprehension of it. The maiden who offers the work of the past to the present is far more than a figure from Greek antiquity. She is a spirit as alive today as 25 centuries ago. Although Hegel does not use the word, she can be said to represent tradition. She is the tradition which mediates the past to the present.

In his description of her, Hegel also makes an implicit prescription. He prescribes for us how we are to understand this spirit which is tradition. Modern humanity cannot be satisfied, he suggests, with an external activity, the activity of preserving the fruit of the past by wiping from it rain and dust, the activity of a superficial scholarship. Such an activity refuses to engage antiquity on the level of its philosophic thought, and appeases itself with a merely imaginative reflection on the psychology of the ancient thinker. More is available to us, Hegel suggests, than a romantic reverie on the origins of what has survived through the centuries. In the work of antiquity one instead can find the truth of the past objectified. This is no long-lost truth which never can be recovered. It is rather a movement of the spirit in which the present as well as the past can participate. One recalls it not as a fact toward which one can be indifferent, but as something alien which can become one's own.

IV.1.A.3. The Permanent Validity of Every Epoch

This gives us an initial insight into Hegel's task of integrating the past. The parable of the maiden and the fruit suggests the possibilities which the past affords the present understanding of truth. Hegel does not, however, compare the fruit to the truth of antiquity. Rather, he compares it to classical art. His reason for this, I believe is rhetorical. He wants to persuade us. Many would dispute the value of antique philosophy for truth. One need only think of Francis Bacon, who had scant appreciation for Aristotelian logic or the natural theology of Plato. But it is unlikely that Bacon would have disputed the beauty of the Athenian Parthenon or of the Laocoön. The example of Greek art is rhetorically apropos because it represents what cannot be superseded. Here, in the art of antiquity, one discovers something as valid today as in the era it was made. Hegel proposes this example in order to suggest an analogy between art and all the works

²⁶ “[S]o ist der Geist des Schicksa[l]s, der uns jede Kunstwerke darbietet, mehr als das sittliche Leben und Wirklichkeit jenes Volkes, denn er ist die *Er-Innerung* des in ihnen noch *veräusserten* Geistes, – er ist der Geist des tragischen Schicksals, das alle jene individuellen Götter und Attribute der Substanz in das Eine Pantheon versammelt, in den seiner als Geist selbstbewussten Geist.” Ibid.

of the human spirit. They are all objectifications of truth, forms in which the truth has been made manifest. One can no more say in an absolute sense that modern thought has superseded the thought of antiquity than one can affirm that modern art has rendered classical art obsolete.

To be sure, there is a development in the concept of art. “Before the mind can attain to the true notion of its absolute essence,” states Hegel in his lectures on aesthetics, “it is constrained to traverse a series of stages rooted in this very notional concept.”²⁷ Although later stages do not render the previous stages superfluous, nevertheless there is such a thing as development and, in that sense, progress. Indeed for Hegel the romantic type of art is the successor to classical art and a more perfect realization of the freedom of the spirit than the art of antiquity. But romantic art is in one respect defective. Its content of freedom, Hegel writes, “makes a more ideal demand upon expression than the mere representation through an external or physical medium is able to supply.”²⁸ Romantic art, despite its ideal spirituality, unites inner meaning and outer form less perfectly than classical art. The classic, by consequence, is not just an historical category but an unsurpassed norm.²⁹ The student of aesthetics, Hegel implies, should not dismiss one form of art or another, but should strive to grasp art history as a steady unfolding of the human spirit. The same might be said of all of the spirit’s manifestations. One can infer that, in the traditions which have been passed on, humanity does not find what is merely outdated and replaced, but a truth which animates the present as well as the past. The embodiment of that truth, which seems so foreign, presents a challenge to the understanding.

How is one to meet that challenge? It is one thing to say that the past affords possibilities for present understanding, and quite another to show how those possibilities are to be grasped. Hegel, as we saw above, speaks of the arid and external scholarship which preserves lifeless elements of antique life, “not in order to live in the past, but to represent them imaginatively.”³⁰ In this phrase, he seems to suggest that living in the

²⁷ “Denn der Geist, ehe er zum wahren Begriffe seines absoluten Wesens gelangt, hat einem in diesem Begriffe selbst begründeten Verlauf von Stufen durchzugehen.” Hegel, Werke, vols. 12-14: Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik, with a Foreword by Heinrich Gustav Hotho, 3rd ed., 12.110. Translation: The Philosophy of Fine Art, trans., with notes, by F. P. B. Osmaston, 4 vols. (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920), 1.98. Osmaston follows the English practice of translating “Geist” as mind instead of spirit, and “Begriffe” as notion instead of concept.

²⁸ “Diess giebt den Grundtypus für die romantische Kunstform ab, für welche, indem ihr Gehalt seiner freieh Geistigheit wegen mehr fordert, als die Darstellung im Aeusserlichen und Leiblichen zu beiten vermag.” Ibid., 12.406; trans., 2.4-5. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the content of romantic art is greater than an external or physical representation can express.

²⁹ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 274; trans., p. 258.

³⁰ See footnote 25 above.

past is preferable to imaginative representation. But that can hardly be his meaning. First of all, one cannot really live in the past. A central feature of the parable of the maiden and the fruit is that the fruit has been, once and for all, broken from the tree. Reattaching it is out of the question. Secondly, the maiden who offers it represents not the age of its origin, but is a spirit who unites past and present. One need not live in the past, she suggests, in order to fathom its truth. Thirdly, living in the past cannot be Hegel's goal, because he has, in other writings, set himself in opposition to such an attempt. In his discussion of the end of romantic art, for example, Hegel disparages the artist who seeks to appropriate past views of the world. Such an artist, he writes, tries "to root himself in one of such, and, let us say, turns Roman Catholic."³¹ Putting aside the equation of becoming a Catholic and appropriating a past view of the world, we nevertheless ought to note that the attempt to live in something dead and gone will inevitably lead to frustration. One confronts the intractable mass of what Hegel, in his early writings, called positivity: the unintelligible and therefore inassimilable.³² Hegel's aim of integrating the past therefore cannot take any form in which the human spirit relinquishes its freedom, conforms to something unnatural, and pledges allegiance to the irrational.

IV.1.B. The Dialectic of Appropriation

This raises, however, the question of the irrational. When we say that something is irrational, do we mean that it is unintelligible, that it does not and can never lend itself to conceptual formulation? Or do we mean that it is only apparently nonsensical – and that further study of the matter will yield sense out of nonsense? The latter view accords better with Hegel's thought, and gives us a clue toward his understanding of the task of integrating the past with the present. The task, as he sees it, is a dialectical one. In order to elucidate that task, it is necessary to explore, in a brief and concrete manner, what Hegel understands by dialectic. Hegel describes the dialectical method in the introduction to his 1812 Science of Logic. The method begins, he says, when the mind encounters material that seems contradictory.

What is self-contradictory resolves itself not into nullity, into abstract Nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its particular content. . . . Since what results, the negation, is a definite negation, it has a content. It is a new concept, but a higher, richer concept than that which preceded; for it has

³¹ "Es hilft da weiter nichts, sich vergangene Weltanschauungen wieder, so zu sagen, substantiell aneignen, d.i., sich in Eine dieser Anschauungsweisen festhineinmachen zu wollen, als z.B. katholisch zu werden." Hegel, Werke, 13.233; trans., The Philosophy of Fine Art, 2.393. The addition of the adjective "Roman" to "Catholic" suggests that the translator is an Anglican. What is most remarkable about Hegel's sentence is the verb "festhineinmachen," which recalls the verb "hineinleben" cited above in footnote 25. Whether one attempts to live or to secure oneself "hinein," i.e., "in the past," there is something questionable about the effort.

³² See footnote 7 above.

been enriched by the negation or opposite of that preceding concept, and thus contains it, but contains also more than it, and is the unity of it and its opposite.³³

The difficulties of this passage are legion. Perhaps the chief difficulty lies in the fact that Hegel describes the movement of thought itself, rather than any particular thought. Let us try, without doing violence to the text, to understand this passage in terms of a particular thought. What does the passage mean in relation to our prime concern, Christian tradition? Hegel begins by speaking of what is self-contradictory. Tradition is self-contradictory, we can say, in that it is both a unity and a multiplicity. It is a unity in that one can rightly speak of a Christian tradition in general. But it is also a multiplicity in that this single tradition is a diverse thing. Later elements of the tradition, such as the Protestant Reformation, apparently contradict earlier elements of the tradition, such as the rise of early Catholicism. Hegel quotes that a self-contradiction does not dissolve into nothingness. This can be taken to mean, with justification, that the conflict within tradition does not cancel tradition. In contradiction, reason does not encounter an impasse. Contradiction is rather a constitutive moment of reason itself. With this claim, Hegel retreats from the thesis of skepticism which such an apparent non sequitur might provoke.

What is negated, he continues, is only a particular content. The adjective “particular” (“besonderen”) is meant to suggest that only an aspect of the content is cancelled, rather than the entirety. From this we can conclude that, when an aspect of tradition is regarded as self-contradictory, it is not the whole or the idea of tradition which is abolished. Nor is it the ultimate abolition even of that aspect which is being considered. Instead, writes Hegel, the result of the negation “contains in essence that from which it results.”³⁴ The earlier form of tradition, negated by the later, is contained in the later. This relation, the union of opposites, is what Hegel calls dialectical. On the one hand, the later form of tradition appears to be something novel. It defines itself in contrast to, and negates, what came before. On the other hand, the later form of tradition contains the earlier as its opposite. It relies on it in order to define itself, and so can be

³³ “Das Einzige, *um den wissenschaftlichen Fortgang zu gewinnen*, und um dessen ganz *einfache* Einsicht sich wesentlich zu bemühen ist, – ist die Erkenntnis des logischen Satzes, dass das Negative ebenso sehr positiv ist, oder dass das sich Widersprechende sich nicht in Null, in das abstrakte Nichts ablöst, sondern wesentlich nur in die Negation seines *besonderen* Inhalts. . . . Indem das Resultierende, die Negation, *bestimmte* Negation ist, hat sie einen *Inhalt*. Sie ist ein neuer Begriff, aber die höhere, reichere Begriff als der vorhergehende; denn sie ist um dessen Negation oder Entgegengesetztes reicher geworden; enthält ihn also, aber auch mehr als ihn, und ist die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten.” Hegel, *Werke*, vols. 4-5: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, with a Foreword by Leopold von Henning; in the section entitled “Allgemeiner Begriff der Logik,” 4.51. Translation: *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, trans. by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (1929), with an Introductory Preface by Viscount Haldane of Cloan, third impression, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, and New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), 1.65.

³⁴ “[D]ass also im Resultate wesentlich das enthalten ist, woraus es resultiert.” Ibid.

said to be dialectically related to it. Hegel adds that the union of the two (or the negation of the earlier by the later) is higher and richer, because it is the unity of the one and its opposite. In this union the differences between the two are both preserved and transcended.

IV.1.B.1. The Unity of Being and Nothingness

The obvious objection to Hegel's dialectical method is that the method is itself fraught with contradictions. How can one say that opposites may be united, without at the same time dissolving the opposition between them? Hegel's approach apparently violates the elementary law of non-contradiction as we see it, for example, in the fourth book of Aristotle's Metaphysics. One cannot say that the same thing both is and is not. Equally absurd is the affirmation that an earlier form of tradition both has been preserved in and has been transcended by a later form. Hegel, however, extricates himself from this difficulty with a number of compelling observations. First, he notes that Christian metaphysics rejected the proposition that nothing comes out of nothing, for such a proposition denies the possibility of *creatio ex nihilo*.³⁵ Out of nothing God created being. This observation begins the process of breaking down what Hegel calls the abstract opposition of being and nothingness. Instead of regarding them as opposed, Hegel notes that they are empirically united, for example, in light. Although most people regard darkness as the absence of light and its opposite, nevertheless all would admit that darkness is present in light, shading it into color. This alone enables things to be distinguished by the eye.³⁶ From this, Hegel draws the inference that being and nothingness mutually determine one another. Their relation can be conceived as a ceaseless back-and-forth motion.

This brings us to the second observation by Hegel on the relation of being and nothingness. They are the inseparable moments of a unity, he writes, which is (in relation to them) a third. This third he terms becoming.³⁷ What is becoming is neither pure and undetermined being nor pure and undetermined nothingness. It is, rather, the unity of being and nothingness in which both are "aufgehoben," a unity which both transcends and preserves their distinctness.³⁸ Such a unity transcends their distinctness in that what results from the clash of thought cannot be simply expressed as the sum of two distinct forces. The forces are not integers to be added, but contradictions to be reconciled. Something new results which is neither the one nor the other. But this new

³⁵ "Wenn die spätere vornehmlich christliche Metaphysik den Satz, aus Nichts werde Nichts, verwarf, so behauptete sie einen Uebergang von Nichts in Seyn." Ibid., 4.90; trans., 1.96.

³⁶ Ibid., 4.114; trans., 1.114.

³⁷ "Die Einheit, deren Momente, Seyn und Nichts, als untrennbare sind, ist von ihnen selbst zugleich verschieden, so ein Drittes gegen sie, welches in seiner eigenthlimlichen Form das Werden ist." Ibid., 4.102; trans., 1.106.

³⁸ Hegel's comment on the "Aufheben des Werdens" concludes the first chapter of the Logik: *ibid.*, 4.119-121; trans., 1.118-120.

unity cannot be said to simply transcend their opposition either. The opposition remains as a permanent tension within the unity. Perhaps it would be better to speak of a unity-in-diversity, expressing the tension as the movement of becoming.³⁹

IV.1.B.2. The Example of the Christological Debates

Hegel's doctrine of becoming as the unity of being and nothingness may be illustrated by the development of Christian tradition. In tradition we do not see a static succession in which later forms merely supersede the earlier forms. On the contrary, tradition presents us with a development. It is a process of becoming, in which what apparently falls away is taken up in the developing movement as that which defines the movement. The Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries offer a good example.⁴⁰

Doubtless, one cannot simply equate the humanity and divinity of Christ with contradictions taken up by the Hegelian dialectic. Here we have a case, not of clear and opposite antitheses, but of the most profound of Christological problems. The solution to these problems – if we can call the conciliar formulas a solution – has provoked whole libraries of further thought.⁴¹ The councils did anything but lay the matter to rest. We

³⁹ Such a dialectical concept lends itself to seemingly paradoxical formulations, such as Gadamer's statement that life is the "Identität der Identität und der Differenz." Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hegels Dialektik des Selbstbewusstseins," in Materialien zu Hegels "Phänomenologie des Geistes", ed. Hans Friedrich Fulda and Dieter Henrich (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 217-242; p. 222 cited here. Translation: "Hegel's Dialectic of Self-consciousness," in Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic, p. 58. This essay is not contained in the original edition of Hegels Dialektik.

⁴⁰ Excerpts from the relevant texts of the ecumenical councils of Nicea (325), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451) can be found in Enchiridion Symbolorum: definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, compiled by Henry Denzinger, edited by Clemens Bannwart and Johannes Bapt. Umberg, newly edited by Karl Rahner, 30th ed. (Freiburg in Breisgau and Barcelona: Herder, 1955), sections 54-57, 111a-142, and 148-158. Translation: The Sources of Catholic Dogma, trans. Roy J. Deferrari from the 30th edition of Henry Denzinger's Enchiridion Symbolorum (St. Louis, Mo., and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), pp. 26-27, 49-58, and 60-63. The complete texts are available in Sacrorum Conciliorum, nova et amplissima collectio, compiled by Giovanni Domenico Mansi (Lucca, 1748-1752), reprint ed., 53 vols. in 59 (Paris: Bibliopola (ed. Hubert Welter), 1901-1927), vols. 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7.

⁴¹ A bibliography of earlier material on the question is offered by Adolf Schönmetzer, "Schriftums-Verzeichnis zur Geschichte des Konzils von Chalkedon," in Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, 3 vols., 2nd photomechanical reproduction with additions to the 1951 and 1959 editions (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1962), 111.825-865, 877-879. Recent books and articles of special interest are offered in the bibliography of Aloys Grillmeier's Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 1: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451), trans. John Bowden, 2nd revised ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), pp. 569-579. This work, first published in 1965, is a revision of the 1951 article "Die theologische und sprachliche Vorbereitung der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon," in Das Konzil von Chalkedon, 1.5-202.

should not expect to find the Christological problem resolving itself into neat dialectical schemes of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

Yet it is fair to say that, from the time of the debates which culminated in the Council of Nicea to the decisive formula of Chalcedon, we do find contradictory tendencies in theology which had to be, after a fashion, reconciled. The theology of Nicea insisted that Jesus Christ is true God and also that he was the only-begotten of the Father. He is begotten, and thus a son. But he is also one in being with the Father – the very thing which the heretical Arius believed was incompatible with the oneness of God. Hence we can see in the formula of Nicea the traces of a theological dispute which was resolved in a synthesis of seemingly antagonistic beliefs.⁴² To be sure, Arius was condemned, and his doctrine was negated. But the oneness of God, in the light of which Arius had wrongly subordinated the Son to the Father, was simultaneously maintained and broadened. The Nicean doctrine came to be, we can affirm, by emerging from the clash of true and false statements about the Christ. The new formula defined God as a unity which encompasses plurality, enabling the faith of the Church to become more explicit.

The Hegelian dialectic allows us to conceptualize how the traces of heretical thought are taken up and transformed in the formulas of orthodoxy. But a better example of the process of dialectic in the development of doctrine arises when no one is condemned, and when seeming contradictions are reconciled. Thus we can observe, in the formulas of Ephesus and Chalcedon, the integration of two distinct and conflicting theological currents, those of Antioch and Alexandria. The theology of Alexandria, whose classical exponent was Athanasius (fl. 328), stood in opposition to Christological dualism. Such opposition is best expressed in the statement that the divine Word took flesh or a body, rather than that it entered a holy man.⁴³ Antiochene theology, on the other hand, insisted on the historical, human life of the Son. Its most famous proponents, the bishops and exegetes Diodore of Tarsus (died c. 394) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428), presupposed that the human nature of Jesus was complete, independent, and developing.⁴⁴ Both the theologies of Alexandria and of Antioch had their heretical representatives. The verdict on the Alexandrian, Apollinarius of Laodicea, was that he was a docetist. And the Antiochene Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, treated the metaphysical question of the person of Jesus Christ with such vagueness that many believed that the Patriarch spoke of an ordinary man linked to the divine Word by harmony of will.⁴⁵ In these heretical representatives, the two theologies are mutually

The revised German text has never been published, nor the projected two volumes with which Grillmeier promised to complete his survey.

⁴² John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, and London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), pp. 231-237.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 284 ff.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 301 ff.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 289-295; 310-317.

exclusive. But in the legitimate representatives of the theologies of Alexandria and of Antioch, one finds tendencies which, despite profound differences, are thoroughly compatible.

The problem they posed for the development of doctrine can be satisfactorily expressed using the terms of the Hegelian dialectic. Starting from the same deposit of faith, the two schools had developed Christological ideas that entailed seeming contradictions. Either the divine Word merely took on flesh, or the man, Jesus, exhibited characteristics incompatible with the perfection of God. In the Chalcedonian formula, with its emphasis on the two natures of Christ united in one person, we find a synthesis and reconciliation of apparent opposites. The legitimate views of both schools are united with each other. This has definite consequences for our investigation. The being of genuine tradition, we can say in Hegel's terms, defines itself over against the nothingness of false tradition. Yet that nothingness is not simply annulled. Rather, it is the necessary movement without which a genuine tradition could not have been formulated. Indeed, one could go so far as to assert, following Hegel's dialectic, that without the existence of falsehood in tradition, the truth would not have arisen as it did. What now is might never have been. The development of tradition represents, by consequence, the back-and-forth movement of being and nothingness. The nothingness of falsehood is taken up into, and helps define, the being of the true. That being, expressed in concepts, thus becomes the basis for new interpretations, and even false interpretations. In that sense, it can never be wholly separated from the nothingness of falsehood. Tradition shares in the contradiction of being and nothingness, as well as in the reciprocal assimilation of the one by the other. Hegel's third term, "das Werden" or "becoming," aptly can be applied to tradition.

No doubt we have strayed, in making this application, from Hegel's Science of Logic. The philosopher might have regarded our theological turn as an example in particular which distracts attention from a concept which is far more general. And he would certainly note, in the application of the dialectic to Christian tradition, the lack of any comment on the relation between authority and freedom in the definition of tradition. Nevertheless, the reconciliation of controversies in the Christological formulations of the fourth and fifth centuries does reflect a movement which Hegel's dialectic well describes. The terms of the Hegelian logic – being, nothingness, and becoming – take on new meaning within the framework of a particular dispute in which the elements of theology and history are equally mixed. Hegel might even have said that his thought demands application in order to rise to true universality. This, however, raises new questions. How, in point of fact, was the Hegelian dialectic applied by Catholic theologians? And furthermore, what are the limits of the applicability of the dialectic to the theology of tradition? In order to answer these questions, let us turn, by way of an excursus, to the earliest appropriation of Hegel by Catholic theologians, the appropriation of the Tübingen School.

IV.1.C. Excursus: The Tübingen Theologians' Use of the Dialectic

The application of Hegel's dialectic to tradition had begun, even before the philosopher's death in 1831, by the theologians of the Catholic Tübingen School. Tübingen, the Schwabian town on the Neckar River where Hegel himself had studied, is

remarkable in that it has two theological faculties, Catholic and Protestant. Although the Reformation had reached the state of Württemberg in 1534, at which time the Tübingen theological faculty was stamped with Lutheran orthodoxy, a Catholic theological faculty was created in 1817, eleven years after Württemberg had become a kingdom. From that time a distinction became necessary. Today, we speak of the Tübingen School proper (which refers mainly to the nineteenth-century Protestant theologians whose historical-critical theology is linked with the name of Ferdinand Christian Baur) and the Catholic Tübingen School. The latter could not help but enter into dialogue with the former. Hegel's ideas were current among the Protestant faculty. The Catholic faculty quickly took them up.⁴⁶

IV.1.C.1. Möhler and the Dialectic of Early Development

The most outstanding member of the Catholic faculty was Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838), who was concerned, among other topics, with the question of the development of doctrine. In his Athanasius the Great (1827), for example, a study of the great Alexandrian theologian, he presented a dialectical concept of development which is oriented toward Hegel.⁴⁷ Möhler takes issue, at one point in the volume, with Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher's treatment of the difference between the Athanasian and Sabellian doctrines of the trinity had suggested that Jesus Christ was originally proclaimed only as redeemer. The proclamation of this redeemer as God, he said, cannot be defined as part of the original Christian revelation.⁴⁸ In other words, the development of what can be termed Catholic Christology does not necessarily have an apostolic origin. It is rather, in Schleiermacher's view, a product of the fateful acceptance by later thinkers of early poetic and rhetorical descriptions of Christ. These descriptions exaggerated the relation of Jesus to God. It is to this assertion that Möhler responds. He wants to affirm, on the one hand, the apostolic origins of Catholic Christology. On the other hand, he wants to show that development in thought is necessary. He reconciles the two tendencies with what has become the classic approach: first, the distinction between faith and the understanding of faith; and second, the notion of the development of an explicit conceptual understanding from the implications of the faith itself.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., S.v. "Tübingen, University of," by M. Elze.

⁴⁷ Joseph Rupert Geiselman, Die katholische Tübingen Schule. Ihre theologische Eigenart (Freiburg-Basel-Vienna: Herder, 1964), 79-80.

⁴⁸ Schleiermacher, Werke, series I, vol. 2, pp. 485-574: "Ueber den Gegensatz zwischen der sabellianischen und der athanasianischen Vorstellung von er Trinität."

⁴⁹ "[D]er Glaube wird allerdings stets durch Begriffe erzeugt, aber diese müssen nicht nach allen Beziehungen anfänglich schon entwickelt sein." Johann Adam Möhler, Athanasius der Grosse und die Kirche seiner Zeit, besonders im Kampf mit dem Arianismus, second (corrected) ed., 6 vols. in 1 (Mainz: Druck und Verlag von Florian Kupferberg, 1844), p. 276.

Anyone with an understanding of the matter, remarks Möhler, knows that the fact of the development of Christological concepts is no evidence against their apostolic origin. Despite the fact of development, the faith has remained constant. It is the understanding of the faith which develops in the efforts, often unsuccessful, to express it. Unclarity in expression, according to Möhler, presupposes unclarity and vacillation in the concepts of faith. Without the contradictions of heresy, such as the Arianism against which Athanasius struggled, the concepts of faith would never achieve the clarity which the faith itself has always possessed.⁵⁰ Here we see the introduction of the Hegelian element. The falseness of heresy provokes a deeper consideration of the faith. Without the falseness, the impetus to formulate adequate concepts of faith might have been hindered. The falseness is thus an essential component of the movement toward the understanding of truth.

Möhler, we can see, was the first Catholic to apply Hegel's description of the dialectical method and content of logic to a description of the development of tradition. Tradition developed from the contradictions which arose in the search for concepts to explain the faith. When the theologians of the Patristic age encountered contradictions in the concepts of faith, they returned to the faith itself for more adequate concepts. Möhler's distinction between an unchanging content of faith and a changeable form sets him apart, it must be said, from Hegel. The philosopher spoke not of an unchanging content, but rather of a unity which encompasses, and demands to be expressed in, diversity. It would be wrong to call Möhler a Hegelian, as if he had made a thoroughgoing appropriation of Hegel's thought.⁵¹ But he did apply the concepts of the Hegelian dialectic to the development of doctrine. His statement of the necessity of conflict in the progression of the thought of the Patristic age laid the basis for a dialectical analysis of the Christological debates, which we have already sketched in outline.

It is important to see, however, that Möhler applied the Hegelian dialectic only to the question of how past doctrines arose. He saw that development occurred by means of the formulation of doctrinal concepts to define the faith, concepts which were often in conflict with one another. The resolution of the conflicts marked an advance in development. But Möhler did not speak, as far as I know, of the dialectical appropriation of tradition by the modern Christian. He did not apply the Hegelian dialectic to an analysis of how doctrine, once developed in the past, is taken up in the present. That task fell to Möhler's student, Johannes Evangelist von Kuhn (1806-1887).

IV.1.C.2. Kuhn and the Dialectic of Present Appropriation

⁵⁰ "Allein die Unklarheit im Ausdruck, das Schwankende und hie und da sich Widersprechende, setzt eine Unklarheit und ein Schwanken im Begriffe selbst voraus. Dieser musste erst noch genauer entwickelt werden." Ibid., p. 51.

⁵¹ Geiselman, Die katholische Tübinger Schule, p. 89.

With Kuhn, according to J. R. Geiselman, the world of Hegel's spirit moved into the Catholic Tübingen school.⁵² Kuhn seized upon Hegel's dialectic of consciousness, best expressed in the Phenomenology of Spirit. There, in the pages following Hegel's parable of the maiden and the fruit, we find a discussion of the stages of development leading to the Christian revelation, and simultaneously, a description of that consciousness which appropriates the revelation of God as absolute spirit. The parable of the maiden, as we saw above, has an element of pathos in it. It suggests the poverty of the modern, who believes that the spirit of Greek religion is only available in a limited way to the scholar-curator of Greek art. But then this element of pathos is overcome in Hegelian fashion by the assertion that all the conditions for the emergence of such spirit are still present.⁵³ The conditions are fulfilled, writes Hegel, when spirit is born as self-consciousness. Parturition is complete when absolute spirit takes on the shape of self-consciousness and exists as self-conscious act which Hegel identifies with the incarnation.⁵⁴ Having made this possibly orthodox affirmation, Hegel proceeds to show how humanity also rises to the realization of spirit as self-consciousness. Humanity itself, Hegel writes, can achieve the unity of being and thought in which God is present.⁵⁵ Such unity is achieved in the speculative knowledge by which the difference between God and world is cancelled. This is the point, one could say, at which Hegel and Christian orthodoxy part ways. Yet it is at precisely this moment that Hegel's description of the appropriation of the revealed religion becomes important for Kuhn and the Catholic Tübingen School.

IV.1.C.2.a. Three Moments of the Life of Spirit

Three moments, Hegel writes, constitute the life of the human spirit. These moments correspond to the progression of the believer toward unity with absolute spirit. The first moment is that of immediate consciousness. Hegel describes it as the consciousness of the individuals who saw and heard Jesus Christ (referred to as the incarnation of absolute spirit), and of the community whose consciousness of itself is consciousness of spirit. The first moment, Hegel writes, is defective. In it, the spirit has

⁵² Ibid., p. 342. See also the sections entitled "Die an Hegel ausgerichtete Dialektik Kuhns," pp. 376-382, and "Die antihegelsche Dialektik Kuhns," pp. 382- 386.

⁵³ Hegel, Werke, 2.573; translation, p. 754. Baillie translates the word "Hervorgangs" as "production" in the phrase "All the conditions for its [spirit's] production are present." This answers the question of whether spirit is a human production in an affirmative way – a question which Hegel himself is not so quick to answer.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.576-577; trans., pp. 757-758.

⁵⁵ "[D]enn diese Einheit des Seyns und Denkens ist das Selbstbewusstseyn und ist selbst da oder die gedachte Einheit hat zugleich diese Gestalt dessen, was sie ist. Gott ist also hier offenbar, wie er ist; er ist so da, wie er an sich ist; er ist da als Geist. Gott ist allein im reinen spekulativen Wissen erreichbar und ist nur in ihm und ist nur es selbst, denn er ist der Geist und dieses spekulative Wissen ist das Wissen der offenbaren Religion." Ibid., 2.579; trans., p. 761.

scarcely begun to reflect on its perceptions.⁵⁶ That which is, the incarnation, has not yet been taken up in thought. The second moment of the life of the spirit consists in the representation by consciousness to itself of what it once knew immediately and in sensory perception. Consciousness is here divided. Between what is – which we might call tradition – and our thought of what is, a barrier has been erected. Consciousness presents to itself the image of the incarnation of spirit, but regards that image (and furthermore, the spirit itself) as something external. The bond between spirit and the consciousness in which it dwells is broken.⁵⁷ The third moment of the life of the spirit is the return of the spirit to itself. In this moment, spirit is neither the immediate self-consciousness of the community nor the objectivity of spirit which the consciousness represents to itself. It is instead the spirit reconciled to itself. In this reconciliation, the gulf between the spirit's own being (the embodiment of it, we would say, in tradition) and our thought of it in consciousness is overcome.⁵⁸ This is the absolute union for Hegel of being and thinking. That which truly is resides not as a datum or a representation outside of the thinker. Instead, it is so integrated in thought that one cannot speak of the difference between being and thinking without at the same time canceling the difference. Such cancellation is achieved by encompassing the difference in thought.

Hegel's analysis of the three moments in the life of the spirit was significant for the Catholic Tübingen School. The dialectic of consciousness, according to the first (1846) edition of Kuhn's *Catholic Dogmatics*, corresponds to the dialectic of Christian faith. In this dialectical sense, Christian faith can be said to progress in consciousness. Taking over the three-stage scheme of Hegel,⁵⁹ Kuhn describes the dialectic of consciousness as one which moves from the immediacy of sense-perception, to the mediation of representational and reflective understanding, to finally the higher unity of conceptual knowledge.⁶⁰ Here we find a genuine progression in consciousness, says

⁵⁶ "Denn als solches, das ihn [den das absolut Wesen offenbarenden Mensch] sinnlich sieht und hört, ist es selbst nur unmittelbares Bewusstseyn, das die Ungleichheit der Gegenständlichkeit nicht aufgehoben, nicht ins reine Denken zurückgenommen hat, sondern dies en gegenständlichen Einzelnen, nicht aber sich selbst als Geist weiss." Ibid., 2.581; trans., p. 763.

⁵⁷ "Es ist also in dieser Verbindung des Seyns und Denkens der Mangel vorhanden, dass das geistige Wesen noch mit einer unversöhnten Entzweigung in ein Diesseits und Jenseits behaftet ist." Ibid., 2.582; trans., pp. 763-764.

⁵⁸ "Aber seine Wahrheit [die Wahrheit des Geistes] ist nicht nur die Substanz der Gemeinde, oder das Ansich derselben zu seyn, noch auch nur aus dieser Innerlichkeit in die Gegenständlichkeit des Vorstellens heraufzutreten, sondern wirkliches Selbst zu werden, sich in sich zu reflektiren und Subjekt zu seyn." Ibid., 2.582; trans., p. 764.

⁵⁹ Kuhn refers explicitly to Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, sections 20 and 573.

⁶⁰ Dr. J. Kuhn, *Katholische Dogmatik* (although subtitled *Einleitung in die katholische Dogmatik*, no more than these two volumes was published), 2 vols. (Tübingen: Verlag der H. Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, 1846), vol. 1, section 5, pp. 53-54.

Kuhn. The final stage of conceptual knowledge encompasses, in a conscious manner, the distinctions made by the representational consciousness between subject and object, between the believer and what is believed. In the first stage of the dialectic, such a distinction is not even recognized. In the second stage, that which is represented to consciousness – Kuhn does not use the example, but we can think here of Christian tradition – is distinct from consciousness itself. Consciousness does not regard the tradition as its own. Yet in the final stage, the oppositions between subject and object are reconciled in conceptual thought. The second stage of oppositions does not negate the unity which lies hidden within it, writes Kuhn, “but it prepares for the concrete unity in the concept.”⁶¹ Without the oppositions of the second stage – without the sense that Christian tradition is alien to the Christian present – there would be no impetus toward a higher synthesis. It is as if a mature faith depends upon progressively working through each stage.

Kuhn provides another example of how the Hegelian dialectic enables us to conceptualize the relation between humanity and tradition. Again, he does not refer to tradition explicitly. He aims simply to compare the second stage of consciousness to that moment of Christian thought which represents God to itself as wholly distinct from the world. But in this moment of thought, one realizes how inadequate are the forms of consciousness (the forms, we might add, which tradition has bequeathed) in their efforts to comprehend God.⁶² They represent God by means of attributes, such as omnipotence and omniscience, which can scarcely do God justice. Hence one is impelled to a third stage. Yet even this third stage of speculative thought (and Kuhn alludes here to Hegel) cannot lead to a fully pure and unqualifiedly adequate concept of God. When such thought aspires to go beyond the superlative attributes of the tradition to an unqualifiedly adequate knowledge of God, says Kuhn, it becomes either negative and empty (nihilistic) or positive and untrue (pantheistic).⁶³

Nevertheless there does exist, in Kuhn’s opinion, a unity between God and our concept of God. One begins with the attributes of God, drawn from experience, such as omnipotence and omniscience, and progresses from their distinctiveness to their unity.

⁶¹ “[D]as aber ist das Wahre und Bleibende an ihm [an dem Mangel des Subjektiven und Objektiven], dass in dem Mangel des Gegensatzes die höhere Einheit, wodurch es ein wahres ist, verborgen ist, und dieses Wahre geht in die folgende Stufe über, indem diese mit ihrem Gegensatze jene Einheit nicht negiert, sondern sie für die concrete Einheit im Begriff präparirt.” Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. 50.

⁶³ “Indessen führt das spekulative Denken selbst, wie weit es auch getrieben werden mag, nie zu einem völlig reinen und schlechthin adäquaten Begriff von Gott, sondern wenn es sich über den Superlativ der reinsten und allgemeinsten, darum angemessensten Erkenntnis Gottes hinaus zu einer schlechthin angemessenen, absoluten Erkenntnis derselben steigert, so ist sie entweder rein negativ und inhaltsleer (nihilistisch), oder zwar positiv und unwahr (pantheistisch).” Ibid., p. 51.

The basis for this progression is the insight that, although the form of our concept of God is inadequate, its content is not untrue.⁶⁴ No doubt the experiential or empirical form of religious consciousness may be untrue, insofar as it makes any one attribute of God primary. But that religious form of consciousness is not necessarily inferior to the philosophic and scientific form. Philosophic consciousness (the reference here is to Hegel's speculative thought) may even lose itself in endless negations, and so in effect cut itself off from its empirical bases. What is needed, Kuhn says in conclusion, is a dialectical progression of consciousness which unites the religious (empirical) and the philosophic (speculative). It begins with the empirical, i.e., experiential, attributes of God; acknowledges their diversity; and reconciles them by means of speculative, conceptual thought.⁶⁵

What Kuhn does not say is that the dialectical progression of consciousness is applicable to the appropriation of tradition by the modern Christian. Yet that is implicit in his treatment of the attributes of God. Tradition, just like the attributes, can seem inadequate to our religious understanding. But the multiplicity and unevenness of tradition is not necessarily untrue. Doubtless, it does appear fraught with self-contradictions. But in the speculative concept, the mind draws the contradictions of tradition together, grasping them as a unity. It must be admitted that Kuhn distinguishes himself here from Hegel. For Hegel, the oppositions of the second stage of the dialectic are resolved by means of thought into singularity or identity. Kuhn prefers to speak, not of identity, but of the unity of all things, a unity which belongs to our concept of world.⁶⁶ Yet he employs the Hegelian terminology, meaning by the speculative concept that movement of thought by which antinomies are reconciled. Kuhn did not cancel the opposition between God and world. But he insisted that, despite the separation of God from the world, nevertheless the divine can be truly known. It is known not just through past revelation, but through the appropriation of it in present thought. Thus we can say that the Hegelian dialectic was even more important for Kuhn than for Möhler. Möhler employed the dialectic to express how the understanding of faith was refined in the Patristic age out of the clash of antagonistic concepts. Kuhn seized on the dialectic, not just to describe how the concepts of faith once arose, but also how they now progress in present consciousness.

IV.1.C.2.b. Critique in the Name of Perception and Reflection

It must be conceded that, with the second (1859) edition of Kuhn's Catholic Dogmatics, the theologian became more critical of Hegel. From the second edition, for example, Kuhn excised the first edition's explicit application of Hegel's dialectic of consciousness to Christian faith. The theologian could then write that the dialectical progression from immediate perception, through representation, to the concept, is

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

constitutive of every theory of knowledge – not just Hegel’s.⁶⁷ The Hegelian philosophy, Kuhn charges, is too thoroughly imbued with a corrupting apriorism. By this he means that the philosophy is based upon the presupposition that knowledge rests upon principles that are self-evident to reason. Against this, Kuhn argues that our knowledge is created, and so cannot be absolute.⁶⁸ It does not rest upon what is self-evident. If it did, then thought itself would be the source of knowledge, and the preliminary stages of thought, which lead to the speculative concept described by Hegel, would have a merely preparatory function. In contrast to this, Kuhn insists that the first two stages of the dialectic have to be restored to the place of honor from which Hegel excluded them. Immediate perception cannot simply be the immature first stage of the life of the spirit. It is rather the basis of truth. Through it alone, knowledge first comes to us.

Furthermore, Kuhn argues that the second stage of the dialectic ought to be accorded its own dignity. It was deprived of its proper place, he says, when Hegel began to regard the contradictions which arise in this stage as something inadequate. They came to represent an opposition which needs to be wholly dissolved in the identity of the speculative concept of the absolute. For Kuhn, however, the concept of the absolute, as a purely philosophic concept, can never dissolve the differences between God and the world. The second stage of the dialectic is thus not a merely preparatory stage on the road to absolute knowledge. Rather, it is a necessary and genuine moment of truth.⁶⁹

The oppositions of the second stage can be overcome, Kuhn suggested, but not by the postulate of their speculative identity. Kuhn makes the more modest affirmation that the oppositions are never absolute. The gulf between God and world is not impassible. In the third stage of the dialectic, oppositions enjoy not identity, but a relative unity.⁷⁰ Hence we can say that Kuhn assesses the speculative concept differently than does Hegel. In the theologian’s view, Hegel regards the concept as the essential form of the consciousness of truth, a truth whose source lies in thought itself. For Kuhn, however, the speculative concept is the medium of scientific knowledge. The source of that

⁶⁷ “Die thatsächlichen Momente des Bewusstseins zwar in seinem (dialektischen) Fortschritt von der Anschauung oder unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung durch die Vorstellung hindurch zu dem Begriff muss jede Erkenntnistheorie anerkennen.” Dr. J. Kuhn, Einleitung in die katholische Dogmatik, 2nd ed. (unchanged reprint of the 1859 edition published in Tübingen), 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Minerva G.M.B.H., 1968), 1.240.

⁶⁸ “Unser Erkennen des Schöpfers und der geschaffenen Dinge ist selber ein geschaffenes und als solches nie absolut.” Id., “Prinzip und Methode der spekulativen Theologie,” Theologische Quartalschrift (1841): 1-80, p. 77 cited here; quoted from Geiselman, Die katholische Tübinger Schule, p. 379.

⁶⁹ Kuhn, “Prinzip und Methode,” pp. 67-70; discussed by Geiselman, Die katholische Tübinger Schule, p. 380.

⁷⁰ Kuhn, “Prinzip und Methode,” pp. 11-12; discussed by Geiselman, Die katholische Tübinger Schule, p. 381.

knowledge is a far higher thing than mere thought, even that of the speculative concept.⁷¹ Properly understood, according to Kuhn, the concept secures the truth which is first grasped in an imperfect way through immediate perception, then reflected upon by means of the representations of consciousness. Kuhn wants to say that not just the speculative concept, but every moment in the dialectic of consciousness, is essential to truth. To the doctrine he draws from Hegel, that only the speculative concept is the genuine consciousness of truth, he stands in resolute opposition.

Kuhn's critique of Hegel must not, however, obscure the debt of the theologian to the philosopher. Kuhn may be perfectly correct in saying that the dialectical movement of consciousness is constitutive of every theory of knowledge. But it was Hegel who first grasped the depth of that dialectical movement of thought which the Platonic dialogues represent.⁷² Kuhn applied the Hegelian dialectic to the appropriation of the faith in consciousness. He saw that when the enormity of Christian tradition first comes to consciousness, distinctions necessarily are made between consciousness and what it perceives, between the individual and the tradition, between the world and God. With Hegel, he also saw that these distinctions cannot be absolute. No doubt he departs from Hegel in saying that only a relative unity between the oppositions of thought is possible. The second edition of Kuhn's Dogmatics, marked by the polemic against the speculative concept as the sole and essential form of the consciousness of truth, is at pains to deny that pure philosophic thought can overcome the opposition between being and thinking. But Kuhn's second edition is not a retraction of the first edition. Kuhn himself admits as much, describing the later work as only another way to the same goal.⁷³ We can safely say that the first edition's appreciative application of Hegel's dialectic to the consciousness of Christian faith was refined, not repudiated. It completed, in this respect, the work of Möhler. Just as Möhler had seen, thanks to Hegel, the dialectical development of Christian concepts in the past, so Kuhn, under the same inspiration, grasped that dialectical movement which is still at work in the Christian consciousness of the present.

IV.1.C.3. The Applicability and Limits of the Dialectic

One can say that the insights of the Tübingen theologians lead us to a concrete understanding of Hegel's contribution to the rehabilitation of tradition. Hegel, in his discussion of the art and philosophy of the past, presented them as the spirit's permanently valid manifestations. To be sure, they developed out of the contradictions of their age. This was the insight which Möhler applied to Christian tradition. He could not ignore the fact that the development of tradition and doctrine is a history of bitter conflict. The doctrines bear within themselves an eloquent testimony to the oppositions

⁷¹ "Hiedurch beweisen wir die Wahrheit unserer Annahme, dass die Quelle der Wahrheit über dem Denken (Verstand) liege und des reflectirende und speculirende Denken nur das Mittel ihrer wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis sei." Kuhn, Katholische Dogmatik (1859), 1. 242.

⁷² See above, footnote 1.

⁷³ Kuhn, Dogmatik (1859), l.v.

out of which they grew. One need only think of the language of Nicea, uniting “only begotten” with “true God from true God,” or the language of Chalcedon, affirming “one person” in “two natures.” But the fact of development does not detract from the validity of what develops. No doubt, one can reject the idea of development as a departure from an original purity. Such purity then acquires a privileged position against which subsequent corruptions can be measured. This procedure, however, neglects Hegel’s emphasis on the rationality of history. It contradicts the sentiment expressed in the Hegelian aphorism, “What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational.”⁷⁴ The actuality of which Hegel speaks is not simply that which exists in the present, but also what is effective in history. To that extent, it can be applied to tradition. The actual, manifest in tradition, is rational. Hegel’s thinking marks an important stage in the rehabilitation of tradition from the decline it suffered during the Enlightenment. Hegel taught reverence for tradition, conceived as world history. All that we call history, even that which developed out of clearly contradictory movements, is the manifestation of reason or spirit.

But the most important feature of his philosophy for the understanding of tradition by the Catholic Tübingen School is his dialectic of consciousness. This is central because in the dialectic, the very rationality of tradition becomes apparent. The problem of tradition lies in its alien aspect. As soon as one begins to reflect on tradition, questions arise. What is this seemingly alien aspect of the past? What is its claim upon the present? Why should I accept it? These are the questions of the Enlightenment, which often refused to take them seriously. The claim of the past is irrational, many Enlightenment thinkers alleged, and so should be refused in the present. But Hegel’s aphorism about the rationality of the actual suggests another answer. It suggests that, while tradition may seem irrational, its persistence and effectivity demand explanation.

Moreover, the Hegelian dialectic shows how that presence and effectivity can be understood. They are understood in the movement of thought by which one both recognizes the alien features of tradition and acknowledges that those alien features have shaped one’s very being. Thus they cannot be, in the last analysis, wholly alien. The example provided by Kuhn, the example of the reconciled separation of God and world, is instructive. It has a twofold implication. First, there must be a basis for reconciliation. That basis is affirmed by Christianity as the love of the Father who sends the Son into the world. Second, the unity must be fulfilled by the appropriation of it in consciousness. This is the act, explicit or inexplicit, of faith. Kuhn’s example teaches that we can be, and indeed are, reconciled to what is alien.

Without a doubt, God and world remain divided. The difference between divinity and humanity cannot be overcome by a mere thought. This is, we can say, a limit to the applicability of Hegel’s dialectic to the theology of tradition. The human mind can

⁷⁴ “Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig.” Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse (1821), with a Foreword by Eduard Gans, third edition, in Werke, 7.33. Translation: Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, translated with notes by T. M. Knox (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 10.

understand the revelation of God, insofar as it participates in the goodness or wisdom of God; but participation differs from identity. The argument of Kuhn, namely, that thinking is not the source but the medium of truth, cannot be gainsaid. It suggests the limitations of the speculative concept. That concept, Hegel claimed, enables humanity to think the thought of God just as God thinks it. Kuhn would prefer to say, with greater justice, that humanity thinks the thought of God insofar as God gives that thought to reflective consciousness. In tradition, the revelation of God is given to human perception. Humanity's attempts to understand that revelation are expressed in contradictory ways which are then clarified in speculative concepts. But the speculative concept never takes the place of the revelation. The difference between humanity and divinity remains.

The difference, however, is not absolute. Hegel argued that, in the incarnation, the human spirit – divided from itself in the worship of an alien God – returns to itself.⁷⁵ This is akin to the insight of St. Paul, that in Jesus Christ, God is reconciling all things to himself (Colossians 1.20). The humanity which seems absolutely estranged from God, and from the tradition of divine revelation, need not be estranged, and indeed has begun to be reconciled. It must be said that this reconciliation does not result in the identity of the human and the divine. From this, the Catholic must demur, as our excursus has shown. But there is a relative unity of the two. Such unity is achieved not by the human effort of thought alone, but by the act of God. This act is not alien to humanity because it was accomplished by one who was not only divine but also fully human. In respect to this act, humanity is both reconciled and unreconciled to God. It is the essence of speculative thought to hold the poles of this contradiction together. Such speculative thought, described in the Hegelian dialectic of consciousness, renders tradition a service. It shows that what seems alien need never be absolutely so. The act of God differs from the actions of created humanity, but what is given by God is fully intelligible. This brings us from our excursus back into the main line of our argument. We have seen how one can be reconciled to the alien aspect of tradition. Now we must ask why.

IV.2. The Unity of Being and Thought

The contribution to tradition of the philosophy of Hegel can be brought into relief by means of one fundamental idea: the rationality of the actual. Within this one idea there are two complementary movements. The first has to do with the actual. The actual encompasses history, and in history the philosopher finds the thought of reason. This is the claim of Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history, which suggest that one can find the thought of reason actual in tradition as well. The second and complementary motion in Hegel's idea of the rationality of the actual has to do with the rational. Not only is there reason in history, but the rational mind can comprehend it.⁷⁶ Hegel

⁷⁵ See the section above entitled "Three Moments in the Life of the Spirit."

⁷⁶ "[D]ass diesem Denken das Seyn entspreche." Hegel, Wissenschaft der Logik, in Werke, 4.47; translation: Hegel's Science of Logic, 1.61. Hegel attributes the view that mind or rationality is the principle of all that is to the pre-Socratic philosopher, Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, whom we know primarily through the passages of his work quoted in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's Physics, a commentary written in the sixth century of our era. It was Anaxagoras who wrote that "Whatever [things] they were

expresses it in a formula: “Being corresponds to thought.” This is Hegel’s answer to the question of why the past is intelligible. Thought can grasp what is, and what has been, because thought and being are commensurable. The human subject does not, by means of thought, achieve a standpoint, autonomous and individualistic, which enables a correct intuition of being. That is the way of Descartes. No, humanity can have true knowledge because what is, and our thought of what is, genuinely correspond to one another. To be sure, being can surprise thought. Our expectation of what a thing is can be frustrated by the thing in its actuality. But it is the miracle of reflective thought that, once surprised by being, it can appropriate what is new, integrating it with the old upon which the frustrated expectations were based.

This is the point on which Gadamer fastens in his estimation of the Hegelian dialectic. He contrasts Hegel with the sophists, one of whose arguments is proposed in Plato’s *Meno* (80d ff.). There Socrates suggests that he and Meno carry out a joint inquiry into the nature of virtue. But Socrates says that he is not sure what it is. Meno then raises the question of how he and Socrates can inquire about something, if they do not know what they are looking for. Socrates calls this a “trick argument” (επιστηκον λόγον). Although it starts from a sound premise, namely, the finitude of human knowledge, nevertheless it leads to the cultivation of an eristic or disputatious temperament, and ultimately to doubt of the value of reflection in general. The argument is answered by Socrates with the myth of the pre-existence of the soul. He employs the myth, rather than a formal argument, because formal argumentation may mislead the enquirer. The myth suggests that, however one may be confused by the intricacies of argument, one can still be confident that the soul will see through falsehood, recalling the true way. Hegel did not express himself by means of this myth. But the truth of the myth is present in Hegel’s emphasis on the rationality of the actual. Gadamer summarizes the Hegelian view in these words:

It is ultimately reason that is its own foundation. Hegel, by working through the dialectic of reflection in this way as the total self-communication of reason, is fundamentally above the argumentative formalism that we call ‘sophistic’, to use Plato’s term.⁷⁷

going to be, and whatever things were then in existence that are not now, and all things that now exist and whatever shall exist – all were arranged by Mind [πάντα διεκόσμησε νοῦς].” *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Greek and German by Hermann Diels, 5th ed. edited by Walther Kranz, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1934), II.59.B.12. Translation: *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, by Kathleen Freeman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 85.

⁷⁷ “Am Ende ist es die Vernunft, die sich selber begründet. Indem Hegel die Dialektik der Reflexion dergestalt als die totale Selbstvermittlung der Vernunft durcharbeitet, ist auch er dem argumentativen Formalismus, den wir mit Plato sophistisch nannten, grundsätzlich überlegen.” Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 328; trans., pp. 309-310.

If reason is its own foundation – and this is a point which we will have to take up in the next section – it is because reason does not dwell apart from the actuality of what is. Thought and being correspond to one another, and the proof of this (if one can speak of “proofs”) is that in all of being, the being of thought as well as of matter, reason communicates itself. Between what is, and our thought of what is, no hard and fast line can be drawn.

The significance of this for the understanding of tradition may be obscured by the observation, apparently so full of common sense, that there are unreasonable traditions. The existence of some traditions cannot be reconciled, it seems, with what is rational. But if we are to take seriously the dialectic of Hegel, we must raise the following question: what can the human spirit not comprehend? Here the burden falls upon the word “comprehend.” Hegel’s critique of the Kantian dictum, that we can have no knowledge of a thing in itself, but only as it is an object of sense perception, is eminently instructive.⁷⁸ Hegel argued that to say cognition is limited implies the very presence of the infinite or unlimited.⁷⁹ The acknowledgment that our understanding is imperfect suggests that we can conceive of, and may achieve, a better understanding. In principle, nothing exists which is wholly incomprehensible, even the most puzzling and repugnant traditions.

Can Hegel mean that our ability to comprehend all, even the seemingly irrational traditions which we meet in the literature of antiquity, is tantamount to an approval of all? This cannot be the case. It is, after all, a commonplace that one can comprehend something without sanctioning or endorsing it. That is the work of the historian, who comprehends the past, often in order that past mistakes might not be made in the present. But if Hegel does not mean that the understanding of all is a tacit approval, he does say something equally strong. He intends that we comprehend something alien, not simply to condemn it, but to discover its truth. By this he means its truth for those who once tolerated or espoused it, and also its truth for the present, its abiding force. Between the past and the present exists a continuum. The rational is thus not merely to be opposed to the irrational, but is instead that which encompasses it. Gadamer expresses this elegantly in a paraphrase of Hegel, stating that the life of the human spirit consists “in recognizing

⁷⁸ Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft (2nd ed., 1787), vol 3 of the Gesammelte Schriften, ed. by the Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, the first Abteilung of which contains Kant’s Werke, 9 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1910-1923 (vols. 8-9 bear the imprint: Berlin und Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1923)), preface to the second edition, 3.16. Translation: Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1958), p. 27.

⁷⁹ Hegel, System der Philosophie (Hermann Glockner’s title for the Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse, 1830 ed.), with a Foreword by Leopold von Henning, 3rd ed., in Werke, 8.158-159. Translation: The Logic of Hegel, trans. from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences by William Wallace, 2nd ed., revised and augmented (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1892), pp. 116-117 (par. 60).

oneself in other being.”⁸⁰ There is nothing, in other words, which cannot in some way be understood. On the contrary, it is in comprehending the other, and recognizing oneself in what is alien, that one becomes truly oneself. The existence, then, of apparently unreasonable traditions presents no insuperable obstacle to the Hegelian thesis of the rationality of the actual. The encounter with such traditions is instead an opportunity to meet oneself in the other. In the actuality of the alien tradition, one encounters a rationality which is no more foreign than one’s own being.

IV.2.A. Opposition to the Hegelian Unity

Yet it is at the assertion of the rationality of the actual that many modern commentators on Hegel balk. Let us examine first a theological argument against that assertion, and then some philosophical arguments. From Catholic thinkers one is accustomed to hear the objection that the Hegelian postulate of the absolute identity between being and thinking ascribes to humanity a privilege which belongs to God alone. Only the thought of God, according to these thinkers, properly accords with being. Only in God is there a perfect coincidence of nature and essence. This is the insight of Thomas Aquinas. Although it is essentially human to think and to be, some aspects of human thought and human being remain merely potential, said Thomas, and are never fully actualized. God, however, is existence alone, and one cannot speak of a divine nature which, in relation to existence, is only potential.⁸¹ In light of the doctrine, the assertion by Hegel of the absolute correspondence of being and thinking becomes suspect. It ascribes to humanity what belongs to God alone. Kuhn, as we saw earlier, made this objection. He argued that God and the world, while enjoying a relative unity, can never be identified, as Hegel apparently wants, in the speculative concept. Such a concept can only arise insofar as human beings share in the perfect knowledge of God. This brings us to the question of whether reason is, as Gadamer’s paraphrase of Hegel suggests, reason’s own foundation. There are some commentators on Hegel, such as Kojève (whom we will examine below), who argue that if Hegel were fully consistent, he would proclaim his philosophy atheistic. But this is hardly what Gadamer means by saying that, in Hegel’s thought, reason is its own foundation. On the contrary, his remark must be seen in the context of the dialogue

⁸⁰ “Das Leben des Geistes besteht . . . darin, im Anderssein sich selbst zu erkennen.” Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 329; trans., p. 310. This is a paraphrase of a similar sentence in Hegel’s Phänomenologie, in the Werke, 2.28; Baillie trans., p. 86.

⁸¹ In contrast to God, all other things have a nature or form which is potential or partially existent, insofar as that nature or form has not yet been fully realized. Thomas Aquinas, De Ente et Essentia, in the Opera Omnia, according to the edition of Petri Fiaccadori (Parma, 1852-1873), photolithographic reimpression, with a new general introduction in English by Vernon J. Bourke, 25 vols. (New York: Misurgia Publishers, 1948), 16.330-337. In chapter V, Thomas notes that only God is the act-of-existing (*esse tantum*); whereas the human thought of what is does not exist in itself, but has its *esse* from the *primo esse* (p. 335, col. A). Translation: On Being and Essence, trans., with an Introduction and Notes, by Armand Maurer (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), p. 47. According to this translation, in which the division into chapters follows the edition of M. D. Roland Gosselin (1926), the text in question falls in chapter IV.

between Socrates and Meno to which we referred above. There Meno suggests that one cannot inquire about something if one does not already in some sense know it, and Socrates responds by pointing to the reason present in the *ανάμνησις* or recollection of the pre-existent soul. The point is not that God has nothing to do with learning – after all, Socrates claims to have learned his doctrine from certain priests and priestesses – but rather that one is not resourceless in the search for knowledge and truth. As to the basis for that search, it brings us to the doctrine of the eternal ideas and forms. According to this doctrine, the *ἰδέα* gives its truth to the objects of knowledge, which in turn gain their intelligibility by participating in the *εἶδος* or form.⁸² This doctrine was taken up in Thomistic philosophy. There we find a distinction between the act of being of God, which subsists in itself (*esse subsistens*), and that of humanity, which is received from and participates in that of God (*esse receptum vel participatum*).⁸³ The aim of this distinction is to show that, while humanity enjoys a measure of the good, that measure is not the goodness-itself of God. Similarly, one can say that, while human beings enjoy a capacity for true knowledge, they are not omniscient.

This gives us a clue to the proper understanding of the Hegelian dictum that being corresponds to thought, and to the Gadamerian appropriation of this in the statement that reason is its own foundation. Being corresponds to thought insofar as humanity participates or receives a share in the being and thought of God. And reason is its own foundation, we can say, in two senses. First, it is its own foundation because philosophy does not rely, as theology does, on revelation. It is rather an interpretation of the experience of humanity, reminding it of what it already knew in a way unknown to itself – Plato’s *anamnesis*. Secondly, reason is its own foundation in the sense that it has been created with everything necessary for true contemplation. That is not to say, however, that one can dispense with what has been created and, so to speak, usurp the position of God. Instead, Gadamer’s phrase suggests that there is nothing created outside of reason which can take reason’s place.

To be sure, Hegel speaks as if humanity could fully realize an infinite and absolute reason. In his doctrine of true and false infinity, he charges that only the false or bad infinity can be described as the beyond, “because it is the negation, and nothing

⁸² In the *Republic*, Socrates says that the objects of knowledge gain their truth from the idea of truth (508e), and in the *Parmenides*, Socrates says that the participation (*μέθεξις*) of things in the forms has to do with their being made in the image of the forms (132d).

⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, Q. 21, art. 5, resp.; in Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera Omnia*, edited under the auspices of Pope Leo XIII, 25 vols. in 27 to date (Rome: various imprints, the most recent (1979) being Editori di San Tommaso; the series was begun in 1882), Tomus XXII, volumen iii, p. 606. Translation: *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. from the definitive Leonine text by James V. McGlynn, Robert W. Mulligan, and Robert W. Schmidt; 3 vols. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952-1954), 3.26 (volume 3 was translated by Schmidt).

more, of the finite posited as real.”⁸⁴ The beyond, the realm which theology, in Hegel’s eyes, mistakenly ascribes to a transcendent God, is merely a negation for the philosopher. It negates finite reality, that is, it is known only as that which finite reality is not. Bad infinity is an abstraction from the finite. True infinity, on the other hand, is the unity of the negation of both the finite and the infinite. The finitude of human knowledge is recognized as a limit, and when recognized as such, leads to the realization of what lies beyond the limit. This is what theology might call the beatific vision. In an analogous way, the infinity which belongs to God is realized as that which is active in history. As such, it is no longer infinite but present before us. In that sense, it cannot exist beyond human intelligibility.⁸⁵ Hence the absolute knowledge of Hegel can be, with proper qualifications, reconciled with the classical doctrine of human participation in the thought of God.

But it is one thing to assert, as Catholic theologians do, that between the thought of God and that of human beings there exists a relative unity. It is quite another to suggest, as Hegel does, that between the two there can exist in the present an absolute identity. This latter doctrine, it can be argued, tends to usurp the role of God and reduce it to a relation of identity with human thought.

IV.2.A.1. Küng and the Future of God

Such an argument is explicitly made by the Tübingen theologian, Hans Küng (b. 1928), in his application of Hegel’s theological thinking to Christology. There the critique of Hegel is phrased not in terms of Thomistic metaphysics, but in terms of what Küng would call a Gospel-based doctrine of faith and grace. His point is that the Hegelian dialectic, into which all thought can be absorbed, overemphasizes reason and nature. It turns the world of history into a graceless realm of rational necessity. Küng is willing to concede, of course, that Hegel’s apologia for Christianity opens up valuable perspectives. In particular, he cites the Hegelian ontology as the first to explore the question of eternal being in terms of the Christian stress on history; and he praises Hegel’s exploration of consciousness as that in which humanity is called to a genuine freedom.⁸⁶ But Küng wants to emphasize the sovereignty of God. It is God, he says,

⁸⁴ “Nur das Schlecht-Unendliche ist das Jenseits, weil es nur die Negation des als real gesetzten Endlichen ist.” Hegel, Logik, in Werke, 4.173; translation: Hegel’s Science of Logic, 1.162.

⁸⁵ Thus a theologian can draw a parallel between the true infinity of Hegel and the being *per se* of God, and between the false infinity of Hegel and the being *per participationem* of humanity. The reconciliation of opposites of which Hegel speaks, then, “may be conceived as formally identical with the relation which holds between the *per se* and the *per participationem* in traditional doctrine.” Kevin Albert Wall, The Doctrine of Relation in Hegel (Oakland?: Albertus Magnus Press, 1963?), p. 98.

⁸⁶ Hans Küng, Menschwerdung Gottes. Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie, in the series Ökumenische Forschung, ed. Hans Küng and Joseph Ratzinger, part II: Soteriologie, vol. 1 (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1970), p. 512.

who shatters human expectations, offering the gift of the divine self in a way which no philosophy of reflection can anticipate. Despite the fact that the Biblical revelation can be taken up into the Hegelian dialectic, the two cannot be wholly reconciled, according to Küng. Against the speculative necessity of Hegel's thought, he insists upon the unanticipated grace of God; against the absolute knowledge of philosophy, he insists upon trusting faith.⁸⁷

Küng's objection to the Hegelian doctrine of the identity of being and thought has its basis in what Küng perceives as the central omission of Hegel's philosophy: in it there is no place for the future.⁸⁸ To be sure, there is a teleology in Hegel. But this, as Küng puts it, is not an eschaton to be hoped for, but an inexorable consequence of what has already taken place. Hegel anticipates no consummation of the world, Küng argues, and no creation of a new heaven and a new earth;⁸⁹ accordingly, the Christ is reduced, in the end, to a mere tool of the Hegelian world-spirit. In that spirit, the identity of being and thought has been realized. There is nothing more for which to hope. Küng, it must be seen, criticizes the Hegelian doctrine precisely for the same reason that we find it instructive for tradition. Just as Hegel dwells on history, finding in it the thought of reason, so theology dwells on Christian tradition, finding in it the truth of the Gospel. Küng's point, however, is that the Christian cannot be content merely to sift what has once been given. There is something more to come, namely, the fullness of salvation or soteriology.

Here a distinction must be made between completed revelation, especially the gift of the divine self in Jesus Christ, and continuing grace, the self-communication of God to humanity. Küng, with his treatment of the future of God, wants to emphasize the manifold possibilities to which humanity may be called. For that reason, he speaks of grace, and Hegel's omission of a philosophical eschatology is regarded as a shortcoming. But the Church teaches that, with the death of the last Apostle, revelation was complete.⁹⁰ The thrust of this teaching is that, in revelation, humanity has been given the source of all saving truth. It can be confident that what God has revealed about the divine self will not be superseded by some future revelation. In this sense, all of history is the unfolding of the consequences of what was accomplished *επάφραξ*, once for all (Romans 6.10; Hebrews 7.27). It is to the Christian doctrine of revelation, then, and not to the doctrine of grace, that the Hegelian notion of the unfolding of the world-spirit is applicable.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 516-517.

⁸⁸ Ibid. See the conclusion to chapter 8, part vi, "Gott der Zukunft?", pp. 467-500, esp. pp. 489-490.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 493.

⁹⁰ This teaching is implicit in the Tridentine statement of the relation between Scripture and tradition (see below [A Reconsideration of the Modern Theology of Tradition](#), esp. the section entitled "The Tridentine Decree") and in the list of the Modernist errors published in the 1904 decree of the Holy Office, "Lamentabili" ([Enchiridion Symbolorum](#), section 2021; trans., [The Sources of Catholic Dogma](#), p. 509).

Without a doubt, this notion of an ineluctable world-spirit appears to limit human possibility, as Küng suggests. Humanity is limited to trusting in the completed revelation of God. But this can hardly be called a limitation in the sense of an infringement of freedom, unless one views freedom negatively as simply the removal of obstacles to volition. The rational in history and the revelation of God are no more limits of freedom than the fact that belonging to one's own tradition, and being oneself, prevents one from being someone else. Indeed, Küng ought to be questioned as to why, in his analysis of Hegel, he avoids entirely the theology of tradition and its analogue in the Hegelian philosophy of history. The proper theological question is not why the philosopher omits a treatment of eschatology. Instead it is whether human beings are denied a true future in the philosophy of absolute knowledge. Does a moderate Hegelianism, affirming the unity (but not the identity) of being and thought, entail this? Does it allow not only the reconciliation in consciousness of the past to the present (which we can applaud), but also the anticipation of the future? Does it demand or promise an absolute knowledge of what is to come, and thus the reduction to superfluity of future divine action? The unity of being and thought is repugnant if it suggests that human thought can grasp being in such a way that God becomes a superfluous datum or a merely immanent spirit. If the Hegelian doctrine necessarily entails this, it rightly deserves the opprobrium of theology.

IV.2.A.2. Kojève and the Perfect State

The usual philosophical opposition to Hegel's doctrine of the unity of being and thought, however, does not rest upon theological principles. Such opposition is usually expressed in terms of the empirical disunity of the two. In other words, the unity of being and thought is denied on the grounds that there is no human being in whom we can observe such unity. This is the observation of philosophy, rather than of theology. Hegel's thesis, then, that the two share a relation of identity (or, more moderately, of unity) in difference, becomes the basis for new philosophical questions. If the unity of being and thinking has not yet been realized, how might it be, and under what conditions? If Hegel's conclusion of the identity of the two is rejected, why does his thought remain important? The first question is that of Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968), and the second that of Charles Taylor (b. 1931).

Kojève is germane to our inquiry because he affirms the possibility and desirability of the union of being and thought in a way inimical to the idea of tradition. He transforms the formula of Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology*, "being is thought,"⁹¹ into his own terminology, "the Concept is time."⁹² By the concept, Kojève means an interpretation of reality which is identical to that reality. Such an interpretation

⁹¹ Hegel, Werke, 2.51; trans., p. 113.

⁹² Alexandre Kojève, Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit, réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau, 3rd ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 379. Translation: Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit, assembled by Raymond Queneau, ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York and London: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1969), p. 147.

is accomplished through a transcendental ego, i.e., through an individual who has transcended individuality.⁹³ The concept is the thought of that ego. By time, Kojève means human history. Thus the transcendental ego is nothing other than the historical individual: the human being who, in the course of history, reveals being in verbal discourse.⁹⁴ For Kojève, Hegel's identification of being and thought signifies that humanity can understand the being of the historical world as a concept or as discourse. Furthermore, this discourse is identical with the thought of finite human beings, without whom there would be no history (and, in that sense, no time).⁹⁵ Kojève's pronouncement that the concept is time interprets Hegel in radically anthropocentric terms: being is identical with the thought of finite human beings.

At this point, Kojève parts company with Hegel. Hegel posits the existence of a creator-God. The French philosopher disapproves of Hegel's description in the Logic of the content of thought as that which "shows forth God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a Finite Spirit."⁹⁶ According to Kojève, this sentence of Hegel marks a turn from philosophy to theology.⁹⁷ Such a move disappoints the French philosopher, because, while it does not deny the ideal of wisdom, it suggests that humanity cannot achieve it by itself.⁹⁸ Hegel's basic error, according to Kojève, consists in his failure to see that only history or temporal existence can reveal itself by the concept, and not nature. History is the creation of humanity, and so can be grasped in thought as the expression of human desires; but nature is impersonal.⁹⁹ It was Hegel's mistake to think that impersonal nature could be revealed in the concept, just as history could be.

In order to overcome this error, however, Kojève demands something in addition to the abolition of theology. That would only fulfill one of the two conditions which, according to the French philosopher, Hegel posited for the realization of absolute knowledge. The first condition is that knowledge be truly circular. It should not be founded upon a starting-point (such as God), but should end where it began, with a

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 356-57; tr., p. 123.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 366; tr., p. 133

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 371-72; tr., p. 139

⁹⁶ "Man kann sich deswegen ausdrücken, dass dieser Inhalt *die Darstellung Gottes ist wie er in seinem ewigen Wesen vor der Erschaffung der Natur und eines endlichen Geistes ist.*" Hegel, Werke, 4.46; translation: Hegel's Science of Logic, 1.60.

⁹⁷ Kojève, p. 378; tr., pp. 146-147.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 286; tr. pp. 91-2.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 377-78; trans., pp. 145-147. The same notion of a nature-in-itself, fully independent from thought, recurs in the analysis of Hegel by Jürgen Habermas. See below, chapter 7, esp. the section entitled "The Transcendentality of Critique."

question.¹⁰⁰ The second condition for the realization of true knowledge, in Kojève's paraphrase of Hegel, is that the absolute knower be a citizen of the perfect state.¹⁰¹ This perfect state is the one which transforms the circular knowledge into truth. In other words, the perfect state is the completion of history, the point at which absolute knowledge has been realized.¹⁰² Kojève alludes here to Hegel's discussion in the Phenomenology of "Bildung" or culture, in which the discord between independent conscious life and the authority of the state is overcome.¹⁰³ Such a perfect state has not been realized, Kojève readily concedes, and so one must strive for the realization of that state in order that absolute knowledge be achieved.¹⁰⁴ The realization of the identity of being and thought, then, is a contingent one. When the perfect state has been achieved, the conditions for the achievement of the unity of being and thought will also have been realized.

The problem with this interpretation is that it makes the rationality of the actual past depend upon the creation of a possible future. The past – and, for that matter, tradition – only exhibits rationality within an interpretive context which is not yet existent. Kojève's argument effectively robs tradition of its claim upon the present. It can only make such a claim if it is rational. But if tradition is rational only within a yet-to-be realized context, that is, within the creation of the perfect state, then it cannot be rational in the imperfect state of the here-and-now. Doubtless, tradition remains in some way effective, even for Kojève. But it is effective as the unconscious realm which compels human behavior out of slavishness to the past. Such slavery can only be broken by making tradition transparent to reason. And for this liberation, according to Kojève, we must await a new social order. Only then will a genuine unity between being and thought exist. In theological terms, this is tantamount to saying that revelation will only be complete at the end of time. Such a statement seems plausible, because it denies absolute validity to a present (and manifestly imperfect) state of things. But it also relativizes what God has revealed. The task presented by tradition, the task of coming to one's true self by reconciling oneself to what appears alien, to a revelation which tradition mediates, is replaced by a new task. It is the task of creating a new future, within which alone the past will be meaningful.

IV.2.A.3. Taylor and "Situated Subjectivity"

While Kojève posits the unity of being and thought as a future possibility, the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, dismisses it as impossibility. It is impossible because the doctrine of Hegel has not gained universal acceptance. "No one actually believes his central ontological thesis," writes Taylor, "that the universe is posited by a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 287; trans., pp. 93-4.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 288; trans., p. 95.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 284; trans., p. 90. See also p. 380; trans., p. 148.

¹⁰³ Hegel, Werke, 2.389; trans., p. 529.

¹⁰⁴ Kojève, p. 291; trans., p. 98.

Spirit whose essence is rational necessity.”¹⁰⁵ Hegel’s central thesis is ontological because it concerns what is, namely, the universe. The universe is posited by a spirit whose essence, necessity, is rational. It can be comprehended, according to Hegel, in rational thought. But no one believes this thesis, Taylor alleges, and thus the matter is closed: there is, apparently, no empirical unity of being and thought.

Then a question arises. If Hegel’s central thesis is dead, why does his thought remain important? Taylor’s answer to this is interesting because, despite his rejection of the thesis of the unity of being and thought, he endorses an aspect of Hegelian doctrine which is central to the rehabilitation of tradition, at least in a general philosophical sense. This is Hegel’s critique of freedom as self-dependence. The critique can be found in the Phenomenology’s discussion of absolute freedom and terror, where Hegel apparently alludes to the French Revolution. The absolute freedom for which the revolutionaries strove was supposed to lead to a new order. But absolute freedom, Hegel writes, can achieve nothing. First of all, such freedom, defined as the unimpeded interaction of consciousness with itself, cannot let anything stand over against itself. And if this cannot happen, no new order will be achieved.¹⁰⁶ Secondly, for something to be accomplished, an individual or group must accomplish it. This means that those who do not accomplish the deed have a lesser share in it. By it their freedom may even be infringed. “Universal freedom,” in Hegel’s verdict, “can thus produce neither a positive achievement nor a deed; there is left for it only negative action; it is merely the rage and fury of destruction.”¹⁰⁷ Destruction is the outcome of the desire for absolute freedom. Violence stems from it as inevitably as the emancipatory ideals of the French Revolution degenerated into a reign of terror.

Taylor expounds the Hegelian critique of absolute freedom with approval. Following his exposition, he draws a parallel between the destruction of which Hegel speaks and the antipathy to tradition of all those who use terror as a political tool. Although he does not use the word tradition, the lesson Taylor draws from Hegel clearly implies that absolute freedom and tradition are incompatible. The drive for absolute freedom, writes Taylor, “cannot brook any standing structures, even its own past creations, which are not an emanation of contemporary active will.”¹⁰⁸ The Hegelian critique of absolute freedom is thus approved because it points to a truth affirmed by modern philosophers. This is the truth that human subjectivity is never absolutely free, but rather is, in Taylor’s words, “necessarily situated in life, in nature, and in a setting of

¹⁰⁵ Charles Taylor, Hegel (Cambridge, London, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 538.

¹⁰⁶ Hegel, Phänomenologie, in Werke, 2.452; trans., p. 603.

¹⁰⁷ “Kein positives Werk noch Tat kann also die allgemeine Freiheit hervorbringen; es bleibt nur das *negative Tun*; sie ist nur die *Furie* des Verschwindens.” Ibid., 2.453; trans., p. 604. The English version does not add the typographical emphasis of the original, and the words “rage and” are an addition.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, Hegel, p. 418.

social practices and institutions.”¹⁰⁹ These are the standing structures which the revolutionary may reject as hindrances to a new and genuinely human order. To reject them, however, is to reject something which in itself, according to Hegel, is fundamentally human. Thus Taylor designates Hegel as the figure to whom “the modern search for a situated subjectivity constantly refers.”¹¹⁰

IV.2.A.3.a. Critique of social science

It remains to be seen with what justice one can invoke Hegel in support of a philosophy of subjectivity. What does Taylor mean by subjectivity? Modern humanity, he suggests, regards the truth as that which only can be judged by criteria which the individual applies. Objective criteria accessible to all, and authority in general, cannot take the place of the judgment by an individual subject. Yet that subjectivity is, in some yet-to-be defined way, situated. It is related to aspects of the human being which are simply given, Taylor implies, such as the human being’s social nature and bodily existence. To these we can add humanity’s participation in history and in tradition. Hegel is invoked, then, as one who sought to reconcile subjectivity with the “situatedness” of the human. In lauding this, Taylor opens the way to a rehabilitation of tradition as part of the human situation. The study of tradition is therefore essential to any effort to situate the human being.

But Taylor rejects the doctrine of the unity of being and thought by which Hegel accomplished the reconciliation of situatedness and subjectivity. Taylor feels that this rejection is necessary in order to affirm the Hegelian critique of absolute freedom. He fears that, if one were to assert the unity of being and thought, one might assume that all reality is transparent to reason. Such an assumption might then tempt one to believe that one can enjoy an absolute freedom from reality by means of the reason which penetrates it. The end result would be the re-establishment of political terror in the very name of deluded reason.

In place of the Hegelian thesis of the unity of being and thought, Taylor proposes a distinction between the sense of a thing and the embodiment of that sense in language. This is clearly argued in his article of 1971, “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man.” The distinction between sense and its embodiment must be made, says Taylor, because while the sense of a thing (“experiential meaning”) is meaning “of something,” the embodiment of that sense (“linguistic meaning”) is “the meaning of signifiers and . . . is about a world of referents.”¹¹¹ In other words, one must distinguish between meaning and its embodiment because the two are simply not identical. What we say about something is never adequate to the thing itself. To be sure, it ordinarily seems adequate. When a society is relatively homogeneous, the modes of social relation sustain a set of explicit notions which suffice for describing things. Taylor calls these modes of social relation

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 567. See also pp. 474-475.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 570.

¹¹¹ Charles Taylor, “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” The Review of Metaphysics 25 (1971): 3-51; p. 12 cited here.

“intersubjective meanings.”¹¹² They allow a society to reach a consensus on explicit notions and items of belief, or on “common meanings.”¹¹³ But when a society is relatively heterogeneous, and when its members share ever fewer intersubjective meanings, common meanings tend to fade. Then it becomes clear that what we say about something is inadequate to the thing itself.

Ordinary social science overlooks intersubjective meanings, argues Taylor, because such meanings cannot be reduced to quantifiable data. They are not merely the society’s subjective reaction to aspects of the world, but are “social practices and institutions” which are “constitutive of social reality.”¹¹⁴ The methods of social science have precipitated a crisis. It consists in the breakdown of societal consensus, a breakdown which social science is unable to grasp and hence to remedy. Taylor’s response to the crisis is to demand the establishment of a “hermeneutical science of man which has a place for a study of intersubjective meanings.”¹¹⁵ Such a hermeneutical science is defined as that which substitutes, as its object, the interpretation of these intersubjective meanings for brute data. The analysis of brute data, Taylor explains, belongs to the outmoded verification model of mainstream social science. The new hermeneutical science is defined not in terms of verification, but of insight. In an argument, one appeals to an interpretation which encompasses all positions, rather than to new data.¹¹⁶ The aim is to make sense, through interpretations, of those intersubjective meanings embodied in society. The solution to the identity crisis of modernity (Taylor’s article, it must be remembered, was published in 1971) lies in the work of interpretation. One is to interpret the claims of competing groups in such a way that all might “understand more clearly and profoundly the common and intersubjective meanings of the society in which we have been living.”¹¹⁷ In sum: there are meanings held in common; they exist in present practices and institutions; and they can be, if not verified, at least subjectively understood.

But when Taylor affirms that intersubjective meanings can be understood, that is, made sense of, he does not mean, with Hegel, that the actual is rational.¹¹⁸ Indeed, Taylor rejects what he calls Hegel’s attempt to break out of the circle of interpretations and to arrive at some sure understanding by a rational grasp of the inner necessity of the

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 27-29.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

whole.¹¹⁹ To break out of the circle is to break out of subjectivity, and Taylor opposes this. He is opposed because a posited breaking out from subjectivity might tempt one to establish political terror in the name of objective reason. Hence we can see Taylor's ambivalence toward Hegel. Hegel is for him both the powerful critic of absolute freedom as well as the precursor of modern political totalitarianism. Taylor rejects the unity of being and thought in favor of subjectivity, that is, of a circle of interpretations. Subjectivity has become, in his thought, a refuge against dogmatism.

IV.2.A.3.b. The alternative of empiricism

It is important to see, however, that this is prejudicial to the rehabilitation of tradition, at least in the following two ways. First, Taylor's distinction between "making sense" of an action or practice and affirming it as "rational" poses a problem to the study of history and of tradition. The problem is that, once one abandons the task of seeking the rationality of history, in Hegelian terms, and confines oneself merely to making sense out of it, history's claim upon the present is weakened. To make sense out of history is to merely see in it its patterns of coherence. This is an indispensable part of the historical task, but it falls short of allowing the past to change one's understanding of present truth. It is Schleiermacher's reconstructive hermeneutics, to use Gadamer's terms, rather than the Hegelian integration of the past. If history and tradition do not embody reason, one can dispense with them, as the French revolutionaries tried to do, and create a new order based on a purely contemporary understanding. Taylor is, of course, opposed to this. That is why he insists upon the study of intersubjective meanings which are "out there in the practices themselves."¹²⁰ But if there is no unity of being and thought, if one can only make sense of the practices (and thus deny that the being of the practices corresponds in some way to our thought of them), then one might well ask what the basis for Taylor's optimistic belief in the intelligibility and meaningfulness of social practices really is. To deny the unity of being and thought is to deny the ontological conditions for the possibility of the rehabilitation of tradition.

This is the first way in which Taylor's rejection of the unity of being and thought is prejudicial to tradition. The second way has to do with the philosophy of subjectivity. Taylor, as we saw, regards Hegel as the one in whose critique of absolute freedom modern philosophy is inspired in its search for a situated subjectivity. But a philosophy of subjectivity cannot be identified with Hegel's thought. Taylor himself concedes this.¹²¹ Thus, while he can invoke Hegel as a central figure in the modern search for a situated subjectivity, he must oppose the Hegelian philosophy as a rationalist aspiration to go beyond subjectivity. This is a false aspiration, according to Taylor, and leads one back to the discredited verification model of modern science. Instead of searching for a way out of subjectivity, he suggests, let us commit ourselves to the task of understanding the other as a subject: an autonomous individual who is nevertheless situated, sharing with other human beings a world of meaning.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

¹²¹ Taylor, Hegel, p. 316.

The way to achieve this, in Taylor's view, is the creation of a new hermeneutical science. What is supposedly new about this science is its abandonment of the verification model and its embrace of the subjectivity of the circle of interpretations: one interpretation is founded upon another interpretation, ad infinitum. Taylor embraces this scheme as the only alternative to the outmoded attempt of the social sciences to anchor truths in data which can be verified. Such an attempt is outmoded, in his opinion, because the attempt to understand social reality in terms of brute data excludes features which cannot be reduced to dissent or assent to verbal formulas.¹²² We can applaud Taylor's criticism of social science, at least insofar as he characterizes it. But we must admit further that Taylor, for a professional philosopher, pays scant attention to the classical alternative to the verification model.

This is the alternative of Aristotle, who speaks (without reference to the verification of brute data) about ἐμπειρία, the empiricism which is experience (Posterior Analytics, 100^a5-9). This experience is constituted by memories of repeated sense-perceptions (αἰσθήσεως). To be sure, the knowledge of which Aristotle speaks must be based on sense-perceptions, as all knowledge is. But such knowledge cannot be reduced to an individual datum or series of data. It is instead the result of experience, "the universal now stabilized in its entirety within the soul, the one beside the many which is a single identity within them all."¹²³ The many are the particulars of sense perception. The one is the universal, the necessary stabilization in the soul of the many. We find in the empiricism or experience of Aristotle a third way of knowing, if it can be called that, which is neither purely subjective nor reducible to what can be uncontestedly verified. In comparison to it, the proposed hermeneutical science of Taylor seems distinctly jejune and unnecessary. Taylor's neglect of the classical alternative can be understood, however, when one sees that the empiricism of which Aristotle speaks is linked by Hegel to the speculative method. Indeed, Hegel asserts that insofar as Aristotle is empirical, he is speculative. By this he means that in Aristotle there is no holding fast to individual data in isolation from other data, but rather all particulars are held in unity. Thus Hegel concludes that "the empirical, grasped in its synthesis, is the speculative concept."¹²⁴ It is

¹²² Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," p. 33.

¹²³ ἐκ δ' ἐμπειρίας ἡ ἐκ παντὸς ηρεμήσαντος του καθόλου εν τη φυχη, του ενὸς παρα τα πολλα, ὁ αν εν απασιν εν ενη εκεινοις το αυτο. Posterior Analytics 100^a6-8, in Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics, a revised text with Introduction and commentary by W. D. Ross (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1949). Translation: The Works of Aristotle, trans. into English under the editorship of W. D. Ross, 12 vols. (London: Oxford University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University), 1928), vol. I: Categoriae and De interpretatione, Analytica priora, Analytica posteriora (trans. G. R. G. Mure), Topica and De sophisticis elenchis.

¹²⁴ "Seine Empirie [die des Aristoteles] ist eben total; d.h. er lässt nicht Bestimmtheiten weg, er hält nicht eine Bestimmung fest and nachher wieder eine andere, – sondern sie zumal in Einem, – . . . *das Empirische, in seiner Synthesis aufgefasst, ist der spekulative Begriff.*" Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, with a Foreword by Karl Ludwig Michelet, 3rd ed. in 3 vols., in Werke, 18.341. The translation of this

speculative in that all the particulars of experience are reflected in thought by means of an inner dialectic. Were Taylor to consider seriously the empiricism or emphasis on experience of Aristotle, he would be drawn back into the orbit of Hegel. He would have to take seriously the idea of the unity of being and thought (though not as something which can be or has been achieved once and for all – not as the identity of being and thought). He would have to consider, in other words, the dialectical movement of the sense-perception of particulars, stabilized in memory, and projected as a universal, which must then return to perception for its confirmation. This is the rational dialectic which Aristotle calls empirical and which Hegel calls speculative. It is by no means subjective, at least in the modern sense of the word. But because Taylor refuses to consider the dialectic of experience as a serious alternative to the subjective circle of interpretation, his project of a hermeneutical science is ultimately of little value to the rehabilitation of tradition. Such a project would substitute for the Hegelian-Aristotelian heritage an interpretive procedure which, while it is in itself unobjectionable, pays no heed to its own ontological basis and to the dialectical logic of its development.

IV.2.B. Affirmation of the Hegelian Unity

In sum, then, we have seen three varieties of opposition to the Hegelian doctrine of the unity of being and thought. In the work of Kūng, the unity of being and thought is rejected in the name of the future of God. Hegel's doctrine reduces the acts of God, in Kūng's view, to the inevitable consequences of logical necessity. The net result of this critique is to devalue the Hegelian emphasis on the rationality of history, and hence to undercut its contribution to tradition. Kojève's view of the matter is that the unity of being and thought is possible. But it can only be achieved after the realization of the perfect state, and so does not exist in the present. The consequence is that tradition will only be grasped in its full rationality at some undetermined future point. Only then can we speak of its rehabilitation. Taylor's philosophy, with its emphasis on a situated subjectivity, seems to offer a new motive for the study of tradition. In its practices and institutions one can apparently find the traces of those intersubjective meanings which bind a society together. But the rejection by Taylor of the unity of being and thought denies the ontological basis upon which the value of those interpretations ultimately rests. He claims for them a merely subjective necessity, ignoring the process of accumulated experience, refined through dialectic, in which societal consensus is truly built. The three opponents of the Hegelian doctrine which we have considered present a number of obstacles to the rehabilitation of tradition. In them, tradition is relativized in the face of an unknown future, deprived of its intelligibility due to an imperfect present, and rendered opaque as a result of an impenetrable subjectivity.

For a survey of Hegel's contribution to the philosophic rehabilitation of tradition, it is not necessary to answer the arguments of Kūng, Kojève, and Taylor in detail. Instead what is needed is a sketch of those elements in the thought of Hegel which suggest that the objections we have seen are answerable. To do this, we shall follow the exposition of Hegel by Gadamer, in whose own rehabilitation of tradition Hegel plays a

passage has been edited beyond recognition in Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, 3 vols. (New York: Humanities Press, and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), 2.156.

central role. This will enable us to see how Hegel himself might answer the objections of his critics. Furthermore, it will make clear the difference between the understanding of Hegel by Gadamer and that by some of Gadamer's contemporaries.

IV.2.B.1. The future and the cunning of reason

The first point of contention is whether, in the thought of Hegel, the unity of being and thought is so presented as to render the future an essentially empty category. In other words, does Hegel conceive this unity in such a way as to claim that being has become fully transparent to thought? Is the future nothing other than the inexorable working-out of the consequences of what is now present? This seems to be implied in Hegel's doctrine of world-historical individuals. These are the figures, such as Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon, who grasp the truth, so to speak, of where their age is tending. They prophesy this truth and ultimately bring it about. "The world-historical persons," says Hegel, "the heroes of their age, must therefore be recognized as its seers – their words and deeds are the best of the age."¹²⁵ In them, the being of what is to come, of what is needed and timely, is grasped and fostered. In the world-historical individual we seemingly discover a figure in whom being (that is, the tendency of the currents of life) and thought are one.

But this is not the same as saying that, in these figures, being has become fully transparent to thought. Hegel himself admits that the world-historical individuals are not philosophers, but practical men. They do not foresee the entirety of the future, but anticipate the spirit of their age. The clearest testimony to this is Hegel's concept of the "List der Vernunft," the cunning of reason. Such cunning consists in the fact that reason (here defined as meaning in history) is achieved regardless of the degree to which the individual actors are aware of it. They are driven by their passions, and may come to ruin; but the ends of reason are attained. Such reason, says Hegel, "sets the passions to work for itself, while that through which it develops itself pays the penalty and suffers the loss."¹²⁶ The cunning of reason lies in its employment of seemingly irrational humanity to achieve its wholly rational ends. Humanity is almost the possessed oracle of the world-spirit, in the Hegelian doctrine of the cunning of reason, and far from the absolute lord of history who has realized the full identity of being and thought.

Thus Gadamer can describe the world-historical individual in Hegel as a particular case. It contradicts the general rule, which is that the course of history is misunderstood by the population at large.¹²⁷ Indeed, one is almost tempted by Hegel's

¹²⁵ "Die welthistorischen Menschen, die heroen einer Zeit, sind darum als die Einsichtigen anzuerkennen; ihre Handlungen, ihre Reden sind das Beste der Zeit." Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte, in Werke, 11.60. Trans., Reason in History, p. 40.

¹²⁶ "Das ist die List der Vernunft zu nennen, dass sie die Leidenschaften für sich wirken lässt, wobei das, was durch sie sich in Existenz setzt, einbusst und Schaden leidet." Ibid., 11.63; trans., p. 44. The verb "einbussen" connotes penance or atonement, a connotation which the English fails to render.

¹²⁷ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 354; trans., p. 335.

thinking on this point to deny the possibility that philosophic thought can grasp the rational. Instead, the specter that human finitude must necessarily relativize the validity of every philosophical proposition, even the most rigorous, ceaselessly haunts us.¹²⁸ At the very least, one cannot say that Hegel puts forth the claim that all being, future as well as past, has been fully comprehended. It is intelligible in principle, according to Hegel; and the mind can reconcile itself to the alien features of the past, which then become the objects of philosophical contemplation. That is why the philosopher is absorbed in history, and the theologian in tradition: not because the past enables the prediction of the future, but because the past exhibits a meaningfulness which the future can only confirm. Hegel expresses this by the proverb, “The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.”¹²⁹ Only at twilight, in meditation on the events of the day which is past, does philosophy find its element. It does not spread its wings in the full light of day. The future lies beyond it.

IV.2.B.2. The synthesis of proposition and dialectic

With such a proverb, then, we can imagine Hegel answering the charge of Kūng, that Hegel’s philosophy denies the future which belongs to God. But what about the allegation of Kojève, namely, that the unity of being and thought is contingent upon the establishment of the perfect state? The problem with this allegation, as we saw, is that it denies the present rationality of the past and of tradition. They will only become intelligible at some time in the future. In order to answer the allegation, one has to show the manner in which such rationality can be said to be present or actual. The sticking-point of such a demonstration is its double demand: the rational has to be seen in the actual, which mocks us with its apparent caprice and disorder; and the actual has to reveal its rationality, that is, its unity and intelligibility, which are so well hidden that to deny them is more plausible than to acknowledge them. In short, an answer to the objection of Kojève must allow the thinker to both affirm the rational and to respond to the criticism which any such affirmation will entail.

Hegel’s answer lies in his concept of dialectic. This is the concept which, as we saw above, describes the movement of thought itself, rather than any particular thought.¹³⁰ But to say that much already poses a problem. The problem has to do with the fact that, to speak of “thought itself” and of “any particular thought,” one necessarily posits a distinction between thought and what it thinks. Hegel wants to efface that distinction. The method of his system of logic, he writes, “is no-ways different from its object and content;--for it is the content in itself, *the Dialectic which it has in itself*, that

¹²⁸ This was the crisis, according to Gadamer, which led him to see that the human capacity to formulate questions, and thus to link ideas, freed one from the bonds of finitude. Gadamer and Habermas, Das Erbe Hegels, p. 51; trans., Reason in the Age of Science, p. 46.

¹²⁹ “[D]ie Eule der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Dämmerung ihren Flug.” Hegel, Philosophie des Rechts, in Werke, 7.37; trans., p. 13.

¹³⁰ See the section above entitled “The Dialectic of Appropriation.”

moves it one.”¹³¹ The dialectical method, as Hegel develops it, does not shy away from affirmations of rationality. In that sense, it distinguishes itself from the kind of dialectic we still call sophistic. But whoever surrenders to the dialectic, whoever is grasped by it, understands that an affirmation of rationality can never be wholly self-satisfied. The dialectic, which is the content of rationality itself, moves itself on.

Gadamer defines this as the very idea of Hegel’s logic. In this idea we find united the affirmation or predication of rationality and, simultaneously, the movement of rationality itself. The predication of rationality is, in Gadamer’s view, the heritage of Aristotle’s doctrine of categories. According to that doctrine, categories predicate the variety or senses of being.¹³² The claim is that, in the categories, one can actually grasp the forms which participate in being by means of propositions. To this doctrine of categories Hegel adds the Platonic teaching on the concatenation of ideas. This is the teaching, drawn from the dialogues Meno, Parmenides, and Sophist, that there are no individual ideas of truth. Instead, what one finds are the ideas in a complex – linked, mixed, and reflected, just as they are in conversation or in the dialogue of the soul with itself.¹³³ This concatenation of ideas is the very movement of rationality, the form which reflection takes. When Hegel writes that his method does not differ from its content, he means that he has unified the Aristotelian doctrine of categories and the Platonic dialectic. Gadamer expresses this as follows:

Hegel’s idea of logic would grasp as a unified complex this tradition of the doctrine of categories as the basic concepts of being (which constitute the objects of experience) with the pure determinations of reflection, which are the merely formal determinations of thought.¹³⁴

¹³¹ “Diess [dass Hegels Methode die einzige wahrhafte ist] erhellt für sich schon daraus, dass sie [die Methode] von ihrem Gegenstande und Inhalte nichts Unterschiedenes ist; – denn es ist der Inhalt in sich, *die Dialektik, die er an ihm selbst hat*, welche ihn fortbewegt.” Hegel, Logik, in Werke, 4.52; trans., 1.65.

¹³² In the Metaphysics, Aristotle writes that “The senses of essential being are those which are indicated by the figures of predication [i.e., the categories, *σχήματα της κατηγορίας*]; for ‘being’ has as many senses as there are ways of predication” (1017^a23-24). Aristotle, The Metaphysics, bks. I-IX, with an English translation by Hugh Tredennick, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, and London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1947). For a further discussion of this passage, see chapter 6 below, “The Categories in Aristotle.”

¹³³ In the Meno, Socrates teaches that once a single piece of knowledge has been recalled, there is no reason why all the rest should not be discovered (81d). Parmenides tells Socrates that if he is really to discover the truth, he must bring one thing into relation with another ad infinitum (136b). In the Sophist, the Eleatic stranger states that discourse owes its existence to the interweaving of forms (260a).

¹³⁴ “Hegels Idee der Logik will nun diese Tradition der Kategorienlehre als der Lehre von den Grundbegriffen des Seins, die den Gegenstand der Erfahrung konstituieren, zusammen mit den reinen Reflexionsbegriffen, die blosse Formbestimmungen des

The determinations of reflection, the forms of thought, refer to the progression of ideas in a dialectic which can never be brought to a halt. The categories refer to the predication of reality in the form of propositions. What Hegel has achieved, in Gadamer's paraphrase, is a unity of dialectic and category, in which the proposition never brings thought to an end, but rather contributes to the continuing process of unfolding the truth. Such an insight into the nature of propositions has important consequences for the unfolding of Christian tradition, as we shall see.

In the idea of Hegel's logic, then, the outlines of the answer are present to the allegation of Kojève, namely, that the unity of being and thought is contingent upon the establishment of the perfect state. Kojève felt that this was the only way to maintain the Hegelian doctrine of unity in the face of a manifestly imperfect social order. Were there to be a unity of being and thought, the rationality of thought must necessarily be embodied fully in the state. But Hegel did not mean by the assertion of unity that the rationality of the actual would be or has been realized. He meant rather that the intelligibility of being is somehow already manifest in present thought. The unity of being and thought is not a state to be achieved once-and-for-all in the future, but a task which has already begun. The study of tradition, we can add, is not a discipline which will come to an end with the final evolution of society. Nor is it a doctrine which has achieved a final form, never more to be unfolded or interpreted. Rather, it is the movement of the past in the present. The two are linked in a continuum in which the distinction between what is thought – tradition – and the one who thinks it is dissolved.

IV.2.B.3. The dimension of experience

This brings us to the final objection to the unity of being and thought, the objection of Taylor. This objection seems to be one based on consensus – no one, Taylor says, believes the Hegelian doctrine – but has its real foundation in an epistemological critique. In the terms of the critique, a social scientist can either attempt to ground all statements in observations of data which are verifiable, or dispense with the model of verification and embrace a subjective circle of interpretation. The latter project is Taylor's own, and has the decided advantage of avoiding the seemingly hopeless quest for an absolute beginning for science. Instead, one acknowledges that every interpretation is based on a prior interpretation, that the basis for consensus or interpretations lies in the often-unthematized conventions or practices which make up the social fabric, and that the more profound interpretation is one which comprehends the less profound, as well as the conventions and practices of those who hold it. The opposition between interpreters cannot be overcome until the less profound interpreter gains insight and is transformed. In short, the purportedly new science recommended by Taylor demands that the scientist seek ever-more-comprehensive interpretations. These interpretations are subjective, and cannot pretend to absolute comprehensiveness. But interpreters can aspire, in Taylor's view, to greater comprehensiveness. They can do so

Denkens sind, in einem einheitlichen Zusammenhang begreifen." Gadamer, "Die Idee der Hegelschen Logik," in Hegels Dialektik, pp. 54-55. The translation is my own. In the published translation, the citation is at p. 81. It renders "Idee" as "conception" and abbreviates the phrase "in einem einheitlichen Zusammenhang."

by following the clues, buried in social practice and convention, which will enable a grasp of societal presuppositions and hence of the meanings which can be held in common.

The Hegelian concept of experience is missing in Taylor's discussion. One sees this, first of all, in the resigned appeal to insight and to self-transformation with which Taylor concludes his discussion of interpretive impasses. In the event of such an impasse, he writes, each interpreter can only appeal to a deeper insight on the part of the other, an appeal which can take the form of the imperative: change yourself. The problem with such an appeal is that it hinges on what can be an irrational act, the radical disruption of one's self-identity. It may appear to demand that one throw over what one knows for something about which one knows nothing. Taylor's discussion, which rejects the ontological underpinnings of Hegel's thought, neglects the sense in which one comes to one's true self by going outside oneself. Hegel expresses this by saying that the basis of science is the pure knowledge of oneself in what is absolutely other.¹³⁵ By this he means that, in real knowing, the objects of perception are taken up by the spirit or in the mind, which in turn becomes an object to itself. As an object, this mind or spirit has become alien to itself by means of what it has perceived. Nevertheless, this alienation is not final. It can be overcome, after which the spirit is reconciled to itself. This movement Hegel calls the "Wissenschaft der Erfahrung," the science of experience.¹³⁶ It enables him to speak of the insight or self-transformation to which Taylor refers without the apparent irrationality of the dictum, change yourself.

IV.2.B.3.a. The limits of external reflection

Hegel's concept of experience becomes clearer as an antithesis to Taylor's science of interpretation when one examines the method proposed by Taylor. In terms of this method, the interpreter is to examine the intersubjective meanings, implicit in the practice and conventions of society, in order to achieve a deeper grasp of the bases for consensus to which the interpreter can appeal in a dispute. Taylor is calling, in other words, for an interpretive strategy which will enable one to secure an interpretation by showing it to be more in consonance with the beliefs of rival interpreters than they themselves realize. What Taylor hesitates to ask, because he denies the unity of being and thought, is a deeper grasp of the subject matter itself. That is too closely intertwined with the rejected verification model. But a deeper grasp of the subject matter is precisely what Hegel demands. The true method, according to Hegel, is nothing other than the movement of the concept itself.¹³⁷ He does not say that the true method is to follow such a movement. That would be to posit an opposition between being and thought. The two

¹³⁵ "Das reine Selbsterkennen im absoluten Andersseyn, dieser Aether als solches, ist der Grund und Boden der Wissenschaft oder das Wissen im Allgemeinen." Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, in *Werke*, 2.28; the Baillie translation, p. 86, is somewhat wordy. Gadamer's paraphrase is much more concise. See above, footnote 80.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.36; trans., p. 96

¹³⁷ "Was hiermit als Methode hier zu betrachten ist, ist nur die Bewegung des Begriffs selbst." Hegel, *Logik*, in *Werke*, 5.330; trans., 2.468.

are rather united in the concept, whose movement is the only thing which can truly be called a method. This method stands in contrast to what Hegel calls external reflection. Such reflection “considers itself as a merely formal activity,” Hegel writes, “which receives its content and matter from without.”¹³⁸ This external reflection bears too close a resemblance to Taylor’s method of seeking the intersubjective meanings which lie at the basis of what we hold in common. Instead of proposing, as Taylor does, a formal activity of interpreting what escapes the scrutiny of mainstream social science, Hegel states what takes place due to the unity of being and thought: the movement of the concept, that is, of the union of the thing and the mind in experience.

The subjectivity to which Taylor is committed rules out the legitimacy of all talk of the subject matter itself. Between being and our thought or interpretation of it there exists for Taylor a great divide, and in his doctrine the object differs from its expression. Hegel, it must be conceded, also acknowledges the difference between what he calls the force of being and its expression.¹³⁹ But he interprets the two dialectically, seeing in the distinction a fundamental unity. It is the unity of experience, in which what seems to be alien springs out at consciousness, upsetting its expectations. It then comes to be seen not as alien at all, but as itself part of consciousness.¹⁴⁰ This is the thrust of the concluding pages of the Introduction to Hegel’s Phenomenology.

¹³⁸ “In der That geht auch die denkende Reflexion, insofern sie sich als äusserliche verhält, schlechthin von einem gegebenen, ihr fremden Unmittelbaren aus, und betrachtet sich als ein bloss formelles Thun, das Inhalt und Stoff von aussen empfangt, und für sich nur die durch ihn bedingte Bewegung sey.” Ibid., 4.500; trans., 2.31.

¹³⁹ See the discussion in the Phänomenologie of “Kraft und Verstand,” in the Werke, 2.108-138; trans., pp. 179-213. Our comments on and application of these ideas can be found in Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Decline of Tradition, esp. the section “Historical Force and Its Expression in Droysen.”

¹⁴⁰ Such a distinction-in-unity cuts to the heart of the current literary-critical debate about the difference between theory and practice. Emphasizing the activity of consciousness by which the alien (namely, a new method or insight) is synthesized with one’s own beliefs, some writers tend to regard the distinction between theory and practice as the handmaid, in Hegel’s terms, of external reflection. They argue that to apply a method or theory from the outside, so to speak, is to wrongly presume that such external reflection preserves one from bias or to delude oneself that one has avoided commitment (Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, “Against Theory,” Critical Inquiry 8 (1982): 723-742). Hegel would applaud the opposition to self-alienation implicit in their condemnation of “theory.” But their polemic against theory pays no attention to the process of being committed to something, then of suffering doubts about and critical alienation from that to which one is committed, only to achieve a more precise commitment. This dialectical process, implicit in the ideal of θεωρία in Plato (Republic S17d, Symposium 211d) and in Aristotle (Metaphysics 1072^b24, Nicomachean Ethics 1177^a7-8, 1178^b7-8), is central to the “theoretical enterprise.” Can one define theory as the anti-theorists do, even for the purpose of literary criticism, without reference to it?

In those pages, we seem to find a division between one and the same object of experience. First, there is the object of perception as it exists *per se*; and second, there is the object as it exists for consciousness. According to Hegel, however, the second cancels or encompasses the first. The second object, he writes, “contains the nothingness of the first; the new object is the experience concerning that first object.”¹⁴¹ In other words, the two objects only appear to be two in a preliminary stage of consciousness. They are united in the more advanced stage, the stage in which experience apparently transforms the object or takes its place in consciousness.¹⁴² In experience, then, a multiplicity becomes a unity. One no longer has, with Taylor, the object and our interpretation of it, but the fusion of the two.

IV.2.B.3.b. Overcoming subjectivity in absolute knowledge

Such fusion occurs in what Hegel calls “absolute Wissen” or absolute knowledge.¹⁴³ The problem with this absolute knowledge, as Taylor has pointed out, is that it may tempt one to think that one can fully comprehend reality by means of a seeming omniscient power of reason. If knowledge is absolute, then one no longer needs to learn anything new, or to take anyone else’s opinion into consideration. Hegel, it must be said, could hardly have meant that, considering the emphasis he places on knowing oneself in knowing what is other than oneself. Nevertheless we must admit that his “science of experience” poses the problem of how science and experience are to be reconciled. It is one thing to interpret the absolute knowledge of Hegel as meaning that the object of knowledge is made absolute, that is, absolved or set free from its apparent opposition to our thought. This claim we can accept. But it is quite another to interpret absolute knowledge as a science in which the thinker is set free from the need for further experience. Science and experience are then welded in such a way, according to this second claim, that the novelty of experience is absorbed by science. The “new” is subordinated to an “old,” i.e., to a knowledge which makes the new superfluous. Hegel does appear to make this second claim as well as the first. He conceives of the fulfillment of experience as “the fact united and combined with the certainty of our own selves.”¹⁴⁴ This is the case when, for example, the Hegelian philosopher grasps the fact

¹⁴¹ “Dieser neue Gegenstand enthält die Nichtigkeit des ersten, er ist die über ihn gemachte Erfahrung.” Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, in *Werke*, 2.78. In this edition, “Nichtigkeit” is spelled “Richtigkeit” by a typographical error which subsequent editions have corrected. Baillie trans., p. 143. The italicization of “experience” is Baillie’s addition.

¹⁴² This is discussed below in chapter 5, esp. the section entitled “The *Phenomenology*’s Formula for Consciousness.”

¹⁴³ This is the title of the concluding section of the *Phänomenologie*, in *Werke*, 2.602-620; trans., pp. 789-808.

¹⁴⁴ “Das Princip der *Erfahrung* enthält die unendlich wichtige Bestimmung, dass für das Annehmen und Fürwahrhalten eines Inhalts der Mensch selbst *dabei seyn* müsse, bestimmter dass er solchen Inhalt mit *der Gewissheit seiner selbst* in Einigkeit und vereinigt finde.” Hegel, *System der Philosophie (Encyclopädie of 1830)*, in *Werke*, 8.50 (sec. 7); trans., *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 12.

of history in the unity of the philosophic consciousness. It can then appear as if the philosopher need no longer turn to the historical sources. Such a philosopher could remain aloof from historical study, for all that can be experienced in it the philosophic consciousness already possesses. This is the point at which Gadamer criticizes Hegel. Gadamer opposes the identity (but not the unity) of being and thought. He opposes this identity in the name of experience. Experience upsets the self-certainty of the knower, states Gadamer. He adds:

That is why the [Hegelian] dialectic of experience must end with the overcoming of all experience, which is attained in absolute knowledge, ie in the complete identity of consciousness and object. We can now understand why Hegel's application to history, insofar as he saw it as part of the absolute self-consciousness of philosophy, does not do justice to the hermeneutical consciousness.¹⁴⁵

Gadamer's point is that, in Hegel's concept of absolute knowledge, there is no longer any place for experience. To be sure, he would agree with Hegel that the essence of experience is the appropriation of the new. Gadamer describes it as an "Erleiden," something which one undergoes.¹⁴⁶ In a similar way, Hegel speaks of the "Gegenstoss" or "counter-thrust" which is received when the subject of a sentence passes into the predicate. The predicate (rather than the subject) appears as the real content of the sentence.¹⁴⁷ In short, there is for both Hegel and Gadamer an element of the passive in experience. In the concept of experience, subjectivity is overcome in the appearance of the new, the manifestation of a novelty which then is appropriated in consciousness. The difference between Hegel and Gadamer consists in this, that for Hegel, the passivity of experience, the sense in which what is experienced is alien to the one who suffers it, is overcome in thought. This is more than the appropriation which Gadamer is willing to concede. The experience of history as something alien to the thinker is overcome for Hegel in the self-consciousness of philosophy, to which nothing human can ever be alien. Gadamer opposes this in the name of hermeneutical consciousness. He insists that experience is not something which can be overcome, but is that which opens one to further experience. Unlike Hegel, who speaks of the science of experience, Gadamer claims that it is the nature of experience to stand in irreconcilable opposition to scientific knowledge. He would prefer to speak of the dialectic of experience. In this dialectic,

¹⁴⁵ "Daher muss die Dialektik der Erfahrung mit der Überwindung aller Erfahrung enden, die im absolute Wissen, d.h. in der vollständigen Identität von Bewusstsein und Gegenstand erreicht ist. Wir werden von da aus begreifen können, warum die Anwendung, die Hegel auf die Geschichte macht, indem er sie im absoluten Selbstbewusstsein der Philosophie begriffen sieht, dem hermeneutischen Bewusstsein nicht gerecht wird." Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, pp. 337-338; trans., p. 319.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 440-441; trans., p. 422.

¹⁴⁷ Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, in *Werke*, 2.56; trans., p. 119.

experience is not negated by its absorption into systematic knowledge, but prepares one to welcome new experiences.¹⁴⁸

Thus in the matter of experience, Gadamer distances himself from Hegel. But this distance scarcely disturbs the affinity between the two thinkers. Although they differ in their description of the goal to which experience tends, both assign a central role to experience. Both are committed to the empiricism of which Aristotle speaks in the Posterior Analytics. This is the experience of the one or of the universal which is the soul's synthesis of its myriad perceptions.¹⁴⁹ And both Hegel and Gadamer regard dialectic as intrinsically linked to experience. Knowledge does not consist of a single experience, but rather lies in the dialectical movement of the whole, as one experience confronts another, adjusting, sharpening, refining it. This is akin to the Platonic doctrine of the concatenation of ideas. In sum, both Hegel and Gadamer regard themselves as heirs of classical thought. And in this they stand together in opposition to the situated subjectivity of a thinker like Taylor, for whom the bond between the universal and experience, between being and thought, has been broken.

IV.2.C. Tradition as Concept and as Doctrine

It is finally in Hegel's doctrine of the unity of being and thought that we find the ontological basis for the rehabilitation of tradition. One cannot assert the intelligibility of history, as Hegel did, without overstepping the limits of what can be empirically verified by experimental science. An affirmation of the rationality of being – whether that being is understood as a correspondence with thought or as that which, in the Heideggerian sense, eludes conceptualization – underlies Hegel's efforts to think historically. Truth is historical, and upon that assertion the philosophic rehabilitation of tradition stands. Tradition, which was denied philosophic value in the thought of the Enlightenment on the grounds that the claim of the past is inferior to the rational transparency of present insight, receives in the hands of Hegel a new justification. The justification takes the form of, first, a re-discovery of the wealth of Greek thought; second, an inference that the entirety of past thought is part of the movement of spirit; and third, a belief that spirit is

¹⁴⁸ Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, p. 338; trans., p. 319. Gadamer, alluding to the doctrine of bad or false infinity in Hegel's Logik, describes himself (in contrast to Hegel) as an advocate of the bad infinite (see above, footnote 84). This bad infinite is, in Hegel's eyes, a mere abstraction from the finite; but for Gadamer, it is the infinity of dialogue, an infinity glimpsed in our own finite dialogues (Gadamer and Habermas, Das Erbe Hegels, p. 39; trans., Reason in the Age of Science, p. 40). Instead of the full reconciliation of opposites proclaimed by Hegel, Gadamer sees the reverse: the endlessly progressive drive of opposing movements and claims to power of the "schlechte Unendlichkeit" (Gadamer, "Über das Philosophische in den Wissenschaften und die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Philosophie," in Gadamer, Vernunft im Zeitalter der Wissenschaft. Aufsätze (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), p. 26; trans., Reason in the Age of Science, p. 16).

¹⁴⁹ Thus Gadamer (Wahrheit und Methode, pp. 333-335; trans., pp. 314-316) cites with approval Aristotle's image of the experience of sense-perception as a rout in battle, stopped by first one man making a stand and then another, until the battle order has been restored (Posterior Analytics 100^a11-12). See above, footnote 122.

the continuum linking past and present. In the past, then, one finds not an alien world but the presence of reason in its previous guises.

The advantage of this philosophical rehabilitation of tradition for the theology of tradition is that it is more in harmony with Christian revelation than those philosophies which deny the unity of being and thought. If history and tradition do not have something inherently rational about them, there is no philosophical reason for turning to tradition in order to learn about our origin, meaning, and purpose. One is tempted instead to look only to the future, as the realm in which meaning and purpose are to be created by human beings. Only in the future will the actual be rational. The past offers, at most, only clues to the common meanings which have bound subjective humanity together in occasional communities of interest. One can doubtless pick up these threads, so to speak, and weave them in the present for the sake of a persuasive argument. But there is no ontological reason why anyone should be persuaded. In contrast to this view, the Hegelian doctrine affirms not only the rationality of the actual, but (in a way which would sound triumphalistic on the lips of a Catholic) points to Christianity as the absolute religion. To be sure, Hegel would deny the triumphalist impulse. His Christianity subordinates the transcendence of God to an immanence which is humanly realizable. But he did affirm that in the incarnation, the absolute spirit which is reason itself has become one with humanity. The unfolding of Christianity manifests, in a pre-eminent way, the unfolding of reason.

In our analyses we saw how Catholic theologians of the Tübingen school began to appropriate the heritage of Hegel's thought. That thought provided them with a way of conceptualizing both the development of tradition and the modern application of it. Both development and application, the theologians said, proceed dialectically. The development of tradition occurs, Möhler stated, as interpretations of the faith are articulated in an effort to understand it. These interpretations may clash, as we saw in the example of the Christological debates. The clash of interpretations forces the interpreters to return to the faith itself for better concepts. In the articulation of them we find preserved the traces of the prior and inadequate formulations. The modern application of tradition also proceeds dialectically, we can say in a paraphrase of Kuhn, in that the relation between the believer and divine tradition parallels the relation between subject and object. The two appear to be irreconcilably opposed. Yet that opposition is overcome in the speculative concept, by which is meant that movement of thought in which oppositions are drawn together in a relative unity. The Catholic theologians stated the relative nature of this unity, denying the absolute identity posited by Hegel. But they affirmed, with the philosopher, the central idea that in Christian revelation we find the thought of God unfolded before human eyes.

The question that remains is, to what extent has the divine thought been unfolded? Here Hegel offers what is perhaps the idea most applicable to the theology of tradition. When he speaks of the "strenuous toil of conceptual reflection," the "Anstrengung des Begriffs," he means that in conceptual thought, that is, in language, the truth can be expressed.¹⁵⁰ This can be extended to every subject matter, but we are thinking here

¹⁵⁰ Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, in *Werke*, 2.54; trans., p. 116.

especially of Christian tradition. In language, in doctrine, the truth of tradition becomes manifest. Christian tradition must not be considered a vague heritage or force which has shaped, more or less unconsciously, all life and thought. To speak of it that way is to shirk the “strenuous toil of conceptual reflection.” Instead, Christian tradition poses a challenge which is not least of all intellectual. The challenge is to grasp and express tradition so that it might not remain vague and irrational. Without such grasp and expression it cannot be shared. Catholic theology, we can state by way of anticipation, has defined tradition as doctrine.¹⁵¹ Tradition is known, the theologians imply, insofar as it is reflected in the teachings of the Church. To this extent Catholic theology has risen to the Hegelian challenge of grasping and expressing tradition in a strenuously conceptual manner. Can we not see a kinship between Hegel’s emphasis on the concept and theology’s definition of tradition as doctrine? Is it not fair to say that, just as Hegel demands strenuous conceptual reflection, so the theologians of tradition call for strenuous doctrinal reflection? Do we stray far from Hegel’s spirit when we try to understand Christian tradition, defined as doctrine, along the lines of the “Anstrengung des Begriffs”?

Hegel, we must recall, described a dialectical relation between Historical force and its expression.¹⁵² The forces of history are known only insofar as they are expressed. This point accords well with Catholic theology’s concept of tradition as that which finds expression in Church teaching. But Catholic theology cannot overlook Hegel’s dialectical twist: the expressions by which history is known cannot exhaust history’s force. The teachings of the Church, we can say by extension, often give an insufficient emphasis to what deserves the name of Christian tradition.¹⁵³ When this occurs, it can seem that the parallel which we have drawn between the Hegelian concept and Christian doctrine elevates the latter to a kind of absolute knowledge. Then the ambiguity of absolute knowledge comes into play. Is the appropriation of tradition by Catholic theology a pure knowledge which unlocks the treasures of revelation by dissolving their seeming opposition to thought? Or is it, in addition, a knowledge which brings thought to an end by setting it free from the need for further experience? Is the transformation of tradition into doctrine the end of experience, and thus the end of tradition as a living thing?

These questions seemingly draw us far afield from a purely philosophical rehabilitation of tradition. But they steer us, at the same time, back toward philosophy – toward the philosophic concept of experience. What is the significance of present experience for a philosophic rehabilitation of tradition? Martin Heidegger, criticizing

¹⁵¹ See A Reconsideration of the Modern Theology of Tradition, esp. the section entitled “Problems Posed by Scholastic Terminology,” footnote 19.

¹⁵² See Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Decline of Tradition, esp. the section entitled “Historical Force and Its Expression in Droysen.”

¹⁵³ This has been conceded by Catholic theologians. See A Reconsideration of the Modern Theology of Tradition, esp. the section entitled “Franzelin’s Insistence on the Independence of the Remote Rule,” footnote 33.

Hegel in the name of experience, touched upon this problem. Are the knowledge of Hegel and the experience of Heidegger incompatible? To this question we now turn.