

G.W.F. HEGEL: “Absolute Knowing,” from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Chapter VIII (1807).

Translated by KENLEY R. DOVE

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G.W.F. HEGEL: “ABSOLUTE KNOWING”
FROM THE *PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT*, CHAPTER VIII (1807)
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In Revealed Religion Spirit has not yet overcome its consciousness as such. In other words, Spirit’s actual self-consciousness is not the object of its consciousness. Here Spirit itself in general and the stages differentiating themselves within it are represented pictorially and take the form of objectness. The *content* represented is absolute Spirit. All that remains [to be done] is to eliminate this mere form. Or, more precisely, because this form pertains to *consciousness as such*, its truth must have already become evident in the development of the shapes of consciousness.

This overcoming of the object of consciousness must not be confused with that one-way process in which the object showed itself returning into the Self. It must be taken more definitely. The object must have presented itself to consciousness not only as something which is, as such, evanescent; more importantly, it must be evident that it is the alienation [or externalization] of self-consciousness which establishes thinghood, and that this alienation has not merely a negative but also a positive significance. The significance of alienation must be not only for us or in itself; it must also be for consciousness itself. The object’s negative aspect—its self-elimination—does have positive significance *for consciousness* (or consciousness *knows* the nothingness of the object) in virtue of the fact that, on the one hand, consciousness alienates its self—for in this alienation consciousness establishes *itself* as object, or, because of the indivisible unity of *for-itselfness*, consciousness establishes the object as its self—; on the other hand, the fact that consciousness has, by the same token, also eliminated and reappropriated this alienation and objectness, is, at the same time, another stage in the process whereby the object eliminates itself, [namely, the stage in virtue of which] consciousness is with itself in *its* otherness as such.

This is the movement of *consciousness*; in it, consciousness is the totality of its stages.

Consciousness accordingly must have related to the object in terms of the totality of its determinations, and must have grasped it in terms of each determination. *In itself*, the *object* is constituted as Spiritual Essence by this totality of its determinations; for consciousness, the object comes to be this Spiritual Essence in truth when every single determination of the object is apprehended as a determination of the Self, that is, through the just mentioned Spiritual mode of relating to determinations.

Thus the object [as such] is partly *immediate* Being, or a thing in general—the correlative of immediate consciousness; partly a [movement of] becoming other than itself, the relation or *Being for another* and *for-itselfness* of the object [i.e.,] determinateness—the correlative of Perception; partly *Essence* or [the object] as something universal—the correlative of Understanding. The object as a whole is the inferential process or the movement of the Universal through determination to individuality, as well as the reverse movement, from individuality through eliminated individuality (or determination) to the universal.

Consciousness must, then, know the object as its self in terms of these three determinations. The knowing under discussion here is not, however, knowing as a pure Conception of the object.

Rather, the knowing in question is only to be exhibited in the form of consciousness's developmental Shapes. That is why the object does not yet appear in consciousness as such as the Spiritual Essentiality we just mentioned; consciousness's mode of relating to the object does not involve consideration of it in this totality as such, nor in the pure Conceptual form of this totality. As relating to the object, consciousness is instead partly a shape of consciousness in general and partly a plurality of such Shapes, which *we* gather together. In this plurality, the totality of the stages of the object and of consciousness's mode of relating can only be exhibited when [this] totality is resolved into its stages.

With regard to the dimension of grasping the object [as a totality], as it takes place in the Shape of consciousness, it will therefore suffice to recall those earlier shapes of such grasping which have already come up.

As regards the object then, so far as it is immediate, an *indifferent Being*, we saw observing Reason *seek* and *find* its self in such an indifferent thing, i.e., we saw it conscious of its doing as something external [to it] just as it is conscious of the object merely as something immediate.

At the apex of its development we also saw the determination of observing Reason expressed in the infinite judgment, that the *Being of 'P is a thing*.

And, indeed, a sensible immediate thing: when 'P is called *soul*, it is, to be sure, also represented as a thing: but it is represented as a thing which is invisible, intangible, etc., and therefore it is not, in point of fact, represented as immediate Being, and not as what one ordinarily means by the word "thing."

Taken literally, that judgment is dull and devoid of Spirit, or, better, it is Spiritual emptiness itself. But in terms of its *Concept*, it is really a wellspring of Spirit and wit, and this *inner* dimension of the judgment, not yet *present* in the judgment as expressed, is what the two other stages to be considered bring out.

The thing is 'P; in point of fact, however, the thing is eliminated in this infinite judgment. In itself, the thing is nothing; it only has significance in relation, only *through the 'P and its reference* to the thing.

This stage presented itself for consciousness in pure insight and enlightenment. Things are purely and simply *useful*, and are only to be considered in terms of their utility.

The *cultivated* self-consciousness that has passed through the world of self-estranged Spirit has [through its alienation] produced its thing as its self. Thus it still retains its self in the thing and knows the non-independence of the thing; in other words, it knows that the thing is essentially no more than a *Being for something other than itself*. Or, to express the *relation* more completely (i.e., what here uniquely constitutes the nature of the object): consciousness takes the thing to be *something existing for itself*, it announces sense-certainty as absolute truth, but this same *for-itselfness* is taken to be a merely evanescent stage, which passes over into its opposite, into the [already] superseded mode of Being for another.

But even here knowledge of the thing is not yet complete. The thing must be known not merely in terms of the immediacy of Being and of determinacy, but also, as *essence* or *something inner*, i.e., as Self. This is present in *moral self-consciousness*. This [shape of consciousness] knows its knowing

as the *absolute Essentiality*, i.e., it knows *Being* exclusively as pure will or pure knowing. It is nothing but this mere will and knowing. To anything other than itself only inessential Being is attributed, i.e., it is not regarded as Being existing *in itself* but only as the empty husk of Being. To the extent that the *existence* in moral consciousness's world picture devolves from the Self, that *existence* is to the same extent taken back into itself. Finally, as conscience, it is no longer this continuously oscillating process of placing and displacing existence and the Self. Instead it knows that its *existence* as such is this pure certainty of its self. The object-like element in which conscience, as acting, projects itself, is nothing other than the Self's pure knowing of itself.

These are the stages which make up the reconciliation of Spirit with the consciousness distinctive of Spirit. By themselves they are separate: the force of this reconciliation is constituted by their Spiritual Unity alone. The last of these stages, however, necessarily is this Unity itself, which, as has been made clear, really combines all stages within itself. Spirit certain of its self in its existence has for its element of *existence* nothing but this knowing of itself. The declaration that it does what it does in the conviction of duty, this language of Spirit is the only aspect of its acting that counts.

It is acting which, as something existing in itself, first breaks up the simplicity of the Concept and is [also] the return out of this sundered state. This first movement converts itself into the second when the element of recognizing posits itself as a *simple* knowing of duty over and against difference and bifurcation. Since bifurcation inheres in the nature of action as such, it accordingly forms an actuality rigidly opposed to action. In forgiveness, however, we saw how this hardness is renounced by its self and alienates itself. For self-consciousness, actuality, [even] as *immediate existence*, thus has no other significance [here] than to be pure knowing; likewise, as *determinate* existence, or as relation, the self-counterposing actuality is a knowing of this purely singular Self, on the one hand, and a knowing of knowing as something universal on the other. With this it is *eo ipso* posited that the *third* stage, *universality* or the *Essence*, counts as nothing but *knowing* for each of the two counterposed selves. Finally the two selves also eliminate the empty opposition still remaining and now are the knowing of the 'I' = 'I,' this singular Self which immediately is pure knowing, i.e., something universal.

This reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness accordingly shows itself to be brought about through a doubled dimension, once in religious Spirit, the other time in consciousness itself as such. The doubled dimensions differentiate themselves from one another in that the one is this reconciliation in the form of *in-itselfness*, the other in the form of *for-itselfness*. As they were considered, they initially fall apart; in the order in which the shapes of consciousness came before us, consciousness had long since come to [1] the separate stages of these shapes and [2] their unification, before Religion, too, gave its object the shape of actual self-consciousness. [But] the unification of the two dimensions has not yet been exhibited. Precisely this is what concludes this series of the shapes of Spirit; for in this unification Spirit comes to the point of knowing itself not merely as it is *in itself*, i.e., in terms of its absolute content, nor merely as it is *for itself*, i.e., in terms of its contentless form (the dimension of self-consciousness), but as it is *in and for itself*.

In itself, however, this unification has already taken place. Indeed, this also took place in Religion, in the return of the representation into self-consciousness. But that unification was not in accord with the appropriate form, for the religious dimension is the dimension of the *In-itself*, which

is counterposed to the movement of self-consciousness. The unification hence belongs to this other dimension, which is, within the opposition, the dimension of reflection within itself. This is therefore the dimension which contains its self and its counterpart, and not merely *in itself*, i.e., in the general way, but [also] *for itself*, i.e., developed and differentiated. The content, as well as the other dimension of self-conscious Spirit, in so far as this dimension is the other dimension, is present in its completeness and has been shown. The unification still lacking is the simple unity of the Concept. This Concept is also present already in the dimension of self-consciousness itself; but as it came up in the previous stage, the Concept, as in all other stages, has the form of being a *particular shape of consciousness*.

The Concept [in the stage antecedent to Religion] is therefore that part of the Shape of self-certain Spirit which remains fixated in its own Concept and has been called the *beautiful soul*. In other words the beautiful soul is this Concept's knowing of its self; in its pure transparent unity—[as] the self-consciousness which knows this pure knowing of *pure inwardness* as Spirit—it is not merely the intuition of the divine, it is the divine self-intuition.

When this Concept remains firmly opposed to its own realization, it is the one-dimensional Shape whose disappearance into empty vapor we witnessed. But we also saw its positive alienation and progression. By means of this realization, the self-persistence of this objectless self-consciousness, i.e., the determinacy of the Concept, eliminates itself in deference to its fulfillment. The Concept's self-consciousness attains the form of universality and what it retains is its true Concept, the Concept which has attained its realization. Self-consciousness is this Concept in its truth, namely, in the unity with its alienation—the knowing of pure knowing, not an abstract *Essence*, which duty is, but of pure knowing as an *Essence* which is *this* knowing, *this* pure self-consciousness, which is therefore at the same time a genuine object; for the Concept is the Self existing for itself.

This Concept gave itself its fulfillment, on the one hand, in self-certain Spirit *acting* and, on the other, in Religion. In Religion the Concept attained the absolute *content as content*, i.e., in the form of *representation*, the form of otherness for consciousness. In the first of these two Shapes, however, the form is the Self itself, for this Shape contains *acting* Spirit certain of itself; the Self enacts the life of absolute Spirit. As we see, this Shape is that simple Concept; but here it relinquishes its eternal Essence [and] *exists as something definite*, i.e., it acts. The Concept's *bifurcating* or self-projecting aspect is due to the purity of the Concept, for this purity is absolute abstraction or negativity.

The element of its actuality or of Being is likewise present within the Concept in virtue of pure knowing itself, for pure knowing is the simple *immediacy* which is *Being* and *existence* as well as *Essence*. Pure knowing's dimension of *Being* and *existence* is negative thinking, its dimension of *Essence* [however] is [that] positive thinking [itself]. Finally, this existence is equally the reflection out of pure knowing—be it taken as existence or as duty—and into itself, i.e., it is evil. This internalization constitutes the *opposition* of the *Concept* and it thus marks the appearance of that pure knowing of the Essence which *does not act and is not actual*. But when the Concept makes its appearance in this opposition it *eo ipso* participates in it; the pure knowing of the Essence has, *in itself*, alienated its simplicity, for the pure knowing of the Essence is the *bifurcating*, i.e., the negativity, which the Concept is. Insofar as this

bifurcating is the process of *coming-to-be for itself*, it is evil; so far as it is the *In-itself*, it is the enduring good.

Now what initially takes place *in itself* is at the same time *for consciousness* and is itself doubled as well as doubled for consciousness since it is consciousness's *for-itselfness*, i.e., its own doing. What is, *in itself*, already posited now repeats itself as a knowing of it by consciousness and a conscious doing. Each of the doubled dimensions absolves the other of that determinate independence in which one makes its appearance vis-à-vis the other. This absolution is the same renunciation of the Conceptual one-dimensionality that, *in itself*, constitutes the beginning. But now it is consciousness's own renunciation, just as the Concept renounced is its own.

That *In-itself* of the beginning is, as negativity, something which is, in truth, also *mediated*; it now *posits* itself as it is in truth, and the *negative* dimension, as the *determinacy* of each In-itself for the other and in itself, is something self-eliminating. The one of these two parts of the opposition is the inequality between *Being-within-itself* in its *separateness*, and universality; the other is the inequality between its abstract universality and the Self. The first withdraws from its for-itselfness, and alienates it-self, i.e., confesses; the second renounces the harsh rigidity of its abstract universality and withdraws thereby from its lifeless Self and its inert universality. Accordingly, the first has completed itself through that stage of universality, which is Essence, and the second through that universality which is Self. Through this movement of action, Spirit has come forth as a pure universality of knowing which is self-consciousness,—as a self-consciousness which is the simple unity of knowing. For Spirit is Spirit only when it exists definitely, raises its existence into *thought* and therewith into absolute *counterposition*, and, from this state, returns to its self in and through this very counterposition.

Therefore what was in religion content, a form of representing an *other*, is here the Self's very own doing. The connection between the two, that the content is the *Self's* own *doing*, is established by the Concept, for this Concept is, as we see, the knowing of the Self's internal doing as that which exhausts all essentiality and all existence, the knowing of *this subject* as *substance* and of substance as this knowing of its doing.

What we have contributed here is exclusively: [1] the *collection* of the separate stages, each of which exhibits in its principle the life of Spirit as a whole, and [2] the retention of the Concept in the form of the Concept, whose content would have in any case rendered itself accessible in those stages, whereas the Concept itself otherwise would have rendered itself accessible merely in the form of a *Shape of consciousness*.

This last Shape of Spirit is *absolute knowing*. It is the Spirit which simultaneously gives its complete and true content the form of Self, and thereby realizes its Concept and also remains within its Concept in this realization; it is Spirit knowing itself in the shape of Spirit, *knowing which comprehends*. It is not merely [the] *truth* which is, *in itself*, fully equivalent to *certainty*: [here] truth also has the *shape* of Spirit's certainty of itself, it is in its existence, i.e., it is for knowing Spirit in the form of Spirit's self-knowing. Truth is the *content* which in Religion is still unequal to its certainty. But this equivalence is constituted when the content obtains and preserves the Shape of Self. What has thereby become the element of existence or the *form of objectness* for consciousness is the same as what Essence itself is,

namely, the Concept. Spirit *appearing* to consciousness in this element, or what is here the same, Spirit produced in this element by consciousness, *is Science*.

The nature of this knowing, its stages and movement, has therefore made itself accessible in such a way that knowing for consciousness is the pure *for-itselfness* of self-consciousness. This knowing is ‘P which is *this* and no other ‘T just as it is also immediately *mediated*, i.e., eliminated, *universal* ‘I.’

Consciousness’s knowing has a *content* which it *distinguishes* from itself; for this knowing is pure negativity or self-bifurcating. It is *consciousness*. In its difference, this content is itself the ‘I,’ for it is the movement of eliminating its self, i.e., the content is the same pure negativity which ‘T’ is. ‘T’ is reflected within itself in the *content* as in what is differentiated; but the content is only *comprehended* when ‘T’ is with its self in its otherness. More precisely formulated, this content is none other than the just-mentioned movement itself, for the content is the Spirit which traverses itself—and indeed *for itself* as Spirit—in virtue of the fact that it has the Shape of the Concept in its own objectness.

As to the *existence* of this Concept, however, *Science* does not appear in time and actuality until Spirit has come to this [level of] consciousness concerning itself. As the Spirit that knows what it is, it does not exist earlier or anywhere except after the completion of the labor of coercing Spirit’s incomplete Shaping, of securing the Shape of *Spiritual Essence* for Spirit’s consciousness and, in this way, of equating Spirit’s *self-consciousness* with its *consciousness*.

Differentiated into its stages, Spirit existing in and for itself is knowing existing *for itself*, *Conceptual activity* [or comprehension] in general, which has, as such, not yet reached substance, i.e., is not yet, in its self, *absolute knowing*.

It is to be noted that knowing substance comes to exist in actuality earlier than the form or the Conceptual Shape of this same actuality. For substance is the still undeveloped *In-itself*, i.e., the ground and Concept in its as yet unmoved simplicity: substance is therefore Spirit’s *inwardness*, i.e., its Self, which does not yet *exist* as something definite. What *does exist* definitely exists as something simple and immediate but still undeveloped, i.e., the object of representing consciousness in general. Cognition—because it is the Spiritual consciousness to which what *exists in itself* only exists in so far as it is *Being for the Self* and Being of the *Self*, i.e., Concept—initially has, for this reason, only an impoverished object, in contrast to which substance and the consciousness of substance is richer. [But] the manifestation which substance has in this consciousness is in fact a hiddenness, for substance is the mode of *Being* which is still *without self*, and what is manifest is only consciousness’s certainty of itself. Consequently it is at first only the *abstract stages* of substance that pertain to *self-consciousness*. But when these stages propel themselves forward as pure movements, self-consciousness enriches itself until it has purged consciousness of all substance, absorbed the entire Essential structure of substance into itself and—since this negative way of relating to objectness is also positive, i.e., a positing—until it has generated substance out of itself and therewith reproduced it for consciousness. In the *Concept* which knows itself as Concept, the *stages* thus make their appearance earlier than the *completed whole*, whose becoming is the movement of these stages. In *consciousness*, on the one hand, the whole, albeit uncomprehended, is earlier than the stages.

Time is the *Concept* itself *existing* as something definite and representing itself to consciousness as empty intuition. That is the reason why Spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time so long as it does not *grasp its* pure Concept, i.e., so long as it does not annihilate time. Time is the pure Self *externally* intuited and *not grasped* by the Self; it is the merely intuited Concept. When this Concept does grasp itself, it eliminates its temporal form, comprehends intuiting, and is intuiting comprehended and comprehending.

Time accordingly appears as the fate and necessity of that Spirit which is not completed within itself. It appears as the necessity of enriching the participation which self-consciousness has in consciousness, the necessity of setting into motion the *immediacy of the In-itself* (the form in which substance is in consciousness) or, inversely, when the In-itself is taken as *something internal*, time appears as the necessity of realizing and revealing what is at first merely *internal*, i.e., of claiming the In-itself for Spirit's self-certainty.

For this reason it must be said that nothing is *known* which is not in *experience* or, as this is also expressed, which is not present as *felt truth*, as *inwardly revealed* eternity, as *presumed* sacrality, or whatever other expressions are used. For experience consists precisely in this: that the content—and the content is Spirit—is, *in itself*, substance and therefore an *object of consciousness*. But this substance which Spirit is, is Spirit's coming to be what it is *in itself*; and Spirit in itself is *Spirit* in truth only when it exists as this becoming reflecting itself into itself. In itself, Spirit is that same movement which cognition is—the transformation of that *In-itself* into a *For-itself*, of *substance* into *subject*, of the object of *consciousness* into an object of self-consciousness, i.e., into an object which is *eo ipso* eliminated, in other words into the *Concept*. Experience is the circle returning into itself which presupposes its beginning and attains it only in the end.

So far, then, as Spirit necessarily is this differentiation within itself, its intuited whole confronts its simple self-consciousness, and since the whole is something differentiated, it is accordingly differentiated into [1] its intuited pure Concept, i.e., time, and [2] the content, i.e., the *In-itself*. Substance, as subject, involves *the at first merely inner necessity* of presenting itself in terms of substance as that which it is *in itself*, as *Spirit*. But only the completed presentation in terms of objectness is at the same time the reflection of self-presenting substance, i.e., its coming to be self.

Consequently Spirit cannot attain its completion as self-conscious Spirit before it has completed itself *in itself*, i.e., as World-spirit. That is why the content of Religion expresses what *Spirit is* earlier in time than Science: but Science alone is Spirit's true knowing of Spirit itself.

The movement which extricates the form of Spirit's self-knowing is the labor accomplished by Spirit as *actual history*. The religious community, insofar as it is initially the substance of absolute Spirit, is the crude consciousness whose existence becomes more and more barbaric and hard with every deepening of its inner Spirit, and the inarticulate Self of this consciousness has a correspondingly harder labor with its Essence, the content of its consciousness which is foreign to it. Only after it has given up the hope of eliminating foreignness in an external, i.e., foreign manner, does consciousness turn to its self, to its own world and present epoch, and discover them as its property. This is because the foreign manner is, as eliminated, the return into self-consciousness. Therewith consciousness has

taken the first step in descending out of the world of [mere] intellect, or better, in Spiritualizing the abstract element of that world with actual self. Through observation it finds existence as thought and comprehends it and, inversely, it finds existence in its thinking. Thus when consciousness itself has initially expressed in an abstract way the immediate *unity* of thinking and *Being*, of abstract Essence and Self; and when it has reawakened the original sacral light in a purer form, namely as unity of extension and Being—for extension is the form of simplicity more nearly equal to pure thinking than light is—and has thus reawakened in thought the *substance* of dawn; then Spirit recoils at once from this abstract unity, from this substantiality *without self*, and asserts individuality against it. But it is only after Spirit has alienated this individuality in the process of cultivation, and has thereby constituted individuality as existence and permeated all existence with individuality, arrived at the thought of utility, and grasped, in absolute freedom, existence as its will, it is only then that Spirit exposes the thought of its innermost depth and expresses the Essence as ‘I = I.’ This ‘I = I’ is, however, the movement that reflects itself into itself; for since this equation, as absolute negativity, is the absolute difference, the self-equation of ‘I’ confronts this pure difference. This difference, as pure and at the same time object-like to the self-knowing Self, is to be expressed as *time*. Thus just as Essence was previously expressed as the unity of thinking and extension, it would now seem appropriate to take Self as the unity of thinking and time. But difference left to its self, time without halt or repose, coincides instead with its self. Time is the object-like repose of extension, whereas *extension* is the pure equality with its self, the ‘I.’

In other words, ‘I’ is not merely the Self; it is the *equality of the Self with itself*. This equality, however, is the complete and immediate unity with its self, i.e., *this subject* is just as much substance. Substance exclusively for itself would be [an] intuiting devoid of content, or the intuiting of a content that, as determinate, would only involve contingency and would be without necessity. Substance would only count as the absolute to the extent that it might be thought or intuited as the *absolute unity*, and because of its diversity all content would have to fall outside the substance and be attributed to reflection. But reflection is a process that does not pertain to substance, because substance [taken as an absolute] would not be subject, would not be comprehended as the process of reflecting about itself and into itself, i.e., it would not be comprehended as Spirit. But if a content were to be spoken of, the discussion would, on the one hand, serve merely to cast that content out into the empty void of the absolute; on the other hand, the content itself would only have been picked up in an external fashion from sense perception. Knowing would seem to have arrived at things, at the difference from its self and the difference between multiple things, but one would comprehend neither how nor whence.

As it has shown itself to us, however, Spirit is not merely the withdrawal of self-consciousness into its pure inwardness, nor is it the mere submergence of self-consciousness in substance and the nothingness of its difference. Spirit is rather *this movement* of the Self which alienates its self and submerges itself in its substance and which, as subject, [1] has gone out of this substance into itself, making it object and content, just as it also [2] eliminates the difference of objectness and content. That first reflection out of immediacy is the self-differentiation of the subject from its substance, the self-bifurcating Concept, the internalization and becoming of the pure ‘I.’ Since this difference is the pure doing of the ‘I = I,’ the Concept is the necessity and the dawning of that *existence* which has

substance for its Essence and subsists for itself. But as the subsistence of existence for itself is the Concept posited in determinacy, it is thereby also the movement of the Concept *in its self* descending into the simple substance. And this substance is subject only as this negativity and movement.

‘T’ does not have to fixate itself upon the *form* of *self-consciousness* in opposition to the form of substantiality and objectness, as if it were afraid of its alienation;—Spirit’s force is rather to remain equal to its self in its alienation, and, as that which exists *in-* and *for-itself*, also to posit for-itselfness merely as a stage, like in-itselfness. Nor is ‘T’ a third which casts differences back into the void of the absolute and pronounces their equality in that void. Knowing consists rather in this seeming inactivity which only considers how what is differentiated is moved by itself and returns to its unity.

In knowing, Spirit has therefore terminated the movement of its development in Shapes, in so far as knowing is afflicted with that difference of consciousness which is now overcome. Spirit has attained the pure element of its existence, the Concept. In terms of *freedom* and its *Being*, the content is the self-alienating Self, i.e., the *immediate* unity of self-knowing. The pure movement of this alienation, when considered in terms of its content, constitutes the necessity of the content itself. The diverse content is, as *determinate*, in relation and not in itself: it is its agitation to eliminate its self, in other words, it is *negativity*. Thus necessity or diversity is Self just as free Being is; and in the self-like *form* in which existence is immediately thought, the content is *Concept*. Therefore when Spirit has attained the Concept, it unfolds existence and movement in this ether of its life, and is *Science*. In Science, the stages of Spirit’s movement no longer present themselves as determinate *Shapes of consciousness* but rather, since the difference of consciousness has returned into the Self, as *determinate Concepts* and as a movement of these Concepts which is organic and founded in its self. Whereas every stage in the Phenomenology of Spirit is the difference of knowing and truth and the movement in which this difference eliminates itself, Science, on the other hand, contains neither this difference nor the eliminating of it. But since a scientific stage has the form of the Concept, it unites the object-like form of truth and the form of the knowing Self in an immediate unity. The scientific stage does not present itself as this movement that proceeds back and forth out of consciousness or representation into self-consciousness and vice versa; instead, the pure Shape of the scientific stage, liberated from its appearance in consciousness, i.e., the pure Concept and its progression, depends upon the pure determinacy of the stage and nothing else. Conversely, there corresponds to every abstract stage of Science a Shape of phenomenal Spirit in general. As definitely-existing Spirit is not richer than Science, so, too, this Spirit, in terms of its content, is not poorer. Cognition of the pure Concepts of Science in this form, as Shapes of consciousness, constitutes that dimension of the reality of Science in terms of which the Essence of Science, the Concept posited in Science in its simple mediation as *thinking*, separates the stages of this mediation and presents itself in terms of the internal opposition [of consciousness].

Science contains within itself this same necessity of alienating the form of the pure Concept and contains the transition of the Concept into *consciousness*. Precisely because it grasps its Concept, Spirit knowing its self is immediate equality with its self, which in the difference of this equality [i.e., the opposition of consciousness, the form of objectness], is the *certainty of what is immediate*, i.e., *sense-consciousness*—the beginning from which we have proceeded. This releasing of self-knowing Spirit from the [peculiar] form of its Self is the supreme freedom and security of Spirit’s self-knowledge.

Yet this alienation is still incomplete. It [still] expresses the *reference* of self-certainty to the object. And, just because it is involved in this reference, the object has not [yet] attained its full freedom. Knowing is acquainted not merely with itself but also with the negative dimension of its self, i.e., its limit. Knowing knowing its limit is knowing able to sacrifice itself. This self-sacrifice is the alienation in which Spirit presents its movement of becoming Spirit in the form of a *free contingent happening*, intuiting its pure *Self* as *time* external to it and likewise its *Being* as space. This last becoming of Spirit, nature, is its living immediate becoming. Nature, i.e., alienated Spirit, is in its own existence nothing but this eternal alienation of its *subsistence* and the movement which produces the *Subject*.

The other dimension of Spirit's becoming is the becoming that knows and mediates itself—Spirit alienated in time; but this alienation is just as much the alienation of its self; the negative dimension is the negative dimension of its self. This becoming presents an inert movement and succession of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with the complete richness of Spirit, moves so inertly precisely because the Self has to penetrate and digest this full richness of its substance. Since the completion of Spirit consists in *knowing* completely what *it is*, its substance, this knowing is accordingly Spirit's *internalization*, in which it gives up its existence and consigns its Shape to Recollection. In its internalization, Spirit is submerged in the night of its self-consciousness. But its existence, which has disappeared, is preserved in this Recollection. And this eliminated existence—which is the antecedent existence, but now reborn out of knowing—is the new existence, a new world and a new Shape of Spirit. In this new world, Spirit has to begin again in the immediacy of this Shape, and starting from this world, it has to bring itself to maturity once again, in a manner as naive and unprepossessing as if all that had gone on before were lost for it and as if it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But *Recollection* has preserved these Spirits and is the inner [dimension] and the form of substance—which is, indeed, higher. If therefore this Spirit, seeming to proceed merely from itself, recommences its process of civilization from the beginning, it is nevertheless at a higher level that Spirit now begins. The Spiritual realm which has civilized itself in this fashion in existence constitutes a succession in which one Spirit replaced the other and each appropriated from its antecedent the realm of world. The goal of this succession is the revelation of the depth, and this revelation is *the absolute Concept*; this revelation is consequently the eliminating of Spirit's depth, i.e., it is [1] its *extension*, the negativity of this inwardly existing 'I,' which is the 'I's alienation, i.e., substance—and [2] its *time*, whereby this alienation alienates itself in its self and thus exists as something to the Self in the extension as well as the depth of alienation. *The goal*, absolute knowing, i.e., Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, has for its pathway the Recollection of Spirits as they exist in themselves and as they achieve the organization of their realm. Their preservation in terms of the dimension of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency is history; in terms of the dimension of their comprehended organization, however, this preservation is the *Science of phenomenal knowing*. Both together, history comprehended, form the recollection and the Golgotha of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth and certainty of its throne, without which Spirit would be lifeless solitude; only—

from the cup of this, the realm of Spirits,
to Spirit foams its own infinity.¹

¹ From Schiller's poem *Die Freundschaft*: "Aus dem Kelch des ganzen Seelenreiches/Schäumt ihm—die Unendlichkeit."