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INTRODUCTION
TO THE READING OF
HEGEL

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LECTURES ON THE

Phenomenology of Spirit

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SUMMARY OF THE FIRST SIX CHAPTERS OF THE *PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT*

*Complete Text of the First Three Lectures
of the Academic Year 1937-1938*

We still have the last two chapters of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to read. Chapter VII is entitled "Religion"; Chapter VIII, "Das absolute Wissen," absolute Knowledge. This "absolute Knowledge" is nothing other than the complete System of Hegelian philosophy or "Science," which Hegel expounded later in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. In Chapter VIII, then, the problem is not to develop the *content* of absolute Knowledge. It is concerned only with this Knowledge itself, as a kind of "faculty." It is concerned with showing what this *Knowledge* must be, what the Man must be who is endowed with a Knowledge that permits him completely and adequately to reveal the *totality* of existing Being. In particular, it will be concerned with differentiating this absolute philosophical Knowledge from *another* Knowledge, which also claims to be absolute—the Knowledge implied in the Christian revelation and the theology that follows from it. Therefore, one of the principal themes of Chapter VIII is the comparison between Hegelian philosophy or "Science" and the Christian religion.

Now, in order to understand fully the essential character of these two phenomena and of the relations between them, one must consider them in their genesis.

The genesis of Christianity, of the "absolute *Religion*," starting from the most "primitive" religion, is described in Chapter VII. As for the genesis of Hegel's philosophy, one can say that the whole *Phenomenology*—and particularly Chapters I through VI, which we have already read—is nothing but a description of the genesis that culminates in the production of the *Phenomenology*,

which itself *describes* this *genesis* of philosophy and thus makes it possible by *understanding* its possibility. Chapters I through VI, which show how and why Man could finally reach absolute Knowledge, also complete the analysis of the Christian or absolute *Religion* given in Chapter VII. According to Hegel—to use the Marxist terminology—Religion is only an ideological superstructure that is born and exists solely in relation to a *real* substructure. This substructure, which supports both Religion and Philosophy, is nothing but the totality of human *Actions* realized during the course of universal history, that History in and by which Man has *created* a series of specifically *human Worlds*, essentially different from the natural World. It is these social Worlds that are reflected in the religious and philosophical ideologies, and therefore—to come to the point at once—*absolute* Knowledge, which reveals the *totality* of Being, can be realized only at the *end* of History, in the *last* World created by Man.

To understand what absolute Knowledge is, to know how and why this Knowledge has become possible, one must therefore understand the whole of universal history. And this is what Hegel has done in Chapter VI.

However, to understand the edifice of universal history and the process of its construction, one must know the materials that were used to construct it. These materials are men. To know what *History* is, one must therefore know what Man who realizes it is. Most certainly, man is something quite different from a brick. In the first place, if we want to compare universal history to the construction of an edifice, we must point out that men are not only the bricks that are used in the construction; they are also the masons who build it and the architects who conceive the plan for it, a plan, moreover, which is progressively elaborated during the construction itself. Furthermore, even as “brick,” man is essentially different from a material brick: even the human brick changes during the construction, just as the human mason and the human architect do. Nevertheless, there is something in Man, in every man, that makes him suited to participate—passively or actively—in the realization of universal history. At the *beginning* of this History, which ends finally in absolute Knowledge, there are, so to speak, the necessary and sufficient conditions. And Hegel

studies these conditions in the first four chapters of the *Phenomenology*.

Finally, Man is not only the material, the builder, and the architect of the historical edifice. He is also the one *for* whom this edifice is constructed: he lives in it, he *sees* and *understands* it, he *describes* and *criticizes* it. There is a whole category of men who do not actively participate in the historical construction and who are content to live in the constructed edifice and to *talk* about it. These men, who live somehow "above the battle," who are content to *talk* about things that they do not create by their *Action*, are Intellectuals who produce intellectuals' *ideologies*, which they take for philosophy (and pass off as such). Hegel describes and criticizes these ideologies in Chapter V.

Therefore, once again: the whole of the *Phenomenology*, summarized in Chapter VIII, must answer the question, "What is absolute Knowledge and how is it possible?"; that is to say: what must Man and his historical evolution be, so that, at a certain moment in that evolution, a human *individual*, by chance having the name of Hegel, sees that he has an *absolute* Knowledge—i.e., a Knowledge that reveals to him no longer a particular and momentary *aspect* of Being (which he mistakes for the totality of Being), but Being in its integral *whole*, as it is in and for itself?

Or again, to present the same problem in its Cartesian aspect: the *Phenomenology* must answer the question of the philosopher who believes he can attain the definitive or absolute truth: "I think, therefore I *am*; but *what* am I?"

The Cartesian reply to the philosophers' question, "What am I?"—the reply, "I am a thinking being"—does not satisfy Hegel.

Certainly, he must have said to himself, "I *am* a thinking being. But what interests me above all is that I am a *philosopher*, able to reveal the definitive *truth*, and hence endowed with an *absolute* Knowledge—that is, a *universally* and *eternally* valid Knowledge. Now, if *all* men are 'thinking beings,' I *alone*—at least for the moment—possess this Knowledge. By asking myself 'what am I?' and by answering 'a thinking being,' I therefore understand nothing, or very little, of myself.

"I am not only a thinking being. I am the bearer of an absolute Knowledge. And this Knowledge is actually, at the moment when

I think, incarnated in me, Hegel. Therefore, I am not only a thinking being; I am also—and above all—Hegel. What, then, is this Hegel?"

To begin with, he is a man of flesh and blood, who *knows* that he is such. Next, this man does not float in empty space. He is seated on a chair, at a table, writing with a pen on paper. And he *knows* that all these objects did not fall from the sky; he knows that those things are products of something called human *work*. He also knows that this work is carried out in a human *World*, in the bosom of a Nature in which he himself participates. And this World is present in his mind at the very moment when he writes to answer his "What am I?" Thus, for example, he hears sounds from afar. But he does not hear mere *sounds*. He *knows* in addition that these sounds are cannon shots, and he knows that the cannons too are products of some *Work*, manufactured in this case for a *Fight* to the death between men. But there is still more. He knows that he is hearing shots from Napoleon's cannons at the Battle of Jena. Hence he knows that he lives in a World in which Napoleon is acting.

Now, this is something that Descartes, Plato, and so many other philosophers did *not* know, *could* not know. And is it not because of this that Hegel attains that absolute Knowledge to which his predecessors *vainly* aspired?

Perhaps. But why then is it *Hegel* who attains it, and not some other of his contemporaries, all of whom know that there is a man named Napoleon? But *how* do they know him? Do they *truly* know him? Do they know *what* Napoleon is? Do they *understand* him?

Now, in fact, what is it to "understand" Napoleon, other than to understand him as the one who perfects the ideal of the French Revolution by *realizing* it? And can one understand this idea, this Revolution, without understanding the ideology of the *Aufklärung*, the Enlightenment? Generally speaking, to understand Napoleon is to understand him in relation to the whole of anterior historical evolution, to understand the whole of universal history. Now, almost none of the philosophers contemporary with Hegel posed this problem for himself. And none of them, except Hegel, resolved it. For Hegel is the only one able to accept, and to justify, Napoleon's existence—that is, to "deduce" it from the first principles

of his philosophy, his anthropology, his conception of history. The others consider themselves obliged to condemn Napoleon, that is, to condemn the historical *reality*; and their philosophical systems—by that very fact—are all condemned by that reality.

Is he not this *Hegel*, a thinker endowed with an *absolute* Knowledge, because on the one hand, he *lives* in Napoleon's time, and, on the other, is the *only* one to *understand* him?

This is precisely what Hegel says in the *Phenomenology*.

Absolute Knowledge became—*objectively*—possible because in and by Napoleon the *real* process of historical evolution, in the course of which man *created* new Worlds and *transformed* himself by creating them, came to its end. To reveal *this* World, therefore, is to reveal *the* World—that is, to reveal being in the *completed* totality of its spatial-temporal existence. And—*subjectively*—absolute Knowledge became possible because a man named Hegel was able to understand the *World* in which he lived and to understand *himself* as living in and understanding this World. Like each of his contemporaries, Hegel was a microcosm, who incorporated in *his* particular being the completed *totality* of the spatial-temporal realization of *universal* being. But he was the only one to *understand* himself as this whole, to give a correct and complete answer to the Cartesian question, "What am I?" By understanding himself through the understanding of the *totality* of the anthropogenetic historical process, which ends with Napoleon and his contemporaries, and by understanding this process through his understanding of *himself*, Hegel caused the completed whole of the universal real process to penetrate into his individual consciousness, and then he penetrated this consciousness. Thus this consciousness became just as total, as universal, as the process that it revealed by understanding itself; and this fully self-conscious consciousness is absolute Knowledge, which, by being developed in discourse, will form the content of absolute *philosophy* or Science, of that *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* that contains the sum of all possible knowledge.

Descartes' philosophy is insufficient because the answer that it gives to the "What am I?" was insufficient, incomplete from the beginning. To be sure, Descartes *could* not realize absolute, Hegelian philosophy. At the moment when he lived, history was not yet completed. Even if he had *fully* understood himself, then,

he would have conceived only a *part* of the human reality, and his system founded on this understanding of himself would necessarily be insufficient and false, to the extent that it lays claim to *totality*, as every system worthy of the name must. But it must also be said that Descartes—for reasons that Hegel explains—erred in answering his initial question. And that is why his answer, “I am a *thinking* being,” is not only too summary, but also false, because it is one-sided.

Starting with “I think,” Descartes fixed his attention only on the “think,” completely neglecting the “I.” Now, this I is essential. For Man, and consequently the Philosopher, is not only Consciousness, but also—and above all—*Self-Consciousness*. Man is not only a being that *thinks*—i.e., reveals Being by *Logos*, by *Speech* formed of words that have a *meaning*. He reveals in addition—also by *Speech*—the being that *reveals* Being, the being that he himself is, the revealing being that he *opposes* to the revealed being by giving it the name *Ich* or *Selbst*, I or Self.

To be sure, there is no human existence without *Bewusstsein*, without *Consciousness* of the external world. But for there *truly* to be human existence, capable of becoming a *philosophic* existence, there must also be *Self-Consciousness*. And for there to be *Self-Consciousness*, *Selbst-bewusstsein*, there must be this *Selbst*, this specifically human thing that is revealed by man and reveals itself when man says, “I. . . .”

Before analyzing the “*I think*,” before proceeding to the Kantian theory of *knowledge*—i.e., of the relation between the (conscious) *subject* and the (conceived) object, one must ask what this subject is that is revealed in and by the *I* of “I think.” One must ask when, why, and how man is led to say “I. . . .”

For there to be *Self-Consciousness*, there must—first of all—be *Consciousness*. In other words, there must be revelation of Being by *Speech*, if only by the one word *Sein*, Being—revelation of a Being that will later be called “*objective, external, non-human* being,” “*World*,” “*Nature*,” and so on, but for the moment is still *neutral*, since as yet there is no *Self-Consciousness* and consequently no opposition of subject to object, of I to non-I, of the human to the natural.

Hegel studies the most elementary form of *Consciousness*, of knowledge of Being, and of its revelation by *Speech*, in Chapter I,

given the name "Sensual Certainty" (*sinnliche Gewissheit*). I shall not repeat what he says there. What interests us for the moment is that, starting from *this* Consciousness, from *this* knowledge, there is no way to reach Self-Consciousness. To reach it, one must start from something *other* than *contemplative* knowledge of Being, other than its *passive* revelation, which leaves Being as it is in itself, independent of the knowledge that reveals it.

Indeed, we all know that the man who attentively *contemplates* a thing, who wants to see it as it is without changing anything, is "*absorbed*," so to speak, by this contemplation—that is, by this *thing*. He *forgets himself*, he thinks only about the *thing* being contemplated; he thinks neither about his *contemplation*, nor—and even less—about himself, his "I," his *Selbst*. The more he is conscious of the *thing*, the less he is conscious of *himself*. He may perhaps talk about the thing, but he will never talk about himself; in his discourse, the word "I" will not occur.

For this word to appear, something other than purely passive contemplation, which only *reveals* Being, must also be present. And this other thing, according to Hegel, is *Desire*, *Begierde*, of which he speaks in the beginning of Chapter IV.

Indeed, when man experiences a desire, when he is hungry, for example, and wants to eat, and when he becomes aware of it, he necessarily becomes aware of *himself*. Desire is always revealed as *my* desire, and to reveal desire, one must use the word "I." Man is *absorbed* by his contemplation of the thing in vain; as soon as *desire* for that thing is born, he will immediately be "brought back to *himself*." Suddenly, he will see that, in addition to the thing, there is his contemplation, there is *himself*, which is *not* that thing. And the thing appears to him as an *object* (*Gegen-stand*), as an *external* reality, which is not in him, which is not *he* but a *non-I*.

Hence, it is not purely cognitive and passive contemplation that is at the base of Self-Consciousness—i.e., of truly *human* existence (and therefore—in the end—of philosophical existence), but *Desire*. (And, in parenthesis, that is why human existence is possible only where there is something called *Leben*, biological, *animal* life. For there is no Desire without Life.)

Now, what is Desire—one need only think of the desire called "hunger"—but the desire to *transform* the contemplated thing by an action, to overcome it in its being that is unrelated to mine

and independent of me, to *negate* it in its independence, and to assimilate it to myself, to make it *mine*, to absorb it in and by my *I*? For Self-Consciousness, and hence philosophy, to exist, then, there must be in Man not only *positive*, passive contemplation, which merely *reveals* being, but also *negating* Desire, and hence *Action* that *transforms* the given being. The human I must be an I of *Desire*—that is, an *active* I, a *negating* I, an I that *transforms* Being and creates a new being by destroying the given being.

Now, what is the I of Desire—the I of a hungry man, for example—but an *emptiness* greedy for content; an emptiness that wants to be filled by what is full, to be filled by *emptying* this fullness, to put itself—once it is filled—in the place of this fullness, to occupy with *its* fullness the emptiness caused by overcoming the fullness that was *not* its own? Therefore, to speak generally: if the true (absolute) philosophy, unlike Kantian and pre-Kantian philosophy, is not a philosophy of *Consciousness*, but rather a philosophy of *Self-Consciousness*, a philosophy *conscious* of itself, taking account of itself, justifying itself, *knowing* itself to be absolute and revealed by itself to itself as such, then the Philosopher must—Man must—in the very foundation of his being not only be passive and positive *contemplation*, but also be active and negating *Desire*. Now, if he is to be so, he cannot be a *Being* that *is*, that is eternally *identical* to itself, that is *self-sufficient*. Man must be an emptiness, a nothingness, which is not a pure nothingness (*reines Nichts*), but something that *is* to the extent that it *annihilates* Being, in order to realize itself at the expense of Being and to nihilate *in* being. Man is negating *Action*, which transforms given Being and, by transforming it, transforms itself. Man *is* what he is only to the extent that he *becomes* what he is; his true *Being* (*Sein*) is *Becoming* (*Werden*), *Time*, *History*; and he *becomes*, he *is* History only in and by *Action* that negates the given, the Action of Fighting and of Work—of the Work that finally produces the table on which Hegel writes his *Phenomenology*, and of the Fight that is finally that Battle of Jena whose sounds he hears while writing the *Phenomenology*. And that is why, in answering the “What am I?” Hegel had to take account of both that table and those sounds.

There is no human existence without Consciousness or without Self-Consciousness—that is, without revelation of Being by Speech

or without Desire that reveals and creates the I. That is why, in the *Phenomenology*—i.e., in phenomenological *anthropology*—the elementary possibility of *revelation* of given Being by Speech (implied in the Chapter “Sensual Certainty”) on the one hand, and on the other, *Action* that destroys or negates given Being (Action that arises from and because of Desire), are two irreducible givens, which the *Phenomenology* presupposes as its *premises*. But these premises are not sufficient.

The analysis that uncovers the constituent role of Desire enables us to understand why human existence is possible only with an animal existence as its basis: a stone or a plant (having no Desire) never attains Self-Consciousness and consequently philosophy. But animals do not attain it either. *Animal* Desire, therefore, is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of human and philosophical existence. And here is why.

Animal Desire—hunger, for example—and the action that flows from it, negate, destroy the natural given. By negating it, modifying it, making it its own, the animal raises itself above this given. According to Hegel, the animal realizes and reveals its *superiority* to plants by eating them. But by feeding on plants, the animal *depends* on them and hence does not manage truly to go beyond them. Generally speaking, the greedy emptiness—or the I—that is revealed by *biological* Desire is filled—by the *biological* action that flows from it—only with a *natural*, biological content. Therefore, the I, or the pseudo-I, realized by the active satisfaction of this Desire, is just as *natural*, biological, material, as that toward which the Desire and the Action are directed. The Animal raises itself above the Nature that is negated in its animal Desire only to fall back into it immediately by the satisfaction of this Desire. Accordingly, the Animal attains only *Selbst-gefühl*, *Sentiment of self*, but not *Selbst-bewusstsein*, *Self-Consciousness*—that is, it cannot *speak* of itself, it cannot say “I. . .” And this is so because the Animal does not really transcend itself as *given*—i.e., as body; it does not rise *above* itself in order to *come back* toward itself; it has no *distance* with respect to itself in order to *contemplate* itself.

For Self-Consciousness to exist, for philosophy to exist, there must be *transcendence* of self with respect to self as *given*. And this is possible, according to Hegel, only if Desire is directed not

toward a *given* being, but toward a *nonbeing*. To desire Being is to fill oneself with this given Being, to enslave oneself to it. To desire non-Being is to liberate oneself from Being, to realize one's autonomy, one's Freedom. To be anthropogenetic, then, Desire must be directed toward a nonbeing—that is, toward another *Desire*, another greedy emptiness, another *I*. For Desire is *absence* of Being, (to be hungry is to be *deprived* of food); it is a Nothingness that *nihilates* in Being, and not a Being that *is*. In other words, Action that is destined to satisfy an animal Desire, which is directed toward a given, existing *thing*, never succeeds in realizing a *human*, self-conscious *I*. Desire is human—or, more exactly, “humanizing,” “anthropogenetic”—only provided that it is directed toward another *Desire* and an *other* Desire. To be *human*, man must act not for the sake of subjugating a *thing*, but for the sake of subjugating another *Desire* (for the thing). The man who desires a thing humanly acts not so much to possess the *thing* as to make another *recognize* his *right*—as will be said later—to that thing, to make another recognize him as the *owner* of the thing. And he does this—in the final analysis—in order to make the other recognize his *superiority* over the other. It is only Desire of such a *Recognition* (*Anerkennung*), it is only Action that flows from such a Desire, that creates, realizes, and reveals a *human*, non-biological *I*.

Therefore, the *Phenomenology* must accept a third irreducible premise: the existence of *several* Desires that can desire one another mutually, each of which wants to negate, to assimilate, to make its own, to subjugate, the other Desire as Desire. This *multiplicity* of Desires is just as “undeducible” as the fact of Desire itself. By accepting it, one can already foresee, or understand (“deduce”), what human existence will be.

If, on the one hand—as Hegel says—Self-Consciousness and Man in general are, finally, nothing but Desire that tries to be satisfied by being recognized by another Desire in its *exclusive* right to satisfaction, it is obvious that Man can be fully realized and revealed—that is, be definitively *satisfied*—only by realizing a universal Recognition. Now if—on the other hand—there is a *multiplicity* of these Desires for universal Recognition, it is obvious that the Action that is born of these Desires can—at least in the beginning—be nothing but a life and death *Fight* (*Kampf auf*

Leben und Tod). A *Fight*, since each will want to subjugate the other, *all* the others, by a negating, destroying *action*. A life and death *Fight* because Desire that is directed toward a Desire directed toward a Desire *goes beyond* the biological given, so that Action carried out for the sake of this Desire is not limited by this given. In other words, Man will risk his biological *life* to satisfy his *nonbiological* Desire. And Hegel says that the being that is incapable of putting its life in danger in order to attain ends that are not immediately vital—i.e. the being that cannot risk its life in a *Fight* for *Recognition*, in a fight for pure *prestige*—is *not* a truly *human* being.

Therefore, human, historical, self-conscious existence is possible only where there are, or—at least—where there have been, bloody fights, wars for prestige. And thus it was the sounds of one of these Fights that Hegel heard while finishing his *Phenomenology*, in which he became conscious of himself by answering his question “What am I?”

But it is obvious that the three already-mentioned premises in the *Phenomenology* are not sufficient to explain the possibility of the Battle of Jena. Indeed, if *all* men were as I have just said, every *Fight* for prestige would end in the death of at least one of the adversaries. That is to say, finally, there would remain *only one* man in the world, and—according to Hegel—he would no longer be, he would not be, a *human* being, since the human *reality* is nothing but the fact of the *recognition* of one man by *another* man.

To explain the fact of the Battle of Jena, the fact of the *History* that that battle completes, one must therefore posit a fourth and last irreducible premise in the *Phenomenology*. One must suppose that the *Fight* ends in such a way that *both* adversaries remain alive. Now, if this is to occur, one must suppose that one of the adversaries *gives in* to the other and submits to him, recognizing him without being recognized by him. One must suppose that the *Fight* ends in the victory of the one who is ready to go *all the way* over the one who—faced with death—does not manage to raise himself above his biological instinct of preservation (identity). To use Hegel's terminology, one must suppose that there is a victor who becomes the *Master* of the vanquished; or, if one prefers, a vanquished who becomes the *Slave* of the victor. The existence of

a difference between Master and Slave or, more exactly, the *possibility* of a difference between *future* Master and *future* Slave is the fourth and last premise of the *Phenomenology*.

The vanquished has subordinated his *human* desire for *Recognition* to the *biological* desire to preserve his *life*: this is what determines and reveals—to him and to the victor—his inferiority. The victor has risked his *life* for a *nonvital* end: and this is what determines and reveals—to him and to the vanquished—his superiority over biological life and, consequently, over the vanquished. Thus, the difference between Master and Slave is *realized* in the existence of the victor and of the vanquished, and it is *recognized* by both of them.

The Master's superiority over Nature, founded on the risk of his life in the Fight for prestige, is realized by the fact of the Slave's *Work*. This *Work* is placed between the Master and Nature. The Slave transforms the *given* conditions of existence so as to make them *conform* to the Master's demands. Nature, transformed by the Slave's *Work*, *serves* the Master, without his needing to serve it in turn. The enslaving side of the interaction with Nature falls to the lot of the Slave: by enslaving the Slave and forcing him to work, the Master enslaves Nature and thus *realizes* his freedom in Nature. Thus the Master's existence can remain exclusively *warlike*: he fights, but does not work. As for the Slave, his existence is reduced to *Work* (*Arbeit*) which he executes in the Master's *Service* (*Dienst*). He works, but does not fight. And according to Hegel, only action carried out in another's service is *Work* (*Arbeit*) in the proper sense of the word: an essentially human and humanizing action. The being that acts to satisfy its *own* instincts, which—as such—are always *natural*, does not rise above Nature: it remains a *natural* being, an animal. But by acting to satisfy an instinct that is *not* my own, I am acting in relation to what is not—for me—instinct. I am acting in relation to an *idea*, a *nonbiological* end. And it is this transformation of Nature in relation to a *nonmaterial idea* that is *Work* in the proper sense of the word: *Work* that creates a nonnatural, technical, humanized World adapted to the *human* Desire of a being that has *demonstrated* and realized its superiority to Nature by risking its life for the *nonbiological* end of Recognition. And it is only this *Work*

that could finally produce the *table* on which Hegel wrote his *Phenomenology* and which was a part of the content of the I that he analyzed in answering his question, "What am I?"

Generally speaking, by accepting the four premises mentioned above, namely: (1) the existence of the revelation of given Being by Speech, (2) the existence of a Desire engendering an Action that *negates*, transforms, given Being, (3) the existence of *several* Desires, which can desire one another mutually, and (4) the existence of a *possibility* of difference between the Desires of (future) Masters and the Desires of (future) Slaves—by accepting these four premises, we understand the possibility of a *historical* process, of a *History*, which is, in its totality, the history of the Fights and the Work that finally ended in the wars of Napoleon and the table on which Hegel wrote the *Phenomenology* in order to *understand* both those wars and that table. Inversely, in order to explain the possibility of the *Phenomenology*, which is written on a *table* and which explains the wars of Napoleon, we must suppose the four premises mentioned.¹

In fine, then, we can say this: Man was born and History began with the first Fight that ended in the appearance of a Master and a Slave. That is to say that Man—at his origin—is always either Master or Slave; and that true Man can exist only where there is a Master *and* a Slave. (If they are to be *human*, they must be at least *two* in number.) And universal history, the history of the interaction between men and of their interaction with Nature, is the history of the interaction between warlike Masters and working Slaves. Consequently, History stops at the moment when the difference, the opposition, between Master and Slave disappears: at the moment when the Master will cease to be Master, because

¹ We could try to deduce the first premise from the other three: Speech (*Logos*) that reveals Being is born in and from the Slave's Self-Consciousness (through Work). As for the fourth premise, it postulates the act of *freedom*. For nothing *predisposes* the future Master to Mastery, just as nothing *predisposes* the future Slave to Slavery; each can (freely) *create* himself as Master or Slave. What is *given*, therefore, is not the *difference* between Master and Slave, but the free act that *creates* it. Now, the *free* act is by definition "undeducible." Here, then, we have what is indeed an absolute *premise*. All we can say is that without the primordial free act that creates Mastery and Slavery, history and philosophy could not exist. Now, this act in turn presupposes a multiplicity of Desires that *desire one another mutually*.

he will no longer have a Slave; and the Slave will cease to be Slave, because he will no longer have a Master (although the Slave will not become Master in turn, since he will have no Slave).

Now, according to Hegel, it is in and by the wars of Napoleon, and, in particular, the Battle of Jena, that this completion of History is realized through the dialectical overcoming (*Aufheben*) of both the Master and the Slave. Consequently, the presence of the Battle of Jena in Hegel's consciousness is of capital importance. It is because Hegel hears the sounds of that battle that he can know that History is being completed or has been completed, that—consequently—his conception of the World is a *total* conception, that his knowledge is an *absolute* knowledge.

However, to *know* this, to know that he is the thinker who can realize the absolute Science, he must *know* that the Napoleonic Wars realize the dialectical synthesis of the Master and the Slave. And to know this, he must know: on the one hand, what the *essence* (*Wesen*) of the Master and the Slave is; and—on the other—how and why History, which began with the “first” Fight for prestige, ended in the wars of Napoleon.

The analysis of the essential character of the Master-Slave opposition—that is, of the motive principle of the historical process—is found in Chapter IV. And as for the analysis of the historical process itself, it is given in Chapter VI.

History, that universal human process that conditioned the coming of Hegel, of the thinker endowed with an *absolute* Knowledge, a process that that thinker must *understand* in and by a *Phenomenology* before he can realize this absolute Knowledge in the “System of Science”—universal history, therefore, is nothing but the history of the *dialectical*—i.e., *active*—relation between Mastery and Slavery. Hence, History will be completed at the moment when the synthesis of the Master and the Slave is realized, that synthesis that is the whole Man, the Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State created by Napoleon.

This conception, according to which History is a dialectic or an *interaction* of Mastery and Slavery, permits us to understand the *meaning* of the division of the historical process into three great periods (of very unequal lengths, incidentally). If History begins with the Fight after which a Master *dominates* a Slave, the first historical period must certainly be the one in which human exist-

ence is entirely determined by the existence of the *Master*. Throughout this period, then, it is *Mastery* that will reveal its essence by realizing its existential possibilities through Action. But if History is only a dialectic of *Mastery and Slavery*, this latter too must be entirely revealed by being completely realized through Action. Therefore, the first period must be completed by a second, in which human existence will be determined by *slavish* existence. Finally, if the end of History is the *synthesis* of *Mastery and Slavery*, and the *understanding* of that synthesis, these two periods must be followed by a third, during which human existence, in some sense neutralized, synthetic, reveals itself to itself by actively realizing its own *possibilities*. But this time, these possibilities also imply the possibility of understanding oneself fully and definitively—that is, perfectly.

But of course, in order to write Chapter VI, in order to understand what History is, it is not sufficient to know that History has three periods. One must also know what each of them is, one must understand the why and the how of each of them and of the transition from one to another. Now, to understand this, one must know what is the *Wesen*, the essential-reality, of *Mastery and Slavery*, what is the essence of the two principles which, in their interaction, are going to realize the process being studied. And this analysis of the Master as such and of the Slave as such is made in Section B of Chapter IV.

Let us begin with the Master.

The Master is the man who went all the way in a Fight for prestige, who risked his *life* in order to be *recognized* in his absolute superiority by *another* man. That is, to his *real*, natural biological life he preferred something *ideal*, spiritual, *nonbiological*: the fact of being *anerkannt*, of being *recognized* in and by a *consciousness*, of bearing the *name* of "Master," of being *called* "Master." Thus, he "brought to light," proved (*bewährt*), realized, and revealed his *superiority* over biological existence, over *his* biological existence, over the natural World in general and over everything that knows itself and that he knows to be *bound* to this World, in particular, over the Slave. This superiority, at first purely *ideal*, which consists in the mental fact of being recognized and of knowing that he is recognized as Master by the Slave, is *realized* and materialized through the Slave's *Work*. The Master, who was

able to force the Slave to *recognize* him as Master, can also force the Slave to *work* for him, to yield the result of his *Action* to him. Thus, the Master no longer needs to make any effort to satisfy his (natural) desires. The *enslaving* side of this satisfaction has passed to the Slave: the Master, by dominating the working Slave, dominates Nature and lives in it as *Master*. Now, to preserve oneself in Nature without fighting against it is to live in *Gemuss*, in Enjoyment. And the enjoyment that one obtains without making any effort is *Lust*, Pleasure. The life of the Masters, to the extent that it is not bloody Fighting, Fighting for prestige with human beings, is a life of pleasure.

At first glance, it seems that the Master realizes the peak of human existence, being the man who is fully satisfied (*befriedigt*), in and by his real existence, by what he is. Now in fact, this is not at all the case.

What is this man, what does he *want* to be, if not a Master? It was to become *Master*, to be *Master* that he risked his life, and not to live a life of pleasure. Now, what he wanted by engaging in the fight was to be recognized by *another*—that is, by someone *other* than himself but who is *like him*, by *another man*. But in fact, at the end of the Fight, he is recognized only by a *Slave*. To be a *man*, he wanted to be recognized by another man. But if to be a man is to be *Master*, the Slave is not a man, and to be recognized by a Slave is not to be recognized by a *man*. He would have to be recognized by another Master. But this is impossible, since—by definition—the Master prefers death to slavish recognition of another's superiority. In short, the Master never succeeds in realizing his end, the end for which he risks his very life. The Master can be satisfied only in and by death, *his* death or the death of his adversary. But one cannot be *befriedigt* (fully satisfied) by what *is*, by what one *is*, in and by *death*. For death *is* not, the dead man *is* not. And what *is*, what lives, is only a Slave. Now, is it worthwhile to risk one's life in order to know that one is recognized by a *Slave*? Obviously not. And that is why, to the extent that the Master is not made brutish by his pleasure and enjoyment, when he takes account of what his *true* end and the motive of his *actions*—i.e., his warlike actions—are, he will *not*, he will *never* be *befriedigt*, satisfied by what *is*, by what *he* is.

In other words, Mastery is an existential impasse. The Master

can either make himself *brutish* in pleasure or *die* on the field of battle as Master, but he cannot *live consciously* with the knowledge that he is *satisfied* by what he is. Now, it is only conscious satisfaction, *Befriedigung*, that can complete History, for only the Man who *knows* he is *satisfied* by what he is no longer strives to go beyond himself, to go beyond what he is and what is, through Action that transforms Nature, through Action that creates History. If History must be *completed*, if absolute Knowledge must be possible, it is only the Slave who can do it, by attaining Satisfaction. And that is why Hegel says that the "truth" (= revealed reality) of the Master is the Slave. The human ideal, born in the Master, can be *realized* and revealed, can become *Wahrheit* (truth), only in and by Slavery.

To be able to stop and understand himself, a man must be *satisfied*. And for this, of course, he must *cease* to be a Slave. But to be able to cease being *Slave*, he must have *been* a Slave. And since there are Slaves only where there is a Master, Mastery, while itself an *impasse*, is "justified" as a *necessary* stage of the historical existence that leads to the absolute Science of Hegel. The Master appears only for the sake of engendering the Slave who "overcomes" (*aufhebt*) him as Master, while thereby "overcoming" himself as Slave. And this Slave who has been "overcome" is the one who will be satisfied by what he is and will understand that he is satisfied in and by Hegel's philosophy, in and by the *Phenomenology*. The Master is only the "catalyst" of the History that will be realized, completed, and "revealed" by the Slave or the ex-Slave who has become a Citizen.

But let us first see what the Slave is in the *beginning*, the Slave of the *Master*, the Slave not yet satisfied by the Citizenship that realizes and reveals his Freedom.

Man became a Slave because he feared death. To be sure, on the one hand this fear (*Furcht*) reveals his dependence with respect to Nature and thus justifies his dependence with respect to the Master, who *dominates* Nature. But on the other hand, this same fear—according to Hegel—has a positive value, which conditions the Slave's *superiority* to the Master. Through animal fear of death (*Angst*) the Slave experienced the dread or the Terror (*Furcht*) of Nothingness, of his nothingness. He caught a glimpse of himself as nothingness, he understood that his whole existence was but a

“surpassed,” “overcome” (*aufgehoben*) death—a Nothingness maintained in Being. Now—we have seen it and shall see it again—the profound basis of Hegelian anthropology is formed by this idea that Man is not a Being that *is* in an eternal identity to itself in Space, but a Nothingness that *nihilates* as Time in spatial Being, through the *negation* of this Being—through the negation or transformation of the given, starting from an idea or an ideal that does *not yet exist*, that is still nothingness (a “project”)—through negation that is called the *Action (Tat)* of Fighting and of Work (*Kampf und Arbeit*). Hence the Slave, who—through fear of death—grasps the (human) Nothingness that is at the foundation of his (natural) Being, understands himself, understands Man, better than the Master does. From the “first” Fight, the Slave has an intuition of the human reality, and that is the profound reason that it is finally he, and not the Master, who will complete History by revealing the truth of Man, by revealing his reality through Hegelian Science.

But—still thanks to the Master—the Slave has another advantage, conditioned by the fact that he *works* and that he works in the *service (Dienst)* of *another*, that he *serves* another by *working*. To work for *another* is to act contrary to the *instincts* that drive man to satisfy his *own* needs. There is no *instinct* that forces the Slave to work for the Master. If he does it, it is from *fear* of the Master. But *this* fear is not the same as the fear he experienced at the moment of the Fight: the danger is no longer *immediate*; the Slave only *knows* that the Master can kill him; he does not *see* him in a murderous posture. In other words, the Slave who *works* for the Master represses his *instincts* in relation to an *idea*, a *concept*.² And that is precisely what makes his activity a specifically *human* activity, a *Work*, an *Arbeit*. By acting, he negates, he transforms the given, Nature, *his* Nature; and he does it in relation to an *idea*, to what does not *exist* in the biological sense of the word, in relation to the idea of a *Master*—i.e., to an essentially *social*, human, historical notion. Now, to be able to transform the natural given in relation to a *nonnatural* idea is to possess a *technique*. And the

² According to Hegel, Concept (*Begriff*) and Understanding (*Verstand*) are born of the Slave's Work, whereas sensual Knowledge (*sinnliche Gewissheit*) is an irreducible given. But one could try to deduce *all* human understanding from Work.

idea that engenders a technique is a *scientific* idea, a scientific concept. Finally, to possess scientific concepts is to be endowed with Understanding, *Verstand*, the faculty of *abstract* notions.

Understanding, abstract thought, science, technique, the arts—all these, then, have their origin in the forced work of the Slave. Therefore, the Slave, and not the Master, is the one who realizes all that has to do with these things; in particular Newtonian physics (which so impressed Kant), that physics of Force and of Law, which—according to Hegel—are in the final analysis the force of the victor in the Fight for prestige and the law of the Master who is recognized by the Slave.

But these are not the only advantages procured by Work; Work will also open the way to Freedom or—more exactly—to liberation.

Indeed, the Master realized his freedom by surmounting his *instinct* to live in the Fight. Now, by working for *another*, the Slave too surmounts his *instincts*, and—by thereby raising himself to thought, to science, to technique, by transforming Nature in relation to an idea—he too succeeds in dominating Nature and his “Nature”—that is, the same Nature that dominated him at the moment of the Fight and made him the Slave of the Master. Through his Work, therefore, the Slave comes to the same result to which the Master comes by risking his life in the Fight: he no longer depends on the given, natural conditions of existence; he *modifies* them, starting from the idea he has of himself. In becoming *conscious* of this fact, therefore, he becomes conscious of his *freedom* (*Freiheit*), his autonomy (*Selbständigkeit*). And, by using the *thought* that arises from his Work, he forms the abstract *notion* of the Freedom that has been realized in him by this same Work.

To be sure, in the Slave properly so-called this *notion* of Freedom does not yet correspond to a true *reality*. He frees himself mentally only thanks to *forced* work, only because he is the Slave of a Master. And he *remains* in fact this Slave. Thus he frees himself, so to speak, only to be a Slave freely, to be still more a Slave than he was before having formed the *idea* of Freedom. However, the insufficiency of the Slave is at the same time his perfection: this is because he *is* not actually free, because he has an *idea* of Freedom, an idea that is *not* realized but that can be realized by the conscious and voluntary transformation of given existence, by

the active abolition of Slavery. The Master, on the other hand, is free; his idea of Freedom is not *abstract*. That is why it is not an *idea* in the proper sense of the word: an *ideal* to realize. And that is why the Master never succeeds in going beyond the freedom that is realized in *himself* and the insufficiency of *that* freedom. Progress in the realization of Freedom can be carried out only by the Slave, who begins with a *nonrealized* ideal of Freedom. And it is because he has an *ideal*, an *abstract* idea, that progress in the *realization* of Freedom can be completed by an *understanding* of Freedom, by the birth of the *absolute Idea* (*absolute Idee*) of human Freedom, revealed in and by absolute Knowledge.

Generally speaking, it is the Slave, and only he, who can realize a *progress*, who can go beyond the *given* and—in particular—the given that he himself is. On the one hand, as I just said, possessing the *idea* of Freedom and *not being* free, he is led to transform the given (social) conditions of his existence—that is, to realize a historical progress. Furthermore—and this is the important point—this progress has a meaning for him which it does not and cannot have for the Master. The Master's freedom, engendered in and by the Fight, is an impasse. To realize it, he must make it recognized by a *Slave*, he must transform whoever is to recognize it into a *Slave*. Now, my freedom ceases to be a dream, an illusion, an abstract idea, only to the extent that it is *universally recognized* by those whom I recognize as worthy of recognizing it. And this is precisely what the Master can *never* obtain. His freedom, to be sure, is recognized. Therefore, it is *real*. But it is recognized only by Slaves. Therefore, it is insufficient in its reality, it cannot *satisfy* him who realizes it. And yet, as long as it remains a Master's freedom, the situation cannot be otherwise. On the other hand, if—at the start—the Slave's freedom is recognized by no one but himself, if, consequently, it is purely *abstract*, it can end in being *realized* and in being realized in its *perfection*. For the Slave *recognizes* the human reality and dignity of the Master: Therefore, it is sufficient for him to impose his liberty on the Master in order to attain the definitive Satisfaction that *mutual* Recognition gives and thus to stop the historical process.

Of course, in order to do this, he must fight against the Master, that is to say—precisely—he must cease to be a Slave, surmount his fear of death. He must become *other* than what he *is*. Now, in

contrast to the warlike Master who will always remain what he already is—i.e., Master—the working Slave can change, and he actually does change, thanks to his work.

The human Action of the Master reduces to risking his life. Now, the risk of life is the same at all times and in all places. The risk itself is what counts, and it does not matter whether a stone ax or a machine gun is being used. Accordingly, it is not the Fight as such, the risk of life, but *Work* that one day produces a machine gun, and no longer an ax. The purely warlike attitude of the Master does not vary throughout the centuries, and therefore it cannot engender a historical change. Without the Slave's Work, the "first" Fight would be reproduced indefinitely: nothing would change in it; it would change nothing in the Master; hence nothing would change in Man, through Man, for Man; the World would remain identical to itself, it would be Nature and not a human, historical World.

Quite different is the situation created by Work. Man who works *transforms* given Nature. Hence, if he repeats his act, he repeats it in *different* conditions, and thus his act itself will be different. After making the first ax, man can use it to make a second one, which, by that very fact, will be another, a better ax. Production transforms the means of production; the modification of means simplifies production; and so on. Where there is Work, then, there is necessarily change, progress, historical evolution.³

Historical evolution. For what changes as a result of Work is not only the natural World; it is also—and even especially—Man himself. Man, in the beginning, depends on the given, natural conditions of his existence. To be sure, he can rise above these conditions by risking his life in a Fight for prestige. But in this risk he somehow negates the *totality* of these conditions, which are still the same; he negates them *en masse*, without modifying them, and this negation is always the same. Accordingly, the freedom that he creates in and by this act of negation does not depend on the particular forms of the given. It is only by rising above the given conditions through negation brought about in and by *Work*

³ A manufactured object incarnates an idea (a "project") which is independent of the material *hic et nunc*; that is why these objects can be "exchanged." Hence the birth of an "economic," specifically human World, in which money, capital, interest, salary, and so on appear.

that Man remains in contact with the concrete, which varies with space and time. That is why he changes himself by transforming the World.

The scheme of historical evolution, therefore, is as follows:

At the start, the future Master and the future Slave are both determined by a given, natural World independent of them: hence they are not yet truly human, historical beings. Then, by risking his life, the Master raises himself above given Nature, above his given (animal) "nature," and becomes a human being, a being that creates itself in and by its conscious negating Action. Then, he forces the Slave to work. The latter changes the real given World. Hence he too raises himself above Nature, above his (animal) "nature," since he succeeds in making it other than it was. To be sure, the Slave, like the Master, like Man in general, is determined by the real World. But since this World has been *changed*, he changes as well.⁴ And since it was *he* who changed the World, it is *he* who changes himself, whereas the Master changes only through the Slave. Therefore, the historical process, the historical becoming of the human being, is the product of the working Slave and not of the warlike Master. To be sure, without the Master, there would have been no History; but only because without him there would have been no Slave and hence no Work.

Therefore—once more—thanks to his Work, the Slave *can* change and become other than he is, that is, he can—finally—cease to be a Slave. Work is *Bildung*, in the double meaning of the word: on the one hand, it forms, transforms the World, humanizes it by making it more adapted to Man; on the other, it transforms, forms, educates man, it humanizes him by bringing him into greater conformity with the *idea* that he has of himself, an idea that—in the beginning—is only an *abstract* idea, an *ideal*. If then, at the start, in the given World the Slave had a fearful "nature" and *had* to submit to the Master, to the strong man, it does not mean that this will *always* be the case. Thanks to his work, *he* can become other; and, thanks to his work, the *World* can become other. And

⁴ Animals also have (pseudo) techniques: the first spider changed the World by weaving the first web. Hence it would be better to say: the World changes essentially (and becomes human) through "exchange," which is possible only as a result of Work that realizes a "project."

this is what actually took place, as universal history and, finally, the French Revolution and Napoleon show.

This creative education of Man by work (*Bildung*) creates History—i.e., human *Time*. Work is Time, and that is why it necessarily exists *in* time: it requires time. The transformation of the Slave, which will allow him to surmount his dread, his fear of the Master, by surmounting the terror of death—this transformation is long and painful. In the beginning, the Slave who—by his Work—raised himself to the abstract *idea* of his Freedom, does not succeed in *realizing* it, because he does not yet dare to *act* with a view to this realization, that is to say, he does not dare to fight against the Master and to risk his life in a Fight for Freedom.

Thus it is that, before *realizing* Freedom, the Slave imagines a series of ideologies, by which he seeks to justify himself, to justify his slavery, to reconcile the *ideal* of Freedom with the *fact* of Slavery.

The first of these Slave's ideologies is Stoicism. The Slave tries to persuade himself that he is *actually* free simply by *knowing* that he is free—that is, by having the abstract *idea* of Freedom. The *real* conditions of existence would have no importance at all: no matter whether one be a Roman emperor or a Slave, rich or poor, sick or healthy; it is sufficient to have the *idea* of freedom, or more precisely, of autonomy, of absolute independence of all *given* conditions of existence. (Whence—in parentheses—the modern variant of Stoicism, of which Hegel speaks in Chapter V: freedom is identified with freedom of *thought*; the State is called free when one can *speak* freely in it; so long as *this* freedom is safeguarded, nothing need be changed in that State.)

Hegel's criticism, or, more exactly, his explanation of the fact that Man did not stop at this Stoic solution which is so satisfying at first sight, can appear unconvincing and bizarre. Hegel says that Man abandons Stoicism because, as a Stoic, he is *bored*. The Stoic ideology was invented to justify the Slave's inaction, his refusal to *fight* to *realize* his libertarian ideal. Thus this ideology prevents Man from acting: it obliges him to be content with *talking*. Now, says Hegel, all discourse that remains discourse ends in *boring* Man.

This objection—or explanation—is simplistic only at first sight. In fact, it has a profound metaphysical basis. Man is not a Being

that *is*: he is a Nothingness that *nihilates* through the negation of Being. Now, the negation of Being is Action. That is why Hegel says, "the *true* being of man is his *action*." Not to *act*, therefore, is not to be as a truly *human* being; it is to be as *Sein*, as given, natural being. Hence, it is to fall into decay, to become brutish; and this metaphysical truth is revealed to Man through the phenomenon of boredom: the Man who—like a thing, like an ~~animal~~, like an angel—remains identical to himself, does not negate, does not negate himself—i.e., does not act, is *bored*. And only Man can be bored.

However that may be, it was the *boredom* caused by Stoic chatter that forced Man to seek something else. In fact, Man can be satisfied only by *action*. Now, to act is to transform what is real. And to transform what is real is to *negate* the given. In the Slave's case, to act effectively would be to negate Slavery—that is, to negate the Master, and hence to risk his life in a Fight against the Master. The Slave does not yet dare to do this. And with boredom driving him to action, he is content to activate his thought in some sense. He makes it *negate* the given. The Stoic Slave becomes the *skeptic-nihilist* Slave.

This new attitude culminates in Solipsism: the value, the very reality of all that is not I is denied, and the universality and radicalism of this negation makes up for its purely *abstract*, verbal character.

Nevertheless, Man does not succeed in remaining in this skeptical-nihilistic attitude. He does not succeed because in fact he contradicts himself through his very existence: how and why is one to live when one denies the value and the being of the World and of other men? Thus, to take nihilism seriously is to commit suicide, to cease completely to act and—consequently—to live. But the *radical* Skeptic does not interest Hegel, because, by definition, he disappears by committing suicide, he ceases to be, and consequently he ceases to be a human being, an agent of historical evolution. Only the Nihilist who *remains alive* is interesting.

Now, this latter must eventually perceive the contradiction implied in his existence. And, generally speaking, the awareness of a *contradiction* is what moves human, historical evolution. To become aware of a contradiction is necessarily to want to remove it. Now, one can in fact overcome the contradiction of a given

existence only by *modifying* the given existence, by transforming it through Action. But in the Slave's case, to transform existence is, again, to fight against the Master. Now, he does not want to do this. He tries, therefore, to justify by a new ideology this contradiction in skeptical existence, which is, all things considered, the Stoic—i.e., slavish—contradiction, between the *idea* or the *ideal* of Freedom and the *reality* of Slavery. And this third and last Slave's ideology is the *Christian* ideology.

At this point, the Slave does not deny the contradictory character of his existence. But he tries to justify it by saying that *all* existence necessarily, inevitably, implies a contradiction. To this end he imagines an "other world," which is "beyond" (*Jenseits*) the natural World of the senses. Here below he is a Slave, and he does nothing to free himself. But he is right, for in *this* World *everything* is Slavery, and the Master is as much a Slave here as he is. But freedom is not an empty word, a simple abstract *idea*, an unrealizable ideal, as in Stoicism and Skepticism. Freedom is *real*, real in the *Beyond*. Hence no need to fight against the Master, since one already *is* free to the extent that one participates in the Beyond, since one is freed by that Beyond, by the intervention of the Beyond in the World of the senses. No need to fight to be recognized by the Master, since one is recognized by a God. No need to fight to become free in this world, which is just as vain and stripped of value for the Christian as for the Skeptic. No need to fight, to act, since—in the Beyond, in the only World that truly counts—one *is* already freed and *equal* to the Master (in the Service of God). Hence one can maintain the Stoic attitude, but with good reason this time. And without being bored, too, for now one does not eternally remain the *same*: one changes and one *must* change, one must always go beyond oneself in order to rise above oneself as something given in the real empirical World, in order to attain the transcendental World, the Beyond which remains inaccessible.

Without Fighting, without effort, therefore, the Christian realizes the Slave's ideal: he obtains—in and through (or for) God—equality with the Master: inequality is but a mirage, like everything in this World of the senses in which Slavery and Mastery hold sway.

Certainly an ingenious solution, Hegel will say. And not at all

astonishing that Man through the centuries could believe himself "satisfied" by this pious reward for his Work. But, Hegel adds, all this is too good—too simple, too easy—to be true. In fact, what made Man a Slave was his refusal to risk his life. Hence he will not cease to be a Slave, as long as he is not ready to risk his life in a *Fight* against the Master, as long as he does not accept the idea of his *death*. A liberation without a bloody *Fight*, therefore, is metaphysically impossible. And this metaphysical impossibility is also revealed in the Christian ideology itself.

Indeed, the Christian Slave can affirm his equality with the Master only by accepting the existence of an "other world" and a transcendent God. Now, this God is necessarily a *Master*, and an *absolute* Master. Thus the Christian frees himself from the human Master only to be enslaved to the divine Master. He does free himself—at least in his idea—from the human Master. But although he no longer has a Master, he does not cease to be a Slave. He is a Slave without a Master, he is a Slave in *himself*, he is the pure essence of Slavery. And this "absolute" Slavery engenders an equally absolute Master. It is before *God* that he is the equal of the Master. Hence he is the Master's equal only in absolute *slavery*. Therefore he remains a *Servant*, the servant of a Master for whose glory and pleasure he works. And this new Master is such that the new Christian Slave is even more a Slave than the pagan Slave.

[And if the Slave accepts this new divine Master, he does it for the same reason that he accepted the human Master: through fear of death. He accepted—or produced—his first Slavery because it was the price of his biological *life*. He accepts—or produces—the second, because it is the price of his *eternal life*.] For the fundamental motive of the ideology of the "two worlds" and the duality of human existence is the slavish desire for life at any price, sublimated in the desire for an *eternal life*. In the final analysis, Christianity is born from the Slave's terror in the face of Nothingness, his nothingness; that is, for Hegel, from the impossibility of bearing the necessary condition of Man's existence—the condition of death, of finiteness.⁵

⁵ There is no human (conscious, articulate, free) existence without Fighting that implies the risk of life—i.e., without death, without finiteness. "Immortal man" is a "squared circle."

Consequently, to overcome the insufficiency of the Christian ideology, to become free from the absolute Master and the Beyond, to *realize* Freedom and to *live* in the World as a human being, autonomous and free—all this is possible only on the condition that one accept the idea of death and, consequently, atheism. And the whole evolution of the Christian World is nothing but a progress toward the atheistic awareness of the essential finiteness of human existence. Only thus, only by “overcoming” Christian *theology*, will Man definitively cease to be a Slave and *realize* this idea of Freedom which, while it remained an abstract idea—i.e., an ideal, engendered Christianity.

This is what is effected in and by the French Revolution, which completes the evolution of the Christian World and inaugurates the third historical World, in which *realized* freedom will finally be conceived (*begriffen*) by philosophy: by German philosophy, and *finally* by Hegel. Now, for a Revolution to succeed in overcoming Christianity *really*, the Christian ideal must first be *realized* in the form of a *World*. For, in order that an ideology may be surpassed, “overcome” by Man, Man must first experience the *realization* of this ideology in the real World in which he lives. The problem, therefore, is to know how the pagan World of Mastery can become a Christian World of Slavery, when there has been no Fight between Masters and Slaves, when there has been no Revolution properly so-called. For if these had taken place, the Slave would have become the free Worker who fights and risks his life; hence he would cease to be a Slave and consequently could not realize a *Christian*, essentially slavish, World.

Hegel resolves this problem in Section A of Chapter VI. Let us see what he says there. Since Hegel does not talk about the *genesis* of the pagan State in the *Phenomenology*, let us study it as a State already formed.

The essential character of this State, of pagan Society, is determined by the fact that it is a State, a Society, of *Masters*. The pagan State recognized only the Masters as citizens. Only he who makes war is a citizen, and it is only the citizen who makes war. The work is assigned to the Slaves, who are on the fringe of the Society and the State. And thus the State, in its totality, is a Master-State, which sees the meaning of its existence not in its

work, but in its prestige, in the wars for prestige that it wages in order to make other States, *all* other States, recognize its autonomy and its supremacy.

Now, according to Hegel, it follows from all this that the pagan State of warlike and idle Masters can recognize, can make recognized or realize, only the *universal* element of human existence, while the *particular* element remains on the fringe of the Society and State proper.

This opposition of Particularity and Universality, of *Einzelheit* and *Allgemeinheit*, is fundamental for Hegel. And if History, according to him, can be interpreted as a dialectic of Mastery and Slavery, it can also be understood as a dialectic of the Particular and the Universal in human existence. Moreover, these two interpretations mutually complete one another, since Mastery corresponds to Universality and Slavery to Particularity.

Here is what this means:

Man from the start seeks *Anerkennung*, Recognition. He is not content with attributing a value to himself. He wants this *particular* value, *his own*, to be recognized by *all* men, *universally*.

In other words: Man can be truly "satisfied," History can end, only in and by the formation of a Society, of a State, in which the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such, in its very particularity, by *all*, by Universality incarnated in the State as such; and in which the universal value of the State is recognized and realized by the Particular as such, by *all* the Particulars.⁶ Now such a State, such a synthesis of Particularity and Universality, is possible only after the "overcoming" of the opposition between the Master and the Slave, since the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal is also a synthesis of Mastery and Slavery.

As long as the Master is opposed to the Slave, as long as Mastery and Slavery exist, the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal cannot be realized, and human existence will never be "*satisfied*." This is true not only because the *Slave* is not universally recog-

⁶The Particular who realizes a universal value, moreover, is no longer a Particular: he is an Individual (= Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State), a synthesis of the Particular and the Universal. Likewise, the Universal (the State) realized by the Particular is individualized. It is the Individual-State or the State-Individual, incarnated in the person of the universal Head of State (Napoleon) and revealed by the Wise Man (Hegel).

nized; and not only because the Master himself does not achieve *truly* universal recognition, since he does not recognize a part of those who recognize him—the Slaves. This synthesis is impossible because the Master manages to realize and to make recognized only the *universal* element in Man, while the Slave reduces his existence to a purely *particular* value.

The Master constitutes his human value in and by the risk of his life. Now, this risk is everywhere and always—and in *all* men—the same. The Man who risks his life is in no way different, by the sole act of having risked his life, from all the others who have done as much. The human value constituted by the Fight is essentially *universal*, “impersonal.” And that is why the Masters’ State, which recognizes a man only to the extent that this man risks his life for the State in a war for prestige, recognizes only the purely *universal* element in man, in the citizen: the citizen of this State is just another citizen; as a citizen recognized by the State, he is no different from the others; he is *an* anonymous warrior, he is not Mr. *So-and-So*. And even the Head of State is just another representative of the State, of the Universal, and not an *Individual* properly so-called: in his activity he is a function of the State; the State is not a function of his personal, particular will. In short, the Head of the Greek City-State is not a “dictator” in the modern, Christian, romantic sense of the word. He is not a Napoleon, who *creates* a State through his *personal* will, with a view to realizing and making recognized his *Individuality*. The pagan Head of State accepts a *given* State, and his own value, his very reality, is but a function of this State, of this *universal* element of existence. And that is why the Master, the Pagan, is never “satisfied.” Only the Individual can be “satisfied.”

As for the Slave’s existence, it is limited to the purely *particular* element. The human value constituted by *Work* is essentially *particular*, “personal.” *Bildung*, the educative formation of the Worker by Work, depends on the concrete conditions in which the work is carried out, conditions that vary in space and are modified in time as a function of this very work. Therefore it is by Work, finally, that the differences between men are established, that the “particularities,” the “personalities,” are formed. And thus it is the working Slave, and not the warlike Master, who becomes *conscious* of his “personality” and who imagines “individualistic”

ideologies, in which absolute value is attributed to Particularity, to "personality," and not to "Universality," to the State as such and to the Citizen taken as Citizen.

However, what is recognized *universally*, by the *others*, by the State, by Mastery as such, is not Work, nor the worker's "personality," but at best the impersonal *product* of work. As long as the Slave works while remaining a Slave, that is to say, as long as he does not risk his life, as long as he does not fight to impose his personal value on the State, as long as he does not actively intervene in the social life, his particular value remains purely *subjective*: he is the *only* one to recognize it. Hence his value is *uniquely* particular; the *synthesis* of the Particular and the Universal—i.e., Individuality—is no more realized in the Slave than in the Master. And that is why—once more—the synthesis of Particularity and Universality in Individuality, which alone can truly "satisfy" Man, can be realized only in and by a synthetic "overcoming" of Mastery and Slavery.

But let us return to the pagan State, to the City-State of the nonworking warlike Masters.

This State, like every State, is interested in and recognizes only the *Action* of the citizens, which—here—is reduced to warlike action. Hence the pagan State recognizes in the Citizen only the *universal* aspect of human existence. However, the particular element is not, and cannot be, absolutely excluded.

In point of fact, the Master is not only a Master of slaves and a warlike citizen of a State. He is also, of necessity, a member of a Family. And it is to the Family that the *particular* aspect of the pagan Master's existence belongs.

In the bosom of his Family, Man is not just another Master, just another Citizen, just another warrior. He is father, husband, son; and he is *this* father, *this* husband: *such a one*, a "particular." However, his particularity recognized in and by the Family is not truly human. In effect, for the pagan Master who does not work, human, humanizing action reduces to the warlike Action of Fighting. Now, there is no Fighting, no risk of life, within the Family. Therefore it is not human *Action* (*Tat*) that is recognized in and by the Family as such, but solely the *Sein*, the *given static Being*, the biological existence of man, of father, of husband, of son, of brother, and so on.

Now, to attribute an absolute value to a being not in relation to what he *does*, to his acts, but simply because he *is*, because of the simple fact of his *Sein*, his *Being*—is to love him. Hence we can also say that Love is what is realized in and by the ancient Family. And since Love does not depend on the *acts*, on the *activity* of the loved one, it cannot be ended by his very *death*. By loving man in his *inaction*, one considers him *as if* he were dead. Hence death can change nothing in the Love, in the value attributed in and by the Family. And that is why Love and the worship of the dead have their place within the pagan *Family*.

The *particular* and particularist Family, therefore, is a necessary complement of the *universal* and universalist pagan State. However, the pagan Master is as little *befriedigt*, "satisfied," by his family life as he is by his existence as a citizen. His *human* existence is what is realized and recognized in and by the State. But this existence is not truly *his*: it is not *he* who is recognized. As for the Family, it recognizes his personal, particular existence. But this essentially inactive existence is not truly *human*.

Wherever the human Actions of Fighting and of Work are not synthesized in a *single* human being, Man is never fully "satisfied." The realization and the recognition of solely universal *Action* in the State "satisfies" Man as little as the realization and the recognition of his personal, particular *Being* in the Family.

To be sure—in principle—a synthesis of the familial Particular and the political Universal could satisfy Man. But such a synthesis is absolutely impossible in the pagan World. For the Family and the State are mutually exclusive, and yet Man cannot do without the one or the other.

In effect, for the Family, the supreme value is the *Sein*, the natural *Being*, the biological *life* of its member. Now, what the State demands of this member of the Family is precisely the risk of his life, his *death* for the universal cause. To fulfill the duty of the Citizen, therefore, is necessarily to break the law of the Family; and inversely.

In the pagan World this conflict is inevitable and has no solution: Man cannot renounce his Family, since he cannot renounce the Particularity of his Being; nor can he renounce the State, since he cannot renounce the Universality of his Action. And thus he is always and necessarily *criminal*, either toward the State or toward

the Family. And this is what constitutes the *tragic* character of pagan life.

Like the hero of ancient tragedy, then, the pagan World of the warlike Masters is in an inevitable conflict without a solution, which necessarily ends in the death, the complete ruin, of this World. And here is how Hegel represents the development of that tragedy in the *Phenomenology*:

In the final analysis, the pagan World perishes because it excludes Work. But the immediate agent of its ruin is, curiously, Woman. For it is the Woman who represents the family principle—i.e., that principle of *Particularity* which is hostile to Society as such and whose victory signifies the ruin of the State, of the Universal properly so-called.

Now on the one hand, the Woman acts on the *young* man, who is not yet completely detached from the Family, who has not yet completely subordinated his Particularity to the Universality of the State. On the other hand, and precisely because the State is a *warlike* State, it is the *young* man—the young military hero—who must finally come to power in the State. And once he has come to power, this young hero (= Alexander the Great) makes the most of his familial, even feminine, Particularity. He tends to transform the State into his *private* property, into a family patrimony, and to make the *citizens* of the State his own *subjects*. And he succeeds.

Why? Well, again because the pagan State excludes Work. Since the only *human* value is the one that is realized in and by Fighting and the risk of life, the life of the State must necessarily be a warlike life: the pagan State is a *human* State only to the extent that it wages perpetual wars for prestige. Now the laws of war, of brute force, are such that the strongest State must little by little swallow up the weaker ones. And the *victorious* City is thus transformed, little by little, into an *Empire*—into the Roman Empire.

Now the inhabitants of the mother City, the Masters properly so-called, are too few to defend the Empire. The Emperor must resort to mercenaries. The result is that the citizens of the City are no longer *obliged* to make war. And little by little, at the end of a certain time, they no longer make war. Thereby they can no longer make any resistance to the particularism of the Emperor,

who "overcomes" them as *Citizens* and transforms them into *particulars* belonging to his *patrimony*, into "private persons."

When all is said and done, the former citizens become *slaves* of the sovereign. And they become slaves because they already *are* slaves. In effect, to be a Master is to fight, to risk one's life. Hence the citizens who no longer wage war cease to be Masters, and that is why they become Slaves of the Roman Emperor. And that is also why they accept the *ideology* of their Slaves: first Stoicism, then Skepticism, and—finally—Christianity.

Here we have found the solution to the problem that interests us: the Masters have accepted the ideology of their Slaves; the pagan Man of Mastery has become the Christian Man of Slavery; and all this without a Fight, without a Revolution properly so-called—because the Masters *themselves* have become Slaves. Or more precisely: *pseudo*-Slaves, or—if you will—*pseudo*-Masters. For they are no longer real *Masters*, since they no longer risk their lives; but they are not real Slaves either, because they do not work in the service of another. They are, so to speak, Slaves without Masters, *pseudo*-Slaves. And by ceasing to be true Masters, they end in no longer having real Slaves: they free them, and thus the Slaves themselves become Slaves without Masters, *pseudo*-Masters. Therefore, the opposition of Mastery and Slavery is "overcome." Not, however, because the Slaves have become true Masters. The unification is effected in *pseudo*-Mastery, which is—in fact—a *pseudo*-Slavery, a Slavery without Masters.

This Slave without a Master, this Master without a Slave, is what Hegel calls the *Bourgeois*, the private property-owner. It is by becoming a private property-owner that the Greek Master, a *citizen* of the City, becomes the peaceful Roman Bourgeois, a *subject* of the Emperor, who himself is but a Bourgeois, a private property-owner, whose Empire is his patrimony. And it is also in relation to private property that the freeing of the Slaves is carried out; they become property-owners, Bourgeois, like their ex-masters.

In contrast to the Greek City, then, the Roman Empire is a bourgeois World. And it is as such that it finally becomes a *Christian* World.

The bourgeois World elaborates civil *Law*—the only original creation of Rome, according to Hegel. And the fundamental

So this is possibly a new way of mastering the
role of pseudo-slaves, bourgeois

notion of Roman legal thought, that of the "legal person" (*rechtliche Persönlichkeit*), corresponds to the *Stoic* conception of human existence, as well as to the principle of family particularism. Just like the Family, civil Law attaches an absolute value to the pure and simple *Being* of Man, independently of his Actions. And just as in the *Stoic* conception, the value attributed to the "person" does not depend on the concrete condition of his existence: a man, and every man equally, is everywhere and always a "legal person." And we can say that the bourgeois State founded on the idea of *civil* Law is the *real* basis of *Stoicism*, of *Stoicism* taken not as an abstract *idea*, but as a social, historical *reality*.

And the same is true for nihilistic Skepticism: private *property* (*Eigentum*) is its real basis and its social, historical reality. The nihilistic Skepticism of the solipsistic Slave, who attributes a true value and a true being only to himself, is found again in the private property-owner, who subordinates everything, the State itself, to the absolute value of his own property. Thus, if the only *reality* of the particularistic ideologies, the so-called "individualistic" ideologies, is private Property, it is only in a bourgeois World, dominated by the idea of this property, that these ideologies can become real social forces.

Finally, this same bourgeois essence of the Roman Empire is what explains its transformation into a Christian World, makes the reality of Christianity possible, transforms the Christian *idea* and the Christian *ideal* into a social and historical *reality*. And this is why:

To be a truly human being, the Bourgeois (who, in principle, does not fight, does not risk his life) must *work*, just like the Slave. But in contrast to the Slave, since the Bourgeois has no Master, he does not have to work in *another's* service. Therefore, he believes that he works for himself. Now in the Hegelian conception, work can truly be Work, a specifically *human* Action, only on the condition that it be carried out in relation to an *idea* (a "project")—that is, in relation to something other than the *given*, and, in particular, other than the given that the worker himself is. It was thus that the Slave could *work* by being supported by the idea of the *Master*, of *Mastery*, of *Service* (*Dienst*). A man can also work (and that is the *Hegelian*, definitive solution of the problem) by being supported by the idea of the *Community*, of the State: one

can—and one must—work for the State. But the Bourgeois can do neither the one nor the other. He no longer has a Master whom he could have served by working. And he does not yet have a State, for the bourgeois-World is but an agglomeration of private Property-owners, isolated from each other, without true community.

Hence the Bourgeois' problem seems insoluble: he must work for *another* and can work only for *himself*. Now in fact, Man manages to resolve this problem, and he resolves it once more by the bourgeois principle of private *Property*. The Bourgeois does not work for another. But he does not work for himself, taken as a biological entity, either. He works for himself taken as a "legal person," as a private *Property-owner*: he works for Property taken as such—i.e., Property that has now become *money*; he works for Capital.

In other words, the bourgeois Worker presupposes—and conditions—an *Entsagung*, an *Abnegation* of human existence. Man transcends himself, surpasses himself, projects himself far away from himself by projecting himself onto the idea of private Property, of Capital, which—while being the Property-owner's own product—becomes independent of him and enslaves him just as the Master enslaved the Slave; with this difference, however, that the enslavement is now conscious and freely accepted by the Worker. (We see, by the way, that for Hegel, as for Marx, the central phenomenon of the bourgeois World is not the enslavement of the working man, of the *poor* bourgeois, by the rich bourgeois, but the enslavement of *both* by Capital.) However that may be, bourgeois existence presupposes, engenders, and nourishes Abnegation. Now it is precisely this Abnegation that reflects itself in the dualistic Christian ideology, while providing it with a new, specific, nonpagan content. It is the same Christian dualism that is found again in bourgeois existence: the opposition between the "legal Person," the private Property-owner, and the man of flesh and blood; the existence of an ideal, transcendent World, represented in reality by Money, Capital, to which Man is supposed to devote his Actions, to sacrifice his sensual, biological Desires.

And as for the structure of the Christian Beyond, it is formed in the image of the relations realized in the Roman Empire between the Emperor and his subjects, relations which—as we have seen—have the same origin as the Christian ideology: the refusal of

death, the desire for animal life, for *Sein*, which in Christianity is sublimated in a desire for immortality, for "eternal life." And if the pagan Master accepts the Christian ideology of his Slave, an ideology that makes him a Servant of the absolute Master, of the King of heaven, of God, it is because—having ceased to risk his life and becoming a peaceful Bourgeois—he sees that he is no longer a *Citizen* who can satisfy himself through a political activity. He sees that he is the passive subject of a despotic Emperor. Just like the Slave, therefore, he has nothing to lose and everything to gain by imagining a transcendent World, in which all men are equal before an omnipotent, truly *universal* Master, who recognizes, moreover, the absolute value of each *Particular* as such.

Here, then, is how and why the pagan World of Masters became a Christian bourgeois World:

In opposition to Paganism, to the religion of the Masters, of the warlike Citizens who attribute true value only to Universality, to what is valuable for all men and at all times, Christianity, the religion of the Slaves, or—more exactly—of the Bourgeois-Subjects, attributes an absolute value to Particularity, to ~~the~~ here and now. This change of attitude is clearly manifested in the myth of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, as well as in the idea that God has a direct, immediate relation with each man taken separately, without passing through the universal—i.e., social and political—element of Man's existence.

Hence Christianity is first of all a particularistic, family, and slavish reaction against the pagan universalism of the Citizen-Masters. But it is more than that. It also implies the idea of a synthesis of the Particular and the Universal—that is, of Mastery and Slavery too: the idea of Individuality—i.e., of that realization of universal values and realities in and by the Particular and of that universal recognition of the value of the Particular, which alone can give Man *Befriedigung*, the supreme and definitive "Satisfaction."

In other words, Christianity finds the solution to the pagan tragedy. And that is why, since the coming of Christ, there is no longer any true tragedy—that is, inevitable conflict with truly no way out.

The whole problem, now, is to *realize* the Christian idea of Individuality. And the history of the Christian World is nothing but the history of this realization.

Now, according to Hegel, one can realize the Christian *anthropological* ideal (which he accepts in full) only by "overcoming" the Christian *theology*: Christian Man can really become what he would like to be only by becoming a man without God—or, if you will, a Gød-Man. He must realize *in himself* what at first he thought was realized in his God. To be *really* Christian, he *himself* must become Christ.

According to the Christian *Religion*, Individuality, the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal, is effected only in and by the Beyond, after man's death.

This conception is meaningful only if Man is presupposed to be immortal. Now, according to Hegel, immortality is incompatible with the very essence of human being and, consequently, with Christian anthropology itself.

Therefore, the human ideal can be realized only if it is such that it can be realized by a *mortal* Man who knows he is such. In other words, the Christian synthesis must be effected not in the Beyond, after death, but on earth, during man's life. And this means that the *transcendent* Universal (God), who recognizes the Particular, must be replaced by a Universal that is immanent in the World. And for Hegel this immanent Universal can only be the State. What is supposed to be realized by God in the Kingdom of Heaven must be realized in and by the State, in the earthly kingdom. And that is why Hegel says that the "absolute" State that he has in mind (Napoleon's Empire) is the *realization* of the Christian Kingdom of heaven.

The history of the Christian World, therefore, is the history of the progressive realization of that ideal State, in which Man will finally be "satisfied" by realizing himself as Individuality—a synthesis of the Universal and the Particular, of the Master and the Slave, of Fighting and Work. But in order to realize this State, Man must look away from the Beyond, look toward this earth and act only with a view to this earth. In other words, he must eliminate the Christian idea of transcendence. And that is why the evolution of the Christian World is dual: on the one hand there is the *real* evolution, which prepares the social and political conditions for the coming of the "absolute" State; and on the other, an *ideal* evolution, which eliminates the *transcendent* idea, which brings Heaven back to Earth, as Hegel says.

This ideal evolution, which destroys Christian *Theology*, is the work of the Intellectual. Hegel takes a great interest in the phenomenon of the Christian or bourgeois Intellectual. He talks about it in Section B of Chapter VI, and devotes all of Chapter V to it.⁷

This Intellectual can subsist only in the Christian bourgeois World, in which a man is able not to be a Master—that is, not to have Slaves and not to fight—without thereby becoming a Slave himself. But the bourgeois Intellectual is nonetheless something different from the Bourgeois properly so-called. For if, just like the Bourgeois, the non-Master, he is essentially peaceful and does not *fight*, he differs from the Bourgeois in that he does not *work* either. Hence he is as stripped of the essential character of the Slave as he is of that of the Master.

Not being a Slave, the Intellectual can liberate himself from the essentially slavish aspect of Christianity, namely from its theological, transcendent element. But not being a Master, he can preserve the element of the Particular, the “individualistic” ideology of Christian anthropology. In short, being neither Master nor Slave, he is able—in this *nothingness*, in this absence of all given *determination*—to “realize” in some way the desired synthesis of Mastery and Slavery: he can *conceive* it. However, being *neither Master nor Slave*—that is, abstaining from all Work and from all Fighting—he cannot truly *realize* the synthesis that he discovers: without Fighting and without Work, this synthesis conceived by the Intellectual remains purely *verbal*.

Now, the problem at hand is this *realization*, for only the *reality* of the synthesis can “satisfy” Man, complete History, and establish the absolute Science. Therefore, the ideal process must rejoin the real process; the social and historical conditions must be such that the ideology of the Intellectual can be realized. Now, this is what took place at the moment of the French Revolution; during which the immanent idea of Individuality, elaborated by the Intellectuals of the Enlightenment, was realized in and by the Fight of the working Bourgeois, who were first revolutionaries and then

⁷ In fact, the Intellectual of Chapter V (the Man who lives in society and in a State while believing he is, or pretending to be, “alone in the world”) is found at every stage of the bourgeois World. But in describing him, Hegel has his contemporaries especially in mind.

citizens of the universal and homogeneous State (the Napoleonic Empire).

The *realization* of the Christian idea, which was secularized by the Intellectual and thus made realizable, is not possible without a Fight, without a social war, without the risk of life. This is true for reasons that are in some sense "metaphysical." Since the idea to be realized is the idea of a synthesis of Mastery and Slavery, it can be realized only if the slavish element of Work is associated with the element of Fighting for life and death, which characterizes the Master: the working-Bourgeois, to become a—"satisfied"—Citizen of the "absolute" State, *must* become a Warrior—that is, he must introduce death into his existence, by consciously and voluntarily risking his life, while knowing that he is mortal. Now we have seen that in the bourgeois World there were no Masters. The Fight in question, therefore, cannot be a class fight properly so-called, a war between the Masters and the Slaves. The Bourgeois is neither Slave nor Master; he is—being the Slave of Capital—his *own* Slave. It is from himself, therefore, that he must free himself. And that is why the liberating risk of life takes the form not of risk on the field of battle, but of the risk created by Robespierre's Terror. The working Bourgeois, turned Revolutionary, himself creates the situation that introduces into him the element of death. And it is only thanks to the Terror that the idea of the final Synthesis, which definitively "satisfies" Man, is realized.

It is in the Terror that the State is born in which this "satisfaction" is attained. This State, for the author of the *Phenomenology*, is Napoleon's Empire. And Napoleon himself is the wholly "satisfied" Man, who, in and by his definitive Satisfaction, completes the course of the historical evolution of humanity. He is the human *Individual* in the proper and full sense of the word; because it is through *him*, through *this* particular man, that the "common cause," the truly universal cause, is realized; and because this particular man is recognized, in his very particularity, by all men, universally. The only thing that he lacks is *Self-Consciousness*; he is the perfect Man, but he does not yet *know* it, and that is why Man is not fully "satisfied" in him alone. He cannot *say* of himself all that I have just said.

Now, I have said it because I read it in the *Phenomenology*. Therefore it is Hegel, the author of the *Phenomenology*, who is

somehow Napoleon's Self-Consciousness. And since the perfect Man, the Man fully "satisfied" by what he *is*, can only be a Man who *knows* what he is, who is fully *self-conscious*, it is Napoleon's existence as *revealed* to all men in and by the *Phenomenology* that is the realized ideal of human existence.

That is why the Christian period (Chapter VI, Section B), which culminates in Napoleon, must be completed by a third historical period, a short one (Chapter VI, Section C), which is the period of German philosophy, culminating in Hegel—the author of the *Phenomenology*.

The phenomenon that completes the historical evolution and thus makes the absolute Science possible, therefore, is the "conception" (*Begreifen*) of Napoleon by Hegel. This dyad, formed by Napoleon and Hegel, is the perfect Man, fully and definitively "satisfied" by what he *is* and by what he *knows* himself to be. *This* is the realization of the ideal revealed by the myth of Jesus Christ, of the God-Man. And that is why Hegel completes Chapter VI with these words: "*Es ist der erscheinende Gott . . .*"; "*This is the revealed God,*" the *real*, true Christ.

Now, having said this, Hegel considers himself obliged to come to terms with the Christian, theological interpretation of the idea of Christ. He must speak of the relation between his philosophy, between the *Phenomenology*, and Christian theology. He must say what this theology *is* in reality.

That is the central theme of Chapter VII.