Chapter Seven

The Relevance of Hegel's "Absolute Spirit" to Social Normativity

Paul Redding

Introduction

Around the turn of the Twentieth Century, Wilhelm Dilthey, in characterising the humanistic disciplines as "*Geisteswissenschaften*," sciences of "spirit" (*Geist*) as opposed to those of "nature" (*Naturwissenschaften*), appealed to Hegel's notion of *objective spirit* (*objektiver Geist*).[1] However for Dilthey, a neo-Kantian, Hegel's concept had to be disentangled from what was considered the unsupportable metaphysical system within which Hegel had presented it. In contrast, Dilthey gave the notion a broadly epistemological significance by correlating it with a distinct type of "understanding" peculiar to the *Geisteswissenschaften*.

Dilthey had extended to the human sciences in general the idea of a peculiarly "hermeneutic" approach to the linguistic disciplines forged by in the early Nineteenth Century by F. D. E. Schleiermacher. While the *Naturwissenschaften* were rightly concerned with

explaining (*erklären*) phenomena in terms of causal laws, the *Geisteswissenschaften* aimed at understanding [*verstehen*] the *meaning* expressed in actions and other expressions of social life, not just linguistic ones. Here Dilthey thought he was making explicit what was present in the historiography of the romantic "historical school" stemming from the work of Leopold von Ranke, and this approach, and not Hegel's *metaphysical* one, would stand as the exemplar of an anti-naturalistic approach to history: "Today we can no longer retain the presuppositions on which Hegel based this concept [of objective spirit]. He constructed communities from the universal, rational will. Today we must start from the reality of life ... Hegel constructed metaphysically; we analyse the given."[2]

Dilthey found the notion of *objektiver Geist* fruitful for capturing the idea that the human sciences examined societies in terms of the specific cultural and meaningful practices and institutions within which the psychological capacities of individual agents developed. While cultural systems were the expressions of life forms that were ultimately grounded in human nature, humanistic understanding could not be reduced to the sorts of explanation that ultimately applied to the natural world. Cultural life was, rather, characterised in ways that seem broadly similar to those explored more recently in terms of the idea of normative or rule-following "forms of life" commonly associated with the later Wittgenstein. For example, while a human action *qua* physical event—in an oft-repeated example, the raising of an individual's right arm—may be potentially explainable in the way that applies to any other natural event, the same event described as a conscious and intentional *action*—that of *voting* for a particular motion in a meeting, say—invokes other non-physically reducible considerations. To take this case, it is impossible to say *what voting is*, without referring to the practices of culturally variable institutions concerned with collective decision making.

As John Searle had pointed out, for such meaningful intentional actions, a physical event X will only "count as" an instance of an action Y if there exist the relevant background institutions which can be thought of as "systems of constitutive rules ... of the form 'X counts as Y in context C.'"[3] Stressing the normative or "rule-*following*" patterns manifested and their non-reducibility to *mere* nomological regularity invokes a distinction that might be likened to Kant's distinction between acting "in accordance with laws," and acting "*in accordance with the representation* of laws."[4] However, Kant's position on

rule-following here is commonly taken as overly rationalistic and individual-istic, and a solution to this problem is often seen to lie in an appeal, as had been made by Hegel, to the fundamentally *social* nature of the "rules" in ques-tion. To be a rule-following agent is to have been inducted into *communal* rule-following practices, and to hold oneself to a rule presupposes that one *already* belongs to a community of rule-following agents *by* whom one's trans-gressions are likely to be corrected. In Hegelian terms, to be a rule-following agent presupposed one's belonging to a realm of "*Sittlichkeit*" structured by communal conventions ("*Sitten*").

For Dilthey, the need to liberate Hegel's idea of *objectiver Geist* from his systematic metaphysics meant extracting it from his tripartite classification of spirit into its "subjective," "objective," and, crucially, "*absolute*" forms. It was "absolute spirit"—often taken simply as a synonym for "God"—that showed Hegel's commitment to a pre-Kantian dogmatic, and in particular, *spiritualis-tic*, metaphysics. Thus "what Hegel distinguished from objective spirit as absolute spirit, namely art, religion and philosophy" had *itself* to be brought back under the concept of *objective* spirit.[5] The problems inherent in this "historicist" move, however, are well known, with the normative philosophi-cal framework presupposed by the investigator itself seemingly reduced in relativistic fashion to the status of mere expression of that investigator's particular "worldview" [*Weltanschauung*]. Later in the Twentieth Century, Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his celebrated *Truth and Method*, would attempt to circumvent such relativistic problems by once again returning to Hegel, claiming to find in Hegel's *integrative* approach to historical knowledge an alternative to the merely "reconstructive" conception that Dilthey had inher-ited from Schleiermacher and Ranke and that was responsible for the prob-lems of a relativistic historicism.[6] Nevertheless, like Dilthey, Gadamer too ultimately endorsed *Kant's* critical philosophy against Hegel's imputed pre-critical "spiritualistic" metaphysics.[7]

In the last twenty years, however, the picture of Hegel as precritical "dog-matic" metaphysician that had been accepted by both Dilthey and Gadamer has come under considerable challenge. Rather than being an object of a Kantian type critique, Hegel, it is commonly argued, is properly viewed as having developed Kant's critique of dogmatic metaphysics, turning it against residual "dogmatic" elements within Kant's own version of critical philoso-phy.[8] Moreover, among the revisionist Hegelians some have seized upon

aspects of Hegel's approach that are crucial to those Hegel-inflected aspects of Gadamer's critique of Dilthey's historicism—Hegel's notion of "recognition" conceived as an intersubjective dynamic process separating the human from the natural realm and constitutive of the very substance of *Geist* itself.[9] We can ask: might it not be the case that this notion can *also* be used to relieve even the conception of *absolute* spirit of some of the charges of a pre-critical "spiritualistic" ontology? The possibility of an affirmative answer is what I will be suggesting in this essay.

In Section 1 I examine Hegel's conception of recognition in the light of a generally hermeneutic approach to social life, contrasting the normative dimension of Hegel's approach to social life that flows from the central role he gives to recognition with Dilthey's more empiricist transformation of Hegel's "objective spirit." I then attempt to divest Hegel's idea of *absolute* spirit from the taint of pre-critical spiritualistic metaphysics by drawing on Robert Brandom's recent attempts to capture Hegel's concept of recognition. Parallels between Brandom's idea of the recognitive core of philosophical life itself and Hegel's conception of philosophy as a form of absolute spirit emerge when we consider (in Section 2) Hegel's specific treatment of *Stoicism* as a form of philosophical life. But the fate of Stoicism in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* reveals a very different attitude to the relation of philosophy to religion to anything consistent with Brandom's approach. Surely *this*, it might be argued, shows Hegel's ultimate entrapment within a traditional spiritualistic ontology. To try to answer this, in the final section I focus specifically on what Hegel's approach to religion (specifically Christianity) implies for his metaphysical commitments. Once more I try to show how Hegel's key concept of recognition is used to free even his *theology* from unwanted pre-critical forms of metaphysics, and that here, as elsewhere, Hegel's thought is fundamentally Kantian. But following hints in Kant, I suggest that Hegel may still have much to teach us about the constitutive normative functions of social life, and that these lessons are to be found in those parts of his theory that Dilthey had been most eager to abandon.

1. Recognition, Social Ontology and Hegel's Metaphysics

Hegel's idea of the role played by "recognition" in the constitution of human or "spiritual" life is probably most familiar from the well-known discussion

of the "master–slave dialectic" in Chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[10] Here it is clear that in Hegel's parable the micro-society made up of a master and his slave is meant as a model of a primitive form of political life *qua* "spiritual" rather than "natural" existence. We might say that while for Aristotle a slave is fundamentally a slave by nature,[11] for Hegel to be a slave is to accept a *normative social role*. That is, rather than instantiating natural kinds, master and slave occupy opposed *normative statuses* with crude but clearly defined "rights" and "obligations": in short, the master has the right to demand of the slave whatever he wants, the slave has the duty to oblige, a duty grounded in an initial commitment to become the master's slave in exchange for his life. "Anerkennung," recognition or acknowledgement, is at the core of this form of life: to *be* a slave is to recognise or acknowledge another *as* a master, and to be acknowledged in turn by them as their slave; and to *be* a master is to be acknowledged as such by another whom one treats in turn as a slave.

Acknowledgement is thereby *self*-acknowledgement, as is signaled by the fact that Hegel's account of *Anerkennung* emerges as a solution to the problematic status of *self-consciousness*. In contrast to the mere biological beings of natural life, slaves and masters thereby exist "for themselves" and not just "in themselves," and they can be "for themselves" only because they each exist "for another."[12]

Dilthey had conceived of individuals as the "bearers [*Träger*]" of the normative social roles that they occupied, and *as* such bearers they could not be understood as merely natural or biological entities. But for Hegel, however, the relation of subject to the social role borne is not so straight-forward. To be the occupant of a social role—to be a rule-follower—will require the ability to recognise what material item is to count *as* an instance of some culturally defined identity: a slave will need to be able to recognise a particular individual *as* his master, to recognise and act on the expressions of his will, and so on, and the "counts as" relation clearly suggests a role for concepts here. It is not surprising then that Hegel, following Kant, takes the capacity involved as a conceptual one as for Kant, concepts *are* effectively such rules. And again following Kant, Hegel will link the conceptual capacity of humans to their *freedom*, to their capacity to, to some degree, transcend or become independent of the domination of the nature to which they nevertheless belong. But this dual belonging to both nature and *Geist* in turn for Hegel introduces a tension into the relationship between master and slave.

At the surface level the master "recognises" the slave as mere *means* to his will: the slave is treated as a being entirely mired within the dumb objectivity of nature and bereft of the independence that conceptual thought promises. Conversely, the master recognises *himself*, and is recognised by his slave, as one-sidedly *independent*—as a quasi-omnipotent will to which the world, mediated by the slave's service, necessarily bends. But at a deeper level, independence and dependence cannot be distributed between master and slave in this way: recognition must be *symmetrical*. The master cannot be *recognised by* a merely dependent object, recognition must come from a self-conscious subject capable of conceptual thought and the independence from nature that this brings with it. Thus, this form of life will play out a dialectic that will contain lessons for both master and slave. The slave must come to recognise his own degree of independence from the world, and he will do this by recognising himself as the agent responsible for the transformed products of his labour. And from *his own* dependence on the *work of* the slave, the master will conversely learn the hard truth that his purported unilateral independence ultimately is shown to be a sham. The asymmetrical relation of master and slave, contradicting the essential reciprocity of recognition, will be undone, and this form of life will collapse and be replaced by another.

The contradictoriness and self-transcendence of this specific form of recognition that emerges in the discussion of "self-consciousness" in chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is typical of the way that Hegel treats all finite "shapes" of consciousness, self-consciousness and spirit in that work, and such a gap between the overt form of a recognitive relation and its underlying character must be problematic for any Diltheian or Rankean conception of "objective spirit" which accepts particular forms of life as "givens" and as intelligible in their own terms. Thus Hegel can appeal to an essential reciprocity that will render an empirical institution like slavery intrinsically *contradictory*, with such contradictions working to undermine any finite shape of spirit that is simply given in history. It is just *this* mechanism that is at the heart of Hegel's teleological conception of human history as a process in which such "contradictions" are progressively eliminated or somehow resolved within succeeding forms of life, but the romantic historiographical tradition to which Dilthey was trying to give epistemological support rejected any whiff of any such "metaphysically" grounded historical teleology.

Hegel's discussion of the way that forms of self-consciousness have essential natures to which their bearers are somehow meant, but may fail, to live to up recalls Aristotle's normative idea of essences and the teleological dimension of their realisation, but a stress on the Aristotelian shape of Hegel's thought on these and other matters should not obscure the genuinely *Kantian* dimension to Hegel's approach.[13] As in Kant's account of the basic normative operations of the mind, Hegel thinks of cognitive norms as immanent to the mind's own operations, or to "thought" itself, but he rejects the individualism of Kant's approach, and thinks of these norms as fundamentally *socially* based and historically evolving by a process within which norms which, at a certain stage of development are *implicit* to social practices, are made progressively *explicit* and available to conscious reflection. This development is conceived of as rational because the specific contradictions plaguing any particular stage are removed with the transition to the next.

Of course there have been many attempts—the most famous being that of Marx—to recoup *something* of Hegel's teleological account of the realisation of "reason in history" by uncoupling the dynamics of social life from any concept of absolute spirit, and it is not difficult to appreciate the motivations for this. Hegel commonly describes this development of thought in religious terms as a process in which "absolute spirit" itself—God—becomes progressively *self-conscious*. Thus, "absolute spirit" is not just a *name* for particular "spiritual products"—art, religion and philosophy—it is the medium for the full realisation of God himself. Thus in his series of lectures on philosophy of religion given at the University of Berlin in 1827 Hegel claims that "the content of philosophy, its need and interest, is wholly in common with that of religion. The object of religion, like that of philosophy, is the eternal truth, God and nothing but God and the explication of God."[14] But we must keep in mind that, like Kant, Hegel takes religious language as a symbolic or metaphorical form of representation of what can be more completely expressed in philosophy *conceptually*,[15] and so it is far from clear that Hegel has anything like a *spiritually realist* concept of God. And if this continuity between Hegel and Kant at the level of *theology* is added to the purported continuity of their "idealist" critiques of traditional metaphysics, we might start to see how the worries that Dilthey shared with others about Hegel's metaphysically constructivist approach might dissolve.

Recent revisionist readings of Hegel, like the more epistemologically "Diltheian" ones, typically draw on parallels between Hegel's concept of spirit and considerations of socially based rule-following, but in ways that draw analogies around the theme of the self-correcting proclivities of socially embodied reasoning. One version of this reading of Hegel is that found in the approach of Robert Brandom which, on examination, may be particularly apt for thinking about *absolute* spirit from a recognitive point of view.[16]

Wittgenstein's idea of the interlacing of "language games" with "forms of life" has suggested to many something like Hegel's idea of "objective spirit": indeed, one may think of Wittgenstein's famous example of the "builders' language game"[17] as somewhat analogous to what is sketched in Hegel's micro-community of master and slave. However, a more *systematically rationalist* Hegelian tone characterises Robert Brandom's development of an approach to the language-game idea found in the work of Wilfrid Sellars from the mid-twentieth century.[18] Sellars had conceived of the human world as irreducibly normative ("fraught with ought") but, in line with his scientific realism, had rejected any idea of some extra-human legislator *responsible* for those norms. Similarly for Brandom, all rational norms are immanent within social life and to be understood as "instituted" and "administered" by human agents themselves in the course their participation within the core linguistic practices of life. The core practices of this instituting and administering are the *making of assertions* and the *giving of justifications* for those assertions in the face of an interlocutor's demand for justification. These interactions are, for Brandom, fundamentally *recognitive* in Hegel's sense: in addressing another one *recognises* that other (and, reflectively, oneself) as subject to the same norms from which one speaks, and so one recognises that other as entitled to *hold oneself* to the norms as one holds them.

According to this picture, when I make a claim to another, I acknowledge them as entitled to raise the question of *my* entitlement to the claim by questioning its justification, and when that question is raised my appropriate response will be to give the other *reasons* for the claim in question. Standardly, to give such a reason will be to appeal to some *further* claim from which the original claim can be "materially" (non-formally) inferred.[19] If another asks after my entitlement to the claim *that it will soon rain*, I might, for example, offer the further claim that *dark clouds are overhead*. To converse, then, is to

deal in commitments and entitlements. To assert is to commit oneself to the fact of one's entitlement to the assertion, and further, to commit oneself to the array of further claims that might be *inferred* from the initial claim. In short, to make an assertion is to place the *propositional content* claimed in what Sellars referred to as the "space of reasons." This is a "normative" space in that all the relevant inferential connections hold in virtue of the implicit norms of our linguistic practices.

In Hegelian fashion, Brandom, following Sellars, focuses on the *self-correcting* propensities of our discourse. In the process of justifying a claim the justifying *norm itself* can be made explicit: for example, invoking the dark clouds overhead can be used to justify the claim that it will rain if it is accepted that *as a rule*, dark overhead clouds accompany rain, but this norm can *itself* be questioned. In this way, the norms initially *implicit* in the discursive practice can be made *explicit*, challenged, improved, replaced, and so on. In Hegelian terms we might say that the practice itself thereby becomes *more self-conscious*.

The "language games" that Brandom has in mind are highly abstract forms of interactions within which the participants are effectively pared down to being considered as mere bearers of particular recognised entitlements and commitments. If one were to look to concrete exemplars of such interactions one might look to the practice of philosophy itself. For his part, Hegel does not often talk explicitly *about* philosophy *as* a realm of public self-reflective culture, but it becomes apparent in his discussion of the forms of self-consciousness in Chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology* that follow the discussion on the master and slave as he there discusses the distinctly *philosophical* forms of self-consciousness, "stoicism" and "scepticism," and following these, an explicitly *religious one*, "the unhappy consciousness". Hegel's account of *stoicism* as a form of self-consciousness, and of the more general form of recognition at the heart of the stoic language game bears interesting analogies to Brandom's account of the dynamics of human rational life.

2. Stoicism and the Philosophical Subject as Abstract Bearer of Rational Rights and Duties

The place of Stoicism in the development of philosophy in the ancient world is particularly significant for Hegel. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*,

Hegel is far more appreciative of the "speculative" approach of Plato and Aristotle than of any later periods of Greek philosophy, nevertheless he complains about both Plato and Aristotle in a way that echoes Kant's complaint about Aristotle's *unsystematic* approach to the categories.[20] The approaches of both, he says, "are not in the form of a system" and "the nature of the speculative has not been explicitly brought to consciousness as the notion … not set forth as the universal, from which the particular was developed."[21] Thus at the end of classical period of ancient philosophy the need remained for "the whole extent of what is known [to] appear as one organisation of the notion," and this need was addressed in the "second period" of ancient philosophy comprising the approaches of Stoicism, Epicureanism and Skepticism. However, in this period the speculative character of the thought of the first period has now been lost, the new approaches being marked by the formalistic "understanding" rather than speculative "reason."[22] This is reflected in how the philosophies of the second period all focus, in some way, on the issue of a principle or "criterion" for judgement. For the Stoic, this criterion was to be found in pure thinking itself, and the Stoic believed that by conforming to it the thinking subject could raise him or herself "into this abstract independence" and attain the freedom of the *sage*.[23]

In Chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Stoicism is treated as a form of self-consciousness in which the polarities of dependence and independence that were separated in the slave and his master are brought into a single self-consciousness, "an I which has the otherness within itself."[24] Moreover, while the cognitive lives of master and slave were articulated by concepts that were "pictured or figuratively conceived,"[25] in Stoicism self-consciousness "is aware of itself as essential being, a being which *thinks* or is free self-consciousness." Thus the Stoic "holds something to be essentially important, or true and good only in so far as it *thinks* it to be such."[26] And while the slave had achieved freedom by working on and transforming objects of the external world, the Stoic has withdrawn interest from this world and works upon and transforms his or her own *self*, thus initiating an approach to philosophy *as "Bildung"* or, as we might say, culture and self-cultivation.[27]

With this stance, then, the Stoic, embodies at the level of individual *intention* the very project of philosophy that is enacted in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*— the elevation of consciousness to the realm of pure thought or *science*. Hegel is

concerned with the issue of the form of *Sittlichkeit* or objective spirit within which a form of self-consciousness can arise. While Stoicism had first appeared in Greece, its renunciation of the immediate concerns of external reality had given it a relative independence from the practical world of the polis that had allowed it to be transplanted to Rome: "As a universal form of the World-Spirit, Stoicism could only appear on the scene in a time of universal fear and bondage, but also a time of a universal culture [*einer allgemeinen Bildung*] which had raised the shaping of character [*das Bilden*] to the level of thought."[28]

This *relocatability* of certain cultural products will be essential for art, religion and philosophy *qua* forms of absolute spirit, distinguishing them from other objectifications of spirit. As Gadamer stresses, for Hegel the products of aesthetico-religious culture of the polis were for later ages like "beautiful fruits torn from the tree."[29] As such they have been torn from the forms of life that gave them significance. However, it is the very fact that such fruits can be re-incorporated into the lives of later, very *different* forms of community, that for Gadamer shows the inadequacy of any historicist approach which sees them as *merely* expressing the essence of the particular societies from which they arose, and so reducing their significance to their functioning within the "objective Spirit" from which they came.[30] We might say then that it is the relocatability of the material expressions of absolute spirit that allow them to function within a *universal* rather than local culture and that this feature will depend upon the presence of some form of enduring representational media within which such "fruits" can be preserved.[31] In the case of a culture's *linguistic* expressions, this medium, as Gadamer stresses, will be *writing*,[32] a medium for philosophising that will become important for the Stoic.

In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, while *we* (readers or "phenomenological viewers") can see a necessary link between the individualism of the Stoic and the type of atomised society in which Stoicism emerged as a form of self-consciousness, the Stoic *himself* misunderstands this as independence from social and political life *per se*, indeed, as an indifference to the existence of others *as such*. "This consciousness accordingly has a negative attitude towards the lord and bondsman relationship. … its aim is to be free and to maintain that lifeless indifference which steadfastly withdraws from the bustle of existence … into the simple essentiality of thought." [33] However, while the Stoic may not grasp

his or her dependence *as a thinker* on the recognition of others, this essential link is confirmed later in the *Phenomenology* when, in the context of a discussion of spirit, Hegel refers back to the analysis of Stoic self-consciousness linking it to "legal status."

Towards the end of the first section of Chapter 6, "Spirit," headed "The True Spirit. The Ethical Order [*Sittlichkeit*]," Hegel discusses the emergence within Rome of "legal status [*Rechtzustand*]" or "personality," the conception of the individual as a bearer of abstract rights, and he connects this notion to the earlier discussion of Stoicism.

> Personality, then, has stepped out of the life of the ethical substance. It is the independence of consciousness, an independence which has *actual* validity. The non-actual thought of it which came from renouncing the *actual* world appeared earlier as the *Stoical* self-consciousness. Just as this proceeded from lordship and bondage, as the immediate existence of self-consciousness, so personality has proceeded from the immediate life of Spirit, which is the universal dominating will of all, and equally their service of obedience. What was for Stoicism only the *abstraction* of an *intrinsic* reality is now an *actual* world. Stoicism is nothing else but the consciousness which reduces to its abstract form the principle of legal status, an independence that lacks the life of Spirit.[34]

We are surely meant to take this link between legal status and Stoicism seriously. Legal status is here examined in the context of the spirit of a particular type of society: that of Rome. Earlier in this chapter Hegel had discussed the *immediate* nature of Greek "*Sittlichkeit*" suggesting that there any individual gained their identity from the complex of recognitively supported particular roles that articulated life in the polis. *Qua* occupant of legal status, however, an individual is no longer so recognised as a *specific* member of the community but simply as an abstract bearer of rights. The connection to the theme of recognition is all too apparent here, as the concept had originated with Fichte's theorisation of legal status.[35] The claim that "Stoicism is nothing else but the consciousness which reduces to its abstract form the principle of legal status," I suggest, can be taken as implying two things. First, that the relevant "rights" that are constitutive for the identity of the Stoic consist not of property in the external world but something more abstract: as the Stoic identifies himself as *thinker*, his "property," we might say, consist his own *thoughts*.

Next, although the Stoic takes this to be an individual affair, the fact that the "form" of this relation between the Stoic and his thoughts is that found in legal right implies that the Stoic's status *as a thinker* must be dependent on the *recognition* of other thinkers. His proper thoughts are the ones to which he is *rationally entitled*.

We in fact encounter just this idea in the context of modern epistemology when the justification of belief is discussed in terms of the notion of epistemic "entitlement," the notion central to Brandom's account of the pragmatics of the rational "language games" found in philosophy. An interlocutor, in challenging the assertion of a speaker and in demanding its justification, is thus asking after the grounds that would "entitle" the speaker to the claim to which the speaker has committed him or herself in the assertion. That Hegel has something like this recognitive basis of epistemic entitlement in mind in discussing the Stoics is further suggested by his thematisation in the opposition between Stoicism and Skepticism over the issue of the criterion itself—a dialectic that results in the collapse of this "second period" of ancient philosophy. The Stoic, who believes that *thought* is the way at getting at what is true but encounters the opposing view of the Skeptic, who rejects the idea of "a 'criterion of truth as such,'" and only accepts a criterion for plausibility.[36]

The Stoic of course thinks of the philosophical cultivation of the self as an individual affair, but this is only because it is an activity grounded in a type of public culture that gives expression to the type of individualistically conceived personal identity found in Rome but not easily available in Greece. Hegel captures the difference by saying that the *Sittlichkeit* that was found in immediate form in Greek society has undergone "alienation [*Entfremdung*]." While all forms of society are, in their non-reducibility to nature, in some sense "constructed [*gebildet*]," in the Roman world "spirit constructs for itself [*bildet sich*] not merely *a* world, but a world that is double, divided and self-opposed."[37] The most obvious way in which this "divided and self-opposed" character of the objective spirit of Roman society will be expressed is in the other-worldly nature of the Christianity that was to gain a grip there. But there is another more general sense in which the Roman world exhibits this doubling of its elements, and this is directly connected with the Stoic theme of self-cultivation.
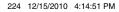
The Stoic attempts to construct or form himself [*bildet sich*] into a pure thinker, thereby totally transcending the determinations of his given, natural self. But the type of self-alienation after which the Stoic strives is, as Hegel comments later in a different context, only completely achievable in *language*. "Language … alone expresses the 'I'. The 'I' is this particular 'I'—but equally the *universal* 'I'; its manifesting is also at once this externalisation and vanishing of *this* particular 'I', and as a result the 'I' remains in its universality."[38] The Stoic is not exempt from recognitive intersubjective relations, they are just less visible, mediated by the subject's linguistic traces. The project of self-cultivation relies on cultural resources that provide the tools with which this project can be undertaken—tools belonging in the realm of relocatable cultural products such as philosophical and other forms of literature which flourished in the period in question. In the later discussion of language Hegel notes that "in the world of ethical order [*Sittlichkeit*], in *law* and *command*, and in the actual world, in *counsel* only, language has the essence for its content; but here it has for its content the form itself, the form which language itself is, and is authoritative as *language*."[39] What Hegel seems to mean with the first part of this sentence is that as it functions within immediate social interactions, language gives a form to a content that is given to it *from* the world of social interaction itself. Explicit expressions of "law" and "command," for example, receive their *authority* from the normative status of the person who utters the words. But in a society in which spirit is itself self-alienated, language *too* becomes alienated from the practices otherwise informing it in the sense that linguistic texts can seemingly maintain their authority in isolation from the original speaker.

Recently Pierre Hadot has pointed to just this form of alienable written text functioning within Stoic practices of self-cultivation in commenting upon the ancient literary form of *hypomnemata*. Epictetus encouraged "lovers of wisdom" to write down, re-read and mediate upon their thoughts,[40] the point of this activity being to "liberate oneself from one's individuality" by one's being able later to hold one's behaviour to such thoughts in subjectively tumultuous times.[41] As Hadot points out, "when one formulates one's personal acts in writing, one is taken up by the machinery of reason, logic and universality." While the thoughts so set down were "usually the dogmas of the school's founding members", it is clear that the authority of those written thoughts did not *derive* from those founders, but derived from the

fact that they were taken as having achieved the objectivity of the Stoic criterion. In Hegel's words, they were authoritative "as *language*."

On Hegel's account, the very conditions that had allowed a public philosophical culture to flourish in the Greco-Roman world had also effectively prevented it from developing: Stoicism, like the linked notion of "legal status," was restricted by an ultimately empty formalism that had its basis in the political structure of the Roman world in which power had come to be invested in a single individual. While a creation of the Roman world, the idea of legal status was to remain there largely empty because it lacked a practical form of life within which the ascription of such a status could play a significant and organic role. Much later, a form of *Sittlichkeit*, "civil society," would develop around the emerging *modern* economy, but in Rome any "content" which could fill such rights "belong[ed] to an autonomous power … which [was] arbitrary and capricious"—the emperor himself.[42] We might relate this to the bare formalism of the Stoic's conceptions of reason and truth that had led to an inability to reply to the equally formal *sceptical* challenge; uncoupled from the powers involved in *transforming the world* in work, that is, the context of the development of the slave's cognitive powers, the Stoics' determination of the criterion of rationality could only remain abstract and formal. This abstraction and formality even affected the Stoic conception of the sage: "The wise man is specially skilful in dialectic we are told by the Stoics, for all things, both physical and ethical, are perceived through a knowledge of logic. But thus they have ascribed this perception to a subject, *without stating who this wise man is*."[43] The Christians, of course, had no trouble in saying who *their* equivalent to the "wise man" was.

For Hegel Greco-Roman philosophy and early Christianity were in a complex relation. Hegel stresses the importance of the philosophical culture that allowed the church fathers to

> elaborat[e] the Christian religion in thinking knowledge … We know that the Fathers were men of great philosophical culture, and that they introduced Philosophy, and more especially Neo-Platonic philosophy, into the Church; in this way they worked out a Christian system by which the first mode in which Christianity was manifested in the world was supplemented, for system was not present in this first manifestation.[44]

Hegel rarely mentions Augustine, but the Bishop of Hippo surely provides a particularly good model for the "unhappy consciousness" who succeeds Stoic and Skeptical self-consciousnesses in chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[45] And this former teacher of rhetoric and reader of the Neoplatonists and Cicero was surely the type of *cultivated* church father that Hegel has in mind. Augustine, according to a recent biographer, "lived much of his life sunk in an ocean of books, books he made and books that made him and books that made the world for him."[46]

3. Philosophy and Religion as Shapes of Absolute Spirit

The church fathers are important for Hegel because they introduced *philosophy* into a faith-based religion, and *a religion* into late Greek philosophy, and doing so transformed the structure of *both*. With respect to the relation of religion to philosophy, Hegel, as we have seen effectively follows Kant: while the medium of philosophy is conceptual, the religious mode of representation is a fundamentally metaphorical or allegorical *picture language* (*Vorstellungen*), in which an "inner meaning" is attributed to a content given in images or sensory intuition. In the case of Christianity, such an allegorical meaning was assigned to the facts of the life of a particular human being, Jesus. When we say "that God has begotten a son", says Hegel, "we know quite well that this is only an image."[47]

In the anthropomorphic "artistic" religions of Greece, the gods had been depicted with human form in statues, and then in specifically *linguistic* products such as epics and tragic dramas, but an internal dialectic of the tragic form eventually converted it into the effectively *secular* art form of comedy.[48] In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel comments that Greek religion had been both "too much" and "too little" anthropomorphic: "too much, because immediate qualities, forms, actions, are taken up into the divine; too little, because man is not divine as man, but only as a far-away form and not as 'this', and subjective man."[49] But in Trinitarian Christianity God was not simply depicted in human form, he was regarded to be *this* particular man, Jesus, both "son of God" and "son of man." It was the triune structure that Christian myth gave to the absolute that made it continuous with the Neo-platonic phase of Greek philosophy that Hegel describes as having succeeded skepticism. Neo-platonism had further developed the idea from Stoic physics

of a world-pervading spirit or "*nous*" by making it concrete *and* by giving it a trinary "hypostatic" differentiation, as in Plotinus' hypostases of "the One," "nous, " and "psyche." However, "in spite of their profound and true speculation, the Neo-Platonists still had not proved their doctrine that the Trinity is the truth, for there is lacking to it the form of inward necessity."[50] This was only to be achieved in Christianity: "To [the Neoplatonists] spirit is thus not individual spirit; and this deficiency is made good through Christianity, in which spirit is found as actual, present spirit, immediately existent in the world here and now, and the absolute spirit is known in the immediate presence as man."[51] Of course, this deficiency was made good only in the mode of a *religious* "picturing" representation, but the church fathers had also created a *philosophical* religion, and Christianity was destined to be pulled into the classic dialectic between faith and knowledge—*Vorstellungen* and concept— that would come to a head in the Enlightenment. While in the revealed religion of early Christianity spirit had "attained its true *shape*," there "the shape itself and the picture-thought [were] still the unvanquished aspect from which Spirit must pass over into the Notion."[52]

All in all, we can see from Hegel's discussion of the passage from ancient philosophy and religion to the philosophical religion of the church fathers that "Absolute Spirit" is, like other dimensions of spirit, fundamentally recognitive in its nature. In the objectifications of the anthropomorphic "artistic religion" [*künstliche Religion*] of the Greeks, the shape of spirit was depicted in the form of a self "through the creative activity of consciousness whereby this [consciousness] beholds in its object its act or the self."[53] This anthropomorphic form given to the representation of spirit was extended and radicalised in Christianity with the idea of an historically actual being, Jesus, recognised as both man and God. This doctrine was soon to pose problems for Christianity's philosophical side, the seeming contradiction contained in this idea causing recurrent attempts throughout the history of Christianity to reject the Trinitarian idea.[54] With his own logical interpretation of the Trinitarian doctrine, Hegel understood the abstract opposition between the first two persons of the trinity, the "Father" and the "Son," as resolved in the "third person," the "Holy Spirit," immanent within the religious community itself.[55] The actual historical figure of Jesus, the "son of man," could only *be* the "son of God" in virtue of the fact that he was so *recognised* by the members of this community. Jesus thus lived on ("arose from the dead") within the scripturally encoded

collective memory of the religious community—continued to exist within its literary culture, we might say—as an exemplification of the highest life.

Thus the complex symbolic structure of Christianity, *qua* type of collective artwork, presents within the form of *Vorstellungen* a truth pertaining to spirit in both subjective and objective forms.[56] Spirit is essentially self-alienating, in a way demonstrated both at the individual level with the process of self-cultivation, and the level of collective culture itself, when concrete social norms are made explicit in symbolic productions allowing their further criticism and change. The self-alienation that God "the father" must undergo *to be* God symbolises this, as does the self-sacrifice of his "son."[57]

Relying on an analogy between the human mind and the trinity traceable to the church fathers, Hegel could take the triune structure of the Christian God as a symbolically articulated model for the recognitive constitution of the finite mind (subjective spirit). As the doctrine of the trinity cannot be cashed out in any substance-based metaphysics (*qua* substances God could only be one or three, not both), so too does Hegel's conception of the recognitively constituted finite mind resist being understood as any type of *substance*—spiritual *or* material. The free individual subject, as Hegel puts it, confounding any substantialist conception of the self, is "at home with itself" [*bei sich*] only when "in another" [*im anderen*].[58] The Diltheian more *functionalistic* approach to the self where the natural self is the *bearer* of socially defined normative roles comes close to Hegel's theory, but can only capture that "immediate" relation of individual organism to social role characteristic of pre-Christian forms of life like that of the polis. But even if we take Hegel's personifications of absolute spirit as instances of essentially metaphorical expressions for the presentation of his recognitive theory of self-consciousness, we still might ask to what his continued use of such metaphors commit him. Why does Hegel insist on giving religion the status it has rather than, like other secular thinkers of the Enlightenment, reducing it to "superstition"?[59] Another way of posing this question is to ask: Why cannot the symbolic expressions characteristic of religion be regarded as entirely replaceable by the abstract conceptuality of secular thought?

Hegel's appeals to religion are typically associated with the charge of "abstract formalism" that he brings against "the understanding," and those presuppose his own "speculative" approach to reason and logic. This is the

charge that he brings against both the Stoics of the Greco-Roman world and Kant's transcendental idealism: both reduce the speculative reason of Plato and Aristotle to "the understanding." While Kant warns of the fact that the pursuit of thought *beyond* the bounds of the empirically bound "understanding" leads to antinomies and contradictions, Hegel appears to *embrace* the contradictions so generated as it will be the *resolution* of such contradiction that will allow reason to progress in its self-correcting manner. Hegel clearly sees his own version of speculative philosophy as correcting problems within the stance of Kant's formalist "understanding," but he also typically appeals to religion, despite the limitations of its picture-language, as addressing and overcoming these same shortcomings. We might glimpse his reasons for this if we return to the problems facing the Stoic, and comparing them with a modern version of the same configuration of self-consciousness.

The internalisation of the opposition between master and slave is clearly reflected in the Stoic practice of the writing of *hypomnemata* as is brought out in Pierre Hadot's comments on the *Meditations* of the Stoic, Marcus Aurelius. For Marcus, he notes, the writer's ego is "situated at the level of Reason, exhorting the soul." That is, in composing his texts Marcus writes from the position of rational thought with the text meant as a device for holding his future behaviour to reason's dictates. Hadot's comparison of Marcus' *Meditations* with the *Soliloquies* of Augustine is instructive here. In contrast to Marcus, says Hadot, "Augustine's ego takes the place of the soul *listening* to Reason."[60] Such a reluctance to speak from the position of reason itself is typical of the "unhappy consciousness," who locates reason in a transcendent source, God, and adopts rather the Christian's stance of "*faith* [Glauben]." As we have seen, for Hegel the unhappy consciousness' stance initially overcomes the problem of the abstraction and formalism of Stoicism, at least in relation to giving a content to the life of the "good" man. But "unhappy consciousness" reproduces the same abstract *asymmetry* between independent (God) and dependent (man) that characterised the master–slave relation that had been internalised by the Stoic. This abstract opposition between *norm* and *individual subjected to the norm* continues to plague such forms of self-consciousness.

The Stoic's problem of *simultaneously* being its own master and slave reappears at the end of Chapter 6 of the *Phenomenology* in Hegel's discussion of

"the beautiful soul" who is *certain* of the purity of his own motivations and who dismisses other's interpretations of his actions as misunderstandings or the result of evil intentions. That is, the beautiful soul is a form of self-consciousness who still must learn that spirit is instantiated *not* in individuals *per se*, who can only ever be finite *self-contradictory* instantiations of it, but in historically developing networks of recognitively linked individuals. The beautiful soul thus has to face the "hard-hearted judge" who can break the immediacy of the beautiful soul's convictions, however the hard-hearted judge in judging from the position of reason faces the same problem faced by the beautiful soul. The judge must therefore acknowledge and confess to his own finitude and seek forgiveness from the subject being judged. *Mutual* confession and forgiveness is therefore the only relation that solves the problem. Here Hegel comments that the reconciling word is "the *objectively* existent Spirit, which beholds the pure knowledge of itself *qua* universal essence, in its opposite … a reciprocal recognition which is *absolute* Spirit."[61] The "reconciling *Yea*, in which the two 'I's let go their antithetical *existence*" is in fact God's self-manifestation "in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge."[62]

Hegel's insistence on *forgiveness* here introduces a shape of recognition that might be difficult to articulate with Brandom's somewhat legalistic model of "deontic scorekeeping,"[63] and seems to signal a different way of thinking about the *intransigence* of our natural determinations in relation to the normative demands that we otherwise face. Besides *holding each other* (and ourselves) to the norms, we must be prepared to *forgive* certain transgressions of others (and ourselves) as well. Given that we are entitled to hold others to the norms, this means in some sense being prepared to *forego*, or at least not insist on, our entitlements. This seems to signal a conception of community that is deeper than and presupposed by the type of recognitive interactions based on "entitlements" and "commitments."[64] Nevertheless, it still might still be thought that we could accommodate this idea within a recognitive account of ethical life without using Hegel's symbolic form of expression when he identifies the "speaker" here as God. And yet for Hegel there does seem to be more at stake here than just a discardable figure of speech. Some of Hegel's more romantic contemporaries had claimed that the type of "metaphysical" claims that Kant had disavowed *could* be made, but only *indirectly* and *poetically*, with figures of speech, irony, and so on. Despite his

antipathy to much of the romantic program, there seems to be a degree of the same idea in Hegel too: although Hegel claims that the medium of philosophy is *conceptual* thought, his idea of "conceptual," at least in relation to more commonplace understandings, seems to have absorbed elements that others would consign to the *symbolic* types of thinking found in religion and art. But rather than to explore the vast question of Hegel's "speculative" thought further here, it aids us to look to Kant, because Kant *too* insists that in certain contexts we can do no other than to adopt a symbolic form of thought and understand a "voice" that we might otherwise take as *our own* (and it which in some sense can only *be* our own) as being the voice of another: the "voice of God." And what appears to be at issue here concerns how we are to think of the very processes in which the norms of all life are *instituted* and *administered*.

Certain Hegelian critics of Kant have pointed to a dilemma that they see facing Kant's account of rule following. For Terry Pinkard Kant faces a paradox—the "Kantian paradox"—in that the morally autonomous individual is conceived as "being subject only to those laws it gives itself." That is, Kant seems to require an agent "to split himself in two, to 'double' himself—in effect, for 'me' to issue a law to myself that 'I' could then use as a reason to apply the law to myself."[65] The basic idea is that it is incoherent to regard the norms to which any subject holds herself as at the same time *legislated* by the subject: they must be regarded as immanent within the rule-governed social life to which that subject belongs. But there is evidence that Kant himself had become aware of the "Kantian paradox," and that he appeals to the symbolic forms of presentation found in religion as part of an effort to address the problem.

In Kant's very latest writings he resumes a theme from his earlier practical philosophy concerning the moral necessity of "postulating" God, but the reason for this seem to have changed. The role of the idea of God is now reduced to a bare minimum: one must relate to the moral law as if it is God's command, *despite the fact* that it is actually one's own.

> The categorical imperative does not presuppose a supremely commanding substance which would be outside me, but is, rather a command or prohibition *of my own reason*. Notwithstanding this, it is nevertheless *to be regarded as* proceeding from a being who has irresistible power over all.[66]

That the moral law needs a *voice* is a function of the fact that it is presented to us in the form of an imperative: a command needs a commander. Evidence that Kant's paradoxical idea that a command that one issues to oneself must be treated *as if* it is the "voice of God" forms a response to the "Kantian Paradox" is suggested by what Kant says in *Perpetual Peace* concerning the quasi-logical problem facing a ruler purporting to hold itself to rules that that ruler has itself legislated: "The legislator can unite in one and the same person his function as legislative and as executor of his will just as little as the universal of the major premiss in a syllogism can also be the subsumption of the particular under the universal in the minor."[67] In *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant appeals to the Trinitarian imagery of the separation of three "persons" in one God in terms of this need to separate the different normative functions involved, functions like those of Brandom's *instituting* and *administering* activities.[68] Without this theological "distinction of personalities," Kant notes, the pure moral religion would "run the danger of degenerating into an anthropomorphic servile faith because of the human propensity to think of the Divinity as a human authority (who does not usually separate in his rule [the parts of] this threefold quality but rather often mixes or interchanges them)."[69] Something like this idea, I suggest, stands behind Hegel's similar approach to the role of religious *Vorstellungen*.

From the early modern period, the idea that the normativity of the social world flowed from God's legislation had started to be challenged by the idea that those norms were somehow the results of collective *human willing*. Kant's conception of the moral law at first glance looks to be a version of this, but Kant is concerned about the propensity of such an approach to fall into the trap of thinking of each subject as a type of unitary substance which can simultaneously legislate norms and subject itself to those norms. In doing so he anticipates Hegel's later objection, and significantly, both invoke the Trinitarian conception of God to challenge the implicitly substantialist conception of the self that is presupposed by modern secular view. In Hegel this takes the form of an appeal to the *logical* truth behind or presented in what, from the point of view of the "understanding," are the *illogical* ideas of the trinity and of the incarnation of God in man. "God," the locus of the norms to which we hold ourselves, in some sense only exists in virtue of *our* recognition of that God and the norms "he" commands. But God and his laws can neither be thought of simply as "our" creation, along the lines pursued later

by Feuerbach and others. Besides suggesting something like a collective version of the "Kantian paradox," such a view suggests that subjects are substances that somehow pre-exist the recognitive relations within which they find themselves, and have natures of which their gods may be merely projections. But Hegel is equally idealist in his approach to "men" and "man" as he is to "gods" and "God," no such entities can be conceived as pre-existing their "recognition" within these complex patterns of interaction that he labels "*Geist,*" interactions mediated by representations of both men and gods.

How to conceive of the normative structure of social life in the absence of the traditional metaphysical idea of God has been one of the most compelling questions facing modern thought, and Hegel's conception of the relation of "subjective" and "objective" figures of spirit have been suggestive to those, like Dilthey, trying to find non-naturalistic but otherwise modern, secular conceptions of human subjectivity. However, not only might it be that Hegel has still much to teach us about the subjects and their lives within a normative social ontology, it may also be the case that some of his most important insights reside in those aspects of his approach to "spirit" that have often been dismissed out of hand.[70]

Notes

[1] See, for example, W. Dilthey, "The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Sciences", in *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. H. P. Rickman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, especially pp. 191–5.

[2] Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, p. 194.

[3] J. Searle, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 51.

[4] I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. M. Gregor, intro. Christine M. Korsgaard, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 24.

[5] Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, p. 194.

[6] H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, second revised edition, translation revised by J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall, London: Continuum, 2004. On Gadamer's appeal to Hegel over Schleiermacher, see Part I, 2, 2 (D) "Reconstruction and integration as hermeneutic tasks".

[7] See for example, his comments in *Truth and Method*, "Forward to the Second Edition", p. xxxiii.

[8] The main proponents of the post-Kantian reading of Hegel I have in mind are Robert Pippin and Terry Pinkard. See, for example, R. B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism:*

The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, and T. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

⁹ For Gadamer, see in particular his treatment of the I-Thou relation in *Truth and Method*, pp. 352–55.

¹⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, §§ 166–230.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics,* trans. H. Rackham, Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1998, 1254 b 15–20.

¹² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §§ 175–7. For an explication of the relations involved, see my "The Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: The Dialectic of Lord and Bondsman in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*", in ed. F. C. Beiser, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹³ Allegra de Laurentiis puts it well when she describes Hegel's approach as a "modern, critical version of Scholastic realism". A. de Laurentiis, "Absolute Knowing", in ed. K. R. Westphal, *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit, Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2009, p. 246.

¹⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: One-volume Edition, The Lectures of 1827*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988, p. 78. Similarly, he says in his lectures on aesthetics that philosophy "has no other object but God and so is essentially rational theology" (*Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, vol 1, p. 149). Philosophy, along with art and religion, belongs to what he refers to as "Absolute Spirit", and these three realms having this same content—God—"differ only in the *forms* in which they bring home to consciousness their object, the Absolute" (*ibid*).

¹⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, pp*. 144–161.

¹⁶ For the inferentialist semantics that forms the background to Brandom's reading of Hegel see R. B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1994. For the application of the approach to Hegel, see his *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2002, chs 6 & 7.

¹⁷ L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1963, § 2.

¹⁸ See, for example, W. Sellars, "Language, Rules and Behavior," in ed. S. Hook, *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom*, New York, Dial Press, 1950, reprinted in W. Sellars, *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid* Sellars, ed. and intro. by J. F. Sicha, Atascadero: Ridgeview, 1980. On Brandom's development of Sellars' pragmatic approach to language see my *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, ch. 2.

[19] On the notion of material inference see Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead*, pp. 6–9.

[20] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A81/B107.

[21] G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 volumes, trans. E. S. Haldane, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, vol. 2, p. 229.

[22] *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 232.

[23] *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 234. Hegel discusses the Stoic's appeal to the criterion of the cataleptic impression (*phantasia kataleptiki*) at p. 250.

[24] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §199.

[25] *ibid.*, §197.

[26] *ibid.*, §198.

[27] Recently this aspect of Greco-Roman philosophy has been stressed by Pierre Hadot in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. and intro. A. I. Davidson, trans. M. Chase, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995.

[28] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §199, translation modified. Cf., "the Stoic philosophy was particularly at home in the Roman world". Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol 2, p. 278.

[29] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 753, quoted in Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 160.

[30] This is at the core of Gadamer's return to Hegel's "integrative" approach to historiography over Schleiermacher's "reconstructive" approach.

[31] See Hegel, "The statues are now only stones from which the living soul has flown, just as the hymns are words from which belief has gone." *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 753. The crucial fact nevertheless is that we have and find meaning in such dead stones and words.

[32] Kant broaches the issue of the difference that that the existence of sacred texts makes to forms of religious faith in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in I. Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 162n.

[33] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §199.

[34] *ibid.*, §479.

[35] J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, ed. F. Neuhouser, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000. Effectively this is the way that Hegel would later theorise abstract property rights in the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*.

[36] In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel expands this dialectic to include the Epicurean. We have already seen from the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* that the Stoic's attempt to specify the "cataleptic impression" as a criterion for certain knowledge must surely fail. For a helpful account of the role of the problem of the criterion in Hegel's *Phenomenology* see K. R. Westphal, "Hegel's Phenomenological

Method and Analysis of Consciousness" in Westphal (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit.

37 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §486.

38 *ibid*., §508. The centrality of language for exploring questions of the "I" had been made thematic by critical engagement with Fichte's philosophy by the "Jena Romantics" in the 1790s.

39 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §508.

40 Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 195.

41 *ibid*., p. 211.

42 Thus in the ancient world "consciousness of right, therefore, in regards to its actual validity, experiences this rather as the loss of its reality and its complete inessentiality". Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §480, translation modified.

43 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol 2, p. 256 (italics added). Earlier, Hegel attributes this criticism of not saying who the wise man is to Cicero (p. 251). Significantly, Kant, in "The Ideal of Pure Reason" in the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, gives the Stoic sage as an example of such an "ideal" which "serves as the *original image* for the thoroughgoing determination of the copy" against which we can compare and judge ourselves. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A569/B597. As Hegel finds the Stoic's non-speculative restriction to the understanding in Kant as well, Cicero's criticism might be taken as applying to Kant's moral philosophy as well.

44 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol 3, p. 11.

45 That Augustine is the model for "unhappy consciousness" is posited by Henry Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 vols, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997, vol. 1, p. 395, and Stephen Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel in the Development of Hegel's Thinking*, University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, p. 294.

46 J. J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography*, New York, Harper Perennial, 2006, p. 120.

47 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, one-volume edition, The Lectures of 1827*, p. 146.

48 Moreover, the specifically religious "picture-language" elements had begun to be forced out of the tragedies by the demands of the philosophers. "The expulsion of such shadowy, insubstantial picture-thoughts which was demanded by the philosophers of antiquity thus already beings in [Greek] tragedy in general." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §741. Comedy is thus the religious analogue to philosophical scepticism: "What this self-consciousness beholds is that whatever the form of essentiality over against it, is instead dissolved in it—in its thinking, its existence, and its action—and is at its mercy." §747. See also §753.

49 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol 3, p. 4.

50 *ibid*., vol 3, pp. 1–2.

[51] *ibid*.

[52] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §683.

[53] *ibid*. The idea of recognition of oneself in the product of one's creative labours was, of course, established in Hegel's discussion of the labour of the slave.

[54] Early the doctrine had been rejected by Arius (ca 250–336 CE) and his followers, who were denounced as heretics at the First Council of Nicaea in 325. In the early modern period it was similarly rejected by Faustus Socinus (1539–1604) and his followers. The antitrinitarian movement later became generally known as "Unitarianism".

[55] Hegel's attempt to reconcile the Trinitarian doctrine with his own logic was complex and changing. See, for example, P. C. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading of the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 85–9. The attempt to resolve the Christian Trinitarian structure with that of logic had to some degree been anticipated by Leibniz in his attempt to exempt the Trinitarian doctrice from contradiction. See in particular Maria Rosa Antognazza's important study, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Gerald Parks, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007.

[56] Augustine had regarded the subjective mind as mirroring, in a finite way, the triune structure of God, an idea revived in Leibniz's drawing of the analogy between the way the self-aware mind is both divided (as subject and object of knowledge) and yet one. Hegel, in his recognitive account of self-consciousness, also regards the structure of self-consciousness as manifesting this triune structure.

[57] I am indebted here to conversations with Paolo Diego Bubbio who has stressed to me the centrality of the figure of "sacrifice" in Hegel's systematic thought.

[58] See, for example, G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part 1 of the* Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze, trans. T. F. Geraets, W A Suchting, and H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1991, § 24, addition 2, and *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. A. W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, § 7 addition. Significantly, being consciously "in another" is what is missing from Stoic self-consciousness. For the Stoic: "In thinking, I *am free,* because I am not in an *other*, but remain simply and solely in communication with myself." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 197.

[59] For his part Brandom is clear about those parts of the historical Hegel that can be discarded as mere inessential accumulations reflecting historically contingent circumstances—a policy that might indeed be extended to the role Hegel gives to religion.

[60] P. Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. M. Chase, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 33 (emphasis added). Thus in the *Soliloquies*, Augustine reports a "voice" speaking to him while reflectively examining his thoughts: "was it I who was speaking, or someone, either outside me or within me, I do not know". Quoted in *ibid*.

[61] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §670.

[62] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §671.

[63] I have developed this idea in "Hegel, Fichte and the Pragmatic Context of Moral Judgment", in ed. E. Hammer, *German Idealism: Contemporary Perspectives*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2007.

[64] In Hegel's *Outlines of a Philosophy of Right*, the "rights based" community of civil society thus presupposes the differently structured community of the family.

[65] T. Pinkard, "Subjects, Objects, and Normativity: What Is It Like To Be an Agent?", in eds. K. Ameriks and J. Stolzenberg, *International Yearbook of German Idealism, vol 1*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2003, p. 210. Pinkard continues: "However, splitting the agent in two *per se* does nothing to solve the problem, since such a view cannot adjudicate which of the two sides of the same agent is to have priority over the other; it cannot, that is, show how splitting myself in two somehow 'binds' one of my parts because of legislation enacted by the other". (*ibid*.) Pinkard adds, that "Wittgenstein's arguments about private languages and rule-following only reinforce such a view". Pinkard's Hegel solves Kant's problem with a move to the "sociality of reason", conceived by Pinkard in terms broadly similar to those of Brandom. See especially, *Hegel's Phenomenology*. A similar Hegel inspired criticism of Kant is made by William Bristow in *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[66] Kant, *Opus postumum*, p. 211, both emphases added. On Kant's later conception of God see especially E. Förster, *Kant's Final Synthesis: An Essay on the Opus Postumum*, Cambridge, Mass., Cambridge University Press, 2000, Ch. 5.

[67] Kant, "Perpetual Peace" in *Kant on History*, trans. L. W. Beck, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1963, p. 96. It is this quasi-logical point that is behind Kant's treatment of the "separation of powers".

[68] Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, pp. 166–7.

[69] *ibid*., p. 167.

[70] I am grateful to Heikki Ikäheimo for helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.