
The St. John's Review

Volume 52, number 1 (Fall 2010)

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The St. John's Review is published by the Office of the Dean, St. John's College, Annapolis: Christopher B. Nelson, President; Pamela Krause, Dean. All manuscripts are subject to blind review. Address correspondence to the *The St. John's Review*, St. John's College, P.O. Box 2800, Annapolis, MD 21404-2800.

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ISSN 0277-4720

Desktop Publishing

The St. John's Communications Office

Current and back issues of *The St. John's Review* are available on-line at www.stjohnscollege.edu/news/pubs/review.shtml.

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 JACOB KLEIN'S TWO
PRESCIENT DISCOVERIES
Eva Brann

Jacob Klein was in the last year of his nine-year tenure as dean of St. John's College in 1957 when I came as a young tutor. He died in 1978, still teaching. In those twenty-one years during which I knew him, he was above all a teacher—mine and everybody's. His spirit informed the college. While dean, he was a fierce defender of his conception of this remarkable community of learning. This passion had generous parameters, from a smiling leniency toward spirited highjinks to a meticulous enforcement of rules meant to inculcate intellectual virtue. As a tutor, he shaped the place through lectures that the whole college attended and discussed, through classroom teaching that elicited from students more than they thought was in them, but above all through conversation that was direct and playful, serious and teasing, earthily Russian and cunningly cosmopolitan. We all thought that he had some secret wisdom that he dispensed sparingly out of pedagogical benevolence; yet he would sometimes tell us things in a plain and simple way that struck home as if we had always known them. I, at least, always had the sense of hearing delightful novelties that somehow I'd known all along. He also had an aversion to discipleship and a predilection for wicked American kids. And he could be infuriating whenever someone tried to extract definitive doctrines from him. His reluctance to pontificate was in part indolence (we sometimes called him "Jasha the Pasha")—an indolence dignified by his aversion to philosophy carried on as an organized business—and in part pedagogical reservation—a conviction that to retail one's thought-products to students was to prevent inquiry. This aversion to professing authority is, to my mind, his most persuasive and felicitous legacy

Keynote Address at the Conference on Jacob Klein, held at Seattle University on May 27-29, 2010. Eva Brann is a tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis.

to the college, and the reason we still call ourselves tutors—guardians of learning—rather than professors—professionals of knowledge.

Nonetheless, there were doctrines and they were published. He had set himself against academic publication, so much so that I had to translate Jasha's youthful book on the origin of algebra in secret—though when confronted with the *fait accompli* he capitulated quite eagerly. This book is now the subject of Burt Hopkins's acute and careful analysis, *The Origin of the Logic of Symbolic Mathematics: Edmund Husserl and Jacob Klein* (to be published in 2011).

Today I would like to present two of his chief discoveries from a perspective of peculiar fascination to me—from the standpoint of the contemporary significance and the astounding prescience, and hence longevity, of his insights. Now I grew up intellectually within a perspective enforced by our program of studies and reinforced by Jasha's views (forgive the informality; it was universal in his circle), which were rooted in certain continental philosophers, of whom Husserl was the most honorable. The guiding notion of this perspective was that modernity is best apprehended as being in a ruptured continuum with Greek antiquity—a continuum insofar as the terms persist, ruptured insofar as they take on new meanings and missions. That perspective makes those who hold it avid participants in the present—critically *and* appreciatively avid.

I will state immediately and straightforwardly the issues of our present-day lives to which Jasha's insights speak. First, they speak to the ever-expanding role of image-viewing and virtual experience in our lives. Here the questions are: What degree of "reality" is ascribable to images? What does life among these semi-beings do to us? Do we lose substance as they lose their ground? Do originals retain their primary or even a residual function in the virtual world? Second, Jasha's insights speak to the burgeoning brain science that tends to ascribe an ultimately physical being to human nature. Here the questions are approachable in terms of "emergence." Granted that brain and mind are intimately linked, what is the manner in which the latter

emerges from, or projects into, the former? How might an entity *emerge*, be it from above or below, that is radically different from its constituents? These are questions about consciousness (what we are *aware of*) and about self-consciousness (who we *are*) that should be of great concern to us, because they dominate public life quite unreflectively. To put this in a form that is not currently fashionable: Do we have souls?

Klein's two insights, then, are both interpretations of Platonic writings and are set out in *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (1965) and *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra* (1934). The latter is a learned book written by a private European scholar for academic readers, the former is a very accessible work written by an American teacher for lovers of Socrates. Of both these insights Burt Hopkins has produced detailed analyses, which have added a new edge to doctrines I've lived with familiarly for half a century. I will, however, feel free here to supplement, embroider and question Jacob Klein's interpretation of Plato and Burt Hopkins's reading of Klein as I go. I'll do it implicitly, so you shouldn't trust this account for faithfulness to the letter, though I hope you may trust it for faithfulness to the spirit. You'll see, I think, what I mean when I speak of the immediacy and naturalness of Klein's interpretation: His readings sit well.

The first insight, then, begins with an understanding of the lowest segment of the so-called Divided Line in Plato's *Republic*, that mathematical image (picture it as vertical) of the ascent to Being and the learning associated with that ascent. In this lowest segment are located the deficient beings called reflections, shadows, and images, and a type of apprehension associated with them called *eikasia* in Greek and usually rendered as "conjecture." Klein's interpretation starts with a new translation of this noun: "image-recognition." The nature of these lowest beings—they are revealed as basic rather than base—is set out in Plato's *Sophist*. Consequently, the *Republic* and the *Sophist* between them lay the foundations of the Platonic world.

The second discovery involves a complex of notions from which I'll extract one main element: the analysis of what it means

to be a number, and what makes possible this kind of being—which, as it turns out, makes possible all Being. Again, the principal texts are the *Sophist* and the *Republic*, supplemented by Aristotle's critical account of Plato's doctrine. To anticipate the perplexity that is also the doctrine: Take any number—say two. It is constituted of two units. Each is one, but both together are two. How can it be that two emerges from elements that are each precisely not two? I might remark in passing that Socrates thinks that one mark of readiness for philosophical engagement is a fascination with this perplexity. And from my experience with students, I know that Socrates was correct.

So now, after these broad previews, some nitty-gritty. Socrates begins by dividing the whole line mentioned above in some arbitrary ratio, and then he divides the two subsections in that same ratio. So if the whole line is, say, sixteen units, and the ratio is, say, triple; then one segment is twelve units, the other four. Then subdivide the twelve-unit segment similarly into nine and three units, and the four-unit segment into three and one. There are now four segments, two by two in the same ratio with each other and with the first division of the whole. Whether you want to make the top or the bottom segment the longest depends on whether you assign more length to the greater fullness of Being or to the larger profusion of items. It can also be shown that in all divisions of this sort—called “extreme-and-mean ratio”—the middle segments will be equal. Socrates will make the iconic most of this mathematical fact.

Now the subsections make a four-term proportion called an *analogia* in Greek—a:b::b:c—and they mirror, as I said, the division of the whole line. You can read the line up or down. *Down* is the cascade of Being, which loses plenitude as it falls from true originals to mere images. *Up* is the ascent of learning, ending in the direct intellectual vision of the prime originals, the *eide*, the “invisible looks” in Klein's language, usually called the “forms.” Beyond all Being there is the notorious Good, the unifying power above all the graduated beings, the principle of wholeness, which I'll leave out here. At the bottom is the aforementioned “image-recognition.” Now just as each of the object-

realms assigned to the upper sections is causally responsible for the ones below, so, inversely, in learning, each stage, each capacity, is needed for the learner to rise. None are left behind; all remain necessary. And so the bottom, the first capacity, is also the most pervasive. Children recognize images early on. Look at a picture book with a two-year-old: “Kitty,” he'll say, pointing. “Careful, it'll scratch.” “No, it won't,” he'll say, looking at you as if you were really naïve. That's image-recognition, the human capability for recognizing likeness as belonging to a deficient order: a cat incapable of scratching.

It is as fundamental for Socrates as it is low on the scale of cognitive modes, because imaging is the most readily imaginable, the least technically ticklish way of representing the activity by which the realm of intelligible Being produces and rules the world of sensory appearances. Each step downward in the scale of being is a move from original to image; each step upward in the scale of learning involves recognizing that something lower is an image of something higher.

Just to complete the sketch of the Divided Line, here are the stages of knowledge and their objects in brief. Above images, there are the apparently solid objects of nature and artifice. The acquaintance with these is called “trust,” *pistis*. It is the implicit, unreflective belief we have in the dependable support of the ground we tread on and the chair we sit in—the faith that our world is not “the baseless fabric of a vision” that melts into thin air.

This whole complex of dimensionally defective images and taken-on-faith solidity of our phenomenal world is itself an image of the upper two parts of the line. The third part, equal in length to the second from the bottom, contains all the rational objects that look, on the way up, like abstractions from the sensory world—mathematical models and logical patterns. To these we apply our understanding, a capacity called in Greek “thinking-through,” *dianoia*. They are then revealed to be the originals of the sensory world, the intelligible patterns that impart to the sensory world such shapeliness and intelligibility as it has. Thus they make natural science possible; for they are the rational

counterparts of the sensory world. Finally, there is the realm of direct knowledge. As happens so often in the dialogues, the contents of these upper reaches are named in inverse relation to the contents of the lower ones: “invisible looks” (since *eidōs* is from the *vid*-verb, the verb for seeing), and they are reached by a capacity for direct insight (which Aristotle will in fact analogize to sensing)—*noēsis*. Above and beyond them all is the very Idea itself, the idea of all ideas—the Good, which produces, nourishes, and unifies all beings, and grounds all human learning.

Implicit in this ladder of Being is the answer to the question that matters most: What *is* an image, such that we can know it *as* an image? The answer is given in the *Sophist*, whose main character is, in his general person, an image incarnate—the mere image of a truly truth-seeking human being. Socrates poses the opening question of the *Sophist*, but he sits silently by as a Stranger from Italian Elea, a follower of Parmenides, finds a solution. I’ll venture a guess why he falls silent. In the *Sophist* appears a serious ontological teaching, and ontological *doctrine* is not Socrates’ way: He is the man of the tentative try, of *hypotheses*. I’ll even venture a—perhaps perverse—appreciation of this mode: His stubborn hypotheticalness, his unwillingness to assert knowledge, is the complement of his unshakable faith in a search for firm truth, carried on in full awareness of human finitude.

What then is the Parmenidean solution? I call it Parmenidean although the Stranger, the intellectual child of Parmenides, calls himself a parricide, since he is about to *deny* a crucial Parmenidean teaching: that Nonbeing *is not*, is neither sayable nor thinkable. For he will in fact *affirm* a yet deeper teaching of his philosophical father: that what counts is being thinkable and sayable. The Elean Stranger will show how Nonbeing can be thinkable and how speech is in fact impossible without it—as was indeed implicit in Parmenides’ very denial.

It is thinkable as *Otherness*. To say that something *is not* is usually to say that it is not this but that, that it is other than something perspectively prior. (I say “usually,” because there “is” also something called “utter non-being,” which is indeed,

though superficially utterable, insuperably unthinkable.) Relational, comparative Nonbeing, however, is one of the great ruling principles of ontology. It is totally pervasive, since whatever is *a* being is other than other beings. It is the source of diversity in the world and of negation in speech. Has the Stranger really done in his philosophical progenitor? No, as I intimated. He has actually saved Parmenides from himself; for he has shown that Nonbeing *is*, is Being in another mode. Being is still all there is. There is no parricide. Moreover, this Other, a piece of apparently high and dry ontology, turns out to give life to the realm of ideas and to the world of human beings: it informs the one with a diversity of beings and articulates the other with the oppositions of speech.

Why was this modification necessary in the search for the Sophist? Because a Sophist is indeed a faker, himself an image of a truth-seeker and a producer of images of what is genuine. Otherness, the great genus of “The Other,” is the condition of possibility for images, since it has three tremendous powers. First, it makes possible that a thing not be what it is. And that is just what characterizes an image: “It’s a kitty,” the child says, pointing. But not really; it doesn’t scratch. Or people bring out photographs in order to be in the presence of an absent one, but they are not real enough to assuage longing. Hence an image is understood first, and most ontologically speaking, as not being what it is, but also, second, as being less than the original it represents; for it represents that original in a deficient likeness. Here a second capacity of the Other shows up: it creates a defective, derivative Otherness. And third, it makes negative knowledge and denying speech possible: we can think and say, “The image is—in some specifiable way—like its original; but likeness is *not* identity.” The sentence “An image is *not* the original” displays Otherness as negation, articulated as Nonbeing. The ability to utter—and mean—that sentence is specifically human. Its loss would be, I think, a serious declension of our humanity. Therefore this complex of consideration, illuminated by Klein in his book on the *Meno*, seems to me crucial for navigating our image-flooded world with full awareness.

More particularly, the ability to distinguish image from original is crucial today because the shaping of our American lives, which is more and more a matter of declining options and refusing temptations, is much in need of suggestive approaches for coping with images. What are the truths and falsehoods of images in general? What consequently are the effects of discretionary image-viewing on our consciousness? Do all images in fact have originals, or is it images “all the way down”? And if there are always originals, how can we find our way back to them? What is real within our world, what is genuine beyond it? I'll assert simply that without occasional reflection on such an eminently current issue our lives tend toward passing by rather than being lived. “The unexamined life is unlivable (*abiotos*),” Socrates says in the *Apology* (38a)—and so a life without reflection on its central issues is thus, in effect, un-lived.

I'll now go on to Klein's second interpretive discovery, a much more technical, but equally future-fraught, construal.

A preoccupation of Socrates—it might be puzzling to readers who haven't yet seen the implications—is often expressed by him in this way: “Each is one, but both are two.” To be gripped by this odd perplexity is, as I said, a beginning of philosophizing. The oddity comes out most starkly when we think of counting-numbers, the natural cardinal numbers. Take the first number, two. (For the ancients, one is not a number; it is the constituent unit of which a number is made.) Each of its units is one and nothing more. Yet this unit and another together make up the number two. Neither is what both together are. This ought to be strange to us, because we are used to the elements of a natural collection having each the quality that characterizes the whole: The doggy species subsumes dogs. Whether we think of dogginess either as an abstracted generalization or as a quality-bestowing form, each member has the characteristic that names the kind. Clearly, numbers are assemblages that work differently from other classes. Numbers have a uniquely characteristic, a so-called “arithmological” structure. The recognition of the significance of this situation and its peculiar appearance among the great forms, particularly in respect to Being, is Klein's achievement.

Let me begin by briefly reviewing the kinds of numbers Klein takes into account. He observes—a previously ignored fact—that the first meaning of the Greek word that we translate as number, *arithmos*, is that of a counted assemblage of *concrete things*. Any counted collection—a flock of sheep, a string of horses, a herd of cattle—does not *have*, but *is* an *arithmos*. If we think as Greeks (and we may, with a little effort), we count ordinally, because we must keep items in order: first, second, third (and then go on cardinally four, five, six, for verbal convenience). But when we have counted up the whole, we allow it to become a heap-number—a distinct, discriminated group. It is a counted collection that has lost its memory. An *arithmos* is such a sensory number. It is, for example, a sheep-number, and its units are sheep-monads. To me it seems undecidable whether such a concrete number has an arithmological structure, since in it the sheep are *both* sheepish and mere units; as a flock we discriminate them, as units we count them.

Next come the mathematical numbers made up of pure monads, units that have no quality besides being unities. A mathematical number is defined by Euclid thus: “An *arithmos* is a multitude composed of monads,” where a monad is a *pure* unit. This type of number has an arithmological structure with a vengeance, and you can see why: a pure unit has *no* characteristics besides unitariness. It's neither apples nor oranges, which is precisely why you can count fruit or anything at all with it. Being thus devoid of qualities, it has mere collectibility, but it has no other contribution to make to the assemblage. *Being* two is not in the nature of a monad as a monad, though *adding up* to two is. “Two” appears to *emerge* from these associable units. If you think this is unintelligible, so does Socrates. It will get worse.

The difficulty is implicitly acknowledged in the modern definition of number. It begins with *arithmos*-like concrete assemblages. If their elements, treated now as mere units, can be put into one-to-one correspondence, the collections are said to be equivalent. The collection or set of all equivalent sets *is their number*. This definition evades the questions, *What* number is it? and Does the set of sets *arise from* the units of the concrete

collection, or does it *bestow on* them the numerosity? Therein lies an implicit recognition of Socrates' problem.

It gets worse, for now a third type of number appears. Klein knows of it from Aristotle's critical report in the *Metaphysics*, where there is mention of "form-numbers," *arithmoi eidetikoi*. The highest genera in the Platonic structure of forms are organized in such numberlike assemblages. These are, unlike the indefinitely many mathematical numbers, limited in multitude. (There may have been ten, the so-called root-numbers of the Pythagoreans.) Now the super-genera in the *Sophist* are Same and Other. The highest after these is Being, which consists of Motion (*kinesis*) and Standstill (*stasis*). (This last is often translated as "Rest," but that inaccurately implies a cessation from, or deprivation of, motion, though the two genera are coequal.) Notice, incidentally, that the three kinds of numbers run in tandem with the three rising upper segments of the Divided Line—concrete numbers with the sensory world, pure units with the mathematical domain, form-numbers with the eidetic realm.

Each of these forms acts like a monad in an arithmetic collection. However—and this is Aristotle's most pertinent criticism—these high forms are not neutral units. They are each very much what they are in themselves, indefeasibly self-same and other than all others. They are, as he says: *asymbletoi*, "incomparable," literally "not throwable together." Thus, unlike pure, neutral mathematical numbers, they cannot be reckoned with *across* their own genus, and so, *a fortiori*, it would be seen that their association within their genus is unintelligible. For how can Motion and Standstill be together as the genus of Being if they have nothing in common and so cannot be rationally added up?

Klein claims that Aristotle's cavil is in fact Plato's point. The forms are associated in what is the very paradigm of an arithmological structure: what *each* is *not*, that they *are together*. It is because *they* have a number structure in which unique *eide* associate in a finite number of finite assemblages that innumerable sensory items can collect into concrete countable heaps organizable into finite classification. Furthermore, it is in

imitation of these eidetic numbers that we have the indefinitely many mathematical numbers uniting as many pure units as you please—though we are left to work out the manner of this descent. For my part, I cannot claim to have done it.

I have mentioned before what is certainly the foremost stumbling block for most people in accepting the forms as causes of worldly being and becoming. The perplexity is usually put as "the participation problem": how do appearances "participate" in the forms? These are infelicitous terms, because they imply the least satisfactory answer—that dogs somehow take a part in, or appropriate a part of the form, a non-solution scotched in Socrates' very early attempt in the dialogue *Parmenides* at articulating his great discovery of the forms. "Imaging" might be a more felicitous term, since it is at least less awkward to the intellectual imagination than is "partaking."

But let me stick here with the familiar term, and follow Klein in pointing out that the participation problem has two levels. On the lower level, the question is how the phenomenal world participates in the forms. On the higher level, it is how the forms associate with, participate in, each other. For unless they do form assemblages, *genera* and their constituent *eide*, the sensory world, even granted that it does somehow receive its being and structure from these, can have no learnable organization. Crudely put: we can classify the world's beings, natural and artificial, in terms of hierarchies of kinds, such as the genera, subgenera, species, and subspecies of biology, only because their causative principles have a prior, paradigmatic structure of associations and subordinations. On this hypothesis, even only artificially distinguished heaps can be counted up by reason of the arithmological character of eidetic groupings.

The eidetic numbers are thus intended to be a Platonic solution to the upper-level participation problem. It is, so to speak, a highly formal solution. For while the *type* of association is named—the *arithmoi eidetikoi* with their arithmological structure—the *cause* of any particular association is not given. There is no substantive answer to the question, Just what in a form makes it associate numerologically with a specific other?

There *should* be no such answer, because the eidetic monads are, after all, impossible. Motion and Standstill have in themselves nothing in common. Moreover, why are *they* the sole constituents of Being? And yet, there *must* be an answer since they are in fact composed. As Klein keeps pointing out, in the upper reaches the *logos*, rational speech, fails. One way it fails is that to reach the number two, for instance, we count off one, one, two; that is, three items—yet there are not three, but only two. For Two, be it mathematical or eidetic, is not over and beyond the two units; it is just those two together. How two items can become one our reason cannot quite articulate. Nor can it say what makes either an eidetic monad, which is a qualitative plenum, or the mathematical unit, which is a qualitative void, associate with others in “families,” (that thought-provoking classificatory term from biology) or in “numbers” (those colorless collections that yet have highly specific characteristics).

Now we come to Klein’s novel construal of just this eidetic number Two, which occurs in the *Sophist*, although it is not explicitly named there. Being is a great eidetic genus. It is composed of Standstill and Motion. Neither of these can have any part in the other; it is just as unthinkable for Standstill to be involved in Motion as for Motion to be involved in Standstill. Yet there is nothing in the world that is not both together. Our world is one of dynamic stability or stable dynamism, in place and in time. The duo responsible for this condition in the realm of forms is called *Being*. Being is not a third beside or above Motion or Standstill but just the togetherness of these subgenera. Being *is* only as both of these together, and neither of them can *be* except as part of a pair. As an unpaired monad, neither *is*; both *are* as a couple: Being *is the* eidetic Two. And once more, it is this arithmetical structure that descends to, makes possible, and is mirrored in, the mathematical number structure of any mathematical two—on the one hand. On the other hand, it makes the phenomenal world appear as I have just described it: at once stable and moving, variable and organizable. On the way up, it might look as if the eidetic numbers are an erroneous levering-up of a mathematical notion; on the way down, they appear as the not

quite humanly comprehensible, but necessary, hypothesis for an articulable world, a countable and classifiable world. And again, seen from above, Being must—somehow—bring about its own division; but seen from below, Being *emerges* from its constituents. And just as the modern definition of number in terms of equivalent sets leaves unarticulated the question of whether the number set is the ground of or the consequence of the equivalent sets, so too in Klein’s exposition of the first eidetic number, Two, it is left unsaid whether the genus determines its eidetic monads, or the reverse, or neither. It is left, as textbooks say, as an exercise for the reader—a hard one.

I might, before I end, even venture a still formal but somewhat more specific answer to the associability question. In the upper ontological reaches, at least, what might be called extreme Otherness—by which I mean either contrary (that is, qualitative) or contradictory (that is, logical) opposition—*seems* to be the principle grounding togetherness. Motion and Standstill are as opposite as can be, and *for that reason* yoked in Being; so are Same and Other. I will not pretend to have worked through the hierarchy of these five greatest genera. Nonetheless I have a suspicion that Same and Other, the most comprehensive genera, are not only intimately related to each other as mutually defining, but may ultimately have to be apprehended together as prior to and thus beyond Being, as a first self-alienation of the One, the principle of comprehension itself. As such, they might even be termed the *negative* Two, but that’s too far-out. In any case, these Plotinian evolutions are beyond my brief for today. I refer to Plotinus at all only because his One is in fact articulable only negatively and, is self-diremptive.

Now the strange structure of number, in which indiscernibly different but non-identical elements like pure monads, mere units, can be together what they are not individually, is only a case, though the most stripped-down, clarified case, of what is nowadays called “emergence.” Recall that emergence is the eventuation of a novel whole from elements that seem to have nothing in common with it. Examples range from trivial to life-changing. Socrates himself points out that the letters sigma and

omega are individually different from the initial syllable of his own name, "So," and that this is *one* new idea composed of *two* elements (*Theaetetus* 203c). Two molecules of hydrogen and one of oxygen combine to form water, whose liquidity emerges as an unforeseeable quality. Individuals form communities that evince a might beyond the additive powers of their citizens. The emergent entity is other than rather than additional to, novel to rather than inferrable from, its elements. In the reverse case, sometimes called *projection*, the elements falling out from a totality are qualitatively quite different from it. This case might be called inverse emergence; an example might be the relation of Platonic forms to their participant particulars.

The most significant problem of emergence is also the most contemporary one. Since it seems indisputable that specific brain lesions lead to specific psychic disabilities, it is claimed by scientists who don't want simply to identify mind with brain that the soul is brain-emergent. Does that make it a mere epiphenomenon? A miracle? "Emergence" names the event as a bottom-up process. But could it be a top-down happening, could the soul shape, or participate in shaping, its physical substructure? These are the recognizable old questions of "one-and-many": one *over*, or *in*, or *out of*, many?

I want to make a claim that in this company especially should garner some sympathy: when deep human matters are at issue, it helps a lot to have delved into some ontology; the inquiry into Being may not affect our lives materially, yet it illuminates our daily lives more directly than does research providing factual information or theory producing instrumental constructs. This is the hypothesis under which Jacob Klein's opening up of two Platonic preoccupations, images and numbers, is of current consequence. Herein lies the prescience, the foresightedness of his Platonic discoveries.

Addendum

I have omitted here, as too complex for brief exposition, a third, more directly global interpretation of the modern condition,

which is central to *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*. It is an understanding of the basic rupture between antiquity and modernity, of *the* great revolution of the West, as brought about by, or at least paradigmatically displayed in, the introduction of algebra. Algebra works with quantities abstracted from concrete collections (such as were betokened by the Greek *arithmoi*), with "general," essentially symbolical "numbers," such as the variables x , y , z or the constants a , b , c . These letters are symbols of a peculiar sort: they *represent* neither a concrete thing nor a determinate concept, but rather *present* themselves as the object of a calculation—a mere object, an indeterminate entity. Klein saw algebraic problem-solving procedures, so effective precisely because so contentlessly formal, as emblematic of a modern rage for that second-order, deliberately denatured thinking which dominates as much of our lives as is method-ridden. The human consequences of this symbolic conceptuality are great.



“YOU ARE THAT!”
The Upanishads Read Through
Western Eyes¹

Robert Druecker

Introduction

The original title of this essay—“*You Are That!*”—was a quotation, from the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, of an exclamation made several times by a man named Uddālaka to his son Śvetaketu. The “That” refers to a realm or state of being, known as “Brahman.” One who experiences it is called a “knower of Brahman” (*brahmavid*). Uddālaka was a knower of Brahman, speaking to his son out of his direct experience.

The classical *Upanishads* are expressions of, and invitations to, this direct experiencing. Understanding them, therefore, is a matter of understanding what that experiencing is like, not a matter of believing or knowing some truths about the world. Thus, elucidating the meaning of this title will convey a sense of the experience of Brahman, which is what the *Upanishads* as a whole are about.

But, of course, their ultimate aim is not simply to produce understanding in this sense, but rather to bring about the direct experiencing of the Brahman-realm. Even Śaṅkara, the most highly esteemed expositor of the *Upanishads*, a man noted for his theoretical acumen, considered direct experience as surpassing all understanding. He is said to have regarded theoretical reflection as one hundred times more efficacious than oral instruction, meditation as one hundred thousand times more efficacious than theoretical reflection, and direct experience of the Brahman-realm as defying all comparison.

The revised title of the essay is: “‘*You Are That!*’: *The Upanishads Read Through Western Eyes.*” In making this change,

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I have followed Aristotle's recommendation to begin with the things best known to us, where "us," in this case, refers to the St. John's community. Thus, Part One will give a sense of what the Brahman-realm is like by elaborating on an analogous experience in Homer and Aristotle. Part Two will elucidate the experiencing of Brahman in a more direct way.

Finally, many of the writings in the *Upanishads* are dialogues involving a knower of Brahman. Yājñavalkya is the central figure in the conversations in the oldest *Upanishad*. In working on the lecture, I imagined him, a knower of Brahman, as my interlocutor. Throughout the essay, I will allow the voice of Yājñavalkya to provide his understanding of analogues between the Brahman-realm and the worlds of Homer and Aristotle.

Part One: *Noēiv* and *Ittisāl* (Conjunction)

A. Homer

Homer frequently refers to human beings or gods waking up to, or realizing (*voēiv*), the full significance of a situation. Sometimes, on the other hand, what they realize is their *ability* to wake up to the full meaning of a situation (*vóoc* in some uses).² The verb in the aorist expresses an individual's sudden flash of insight. For instance, Hektor, resisting his parents' entreaties, holds his position, as he watches Achilles coming toward him. He is pondering what might happen should he retreat or should he offer to return Helen; but then Achilles closes upon him: "And trembling took hold of Hektor when the realization suddenly struck him (*évonēseiv*) [what single combat against Achilles really meant], and he could no longer stand his ground there, but... fled, frightened." (II, 22.136-37).³ The use of the progressive aspect, however, conveys the process of fitting pieces together gradually to form a wholly new picture, as when Theoklymenos tells the suitors that the realization is dawning upon him (*voéō*) that there is an evil on the way that they will not be able to avoid (O, 20.367-70).

Because of the intensity of the character's involvement in the situation, the experienced shift in significance is often accompanied by strong emotion, as is the case with Hektor. When the

insight concerns an individual object instead of a situation, the realization is *always* accompanied by such emotion; it is as if the shift in the meaning of the situation were compressed into a single thing or person. So, For example, Menelaos, having caught sight of Paris, leaps down from his chariot. Then, Homer tells us, "when [Paris] realized the full significance of Menelaos standing there among the champions, the heart was shaken within him" (I, 3.29-31). The full significance here is that Menelaos is drawing near Paris, seething with an overwhelming desire to kill him.

"Realization of significance" has a variety of meanings that spread over a directional arc.⁴ A character begins in a situation in which he has already seemingly recognized (*γγνώσκειν*) the surrounding things or people as definite individuals that are familiar. Then, once awakened to their real significance, he or she experiences a corresponding emotional impact; a way of dealing with the newly perceived situation comes to light and the will to do so arises. Thus, the present naturally extends itself into the future. When the primary meaning is at either end of this arc, the other parts of the arc are co-present. Thus, when the emphasis is on present clarity of mind, the future is nonetheless kept in view. (For instance, when Kirke tells Odysseus that no magic can work on his ability always to realize what is the real meaning of the situation in which he finds himself, she also has in mind the insightful character of his future aims, plans, and actions [O, 10.329].) And, on the other hand, when the emphasis is on future action, clear vision in the present is also involved. (For instance, when, according to Achilles, Peleus vowed to the river Spercheus that Achilles would sacrifice to him upon the latter's return home, this wish [*vóov*] was not a representation of a vague future, but rather a distinct depiction of the wished-for future action and of the detailed steps leading to it [I, 23.144-49].)

The realization of significance may or may not be prepared by a thought process. But when it is, the realization is distinct from the preceding reasoning, in the same way as "seeing" one of Euclid's proofs is different from figuring out how it is justified in terms of previous propositions. For Yājñavalkya, realizing Brahman can also be characterized as including an emotional

response—joy (*ānanda*)—and a way of acting—calm responsiveness to the whole situation.

The realization may penetrate to great depth and extend far in space and time, like that of Theoklymenonos mentioned earlier or like that of Athena when she speaks to Achilles as he is drawing his sword to kill Agamemnon. The more intense the situation and the deeper and broader the realization, the more likely it is that the characters are raised above their ordinary abilities, so that they are able to see almost all the implications and consequences of the situation with unusual clarity and to act with extraordinary foresight. This experience of being raised above the ordinary is a divine manifestation.⁵

Homer most often mentions Athena and Apollo in such moments. For instance, Odysseus's sudden realization of the true meaning of return—the moment when he recognized the right time to reveal himself to Telemachos—occurs in the presence of Athena (O, 16.155ff.). And Hektor's sudden waking up to danger when he was about to oppose Achilles is Apollo's manifesting himself (I, 20.375ff.). These two examples point to the difference between the two gods. Athena remains untroubled and serene in the midst of action, while she discerns at every juncture what the situation requires, plans the deed with precision, and readies herself to bring it about energetically. Apollo, on the other hand, is associated with a cognitive attitude of stately objectivity, wide-ranging gaze, distance and freedom, clarity and good form. He is the god of the saving or preserving awareness (*σωφροσύνη*) expressed in the Delphic dictum, "Know thyself," meaning "Realize what human beings really are, that is, how great a distance separates them from the omnitemporal gods" (HG, 216-17, 215, 52, 57, 59, 78-79, 66). Yājñavalkya would remark that such traits as serenity in the midst of action, the freedom of a ranging gaze, and saving, or preserving, awareness pertain to the Brahman-realm as well.

In a manifestation of Athena or Apollo, the god is revealed as the very essence of the realization. That is, the realization's ultimate meaning is that it is a ray of the divine, illumining human life. Homer realizes that the complete lucidity in which we

sometimes act is a connection with something superior to us, even though we think of it as a quality of our own minds. In decisive moments, what a warrior realizes is both himself and the deity together (HG, 7, 247, 174, 184-85). Yājñavalkya would comment here that in the *Upanishads*, this non-separateness of the human and divine is known as "non-duality" (*advaita*; BU, IV.3,32): "Whoever meditates on a divinity that is other (*anyām*) [than himself], thinking, 'This [god] is one (*anyah*), I am another (*anyah*),' does not know ['I am Brahman']" (BU, I.4.10).

Homer's recognition of moments in which the divine and the human are non-dual is sharply opposed to a view that would see Athena and Apollo as external causes of the events he is narrating (HG, 213). Somewhat similarly, according to Yājñavalkya, we are invited to awaken to Brahman not as an external cause, but rather as what is most profound in our experience.⁶

When the god is present in moments of non-duality, the warrior's ego and personality recede into the background (HG, 241f.). That sort of impersonality, which also characterizes the moment when we experience the truth of a Euclidean proposition, is inherent in the Brahman-realm, according to Yājñavalkya.

The divine coming-to-presence has been said to occur at "the critical moment when human powers suddenly converge, as if charged by electric contact, on some insight, some resolution, some deed."⁷ Lightning comes forth from the clouds to strike buildings or trees that have risen from the earth; so, too, the divine suddenly emerges from the background to shock an individual only when that individual has gone forth from himself toward the background. Yājñavalkya could note that the instant of recognition of the Brahman realm is also compared to "a sudden flash of lightning" (BU, II.3.6; cf. KeU, IV.4). Moreover, he would think that moving toward the background might be, in some way, analogous to a "moving-towards" Brahman—something like the movement involved either in practicing meditation or in coming to wonder, "Who am I?"

While in the examples given so far the divine manifestation has come in an awakening to significance or in an elaborating of a plan, this should not lead us to think the divine is encountered

merely by turning inward. The appearance of the goddess is not, for instance, Achilles's pondering whether to kill Agamemnon or to check his anger (I, 1.193), but rather the resolution of his introspection in a flash of certitude (HG, 174, 48). Yājñavalkya would agree that introspection neither characterizes the Brahman-realm nor is a means thereto. However, there is, he would add, a different sort of inward turn that *can* facilitate its realization.

There are many instances in which a god is present at a moment when none of the characters is aware of it. But sometimes a warrior, when awakening to the full significance of his situation, may realize that his very awakening is itself the manifestation of a god. An interesting example occurs when Poseidon appears to the Aiantes in the likeness of Kalkas. At first neither brother is aware of the presence of a god; but, after Poseidon departs like a hawk, Aias son of Oileus realizes that some god, whom he does not recognize, has addressed them, while Telemonian Aias notices only his own increased strength and energy (I, 13.43-80). On other occasions the human being recognizes the god by name—sometimes only after the encounter, but sometimes already at its inception (HG, 207-08).

A god may be especially close to a particular individual in that the human being regularly displays the qualities of the particular god, as Athena acknowledges Odysseus does (O, 13.330-32; HG, 192-95). There is even one person who seems to be *fully* awake to divine presence—Homer himself, who

sees events through and through even when the participants see only the surface. And often when the participants sense only that a divine hand is touching them the poet is able to name the god concerned and knows the secret of his purpose (HG, 195-96).

According to Yājñavalkya, there is just as much idiosyncratic variety in realizing Brahman as there is in recognizing the presence of a god in moments of waking up to meaning: different individuals respond differently, both in frequency and in degree, to such events.

Up to this point in our consideration of Homer we have

emphasized *cognition*. This is appropriate because cognition in a broad sense is the way in which we come to realize Brahman. However, this focus on cognition gives a distorted picture of the world as Homer depicts it. For there are many gods—Ares, Aphrodite, Poseidon, Hera, and others—who manifest themselves in the world in addition to Athena and Apollo, who are especially associated with realizing significance. Moreover, the appearance of a deity often involves an inner phenomenon *other* than awakening, as when Hektor's body is "packed full of force and fighting strength" (I, 17.211-12) or when Athena puts "courage into the heart" of Nausikaa (O, 6.140). Yājñavalkya could point out that these phenomena of enlivening, energizing, and strengthening were included, along with realization, in what the *Upanishads* call the "Inner Controller" (*antaryāmin*; BU, III.7.1).⁸ He might also remark that Homer did not think of non-duality as limited to cognition, because he recognized that these phenomena, too, were divine manifestations.

In addition to a character's "waking up" to the presence of a god, a deity often manifests itself by affecting a character from outside. Most notably, Patroklos's *aristeia* was put to an end by Apollo, who "stood behind him, and struck his back and his broad shoulders with a flat stroke of the hand so that his eyes spun" (I, 16.791-92). Yājñavalkya would point out that events like this might be echoes of Brahman as "pouring forth," or "emitting," all things. (MuU, I.1.7.) He would add that, just as Homer recognizes the one Apollo both in his striking of Patroklos and in Hektor's realization mentioned earlier, so too the *Upanishads* express the realization that the inner controlling and the outer emitting are one when it states: "This Self is...Brahman" (BU, II.5.19).

B. Aristotle and Averroes

For help in thinking through the experiences highlighted by Homer, we turn to Aristotle. In moments of realization, we are in a state of what he called "being-at-work,"—what I will call "activity." Activity is "complete over any time whatever"; it is not a *temporal* phenomenon. By contrast, a motion "is in time and directed at some end...and is complete when it brings about that

at which it aims” (NE, 1174a15-21). For example, whereas the activity of dancing is “all there” at each moment, the motion of learning to dance is complete only when you’ve actually become a dancer.

Homer’s gods Athena and Apollo are manifested in activities of ours that would be “choiceworthy in themselves” (NE, 1144a1) even if they didn’t effect anything in addition. The active state of our ability to awaken to significance is what is best and most powerful in us and is “either divine itself or the most divine of the things in us.” When it is directed toward the most divine, timeless things, it is a pure beholding (NE, 1177a13-21).

One living in this state of activity would be living a life that “is divine as compared with a human life.” Hence, Aristotle said, “one ought to immortalize” (NE, 1177b25-34); that is, one ought to be as much as possible in this best state of activity—the activity of Homer’s Athena and Apollo, or of Aristotle’s impersonal divinity. When we are in that state, we are in the same state over a limited extent of time as is the divine over the whole of time.⁹ Moreover, “each person would even seem to *be* this [best state of activity]” (NE, 1178a1). “[A]nd so the person who loves and gratifies this is most a lover of self” (NE, 1168b33).

Yājñavalkya could comment that the Brahman-realm, too, has the characteristics of being an atemporal phenomenon, of being a sort of pure beholding, and of being our true self. Moreover, it, too, is impersonal, not divided up into essentially different Athena-moments and Apollo-moments. Finally, knowers of Brahman, living the life of their true self, are leading a life that transcends the human. Consequently, since most of us live in ignorance of Brahman, most of us are not living the life of our true self.

Aristotle seems to agree formally with this conclusion: it is, after all, an implication of Apollo’s injunction “Know thyself.” It might be objected, however, that Aristotle’s characterization of the true self as divine contradicts Apollo’s insistence on separating the human from the divine. Yājñavalkya would reply that when a similar objection is voiced in his tradition, the response is that the contradiction is only apparent. Someone who

took the “You” in “You are That!” to refer to his ordinary sense of self, would be engaging in self-inflation. Students are encouraged to ponder “Who am I?” as a practice, in order to shift them from the ordinary to the true sense of self. So, Yājñavalkya and Aristotle could both take “Know thyself” in a double sense: “With respect to your ordinary sense of self, think mortal thoughts, but recognize that the true you is divine activity.”

In *On the Soul* Aristotle began to sketch what might be entailed in realizing his analogue to “You are That!”—namely, the immortalizing involvement in the best activity. One of Aristotle’s foremost interpreters, Averroes, has developed Aristotle’s black-and-white sketch into a detailed, full-color portrait that bears a striking resemblance to the Upanishadic picture. To that portrait we now turn.¹⁰

The customary name in philosophical texts for Aristotle’s best state of activity is “intellection.” Following Aristotle’s lead, Averroes begins his account of intellection with what is clearer to us, and he ends it with what is clearer by nature. There are three main figures in his initial portrait—the “*material* intellect,” the “*disposed* intellect,” and the “*agent* intellect.” Averroes compares intellection, as Aristotle does, to a craft in which some material, like clay, receives a form—say, that of a bowl (OS, 430a10-14). When I acquire a simple intelligible, such as, ‘straight line,’ it is received as form by the *material intellect*—which, not being corporeal, is material only in the sense that it serves as material-for. My *disposed intellect*,¹¹ now having the acquired intelligible as an active disposition (*ἔξις*), is in what Aristotle calls a *first* state of maintaining itself (*ἔχειν*) in (*ἐν*) its completed condition (*τέλος*), with respect to this intelligible. Henceforth we shall say, somewhat inaccurately, that the mind in this state is “in first actuality.” By analogy, we could say that Suzanne Farrell, the accomplished dancer, is “in first actuality” when not dancing (since she maintains all the dispositions of a dancer), but is “in second actuality” when dancing (since she then makes use of those dispositions.) Similarly, when I am not contemplating the intelligible ‘straight line,’ my intellect is “in first actuality” (since I have the disposition necessary to contemplate it if I so choose),

but when I am contemplating it, perhaps in the course of a demonstration, my intellect is “in second actuality” (since I am then making use of the disposition).

According to Aristotle, “the soul never engages in intellection without an appearance” (431a24), which Averroes takes to mean imaginative appearance.¹² Thus, when I am led up to (*ἐπάγεσθαι*) a particularly suggestive instance, say a good image of a straight line, that image specifies that the material intellect will receive the intelligible ‘straight line.’ Averroes said that the material intellect, as so determined by my imagination,¹³ is “conjoined” with it and that my disposed intellect *is* precisely this conjunction of the material intellect with my imagination.

One of the unusual features of Averroes’ interpretation is that according to him, there is only *one* material intellect. My disposed intellect and your disposed intellect are the results of its conjunctions with the different images in our respective imaginations; we actualize it differently. In this way the one material intellect is said to be incidentally many. (Zedler 1951, 175.) Moreover, since my imagination is corporeal, the intelligibles of mundane things in me, and, consequently, my disposed intellect itself, are generable and corruptible.¹⁴ Yājñavalkya might also say that the one Brahman is incidentally many individual selves (*jīvātman*).

Now, before the intelligible “straight line” can be received by the material intellect, the irrelevant portions of the image in which it is “embodied” must be taken away (*ἀφαιρεῖσθαι*). This abstraction brings it into the state of actual intelligibility. To elucidate this act of abstraction, Averroes referred to another of Aristotle’s comparisons: The passage from potential to actual intelligibility is like a color’s transition from potential visibility to actual visibility when the lights in a room are turned on. The “light” that illumines the darkness of the image, producing the abstraction of the latent intelligible, is the *agent intellect*.

This picture of the agent intellect as shining from the outside onto a potential intelligible embedded in an image is, however, only the way it first appears to us. Averroes said that if we consider its role in the intellectual insights we have when we draw conclusions from the intelligibles that we have acquired—for

example, the insight that one and only one straight line may be drawn between two points—we come to a deeper view. In reality, the agent intellect is related to the intelligibles of my disposed intellect as form to material. It is as though the agent intellect were a light full of Color itself. What really happens when it shines on an image is that the image’s conjunction with Color itself draws out of the latter a particular color, one that had been potentially within Color itself. Then that particular color is received by the material intellect. Even in my acts of intellection simple intelligibles in the world, the agent intellect is incidentally in *partial* conjunction with my imagination.¹⁵ Since I am, then, intellectioning it to some degree, it must be at work as the form of my disposed intellect.

For Averroes, this understanding means that the agent intellect itself is the source of the intelligibility of the corporeal world. For since the image arises on the basis of sense perception of things in the world, the potential intelligibles in my imagination are due to the potential intelligibles in the things in the world. Consequently, Averroes takes the agent intellect to be Aristotle’s unmoved mover from the *Metaphysics* (1072b18-30; 1075a5-11). Hence, there is only one agent intellect; and *it is* its very activity of unchanging, eternal self-intellection. Correlatively, the potential intelligibles of things in the world are their actualities, their being-at-work maintaining themselves in their respective states of completeness. Their intelligibility depends entirely upon the agent intellect in the following way: for each of them its state of completeness is the closest state to the agent intellect’s self-intellection that its materials are capable of attaining.¹⁶ The agent intellect’s responsibility for all intelligible being makes it analogous to the one source of all existence in Yājñavalkya’s tradition.

But how *can* the self-directed intellection of the agent intellect be responsible for our intellection of the intelligibles in things outside of itself in the world, when it and the object of its intellection are absolutely one? Reflexively turned toward itself, it is not aware of the multiplicity of the potential intelligibles of mundane things as such. Yet it nevertheless does comprehend

them, somewhat in the way that the craft of pottery-making comprehends the forms of all the bowls for which it could be responsible. But to be actively responsible for the intellection of *this* intelligible on *this* occasion, the agent intellect must also be “turned outwards,” as it were, away from itself, in order to shine on the appearances of mundane things—in the imaginations of individual human beings.

When it is turned outward but still not illuminating any appearance, the agent intellect *seems* to be lacking any intelligible. And yet as an image arises, the agent intellect will bring one of the intelligibles into focus. Thus, surprisingly, the agent-intellect-as-turned-outward is pure potentiality, pure material-for; it *is* the material intellect. In order to appear as such, that is, as empty of intelligibles of mundane things, it must become “temporarily ignorant of itself” (Blaustein 1984, 214-15).

This self-forgetfulness is concretely realized by its conjunction with our imaginations. By virtue of that conjunction, the agent intellect becomes “ignorant” of being the self-intellecting source of all intelligibility; it appears, instead, in each of us in a double form—first, as our partially actualized receptivity for intelligibles (our disposed intellect) and, second, as light eliciting those intelligibles by abstraction from our images. The agent intellect’s ignorance of itself seems to be in remarkable agreement with the role of ignorance in the *Upanishads*: according to Yājñavalkya a knower of Brahman “knows knowledge and ignorance, both of them, together” (IU, 11). For Brahman, too, turns outward, so that ignorance, that is, awareness of multiplicity, is one of its aspects (Aurobindo 1996, 61-62 and 94). But Brahman is both knowledge and ignorance; the two are inseparable (Aurobindo 1996, 58 and 72).

From the perspective of an individual human being, as I learn more, the agent intellect becomes the form of my disposed intellect to an ever greater degree. In this way my three principal differences from it will decrease. First, in acquiring *more* intelligibles, my disposed intellect becomes less and less a *partial* view of the agent intellect. Second, in advancing to intelligibles that are less and less referred to the *corporeal* world, my disposed intellect

becomes *purser*.¹⁷ Third, in embracing ever more *encompassing* intelligibles, it approaches the agent intellect’s *unitary* vision.

Ultimately, while still “in this life” (Ivry 1966, 83), I may arrive at the point where I have acquired all the intelligibles.¹⁸ Then I will have achieved a state of *complete conjunction*¹⁹ with the agent intellect. My disposed intellect will have lost all traces of individuality,²⁰ which are what make it *my* disposed intellect; it will have perished as such. All of me that is not intellect is “cut off” from my intellect, which is identical with the agent intellect (Blaustein 1984, 272). In this sense the state of complete conjunction has been said to involve an “existential break” from the world.²¹ Once again Yājñavalkya would recognize in this existential break an analogue, at a deep experiential level, to a prominent feature of the realization of Brahman.

In complete conjunction, I experience myself permanently (Ivry 1996, 83) as shining forth intelligibility, but this “myself” is not the self I used to think I was, for the conjunction removes that which had prevented me from recognizing that the agent intellect is my form.²² Averroes says that at this point the agent intellect, united with us as our form, functions as our sole operative principle.²³ We might wonder what life in this state of conjunction would be like. One suggestion is that I might experience it as “a wakeful loss of rationality,” a loss of consciousness of my humanity (Blaustein 1984, 272). I would not be engaged in thinking things out; I would not be conscious of myself as an individual, as a member of the human species.

Alternatively, guided by his own experience, Yājñavalkya would propose that perhaps I might be aware of myself (what Aristotle in the *Ethics* pointed to as my true self) engaged in self-intellection, while simultaneously being aware of experiencing my ordinary self involved in its everyday activities against this backdrop. Yājñavalkya would offer two possibilities, the second of which would *not* be analogous to his own experience. First, in each instance of intellection, I could perhaps experience the agent intellect as transitioning from unitary self-intellection to the offering of an aspect of itself to my imagination. Second, analogous to the end of the path outlined in the *Yoga-Sutras* (that

is, *kaivalya*),²⁴ it could be that when I am engaged in self-intellection I ignore the particulars of the world and desist from everyday activities, and so, ultimately, wither away and die.²⁵

Part Two: *Cit* (Pure Awareness)

To begin our consideration of pure awareness, let us return to Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he writes:

[O]ne who is seeing is aware (*αἰσθάνεται*) that he is seeing, and one who is hearing [is aware] that he is hearing, ... [and, in general,] whenever we are perceiving [we are aware] that we are perceiving and whenever we are engaged in intellection (*νοῶμεν*) [we are aware] that we are engaged in intellection (1170a29-31).²⁶

To what aspect of experience is Aristotle pointing here? Many believe this passage means that perceptual consciousness is accompanied by a reflection on, or a thought about, that consciousness.²⁷ For example, I know that I'm looking at you seated there before me. However, such reflection seems to occur only intermittently. Hence, an alternative interpretation has been proposed,²⁸ according to which perceptual consciousness is always "selfaware"—that is, *aware* (of) itself,²⁹ but not *conscious* of itself—although, at any given time, we may *notice* selfawareness to a greater or lesser degree. Yājñavalkya would emphasize that only diligent practice could enable me to recognize the difference between reflective consciousness and selfawareness in my own experience.

To clarify the difference between selfawareness and reflective consciousness, we shall draw upon some descriptions of experience by the philosopher J.-P. Sartre.³⁰ Consciousness is necessarily always aware (of) itself, but precisely *as* being conscious of an object beyond itself. "[T]his awareness (of) consciousness... is not *positional*; that is, consciousness is not for itself its own object. Its object is outside of it by nature.... We shall call such a consciousness 'consciousness of the first degree'" (S, 23-24). In this essay, "consciousness" will always

mean positional consciousness, consciousness of an object.

As an example of first degree consciousness, let us take my perceptual consciousness-of-a-coffee-cup-on-a-table—say, in the mode of staring-at.³¹ In this experience, the perceptual consciousness is not an object for itself, whereas the coffee-cup-on-a-table is an object for it. But in each such act of consciousness, there lives an attentive presence by virtue of which the consciousness is aware (of) itself. When, as is usually the case, the attentive presence goes unnoticed, we experience only a *dim* awareness (of) consciousness.

Yājñavalkya could point out that in his tradition this awareness is called the "witness" (*sākshī*; ŚU, VI.12-14) and the self-aware quality of consciousness is called "self-luminousness" (*svajyotir*). He might add that this is what he was referring to when he said, "You cannot see the seer of seeing; you cannot hear the hearer of hearing; you cannot think of the thinker of thinking; you cannot perceive the perceiver of perceiving" (BU, III.4.2); and when he said, "It is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unperceived perceiver. Other than this there is no seer...hearer...perceiver" (BU, 7.23). Sartre would seem to agree with him that this awareness cannot be the object of consciousness: this sphere "is a sphere of *absolute* existence, that is, of pure spontaneities, which are never objects" (S, 77).

As opposed to this selfaware, first-degree consciousness-of-objects, which makes up most of our waking lives, there arises from time to time "a consciousness directed onto [the first-degree] consciousness, [that is,] a consciousness which takes [the first-degree] consciousness as its object." Sartre calls it a "second-degree" or "reflecting consciousness." Whereas in the previous case there was no duality at all to synthesize, here "we are in the presence of a synthesis of two consciousnesses, of which one is consciousness *of* the other." When I think, "Staring at this coffee cup on the table is wasting time," this act of reflective consciousness involves a synthesis of the thinking consciousness and the reflected-upon consciousness-of-the-coffee-cup. Moreover, just like first-degree consciousness, second-degree consciousness—my thinking, in this instance—is self-aware (S,

28-29).

When the thinking consciousness posits the previously unreflected-upon staring consciousness as its object, it is not *its own* staring that it is positing. What the reflecting consciousness states about the staring consciousness does not concern itself; it concerns the staring consciousness, which the reflecting consciousness reflects upon. Hence, what reflecting consciousness *is* turns out to be selfaware consciousness of another, prior, selfaware consciousness, which, in turn, is consciousness of an object that is not a consciousness. Reflecting consciousness really does *re-reflect*; that is, it *bends backward* to look at an earlier moment of consciousness.

The fact that it is not *its own* staring that the thinking consciousness posits in reflecting on the staring consciousness raises the question whether the *I* that seems to be thinking “is that of the consciousness reflected upon” and not, in fact, an *I* supposed to be “common to the two superimposed consciousnesses.” Indeed, one suspects that the reason why every reflection possesses a sense of self is that the reflective act itself gives birth to the sense of self in the consciousness that is reflected upon (S, 28-29).³² Sartre offers an example in order to test this hypothesis:

I was absorbed just now in my reading. I am going to seek to recall the circumstances of my reading....
Thus I am going to revive...also a certain thickness of un-reflected-upon consciousness, since the objects were able to be perceived only *by* that consciousness and remain relative to it. *That consciousness must not be posited as the object of my reflection*; on the contrary, I must direct my attention onto the revived objects, but *without losing sight of* the un-reflected-upon consciousness, while maintaining a sort of complicity with it and making an inventory of its content in a non-positional way. The result is not in doubt. While I was reading, there was consciousness *of* the book, *of* the heroes of the novel, but the *I* was not inhabiting that consciousness (S, 30; italics in the

last sentence added).

Here Sartre reawakens the original self-aware consciousness and dwells in the awareness.

That awareness is also a precondition for reflection. Should he reflect, upon being absorbed in his readings, “I was absorbed in my reading,” then, instead of dwelling in the awareness-component of the original consciousness, he would, as it were, transform it into an act of consciousness, the object of which is the original consciousness, (of) which the awareness was aware. There certainly is an *I* present to that second-order consciousness.³³ So, we may call it “self-consciousness.”

Based on this *I* of reflection, Sartre shows how I construct a unified sense of self in three stages: first, as a unity of states, like my hatred of Peter; then as a unity of actions, like my playing a piano sonata; and finally as a unity of qualities, like my spitefulness. For instance, let us suppose a first-order consciousness of disgust and anger, present together with the perception of Peter. If the self-consciousness reflected only on what was appearing in the first-order consciousness, it would be thinking, “I feel disgusted with Peter.” But instead, the angry disgust at Peter appears as a profile, or perspectival view, of the disposition “hatred of Peter,” just as a house will show itself to me in different profiles depending upon where I am standing. The hatred appears to be showing a “side” of itself through the momentary experience of angry disgust. To the self-consciousness, the angry disgust appears to be emanating from the hatred. On a later occasion, perhaps, the hatred will appear upon reflection as an actualization of a quality of spitefulness, which is in me (S, 45-46, 51, 53). But in neither case does the self-consciousness realize that the hatred or the spitefulness is arising in the moment of reflection; rather it supposes that the state or the quality was already there in the first-order consciousness.³⁴

This process resulting in a sense of self leads me to say things like “*my* consciousness,” when in fact “[t]he *I* is not the owner of consciousness; it is the object of consciousness” (S, 77). Yājñavalkya could report that a process of construction of the

sense of self (*aham-kāra*) also figures prominently in the Upanishadic tradition. It leads to the arising of many fears and desires, which, in turn, function as barriers to the realization of Brahman by keeping us “glued” to objects. I note that there is a remarkable agreement here with Sartre, who wrote: “But perhaps the essential role [of the sense of self] is to mask to consciousness its own spontaneity.... Hence, everything happens as if consciousness...were hypnotizing itself over that sense of self, which it constituted” (S, 81-82).

Usually we do not notice the awareness-aspect of consciousness because we are so taken up with what is appearing to consciousness. Yet, on occasion, awareness may stand out in our experience. For instance: Some people are engaged in a heated discussion at an outdoor café, when a nearby car suddenly backfires. Several of the participants may be so caught up in the conversation that they don't even notice the loud sound; others may be startled and shift their attention to the street; someone who was anchored in awareness, however, would notice, but not be jarred by, the sound.

Another example: On a good day the football quarterback Joe Montana, at the top of his game, would experience a pass play as follows.³⁵ He was conscious of the linemen rushing at him, of his receivers running downfield, and so on. But instead of looking with hurried, anxious glances, he experienced an awareness spread over the whole unfolding scene. All the players seemed to be moving in slow motion, and everything appeared with great clarity and distinctness. He was keenly aware of his own body, the motions of his limbs and an overall sense of relaxation, as his arm drew back and the ball headed toward the receiver.³⁶ Taken by itself this example may mislead us into thinking that awareness is dependent on the attainment of a certain level of skill, in this case, that of an MVP quarterback. But the previous example and the following one make it clear that this is not the case.

A third illustration: Some automobile drivers experience freeway traffic as follows: “First, one driver cuts *me* off; then a slowpoke is holding *me* up. My consciousness narrows to focus on the offending driver; and, irritated, I react by honking or

suddenly changing lanes.” Another driver may perceive the same cars on the beltway as if they were moving in a force field. She experiences that field as calling forth the alterations in her driving required in order to maintain a smooth flow of traffic.

A fourth instance: “Surgeons say that during a difficult operation they have the sensation that the entire operating team is a single organism, moved by the same purpose; they describe it as a “ballet” in which the individual is subordinated to the group performance” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 65).

A fifth example: The following story shows a transition out of awareness into self-consciousness:

Suppose a woman is engaged in sewing something. A friend enters the room and begins speaking to her. As long as she listens to her friend and sews in [awareness], she has no trouble doing both. But if she gives her attention to her friend's words and a thought arises in her mind as she thinks about what to reply, her hands stop sewing; if she turns her attention to her sewing and thinks about that, she fails to catch everything her friend is saying, and the conversation does not proceed smoothly. In either case....she has transformed [awareness] into thought. As her thoughts fix on one thing, they're blank to all others, depriving the mind of its freedom.³⁷

This example enables us to avoid the misconception that awareness is incompatible with words. For it was a shift in the *way* in which she attended to speech, or to her sewing, that led to the woman's loss of the ability to attend to both simultaneously.

A sixth and final case, as described by Merleau-Ponty (1945): Being most of the time in the consciousness-mode, we live in a world that “only stirs up second-hand thoughts in us.” Our mind is taken up with “thoughts, already formulated and already expressed, which we can recall silently to ourselves and by which we give ourselves the illusion of an interior life. But this supposed silence is in reality full of words rattling around.” However, occasionally we may “rediscover primordial silence, underneath

the words' rattling around." Then we pass from the mode of consciousness-of-objects to dwell in awareness. We experience "a certain emptiness," "a certain lack which seeks to fill itself," to be transformed into speech (213-14). Then there can emerge "an authentic word, one which formulates something for the first time"—such as "that of the child who is pronouncing her first word, of the lover who is discovering his feeling" (207-08), or of "the writer who is saying and thinking something for the first time" (214). In the mode of awareness, we can live through a sort of original emergence.

Words usually serve to keep our thoughts moving within already formulated articulations. They could be said to function like "precipitates" (*Niederschläge*)³⁸ of previous "chemical reactions," brought about by our own words or those of others. However, when awareness becomes prominent, it acts as a catalyst, which facilitates a fresh chemical reaction.

All the above examples manifest an awake, keen involvement in experience together with an absence of the sense of self and of self-focused emotions and motivations from the foreground. And each of them brings to the foreground a different property of awareness: the first, "unstuckness" to objects; the second, spaciousness, not merely in the spatial and the temporal senses; the third, responsiveness to dynamic qualities of the surrounding field; the fourth, organic connectedness with whom or what³⁹ is in the field; the fifth, motion away from the directing *I*; and the sixth, a sense of emptiness out of which newness arises spontaneously.

We might say that a good seminar could give evidence of some of these signs of increased awareness. If, over time, the participants have developed seminar skills analogous to the skills developed by the members of a surgical team, the seminar might be experienced as a sort of ballet. Along with the development of those skills, some of the members may have cultivated their awareness to some degree, paralleling the range of levels of awareness in the operating team. That cultivation may enable them to experience "a certain emptiness," from which an "authentic word" may emerge with greater frequency.

Such characteristics of awareness as those listed above have

led people in certain pursuits, such as martial arts, to cultivate it, so that it will remain reliably in the foreground. In developing a painterly vision,⁴⁰ for instance, one must learn to forget *what* things are, in order to see *how* they are actually appearing to the eye—which means, how they are coming into being before our eyes. As Merleau-Ponty says of Cézanne: "It is the mountain that he interrogates with his gaze. What exactly does he ask of it? To unveil the means, visible and not otherwise, by which it is making itself a mountain before our eyes."⁴¹

We might expand on this account in the following way. As a potential painter's awareness becomes more prominent, she no longer sees things as already "finished off," but, instead, as having a potential for greater "aliveness." It is as if they were calling to her to join in their emergence. Then she may heed the appeal and begin to paint. Now it is this particular piece of fruit before her that she captures "coming into being before her eyes" in such a way that it can do so later before our eyes.⁴²

Another example of the cultivation of awareness is found in psychoanalysis. In his recommendations on the proper attitude to be adopted by the analyst, Freud counsels a state of mind possessing, first, an absence of reasoning or

deliberate attempts to select, concentrate or understand; and [second,] even, equal and impartial attention to all that occurs within the field of awareness.... This technique, says Freud... "consists simply in not directing one's notice to anything in particular and in maintaining the same 'evenly suspended attention' ... in the face of all that one hears" (Epstein 1904, 194).⁴³

That is, the analyst deliberately withdraws from consciousness-of-objects and dwells in the awareness component of consciousness. This open attentional attitude is to be distinguished, on the one hand, from a merely passive attention, in which the mind wanders freely from object to object, and, on the other, from a focal attentional attitude, searching for a particular meaning (Epstein 1904, 195). Partly because evenly suspended

attention was criticized as unattainable,⁴⁴ Freud's prescriptions to practice it did not become integrated into psychoanalytic training programs.

However, Wilfred Bion, perhaps the most thoughtful psychoanalyst of the latter part of the twentieth century, forcefully advocated this practice in the following terms:

[T]he capacity to forget, the ability to eschew desire and understanding, must be regarded as essential discipline for the psycho-analyst. Failure to practise this discipline will lead to a steady deterioration in the powers of observation whose maintenance is essential. The vigilant submission to such discipline will by degrees strengthen the analyst's mental powers just in proportion as lapses in this discipline will debilitate them....

To attain to the state of mind essential for the practice of psycho-analysis I avoid any exercise of memory.... When I am tempted to remember the events of any particular session I resist the temptation.... If I find that some half-memory is beginning to obtrude I resist its recall....

A similar procedure is followed with regard to desires: I avoid entertaining desires and attempt to dismiss them from my mind. For example...it interferes with analytic work to permit desires for the patient's cure, or well-being, or future to enter the mind. Such desires...lead to progressive deterioration of [the analyst's] intuition....

[There is an aspect of ultimate reality] that is currently presenting the unknown and unknowable [in the consulting room]. This is the 'dark spot' that must be illuminated by 'blindness' [that is, ignorance]. Memory and desire are 'illuminations' that destroy the value of the analyst's capacity for observation as a leakage of light into a camera might destroy the value of the film being exposed (Bion [1970] 1983, 51-52,

55-56, 69).

The effect of failing to observe this discipline is to interpret what the patient says in terms of what the analyst wishes or already "knows," thus closing her off from what may be emerging for the first time in the current hour. Bion's psychoanalytic state of mind may be comparable to Socratic ignorance. Both represent an opening up of the self in conversation, for the sake of noticing emergent possibilities that would otherwise remain unthought.

Another area in which a practice has been advocated for the enhancement of awareness is philosophy. In the early twentieth century, Edmund Husserl proposed pursuing wisdom by following a path that he called "phenomenology." By this he meant an account of the things appearing to you precisely in the way in which they actually appear.

Philosophy students sometimes think that studying phenomenology entails mainly reading books. However, learning to see the things appearing to you precisely in the way in which they actually appear takes *practice*. Martin Heidegger, Husserl's best known student, had great difficulty at the beginning of his study of phenomenology.

It concerned the simple question how thinking's manner of procedure which called itself "phenomenology" was to be carried out.... My perplexity decreased slowly...only after I met Husserl personally in his workshop.... Husserl's teaching took place in a step-by-step *training* in phenomenological "seeing" which at the same time demanded that one relinquish the untested use of philosophical knowledge.... I myself *practiced* phenomenological seeing, teaching and learning in Husserl's proximity after 1919.⁴⁵

The phenomenological seeing that one would practice is founded on an act called "the phenomenological reduction." While the reduction was instituted in the service of phenomenological *philosophy*, Husserl was aware of a powerful transformative effect it could have upon the person practicing it:

Perhaps it will even turn out that the total phenomenological attitude, and the [reduction] belonging to it, essentially has, first of all, the vocation of effecting a complete personal transformation, which would, in the first place, be comparable to a religious conversion, but which beyond that contains within itself the significance of being the greatest existential transformation to which humanity as humanity is called.⁴⁶

Yājñavalkya would note at this point that the designation “greatest existential transformation”—like the earlier “existential break” associated with conjunction in Averroes—also fits with the experience of “waking up to” (*pratibodham*) Brahman (KeU, II.4).

In characterizing the phenomenological reduction, I shall borrow the descriptions of the Husserl’s closest collaborator in his later years, Eugen Fink, because they are vivid and strongly suggestive of awakening to Brahman.⁴⁷ The phenomenological reduction is a two-part act (F, 41). Husserl called the first component of that act a “disconnection” (*Ausschaltung*) or an *epoché* (ἐποχή)—a suspension of the “natural attitude,” the attitude in which we take things for granted, or as a matter of course (*als selbstverständlich*).

Disconnection means that you deliberately abstain from all beliefs; you inhibit your customary acceptance of what “counts” (*das Geltende*) for you (F, 39-40). In Sartre’s terms, you cease living in acts of positional consciousness. While remaining disconnected, as we observed Sartre doing, you turn your attention from the objects of consciousness to the awareness ingredient in consciousness-of-objects. You are not caught up with objects, but are attentively “spread” over the whole of consciousness-of-objects, without positing that whole as an object. And you alter your mode of attention from an active searching-for to a receptive letting-things-come. You are learning to do something involuntary, like preparing to receive “the visitation of sleep,” which comes as the god Dionysus visits his followers, when they no longer are distinct from the role they are playing.⁴⁸ You are not gradually acquiring things in the way the

disposed intellect acquires intelligibles.

The disconnection includes the “nullification” of the sense of yourself as an empirical human being—it “un-humanizes” (*entmenschlicht*) you inasmuch as it “lays bare the... onlooker in himself” that is “*already at work*” in you, into which you now “fade away” (F, 40). In the terminology of this essay, you disidentify with your sense of self, and you pass into awareness instead of remaining in consciousness. Yājñavalkya might remark that the realization of Brahman involves a similar correlation between the deconstruction of the sense of self (*nir-aham-kāra*) and a fading away into the “witness,” which, as we have seen, was already at work.

You are now in a position to notice precisely what appears to you in just the way in which it appears. As with Freud’s *evenly* suspended attention, all the phenomena are treated equally; none is assumed in advance to have priority over the others. As in the case of painterly vision, you are not imposing your knowledge on your experiencing; you are operating “prior” to your identification of things or events. Your going backwards involves a sort of reversal of the outward-turning action of the agent intellect. For the agent intellect elicited intelligibles from their latent state in the appearances, whereas the disconnection goes back behind those intelligibles, which, due to language, are already at work in our ordinary experience of the appearances. In its open attentiveness, the disconnection has an “empty” relationship to experience, perhaps somewhat like the agent intellect in its “empty” state as material intellect.

The second component of the phenomenological reduction, the reducing proper, is a *leading-back*.⁴⁹ In the reducing, “while explicitly inquiring backwards behind the acceptednesses... with respect to your belonging to the world,” you “blast open (*sprengen*),” through transcendental insight, the “captivation and captivity (*Befangenheit*)” caused by those world-acceptednesses. You experience this as a “breakthrough” (*Durchbruch*; FK, 348). As a result, you discover for the first time that a primordial conviction (Husserl calls this an *Urdoxa*) has been underlying all of your experiences—an unformulated, implicit acceptance of the

world and of yourself as belonging to it (F, 40-41). Here 'world' refers, not to the collection of all things, but to what is originally given as a universal background, in the way a horizon is given for vision. While you may have occasionally experienced a breakdown of particular beliefs in the past, that did not shake your implicit acceptance of the horizon.

You are now sharing in the onlooker's awareness of the world, which is the "universally flowing and continuing [world-] apperception," the "underground" (*Untergrund*) out of which every act of consciousness springs up. In this sense, phenomenology is said to make the ultimate ground of the world available to an *experience* (FK, 349, 352, 340),⁵⁰ one in which we experience "how...the world is coming about for us" (Husserl 1962, 147.29-32).

Yājñavalkya might accept the notion that painterly vision, evenly suspended attention, and the phenomenological reduction are at least partial Brahman-experiences, ones that go beyond the spontaneously arising Brahman-moments on the football field or on the highway. However, he would point out two differences. First, they are cultivated in the service of other ends—painting, healing patients, or pursuing wisdom—whereas realization of Brahman is the supreme end (BU, IV.3.22), pursued for its own sake. Second, in the other contexts awareness is to be actualized only on particular occasions—before the canvas, in the consulting room, or in the phenomenological "workshop"—whereas one remains continually in the Brahman-realm.

According to Husserl, in going about the course of ordinary life, the phenomenologist has the *epoché* as "an active-dispositional⁵¹ attitude to which we resolve ourselves once and for all" and which "can be actualized again and again" (Husserl 1962, 153.36-37 and 140.19-20), like the dancer's repeated re-actualizing of the dancing that she has as a first actuality. This raises the question whether the knower of Brahman could be said to be Brahman in this dispositional sense.

In the Upanishadic tradition you may engage in a meditative practice, in which you could pass through several stages. At the beginning you deliberately concentrate and turn your

consciousness inward, while endeavoring to dwell more and more in awareness (Sekida 1985, 62 and 93).⁵² You need to keep reminding yourself to notice the awareness, which is always there. Initially you cannot accomplish this while you are doing something else, because a thing or event always captures your attention.

After a while you will be able to maintain this centering of yourself in awareness. While your mind gradually has become dominated by awareness, you still occasionally experience moments of conscious reflection on the immediately preceding moment of awareness (Sekida 1985, 93).⁵³ You are now "allowing the mind to fluctuate." The following analogy may convey some sense of this experience.⁵⁴ Suppose a neighbor were to ask you to look after her children. When the children come, you could take one of three different courses of action: first, you could abandon responsibility by telling them that they can do whatever they want as long as they don't bother you; or, second, you could try to control them by telling them what to do and what not to do; or, third, you could

allow the children to play. This "allowing" is not active, since you do not interfere. It is not passive, since *you are present with* the children...*in a total way*. It is like a cat sitting at a mouse hole. It appears to be asleep, but let the mouse show but a whisker and the cat will pounce. It is only by allowing that one truly understands what allowing means.

"Allowing" brings awareness to the fore in a way that pushing away and controlling do not.⁵⁵ You are aware of movements from focused to unfocused consciousness, of shifts from perceptual to thinking consciousness, of fluctuations from consciousness-of to empty awareness, and so forth, as well as of the reversals of all these. "Allowing is...so to say, what fluctuating awareness is 'made of.'"

Eventually no reflection is experienced any more; this total wakefulness completely purifies one of the "sleepiness" which is what the "habit" of consciousness really is (Sekida 1985, 62 and

94).⁵⁶ To be aware you don't have to be conscious *of something*; nor do you need to *be someone*, much less someone special (Low 1993, 40).

Positional consciousness-of-objects, which was first for us, here shows itself to be in fact a derivative of non-positional awareness, which is what is first in itself. Initially, consciousness seemed to have the component of awareness; but now we may say that awareness sometimes manifests itself partially in the form of consciousness-of-objects, while in itself it is *pure* awareness (*cit*). Again, this is quite analogous to what Averroes said of the agent intellect. In itself it is pure, having no reference to the world; but, through its outward turn, it conjoins itself with our imaginations, resulting in the emergence from it of particular intelligibles.

Upon emerging from this absolute silence, you may be so forcefully struck by something in the world that you *consciously recognize* that you *are* just pure awareness (Sekida 1985, 95). You momentarily become conscious of this "objectless being present with the children in a total way" as yourself. You are now conscious of having arrived in the Brahman-realm.⁵⁷ Yājñavalkya might note that this recognition is what is expressed in the words: "I am Brahman!" (BU, I.4.10), adding that this experiencing of pure awareness is what he was referring to when he said:

Though then he does not see [any thing], yet he does not see *while seeing*. There is no cutting off of the seeing of the seer.... But there is no second (*dvitīyam*), no other (*anyad*), separate from him, that he *could* see.... When there is some other (*anyad*), then one can see...the other (BU, IV.3.23 and 31).

According to this account, pure awareness seems to be empty. Yājñavalkya could respond that, while it is empty of objects, it is full in the sense that it is an experiencing of the moment-to-moment "going forth of things in different directions" (*vyuccaranti*), like "sparks from a fire" (BU, II.1.20). Alternatively, it is an experiencing of the whole's springing forth (*sambhavati*), which is like a spider emitting (*srjate*) a thread of its web, or like plants springing up from the earth (MuU, I.1.7). It

is as if in pure awareness we had "gone backward" to a point just "before" things, self, and world emerge. This brings to mind a passage in Sartre: "Thus, each instant of our conscious life reveals to us a creation *ex nihilo*...[—]this inexhaustible creation of existence of which *we* are not the creators" (S, 79).

Yājñavalkya's characterization of the fullness of pure awareness is conveyed by the traditional name for the Brahman-realm, *saccidānanda*. The three parts of the one word express the oneness of pure existence (*sat*), pure awareness (*cit*), and pure joy (*ānanda*). Since there is no "of," as in "consciousness-of," awareness *is* pure *sat* rather than a consciousness *of* it. Fink seems to be giving voice to the same experience when he refers to the unique identity of the onlooker and the universally flowing world-apperception: as "there is...no other (*anyad*), separate from him, that he *could* see," so there are no objects to separate the onlooker from the flowing world-apperception (FK, 355).

This oneness of existence and awareness appears in the Thomistic branch of the Aristotelian tradition as follows: Each of us exists by virtue of a separate act of "is-ing" (*esse*), which is something other than our essence, our humanity. A human being *is*, not by virtue of being human, but by participation in, or reception of, is-ing from, absolute Is-ing, just as a piece of wood that is afire is so by participation in Fire (ST, Q.3, A.4r). Absolute Is-ing is like the Sun, and a human being is like some part of the air. Each individual instantiation of the intelligible human essence remains illuminated, that is, continues is-ing, only as long as absolute Is-ing is shining on it (ST, Q.8, A.1r). That is why Thomas says that what we call "creation" is, in fact, an ongoing "flowing out, arising, springing out (*emanatio*)" (ST, Q.44, A.1r) from absolute Is-ing. This much of Thomas's view can help us to understand how the Upanishadic experience of *cit* is an experience of *sat*.

Jacques Maritain (1956) applied Thomas's understanding of the distinction between *esse* and essence to interpret the experience of the knower of Brahman in the following way.⁵⁸ In reflecting consciousness we experience our soul in its acts. What we experience in reflection is not our intelligible essence but

rather our self as “prisoner of the mobility, of the multiplicity, of the fugitive luxuriance of the phenomena and the operations which emerge in us from the night of the unconscious—prisoner of the apparent self” (145-46). But, as we have seen, the cultivation of awareness, as distinct from consciousness or reflecting consciousness, enables those on the path toward realizing Brahman to pass out of ordinary self-conscious experience and into “an exceptional and privileged experience, emptying into the abyss of subjectivity...to escape from the apparent self, in order to reach the absolute Self” (146). These practitioners “strip themselves of every image, of every particular representation, and of every distinct operation to such a degree that...they reach not the essence of their soul but its existence, substantial *esse* itself” (148) “by an...annihilating connaturality” (146), in the absolute silence of total wakefulness.

[F]rom the fact that existence is...limited only by the essence that receives it...one can understand that this negative experience, in reaching the substantial *esse* of the soul, reaches, at once, both this existence proper to the soul and existing in its metaphysical profusion and the sources of existing, according as the existence of the soul...is something that is emanating and is pervaded by an inflow from which it holds everything... It is the sources of being in his soul that the human being reaches in this way (153-54).

Thus, through practice in experiencing pure awareness (*cit*), the knower of Brahman has come to experience himself as the inflow of is-ing flowing out from absolute Is-ing (*sat*). One might say that the transition from experiencing myself as the witness to recognizing pure awareness is like going from having my finger *on* the pulsing of the world to recognizing my finger *as* the pulsing of the world. Maritain’s interpretation clearly distinguishes the Sun of Averroes’ outward-turned self-intellection of intelligible essences from the Sun of outflowing self-aware existence.

Now we are in a position to say that when Śvetaketu realizes “You are That,” he is experiencing himself as the outflow of *sat* and he is recognizing, as his true self, pure awareness (of) the continual emanation of sparks that are “on the way” to becoming things—and that this recognizing *is* that very outflow. Moreover, in this recognition Śvetaketu is what is recognized: “One who knows the supreme Brahman becomes that very Brahman” (MuU, III.2.9; cf. BU, IV.4.13) and “becomes this All” (BU, I.4.10).

Just as we wondered earlier what the daily experience of the state of complete conjunction would be like, so now the analogous question arises with respect to the Brahman-realm. In the discussion of the phenomenological reduction, I raised the possibility that we could acquire pure awareness as a first actuality, in the sense of an active disposition. The knower of Brahman would then alternate between pure awareness and consciousness-of, in the way that I can “turn on” or “turn off” my contemplation of the Pythagorean Theorem as I wish. This suggestion would parallel Aristotle’s experience that we are, for intermittent periods of time, in the same state as the divine itself is over the whole of time. The difference would be that instead of turning from one mode of consciousness (say, perceiving or thinking) to another (intellecting), the knower of Brahman alternates at will between two different ways of total experiencing—between consciousness and pure awareness. It would be somewhat analogous to looking at the well-known ambiguous figure of the duck-rabbit, and seeing it now as a duck, now as a rabbit.

We learn from Yājñavalkya that living in the Brahman-realm is, instead, like a hypothetical *double* seeing of both the duck and the rabbit *at once*, rather than like a seeing of them in alternation (Carter 1997, 54).⁵⁹ The knower of Brahman is engaged with “consciousness-of” while *simultaneously* remaining in the realm of pure awareness. The following analogy, in which the author (Sharma) quotes Ramana Maharshi, conveys something of this:

The ordinary person only sees the reflection in the mirror but the realized person sees the reflection *as*

well as the mirror. “For instance you see a reflection in the mirror and the mirror. You know the mirror to be the reality and the picture in it a mere reflection. Is it necessary that to see the mirror we should cease to see the reflection in it?” Similarly, the realized one *continues to experience the world* in his realized state. Thus the realized person appreciates “the distinctions” of sound, taste, form, smell etc. “But he *always* perceives and experiences the one reality in all of them.”⁶⁰

Brahman-knowers experience the everyday world in the mirror of purified awareness, and this makes possible their keen yet calm involvement in that world. In the analogy we could take “seeing the reflection” to stand for consciousness of the world, and “seeing the mirror,” for pure awareness. When I see the mirror along with the reflections, the latter are not being viewed “from outside,” as they are in the mode of consciousness, but rather as *emerging out of* awareness. One might also apply the analogy to the self by saying that knowers of Brahman experience their ordinary selves, too, as being virtual images cast by the mirror.

The mirror analogy may be applied to the modes of experiencing other than those encountered specifically in meditative practice. Consciousness-of-objects in any manner—perceiving, sensing, emoting, evaluating, thinking, and so on—and self-consciousness, too, are like a vision of things in the virtual space of the mirror. There are two fundamentally different modes of consciousness-of-objects, depending upon whether the object in question is an object in the true sense. When it maintains itself throughout a succession of acts of consciousness, it is an object in the etymological sense, namely something set or put (*jectum*) before or over against (*ob*) the act of consciousness. This setting-over-against is what is meant by “subject-object duality.” Such an object shall be referred to henceforth as an ‘Object.’ It has an identity, to which we may return again and again.

The following example illustrates the different layers that may arise in perceptual consciousness-of-Objects. It begins with

the emergence of an implicit Object from the background, continues with a prepredicative explicating of it, and then undergoes various layers of predicative development. The following illustration may help to explain this: While I am engaged in seminar, someone’s coffee cup may emerge from the margins of my consciousness and may attract my attention and become an explicit object of consciousness. My attention may travel from its color to a figure on the side, and then to its overall shape, and so on.⁶¹ Then my interest may awaken sufficiently so that I think, “The cup has a circular figure on the side.” This shift represents a transition from the cup’s just previously having become *implicitly* determined as having a circle on its side to its being grasped in an *active identification* as determined by the circle on its side.⁶² Then I may think, “The fact that the cup has that circular figure on its side is puzzling. I wonder what it stands for.” My thought may subsequently be led to such Objects as “the circular,” “shape in general,” and “property.”⁶³

“Prior” to such perceptual consciousness of Objects and its developments, there is a sensory consciousness of objects that has been vividly described by Erwin Straus (1956). We sense objects in the same way in which we respond to the dynamic quality of a tone, which is “a state of unrest, a tension, an urge, almost a will to move on, as if a force were acting on the tone and pulling it in a certain direction” (Zuckerandl 1959, 19). We are in a symbiotic relation (Straus 1956, 200) with the “tones,” to which we respond with incipient movements as we do to dance music (239). This pre-linguistic, flowing realm is the ground from which Objects emerge (204). We live simultaneously in the Objective and the sensory and may experience the tension between them, as the latter resists being fit into the former. Some people may be especially attracted to the loss of their stance over-against Objects, to the dispersion of their self-consciousness, and to the blurring of the distinctness within the Objective realm (284 and 275). Precisely because of its lack of subject-Object duality and self-consciousness, sensory consciousness is occasionally mistaken for awareness by beginners. It is, however, just another way of viewing the reflections in the virtual space produced by

the mirror.

All of the above are distinctions that can be seen clearly in the vision of that virtual space. In addition to seeing these distinctions, the knower of Brahman sees the virtual space and its reflections *as emanating* from the mirror. This second sort of seeing is pure awareness. While awareness is never totally absent from our experience, we notice it to varying degrees.

Usually, the degree to which we notice it is very minimal—as when we seem to be, in Sartre's words, "hypnotized" by what we are conscious of. This is our "default" mode of experiencing. When we are reading, thinking, conversing in seminar, dancing, gazing at a sunset, or "even stretching out a hand to open the door," we are absorbed in that moment's action (Sekida 1985, 91). When we are self-conscious, we are also absorbed in the self-consciousness. In absorption, awareness seems to have gotten lost; but it has only receded into the deep background.

In some special moments, which have been called moments of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), awareness becomes prominent in an *incidental* way:

A rock climber explains how it feels when he is scaling a mountain: "You are so involved in what you are doing [that] you aren't thinking of yourself as separate from the immediate activity" (53).

The absence of the self from consciousness does not mean that a person in flow has given up the control of his psychic energy, or that she is unaware of what happens in her body or in her mind.... A good runner is usually aware of every relevant muscle in his body, of the rhythm of his breathing, as well as of the performance of his competitors within the overall strategies of the race (64).

We do not deliberately pursue such moments; they just happen. The flow experience may be spontaneous, as in the earlier examples of the driver and of the woman sewing; or it may be skill-related, as in the examples of Joe Montana, the surgeon, and

the rock climber. In the case of skill-related flow experiences, one might say that the body's usual resistance to intended action is overcome by practice. As a result, consciousness as "over-against" the body disappears, allowing awareness to become prominent. We move out of flow when the "over-againstness" arises again as the "I" becomes active either in reaction ("Wow! This is so exciting!") or in action ("If I bear down, I can keep this going").

As we saw in relation to painting, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology, prominence of awareness may be *deliberately* cultivated in order to be able to engage in some pursuit. Here awareness is practiced, so that the practitioner comes to experience the witness as a disposition. Once the practitioner comes to possess the witness as a *first* actuality, he or she can then activate it when engaging in the activity for the sake of which it was developed.

Finally, in the double seeing of the knower of Brahman, pure mirror-awareness is permanently prominent as a *second* actuality; and there is a "loose," "unstuck," clear consciousness-of-objects as well. This is said to be the state of one "freed while alive" (*jīvanmukta*; cf. BU, IV.4.7).

In virtue of the oneness of *sat* and *cit*, this double seeing is one with the out-flowing of existence. Thus, freedom manifests itself on the one hand inasmuch as one's awareness is active or creative in respect to the world, and on the other hand inasmuch as one's action is responsive or receptive with respect to the world—a reversal of the usual receptivity of consciousness and activity of action (Yuasa 1987, 68). In the realm of action, this freedom is freedom to respond without a "hitch" to the [field of dynamic qualities] in the field of experience, which are analogous to the directional arc involved in realizing the full significance of a situation mentioned in Part One. These field [tensions] include what Yājñavalkya takes Aristotle to be referring to when he speaks of feeling feelings or performing actions as required (*δῆϊ*)—in the required cases, with respect to the required people, in the required way, and for the required reasons (NE, 1106b17-27).

Another way of putting this is to say that the freedom of the knower of Brahman manifests itself in the ability to be able to move freely through the world with grace and effortlessness, which [preserves thoughtful awareness] (*σοφροσύνη*):⁶⁵

For *σοφροσύνη* is precisely the virtue of general and unself-conscious self-possession, of universal grace and effortless command neither specified by particular action, which would transform it from *σοφροσύνη* to some particular virtue, nor checked by any opacity, which would translate it into a mode of self-control. What could work better for its model than a pure objectless knowledge?

Knowers of Brahman have no inner barriers that can impede the spontaneous emergence of whatever is called for by the current moment.

In conclusion, we note certain formal parallels between the role of Brahman in the *Upanishads* and that of the agent intellect according to Averroes. First, each is the source—Brahman, the source of all existence; the agent intellect, the source of all being, that is, of all intelligibility. Second, both are “self-luminous” and are responsible for “seeing” in some sense. Third, the non-dual relation between the individual self and Brahman is like that between the disposed intellect and the agent intellect. Fourth, a “self-forgetting” “outward turn” occurs in the case of each of them. Fifth, both the experience of Brahman and the experience of intellection could be said to involve a breaking-free from my ordinary captivation by the images on the walls of a cave-like dwelling; both involve engaging in practice; and both ultimately arrive at an existential breakthrough to “immortalizing.” In that breakthrough, in both cases, I deconstruct my ordinary sense of self and discover my true self as being both non-private (that is, not mine alone) and non-dual with respect to the true self of others.

There are fundamental differences, however, in other respects. In the case of intellection, one escapes the captivity of

opinions and of the perceptual world by becoming free for intelligibles through the gradual purification of theoretical study; in the case of realizing Brahman, one escapes the captivity of the mundane way of experiencing objects, regardless of whether they appear in sensory, perceptual, or intellectual consciousness, by a sudden shift from involvement in consciousness (whether first-degree or reflective) to pure awareness—a shift that may be experienced by the practice of cultivating awareness. Moreover, the one, impersonal, non-dual, true self of us all, in which we share in our immortalizing, is understood by Averroes to be the self-intellection of the agent intellect; Yājñavalkya, on the other hand, understands it to be pure awareness. And finally, in intellection, the material intellect realizes conjunction with the agent intellect, which is the source of all intelligibility in the world; in experiencing Brahman, however, pure [selfawareness] realizes that it is non-dual with respect to the emergence of existence in its entirety, encompassing both the sensory and the intelligible realms.

Jacob Klein makes the following comment on Aristotle: the receptive aspect of “*voεῖν*...is the state of wakefulness, a state of preparedness and alertness.... *Noῦς*...when it is...*one* with the *νοητά*...[—ο]nly then can be said to be wakefulness ‘at work’” (Klein 1964, 65). Looking back at the beginning of this essay, Yājñavalkya might wonder how Homer’s realization of the full significance of a situation,⁶⁶ Aristotle’s reception of an intelligible, and Averroes’ complete conjunction with the agent intellect’s self-intellection would compare, in regard to their degrees of wakefulness, with dwelling in pure awareness.

He might think that the major difference between the *Upanishads* and our three Western thinkers is that in the former the state of empty receptivity is supreme—that is, even more wakeful than “wakefulness at work.” But, alternately, it might be that Averroes’ account of complete conjunction is a satisfactory *partial* depiction of Brahman. If we focus on the emerging revelation that occurs in the empty, receptive intellect’s becoming one with a “profile” of the full, unitary agent intellect, we may be considering one *face* of Brahman, as it were, namely, the intel-

lectual one. Perhaps Klein was directing our attention to the wakefulness of the experiential living-through of such a moment, a wakefulness that, however, is not limited to the intellectual sphere.

Let us allow Yājñavalkya the last word: “What you may be overlooking is that the empty, receptive material intellect is an appearance of the outward turning of the full source of determinacy, the agent intellect, whereas, in the case of Brahman, the full and determinate is an appearance of the outward turning of the empty.”

¹ This essay is a revision of two NEH-supported lectures given at St. John's College, Annapolis, on February 15 and 19, 2008 and dedicated to the memory of Ralph Swentzell, who did so much to further the study of Eastern Classics at St. John's College.

² This and the following few paragraphs are based on K. von Fritz, “NOOΣ and NOEIN in the Homeric Poems,” *Classical Philology* 38 (1943), 79-93.

³ The translations from Homer are based upon those listed in the bibliography.

⁴ This “directional arc” is analogous, at a higher level, to Merleau-Ponty's *arc intentionnel* on the level of sensing (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 158).

⁵ The following few paragraphs are based on W. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).

⁶ Since this essay is intended to be an introduction to a way of experiencing, it will not go very far into the many conceptual distinctions that have come to be seen as part of the Upanishadic teaching. For instance, there is no discussion of the distinction between *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* Brahman. While it is true that such distinctions do reflect distinctions in experience, the reader who is being introduced to the way of experiencing in question is not likely to have encountered them.

⁷ This quotation and the situation described in the following sentence derive from HG, 6, 210, 195.

⁸ The Inner Controller is depicted mythologically as follows:

He entered in here right to the tips of the nails, as a razor slips into a razor-case. . . . When he breathes he is called ‘breath’; when he speaks, ‘speech’; when he sees, ‘eye’; when he hears, ‘ear’; when he thinks, ‘mind.’ They are just the names of his actions. Whoever meditates on any one of these does not know [the Self], for [the Self] is not completely active in any one of them. One should

meditate on them as [being] simply the Self (BU, I.4.7).

⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1075a7-11: “So, the condition the human intellect... is in at some period of time... is the condition the intellection that intellects itself is in over the whole of time.” Cf.: “For the gods, the whole of life is blessed, and for human beings it is so to the extent that there is in it some likeness to such a state of activity” (NE, 1178b25-26).

¹⁰ I am indebted to my colleague, Michael Blaustein, for a very fruitful recent conversation about Averroes. This section is based upon the works of Altmann, Black, Blaustein, Hyman, Ivry, Leaman, and Zedler listed in the bibliography. Leaman and Zedler have been particularly helpful for the early part, but I have taken most of it from Black. In the later part I have relied heavily on Blaustein's working out of the details of the relation between agent and material intellects and have made significant use of Altmann and Ivry, especially the latter's thoughts about conjunction while we are still alive. However, responsibility for any errors that there may be in the interpretation of Averroes is mine alone.

¹¹ *'aql bi al-malaka*, which means intellect in natural disposition, aptitude, faculty; *intellectus in habitu*.

¹² Also: “the intellective [part of the soul] intellects the [intelligible] looks *in* appearances” (*De anima* 431b2). I accept Nussbaum's (1978) suggestion about the meaning of *φαντοία*. It is based on such passages as the following 428a1, 7, 14ff., & and 29ff., as well as; 428b30ff.), wherein in which the link between *φαντοία* and *φαίνεσθαι* seems compelling.

¹³ In fact, for Averroes, the imagination or, more properly, the cogitative power—which, together with the imagination and memory, prepares what is given in sensation, so that, when illumined by the agent intellect, the intelligible look can appear through and in-form the material intellect—is a fourth intellect, the passible intellect (LC, 449.174, and cfp. 409.640). “The cogitative power has the following functions: it can make an absent object appear as though present; it can compare and distinguish the *re*-presented objects with each other; it can judge whether a given *re*-presented object bears a relation to a directly presented sense intention” (Zedler 1954, 441).

¹⁴ Yet because the human species is eternal, the succession of human souls in which intellection of intelligibles of mundane things occurs ensures the continuity of intellection in the material intellect and the omnitemporality of the intelligible looks of mundane things *as such*. Through the repeated presentation of potential intelligibles in imaginative appearances, this succession “provides a replica in time and in matter of the eternal” intellection of the agent intellect (Zedler 1951, 173). It is possible that the belief that souls migrate into different bodies in succession is a reflection in the form of popular myth of the truth of the omnitemporal unity of the material intellect in the

multiplicity of disposed intellects (Altmann 1965, 82).

¹⁵ The agent intellect in this incidental connection would be what Aristotle referred to as the intellect that enters “from outside the door”: “It remains then that intellect alone enters additionally into [the seed of a human being] from outside the door (*θῆραθεν*) and that it alone is divine, for corporeal being-at-work has nothing in common with its being-at-work” (*De generatione et corruptione* 736b27). Cf.:

But the intellect seems to come to be in [us] while being an independent thing, and not to be destroyed.... [I]ntellecting or contemplating wastes away because something else in us is destroyed, but it is itself unaffected (without attributes). But thinking things through and loving or hating are affections (attributes) not of the intellect but of that which has intellect, insofar as it has it. For this reason, when the latter is destroyed, the intellect neither remembers nor loves, for these acts did not belong to it but to the composite being which has perished; the intellect is perhaps something more divine and is unaffected (OS, 408b18ff.).

What Averroes actually says is that the incidental connection constitutes a “disposition” (*isti'dād*, which means readiness, willingness, preparedness, inclination, tendency, disposition, propensity; *dispositio*) of the agent intellect, but one located within human souls. It is a disposition to receive the intelligible looks of mundane things. Thus, the material intellect is in reality the agent-intellect-as-having-such-a-disposition-in-human-beings.

¹⁶ Based on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b12: “[I]t is beautiful and in that way a source.”

¹⁷ When my disposed intellect is actively engaged in intellecting an intelligible look, it is also intellecting itself, since, as Aristotle points out, the intellect is one with what it intellects, in that the second actuality of both is identical, as lumber's being built is one with the activity of building. In contemplating itself as informed by the intelligible look, my intellect is also directed toward the image, which specifies the particular look that is to be received, in the same way in which, when we look at a painting, we are directed toward the scene that we see in it. However, since the mundane thing toward which the intellect is directed via the image is not pure intelligibility, the disposed intellect's self-intellection is not *pure* self-intellection; its act of intellection is not absolutely one with its object of intellection. In this way it differs from the self-intellection of the agent intellect; for the object of the agent intellect's intellection does not point beyond itself.

¹⁸ What had been my intellect would now be either fully (Blaustein 1984, 272 and 283) or partly assimilated to the agent intellect. That is, either “I” would

be engaged in intellection of everything intelligible or, having abandoned all the contingent aspects of my intellection, I would be focusing solely on its formal aspects, which are supplied by the agent intellect, so that I would be participating in *an aspect* of the formal governing source of the whole (Leaman 1998, 101-03).

¹⁹ *Ittisāl* = connectedness, unitedness, union; juncture, conjunction, link; connection; contact (from *wasala* = to connect, join, unite, combine, link, attach). *Continuatio* = a following of one thing after another, an unbroken series, a connection, continuation, succession (from *continuarē* = to join together in uninterrupted succession, to make continuous). *Wasala* may be a reformulation of Aristotle's *θῆξις*.

Altmann (1965, 83) says that this notion reflects Plotinus's *συνάπτειν* (= [1] [transitive] to join together; [2] [intransitive] to border on, lie next to; combine, be connected with). Consider: “[W]e lift ourselves up by the part [of the soul] which is not submerged in the body and by this conjoin at our own centres to something like the Centre of all things.... [W]e must suppose that [our souls conjoin] by other powers, in the way in which that which is engaged in intellection naturally conjoins with that which is being thoroughly intellected and that that which is engaged in intellection... conjoins with what is akin to it with nothing to keep them apart” (Plotinus, VI.9.8.19-30).

Altmann (1965, 83n.) also mentions that Plotinus refers to his experience of union as a contact (*ἀφή*). However, in Averroes, “conjunction” (*ittisāl*) is to be distinguished from “union” (*ittihād*); the latter signifies oneness, singleness, unity; concord, unison, unanimity; combination; amalgamation, merger, fusion; union, (from *wahada* = [1] to be alone, unique; [2] to make into one, unite, unify; to connect, unite, bring together, amalgamate, merge). In Greek the corresponding word is *ἐνωσις* = combination into one, union.

²⁰ In its perfected state, as engaged in intellection of the agent intellect, the disposed intellect is called the *intellectus adeptus* (Hyman n.d., 188), “intellect that has reached to or attained or obtained.”

²¹ Altmann 1965, 74, characterizing the position of Averroes' teacher.

²² Blaustein 1984, 284. Cf. also: “[T]he material intellect's awareness of itself even when it is not thinking of any intelligible form... is itself a kind of actuality, however empty. Averroes claims that this kind of self-awareness is in fact the obverse of the [agent] intellect's fully conscious awareness of itself; the material intellect's awareness of its own potentiality is a dim awareness of its actuality as the [agent] intellect.” (Ibid.)

²³ It is interesting to note that with respect to conjunction, the agent intellect exercises all four kinds of responsibility that Aristotle describes in the *Physics*. It is responsible for my attainment of conjunction in functioning as my end (*τέλος*). Moreover, it is responsible for the motion of learning, by which I approach conjunction; for my learning is really *its* producing intelligibles in

me by revealing itself to me as the form of my disposed intellect (Blaustein 1984, 276-77). Since the agent intellect is what I am increasingly intellecting and, thus, coming to be, it is also responsible for conjunction in the manner of a form. Finally, it is also responsible as material, since the material intellect is ultimately identical with it. The same could be said of Brahman, with the key difference that its responsibility is not limited to the realm of intelligibility.

²⁴ Patañjali 1989, IV.34; see also Feuerstein's comment in Patañjali 1989, 145. *Kaivalya* is "the aloneness" of seeing.

²⁵ As far as Averroes' own position with respect to individual immortality goes, there are two interesting possibilities. He may have thought that the only immortality was the impersonal immortality of the state of conjunction and that philosophers were orienting their lives accordingly; the belief in personal immortality on the part of ordinary people would then be the closest approximation to truth of which they were capable. On the other hand, he may have held that, while only a few *intellects* may attain conjunction, all *souls* are immortal (Zedler 1954, 451-52). There is a somewhat similar divergence in the Upanishadic tradition between Śankara's position that the individual self is in a sense unreal and Rāmānuja's view that individual selves, while not independent, are real.

²⁶ Cf. the following passages: "Since [in all cases of seeing and hearing] we are aware (*αἰσθανόμεθα*) that we are seeing and hearing, it must either be by sight that we are aware [for example] that we are seeing or by some other [sense]" (OS, 425b11-12). "To each sense there belongs something special and something common. For example, what is special to sight is to see, [what is special] to hearing is to hear, and similarly with the rest. But there is also a certain common power that goes along with all of them, by which one is also aware that one is seeing and hearing (for it is not, after all, by sight that one is seeing that one is seeing)." (*De somno et vigilia*, 455a12-5.)

²⁷ We may speak of self-consciousness in the sense as consciousness of myself only "after" the construction of the sense of self, which is discussed in the text below.

²⁸ By Kosman (1975), who also made reference to Sartre's *La Transcendence de l'Ego*. In planning the lectures, I had intended to use Sartre to introduce the notion of selfawareness (see footnote 29) as an alternative to anything in Aristotle. However, Kosman's article, which I discovered while writing the lectures, made it possible to cite Aristotle himself in order to introduce this notion.

²⁹ I write "selfawareness" and "awareness (of) itself" to suggest that the relationship between awareness and what it is aware (of) is not the same as that between consciousness and the object of consciousness. I am following Sartre's practice in *L'être et le néant* (pp. 18-20), where he writes *conscience (de) soi* to refer to what I am calling "selfawareness" or "awareness (of)

itself."

³⁰ In *La Transcendence de l'Ego*, from which the quotations are taken, Sartre uses only one word, *conscience*, which I have rendered as "consciousness" when it is positional and as "awareness" when it is non-positional. Moreover, he does not here write *conscience (de)*, as he did later (see footnote 28).

³¹ What is said will apply as well to consciousness that is imagining, remembering, judging, thinking, intellecting, feeling, or evaluating.

³² See footnote 34.

³³ The last two sentences represent my understanding of Gurwitsch 1985, 5, second paragraph.

³⁴ Gurwitsch (1941) pointed out that this account of the arising of the sense of self is incompatible with the fact that reflection can accomplish no more than to render explicit the content of the reflected-upon consciousness (332-33). He later (1985) offered a corrected account of the construction of the psychical empirical sense of self (15ff.). It is based on the recognition that both states and qualities "designate psychic constants, i.e., regularities of experience...rather than mental facts which themselves fall under direct experience" (15), as they do in Sartre.

³⁵ I remember many years ago reading an article by him in *The Washington Post*, in which he described his experience in something like these terms.

³⁶ These characteristics are similar to those in the example of the violinist in Csikszentmihalyi 1990: "A violinist must be extremely aware of every movement of her fingers, as well as of the sound entering her ears, and of the total form of the piece she is playing, both analytically, note by note, and holistically, in terms of its overall design" (64).

³⁷ Bankei 2000, 58. I have substituted "awareness" first for "the Unborn" and then for "it," referring to her Buddha-mind.

³⁸ This word is used passim in Husserl 1964.

³⁹ It need not be living beings with respect to which we experience the connection: "The [mountain] climber, focusing all her attention on the small irregularities of the rock wall that will have to support her weight safely, speaks of the sense of kinship that develops between fingers and rock." "This feeling is not just a fancy of the imagination, but is based on a concrete experience of close interaction with some Other." (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 64)

⁴⁰ A popular book on learning to draw tells us of a subjective state that artists speak of, which is characterized by "a sense of close 'connection' with the work, a sense of timelessness, difficulty in using words...a lack of anxiety, a sense of close attention to shapes and spaces and forms that remain nameless." It is important for the artist to experience the shift from the ordinary state to

this one. The student is encouraged to set up the proper “conditions for this mental shift” and to become “able to recognize and foster this state (Edwards 1979, 46). These characteristics correspond quite well with the qualities of a consciousness in which awareness is in the foreground.

⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty 1961, 166, translation modified.

⁴² The articulation in this paragraph emerged in a conversation with Nina Haigney, just a few minutes before I delivered this lecture. It was an example of the sort of thing it attempts to articulate—a conversation, with awareness to some degree in the foreground, allowing for the experience of “a certain emptiness,” followed by the emergence, in two people, of an “authentic word”—or a least a relatively authentic one.

⁴³ The quotation from Freud is from “Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psychoanalysis” (1912).

⁴⁴ By Theodore Reik in 1948; see Epstein 1904, 199-201.

⁴⁵ M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, quoted in Ihde 1977, 15; italics added and translation corrected at one point.

⁴⁶ Husserl 1962, 140.27-33; to maintain consistency of terminology, I substituted “reduction” for “epoché.”

⁴⁷ Husserl himself conveys the same view in different language (Husserl 1962, Sections 37-42).

⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty 1945, 191, where, however, the expression is not being used to characterize the phenomenological reduction.

⁴⁹ The distinction between disconnection and reducing proper parallels that in the Buddhist tradition between mindfulness (*sati*) and seeing distinctly in detail (*vi-paśyana*).

⁵⁰ Cf. “And so also must the gaze made free by the epoché be...an experiencing gaze” (Husserl 1962, 156.13-15).

⁵¹ I take *habituell* to correspond to an adjectival form of *ἔτις*.

⁵² This stage in the yogic tradition involves eight members, the last three of which are concentration, meditation, and in-stance (*samādhi*), which is opposed both to ex-stasy and to our ordinary counter-stance vis-à-vis objects (Patañjali 1989, II.29).

⁵³ Cf. Patañjali 1989, I.42 and 44: coincidence with reflection (*savicārā samāpattih*).

⁵⁴ The quotations in the remainder of this paragraph are taken from Low 1993, 149-50; italics added.

⁵⁵ When allowing the children to play, you are not caught up in their playing;

so, you have a kind of distance from it. Yet you are “with” them, accompanying them. Thus, your distance is of a different kind than the distance that occurs in objectification, where the *ob-ject* stands over against you (discussed in the text below). Moreover, while it might seem as though the objective, perceptual world were free of captivation, when compared to the dynamic, sensory realm (discussed in the text below), one can see that the former is, in fact, grounded in the primordial doxa of the latter.

⁵⁶ The role that this experience of pure awareness plays in the Upanishadic tradition parallels that of the “aloneness of seeing” (*drśeh kaivalyam*; Patañjali 1989, II.25) in the yogic tradition (Patañjali 1989, III.50; IV.26 and 34).

⁵⁷ This account of realization of Brahman is based on zen sources. However, as Shear (1983 and 1990) points out, this experience of awake, pure selfawareness lacks any empirical qualities or content. As a result, differing references to it as the Brahman-realm or Buddha-nature are not pointing to qualitative differences in the experience (Shear 1983, 57-59; 1990, 392). [Note added in revising the lecture: I now think it would be better to say that the zen account is an interpretation of the realization of Brahman.]

⁵⁸ The page numbers given in this paragraph refer to Maritain 1956.

⁵⁹ Sekida 1985, 91-97, also depicts the corresponding state in the zen tradition in this way. Carter proposes the comparison with binocular vision. It is interesting that Bion also uses this analogy (Grinberg, Sor, and Tabak di Bianchedi 1993, 35-36).

⁶⁰ Sharma 1993, 43; first two sets of italics added. The quotation is from Ramana Maharshi as reported in D. Goodman, ed., *The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi* (NY: Arkana, 1985), 42 and 41.

⁶¹ Cf. the description in Husserl 1964, 124-25.

⁶² Cf. the description in Husserl 1964, 206-08.

⁶³ Cf. the descriptions in Husserl 1964, §§58-61, 80-82, 86-87 and in Husserl 1950, §10.

⁶⁴ The page references in the remainder of this paragraph are from Straus 1956.

⁶⁵ I believe that Kleist (1964) had the same phenomenon in view when he reported Herr C.’s words after two anecdotes, one about a graceful dancer who lost his grace when self-consciousness arose and the other about a bear, who effortlessly parried every thrust of Herr C.’s rapier with a graceful swipe of his paw:

[I]n the same degree as, in the organic world, reflection becomes more obscure and weaker, grace emerges there ever more radiant and supreme.—Yet just as...the image in a concave mirror, after

withdrawing to infinity, suddenly comes right in front of us again, so when consciousness has, as it were, passed through an infinite, grace will again put in an appearance. Hence, it appears most purely in the human bodily structure that has either no self-consciousness or an infinite self-consciousness (Kleist 1964, 67).

That is, in our terms, grace emerges in the realm of animal, sensory consciousness, a realm that we can experience, but not enter completely (Straus 1956, 284). And it emerges again in the realm of pure [selfawareness], in which we are no longer caught up in first- or second-degree consciousness.

⁶⁶ Another question to pursue might be whether Homer's realization of full significance became narrower and more limited in passing over into intellection.

ABBREVIATIONS

BU	<i>Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad</i>
CU	<i>Chāndogya Upanishad</i>
F	Fink, E., <i>Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of a Transcendental Theory of Method</i> .
FK	"Die Phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der Gegenwärtigen Kritik."
HG	Otto, W., <i>The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion</i> .
I	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>
IU	<i>Īśā Upanishad</i>
KeU	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
LC	Averroes, Long Commentary = <i>Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima</i>
MuU	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
NE	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ; translation altered in some places.
O	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>
OS	Aristotle, <i>On the Soul</i> ; translation altered in some places.
S	Sartre, J.-P., <i>La Transcendance de l'Ego: Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique</i> .
ST	St. Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i> , Latin text, Volume II,

containing Ia, QQ.2-11.

TU *Taittirīya Upanishad*

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Principles of Motion and the Motion of Principles: Hegel's Inverted World¹

Peter Kalkavage

*Oh, judge for yourselves: I have been concealing
it all the time, but now I will tell you the whole
truth. The fact is, I...corrupted them all!*

—Dostoevsky, "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man"²

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, late in Hegel's chapter on force and understanding, a baffling figure comes before us. It is the famous "inverted world." This figure completes the dialectic of understanding. As a result of the inverted world, consciousness—the sole but protean hero of Hegel's philosophic epic—undergoes a conversion: it ceases to put truth in objects or things and instead places it in the thinking subject.

My plan is to take us through Hegel's chapter on understanding with the following questions in mind: Why, for Hegel, is understanding logically unstable? Why is force its proper object? What is the inverted world, and how does it come about? What does it show us about the nature of thinking, and the nature of nature? Finally, how does the inverted world bring about the great turn in the *Phenomenology* from knowledge as the consciousness of things to knowledge as grounded in self-consciousness?

Understanding, *Verstand*, has a range of meanings in Hegel. It refers most generally to our capacity for making distinctions, our power of analysis. In his *Encyclopedia*, Hegel indicates the function and limit of understanding as follows: "Thinking as *understanding* stops short at the fixed determinacy and its distinctness vis-à-vis other determinacies."³ In other words, understanding establishes fixed boundaries and stable identities. Fond of schematizing, it regards mathematics as the model of

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what it means to know. In the *Phenomenology*, the archetype of *Verstand* is the “new science” inaugurated by Galileo and Descartes and brought to its peak in the force-theories of Newton and Leibniz. The chapter “Force and Understanding” presents a critical reflection on this science. Hegel studied the physics of his day extensively and acknowledged its impressive achievements. But it does not for him embody absolute truth; it is not science at its highest, most complete stage. Hegel’s exposé in the *Phenomenology* reveals why this is the case, why the supposedly stable principles of modern physics are ultimately unstable.

Hegel’s chapter is difficult even by *Phenomenology* standards. To guide us through its twists and turns, I have divided my presentation into six parts. The first three deal respectively with Force, Law, and Explanation. These are related as follows. There are forces at work in nature that operate according to immutable laws (for example, the law of universal gravitation). The scientist explains nature by showing how a given phenomenon (say, a body in free fall) is an instance of a force grounded in one of these laws. Hegel’s account preserves this familiar interweaving of force, law, and explanation but at the same time places it in the context of a dialectical unfolding. Hegel’s logic, unlike ordinary logic, proceeds genetically, like life. Concepts, stages, moments, categories, whatever we wish to call them, do not merely succeed each other, or relate to each other in the manner of different aspects, but emerge out of the evolutionary process that is thought. In the chapter before us, force *gives birth* to law, and together these *give birth* to explanation, which eventually *gives birth* to self-consciousness. This amazing process as a whole, this labor, defines understanding.

I. Force

The *Phenomenology* is the journey of consciousness to absolute knowing, or what Hegel calls Science. We come upon understanding at a pivotal moment in this journey: at the transition from the sensuous to the intelligible. The previous shapes of consciousness are sense-certainty and perception. Like all the

shapes in Hegel’s book, they embody certainty—a claim to know absolutely or unconditionally. Sense-certainty places its absolute trust in the sensuous particular, the whatever-it-is that is here and now; perception trusts the thing and its properties. Both shapes of knowing, together with their corresponding objects, prove to be self-contradictory: they negate themselves.

Force is the Phoenix that rises from the ashes of thinghood. It is an example of what Hegel calls *determinate negation*. This is negation that preserves and lifts up what is negated [79, 113].* Force is the proper object of understanding because it resolves the dissonance that defines the thing of perception. The thing is a One and a Many: this one thing and its many properties. To save this opposition from being contradictory, perception posits another: the thing is independent or *for itself* and dependent or *for another*, that is, related to other things. In the dialectic of perception, these opposed aspects become identical: the thing is shown to be independent insofar as it is dependent, and dependent insofar as it is independent [128]. It makes no sense, then, to regard the thing as absolutely real: a thing is what it is, not through itself alone but only in relation to what it is not, namely, other things. How this ideality of thinghood comes about does not concern us here. The relevant point is that force solves the problem at hand, the problem of substance and relation. Things as things dissolve in their essential relation to other things: they lose their substance. Force, by contrast, is substance that *is* relation. It is the higher category of *substantial relation*, the unity of being-for-self and being-for-another, of independence and dependence.⁴

Let us look more carefully at what this means.

Force, our new object, is not something seen or heard or felt but only thought. It is the purely intelligible inner core of perceptible things. Force is not property but act, the act of self-expression.⁵ In the force-world, a thing does not, strictly speaking, have a property but rather emanates what we call a property from an intense invisible center.⁶ By analogy with

*Numbers in square brackets refer to *paragraph* numbers in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

language, force, in Hegel's terminology, is the *utterance* or *Äußerung* of an inner point. Hardness, for example, is not a quiescent attribute lodged in the thing but an act by which the thing asserts itself or "makes its point."⁷ Moreover, to act is to act upon another thing. Action implies interaction. This is how force makes it possible for individual things to be what they are through their relation to other things: their being-for-self is a being-for-another, and their being-for-another a being-for-self.

Force, Hegel tells us, is a movement [136]. This is not movement in space but dialectical movement—conceptual instability or transition. Consider a metal sphere. Its hardness is one of the properties by which the sphere, at the level of perception, defined itself as an independent thing. Hardness is now to be regarded as emergent from an intensive center, a center of force. Force is the transition of a given content—in this case, hardness—from inner to outer. As Hegel stresses in an earlier version of his system, force is not cause as opposed to effect but rather the identity of cause and effect.⁸ The intensive center of force does not produce something other than itself but exactly itself.⁹ It is a self-realizing potential. It is like an inward thought that finds faithful expression in outward speech.

Dialectical movement comes into play when we attempt to spell out precisely what is happening in the transition from inner to outer. What we find is that the act of self-expression involves negation. The hardness of the sphere, as an emergent property or effect, must come out of hiding, be released from mere implicitness or potency; but if it were simply released, set free, it would not be the hardness *of* the sphere, the expressive manifestation sprung from the intensive center of force. And so, we must conclude that as a property is affirmed or posited, it must at the same time be negated as something independent or on its own. As the property is emitted, it must remain the property *of* the thing, the expression *of* the center of force. Hegel uses the terms *force proper* and *force expressed* to distinguish the two moments involved in the action of force. Force proper refers to the intensive center (force as cause), force expressed to force as

"there" in the perceptible world (force as effect). These moments, Hegel says, are self-canceling [135]. Force proper must negate its inwardness in order to be external or manifest, and, as we saw earlier, force expressed must negate its outwardness in order to be the expression *of* force proper. This self-cancellation on the part of both moments of force is what it means to say that force is a movement. We phenomenological observers see this dialectical truth in the movement of force, but understanding does not. It clings to the safety of stable distinctions and assumes that the movement from inner to outer occurs simply, that is, without any negation or self-otherness.

Force can do what thinghood cannot: it is a deeper, more potent category. Why, then, does it self-destruct? To answer this question, we turn to the phenomenon of interaction, the real-world event in which force meets force. As we proceed, we must bear in mind that understanding claims not merely that there are forces at work in the world, but that force is the absolute truth of things—their abiding substance. Hegel will show, to our amazement, that "the realization of force is at the same time the loss of reality" [141]. Like the thing, force will fail to be substantial.

The self-annihilation of force results from what Hegel calls the "play" of two forces: active and reactive. This play is implicit in Newton's Third Law: "To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction." Force is spontaneous and impulsive but not self-inciting. It must be inspired by the presence of another force in order to express itself [137]. Hegel here borrows terms that Leibniz uses in his analysis of collision. One force *solicits*, the other *is solicited*: one is active, the other passive or re-active.¹⁰ This is like the human situation in which I voice my opinion, translate my inner thought into outer speech, thereby inciting you to respond with a verbal expression of your thought and opinion. Perhaps the forcefulness of my expression prompts you to an equally forceful counter-expression—an equal and opposite reaction.

The play that is essential to force can be maintained as logically stable only if the difference between active and passive force, soliciting and solicited, remains clear and distinct. We must be able to say: "This force is active, that one passive." Hegel proceeds to show that this is not the case. The two opposed determinations of force—soliciting and solicited, active and passive—become identical, or pass into each other. Once this happens, force as the solid substance of things vanishes. It loses its status as a self-subsisting entity and becomes merely ideal, what Hegel calls a *moment*.¹¹

To see how this evaporation of force as substance comes about, imagine banging your fist against a wall. When you hit the wall, the wall hits back: it re-acts. At first, it seems that your fist is active and soliciting, the wall passive and solicited. But you could not hit the wall unless, at the moment of impact, the wall acted on you and solicited the hardness of your fist. This hardness is just as much solicited by that of the wall as the hardness of the wall is by that of your fist. Fist and wall have exchanged determinations, like actors who reverse their roles in mid-scene, and it is impossible to call one of them only active and the other only reactive. Each is both. Soliciting is a being solicited, and being solicited is a soliciting.

Let us recapitulate the story of force. Force starts out as a mere concept in the mind of a subject who claims to know absolute truth: it is *in itself* or implicit, a theoretical good intention. Then it is put to work as the substance of things: it becomes *for itself* or actual. But in the act of making itself real, it becomes evanescent and unreal: the distinction on which its reliability as substance rests becomes a play or interchange of now-fluid determinations. As force leaves the stage of the solidly real, it assumes a new role. It reverts to being inward or conceptual, retreats from the world and goes back inside the thinking subject. We may imagine this as the act in which understanding experiences the dissolution of force, internalizes what it has experienced, and then comes up with a revised perspective. As Hegel observes, force does not return to its original ideality but

advances to a new state [141]. Force falls but does not simply fall. Paradoxically, it falls up. In negating itself, it becomes a new and improved universal, a new object that stands over and against the thinking subject. This higher object, which force has generated, is the deeper inner of things.

II. Law

The dialectic of law will lead us to the inverted world. Law, our newly postulated absolute, will prove unstable. It will fall. This fall is more dramatic than anything we have witnessed so far in the *Phenomenology*. It is the collapse of the very citadel of objective truth, truth that is grounded in objects.

In the fall of force and the rise of law, consciousness experiences a new relation to its object. Hegel calls it a mediated relation. Understanding now "*looks through [the] mediating play of forces into the true background of things*" [143].¹² In other words, understanding sees rest within motion, sameness within difference, form within flux. Law is the eternally abiding, purely intelligible "look" or *idéa* of the always-changing world. *Verstand* at this point is even more recognizable as the modern scientific understanding, which seeks laws of nature so that it may gaze upon change under the aspect of eternity.

Our new object, law, is the imperturbable base and depth of the world. World, here, refers to the unstable play of forces, the role-reversal of our soliciting and solicited "actors." This play is *appearance*, as opposed to law, which constitutes the world's *essence*. In its perpetual self-otherness, appearance recalls the elusive "matrix" of Plato's *Timaeus*, where the powers of body—earth, air, water, and fire—constantly turn into each other, play the game of self-cancellation (49B-C). Law is different from the objects we have seen so far: the sensuous This, the thing of perception, and force as individual substance. It is a world unto itself, separate from but also governing and shining through the world of appearance. Law opens up a *supersensible world* set over and against the *sensible world*. Hegel calls it an "abiding Beyond above the vanishing present"—a *Jenseits* or Over There, as opposed to the *Diesseits* or Over Here [144]. Unlike the

turbulent realm of sense, this Other World is “restful” [157]. It is the heaven of scientific theory.

This two-world thesis will be the death of understanding. As Hegel will show, the waywardness of appearance, the to and fro of change, invades theoretical heaven: the Beyond will collapse into the very realm from which it was to be strictly distinguished. It will become an aspect of appearance. The *certainty* of understanding is that there are two worlds: the *truth* will be that there is only one. Intelligibility is not separate from change, like a law or a platonic Form, but is change—change as dialectical logic or what Hegel calls the Concept. The clue, then, to the discovery of concrete truth is not in some other world but in this one, not in motionless being but in unstable becoming, where opposed determinations flow into each other. This inverts our normal perspective on things, governed as that perspective is by the sober teachings of *Verstand*. As we think our way through the inverted world, *we* are inverted.

The conclusions I have sketched are already present in what Hegel says just before his analysis of law. He reflects on the nature of appearance, in effect telling us where the dialectic of understanding will end up. Understanding *mis*-understands appearance and the intelligible essence that supposedly governs it in another world. From the perspective of understanding, law is an eternal thing-like object that grounds and “saves” the appearances. But this object, the supersensible Beyond, has in fact been generated by appearance [147]. Appearance is the dialectical father, law the offspring. What understanding calls law or essence is in fact, Hegel says, appearance as appearance.

To grasp the meaning of this utterance, we must observe that appearance is not sensuous presence: it is neither the This of sense-certainty nor the thing of perception. Appearance is process and play, flash and shining forth. It is not presence but fleeting presence—presence that constantly cancels itself to become absence.¹³ It is becoming as the unity of coming-to-be and passing away. In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel defines time as “that being which, inasmuch as it *is*, is *not*, and inasmuch as it is

not, is; it is intuited becoming.”¹⁴ Time is appearance in its most rudimentary form. It is the same process of self-negation that we saw in the Now of sense-certainty. When the Now negated itself to become the next Now, it gave birth to universality as the Now of Nows, say, an hour of minutes [107]. Appearance, through its self-negation, also begets a universal, as we have seen. This is law.

Appearance, like time, is a process of self-transcendence, *self-beyonding*. The understanding erroneously treats this self-beyonding, which it has glimpsed in the self-contradictory play of force, as a Beyond that is objectively *there*. It reifies process. But essence, here identical with the supersensible, is the intelligible truth of appearance, the truth that the play of force has itself generated and brought to light. As Hegel puts it, “the supersensible is...*appearance as appearance*” [147]. The meaning of this pivotal sentence, to which I alluded earlier, is that essence and appearance, inner and outer, are identical. As one commentator puts it: “The essence of essence is to manifest itself; manifestation is the manifestation of essence.”¹⁵ Appearance, in other words, is not a low but a high category. It is the self-otherness of essence, the instability of sensuous things that has come out into the open as their higher and deeper truth. In this revelation appearance proves to be not something in need of being “saved.”

Hegel’s critique of the supersensible Beyond recalls Plato’s Forms and the problem of separateness. This problem is highlighted in the dialogue *Parmenides*, where the old Eleatic stings young Socrates with the absurdities of his two-world theory. How is it that a Form, a separate entity off in its own world, is nevertheless manifested in its sensuous instances? Why are we able to see the original in the image? Law is like a platonic Form in that it is eternally self-same and purely intelligible. But it is unlike a Form in being a universal that governs movements, events. Law is the eternal self-sameness of perpetual self-difference. Consider Galileo’s law of free fall. Expressed as an equation, this is the familiar $s = 1/2 gt^2$, where s is the distance a body traverses as it falls, g the gravitational constant, and t the

time during which the falling takes place. For our purposes, however, the more revealing form is $s \propto t^2$: distance varies as the square of the time. This expresses a constant difference or otherness, as opposed to a mere identity. It helps us see what Hegel means when he says that law is “universal difference” and “the simple in the play of force” [148]. Things as such don’t come into the picture. As far as Galileo’s law is concerned, it makes no difference whether the falling object is a cow or a cannonball.¹⁶ What matters is the motion, the event. Galileo’s law is the simple universal in this event. It is the perfectly general, purely intelligible *form of falling*.

Let us now turn to the dialectic of law. Understanding has, we recall, a mediated relation to its supersensible realm of law. It looks through the medium of becoming, as through a veil, to glimpse being and truth in the unchanging forms of change. It imagines that it will in this way take hold of absolute knowing. Problems will emerge when understanding tries to explain how its universal laws fit the actual determinate content of appearances. Up to this point, law is only a good idea. This idea must now prove itself in the act of governing. Law must become actually true or what Hegel calls *for itself*.

To uncover the actuality of law, we turn once more to Galileo, this time to his experiments with the motion of a ball rolling down an inclined plane. Assume that we have found the law that governs this movement and have expressed it mathematically. We say: “This is true; it is the law.” But it isn’t absolutely true. Air resistance, surface friction, and the phenomenon of rolling as opposed to sliding all come into play to qualify the law. In order for a law to be true, it must, as Hegel puts it, “fill out the world of appearance” [150]. This can happen only if there are *many laws* that apply to a given case. Here we have a sign of trouble to come. Law, by definition, is sheer universality; its glory is to be above cases and particulars. But the events to which law must apply if it is to be actual truth involve cases and particulars: phenomena have a determinate content that must somehow be subsumed under law. The world is not movement in general but *this*

movement in *these* circumstances. The problem can be stated as follows: law, though stable, is general or empty, while appearances, though shiftily, are full and differentiated. To overcome this asymmetry, to unite the universal and the particular, law must be on more intimate terms with the phenomenal world if it is to be the truth of that world.

A single law, as we have seen, is not enough to “fill out” the appearances. We need many laws to prevent law from being an empty inner. These must be organized into one law that unifies them—a mega-law. Hegel here refers to Newton’s inverse square law of attraction, which unifies the laws of planetary motion and those of ordinary mechanics. But this mega-law is, alas, the victim of its triumph over specificity. By transcending the difference among the many different laws, it becomes utterly abstract. Hegel calls it “the *Concept of law itself*,”¹⁷ that is, lawfulness as opposed to a law [150]. But then, what to do about all the different ways in which lawfulness manifests itself in nature? To address this problem, understanding interprets lawfulness, the pure form of law, as the “inner *necessity*” of all the different laws [151]. This inner necessity results in a new, more abstract version of force—force as such [152]. Earlier, force was differentiated as active and passive; law was the simple universal. Now force is the simple or undifferentiated, and law is the source of difference [152]. Gravity, for instance, is just plain gravity, a simple force of nature, whereas the *law* by which a body falls involves difference as distance traversed and time squared. So too, electricity is just plain electricity, whereas the *law* of electricity expresses the difference between positive and negative.

The assumption at work here is that law will express the necessary action of simple forces. Hegel shows that this assumption is false. Force and law are in fact “indifferent” to each other, that is, fundamentally unrelated [152]. Electricity indeed manifests itself as positive and negative, but not because of any inherent necessity. The law does not express causal connection but rather what Hume called “constant conjunction.”¹⁸ It does not reveal the origin of difference, but simply states difference as a

fact. It sidesteps the primordial act by which electrical force as such divides into its two opposite forms. The result, Hegel says, is that “necessity here is only an empty word” [152].¹⁹

Indifference shows up in yet another way for the scientific understanding. The very elements that the law combines in its formulas lack necessary connection with each other. Galileo’s law of free fall, for instance, expresses a constant conjunction of distance and time. But it sheds no light on why these should be connected at all, let alone connected in this particular way. There is nothing in the concept of distance traversed that necessarily implies the concept of time squared, and nothing in time squared that implies distance traversed. As mathematical variables, *s* and *t* are logically indifferent to each other. They are quantitatively conjoined in a ratio but not conceptually united in a *λόγος*.²⁰

The necessity that understanding craves, we must note, would be achieved if in its world-view there were a place for inner difference, that is, the immanent self-differentiation of the absolutely simple. That would account for why electrical force necessarily, *out of its own nature*, divides itself into positive and negative. Law, in that case, would be the Concept or dialectical truth. But understanding is no dialectician. It likes its identities neat and its distinctions restful. And so, to prevent simple force from becoming (in its view) compromised, understanding takes difference into *itself* [154]. Necessity now acquires a new meaning. It ceases to be causality in the phenomena and becomes instead the necessity at work in the human subject’s act of theorizing.

III. Explanation

We are on the threshold of the inverted world, which is a second supersensible world [157]. Understanding will reach this extreme point of its effort once it is revealed that explanation is nothing more than the propounding of tautologies—differences that make no difference. Explanation, here, is not scientific account-giving in general but rather a species of bad argument that regularly occurs in physical science. It is the act in which understanding propounds a law that supposedly governs an appearance but ends

up being identical to the appearance. In explanation, ground and grounded become the same.

We saw earlier that force is the absolutely simple (electricity), whereas the law of force expresses a difference (positive and negative). Understanding uses explanation to bridge the gap between force and law, simplicity and difference. But its effort is sophisticated: it distinguishes force and law, and then “condenses the *law* into *force* as the essence of the law” [154]. Hegel uses lightning to illustrate his point. Lightning occurs: it is a phenomenon. Indeed, as a flashing forth, lightning functions as the symbol for appearance as such. Understanding explains lightning by enunciating a law that supposedly expresses how the force of electricity works. Force is assumed to be simple, but the process of explaining involves positive and negative. The explanation purports to the necessary ground of the phenomenon. But in fact, it just repeats what happened at the surface of the phenomenon. It says: “There was a strong electrical discharge because of positive and negative electricity.” This simply says all over again what lightning as a phenomenon *is*. It is not something new and different, but same: a tautology. Understanding posits differences and then, once these differences disappear in the phenomenon (in this case, once the electrical discharge subsides), allows the differences to sink back into an undifferentiated simple force—mere electricity. A distinction is made only to be withdrawn.²¹ In other words, the distinction is merely an artifact and formality of the process of explanation.²²

Explanation, for Hegel, borders on the absurd, or at least the comic. Why does electricity divide into positive and negative? Because that is its law. And why is that its law? Because electricity divides into positive and negative. When we ask understanding why something is the case, it pretends to show us some underlying ground but in fact only repeats the appearance that prompted our question in the first place. This sleight of hand is not confined to physics. Why are human beings the way they are? Because of their genes. What are genes? That which makes us who we are. Or, to shift to the world of Molière: Why does opium

induce sleep? Because it has a “dormitive virtue.” These are all tautologies masquerading as etiologies, accounts of cause. In the earlier version of his system, Hegel summed it up nicely. All explanation, he says, ultimately reduces to the deflating admission: “That is just how it is.”²³

We might be tempted to accuse Hegel of oversimplifying explanation in order to make his case. But Hegel is right. We are surrounded by explanations that purport to reveal a law, a necessary ground, for how the world works—or how the mind works, or how language and culture develop—which, when examined more closely, prove to be nothing more than tautologies. I point this out to remind us that, in reading those parts of the *Phenomenology* that are critical of theory-building, we must allow our scientific, as well as our pre-scientific or natural, perspective to be inverted.

Hegel, we must note, inverts what we ordinarily mean by tautology. Tautology, for him, is not a static $A=A$, but rather the dialectical *movement* in which a difference is posited and immediately canceled [155]. This recalls the play of force, in which active and passive were posited as different and then became identical. The movement of tautology is a turning point in the dialectic of understanding. It is the point at which the shiftiness of appearance “has penetrated into the supersensible world itself” [155]. In the platonic analogy, motion becomes part of the once restful realm of the Forms.

IV. The Inverted World

Who among us has not wondered: What if the world as it is, is the exact opposite of the world as it appears? What if what we call real is really nothing but a dream, and dream reality? What if good people are in themselves bad, and bad people good? What if, in obedience to some perverse cosmic law, being reverses seeming, inner reverses outer? To pose such questions is to set foot on the terrain of Hegel’s inverted world.

The dialectic of understanding is a series of postulated objective *inners*. The first was force. When force as the substance of things vanished, a new inner appeared: the restful realm of law.

But law led to the sleight-of-hand called explanation, where differences make no difference. This movement of tautology generates another inner: the *inverted world*, which is the inner truth of the first supersensible world [157].²⁴ Hegel has taken us on one long journey into the interior of appearance. But the inverted world brings us full circle, confirming the truth of La Rochefoucauld’s maxim: “Extremes touch.” The inverted world will obliterate the Beyond. It will collapse the distinction between essence and appearance, and make appearance the standard to which law must conform.²⁵

Inversion is our new principle, according to which, “what is self-same repels itself from itself” and “the not self-same is self-attractive” [156]. Hegel’s language of repulsion-from-self and attraction-to-other recalls the magnet, which soon emerges as the paradigm of inversion.

The first thing Hegel tells us about the inverted world is that it completes the inner world opened up by understanding [157]. We saw earlier that law failed to “fill out” the world of appearance: it lacked a principle of change or alteration. As an inverted world, the supersensible realm acquires this principle. It becomes an exact replica of the world we actually live in. This is the irony of the inverted world. Strange seeming at first, this world in fact restores what is familiar to us and what had been lost in the abstractions of understanding. It lets our world be as fluid, playful, and self-contradictory as it seems.

This is our perspective, not that of understanding, which clings to its abstractions and continues to think in terms of a supersensible Beyond, where every restless appearance finds its restful double. The inverted world is what the world is implicitly or inwardly, what it is *in itself*. Hegel offers a broad range of examples. The first ones he cites are suited to the theoretical bent of understanding. Like, under the law of the first supersensible world, becomes unlike under that of the second, inverted world; black in the first is transposed to white in the second; the north pole of a magnet in the first world is south in the second; the oxygen pole of the voltaic pile becomes the hydrogen pole, and

the hydrogen the oxygen [158]. But then Hegel goes beyond theory. Revenge on an enemy in this world turns into self-destruction in the other; crime in the first turns into punishment; guilt into pardon; disgrace into honor.²⁶

It would be highly instructive to think through all of Hegel's examples of inversion. Let us focus on one: the magnet. This remarkable object will help us make the transition from inversion as understanding represents it to the philosophic Concept of inversion.

From the perspective of understanding, the poles of a magnet are inverted in the sense that each pole has reference to a separately existing and opposite *in-itself*. This in-itself—the home or, in Gilbert's phrase, the “true location”²⁷ of the magnet's poles—is the Earth, the Ur-magnet that orients our mini-magnets. It seems strange to regard the Earth as a Beyond, but this view makes sense if Earth is the Earth of scientific theory. That the Earth is a body in no way detracts from its theoretical function as the locus of magnetic essence divorced from the things whose essence it is. In our current usage, which was also prevalent in Hegel's day, the north pole of a magnet is called north because it points to the magnetic north pole of the Earth. But as Hegel argues in his *Philosophy of Nature*, it is more accurate to call it “south,” since, by the law of magnetism, it must point to its opposite.²⁸ With this in mind, we can say that each pole of our mini-magnet points to, and is defined by, the opposite pole of the Earth-magnet. North “here” has its inner truth in South “there,” and South “here” has its truth in North “there.”

Hegel calls this approach “superficial” [159]—superficial because non-dialectical. Through its ingenious idea of inversion, understanding, to its credit, hits upon a great principle of nature: polar complementarity.²⁹ But it fails to grasp the true meaning of this principle; its two-world thinking gets in the way. In truth, a magnet's inversion is not to be found anywhere but in itself. The magnet is self-inverting, which is to say that it contains negativity within itself, or is self-other. How do we know? Because any attempt to isolate a pole fails. If we chop off one of the poles, it

simply reappears in the now-smaller magnet. “Pole” is not a material chunk of a body but one term of an opposition. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates tells an Aesop-like fable about how god, seeing that Pleasure and Pain were always quarreling, tied their heads together, so that where the one was the other was bound to follow (60B). The same moral can be inferred from the magnet, where each “head” always entails its opposite.

The magnet illustrates what is true in all cases of inversion. In its true meaning, the inverted world is not a Beyond but rather the intelligible form of the actual world. Inversion in this sense undoes the superstition of understanding, according to which things exist in one world but have their intelligible essence in another: “antitheses of inner and outer, of appearance and the supersensible, as of two different kinds of actuality, we no longer find here” [159].³⁰ Magnetic north, as I indicated earlier, is not south somewhere else but right here: “the north pole which is the in-itself of the south pole is the north pole actually present in the same magnet.” Similarly, in the moral sphere, crime calls down on itself the law's judgment and correction, invokes its nemesis as its fulfillment, not in some other world, but right here. Crime and punishment are the inseparable poles of the moral magnet—a fact well known to Dostoevsky. Moral self-inversion is at work even when we don't get caught. Having done something wrong, we suffer the torments of conscience and punish ourselves: we strain to negate our negation.

Let us sum up what we have seen so far. Understanding embraces the principle of inversion as the true inner meaning of its supersensible law. According to this principle, a given determination finds its truth in its opposite: it is the law of all determinations to be transposed into their opposites, to *move*. But understanding regards this shift in a static way, as mere reference to another object-like world, another substance or medium. We see what it does not: that inversion defines appearance as such. It is the essence of all determinations in the realm of appearance to be self-inverting, to summon their opposites in a new version of the play of force.

The precise meaning of the inverted world, and the corresponding critique of the supersensible Beyond, lead us to the metaphysical primacy of *motion*. Understanding treats motion or change as though it needed to be saved by transcendent principles and mathematical formulas, as though rest alone were intelligible. But motion, as the inverted world has revealed, is the intelligible as such, the Concept as the unity in which opposites flow into each other. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel makes this point with respect to our friend, the magnet: “For the magnet exhibits in simple, naïve fashion the nature of the Concept, and the Concept moreover in its developed form as syllogism.”³¹ He adds in a note: “If anyone thinks that thought is not present in nature, he can be shown it here in magnetism.”³² Magnetism, as opposed to the thing we call a magnet, is a movement of poles toward and into each other. It is the logically structured fluency of opposite determinations present in a simple object.

To think the inverted world, then, is “to think pure change or *think the antithesis within the antithesis itself, or contradiction*” [160]. The inverted world, our second supersensible world, is not alongside the first, but has in fact “overarched the other world and has it within it...; it is itself and its opposite in one unity” [160].

The inverted world, rightly understood, generates what Hegel calls “inner difference.” This act of immanent self-differentiation is the genuine necessity that was lacking in understanding’s effort to connect force and law.³³ The simple force of electricity divides itself into positive and negative because, as a simple force, it is inwardly tense, polarized with respect to itself [161]. Difference isn’t something tacked on as an explanatory construct but is inherent in unity. To be one is to be self-divided, to contain rather than exclude opposition. In revisiting electrical force, Hegel applies the wisdom of the magnet: positive and negative electricity “animate each other into activity, and their being is rather to posit themselves as not-being and to cancel themselves in the unity” [161]. This is our familiar play of force, which, having been constrained by static principles and mathematical formalism, now rises up against understanding to proclaim: “I, in

my instability, was the truth all along! I, pure change, am the essence of law!”

V. Infinity—And Beyond

Hegel gives inner difference an evocative name: *infinity* [161]. Infinity, here, is not indefinite ongoing-ness, which Hegel calls “bad infinity” [238]. It is neither the potential infinite of Aristotle nor those limitless mute spaces that terrified Pascal. It is rather the logical process by which opposites flow into each other. Infinity is transition as such. It is the self-negation of a finite determinateness. The magnet, with its inseparable poles, is the sensuous symbol of infinity in this sense of the term.

Infinity sums up the dialectical movement we have already seen in tautology. It is the “absolute unrest of pure self-movement, in which whatever is determined in one way or another...is rather the opposite of this determinateness” [163]. This flow of opposites into each other inverts the perspective of understanding, which is infatuated with rest and wants to keep its terms clear and distinct. Hegel makes the striking claim that infinity “has been from the start the soul of all that has gone before.” It is the energy of self-negation that was implicit in all the finite shapes of consciousness that have appeared so far—and will continue to appear. When one of these finite shapes self-destructs, refutes itself, it is experiencing the infinity, the self-opposition, that it holds within. In suffering contradiction, it is getting in touch, so to speak, with its inner magnet.

Hegel identifies infinity with what he calls “the absolute Concept” [162]. Infinity and Concept both embody the self-differentiation of the self-identical, which for Hegel is truth. This self-differentiation appears in its purest form in Hegel’s *Logic*. Here in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel calls infinity as Concept “the simple essence of life, the soul of the world, the universal blood” [162]. Infinity, he says, “pulsates within itself but does not move, inwardly vibrates, yet is at rest.” It is Hegel’s version of the Logos of Heraclitus—the Fire that enlivens, pervades, consumes, and unifies all things.

Life, soul, blood. These words suggest that the force-world we are now transcending, the world that seemed so eventful and alive, was not really alive at all. To be sure, there was motion, but not life—*vis viva*, but not organic being.³⁴ Understanding is prejudiced on behalf of physics. This is no doubt largely because the phenomena of physics, unlike those of biology, are readily reducible to the homogeneity of mathematical formalism, that is, equations. Life is the scandal of *Verstand* because the determinations of life are fluidly interconnected and defy rigid boundaries. To appreciate this fact, we have only to think of how animal organisms, in their embryonic development, exhibit spontaneous self-differentiation, develop their different organs and systems, wondrously, *from within*.

Infinity, which has been generated by the inverted world, brings us to self-consciousness. This step had already been taken in the phenomenon of explanation, our internal movement of differentiating what is simple or self-same [163]. Explaining things, Hegel observes in passing, is fun—a holiday of the mind. The reason, he says, is that in the act of explaining why the world does what it does consciousness enjoys conversation with itself, *Selbstgespräch* [163]. To explain is ultimately to enjoy the play of our own inner movement, our *self*-consciousness.

Inversion, inner difference, infinity, explanation all converge in self-consciousness, which now officially comes on the scene in the *Phenomenology*. The truth of the magnet was the repulsion of the self-same and the attraction of the self-different. This truth is now fully revealed as the *self*. To be self-conscious, to be aware of myself as myself, is to be tautologous in Hegel's sense of the word. It is my act of generating inner difference that is immediately canceled or negated. Hegel describes self-consciousness as follows:

I distinguish myself from myself, and in doing so I am directly aware that what is distinguished from myself is not different [from me]. I, the self-same being, repel myself from myself; but what is posited as distinct from

me, or as unlike me, is immediately, in being so distinguished, not a distinction for me [164].

Hegel compares this movement of self-identity with the axial rotation of a sphere [169]. As the sphere turns, it continually generates different positions in space and continually cancels them. It is constantly returning out of the self-otherness that it constantly begets. Every move “away” is a move “toward” and back home.

Hegel stresses that self-consciousness was behind the drama of consciousness all along. It was the energy of self-divisiveness that was the living soul of sense-certainty, perception, and understanding. Now it is revealed that, just as infinity is the true inner of all objects, self-consciousness is the truth of consciousness. In other words, external things *are* and *are true* only insofar as they *are* and *are true* for a thinking subject or self. “True” means “true for me.”

VI. From the Play of Force to the Drama of Man

How does Hegel get from the paradoxes of physics to the fight for recognition with which the drama of self-consciousness begins? This will be my closing question.

I begin by observing that force is already on the verge of self-consciousness. Once physics takes force as its central concern, once it identifies force with nature itself—as happens most dramatically in the physics of Boscovich—it invites a connection between the spontaneity of inanimate bodies and the inner state of human beings.³⁵ Nature and human nature find their common source, their essence, in impulsiveness, or what Hobbes was the first to call *conatus*, striving. Force, seen in this light, is proto-will.³⁶ If we keep in mind this connection between force and will, it becomes less surprising that Hegel's chapter on understanding begins with force and ends with self-consciousness, which, for Hegel, is our impulse or drive to self-affirmation.

As I suggested earlier, the dialectic of understanding generates life as well as self-consciousness. Life and self-consciousness come on the scene together. Both exhibit infinity as

the process of self-differentiation. But for the self at this nascent stage of its development, the mingling of life and self-consciousness poses a problem. On the one hand, the self is aware of itself as being *beyond* body and finitude. To be an inwardly turned being is, in a sense, to experience myself as the absolute, a god. But I am also immersed in organic life, the necessary condition for self-awareness: I am aware of myself only because I am alive, rooted in this living body, which is the immediate object of my desire, care, and anxiety. And so the self is burdened with a double being. It is both a transcendent or pure self, the self in its glory, and an empirical self caught up in the mortifying contingencies of the flesh. This incarnation of inwardness, this unhappy unity of the divine and the mortal, is the contradiction that self-consciousness must somehow resolve, the riddle of its existence.

In the fight for recognition the self seeks to transcend its animality or life. "Self-consciousness," Hegel says, "is in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it is so for another; that is, it is only as a being that is recognized" [178]. Recognition, here, is not blank awareness but honor. In winning the recognition of another, I confirm the absoluteness that I experience within. This recognition is my self-recognition, my certainty of myself as absolute, made concrete, out there, really existent. I *use* this other individual to accomplish my goal, which is to achieve self-certainty through the negation of my self-otherness. But this other, who is also at my stage of raw self-consciousness, wants to use me for the same reason. And so there is a fight for recognition. In this fight I seek to negate the presumed absoluteness of this other individual who confronts me. I also risk my life. I do so in order to show myself and my alter ego that I am more than an animal. I show that I am a pure self, a self that is worthy of being recognized as absolute.

The two individual selves are thus bound together in what Hegel calls a "double movement" [182]. It is double because two selves are involved *and* because the negation each performs on itself it also performs on the other, which is itself. This reciprocal

action recapitulates the dialectic of force, in which the opposed determinations of active and passive, soliciting and solicited, came to be lodged in each of the separate forces: "In this movement [of selves] we see repeated the process which presented itself as the play of forces, but repeated now in consciousness. What in that process was *for us*, is true here of the extremes themselves" [184]. In other words, self-consciousness, as a collision of interacting selves, is force made self-conscious.

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel mounts a critique of force. But the poverty of force is also its potency, its impulse to develop into self-consciousness, and, after many inversions, into the mutual recognition that is spirit. Spirit, for Hegel, is the spirit of the Greek polis, the spirit of the Roman Empire, the spirit of the French monarchy, and the spirit of the German Reformation. This last, which posits the absolute testimony of the heart, sets the stage for Kant's moral world-view, conscience, and the beautiful soul. Each of these worlds is an attempt on the part of selfhood to incarnate itself so that it may know itself as the shared truth of a concrete community of selves. This communal selfhood Hegel calls the "'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" [177].

What, then, is the dialectic of force in Hegel's *Phenomenology*? It is the Prelude to the Great Fugue of conceptualized history, which begins with the fight for recognition and ends in absolute knowing.

Endnotes

¹ A lecture delivered at St. John's College in Annapolis on 15 October 2010. The first version of the lecture was given at the Spinoza Society in Washington, DC on 8 March 2010.

² Fyodor Dostoevsky, in *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man and Other Stories* (West Valley City, Utah: Waking Lion Press, 2006), 16.

³ *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 125. Hegel extols understanding in the Preface of the *Phenomenology*, where he calls the analytic "force" of *Verstand* "the most astonishing and mightiest of powers, or rather the absolute power" [32].

⁴ Hegel identifies force with relation, *Verhältnis*, in the so-called *Jena Logic* (*The Jena System, 1804-1805: Logic and Metaphysics*, trans. John W. Burbidge and George di Giovanni [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986], 47).

⁵ Leibniz is the father of this idea: "Substance is a being capable of action" (*Principles of Nature and Grace*, G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989], 207).

⁶ A thing's property, for Hegel, is a universal, but one that is *bedingt*: conditioned or be-thinged. Force, by contrast, is *unbedingt*—an unconditioned or unbe-thinged universal [132]. In other words, force is purely thinkable. It is not, like color, qualified and limited by a material medium.

⁷ See Newton's *Principia*, Definition 3, where body or mass is identified with the force of resistance or *vis inertiae*.

⁸ See *Jena Logic*, 54.

⁹ "Force thus expresses relationship itself and the necessity to be within itself even in its being-outside itself, or to be self-equal" (*Jena Logic*, 56).

¹⁰ "A Specimen of Dynamics" in Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace*, 121.

¹¹ In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel at one point offers what is perhaps his most deeply revealing critique of force. This is in the context of his argument that Kepler's account of planetary motion is philosophically superior to that of Newton (*Philosophy of Nature, Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. A. V. Miller [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970], 65-83). He remarks: "Seldom has fame been more unjustly transferred from a first discoverer to another person." (*Ibid.*, 66.) Hegel's detailed critique elaborates the three aspects of scientific theorizing that we see in the *Phenomenology*: force, law, and explanation.

¹² Italics Hegel's. Throughout his analysis of force and law, Hegel refers to the syllogism. The middle term of the syllogism mediates between the two extremes, not as a distinct and static *tertium quid*, but as the dialectical identity of the extremes. For a fuller account of the syllogism, see Hegel's *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1976), 664 ff.).

¹³ In his poem "The Cemetery by the Sea," Paul Valéry precisely captures appearance as the dazzling unity of shining forth and evanescence:

*Quel pur travail de fins éclairs consume
Maint diamant d'imperceptible écume,
Et quelle paix semble se concevoir!
Quand sur l'abîme un soleil se repose,
Ouvrages purs d'une éternelle cause,
Le temps scintille et le songe est savoir.*

*What pure labor of fine flashes consumes
Many a diamond with imperceptible foam,
And what peace seems there to be conceived!
When over the abyss a sun reposes,
Pure works of an eternal cause,
Time scintillates and the Dream is to know.*

¹⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, 34.

¹⁵ Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 125.

¹⁶ Throughout this part of his discussion, Hegel's word for "thing" is *Sache*, not *Ding*—that is, a generalized "matter at hand" or *πρᾶγμα*, as opposed to the thing of perception.

¹⁷ Miller's English translation reads "the *Notion* of law itself." In all citations from Miller the word *Notion* is changed to *Concept* wherever it appears.

¹⁸ Hegel cites his agreement with Hume on this point in the *Jena Logic*, 52-53.

¹⁹ The pseudo-necessity of scientific theory re-appears at the level of observational reason. For example, so-called "psychological necessity" (the supposed necessity of psychological laws) proves to be "an empty phrase" [307].

²⁰ *Λόγος* means both *ratio* and *account*. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, 59, Hegel gives a genuinely conceptual *λόγος* of Galileo's law of free fall.

²¹ More examples occur in the *Jena Logic*, 51. Why is the soil wet? Because it rained. What is rain? Falling moisture. Which is to say that the soil is wet because of wetness. In his *Science of Logic*, 458-466, Hegel identifies explanation with the sophistical "arguing from grounds."

²² Berkeley had made a similar claim: "*Force, gravity, attraction* and terms of this sort are useful for reasonings and reckonings about motion and bodies in motion, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion itself or for indicating so many distinct qualities" (*De motu*, 17, trans. A. A. Luce in *Berkeley's Philosophical Writings* [New York: Collier Books, 1965], 255).

²³ *Jena Logic*, 61.

²⁴ Donald Verene suggests that Hegel's phrase was inspired by a play of that name by Ludwig Tieck (*Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1985], 39). The inverted world is, in German, *die verkehrte Welt*. *Verkehrt* means either upside down, or twisted and perverse. Hegel uses the term with the latter meaning in a section entitled "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit" [377]. Scholars disagree as to whether, in the context of the inverted world, *verkehrte* means perverse as well as upside down. Gadamer makes an interesting case for the

double meaning (*Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. P. Christopher Smith [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976], 35-53).

²⁵ This fits the analysis of the inverted world in the *Science of Logic*, 509: "In point of fact, it is just in this opposition of the two worlds that *their difference has vanished*, and what was supposed to be the world in and for itself is itself the world of Appearance." Hegel adds (510): "the world of Appearance is thus in its own self the law which is identical with itself."

²⁶ An otherworldly inversion occurs in Sophocles' *Antigone*. When Creon accuses Antigone of having bestowed equal honor on both her brothers, even though one was the enemy of his city and the other its defender, Antigone responds (l. 521): "Who knows if *down there* this is holy?"

²⁷ William Gilbert, *De Magnete*, trans. P. Fleury Mottelay (New York: Dover, 1958), 26.

²⁸ *Philosophy of Nature*, Addition, 166. Hegel here follows Gilbert, *De Magnete*, 27.

²⁹ "There has been a lot of talk in physics about polarity. This concept is a great advance in the metaphysics of the science; for the concept of polarity is simply nothing else but the specific relation of necessity between two different terms which are one, in that when one is given, the other is also given. But this polarity is restricted to the opposition" (*Philosophy of Nature*, 19).

³⁰ The first supersensible world was a theory of transposed essence, the second that of transposed reversed essence. The transposition of essence is the theoretical analogue of what Hegel calls self-estrangement (*Selbstentfremdung*). In the realm of pure theory, things have their essence in another world. In the more advanced, praxis-oriented stages of spirit, man's essence, the meaning of his life, will be outside of and beyond his actually present world: "In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel repeatedly discusses the duality he wishes to surmount, a dualism which expresses the torment of spirit obliged to live in one world and to think in the other" (Hypollite, *Genesis and Structure*, 382).

³¹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, 163.

³² *Ibid.*, 165.

³³ Inner difference first appeared when force split into two interacting forces [138].

³⁴ The closest we got to life was with magnetism, which Gilbert regarded as a kind of soul: "Wherefore, not without reason, Thales, as Aristotle reports in his book *De Anima*, declares the loadstone to be animate, a part of the animate mother earth and her beloved offspring" (Gilbert, *De Magnete*, 312). Hegel, in a similar vein, praises magnetism in the Preface: "Even when the specific determinateness—say one like Magnetism, for example—is in itself concrete or real, the Understanding degrades it into something lifeless, merely predi-

cating it of another existent thing [the Earth], rather than cognizing it as the immanent life of the thing, or cognizing its naïve and unique way of generating and expressing itself in that thing" [53].

³⁵ In order to save continuity in nature, specifically in the phenomenon of collision, Roger Boscovich argued that the repulsive force mutually exerted by two colliding bodies is exerted *before* the actual collision. All action is action at a distance, and there is never any actual contact between two bodies. Max Jammer puts it succinctly: for Boscovich, "'force' is consequently more fundamental than 'matter'" (*Concepts of Force: A Study in the Foundations of Dynamics* [New York: Dover, 1957], 178).

³⁶ Schopenhauer goes even further by simply identifying force and will: "Hitherto, the concept of *will* has been subsumed under the concept of *force*; I, on the other hand, do exactly the reverse, and intend every force in nature to be conceived as will" (*The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, trans. E. F. Payne [New York: Dover, 1969], 111).



The Work of Education

Jon Lenkowski

Good morning to you, ladies and gentlemen, students, colleagues, distinguished guests, family and friends; and, most particularly, to the current graduates who will receive master's degrees today.

While it is customary at commencements to be congratulatory and encouraging, I'm not going to do that, at least not primarily. Rather, I'm going to try to address the following two connected questions: What exactly have you been doing here? and What have you learned? The first of these two questions goes to the peculiar nature of the *work* we have tried to get you to do here; the second looks easier, but may also require further consideration. Having spent a certain time with us, these seem to be the very same questions you have to be asking yourselves; and they are not very easy questions to answer. I'm going to go over some old ground and I want to assure you that, while I'm enjoying myself, I promise not to keep you very long.

To say that you have spent a certain number of semesters here and read a certain list of deep and important books, and have had conversations about them, is not really to say enough, because it does not capture the essence of the specific *work* you have been doing. It is true that we read a lot of books. But we view this not really as an *end*, but as a *beginning*, since we hope and expect that you will return to these same books, and others like them, again and again throughout your lives. And therefore what you have been doing here must be properly called a *commencement*—that is, only the *beginning* of an activity that will just continue in you as an essential and constant part of your lives. But this can happen only insofar as the books that we have read here together have already gotten a sort of permanent hold on you. Thus our hopes

for your future are inextricably linked to what we assume has already taken root in you here. Let's try to think through the implications of this.

First of all, it would have to mean that you have not kept the books at arm's length, but have allowed them to enter into you in deep and essential ways. In other words: that you have made the books your own. This looks different from something like memorization—say of songs or even certain verses of poetry—which is also a sort of internalization. Memorization might look like making something my own, but really I've only made it always readily available to myself. I can now repeat the song anytime the mood strikes me—but it is still kept at a distance and is in no way *active* in me. On the contrary, it is our great hope that what you have read, studied and discussed here will stay with you in an *active* way; will continue to reverberate and resonate in you; will remain active in the sense that these matters will forever make demands on you, will continue to inform and remain central to your lives and to whatever you think and feel as human beings.

This also distinguishes what we have you do here from merely technical and professional studies. It is true that these also make demands on us, but only in our capacity as professionals of one sort or another, not as human beings as such. So while they may be active in us in our professional work, they are compartmentalized and only kept off to the side, without touching us as human beings, without being allowed to become, or without being thought of as, central to our lives. Our hope here, on the contrary, is that what we have you study will make deeper and more thoroughgoing demands on you, simply as human beings and as citizens.

Thus to say that you make the books your own is to say that you carry your education inside yourselves, where you continue to let it work on you. This is then what we expect you to have been doing here: making the books your own, or—what is the same thing—bringing your education within yourselves. To see how completely appropriate this way of speaking is to what we do here in particular, you have only to consider what you have studied: the philosophy, politics, language and literature, history,

mathematics, and science you have studied here are not simply making claims in the abstract, are not merely certain subject-matters *over there*, alien to me. Rather, we make the book our own. We enter the book and make ourselves part of the book's world. Or, maybe better: we allow the book to enter us; we internalize the book and let it inform and illuminate the ways we look at ourselves. Whether a political teaching centers on Athens in the fifth century BC or on Florence in the sixteenth century, it is always—immediately and directly—drawing my attention to my own political situation. Whether it is Plato's version, or Freud's version, of the tripartite soul, my attention is drawn—immediately and directly—to the phenomena of my own inner life. If this were not the case these books could at most be only of antiquarian interest. These books are always making such demands upon *us*, saying things about *us*, demanding that we *turn toward ourselves*—so that to read the books thoughtfully and intelligently is always to be turning toward ourselves.

This turning toward oneself has two aspects. First there is the question of the unity or unification of the various things we study. And here I would remind you that both our undergraduate program and our graduate program, despite the variety of subject matter in both, claim to be unified programs. So where is the unity to be found? This question is addressed vividly in Book VII of Plato's *Republic* at 537b-c, where Socrates says:

And the various studies acquired without any particular order by the children in their education must be integrated into a *synopsis*, [or *seeing-together*,] which reveals the *kinship* of these studies with one another and with the nature of what is.¹

This *seeing-together* (*σύννοσις* in Greek) is directed first of all to the integration of what are there called gymnastic and musical education, but then subsequently also to what is called the higher musical education, or what we might call the liberal arts. It is the "*seeing-together* that reveals the unity of these studies." Only in turning inward, toward ourselves as the locus of these various

studies can we achieve this *synopsis* or *seeing-together*, for it is *in me*, in my “seeing them together,” that these various studies find their unity, gather and integrate themselves and do their work. And this leads me to the second aspect of this turning inward toward oneself: as the books become your own and enter into your souls, they continue to work upon you and upon your view of all things, including your view of yourselves.

This does not mean that what we read is simply believed or swallowed whole or uncritically. It's more that claims and counter-claims—or even nuance and counter-nuance—vie with one another; that what were fixed, and maybe dearly-held, views get unsettled and become questionable. This is the work done by the books and by our conversations about them. And all of this is going on *in us*. Thus our attention is quite naturally, even effortlessly, drawn inward.

But we are not mere observers here; rather we become active participants in this, our own inner drama. A certain activity or work on our part seems to kick in almost automatically. Or it could be said that the work that the books do elicits, and is completed by, a certain corresponding work on our part. But though this might initially arise automatically, a certain effort seems required to sustain it and make it work *for us*. This sustained effort at turning inward, turning toward yourselves, is the peculiar and proper work we have been intent on getting you to do. The tasks of reading the assignments and participating in class, while necessary and important, are really only a first step, preparatory to this more essential activity. We might name this activity *rumination*, or simply *thinking*, and it consists in carrying on a *conversation* within one's own self, as the ideas take hold and confront one another.

In Book I, Chapter 2 of the *Politics* (1253a8 ff.) Aristotle talks about the importance of language for man, the political animal:

Now it is evident that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animal. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal that has *speech*. And whereas

mere voice is only an indication of pleasure and pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature reaches as far as the sensing of pleasure and pain, and the communication of these to one another, and no further), the *power of speech* is intended to articulate what is advantageous and what is disadvantageous, and therefore similarly what is just and what is unjust. And it belongs to man that he alone among the animals has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense constitutes a household and a city.²

Language is different from mere vocal sound and thus sharply distinguishes human beings even from other social animals. What is so important about the power of speech, according to Aristotle, is that it is *language* that allows us to consider matters of justice and injustice, good and evil, and—we would add—other matters of the same order. We must note here that, while it is speech that clearly distinguishes man from other animals, Aristotle himself is more interested in the specifically human activity that speech alone makes possible for us. It is *this* activity of thinking and considering that really makes us human; it is this that is the *specifically proper activity* of human being *as such*.

And this has been our principal aim in your time here with us that, along with internalizing the books, and carrying your education within yourselves, you have accustomed yourselves to this turn inward, this rumination, this conversation with yourselves, as the proper and essential work, or *being-at-work* (*ἐνέργεια* in Greek) of human being as such—and to such an extent that this activity becomes simply a part of your lives. This is the principal aim of the education we offer you, and may well be the essential and intrinsic goal of education as such.

To help me make the case for this last claim, let me return briefly to Book VII of Plato's *Republic*. I will read from 518b6-d7, abbreviating the passage slightly. Socrates says:

[T]herefore education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be. They assert that they *put into the soul* knowledge that isn't in it, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes.... But the present argument indicates that this power is *already* in the soul of each and that, just as an eye is not able to turn from darkness to the light without the whole body turning, so also the instrument with which each learns must, together with the whole soul, be turned around from becoming, until it is able to look at what is.... And therefore there would be an *art of this turning around*, concerned with the way in which this power can most easily and efficiently be turned around: not an art of producing sight in it, but rather, this art takes as given that sight is there, but not rightly turned, nor looking at what it ought to look at.³

So: education is not a matter of taking knowledge that is already in the teacher's soul, and then transposing it to the soul of the learner. Rather it is a sort of *turning* of the power of seeing that is already in the learner's soul, in the right direction—a turning brought about by a certain art (*τέχνη*) called the *art of turning around* (*περιαγωγή, μεταστροφή*).

Book VII begins with an image of our education—that is, our rise from ignorance to knowledge—depicted as the gradual ascent of released prisoners from within a dark cave up to the light of day. At each stage the released prisoner is torn away from what he had been looking at, and what he had implicitly trusted as real, to now confront something entirely new which conflicts with what he had previously seen. This confrontation compels him to *turn inward*—that is, to weigh the one against the other, and also against all of the other views he had once held at stages already passed through, each one of which had also made truth-claims and had at one time been simply and implicitly trusted and believed in. He is now forced to “*see all of these together*” (*συνορᾶν*, the infinitive of *συνοράω*—that is, *σύνοψις*, synopsis)

and carry on a *conversation with himself*, in which each of these has its say.

The description of the release from shackles and of the violent turning around of these prisoners at the beginning of the Cave passage might suggest the necessity of some external agent (a Socrates, for instance), but even the simplest reflection on the passage quickly gets one to see that this process can occur entirely within a single soul—in other words, through a conversation with oneself. Such an inner dialogue, in which one “talks right through something” is in Greek called *διαλεκτική*, *dialectic*, from the verb *διαλέγειν*, where *λέγειν* means “to speak” or “to talk,” and the prepositional prefix *διά* means “right through.” So someone who finds himself in the same situation as this released prisoner would have to effortfully “talk right through” this panoply of claims and counterclaims upon him that he now finds in his soul. This is captured nicely in the middle voice of the verb, where *διαλέγεσθαι* often has the sense of talking with oneself. A bit further on in Book VII, at 532b4-5, the release from bonds and the *turning-around* connected with it are identified with *dialectic*.

This, then, is the picture of education given in the *Republic*. It is supposed to culminate in light, or in genuine knowledge. But whether this culmination is ultimately a real resolution, and whether all of the antagonisms in the soul between claims and counterclaims are ever really left behind, seems difficult to assess, especially since what the *Republic* claims to be the ultimate moment of this journey upward—namely, the Good or the Idea of the Good—is explicitly said to be *beyond being* (Book VI, 509b).

But however this turns out, we in the meantime accomplish something of enormous significance:

First: This turn inward, turn toward the self, where the *synopsis* or *seeing-together* occurs, could be called, or likened to, a kind of *conversion*, since we have been *turned around* and *turned inward* toward ourselves.

Second: Furthermore, and as a consequence of this, whatever progress we make here toward knowledge seems at the same time to also be a progress toward *self-knowledge*. So here knowledge and self-knowledge seem to come together or coincide.

Third: If we persist in this turn inward and allow it to develop into a full-blown conversation with oneself, we are making actual within ourselves the proper and essential *work* (ἔργον) or *being-at-work* (ἐνέργεια) of human being as such.

Fourth and finally: This *dialectical* movement of the soul within itself, which is the essential *work* and the very heart of the education we have tried to provide for you here, is at once the inner essence of education as such.

Postscript

The inward turn talked about here might invite comparison with the concept of *Er-innern*, *Er-innerung* in Hegel (cf. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, VIII: *Das Absolute Wissen*, the very last paragraph), and importantly revived by Gadamer (cf. *Wahrheit und Methode*, Erster Teil, Sec. II, 2, d, penultimate paragraph), as well as the concept of *Er-eignen*, *Er-eignis* in Heidegger (cf. *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, passim). In ordinary German, the verb *erinnern* normally means “to remind,” and with *sich* in the reflexive form “to remember,” though Hegel and Gadamer take the word more literally to mean something like “to interiorize”—an easy enough connection via the adverb *inne* (English “within”) in the verb root. The verb *ereignen* normally means “to happen” and the noun *Ereignis* means “an event.” The standard etymology (cf. *Der Grosse Duden*, Bd. 7: *Etymologie*) traces *ereignen*, through a shift in the root, to the archaic *eräugnen*, carrying the sense of showing (itself) before the eyes (*Augen* in German). The connection between this and “to happen” seems clear enough. But Heidegger, true to his fierce independence, takes the verb in an entirely different direction, linking *ereignen* through the root directly with the adjective *eigen* (English “own” or “one’s own”)—a connection that *Duden* explicitly warns against. Heidegger’s insistence on linking *ereignen* to *eigen*, together with the particular stress he puts on the motive power of the prefix *er-*, leads him to take *er-eignen* to mean something like “on the way to appropriating,” or “on the way to ownness.” (The current

standard way of rendering this in English is “en-owning,” which, while neither German nor English, tries to capture both the sense and flavor of Heidegger’s usage.) Of course, there is an agenda behind this reading. And yet it seems too simpleminded to dismiss Heidegger’s interpretation as just bad philology. Should not the presumption at least be that he has seen into something hidden and essential which has allowed him to look beyond the everyday and obvious?

Notes

¹ *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 216. Translation slightly altered and emphases added by the author.

² Translation by the author.

³ *The Republic of Plato*, 197. Emphases added.



Falstaff and Cleopatra

Elliott Zuckerman

I

Falstaff and Cleopatra do not look alike. We all have a mental picture of Falstaff, and most of us think we can visualize Cleopatra. Yet it is surprising how few words in their plays are devoted to their physical descriptions. Falstaff comes upon us unannounced in the second scene of *Henry the Fourth Part One*. At the same moment we move suddenly from formal verse into prose. If we envision as a whole the four plays of Shakespeare's mature history cycle—*Richard the Second*, *Henry the Fourth Part One* and *Part Two*, and *Henry the Fifth*—then it is in that scene that Falstaff begins his domination and transformation of the two middle plays. After the regular verse that we have heard so far, both Falstaff and the prose come as something new. They announce that the messy world of London lowlife will be exposed to us, inserted below the arena of dynastic rivalry and war. To put it impressionistically into color and sound, it is as though the greenish white and the glitter of *Richard the Second* have been replaced by the rich browns of smelly taverns and Spanish sherry, later to be succeeded by the golden brass of *Henry the Fifth*.

At the end of two full acts all we are actually told about Falstaff's looks is that he is old and that he is fat. We also learn that he has wit, but wit, so far as I know, is not limited to a physical type. As it happens, all three of these definitive words—*fat*, *old*, and *wit*—are used by Prince Hal in the opening phrase of their first exchange. But it is Falstaff's habitual drink that Hal calls *old*, and it is his wit itself that he calls *fat*:

Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack...¹

A lecture delivered on 2 April 2010 at St. John's College in Annapolis. Elliott Zuckerman is a tutor emeritus.

Later on, Falstaff will famously tell us that he is not only witty in himself but the source of wit in other men. But here the Prince is not referring to the expanse of Falstaff's humor or the infectiousness of his intellect. In his banter Hal is calling his companion *thick-witted*, the opposite of what we might call a "rapier" wit. Yet isn't it remarkable that in his opening words Hal uses the three words—four, if we add *sack*—that signify what may be most important in Falstaff's being? Fat, Wit, Old, Sack—it is one of those marvelous details in Shakespeare about which we wonder whether he placed them there strategically in premeditated design, or whether they simply turned up, self-generated by genius.

As for Cleopatra, all hints about her looks are eclipsed by something said about her that beggars all description. It may be the greatest compliment ever paid anyone:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety: other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies.²

Perhaps such hyperbole is necessary not only because she tempts one of the greatest Roman heroes to betrayal, emasculation, and death, but also because—in the company of Juliet and Cressida, Rosalind and Viola, Imogen and Isabella—she is played by a boy. I think she is the only heroine who explicitly refers to that convention, when, near the end, she evades the captivity in which, as she says, some squeaking actor will "boy" her greatness. (Among her countless talents, Cleopatra is good at transforming nouns into verbs.)

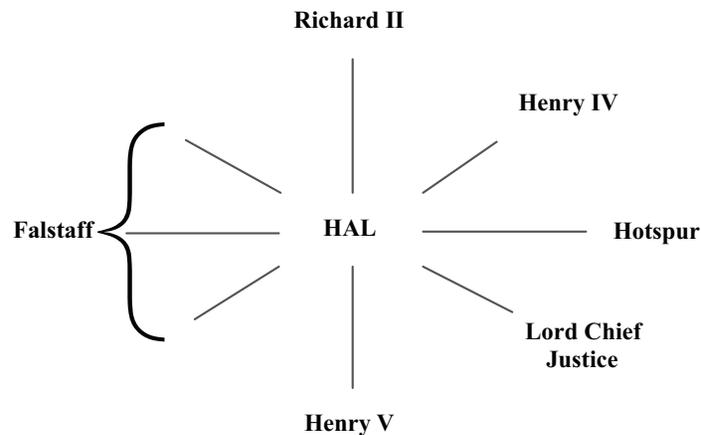
Cleopatra is not only associated with crocodiles and snakes, but she is expanded into a personification of Egypt and the Nile. We see her playing the capricious monarch and the jealous rival. My favorite among her various guises is in her scene as music lover. She calls for music by echoing the opening line that this audience ought to know well:

Give me some music, moody food
Of those that trade in love.
[*Music is called for. After a performance of whatever
length, she interrupts:*]
Let it alone, let's to billiards.⁴

By replacing music with billiards, Cleopatra demonstrates her infinite variety.

In an instructive anthology of French prose, designed for use in the language tutorial of the college, there are samples of the short character sketches of La Bruyère. Each paragraph is a list of personal and sartorial characteristics, and ends with a declaration of what the person is: *il est riche, il est pauvre*. Such generic tags cannot be attached to the great people in Shakespeare. There is only one Hamlet, one Rosalind, one Lady Macbeth—only one Falstaff and only one Cleopatra. Why, then, did I put those two together in the title of this lecture, and why have at least some of you already guessed why they deserve to be paired? Whether for good or for ill, the Fat Wit and the Serpent of the Nile, each in his or her respective world, represent a counterpoise and a threat to what is going on politically.

The History Tetralogy has the bones of a Morality Play. In the line of legitimacy, Prince Hal lies between Richard the Second, who was legitimate but weak, and the Henry the Fifth that Hal is to become, who will legitimize the crown his father wears uneasily. Meanwhile there is a gamut of Honor, ranging from Falstaff, for whom it is a mere word, to Hotspur, for whom it is everything. Hotspur, by the way, is the only rival to Falstaff in liveliness and language. In Part Two the underlying schematism is further personalized by the introduction of the Lord Chief Justice, representing the moral order for which the future king must eventually reject Falstaff. Falstaff is also the Prince's surrogate father—a role that is memorialized in a long and separate scene.



Prince Hal is at the center of four triads, which at their most neutral should give him—and us—the wherewithal for a proper political and moral choice. The trouble is that Shakespeare in his fecundity has endowed Falstaff with so much being that the scales are, so to speak, outweighed.

Falstaff cannot be a measurable factor within the world when he is already a world in himself. As he tells the Prince in the peroration of a play within the play:

...banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins—but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being as he is old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.⁵

The Prince answers truthfully but mysteriously in a tone the actor must think up for himself: "I do, I will."

Cleopatra, too, despite her pairing with Antony, also has her separable world. This is paradoxically most evident in the manner of her death, which is sharply divided from the death of Antony.

All the other Shakespearean tragic heroes die at the end of their plays, but after the succession of Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth, it is in Act Four that Mark Antony has his prolonged suicide in the presence of Eros. The playwright needs an entire act for something new: the exotic and polysemous apotheosis of Cleopatra. That redemption looks forward, I think, to the final plays, often called Romances, that follow, in which old dissensions are harmonized, lost children are found, and statues come to life. When Cleopatra embraces the asps she is showing the tragic hero how such things ought to be done. All the boyishness is gone in this triumph of the woman. And it is accomplished amidst verbal music that rivals the sensuality of that other triumphal woman, Isolde, who, twenty minutes after the suicide of *her* lover, achieves her first and final sexual climax.

Most of the Romans can't understand Cleopatra, and are persistently fascinated with her and with Egypt. Even Antony has what she calls "Roman thoughts," but unfortunately not often enough. The most extremely Roman of them all—I refer to Octavius Caesar, who is an undisguised boy marching in from the arena of Coriolanus—seems to be unable to recognize her attractiveness. That is, anyway, how I interpret his entry, near the end of the play, into her room in Alexandria. "Which is the Queen of Egypt?" he asks.⁷ He was only the *adoptive* son of Julius.

I mention Julius because I want to tell a brief anecdote about what happened some years ago in a Graduate Institute preceptorial. At the end of the first act we came to Cleopatra's famous reference to her youth:

My salad days,
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood...⁸

I asked what she could have meant, and an elderly man in the class observed that she was referring to a Caesar salad. I thought the interpretation was entirely Shakespearean. This addition to all the other meanings of the salad metaphor would have seemed to him apt and irresistible.

II

Cleopatra's arrival on the barge at Cydnus is a celebrated passage of English verse. It is also a powerful example of how Shakespeare can transform his sources. In this case the source is the good prose of North's translation of Plutarch. The speaker is Enobarbus, who earlier spoke the lines describing Cleopatra in general. He has one of the most privileged roles in Shakespeare. The transformation from good prose to great verse, and then from great verse to great poetry, is worth a lecture of its own. It is certainly worth a Tutorial of its own. Here I can only point to a detail or two that have been added to the description. They have been italicized in the example:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne
 Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
 Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were
 silver,
 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and *made*
The water which they beat to follow faster;
As amorous of their strokes.

* * * * *

Antony,

Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,
 Whistling to *the air;* *which, but for vacancy,*
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
*And made a gap in nature.*⁸

I have italicized the places where the winds, the water, and the air itself are in love. Cleopatra has seduced Nature itself. And as I transcribed these passages I felt obliged to insert a plea for the restoration of this play—I am tempted to say this *poem*—to a more secure place in the program. Not only should it be a seminar reading, but it contains a detail that entitles it to be the very last reading of the senior year. For—as my colleague Mr. Kutler likes to point out—somewhere in its text it contains the word UNSEM-

INARED.

The word *unseminared*—which refers to the deprivation of something even more important than the Seminar—is used only once in Shakespeare's works. There are many thousands of such words. When they occur in Ancient Greek we may assume that other instances haven't survived. In Shakespeare they tell us that his genius had at its disposal a language that was rich in transitional flux. It could be said that Elizabethan and Jacobean English displayed a variety that rivaled Cleopatra's; or that, like Falstaff, the language was fat and witty in itself.

When talking about iambic pentameter, or blank verse, I like to show its remarkable range by quoting pairs of lines that as neighbors highlight the immense contrasts possible in both the language and what had become its characteristic dramatic medium. Some of you already know the following lines as my favorite example, from Hamlet's dying injunction to Horatio:

Absent thee from felicity awhile
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
 To tell my story.⁹

The first line is Latinate and quick-syllabled, leaving unrealized two or three of the metrical stresses. The second is Anglo-Saxon and monosyllabic, realizes extrametrical stresses, and even provides clusters of consonants—"this harsh world"—that slow the line down further, and that are unimaginable in, say, Italian verse. Here is another such line, from *Macbeth*:

The multitudinous seas incarnadine
 Making the green one red.¹⁰

Each of the two lines could belong to a different language. (If, by the way, you don't see that all but the last of these lines are legitimate and unarguable lines of iambic pentameter, please ask me to show you—at the risk that I'll actually do so!)

Such extravagance is in sharp contrast with the economy of the other great modern dramatist we study here. According to one set of tallies, Shakespeare's lexicon is almost ten times that of the

sparse and highly selective lexicon of Racine. (As the students know, most of Racine's vocabulary compensates for its brevity by being untranslatable!) The difference is of course reflected in the difference of the action. In answer to the on-stage horrors of Shakespeare—even Sophocles would not have allowed the audience to witness the gouging-out of eyes—the typical action of the Racinian queen is to go off into the wings and then return, having slightly changed her mind. The so-called unities of time and place are usually ignored in Shakespeare, no more blatantly than in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Act Four has as many as fifteen scenes. Those scene-numberings are, by the way, entirely editorial. It is a delightful fact that in the First Folio, our only original text, the heading of the play is Act One, Scene One—and then there are no further act and scene divisions. Perhaps a careless omission, but it is nicer to think that the first editors realized that this play ought to flow on unimpeded, like the river Nile—or like the overflowing dotage of Antony, which is mentioned in the opening lines.

There is something about the richness of Shakespeare's language that is not always approved: his propensity for punning. One of the great classical critics of Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, played right into my hands when he wrote about it. "The quibble," he said—in his day a pun was called a quibble—"is the fatal *Cleopatra* for which Shakespeare lost the world."¹¹ Just as for Antony the world was well lost, so Shakespeare's attraction to wordplay is happily inseparable from his love of the word.

Tonight there is no time to discuss the wonders of Shakespeare's quibbling, for, as you'll hear, there is a rarer and more hidden aspect of his wordplay to which I shall devote a few minutes. But recently I have been reading learned discussion of the pun—there are such things—and have been confirmed in something I have always suspected: that an investigation of the pun must lead to a discussions of language itself. But even when you hear an everyday pun, let it be enough to remember Shakespeare's predilection when you automatically groan. If the groan is simply to let the punster know that you "got it," a smile of appreciation is a better indication. But if it is a groan of

reproach, the practice of our greatest poet requires that you at least take the time to decide whether the pun is a good one.

But more broadly you might remember that there are petrified puns at the roots of our words—a Platonic dialogue is devoted to quibbling etymologies, strongly countering the now popular notion that the form of words is merely conventional. Punning is related to rhyming and to metaphor. Bear in mind the dangerous double-meanings of the Delphic oracles, where the wrong choice of interpretation might mean one's death. Remember that it was with a quibble that Odysseus escaped from the Cyclops. Much of the sense of music depends upon the ambiguities of what can fairly be called tonal punning, for every modulation pivots on a pun. And above all consider what you are doing when you dream.

The other aspect of wordplay I just referred to is the Anagram, and it is the occasion for my second anecdote. The anagram got me into trouble in my early years of teaching at St. John's. In a language tutorial we were reading one of the sonnets, which I present here. I'll read the whole sonnet, but I'm afraid that I shall talk about only line eleven, which I have italicized:

SONNET 64

When I have seen by time's fell hand defaced
 The rich proud cost of outworn buried age,
 When sometime lofty towers I see down razed,
 And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
 When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
 Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
 And the firm soil win of the watery main,
 Increasing store with loss and loss with store,
 When I have seen such interchange of state,
 Or state itself confounded to decay,
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat:
 That time will come and take my love away.
 This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
 But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

There can be little doubt that the poet is asking us to hear the connection between RUIIN and RUMINATE, and I think he is also asking us to see the connection in the printed text. We did so in that class, long ago, noticing that when we removed RUIIN from RUMINATE we were left with a bereft MATE. We didn't stop there, but went on to look for more anagrams. We found TIME, which is the theme of the sonnet, and words related to that theme, such as MINUTE, MATURE, and REMAIN. Someone happily discovered NATURE. There are more, but I'll let you find them for yourselves.

At a dinner-party that evening, I boasted of what we had discovered in class. I was overheard by one of the elderly members of the faculty, who later took me aside and told me that at St. John's College we don't do such things. Perhaps he thought I also counted up the letters in all my texts, in order to discover what was at the dead middle.

It is now fashionable to include anagrams among the treasures one seeks in the sonnets. I know of recent major studies that do so. When the poem is printed out and non-dramatic, there is an invitation for anagram hunting. But what about the plays, which were presented without a text to follow, to an audience not all of whom could read? Are we to find literal wordplay in the spoken text?

For a test case, I seek the help of Iago. In most of the action of *Othello*, we watch with fascination and dread the virtuoso performance wherein Iago, malignantly and I think motivelessly, brings to destruction a great hero and his innocent wife. He does so by means of a handkerchief. His performance begins with what is almost a whisper: "Ha," he says, "I like not that."¹² What am I to make of the fact that HA—that H and A—are the first two letters of HANDKERCHIEF? What are you to make of it? Did Shakespeare make anything of it? Did Shakespeare even notice it? Does his intent matter, despite the warnings that there is something called the Intentional Fallacy? Isn't the richness and variety of the play enough, without the need to pile up superfluties?

I think similar questions must be asked about any such discovery, particularly when its attraction feels irresistible. Their discovery is only a preliminary to the criticism of the poem. Criticism begins with the attempt to decide whether what is discovered is properly *there*.¹³

III

One reason why Shakespeare the Poet and Shakespeare the Dramatist vie for supreme beauty is that the poetry spreads itself—leaks out, so to speak—into the action. I am referring to what, for want of a better name, I call Enacted Metaphors. The poetic trope is staged for us. Cleopatra, on the upper level of the storied stage, has the wounded Antony reeled up to her, and she observes that fishing is a great sport. The blind Duke of Gloucester thinks he is jumping off a cliff, but only falls from one step of the stage to another. In a speech filled with other sublimely monosyllabic lines, Othello extinguishes a lamp while on his way to smother Desdemona:

Put out the light, and then put out the light.¹⁴

Whole scenes can be large figures of speech. The unweeded garden of England, with a gardener named Adam. The Forest of Arden, which always has Another Part. Lady Macbeth twisting her spotted hands while wandering in disturbed sleep.

Falstaff stages his own resurrection. True to his denigration of Honor, he plays dead in battle. When he gets up, he has the chance to celebrate his ebullience in more than speech. Then, to make the act entirely outrageous, he carries off the body of Hotspur, dead from Honor, in order to claim the victory as his own. When Falstaff was lying in pretended death, we heard an impromptu eulogy from Prince Henry, which is in great contrast to the repudiation of Falstaff at the end of the play. Falstaff's pretended death is comic; his true death is pathetic, and it comes when he is still alive. Cleopatra also keeps dying, and her deaths and recoveries bring on the death of Antony and his brief resurrection. Her final death, carefully staged, is, in the largest sense of the word, comic.

About Falstaff's actual death, there is an aspect I have never seen mentioned in the books I have read. In two significant ways the very end of his life parallels the death of Socrates. As you know, when Socrates is about to die he refers to a debt he owes to the demigod Asclepius—who, as I interpret it, cured him of Becoming. Falstaff, right after his rejection, refers to the money he owes Justice Shallow. More important, both Socrates and Falstaff die from the bottom up. The effect of the hemlock starts at the feet. And in her description of Falstaff's death, Mistress Quickly notices that the final coldness began at his feet. I asserted earlier that one of the duties of criticism was to try to judge whether an anagram, say, was admissible. A similar attempt at discernment should be brought to bear on the significance of such classical parallels.

The most magnificent of all the staged metaphors must be the death of Cleopatra. She herself stages it. She nurses the asp, like the mother of death. She readies herself to meet Antony again, and her ladies follow her, to assist in the seduction:

The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desir'd.¹⁵

But this operatic love-death is not that of the singing divas. They depend upon the easier effects of passionate music. Cleopatra's is the triumph of clarity and wit.

Epilogue

In the Folio version of *King Lear*, shortly after the five *Nevers* that hammer out the culminating despair of the negative action, the King, with the dead Cordelia in his arms, imagines that his daughter is about to speak. As a staged metaphor, it might remind us of Cordelia's initial refusal, five acts earlier, to speak more than a single repeated negative. At the end of the play she is saying nothing. At the beginning she had uttered the word *Nothing*, and with that word she seems to have released the army of uncanny evil manned by her sisters and their allies.

Cordelia, who seems to be Grace itself, and who takes upon herself a redeeming forgiveness, must be eliminated from the

world. Nothing could be more perverse than the eighteenth-century happy ending, in which she survives and is married off to Edgar. This is not only absurd; it is, in another sense, not absurd enough. From the point of view of stagecraft, it is easy enough to save Cordelia. Shakespeare makes that obvious, so that we see that the killing of Cordelia is of the utmost importance. While we are all reasonably hopeful that there is still time to save her, he has Edmund delay until it is too late the casual word that would have meant rescue. It is being asserted, I think, that in order to eliminate the extreme evil, the extreme good must also go. At the end of this tragedy, and I think most of the others, the world must be deprived of both Grace and Evil, leaving us with the merely good and the merely bad.

I'll go one rash step further and draw an analogy with my chief subject. Both Falstaff and Cleopatra reveal a seductive amorality that also, like Grace and Evil, must be purged. England and Rome are left with the ordinary, the political, the moral, and the livable.

¹ *Henry IV, Part I*, I.1.4.

² *Antony and Cleopatra*, II.2.278-81.

³ *Ibid.*, V.2.262

⁴ *Ibid.*, II.51-4

⁵ *Henry IV, Part I*, II.4.457-63.

⁶ *Antony and Cleopatra*, V.2.135.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I.5.86-7

⁸ *Ibid.*, II.2.230-58

⁹ *Hamlet*, V.2, 361-63

¹⁰ *Macbeth*, II.2, 77-8

¹¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Preface to Shakespeare*, §44

¹² *Othello*, III.3.37

¹³ I once gave a lecture on the opening note of "Dove sono," the great C-major aria of the Countess in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. It was only while

speaking the lecture that I realized that the first syllable of the Italian text, DO, was also the DO of the C-major scale.

¹⁴ *Othello*, V.2.7.

¹⁵ *Antony and Cleopatra*, V.2.343-44.



PORTRAITS OF THE
 IMPASSIONED CONCEPT
*Peter Kalkavage, The Logic of
 Desire: An Introduction to Hegel's
 Phenomenology of Spirit.*

Paul Dry books, xvi + 537 pages, \$35.

Book Review by Eva Brann

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an enthralling "picture gallery" (447)* of the successive incarnations in which human consciousness appears in the world; it is also a repellant trudge through the abstract dialectic by which its concept develops. I would claim that until you've undergone the complementary experiences of delighting in the imaginative recognition of the various "pictures" and of suffering the pains of thinking through the logic, you haven't quite lived—if living means having plumbed the possibilities of passionately driven thought in search of self-awareness.

Like all great classics of philosophy, the *Phenomenology* is written for all of us, the amateurs of thinking no less than the professional philosophers (451), provided we have this single qualification—that we are Hegel's contemporaries in the sense of living with him at the end of time, when consciousness has come to full self-realization as spirit. More mundanely put, the *Phenomenology* presupposes only "some familiarity with the history of philosophy" (xii), and that can be supplied by any of the good commentaries available.

Nonetheless, the book is a nest of labyrinths at whose every turn we readers meet, in Peter Kalkavage's words, a monstrous Minotaur, a "Demon of Difficulty" (xi). To overcome each new Minotaur we need help of a more global sort than even the best of

* Page numbers in parentheses refer to *The Logic of Desire*.

paragraph-by-paragraph commentaries can provide. This is exactly what Kalkavage gives us in *The Logic of Desire*. It is a full-scale narrative, a readable yet faithful retelling of Hegel's story. It has several serious predecessors (which are given full credit in a brief analytic biography), but is in a class of its own for its engaging, distinctly American-flavored accessibility, its down-among-the-readers and do-it-yourself egalitarianism. Indeed, an early reader of the book wrote to me to praise it as "a popularization of the right kind, explicating the thinking of Hegel in its own terms, while constantly watching the mind of the potential reader to see whether that mind is taking it in." *The Logic of Desire* intends to lead us "into the thick of Hegel's arguments" (xii), not from a commentator's outside view but from the position of a reader venturing into the labyrinth. That is, of course, what an "introduction" should do – bring us into a text. *The Logic of Desire* is, so to speak, a friendly doppelgänger of the *Phenomenology* that steadily accompanies it (being as long as the text) without ever eclipsing it.

Kalkavage presents Hegel's book as one of a quartet of great books on education, together with Plato's *Republic*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and Rousseau's *Émile*. All four of these works present the drama of the soul's development and liberation, as Hegel puts it, from consciousness's "immediacy" (its unreflectively natural familiarity with its world) to its "mediated" (that is, conceptualized) appropriation of that world as fully self-conscious spirit. The *Phenomenology* is the story of the epochs in the education of spirit, the life changes self-generated by its "passionate self-assertion," its spirited longing, its *desire*, to come into its own. This eventful journey of consciousness's becoming spirit is a tragic drama, because the spirit-to-be "cannot become wise without making a fool of itself. An extremist at heart, spirit, our human essence, is fated...to learn through suffering" (2). The journey that consciousness drives itself through is a logical one – hence the title *The Logic of Desire*.

This logic is new upon the scene of rationality. Hegelian dialectic is a living, developmental logic. It is not the work of individual human understanding passing judgment on this or that

by reference to a fixed set of categories, but rather the work of Thought itself—"the Concept" in Hegel's language. This energetic Concept drives itself in a violent, dialectical (that is, self-antithetical) motion from continuously new "self-positings" through inevitable "self-otherings" to ever current and ever collapsing self-reconciliations, until an ultimate consummation of mutual absorption by self and other is reached. In the hackneyed and unhelpful language of some Hegel-explications, this rising and plunging onward motion of the spirit is referred to as thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but Kalkavage does not use this terminology in his inside chronicle of spirit's way. He finds fresh language for every "moment," every station of consciousness's *via dolorosa*.

In the self-motion of dialectical logic, two elements are compounded: *desirous* striving and *spirited* assertion. Here one of the accepted translations of the German *Geist* as "Spirit" (the other is "Mind") proves serendipitous, for it alludes to "spirit-edness," that proud self-assertion and other-negation which the Greeks called *thymos*. The desire that drives the dialectic is thus shown to be a powerfully negative and destructive force, and it reincarnates itself in a succession of figures—that portrait gallery of impassioned concepts by which spirit drives itself to cancel, keep and raise (the three main meanings of the well known Hegelian verb *aufheben*) all significant oppositions. The paradigm of all these oppositions is that of subject and object, self and other.

The Logic of Desire presents an exemplary attitude for a reader to adopt toward a book. To use a fancy term, it embodies a "hermeneutic," a principle of interpretation. The most respectful such hermeneutic rule I know is the so-called "principle of charity": give the text a chance to make maximum sense. Kalkavage outdoes this principle by embracing a "principle of appreciation": savor and learn from the text to the utmost of your ability. The principle of appreciation is to the principle of charity as awed generosity is to squint-eyed tolerance—a way of treating a book with magnanimity rather than with mere civility.

Thus it is not until the last pages, in the epilogue, that we

learn that Kalkavage could not possibly be a whole-hearted Hegelian, that the book that has captivated him has not captured him. The main sticking-point is that very condition mentioned above, that coloring of spirit's *eros*, of its desire to know itself, by *thymos*—spirit's aggression toward its other. "Desire here is not other-affirming but self-affirming and other-negating" (454). Thus, if Hegel succeeds, he will—and this is in fact his aim—have killed philosophy, the love of wisdom, not only by the combative self-positing of consciousness (which is discordant with the open inquisitiveness of philosophy), but also by the claim that the curriculum of self-development can be completed; for, once Absolute Science, the knowledge that has absorbed all its conditions, has been attained, philosophy is superseded. Kalkavage's approach is therefore a welcome counterweight to a mode that is all too prevalent in contemporary philosophy: to allot living space only to those problems and solutions currently within the consensual range of the philosophical profession. *The Logic of Desire* teaches the lesson of non-credulous admiration.

Does it follow from this way of reading that Kalkavage's Hegel must be either left-leaning or right-leaning? Hegel students on the left—notably Marx—interpreted his work as atheistic because God becomes man and *is* his congregation, while on the right this entry of God into his people was thought to preserve some transcendence. Kalkavage says that "what Hegel no doubt intended is that each is absorbed into the other. God must be *humanized* in order to be self-conscious, and man *divinized* in order to enjoy absolute self-knowledge" (509, n. 2). This view, certainly supported by the text itself, compounds right and left Hegelianism. The *Phenomenology* is neither a theology nor an anthropology but a theoanthropology.

There remains, however, the question of Hegel's politics. In some final advice to the now-engaged reader about which book to tackle next, Kalkavage recommends Hegel's *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* as "the most deeply philosophic political work of modernity, which contains his most powerful critique of modern liberalism" (452). But since the liberalism Hegel was critiquing has much in common with contemporary conservatism,

here too, the right-left question has no bold solution. Hegel's conservatism is too *sui generis* to fall neatly under any predetermined rubric. And yet, perhaps we can find a pidgeon-hole for him. There is among Hegel's epochal portraits a figure called "the beautiful soul." It is described by Kalkavage as being afflicted with "spiritual narcissism," as being "miserable in principle" (345, 348); it is too pure to be practical, and is, on top of that, a harshly unforgiving judge of those who are doers. Kalkavage points out that Hegel himself is, in turn, a particularly harsh judge of this beautiful soul (507, n. 28; 509, n. 48). In this portrait, Hegel paints a wickedly true-to-type likeness of a liberal intellectual—thereby revealing himself to be the "right" Hegel after all.

I might add here that Kalkavage recommends, as another next reading after the *Phenomenology*, *The Science of Logic*. It postdates the *Phenomenology* by five years, and yet it is an ever-fascinating question whether the former comes "before" or "after" the latter. For the *Logic* (or its shorter, more accessible version, often called the "Lesser Logic") is in fact God's pre-temporal life-plan for the spirit in the world—that is, its purely logical unfolding told through the abstractly dialectical moments of the Concept. When this ideal plan, this Concept, enters time, it takes on appearances. Hence "phenomenology" is the account of the phenomena, the appearances of the Concept in a dialectal sequence of forms. In Kalkavage's more accurate and eloquent rendering: "[P]henomenology, as the prelude to science, is spirit's rational *communion with itself* in its manifold appearances in history" (108). Then the question for us readers might well be: Does Hegel know the Concept through its appearances or the converse? Does experience of the appearances precede the logic that makes it rational, or is the dialectic plan prior to any comprehension of the shapes that invest it (516, n.10)? Kalkavage opts, I think, for the first case, and that decision puts the *Phenomenology* first in Hegel's system and first for us readers.

Kalkavage has, as I said, done an end-run around the left-right controversy. And yet, as he leads us to listen to Hegel's language, to savor his symbolism, to follow his figures, we come

to see Hegel as an uncircumventably religion-bound writer. If the structure of the *Phenomenology* is dialectical, its pathos is religious. The above-mentioned “beautiful soul” is one of a myriad of examples. When, as its dialectic demands, this judgmental, holier-than-thou bystander is finally reconciled with the doer (the *Phenomenology* is a *roman à clef* that names no names, to which Kalkavage often supplies the key; in this case, the man of action is Napoleon) they come together in mutual forgiveness “Spirituality no longer consists in life-denying judgmental inwardness, and the world is no longer God-forsaken and vain” (357). Kalkavage’s rendering captures the spiritual aspect of the event.

But more—he catches and conveys at once the pervasive Christianity and the self-willed heresies of Hegel’s book. For example, the religious drama of the *Phenomenology* culminates not in the Resurrection of Easter Sunday, but in the Passion of Good Friday. It is this “speculative Good Friday” that images the *conceptual* ultimate reconciliation of man with God, the revelation that God needs man in order to be fully God. The Passion of Jesus (who is never named) already contains, has conceptually collected and recollected within itself, the resurrection of the spirit, which is not a separate ascent but just “man in history” (449-50). For it is in history that man and God are united, and this union culminates in the infinite sadness of God’s death which is also the first moment when spirit knows itself as spirit. Philosophy must “go down” in order genuinely to “go up” into the eternal Now of Absolute Science. (This moment of consummation is far more complex, of course, than my account of it.) Kalkavage accompanies his presentation of this bold tampering with the climactic events in the calendar of the church year by a remarkable list entitled “Hegel’s Heresies” (398). This list on the one hand leaves me convinced that Hegel was indeed the ultimate heretic; on the other, however, I remain mindful of the fact that “heresy” (Greek for “choice” [*haireisis*]) is, after all, a version of faith—though perhaps a willfully original one. Indeed, the *Phenomenology* exhales such awe before the events of

God’s appearance on earth that it is palpable even to a non-Christian.

The *Phenomenology* is complex beyond summary but without loose ends, and labyrinthine but without cul-de-sacs. The complexities and abrupt corners, the startling turns and sudden familiarities, the space-inversions and time-loops that mark the Concept’s path are lovingly—and clearly—traced out in *The Logic of Desire*. Near the center of the book an “Interlude” is devoted to schematizing these movements and their achieved moments, without letting us forget that conceptual thinking is essentially unpicturable and that the *Phenomenology* speaks with a forked tongue. The phenomenal picture gallery is an aid to be continually subverted; its visualizable images are countermanded by its sightless logic. For images are “out there,” since they are objects, and thinking is within us, since we are subjects. To keep the reader on the conceptual track, Kalkavage continually recapitulates—as Hegel does, but often very abstrusely—the purely logical progress. But Kalkavage also asks the question of questions about this text: “What, possibly, is lost in the move from picture to Concept?” (518, n. 30.) He has, in fact, given an answer, intimated above. What is lost is the element of positive love animating philosophy when it welcomes some sort of vision.

This autobiography of the spirit is, then, the recollection of its continually morphing recognition of itself both *in* and *as* the world, of the moments of reconciliation between self and other, of the mutual “mediation,” the bridging of the gap, between subject and object. As in any autobiography, time is essential, and indeed the latter is spirit’s ultimate definition: time *is* spirit’s intuition of itself, meaning that its self-othering and self-finding, its projection of itself into an object and its consequent seeing itself in that object, *is* the motion, the dialectical flux of appearances, that we call time. But this time is not necessarily chronological. The time-loops mentioned above testify that spirit’s phenomenal progress is not a mathematical continuum, a succession of linear before and afters. For example, Newton’s force of attraction, which holds together the world filled by bodies, appears chronologically much later than God’s power which unifies the creation

inhabited by souls. Yet Hegel regards the latter as more conceptually complex, more replete with dialectical reconciliations, and so, as Kalkavage points out, it appears later in Hegel's account (77). The grades of spirit's self-education are not always consecutively numbered.

Consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit, are the beings whose experiences, whose successive times, are recollected in the *Phenomenology*. By whom? Who is the true teller of the tale? All the Peoples of the Book, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, are familiar with this enigma of authorship, which no amount of textual analysis can solve. For suppose that numerous hands are discerned—the question remains, Who guided the hands? Just two centuries ago, in 1807—Kalkavage's book celebrates this bicentennial—Hegel, a professor of philosophy at Jena, published his book. And yet, scandalous as it may seem, it is not he but the spirit that guided his hand, the hand of one who knows “conceptually grasped history,” who recalls the Golgotha where spirit completed its suffering and became absolute—that is to say, fully itself and self-sufficient. “[T]he *Phenomenology*, strictly speaking, is the work of spirit rather than the work of Hegel” (267; 494, n. 12). The willingness to utter such words is testimony to a readiness to take this terrific book and its demands seriously; it is what gives *The Logic of Desire* its own intensity.

Who or what, then, constitutes this gallery of impersonal persons, from consciousness to spirit, that exhibits the unnamed but identifiable human shapes of history? Logically, as concepts in thought, they are the immature moments of the pure Concept; temporally, as individuals on earth, they represent Everyman (521, n. 71), the various human embodiments of the appearing Concept that we readers, participating in Hegel's “inwardizing” (the literal translation of the German word for recollection, *Erinnerung*) can still find within ourselves. For the spirit's autobiography is also ours, and we now recognize the struggles which, though opaque to our predecessors, have brought us to our common modern humanity, to the community that has grasped its history conceptually (449).

This consummation of Hegel is, I think, as dubious as it is high-toned, but on the way there are many moments of wonderful down-to-earth plausibility, and *The Logic of Desire* reports them with down-home humor. I don't know where else Hegel would find himself so appreciatively joshed, in accordance with the Socratic wisdom that playfulness can levitate dead earnestness into live seriousness. (I should point out, though, that there is also weighty evidence that Hegel himself has a sense of humor.) An example of Kalkavage's wise levity is a section called “Artful Dodgers” that recounts a moment in the life of consciousness—a moment in *my* history, recapitulable within me—when I no longer find myself in external works and objects but shift suddenly to being immersed in “the heart of the matter” (*die Sache selbst*). That shift, however, lands me, by a convoluted evolution, in a drama of deceit that leads to an inevitable downfall by self-negation. For this project, to dwell with the true matter, is *my* cause, and to my fellow workers it connotes a loss of the objectivity they were led to expect of me. Say—this is Kalkavage's example—I was a molecular biologist trying to discover the gene for self-consciousness. Having become engaged with the matter itself as it matters to *me*, I become irritated by other researchers taking up my interest; my scientific “objectivity” shows its limits. Since I can't reappropriate *my* matter, I take my cunningly noble revenge by interesting myself in theirs: I write a best-seller called *Genes Are Us* (222). Thus I take part in a “pathology of appropriation”; for in praising the work of other laboratories I praise my own. I am the Great-Souled Biologist.

Whoever has some small familiarity with modern institutional research will laugh out loud at these insights into the mutual invasion of different scientists' “techno-space” (221). Yet who would have thought of this psychological episode as being a way-station to the reconciliation of subject and object? But so it is, for what consciousness learns at this moment is that “subjective me-ness and objective this-ness are both essential to the matter itself” (223).

Finally, for all the human intensity of *The Logic of Desire*, it is a narrative kept as free as possible of personal opinion. Such

obiter dicta are relegated to the endnotes, which consequently abound in concise illuminations and suggestive queries. Here is Kalkavage on the beautiful soul: “Sensitive types are often merciless judges” (508, n. 39). And a few notes later, he asks a question incited by Hegel’s harsh condemnation of this same beautiful soul and other condemned types hanging in his picture gallery: How do such judgments fit into his scheme of mutual forgiveness and the ultimate reconciliation of oppositions? “[W]e wonder about the connection of reason and judgment in philosophy. Is the philosopher allowed to condemn, or does genuine rationality preclude all condemnation?” (509, n.48.)

This is a version of the unabashedly strange question—asked of us not as an academic exercise but as a living perplexity—whether Hegel the philosophy professor and Hegel the spirit’s secretary quite coincide. It is also an example of the engaging directness with which Peter Kalkavage leads us into one of the wonders of the West.