

1 HEGEL'S THEORY OF THE CONCEPT

"The subject-matter of the philosophical science of right is the Idea of right, i.e., the concept of right together with the actualization of that concept." So begins the introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Since Hegel defines right in terms of freedom,¹ his account of the actualization of that concept is the story of how freedom is actual in the modern world. This occupies almost the entirety of Hegel's text. Thus the concept of freedom is developed for the most part not by itself but in the context of narrating its actualization. But if either the reader or the writer is to have any way of recognizing what counts in the modern world as the actuality of freedom, some prior understanding of the meaning of freedom seems to be required. It is this which the introduction seeks to provide, a purely conceptual analysis of freedom.

This analysis will of necessity be incomplete, just because of its a priori character. "The shapes which the concept assumes in the course of its actualization are indispensable for the knowledge of the concept itself." (PR, ¶1) To repeat, it is only when we grasp "the concept of right *together with* the actualization of that concept" (my italics) that we can adequately grasp that concept. The adequate conceptual grasp of any content can never be reached by conceptual analysis alone. Yet a prior understanding of the concept is needed to guide the discovery of that actualization of freedom which alone can provide us with an adequate conceptual grasp. It is tempting to think of this prior understanding in terms of hypothesis or conjecture, but we know from his discussions of Reinhold that Hegel rejects this suggestion out of hand.² Whence this preunderstanding of freedom, then? There can be only one Hegelian answer—from the Logic. For in Hegelian philosophy it is always the Logic which provides the conceptual wherewithal for any truly speculative understanding of nature or spirit.

The conceptual analysis of freedom presented in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right* does not disappoint these expectations. It is indeed derived from the Logic, in particular from the

analysis of the Concept as universal, particular (or specific), and individual. This triadic structure of the Concept thus becomes the basis for getting at the genuinely speculative element in Hegel's political philosophy. My purpose here, however, is just the opposite. It is to throw a little light on the logic of the Concept by reflecting on Hegel's employment of the categories Universality, Particularity, and Individuality in developing a preunderstanding of freedom.

This procedure will no doubt make some readers feel uncomfortable. The Logic, we will be told, is intelligible in its own right, and is first to be understood by itself as pure thought before any consideration of its employment can be legitimated. That there is something genuinely Hegelian about this response I shall not deny. But there is something equally Hegelian about my own procedure as well. After all, for Hegel the truth is the whole, and no part of philosophical science can be fully understood apart from its detailed relations to the others. I have just quoted Hegel's claim that the concept of right or freedom cannot adequately be understood apart from the shapes of its actualization in the world. I am taking this in the strong sense to mean that even the concepts from the Logic which go into spelling out that convenient concept of freedom to which the introduction is devoted cannot be adequately understood in and by themselves but only when we see them at work in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere.

It is in this sense that I understand Hegel's "knowing before you know" (or don't go into the water before you have learned how to swim) critique of critical philosophy. In a paper presented to the Hegel Society of America at Notre Dame in 1972, John Smith reminds us that Hegel praised the critical project of examining the categories and directed his criticism only toward the tendency to separate such criticism from "first order" knowing, thus examining the categories while they were "idling." "Hegel's fundamental complaint, then, is that Kant analyzed the categories as functions of thought, not when they were functioning in actual knowing, but only in their status as necessary conditions for knowing. . . ." In support of this suggestion Smith quotes from section 41, *Zusatz* of the *Encyclopedia*, where Hegel writes, "So that what we want is to combine in our process of inquiry the *action* of the forms of thought with a criticism of them."³ This requirement seems to me at best to be only partially satisfied in the Logic itself. Thus it serves as another justification for seeking to understand the Logic in terms of its so-called "application." The activity of the categories of Universality, Particularity, and Individuality in Hegel's political theory belongs to the deduction, analysis, and criticism of them in his Logic.

Methodologically, then, I believe my project has ample Hegelian validation. But I claim no scientific status for my attempt at interpretation. This humility is strategically motivated, I hasten to confess, for it leaves me free to invoke hypotheses and test them out, which is what I intend to do. My initial hypothesis is that the following sentence from the *Zusatz* to section 7 of the *Philosophy of Right* is the key to the logic of the Concept: "Freedom in this sense, however, we already possess in the form of feeling—in friendship and love, for instance." The meaning of my hypothesis is both (a) that the structure of the Concept as Universality, Particularity, and Individuality is necessary to an adequate understanding of friendship and love, and (b) that if we think through the meaning of friendship and love adequately we will have developed the structure of the Concept as Universality, Particularity, and Individuality. Since I am trying to work toward the Logic and not from it, it is obviously the latter form of the hypothesis which I shall be exploring.

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The suggestion that friendship and love are the true meaning of freedom follows a summary of sections 5 through 7, which define freedom in terms of the triadic structure of the Concept. While Hegel once suggests that Universality, Particularity, and Individuality are abstractly the same as Identity, Difference, and Ground (EL, ¶164), they here function as Indeterminacy, Determination, and Self-Determination. Since these categories have an obvious bearing on the question of freedom, the task is to see how the original triad can legitimately be translated into them.

The first equivalence is that of Universality with Indeterminacy. Hegel puts it this way:

The will contains (α) the element of pure indeterminacy or that pure reflection of the ego into itself which involves the dissipation of every restriction and every content either immediately presented by nature, by needs, desires, and impulses, or given and determined by any means whatever. This is the unrestricted infinity of absolute abstraction or universality, the pure thought of oneself.

Freedom involves the ability to abstract from every dependence upon an other, and since it is always and only in relation to an other that anything is determinate and not the "indeterminate

immediacy" of pure being, freedom involves "my flight from every content as from a restriction" (PR, ¶5).⁴

There is a freedom which takes this moment of independence as its whole meaning. Theoretically it is "the Hindu fanaticism of pure contemplation" in which the fundamental structures of the self's being-in-the-world are systematically undermined. Practically it is exhibited in the Terror of the French Revolution with its "irreconcilable hatred of everything particular" [*jedes Besondere*], i.e., everything determinate in the social order (PR, ¶5Z). "Only in destroying something does this negative will possess the feeling of itself as existent." This freedom professes to serve some new and better actuality but cannot do so, for any such actuality "leads at once to some sort of order, to a particularization [*Besonderung*] of organizations and individuals alike; while it is precisely out of the annihilation of particularity [*Besonderung*] and objective characterization that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom proceeds." Hegel indicates the one-sidedness of this freedom as absolute independence curtly by calling it "freedom as the Understanding conceives it" (PR, ¶5Z).⁵

The second equivalence is already before us, that of Particularity and Determination, for it matters little whether the content from which this negative freedom flees as from a restriction is called *Besonderheit* or *Bestimmtheit*. But freedom that would be actual cannot flee forever. For "my willing is not pure willing but the willing of something. A will which, like that expounded in section 5, wills only the abstract universal, wills nothing and is therefore no will at all" (PR, ¶6Z). To will something the will must include the moment of "the finitude or particularization [*Besonderung*] of the ego," which is described in this way:

(β) At the same time, the ego is also the transition from undifferentiated indeterminacy to the differentiation, determination, and positing of a determinacy as a content and object. Now further, this content may either be given by nature or engendered by the concept of spirit. (PR, ¶6)

This latter qualification is important, for it indicates that the other which cannot be excluded from freedom is of two sorts, natural, that is, the impulses and inclinations (*Triebe und Neigungen*) of immediate selfhood in their otherness to rational self-determination, and spiritual, that is, both social institutions and concrete other selves in their otherness to the independence of the self who would be free. This second moment, Particularity or Deter-

mination, is no less essential to freedom than the first. For the self which can respond to its own natural immediacy and to the other selves around it only by withdrawal or destruction cannot be said to be free. On the other hand, this moment by itself is just as abstract and inadequate as the first. For the self which is only a function of its impulses and inclinations or of the other selves it encounters is no more free than the self which flees from every content as from a restriction. Indeed, it can scarcely be called a self at all.

Only a caricature of freedom arises, then, when either the moment of Universality = Indeterminacy or that of Particularity = Determination is asked by itself to provide a definition. But neither moment can be eliminated from the concept of freedom. What is needed is a genuine unity of the two, antithetical as they seem. We already know that the unity of Universality and Particularity will be called Individuality, and we might guess that the unity of Indeterminacy and Determination will be called Self-Determination, though in both cases, as in calling happiness the highest good, the task of comprehension lies ahead and not behind. Hegel writes:

(γ) The will is the unity of both these moments. It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e., it is individuality. It is the *self*-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e., in its self-identity and universality. (PR, ¶7)

Three comments on this passage may help us get to the heart of the matter. First, it serves to validate the third equivalence, that of Individuality and Self-Determination. Self-determination is defined as the preservation of self-identity in the process of determination. Only that which is in some strong sense individual can endure determination without becoming simply a function of those others through whom this determination is mediated. Such endurance involves the retention of more than that logical self-identity which permits one to be an object of reference or the subject of predication. It requires that real self-identity which is here equated with the moment of universality, which, as we have seen, is the moment of independence.

Second, we are referred directly back to the Logic, where this unity of self-identity and determinateness is central. We can now understand why, when Hegel calls the Concept "the principle of freedom," he goes right on to say, "Thus in its *self-identity* it has

original and complete determinateness," and, when defining the structure of the Concept in terms of its three moments, he describes Individuality as the unity of Universality and Particularity, "which negative self-unity has complete and original *determinateness*, without any loss to its *self-identity* or universality."⁶

Third, Hegel calls this unity of self-identity and determination which constitutes Self-Determination or Individuality "the innermost secret of speculation," though the Understanding disdains it as "inconceivable" (PR, ¶7). The passage before us indicates both why the synthesis is so easily dismissed as inconceivable and how we may begin to conceive it after all. Self-determination means determination, which means that the self stands in relation to its own negative, to another through whom its determination is mediated. The self is thus *dependent* upon the other for its determinateness. Yet, if this is to be self-determination, it must be a self-mediating activity, and the self must retain its self-identity and universality, i.e., its *independence*. Hegel here uses one of his favorite locutions, *bei sich bleiben*.⁷ This means to keep control of oneself, to stay conscious and not pass out. The task, which Understanding finds impossible, is so to remain in control of oneself in giving oneself up to the mediating activity of the other that the whole operation can be called a self-mediating activity and not something which happens to me while unconscious, after which I come to again to learn about my new determinateness. It could then be said that "the ego determines itself insofar as it is the relating of negativity to itself" (PR, ¶7), or that the self is *Vermittlung* but not *ein Vermitteltes* (WL 2:241 = SL 602).

This is possible, on Hegel's account, because self-determination means "that at one and the same time *the ego posits itself* as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself . . ." (PR, ¶7).⁸ We have already seen that the self cannot be determinate except in relation to another, and that it cannot be free if this relation is either withdrawal or destruction. But if this other is in some sense itself, the possibility of a more positive relation begins to lose its inconceivability. The only problem is that this solution sounds a bit too Fichtean.⁹ The otherness of the other seems compromised.

At this point Hegel's earlier allusion to the categories of Identity, Difference, and Ground is helpful, for it reminds us that for Hegel identity always involves some difference. If the other through whom the self is determined must *in some sense* be identical with that self, we must inquire more carefully what that sense may be. A second formulation from section 7 calls for our attention.

Still, both these moments [self-consciousness as universal and as particular] are only abstractions: what is concrete and true (and everything true is concrete) is the universality which has the particular as its opposite: but [only] that particular which by its reflection into itself has been equalized with the universal.

Here otherness sounds less Fichtean. It has the status of an opposite (*Gegensatz*). But it must have become equalized (*ausgeglichen*) with that to which it stands opposed. We are not told which way the scale must be tipped to bring about this balance. Whether the reflection into itself of the other which confronts the self is a scaling down of its power and activity so that it does not overwhelm the self or a scaling up of its dignity so that its activity is of the same sort as that of the self, the result is that the self and its other are somehow on a par. They are not the same in the sense of numerical identity but of qualitative similarity. This seems the opposite extreme from the Fichtean overtones of the previous formulation. If one thinks of the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology*, for example, it seems that neither way of looking at it will do. For if the other from whom the self seeks the determination of recognition is numerically identical with itself, there can be no acceptance of the claim to human dignity but only the repetition of that claim. While if the other is the same as the self in the weaker sense of being qualitatively similar, equal in being another full-blooded human self, we can see nothing in such equality to weaken the Understanding's suspicion that the self must either destroy the selfhood of the other by becoming its master or give up its own by becoming the slave, in neither case achieving freedom.

Turning to the *Zusatz* to section 7 for help we find a definition of freedom in terms of the three moments of the Concept. It repeats the familiar idea that the self posits itself as its other yet remains by itself in this other; but it provides us with no assistance in making sense out of these Hegelian clichés. Just at this point, however, occurs the sentence which my hypothesis makes central to interpreting Hegel here. "Freedom in this sense, however, we already possess in the form of feeling—in friendship and love, for instance." The explanation continues,

Here we are not inherently one-sided; we restrict ourselves gladly in relating ourselves to another, but in this restriction know ourselves as ourselves. In this determinacy a man should not feel himself determined, on the contrary, since he treats

the other as other, it is there that he first arrives at the feeling of his own self-hood. Thus freedom lies neither in indeterminacy nor in determinacy; it is both of these at once.

Guided by these descriptions and reminded of whatever experiences of true friendship or love we may have had, we suddenly see how the abstract antithesis between numerical identity and mere qualitative sameness does not exhaust the possibilities. Genuine otherness is preserved, since friendship and love require numerical duality and not numerical identity. Yet we can speak of identity and not mere qualitative sameness, for friends and lovers are not merely different numerical units of the same sort—they constitute together a new reality which they express by saying “We.” This whole is more than the sum of its parts. As its constituents the parts are identical with each other, for each of them simply is that We just as much as each is also a distinct I.¹⁰

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Such reflections on the way friends and lovers relate to their counterparts illuminate the kind of identity with difference which the Concept expresses. This confirms Hegel’s own view that the theory of the Concept is a theory of freedom, of personality, and of that sense of ego which the slave lacks (EL, ¶163Z). When loving intersubjectivity is taken as basic, two conspicuous features of the logical exposition of the Concept appear in a new light, namely the ubiquity of the concept of creativity and the transition from Essence to Concept, more specifically, the development of the triadic structure of the Concept from the category of reciprocity.

The creation motif is never far from sight. The concept is *unendlich, schöpferische Form, freie, schöpferische Tätigkeit*, or simply *schöpferische Macht*. It is *das Formierende und Erschaffende*; and one can speak of *das Schaffen des Begriffs*, or even of the Idea as *Schöpferin der Natur*.¹¹

All this tells us that the concept is something active and not inert. In its individuality the Concept is *das Wirkende* (EL, ¶ 163). Frequently Hegel expresses this central theme in Aristotelian language, the concept being related to its objectivity as soul to body or seed to plant.¹² We are given a theory of development which at first appears to be but a restatement of the Aristotelian theory of substantial form as the merger of formal, final, and efficient causality. But Aristotle’s is a theory of life, not of spirit, and while Hegel recognizes the Concept to be “the principle of all life” (EL, ¶160Z) and

the organic level to be "the stage of nature at which the Concept emerges," (WL, 2:224 = SL 586), it is only at the level of spirit that its true meaning is manifest. This means that no Aristotelian interpretation of Hegel's creation talk will be adequate. As creative the Concept is *das Wirkende* indeed, but the organic-developmental models of soul-body and seed-plant give at best a partial account of this. For, as we have seen, the theory of the Concept is a theory of intersubjective selfhood and thus of spirit. Its task is to give an account of determinateness through an other such that this "is not a *limit*, as though it were related to another *beyond* it [*einem Jenseits*] . . ." (WL 2:245 = SL 605) How does the concept of creation contribute to this central problematic?

The *Zusatz* to section 161 of the *Encyclopedia* is of special importance in this connection. For while both the original paragraph and the first long paragraph of the *Zusatz* are devoted to the Aristotelian-developmental aspects of the Concept, the final brief paragraph goes beyond this to the level of spirit.

The movement of the concept is as it were to be looked upon merely as play: the other which it sets up is in reality not an other. Or, as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity: not merely has God created a world which confronts Him as an other; He has also from all eternity begotten a Son in whom He, a Spirit, is at home with Himself [*bei sich selbst ist*].

Three models of the self in relation to its other are given here. In play the other is not really an other, but the figment of the self's active imagination. Remember Puff?

One gray night it happened, Jackie Paper came no more
So Puff the Magic Dragon ceased his fearsome roar.

His head was bent in sorrow, green scales fell like rain
Puff no longer went to play along the cherry lane
Without his lifelong friend, Puff could not be brave
So Puff that mighty dragon sadly slipped into his cave.

The strength of this model is that it completely removes the *Jenseits* character of the other for the self; its weakness is that the other is somewhat ephemeral. The freedom of the child at play is total, but not very real.

The second model is that of God as Creator in relation to the world. Since the world depends on God for its continued existence,

it is sometimes viewed as no more truly other to God than Puff was to Jackie Paper. But creation is more often seen as an exercise of omnipotence voluntarily limiting itself, giving genuine otherness to the world. This is the view Hegel has in mind, for while the other of play is "in reality not an other," when god creates the world it "confronts him as an other." The strength of this model is obviously that otherness gains integrity; its weakness that otherness can all too easily emerge once again as a *Jenseits*, outside the reconciliation of the Concept. This possible obstinate otherness is not incorrigible. As Creator God could either destroy the world he has made, or, alternatively, abandon it. But we have already seen that destruction and withdrawal are anything but the freedom Hegel is seeking to grasp; and nothing in the concept of Creator suggests that God has any options but these in the face of a world turned hostile.

The third model is that of the eternal love between the Father and the Son. As eternal the Son is truly other, neither imaginary like Puff nor contingent like the world. But while otherness is most complete in this model there is no estrangement or hostility here. For in place of the child's sovereignty over his imaginary playmates and God's over the created world, the relation here is that of reciprocal love. Only in love is even God able to be *bei sich selbst* in his other. Though Hegel doesn't mention it here, this holds for his relation to the world as well. For it is only as Redeemer, not simply as Creator, that God can be at peace with the world. It is the God who loved the world who sent his Son, not to be its Judge but its Savior (John 3:16-17).

It is now possible to give Hegel's creation talk its proper place in his theory of the Concept. By itself it is not an adequate model of the conceptual structure being developed. But it helps to express two essential elements of that structure. The first is the active, effective nature of the self as *das Wirkende*. The other is that aspect of love which Hegel especially wishes to highlight, the non-otherness of the most genuinely other (PR, ¶158Z). Taken together the three models we have just examined are not just a progressive series. The first two belong to the third as part of its meaning. In love the threatening aspects of otherness are as thoroughly eliminated as in play and creation (but without having to eliminate otherness as such and with it the benefits which only real otherness can confer). In love the other does not owe its existence to me, but we are so related that I feel no need of that sort of power over the other in order to be myself. I can live in the real world without resort to the pathological phantasies in which I elevate myself to the role of

Creator and reduce the world to a collective Puff with whom I play in childish sovereignty.¹³

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Lest we get carried away here we must remember that the Logic does not try to tell us how or where this freedom as loving reciprocity is to be realized. It only tells us what it is to be free. It does so, however, by calling our attention to the fact that love is only a special form of reciprocity and that there is another reciprocity which is not freedom at all. It is this contrast between two reciprocities which constitutes the transition from Essence to Concept in the Logic.

As a category of Essence Reciprocity expresses a world wholly subject to natural necessity. It is composed of substances, thus of independent and self-sufficient units. It is a world, however, not a chaotic multiplicity, solely because these units do have one mode of relation to one another, causal necessity. Since they are both active and passive, cause and effect in relation to one another, causal necessity has the form of Reciprocity.

In this world independence and identity are mutually exclusive. Causal necessity involves a special form of identity. The effect, being simply the expression or unfolding of the cause, loses its independence and becomes simply an aspect of the cause's career. As the distinction between them vanishes, they become identical. The attempt to see the world exclusively and consistently from this point of view leads to Spinozism, where the world has only one substance in it, or, alternatively, to the Laplacian way of saying the same thing in a different language. If, as the category of Reciprocity itself suggests, some plurality is to be preserved, it must be by viewing the units which make up the world in abstraction from their causal relations, as external and contingent in relation to one another. I have no difficulty, for example, viewing the misfortunes of my beloved and bumbling Chicago Cubs as wholly unrelated to the political climate in Washington. In Reciprocity as a category of Essence I alternate between two incompatible viewpoints, one which views the units of the world as mutually indifferent to one another, and one which views them as so tightly bound together by natural necessity as to lose their independent identity. Clearly neither of these represents freedom in Hegel's sense.

If there is to be a reciprocity which does constitute freedom, it must overcome the mutual exclusiveness of independence and identity. It is in just these terms that Hegel states the transition to the

Concept.¹⁴ The truth of necessity is freedom, we are told, and that of substance the Concept. For reciprocity can be seen as infinite, negative self-relation; negative in that it involves the independence of actualities in relation to one another, but infinite self-relation because "their independence only lies in their identity" (EL, ¶157–58). This harmony of independence and identity is crucial to freedom. The old identity excludes independence.

The identity [*Einheit*] of the things, which necessity presents as bound to each other and thus bereft of their independence, is at first [i.e. while Reciprocity is still a category of Essence] only inward, and therefore has no existence for those under the yoke of necessity. (EL, ¶158Z).¹⁵

Where identity has this character it not only leaves the so-called individuals "bereft of their independence" but also deprives them of any awareness or enjoyment of their identity. There is no experience of love or of community. But there is another kind of identity.

It then appears that the members, linked to one another, are not really foreign to each other, being, as it were, at home, and combining with itself [*bei sich selbst ist und mit sich selbst zusammengeht*]. In this way necessity is transfigured into freedom. . . (EL, ¶158Z).

Just as we have previously seen Hegel describe love as a contradiction and the unity of the concept as inconceivable to the Understanding, we now are reminded that it is not exactly easy to think this unity of identity and independence. "The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality into the concept, is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passing over and identity with the other independent actuality." Once again, to help us get headed in the right direction, Hegel tells us that love is what he is talking about, love as the liberation which can also be called I, free spirit, and blessedness (EL, ¶159).¹⁶

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I have been discussing the theory of the Concept as a theory of freedom rather than as a theory of knowledge, as a theory of the practical rather than the theoretical self. Of course, Hegel would

not have called this part of the *Logic* by the name *Concept* if his theory were not also a theory of knowledge (and the object of knowledge as well). But in spite of saying "Concept" instead of "Freedom" when naming the final level of categorial development, Hegel himself seems to give the epistemological part of his theory a secondary place. "The Concept," he writes,

when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness. True, I have concepts, that is to say, determinate concepts; but the I is the pure Concept itself which, as the Concept, has come into existence. (WL 2:220 = SL, 583)

However we interpret this contrast between the self's being the *Concept* and its having concepts, a complete analysis of Hegel's theory of the concept would have to develop its epistemological discussions which are constantly and overtly interspersed throughout the discussion of freedom to which I have limited myself up to this point. My first hypothesis, that love is the key to the structure of the *Concept*, would be enhanced both in strength and in philosophical interest if a second, corollary hypothesis could be established, namely that the theory of loving intersubjectivity which is the direct meaning of the *Concept* as a theory of the practical self is the guiding metaphor for the theory of knowledge which has reached the same level of philosophical insight. In other words, knowing, too, is to be understood in its highest form as the nonviolent unity of the self and its other. In the space and time remaining to me I can but outline such a reading of Hegel's text.

As a theory of knowledge Hegel regularly contrasts his view of the *Concept* with that of the *Understanding*, which views it as an abstract universal, devoid of particularity and individuality. It is thus without content of its own, the mere form of our subjective thought. Two features of this view are especially stressed, the independence of the object and the subjectivity of thinking.

The independence of the object consists in its being unconditioned in relation to the concepts through which it is thought. It is there first, standing ready made over against the concept, possessed of its being and truth prior to any rendezvous with the concept. The content thus falls on the side of the object. The concept is an empty and inert form which comes to it from without. This kind of thinking is subjective, for it is separated from its truth. The truth is supposed to reside in the content or object, while thinking is entirely the activity of the subject. The abstract universals employed in such

thinking are generated, as their name suggests, through the activity of abstracting; and it is the knowing subject who must perform this operation of neglecting some features presented to consciousness while focusing attention on others. Since it is the contingent purpose of the knower which directs this process, it can also be said that an interest external to the subject matter presides over this whole domain of thinking.

On this view the truth of the object is not an intelligibility or meaning it can reveal to us but rather a brute otherness which we must forge weapons to overcome. Abstract universals are those weapons, by means of which we hope to deprive the object of its original independence and render it subject to our purposes and interests. Knowing is the desire to master and dominate. Without any specific reference to technological purposes and interests, Hegel has described the essence of calculative thinking.

Knowledge at the level of the Concept contrasts sharply. This highest kind of knowing, attested by both religion and philosophy (WL 2:225–26 = SL, 587–88), assumes that things have their being and truth by virtue of the Concept at work within them. The form by which they are known is identical with the form by which they are what they are. Since the form is already present in the content Hegel can say, “*dass wir die Begriffe gar nicht bilden*” (EL, ¶163Z). We do not need to impose our external purposes on the processes of thought. This is not to say that knowledge, any more than love itself, is entirely devoid of interest. It is to say that the subject no longer seeks to use the object. The guiding interest is no longer the subject’s private purpose, but its openness to the object so that the object may reveal both itself and the subject for what they are. In thus giving itself up to the object, the subject does not discover that in ceasing to be the master it has become the slave. The impetus toward domination is undermined as a new identity takes shape. For the form which is the truth of the thing and the form which is the thought of the subject are one and the same.

Hegel, as is his wont, lapses into lyricism.

The universal is therefore *free* power; it is itself and takes its other within its embrace [*greift über sein Anderes über*], but without doing violence to it; on the contrary, the universal is, in its other, in peaceful communion with itself. We have called it free power, but it could also be called *free love* and *boundless blessedness*, for it bears itself towards its other as towards *its own self*; in it, it has returned to itself. (WL 2:242 = SL, 603)¹⁷

We might call this the Golden Rule of the Concept. For Hegel it is the norm for philosophical knowledge as well as for life with our neighbor.