

Consciousness and the Transcendental Deduction



Every stage of the *Phenomenology* is filled with obscure allusions to other texts—both philosophical and literary. Lauer thinks we should be slow in concluding just which texts Hegel has in mind. He suggests that Hegel may not have been sure himself or that he wanted to refer to an amalgam of positions. Pippin suggests that Hegel refrains from giving us specific references because he wants to sketch the position he is criticizing in as abstract a way as possible, so as to include all partisans of such a position.¹ These points are well taken. Hegel’s allusions are like those found in a novel. They are not specific, precise, and limited. They are general, open, even symbolic—as if they were trying to refer to as much as possible.

Nevertheless, I will spend considerable effort trying to identify at least some of the texts that Hegel is alluding to. One of the reasons for this is that Hegel alludes to Kant in many more cases than has been recognized; and if we notice this it will change, it will clarify and improve our understanding of Hegel. I intend to pay a great deal of attention to Hegel’s reliance on Kant. I do not mean to imply by this that Hegel was not significantly influenced by other philosophers—Fichte, Schelling, Aristotle, Spinoza, Rousseau, and others. He certainly was. Nor do I want to suggest that Hegel is alluding only, or even primarily, to Kant, and not to other philosophers. And I certainly do not want to suggest that by establishing a connection to Kant we will be able to explain everything that is going on in the *Phenomenology*. I only want to suggest that we can learn something important by seeing connections to Kant.

I. Kant’s Transcendental Deduction

I want to argue that right from the start, in the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*, and in each and every one of them—“Sense-Certainty,”

“Perception,” and “Force and the Understanding”—Kant is at the conceptual center of the issues treated. These three chapters are included in what I have called part 1 of the *Phenomenology*, which deals with individual consciousness. It is my contention that these three chapters begin Hegel’s deduction and that they closely follow Kant’s “Transcendental Deduction,” especially as Kant laid it out in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR, A95–130).

Kant says, “If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is [essentially] a whole in which representations stand compared and connected.”² For knowledge to be possible, the manifold of sensation must be run through and held together. Coherent experience, Kant argues in the first edition, requires a threefold synthesis: a synthesis of apprehension in intuition, a synthesis of reproduction in imagination, and a synthesis of recognition in a concept. These are not three separate steps; they are inseparable moments of one synthesis. In the synthesis of apprehension, for Kant, the imagination takes up impressions, apprehends them, forms them into an image, and makes them modifications of the mind belonging to inner sense and thus subject to time. Inner intuition is thoroughly temporal. Our representations appear to us successively in time. They are ordered, connected, and related in time (CPR, A98–100, A102, A120–1).

This synthesis of apprehension, however, cannot by itself give us ordered experience. A second synthesis is also necessary. The mind must be able to reinstate preceding perceptions alongside subsequent perceptions and hold them together in a temporal series. We need to retain, remember, and reproduce perceptions. We need a synthesis of reproduction in imagination (CPR, A100–1, A121). If I try to “think of the time from one noon to another,” Kant tells us, and “if I were always to drop out of thought the preceding representations . . . [if I] did not reproduce them while advancing to those that follow,” then, he says, “not even the . . . most elementary representations . . . could arise” (CPR, A102). We must be aware that what we think is the same as what we thought a moment before (CPR, A103). Otherwise we would have nothing but disjointed chaos. We would not be able to connect earlier with later perceptions of an event or object—they would not belong together for us. One sentence of a speech, even one word, since it would not be remembered, could not be connected with the next. We would have no coherent experience.

Still, even this is not enough. Representations, if they are to give rise to knowledge, cannot be reproduced in any old order just as they happen to come together. The reproduction must conform to a rule according to which a perception is connected with some one representation rather than another (CPR, A121). The concepts or categories of the understanding provide these

rules—rules for the necessary reproduction of the manifold (CPR, A103, A106; also B233–A201). A third synthesis, then, is also necessary. A synthesis of recognition in a concept is necessary to determine the specific order and relation of the reproduction of representations. The only way to grasp these successive and remembered moments in one cognition and the only way to unify these sensations into one object is through concepts that embrace, organize, and unify them. Otherwise we would not have an object, but merely a disjointed series of isolated, remembered sensations.

Furthermore, this threefold synthesis requires a unity of consciousness—Kant calls it the “transcendental unity of apperception” (CPR, A106–7). For Hume, there was no fixed, stable, unified self that could be experienced. When we turn to inner sense, we experience nothing but a flux of shifting ideas, images, and impressions.³ Kant agrees with Hume that we never experience a unified self (CPR, A106–7). But for Kant there must be a unified self. If not, then the diverse multitude of sensations, the temporal flux that constitutes inner sense, would not belong to a single consciousness and thus could not belong to me. The flux must be unified within a single self for experience to be possible—or else this flux of images could not be *my* flux of images. It could not be *my* experience. I would then have no experience—“merely a blind play of representations, less even than a dream” (CPR, A112, A122, B132–3).

At the very same time, there is also a second unity involved here—that of the object. For the manifold of sensations to be unified as one object, it is also the case that this manifold must be contained in a unified self. If we cannot presuppose a transcendental unity of apperception, there is no way to understand the possibility of a unified object. The transcendental unity of apperception through the categories forms a unified object. Thus the transcendental unity of apperception is an objective condition of all knowledge. It is not merely a subjective condition that I require in order to have knowledge of an object. It is an objective condition under which representations must stand in order to become an object for me (CPR, A105, A108, A111–12, A125, B138–9, B143). Representations for their part must be capable of association; they must have what Kant calls an “affinity.” They must be able to enter the mind, conform to the unity of apperception, and be subject to the rules of the categories (CPR, A122).

This might all seem to be just a bizarre problem that idealists are stuck with and that other “sensible” philosophers need not be bothered by. But that is not the case at all. Kant, it is true, suggests that our experience is constructed out of unconnected elements. This might seem to be an odd and unacceptable view, but for Kant to be right, we must see, it need not at all be the case that things-in-themselves are unconnected. Let us assume, just as a materialist or a realist might, that things are fully organized and connected

independently of our perception. Nevertheless, we must still *apprehend* these things, and in doing so we would have to organize and connect *our various representations*—whatever the character of the thing itself.

Suppose a house exists before us. We apprehend a foundation, walls, roof, chimney, doors, and so forth. Even if they are organized and connected in themselves as for the best realist, we must still organize and connect them in our apprehension, or for us there would only be disconnected chaos. Each shingle on the roof, brick of the chimney, pane of the window—all the way down to the minutest details—would have to be grasped in our apprehension, reproduced in memory, subsumed under concepts, and brought under the unity of apperception. If not, we would have unconnected chaos (*CPR*, A98–101, A122, B134, B154, A156). Our senses separate things. We apprehend the roof separately from the foundation; we can fail to remember one moment of the walls as connected with other moments. We might think of our experience as recorded on a series of videos—one of the roof, another of the windows, and so forth. Moreover, each and every frame of film would be a separate representation. We must organize each of these representations in our inner experience—and whatever the world in itself might be like is irrelevant.⁴ A threefold synthesis and a transcendental unity of apperception are necessary to have ordered experience for any sort of theory of experience.⁵

I want to argue that the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* follow and comment on Kant's treatment of the threefold synthesis of the imagination. At the same time, they criticize Kant and try to get beyond his unknown thing-in-itself. Chapter I, entitled "Sense-Certainty," takes up immediate sensation and treats it simply as apprehended, that is, it treats it as if we had a synthesis of apprehension, the first moment of the threefold synthesis, but without going any further, without yet having a synthesis of reproduction or a synthesis of recognition in a concept. And we quickly see that this fails. We cannot even hold impressions together through time. So in chapter II, entitled "Perception," we go on to include a synthesis of reproduction, the second moment of the threefold synthesis, memory holding together a series of representations through time. Here we get a thing and its properties—which recalls the empiricism of Locke. This runs into various troubles because we have not as yet included a synthesis of recognition in a concept. In chapter III, entitled "Force and the Understanding," we finally arrive at Kant's categories or concepts of the understanding, we include the third part of the threefold synthesis, and we come to see that we must understand objects as conceptual relations.

At first sight this might appear to be a bizarre overinterpretation, but it is quite clear from other texts that Hegel is fully aware of the Kantian threefold synthesis (*F&K*, 69–70/*GW*, IV, 327; *PM*, 208/*SW*, X, 337), and I suggest

that seeing this relationship to Kant's transcendental deduction will make the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* a good bit clearer as well as help us to understand the beginnings of Hegel's own deduction.

II. Sense-Certainty

Taylor (*H*, 141) and Rockmore argue that sense-certainty resembles empiricism.⁶ I do not think that is correct. While it is true that sense-certainty, like empiricism, limits knowledge to sensation of particulars, nevertheless, unlike empiricism, it embodies no notion of appearances, impressions, sense-data, or anything of the sort. Rather, sense-certainty takes itself to be immediate knowledge that grasps things as they are—without altering them in any way (*PhS*, 58/*GW*, IX, 63). What Hegel has in mind here, I think, is traditional metaphysics—which in the *Logic* he says is a form of thought that never became aware of the modern antithesis between the subjective and the objective. It claims to take the material furnished by sense and bring it before the mind as it really is. It takes the laws and forms of thought to be the laws and forms of things. Thought grasps the very nature of the thing—without distortion (*L*, 60–1/*SW*, VIII, 99–100).

This form of knowledge, immediate knowledge of particulars, fails for Hegel, and indeed fails in much the same sort of way it was thought to fail in the ancient world. Sense-certainty is the sort of knowledge that Plato attacks throughout the *Theaetetus*. Plato concludes that particulars are too shifting and changeable to be objects of knowledge and that we cannot give an account of primary things taken by themselves.⁷ Aristotle, too, argues that there can be neither definition nor demonstration about sensible individuals.⁸ As I have already suggested, sense-certainty also corresponds to what Kant calls a “synthesis of apprehension,” and it would not work for Kant either, because we have left out the rest of the threefold synthesis. Pippin thinks there are no clear philosophical precedents for sense-certainty.⁹ I suggest there are several.

It might seem odd, however, to think that Hegel would decide to link traditional metaphysics with Kantian epistemology when these philosophical outlooks are so opposed. But from another perspective it is not really so odd. Plato, Aristotle, and Kant at some place in their theory must attend to, and ordinary consciousness (perhaps in any age) just seems to begin with, the simplest and naivest notion of knowledge—knowledge as a direct grasp of sense particulars (*L*, 60/*SW*, VIII, 99). Perhaps any theory must start with some sort of simple apprehension. But from there we quickly find that there is much more to it. At any rate, I want to focus on the parallel here between Hegel and Kant.

In “Sense-Certainty,” we start with simple, immediate, and seemingly indubitable sensation, as if we only had an as yet unorganized manifold of isolated sensations. We certainly do not have conceptually organized objects, but, as Hegel puts it, merely a “this.” We have a “here” and a “now”—a spatial here and a temporal now—making up a this. We point to it, indicate it, mean it—we can say no more about it at this stage (*PhS*, 59–60/*GW*, IX, 64–5).

But even as we try to indicate a this we soon discover that we do not really have such a pure immediacy before us—we do not really have a simple here or a now, but only *instances* of them. The here and the now change. Night changes into day. As I turn my head the tree disappears and I see a house. The indicated referent does not remain, it will not hold stable, it is not preserved. If now is night, Hegel says, let us write it down: “A truth cannot lose anything by being written down, any more than it can lose anything through our preserving it.” But the next time we look, it is noon and our truth “has become stale” (*PhS*, 59–60/*GW*, IX, 64–5). The now changes, it is different, it has a different referent. We have ignored the role of time. Indicating a this will not indicate the same this through time. The this will not indicate the unity of an object through time. We have left out a synthesis of reproduction in imagination. We have ignored memory—we forget (*PhS*, 64/*GW*, IX, 68–9).

Hegel wants us to see that any here, now, or this is really a universal. No this will indicate a sensuous particular. Any this can only indicate any and all heres, nows, thises. Language can never say, can never express in words, the sensuous particular that we mean (*PhS*, 60/*GW*, IX, 65; *L*, 8–9/*SW*, VIII, 74–5). Hegel is headed in the same direction as Kant here. We cannot have knowledge simply of isolated, given sensations. Knowledge involves universals—it requires concepts.

What if, in order to understand sense-certainty, we do not focus on the sensation, as we have been doing up to now, but focus instead on the knowing “I”? It is the I that holds the this fast. Now is night rather than day because I see night, not day. Here is a tree rather than a house because I see a tree, not a house. The only problem with this, however, is that the I too is a universal. One I sees day. Another I sees night. The I refers to any I (*PhS*, 61/*GW*, IX, 66). This will soon become very important. Hume has shown us that we cannot experience a single unified self. Hegel shows us that language cannot even indicate such a self. Indeed, very much in opposition to Kant (*CPR*, B406–7), Hegel will argue that such a self—certainly a Kantian transcendental self—does not exist. In chapter IV of the *Phenomenology*, in the section entitled “Lordship and Bondage,” we will see that for Hegel the self, like all else, is nothing but a conceptual relation. At any rate, sense-certainty does not overcome its difficulties in this direction.

What we are driven to, for Hegel, is a now of many nows, a here of many heres, an I of many I's—a plurality holding together as a universal. We have I's sensing a now that is a process, a passing of nows in time (*PhS*, 64, 66/*GW*, IX, 68, 70). Time, then, is an inescapable element of any sensation. And thus a synthesis of reproduction is a necessary element of any organized experience. The series of isolated sensations must be held together, remembered, reproduced, through time.

Why does Hegel begin with sense-certainty? One reason is that this is where Kant's deduction starts in the first edition. It is also where ordinary consciousness starts. But perhaps most importantly, Hegel starts with sense-certainty because it is about as far as possible from where he wants to end up—with the whole, the absolute. Sense-certainty is as opposed to a doctrine of internal relations as anything can be. It is Hegel's view that adequate knowledge cannot be had about particulars. The part can only be understood in relation to the whole. Hegel rejects the notion of a world that is just there, given, outside, other, over against consciousness, with everything in it externally related. So Hegel starts with precisely that, in order to undermine it, to move us away from it, to show us that such particulars have been abstracted from the whole.¹⁰

According to Stern, a holist argues that the world contains concrete objects that cannot be treated as compounds made up of more fundamental self-subsistent elements. These objects have a unity that is not properly analyzable into a plurality of self-subsistent and externally related parts. Pluralists, on the other hand, think the world contains fundamental self-subsistent elements that are ontologically prior to and independent of their instantiation in the whole, and so pluralists can explain the whole through a combination of separable elements.¹¹

What Hegel does again and again in the *Phenomenology* is to focus on specific relations. And each time he shows us that we cannot understand these relations alone and in isolation. Each time we must move on to a more general relation that takes up and includes within it the earlier, more particular relation. In "Sense-Certainty," then, the fact that language will not express particulars is not due merely to a failure on the part of language. Rather, particular objects themselves fail to hold up for us. Hegel rejects the notion that brute particulars are simply there, given, for sense experience. As we shall see, for Hegel, we must come to understand objects themselves as conceptual relations.

As Taylor (*H*, 142) puts it, being aware of something, being able to say something about it, involves grasping aspects that things have in common, rather than just their particularity. For Hegel, we shall see, all particularity, all difference, is difference within a commonality. Ultimately we have differences *within* the absolute. All differences *from* the absolute would subvert the

absolute. It would mean there was something other than, outside, the absolute, and thus the absolute would not include all of reality—it would not be absolute.

However, there is something else in “Sense-Certainty” that we ought to notice, as it will become a source of difficulty for the conceptual. The way Hegel puts it in the *Logic* is that everything finite is unstable, changeable, transient, implicitly other than what it is, suddenly turning into its opposite—as night turns into day (*L*, 150/SW, VIII, 192–3). Thus, while we must admit that nothing escapes the conceptual, we must also admit that fixed concepts always have a very difficult time holding on to things.

III. Perception

In chapter II, “Perception,” we begin with what “Sense-Certainty” drove us to—a this of many thises, a now of many nows. In other words, we have an entity that holds together—particular sensations holding together as a universal. To use the language of empiricists, we have a thing of many properties (*PhS*, 66–7/GW, IX, 70–1). Empiricism, Hegel claims in the *Logic*, elevates the brute facts of sensation to general ideas (*L*, 77/SW, VIII, 117). What Hegel means here, I think, is that we have the idea of many sensations, qualities, or properties held together as a thing; in other words, basically a Lockean substance—an idea (signifying we know not what, as Locke put it) holding together many properties.¹² Or, to use Kant’s language, we have now included the second moment of the threefold synthesis—a synthesis of reproduction in imagination. We have a holding together, a remembering, a reproducing, of sensations through time. However, as we shall see, we do not yet have the third moment—a synthesis of recognition in a concept. In other words, the Lockean idea of a substance signifying we know not what falls short of Kantian categories. Hegel, in *Faith and Knowledge*, claims that Kant’s views are an extension of Locke’s (*F&K*, 78/GW, IV, 333).¹³

So Hegel takes up a suitable example, a bit of salt, a thing that has several properties—it is white, tart, cubical. These properties are taken to be separate, distinguishable, and indifferent to each other as well as to the salt as a whole. As Hegel puts it, they are connected by an indifferent “also”—the salt is white, *also* tart, *also* cubical. But at the same time, these properties are all held together in a unity. And so, besides these alsos, we have a “one” (*PhS*, 68–9/GW, IX, 72–3).

How do we explain how these properties are unified in the salt, are a one, yet at the same time are alsos, are separate, distinguishable (we can distinguish the color from the taste, the taste from the shape, and so on)? Hegel wants to show us here that if the thing-property model, the substance-acci-

dent model, will not explain things, we will have to move toward a doctrine of internal relations.

Let us try, as empiricism did, to attribute the separateness to the subject. It is the subject's perception that distinguishes the whiteness from the tartness and from the cubicalness; and the subject will also accept responsibility for any distortion of the object brought about in this process. What we have is Locke's notion of secondary qualities.¹⁴ The thing is white only to our eyes, tart only to our tongue, and so forth. Secondary qualities (that is, colors, sounds, tastes) exist only in the mind and are not thought to resemble anything in the object (*PhS*, 70, 72/GW, IX, 73–5). On the other hand, the unity we will attribute to the thing or substance itself—made up of primary qualities (solidity, extension, mobility, figure) that are supposed to exist independently on their own in the thing just as they appear to us.¹⁵

The problem, however, is that while we can attribute the unity to the substance, we cannot, as Berkeley pointed out, perceive that unity. All we perceive are the secondary qualities, the alsos, the whiteness, the tartness. Primary qualities cannot be perceived except through secondary qualities—for example, we cannot, without color, identify shape or distinguish movement against a background. Even the primary qualities are separable. So, we never perceive the substance, the unity, the salt itself, as something beneath the whiteness, tartness, and cubicalness. Hegel concludes, as did Berkeley, that we can dispense with this substance. The thing itself is nothing but the qualities—the whiteness, tartness, cubicalness (*PhS*, 73/GW, IX, 76).¹⁶

At this point, we have completely reversed ourselves. We can no longer say that the diversity, the separateness, is due to the subject and the unity to the object. We find no unity in the object—it is nothing but a diversity, the alsos. We find that the subject has merely projected a unity into the object (*PhS*, 73–4/GW, IX, 76–7). The substance is merely an idea we add to the distinguishable qualities. The unity then is due to the subject and the diversity to the object—precisely the opposite of what we started with.

Let us, then, try a different tack. Let us try making the subject responsible for both sides—for the unity, the unifying, of the object, and also for distinguishing the various qualities or properties (*PhS*, 74/GW, IX, 77). This is no longer a Lockean substance but merely a Berkeleyan perception. Hegel also has Kant in mind (see *L*, 89–90/SW, VIII, 130–1). The thing is merely what appears, what can be perceived, and that is all. The thing is whiteness, tartness, cubicalness, and the oneness is produced by our perception, the unity of our consciousness, that holds it all together. As Pippin points out, Hegel is here rejecting the Lockian or empiricist notion that there are external, nonschematized contents or substances just given to us in intuition to which we can apply a conceptual scheme.¹⁷ There are no such givens—we

cannot successfully make out the case that they exist. They are always already schematized or conceptualized.

What we have then is a thing that presents itself as a unity for-consciousness, but in-itself it is seen as diverse. This raises problems. The thing is taken both as something in-itself and as something for-consciousness. And the thing is something *different* for-consciousness than it is in-itself. It is a one for-consciousness but diverse in-itself. Moreover, the thing is one only for-*another*. The thing only gets its oneness for-itself through another. It is only one for-consciousness. But this means that to be one the thing must be *other* than itself. In other words, to get its oneness it must *not be one*, it must be something *besides* itself, it must also be something for-consciousness, for-another (*PhS*, 74–6/*GW*, IX, 77–9).

This is a problem that empiricism cannot handle. It is not at all a problem for Hegel. It is just what he wants. It shows us that the substance-accident or thing-property model will not work. It will not explain the thing's oneness that exists only for-another—its unity that exists only for-consciousness. The only way to understand this is as a *relation*—a relation grasped by *concepts*.

As Stern points out, relations do not fit easily within an ontology in which properties belong to individual things. Relations do not belong to single things. They belong to two things or they float between with one foot in one and the other foot in the other.¹⁸ At any rate, they do not behave like properties. For Hegel, then, the only way to grasp a thing's oneness-for-consciousness together with its diversity-in-itself is as a conceptual relation, not as a thing with properties. The thing-property model is supposed to give us a unified thing with diverse properties. But we have no unified thing. Consciousness provides the unity—our *concept* provides the unity. And the thing is only a unity in *relation* to our consciousness. We are forced, then, to move on to the third moment of the threefold synthesis.

IV. Force and the Understanding

In chapter III, “Force and the Understanding,” we reach the third moment of the threefold synthesis—the synthesis of recognition in a concept. However, the consciousness there on the stage has not yet become aware of the transcendental unity of apperception. In other words, consciousness does not yet see that the unity of the object is due to the unity of consciousness, which is to say that consciousness does not yet see that consciousness constitutes the object. We still have an understanding that sits back and observes its object as if the object were just given to it from outside, or as if the object were anchored in an unknown thing-in-itself—a view that Hegel also wants to undermine as he proceeds in this chapter. He wants to begin to move beyond Kant.

But the first question that arises in this chapter, I suppose, is why in the world Hegel discusses force. I have been arguing that Hegel moves from simple experience to more complex experience and at each stage chooses to take up an example appropriate to the point he wants to make. Here he chooses force for two reasons. First, it is a perfect example of a phenomenon that is unexplainable on the substance-accident or thing-property model. It can only be understood as a relation grasped by concepts. Second, in this section we are also working toward showing the necessity of Kant's categories. Force is a perfect example because we are also, with Kant, combating Hume's attack on causality. This can be seen explicitly in Hegel's earlier *Jena System of 1804–5* (JS, 53–5/GW, VII, 49–52; see also L, 42, 89–90/SW, VIII, 78–9, 130–1).¹⁹ In force, no causal connection can be perceived as a sense impression, yet the interaction of forces is inescapably causal. The only way to grasp this causal interaction is to understand it as a conceptual relation.

What is force? Force is something that appears, is expressed, when another object approaches and attracts, repulses, or excites it. Think of two magnets. There is no actual contact between the two as with Hume's billiard balls. The influence (the attraction or repulsion) is not a mechanical operating on the other. It makes no sense to speak of a thing or substance transmitting motion as a property to another thing (*PhS*, 85/GW, IX, 87). We can only speak of interaction—relations—within a field. In *The Jena System of 1804–5*, Hegel explicitly claims that force is not a substance but a relation. Moreover, in force we are unable to distinguish a cause from an effect. There is no difference between force and its utterance (JS, 49–51, 55/GW, VII, 45–8, 51–2). The lightning cannot be separated from the flash. What sense does it make for Hume to ask us for an impression of the secret power that the cause imparts to the effect if we cannot distinguish the two?²⁰ Hume is not conceiving the issue correctly.

Force is solely—is nothing but—an interaction occurring in a field. Force exists only when it is expressed. When the magnets come close enough together, force appears. When they are far enough apart, force disappears. Perception was unable to handle the conflict between being in-itself and being for-another—being one for-another and being diverse in-itself. Force has not the slightest difficulty with this. What force is in-itself, it is through its expression, through its relation to another. It expresses itself only when the other magnet approaches. Thus, only in so far as force is for-another is it what it is in-itself. Moreover, when force is expressed it is diverse; when it is driven back into itself it is one (*PhS*, 80–2, 86/GW, IX, 83–5, 87; JS, 54/GW, VII, 51). Thus, it is one in-itself and diverse for-another. Yet it is only what it is in-itself (one), it is only a force, through its relation to another (diversity).

Force is a complex relation between the two magnets. It is not a perceivable thing or substance or secret power. It is a relation. Moreover, force is not

an *external* relation. We do not have two things or substances that can be related externally as with Humean billiard balls. Force is quintessentially an *internal* relation—and, as I have been suggesting, that is what Hegel is after. The very essence of force is that it exists through the other. Force cannot be what it is except in its relation to another (*PhS*, 86, 82, 100/*GW*, IX, 87, 84, 99). The other is internally related to it as part of its very essence.

All we experience, then, for Hegel, is a play of forces. We see forces appear and vanish—a flux of forces. That is all. It can do us no good to project a substance behind this appearance. We have seen that that will not explain anything. What understanding grasps, then, is only relations and their relata—a flux of appearance. Nor does understanding grasp any inner workings or inner mechanism. Nevertheless, Hegel suggests, it just yearns to project something behind this appearance—not a substance as for perception but the *concept* of an unknown thing-in-itself. Consciousness just assumes something must be there. Consciousness wants something to be there. Consciousness needs it. Consciousness posits an inner as an explanation of the manifestation of force. The inner is supposed to explain the unity—the connection—of forces. The appearance is pure flux—interactions appearing and disappearing. The inner is the unity that continues through the flux—a law-like inner unity. Consciousness takes this inner to be the in-itself, a supersensible world, the true world. Hegel says that this is the first dim appearance of reason in the *Phenomenology* (*PhS*, 86–8/*GW*, IX, 88–9). He is referring, I think, to Kant’s ideas of reason—regulative ideas that allow us to treat nature as-if it were unified and consistent. Moreover, as we shall see, for Hegel there is something like a transcendental illusion involved here, as there is for Kant, though, for Hegel, in a sense very much the opposite of Kant (*CPR*, A297–B354, A314–B371, A644–B673, A653–B682, A698=B726).

In both the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, Hegel suggests that we are driven to go behind, within, to find a unity, a set of laws, a lawlike explanation (*L*, 42/*SW*, VIII, 78–9). Hegel calls it a *Reich der Gesetze*, which Miller translates as a “realm of laws” (*PhS*, 91/*GW*, IX, 91). I prefer Baillie’s translation of a “kingdom of laws” (*PhM*, 195). Why does Hegel call it a kingdom? Kant often speaks of a kingdom of nature (e.g., *FP*, 55/*KGS*, IV, 438), but I must admit that I am also reminded of Kant’s notion in the moral sphere of a kingdom of ends (*FP*, 50/*KGS*, IV, 433). I think that in this section of the *Phenomenology* Hegel is trying to draw a lot of things together in a very suggestive fashion. Let me slowly try to explain this.

In the first place, let us remember that for Kant the unknown thing-in-itself is found not only behind any experience of particular things, but also, in the “Transcendental Dialectic,” behind the unity of nature as a whole (e.g., *CPR*, A677=B705-A678=B706; *CPrR*, 111/*KGS*, V, 107). This unity can never be experienced, can never be known, but must be assumed as a regula-

tive idea. Understanding and natural science need the concept of a unified nature. For science to be possible, for the understanding to carry out its work, Kant thinks, we must assume that nature is unified and consistent (CPR, A653–B682, A670–B701, A686=B715, A698=B726). We must assume that laws of nature which hold in one part of nature also hold in the rest of nature that we have not experienced. It cannot be the case that laws of nature contradict each other—or science would be impossible. The same laws that explain terrestrial motion must be consistent with the laws that explain planetary motion. One set of laws must be subsumable under higher sets of laws—this is part of what Hegel means by a “kingdom” of laws (*PhS*, 91/GW, IX, 92).

Understanding demands this regulative idea, this kingdom of laws. Understanding must assume it. The only trouble is, if we admit that consciousness assumes this kingdom of laws, how can we say that it is unknown? It is a need, a creation, an assumption, of the understanding. The distinction between a flux of appearance and an inner world is just a distinction made by consciousness. To organize the flux of appearance, understanding posits an inner world, a beyond, a unity, a kingdom of laws. In doing this, of course, consciousness takes itself to be talking about a different, independent, inner world, there behind the scenes. But we who are philosophizing with Hegel see that consciousness simply made a distinction between outer appearances and an inner, between phenomena and a supersensible thing-in-itself. We see that the supersensible beyond is simply our assumption and, as Hegel puts it, that appearance is its essence and only filling (*PhS*, 89/GW, IX, 90)—all we have is an empty concept of unity that we project behind the flux of appearance. Hegel will resist this drive of consciousness to project a world beyond, a supersensible world, as an unknown thing-in-itself. In the *Phenomenology*, he says, “behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to conceal the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless *we* go behind it ourselves, as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen” (*PhS*, 103/GW, IX, 102).

Hegel does not deny the existence of a thing-in-itself, as Fichte (at least at times) did.²¹ Hegel just denies that the thing-in-itself is unknown. It is not unknown because we construct it. There is nothing there unless we ourselves go behind the curtain and construct it. And what is it we construct? The concept of an inner, a beyond, an other world, an empty abstraction. It looks like an unknown thing-in-itself because it has no content to be known. But nothing is more easily known—it is merely a *concept*, the bare abstract concept of an object, an empty concept whose only filling is ordinary appearance (*L*, 91–2/SW, VIII, 133; *PhS*, 89/GW, IX, 90).²² In short, all we actually have is the flux of appearance, but we cannot accept that that is all we have. We are driven to assume, construct, posit an unknown thing-in-itself behind this content.

There is another way to approach this matter that might make Hegel's position a bit clearer. Allison distinguishes between a "two worlds" and a "two aspects" interpretation of Kant. The two worlds view, the standard view of Kant held by most, is that "there is a straightforward ontological distinction between two classes of entity: knowable and mind-dependent appearances and unknowable and mind-independent things in themselves." The two aspects view, on the other hand, rejects such an ontological distinction and holds instead that "Kant's transcendental distinction is between the ways in which things (empirical objects) can be 'considered' at the metalevel of philosophical reflection rather than between the kinds of things that are considered in such reflection."²³ Allison admits that sometimes Kant's language sounds as if he is committed to the two worlds view and in certain places there even seems to be no way around the fact that Kant really is committed to such a view (*KTI*, 31; *KTF*, 138). Nevertheless, Allison argues that we should adopt the two aspects view of Kant.

Where does Hegel stand on this? It cannot be shown that Hegel understands the distinction between a two worlds and a two aspects view with all the refinement of a contemporary scholar like Allison, but I think it is very definitely the case that Hegel is attacking a two worlds view, the standard view of what Kant holds, and that Hegel is arguing for what is basically a two aspects view. Hegel rejects the existence of another world, a supersensible world, a true world, a beyond, or whatever we wish to call it. The other world, or the distinction between two worlds, for Hegel, is nothing but a product of thought. It is the result of a distinction that is posited by consciousness. It is a conception, a different perspective, another aspect, a construction. There is nothing behind the curtain unless we go behind it ourselves so that there may be something there to be seen (*PhS*, 87–9, 102–3/*GW*, IX, 89–90, 101–2; *L*, 91–2/*SW*, VIII, 133).

Now, of course, Hegel's whole thrust here—and insofar as we do reject a two worlds for a two aspects view we play right into his hands—is to deny that the thing-in-itself can be unknown. If the thing-in-itself is not an entity in a distinct ontological realm, if it is just a different aspect of, a different way of conceiving, a different perspective on the sensible object, then, Hegel wants to know, what can there be here that is not known? Nothing is more easily known. We abstract away everything sensible, all content, and we are left simply with a conception—a conception of a bare it, the contentless concept of an object. What could more easily be known?

At this point, Hegel says, we have moved from consciousness on to self-consciousness (*PhS*, 103/*GW*, IX, 102). This is so because we see that the thing-in-itself, the inner, the kingdom of laws, is a construction of consciousness. Self-consciousness grasps appearances-for-consciousness as well as the thing-in-itself, which we now see is just another kind of appearance-for-con-

consciousness. The content of self-consciousness is completely within consciousness. We have—though the consciousness there on the stage does not see all of this yet—a transcendental unity of apperception. All objects are within this unified consciousness, as for Kant, but in opposition to Kant, there is no unknown thing-in-itself. The transcendental illusion involved here, then, is not what Kant thought it was. It is not that—in trying to go beyond experience, in trying to know the whole of nature, in assuming that nature is a unified and consistent kingdom of laws—we mistakenly claim to know the thing-in-itself which must remain unknown. The transcendental illusion is rather that—in going behind the curtain, in constructing the thing-in-itself, the beyond, the kingdom of laws—we do not notice that it is we ourselves who do the constructing and that nothing is more easily known than what is constructed.²⁴

We still must finish dealing with the various possible meanings that the term “kingdom of laws” might have. I said earlier that it reminds me of Kant’s notion of a kingdom of ends. And, indeed, I think we can now see that there is at least a strong parallel between these two kingdoms. In the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that a kingdom is a union of different rational beings in a system of common laws. A kingdom of ends is a situation in which we abstract from the private interests of individuals and conceive their universal and rational ends combined in a systematic whole—including these rational beings as ends in themselves. A kingdom of ends, then, would be similar to a kingdom of laws in that both involve a system of laws, though in one case we have moral laws and in the other case natural laws (*FP*, 50/KGS, IV, 433). We must also notice that in a kingdom of ends, each individual is the source of these rational moral laws—the source of the categorical imperative. Thus each individual, Kant says, is a supreme lawgiver (*FP*, 49–50/KGS, IV, 432–3). Individuals, Hegel would say, are also supreme lawgivers in the realm of natural laws—they construct the kingdom of laws. Even Kant holds that the understanding is the “lawgiver of nature” (*CPR*, A126–7).

Furthermore, these two kingdoms must be brought into reconciliation. In the *Fundamental Principles*, Kant suggests that the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of ends should be united. In the “Transcendental Dialectic” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says that ideas of reason are to make possible a transition from the concepts of nature to practical concepts. In the section on the “Postulates of Pure Practical Reason” in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that the realization of the highest good requires the harmony of morality and nature—and that this is called the “kingdom of God.” (*FP*, 56/ KGS, IV, 439; *CPR*, B386, A569–B598; *CPrR*, 115, 129–30, 133/KGS, V, 111, 124–5, 128). Much of this will only become clear as we proceed, but for it eventually to do so we must begin to notice a series of

connections. It is very important to see Kant's influence on Hegel in these matters. Unless we do so, Hegel's thought will seem much more scattered, arbitrary, and aimless than it is. It will be especially important to notice that Hegel pays a great deal of attention to the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and to the "Postulates of Pure Practical Reason" in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that is, to sections that especially deal with the reconciliation of nature and morality. This is an issue, we will see, that Hegel takes up and returns to again and again in the *Phenomenology*: here in "Force and the Understanding," again in "Unhappy Consciousness," in the second half of the chapter on "Reason," and in the last part of the chapter on "Spirit." Hegel wants to weaken hard and fast boundaries between the natural realm and the spiritual (moral, cultural, political, religious) realm. He wants to reconcile these two realms in a more thoroughgoing way than Kant did. Consequently he returns to these issues at several different levels of his thought.²⁵

To take the first step in trying to understand all of this, then, we must see that the connection between the "Transcendental Dialectic" and the "Postulates of Pure Practical Reason" is not unconnected to Hegel's rather mysterious notion in "Force and the Understanding" of an inverted world. He says that what in one world is the North Pole, in the other becomes the South Pole, what is black becomes white, what is sweet becomes bitter [*sauer*], and what is justice becomes crime (*PhS*, 97/*GW*, IX, 97–8). This is extremely obscure, but one thing that is quite clear is that it mixes the moral and the natural. Hegel also says that we have *two* supersensible worlds here. One of them he explicitly identifies as the kingdom of laws, which thus refers to Kant's notion in the "Transcendental Dialectic" of a supersensible realm behind the unity of the totality of nature. The other supersensible world Hegel does not identify, but it would certainly seem to be the noumenal realm of freedom behind the moral agent dealt with in Kant's moral writings (*PhS*, 96/*GW*, IX, 96).²⁶ These two realms, we have seen, must be brought together. How does this occur? In the "Postulates of Pure Practical Reason," the highest good requires this reconciliation. Kant says that the highest good for human beings, of course, requires virtue. But it also requires happiness. A life without happiness simply could not be considered to be the highest good for a human being. The trouble is, though, that virtue and happiness would seem to be irreconcilable. Happiness, for Kant, is a natural phenomenon that requires the regular satisfaction of our needs, interests, and desires. But to be virtuous, we certainly cannot be determined by—it is even unlikely that we can be determined in accordance with—needs, interests, or desires. We must be determined by the moral law. If we lived solely in one world, then, virtue and happiness would be irreconcilable. Only if we live in two worlds, Kant thinks, can they be reconciled. Virtue will not likely lead to happiness in the

ordinary world of natural laws and causal determinism. But if we think of ourselves as also living in a noumenal world, Kant says, then virtue could lead to happiness if mediated by an Author of nature; and indeed, Kant goes on to argue that we must postulate a God who sees to it that nature is ordered such that our desires are satisfied (and thus that we can be happy) while acting virtuously (*CPrR*, 111–19, 128–33/*KGS*, V, 107–15, 124–8). At any rate, Hegel's notion of an inverted world, I suggest, grows out of Kant's concept of two opposed worlds: one of freedom, the other of nature; one of autonomy, the other of determinism; one of virtue, the other of happiness—two worlds that require a God to invert one into the other.

If Hegel rejects Kant's notion that the thing-in-itself is unknown, if he rejects the existence of two worlds, as we have seen that he does, then it follows that it will be impossible for him to accept a noumenal realm beyond and different from the phenomenal realm. If this is so, then we would expect—and we will see it confirmed as we proceed in the *Phenomenology*—that Hegel will not accept a realm of morality sharply distinguished from a realm of nature, nor of practical reason separate from theoretical reason. If we are supreme legislators in both the natural and the moral sphere, if we construct both of these realms, it is not very likely that we will ultimately be able to keep them apart. And so the Kantian opposition between two worlds, which gives rise to an inverted world, in Hegel's view, is a mistake that can and must be corrected.

Hegel says that we must eliminate the tendency to handle such differences by splitting, creating different elements, different worlds. Instead, we must grasp such differences as conceptual relations—as *inner* difference, difference within a unity (*PhS*, 98–9/*GW*, IX, 98). And that, if we pursue it far enough, will lead us to the absolute, which, after all, is all of reality, all difference, within a unity. An inverted world results from concepts that are too limited, that are not complex enough to grasp all of reality. Reality is too rich, it always exceeds, is other than, different from, contradicts, inverts, our concepts. All of this will become progressively clearer as we proceed.