

**The process of clarification:  
On Hegel's use of metaphor**

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## Introduction

'Es ist [...] das eigentümliche der Philosophie, das zu untersuchen was man sonst für bekannt hält',<sup>1</sup> Hegel remarks in his introduction to his lectures on the history of philosophy: we cannot but start with what is there before us, with what we are presented with - whether it is the cat on the windowsill, the book we read, the people we live with, the history of philosophy, or philosophy itself. The object of our knowledge is there (an important implication of course being that knowing and thinking should not deal with what we think we do not know) and we should allow it to inspire in us the curiosity and desire to find out what it really is - to come to understand nature, what words and texts mean, what it means to be a human being, what knowing is - with the implication that 'what really is', the truth, is also there, but is obscured by what we take it to be. In thinking about what presents itself, about what we initially accept as clear and self-evident, we have to come to an awareness that things are not simply what we think they are - that we cannot determine and pin them down them according to what we take them to be - but that - in becoming aware that a second look will reveal the cat, the words and my thinking about them to be moving - they have to be developed into what they truly are, through actively involving ourselves with what is there, which we will find both obscures and clarifies our view.

Yet, if that which we think we know - the animal we observe, or the words on the page - has managed to inspire wonder in us, and if we do feel the need to come to know the cat as what it is, or what the text is meant to reveal - how do we set about in our quest for knowledge? The beginning is there but how are to develop our initial question into a

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<sup>1</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I (Werke 18)*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 39.

truth that can be fully comprehended, as we are comprehended in it? What method are we to follow? And how can the method of philosophy be such that what we think we know is set in motion - and we as thinkers are set in motion - while at the same time allowing us to develop what we are presented with in such a way that we ultimately arrive at the truth of things, which is a complete understanding of what there already was, but has now been developed into something that can be understood?

In the preface to the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Hegel extensively discusses what he thinks is wrong with the method and presentation of the greater part of philosophy, and elaborates on the nature of true philosophy. Most philosophical works set out by presenting the results or goal of philosophy as something distinct from the method through which they are to be approached, ‘als ob in dem Zwecke oder den letzten Resultaten die Sache selbst und sogar in ihrem vollkommenen Wesen ausgedrückt wäre, gegen welches die Ausführung eigentlich das Unwesentliche sei.’<sup>2</sup> To do justice to ‘the Sache selbst’, which, as we will see, refers both to true knowing (‘das wirkliche Erkennen’) and its object, absolute truth, we cannot, in advance, say in what way philosophical truth should be presented.<sup>3</sup> Truth, Hegel argues, can only be revealed in, or through, its exposition: ‘die Sache ist nicht in ihrem *Zwecke* erschöpft, sondern in ihrer *Ausführung*, noch ist das *Resultat* das *wirkliche* Ganze, sondern es zusammen mit seinem Werden.’<sup>4</sup> Only by actively involving ourselves with the ways in which what is presents itself, or is presented, can what something truly is be revealed, as its becoming is an integral part of what it is.

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<sup>2</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes (Werke 3)* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. the first sentence of the introduction to the *Phänomenologie*, in which Hegel identifies ‘die Sache selbst’ as ‘das wirkliche Erkennen dessen, was in Wahrheit ist’, *PhdG*, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *PhdG*, p. 13.

The main question of this thesis is in what way Hegel's own method allows for a revelation of truth 'zusammen mit seinem Werden', and I will try to answer this question by analysing the way in which Hegel uses language - and especially metaphor - to incorporate this 'Werden' in his presentation. I will argue that the process in which truth is presented and clarified in the text can only take place if the reader is, and remains, actively involved with what the text is to reveal. I will finally show that, in absolute knowing, truth has, in one sense, fully clarified itself, but that, as absolute knowing is still to be thought of as a process with more than one aspect, metaphor still serves a function.

In chapter one I will discuss the background against which Hegel developed his ideas with regard to the (organic) nature of 'das wirkliche Wissen', which opposed both the either/ or knowing expressed in the judgements of reflexive philosophy – which can only see the manifold as a collection of items that contradict each other,<sup>5</sup> and as an object to which it sees itself as fundamentally opposed, thus being doomed to fail to grasp the unity that holds the manifold together – and the immediate knowing of the Absolute, in which this unity is presupposed as the ultimate principle of reality, but is simultaneously taken to be beyond our understanding, and as such can only be felt or intuited:

[w]enn nämlich das Wahre nur in demjenigen oder vielmehr nur als dasjenige existiert, was bald Anschauung, bald unmittelbares Wissen des Absoluten, Religion, das Sein [...] genannt wird, so wird von da aus zugleich für die Darstellung der Philosophie vielmehr das Gegenteil der Form des Begriffs gefordert. Das Absolute soll nicht begriffen, sondern gefühlt und angeschaut [werden], nicht sein Begriff,

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<sup>5</sup> *PhdG*, p. 12: 'sie [sieht] in der Verschiedenheit nur den Widerspruch'.

sondern sein Gefühl und Anschauung sollen das Wort führen und ausgesprochen werden.<sup>6</sup>

For Hegel, the presentation of true philosophy should be led by, and lead to, the conceptual understanding of the Absolute,<sup>7</sup> and it is this understanding which is to be expressed and articulated in words. The Absolute can be known, and not merely felt or believed in as a unity that lies beyond our understanding, and which we consequently cannot fully grasp, but only accept as a gift from a transcendent being. Merely believing in the Absolute may prove to be a source of comfort and spiritual guidance and inspiration ('Erbauung'), but this is not what philosophy should aim for: '[w]er nur Erbauung sucht, wer die irdische Mannigfaltigkeit seines Daseins und des Gedankens in Nebel einzuhüllen und nach dem unbestimmten Genüsse dieser unbestimmten Göttlichkeit verlangt, mag zusehen, wo er dies findet; er wird leicht selbst sich etwas vorzuschwärmen und damit sich aufzuspreizen die Mittel finden.'<sup>8</sup> If only a feeling that there is an underlying unity is to be our guide, we bar ourselves from a clear understanding of both the manifold that surrounds us and the unity that holds this manifold together, and consequently can only seek to satisfy ourselves with vagueness and indeterminacy. 'Die Kraft des Geistes ist nur so groß als ihre Äußerung:'<sup>9</sup> the spiritual force that holds everything together should be strong enough to fully develop

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<sup>6</sup> *PhdG*, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> With phrases such as 'Wissen des Absoluten', Hegel hints at the unification of subject and object within the Absolute, which is indicated by the genitive: knowledge of the Absolute is both knowledge which belongs to the Absolute (gen.obi.) and the knowledge we have of the Absolute (gen.subi.), and in this knowing, knowledge and the Absolute are, and become, one. Hegel uses the phrase 'das Erkennen des Absoluten' as early as 1802/03, in the *Einleitung zum Kritischen Journal*, to indicate the 'Bestimmung der Philosophie'. Cf. the introduction by Hans Brockard und Hartmut Buchner to G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenaer Kritische Schriften III: Glauben und Wissen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1986), p. X. Similarly, 'sein Begriff' is not only to be understood as our understanding of what the Absolute is, but also as the form or *logos* of what the Absolute is, and which thus determines our understanding of it. The *Begriff* thus in-forms our thought, in a way reminiscent of Aristotle's immanent forms.

<sup>8</sup> *PhdG*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> *PhdG*, p. 18.



and express itself, and nebulous articulations are to be taken as the expressions of a nebulous spirit.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, the question presents itself - and this will be the main focus of chapter two - why Hegel himself, if clarity in expression is what he is after, puts these criticisms and his own expositions in highly complex and metaphorical language, which by both Hegel's contemporaries and predecessors was deemed to unduly obscure his message.<sup>11</sup> There seems to be a contrast between this alleged obscurity and Hegel's message, viz. that precisely the type of philosophy that is looking for 'Erbauung' is guilty of indeterminacy and enshrouding thought in a nebulous cloud, the implication being that it is in the true philosophy Hegel is advocating that the utmost clarity is ultimately achieved.

Hegel's aim in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to show that, by tracking the different shapes in which spirit has expressed and experienced itself, we will ultimately arrive at a knowing that can be called absolute, in which *Geist* has come to full self-understanding and an awareness that it has reached this understanding. As Otto Pöggeler states in an essay on self-consciousness in the *Phänomenologie*, this awareness ultimately gained by *Geist* after having become conscious of all the shapes in which it presented itself is of its development or formation as a process with an immanent and all-encompassing goal, which is to come to an understanding of itself: '[e]rst in diesem Prozeß wird [das absolute Wissen] erreicht: ein letztes Durchsichtigwerden des Absoluten, das alle

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<sup>10</sup> As with the 'Erkennen des Absoluten' (see n. 7), Hegel hints at the twofold character of *Geist*. It is what is responsible for our coming to know what the 'Sache selbst' really is, and refers both to reality as being fundamentally spiritual (see *PhdG*, p. 28), but also to the spirit with which we, as knowers, approach and try to capture reality. In chapter one I will discuss Hegel's concept of *Geist* more extensively.

<sup>11</sup> A famous attack on Hegel was launched by Arthur Schopenhauer, who accused Hegel of being *mea caligine tutus* ('safe within my nebulous dark'). See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Hauptwerke. Band III: Der Satz vom Grunde. Über den Willen in der Natur. Die Grundprobleme der Ethik*, hrsg. Eduard Grisebach (Leipzig: Reclam, 1920), p. 207.

einzelne Gestalten in sich zurückholt.<sup>12</sup> But if, in absolute knowing, the Absolute becomes fully transparent, does that imply that this knowledge can now be presented in a language that is itself completely transparent, in which there is no longer any need for long, complicated sentences, and in which metaphors no longer serve the function they may have had when the object of knowledge had not yet fully revealed and grasped itself, as the meaning of words is now fully transparent, since they completely reflect the concepts they refer to?<sup>13</sup> To judge from the last chapter, (and the preface, that was written after Hegel had finished the rest of the *Phänomenologie*<sup>14</sup>), it is not.

As we can read towards the end of the final chapter, as soon as *Geist* has come to a conceptual understanding of itself – after having gone through all of its shapes, and having thus given proper content to its *Begriff* – it has become true *Wissenschaft*, and ‘die Sache selbst’ is now truly the unity of the object of knowledge and the knowing subject:

In dem Wissen hat also der Geist die Bewegung seines Gestaltens beschlossen, insofern dasselbe mit dem unüberwundenen Unterschiede des Bewußtseins behaftet ist. Er hat das reine Element seines Daseins, den Begriff, gewonnen. Der Inhalt ist nach der *Freiheit* seines *Seins* das sich entäußernde Selbst oder die *unmittelbare* Einheit des Sichselbstwissens. Die reine Bewegung dieser Entäußerung macht, sie am Inhalte betrachtet, die *Notwendigkeit* derselben aus. Der verschiedene Inhalt ist als *bestimmter* im Verhältnisse, nicht an sich, und [ist] seine Unruhe, sich selbst aufzuheben, oder die *Negativität*; also ist die Notwendigkeit oder Verschiedenheit,

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<sup>12</sup> Otto Pöggeler, ‘Selbstbewußtsein als Leitfaden der Phänomenologie des Geistes’ in Dietmar Köhler/ Otto Pöggeler (hrsg.), *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> Of course, complete transparency does not admit of the possibility of reflection, as Hegel also points out in his discussion of physical shape in relation to light in the *Enzyklopädie*, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften II* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), §§ 317- 318.

<sup>14</sup> See Köhler/ Pöggeler, op. cit, p. 2, where they point out that the ‘Vorrede’ was also intended as a preface to the *System der Wissenschaft* that Hegel was intent on writing, and of which the *Phänomenologie* was to be the first part.

wie das freie Sein, ebenso das Selbst; und in dieser selbstischen *Form*, worin das Dasein unmittelbar Gedanke ist, ist der Inhalt *Begriff*. Indem also der Geist den Begriff gewonnen, entfaltet er das Dasein und Bewegung in diesem Äther seines Lebens und ist Wissenschaft. Die Momente seiner Bewegung stellen sich in ihr nicht mehr als bestimmte *Gestalten des Bewußtseins* dar, sondern in dem der Unterschied desselben in das Selbst zurückgegangen, als *bestimmte Begriffe* und als die organische, in sich selbst gegründete Bewegung derselben.<sup>15</sup>

Yet although the passage claims that an understanding of what *Geist* is has been gained, its language definitely presents a challenge, and seems to prevent us from immediately catching on to the gist of Hegel's argumentation. The passage starts by stating that, in knowing itself, *Geist's* movement has come to an end ('beschlossen'), and has now come into its own ('er hat das Element seines Daseins'), which makes this self-understanding possible. However, this appears to be contradicted almost immediately in the third sentence where the content of knowing is said to be (as, being in its own element, it has won through to a complete freedom of being) 'das sich entäußernde Selbst', a self that externalises itself, which very much suggests a further movement originating from within this content. We are thus forced to return to the first sentence, and reconsider the meaning of the word 'beschlossen', which can, indeed, also mean 'to include, or enclose, within itself',<sup>16</sup> so that the movement of *Geist* shaping itself is said to take place within *Wissen*, with the implication that this movement does not come to an end, but continues within the sphere of knowing. A further striking aspect, apart from Hegel's predilection for multi-dimensional words, is that we are constantly made to ask ourselves who or

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<sup>15</sup> *PhdG*, p. 588/ 589.

<sup>16</sup> The word 'beschließen', like so many words Hegel uses, is extremely rich in meaning: it can also mean 'to include within a circumference' (circumcludere), 'to decide', 'to draw a conclusion', 'to take a decision' (which could also link up with the third sentence, in that *Geist* is now actively ready to externalize itself), and I hope this thesis will show that Hegel, as he does here, almost always brings into play a word's full potential. See the entry on 'beschließen' in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm*, available on <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/> DWB.

what the subject or object of a sentence is, as there are constant subtle shifts and, as soon as something appears to be determined, it is said to also be something else, as we can observe in the third sentence, when the content is said to be ‘das sich entäußernde Selbst *oder* (my italics, AG) die *unmittelbare* Einheit des Sichselbstwissens’. We cannot find a still point in the text (since, as Hegel indicates, as soon as something is determined, unrest (“Unruhe”) ensues), from which we can then easily make sense of the text as a whole, and constantly have to make readjustments in our reading and understanding of all of the parts in relation to each other, and to the whole.<sup>17</sup> Finally, this passage raises the question why Hegel uses so many words metaphorically, such as ‘Äther seines Lebens’, when he talks about the *Begriff*, or ‘organic’ to indicate the movement which finds its foundation in concepts that have been determined (which, again, appears to be a contradictory statement).

It appears that Hegel, even at the stage when *Geist* has reached the vantage point of absolute knowing, sees his way of presenting philosophy as the only way in which ‘das wahre Wissen’ can be expressed, even though, at first glance at least, it does so in language that raises questions as soon as it seems to provide us with an answer, and that metaphor - as a rhetorical device that simultaneously obscures and clarifies what is to be said - plays a prominent role in this presentation. In chapter three I will further analyse Hegel's use of metaphor, against the background of contemporary theory on metaphor. In the final chapter, through an analysis of two related, 'organic', metaphors, 'Gärung' and 'Verdauung', I will show that, and explain why, Hegel makes use of ‘clusters’ of metaphors, and why many of his metaphors reveal themselves to belong to more than

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<sup>17</sup> It may well be asked whether it is indeed possible to try to understand a passage, such as the one given above, by looking at that passage alone, and whether or not to quote Hegel is to misrepresent him, as B. Heimann puts it: ‘Hegel zitieren heißt ihn mißverstehen und ihn mißbrauchen’ (B. Heimann, *System and Methode in Hegel's Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1927), XXI, quoted in L. Bruno Puntel, *Darstellung, Methode und Struktur* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1973), p.21) I will discuss this aspect more extensively in chapter two.

one cluster. Furthermore, I will argue that, as in absolute knowing knowledge is still in a state of (continuous) becoming, the presentation has to be such that it incorporates this movement, and that (especially organic) metaphors fulfil an important function in both expressing movement, and allowing for further movement within the totality of truth that is achieved in ‘das absolute Wissen’, in which we, as readers, become involved when taking up the challenges posed by Hegel’s texts. Hegel’s presentation indeed shows that the result can indeed only be shown together with its becoming (‘zusammen mit seinem Werden’), which, as I hope to show, does not only refer to the becoming that prepares for, or leads up to, the ultimate result, but also indicates that the result is indeed still involved in a process of becoming.

A further and related aspect I want to address is that in using language that – through its initial difficulty – forces us to consider and develop its potential, Hegel makes language highly self-conscious, as the reader, as part of what Hegel calls ‘natural consciousness’,<sup>18</sup> becomes aware of all the meanings and preconceptions that we, initially uncritically and thoughtlessly, project onto words. Metaphors, and multi-dimensional words such as ‘beschließen’, in this sense also function as mirror, in which *Geist*, in its externalisation in language as a historical phenomenon, finds itself reflected.

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<sup>18</sup> As Hegel explains in his discussion of ‘das natürliche Bewußtsein’ (*PhdG*, pp. 72/73), ‘natural’ is not simply a positive term that lends itself to associations with an untainted, simple state in which we see the world as it essentially is, but refers to the opinions and preconceptions we already (through habit, education, etc.) are equipped with, and that we have to critically reconsider, as they block our view of ‘das wirkliche Erkennen’. Our initial, natural and necessarily subjective view of the truth is therefore a ‘Vorstellung’ in a quite literal sense: our representation of what truth is, is put in front of (‘vorgestellt’) the truth itself, which thus becomes screened and blocked from view.

## Chapter 1 The nature of true philosophy

One of Hegel's basic tenets is that in order to come to know what is, it should be allowed to enfold itself, and that to develop itself as what it is is the main purpose of knowing. In the introductory lectures on the history of philosophy, he says the following with regard to the concept of development ('der Begriff der Entwicklung'):

Alles Erkennen, Lernen, Wissenschaft, selbst Handeln beabsichtigt weiter nichts, als das, was innerlich, an sich ist, aus sich herauszuziehen und sich gegenständiglich zu werden. In die Existenz treten ist Veränderung und in demselben eins und dasselbe bleiben. Das Ansich regiert den Verlauf. Die Pflanze verliert sich nicht in bloße ungemessene Veränderung. So im Keim der Pflanze. Es ist dem Keime nichts anzusehen. Er hat den Trieb, sich zu entwickeln; er kann es nicht aushalten nur an sich zu sein. Der Trieb ist der Widerspruch, daß er nur an sich ist und es doch nicht sein soll. Der Trieb setzt in die Existenz heraus. Es kommt vielfaches hervor; das ist aber alles im Keime schon enthalten, freilich nicht entwickelt, sondern eingehüllt und ideell. [...] Im Geiste ist es anders. Der Keim in der Natur, nachdem er sich zu einem Anderen gemacht, nimmt sich wieder in die Einheit zusammen. Ebenso im Geist; was an sich ist, wird für den Geist, und so wird er für sich selbst.<sup>19</sup>

What there is already contains the principle (*Keim*) of its own development. If we look at nature, we see that it develops itself according to what it already is, and what it is can be developed in thinking *Geist*. It is not a coincidence that Hegel, in this introductory lecture, turns to the example of the plant to explain *Entwicklung* as the development both of what there is, and of our knowing what there is. Hegel wants us to understand that what there is cannot be understood if we approach it in terms of a mechanistic picture,

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<sup>19</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, pp. 40-41.

in which what is is set in motion by a force other than itself. Neither should we think of what is as to be classified in rigid schemes, such as the system developed by Linnaeus, in which what something is is determined according to a principle externally applied, and in which something belongs either to this or to that category. If we look at nature carefully, Hegel wants us to see, we see that it grows, not in discrete steps, but smoothly and fluidly, and that what is resists neat classification.

In this chapter I want to sketch the background against which Hegel developed his own systematic method of philosophy, and in what way his method - the dialectical movement - is to provide an answer to what he found wanting in the philosophy as he knew it, as it starts from what there is - the content of our thought - and allows this to develop itself.<sup>20</sup> I will explain key concepts of his method and try to show that, as for Hegel truth is what is systematically developed from a starting point that already contains the principle of its own growth - what is is conceived through *Selbsterzeugung* or self-explication - that thinking can only recognise what is if it is to conceive of itself as developing organically.

## 1.1 'Das Bedürfnis der Philosophie'

Already in his early works, Hegel shows a preoccupation with the true nature of knowledge and philosophy. For Hegel it is only within a scientific system that truth can really exist, a claim that had already been advanced in the works of Hegel's immediate

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 50. 'denn es ist der Inhalt an sich, die Dialektik, die er an ihm selbst hat, welche ihn fortbewegt.' Hegel's method can thus not be considered as distinct from its object: we can only fully understand something if the road that brought us there is incorporated in our knowing of what truly is. Hegel here also suggests that, like an organism, knowing contains the principle of its own motion and development.

predecessors, such as Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who aimed at presenting philosophy as a systematic unity in order to make philosophy a true science (*Wissenschaft*). As Jon Stewart explains, in his essay on the systematicity of Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, for Kant it is precisely 'the ensemble or organic unity of knowledge that makes it a true science, and what does not belong to this systematic unity is a "mere aggregate" or collection of facts.'<sup>21</sup> In his *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*, Hegel critically examines the systems of Kant and especially Fichte, in order to show their respective merits, but more importantly, to speak of the need that makes itself felt in their philosophy ('das Bedürfnis der Philosophie'), a need for which Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph's Schelling's *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800) was to provide an answer. What is missing is a 'Philosophie [...], [welche] die Natur für die Mißhandlungen, die sie in dem Kantischen und Fichteschen Systeme leidet, versöhnt und die Vernunft selbst in eine Übereinstimmung mit der Natur [setzt] – nicht in eine solche, worin sie auf sich Verzicht tut oder eine schale Nachahmerin derselben werden müßte, sondern eine Einstimmung dadurch, daß sie sich selbst zur Natur aus innerer Kraft gestaltet.'<sup>22</sup> Hegel's main objection to these systems is that – apart from missing out on the true nature of reason (which is posited as completely opposed to nature, whereby both reason and nature are mistreated) – they have all tried to grasp the whole, but so far have all failed dramatically. 'Der Trieb zur Totalität äußert sich noch als Trieb

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<sup>21</sup> Jon Stewart, 'Hegel's *Phenomenology* as a Systematic Fragment,' in Frederick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 76. 'Organic' in this sentence is Stewart's term, as, in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant himself does not use the term 'organic' to indicate the systematic unity he is after, although the language he uses is rather suggestive, see e.g. in the preface to the first edition: '[die Metaphysik] ist nichts als das Inventarium aller unsere Besitze durch reine Vernunft, systematisch geordnet. Es kann uns hier nichts entgehen, weil was Vernunft gänzlich aus sich selbst hervorbringt, sich nicht verstecken kann, sondern selbst durch Vernunft ans Licht gebracht wird, sobald man nur das gemeinschaftliche Prinzip derselben entdeckt hat.' See: Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, hrsg. Jens Timmermann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998), AXX.

<sup>22</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie* in *Jenaer Schriften 1801-1807* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 13.



zur Vollständigkeit der Kenntnisse':<sup>23</sup> the longing to get hold of the whole has, as yet, expressed itself in the urge to collect all available facts of knowledge. The implication of the word 'noch', of course, being that this 'Trieb', as soon as it has been properly understood, will reveal itself as what it really is.

'Trieb' is one of those words that are, and through Hegel's use become, very rich in meaning. Hegel purposefully leaves open to whom or what the 'Trieb' belongs, and only shows us in what way it externalises itself in the systems under scrutiny. Yet, especially in the context of 'Leben' (a word that also features prominently in the sentence from which the quotation has been taken), he probably also wants us to think of 'Trieb' as the need, or urge, through which organisms maintain themselves. The notion of 'Trieb' as the ability in organisms to organise and preserve themselves ('Selbstorganisation'), which enables them to express themselves as what they are, was developed by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in his *Über den Bildungstrieb und das Zeugungsgeschäft* (1781), a work with which Hegel was familiar. Knowing as a living totality that is capable of organising itself into a system, Hegel suggests, is what is already there ('an sich') in the urge to grasp itself as a totality, but still needs development and articulation; the 'Totalität des Innern' still has to be set in motion.<sup>24</sup> 'Trieb', however, not only featured in the biology of Hegel's time, but also played an important role in Fichte's thought, and in Friedrich Schiller's *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, in which the 'play drive' (*Spieltrieb*) allows human beings to freely form their experience, and thus allows us to go beyond the strictures imposed

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 15. The phrase 'Trieb zur Vollständigkeit' is echoed in the preface to the *Phänomenologie*, when Hegel dismisses knowledge that is a mere 'Aggregat von Kenntnissen'. This phrase is suggestive of Kant, but it is fair to say that Kant himself uses the term *Aggregat* critically, when he points out that a totality of knowledge cannot be achieved *a posteriori*, by trial and error, but should be based on an *a priori* idea of the whole, from which the system (which Hegel is still critical of), is developed. See *KrV*, B89.

<sup>24</sup> On the influence of contemporary biology on Hegel's thinking, see e.g. Dietrich von Engelhardt, 'Die biologische Wissenschaften in Hegels Naturphilosophie' in *Hegels Philosophie der Natur: Beziehungen zwischen empirischer und spekulativer Naturerkenntnis*, hrsg. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Michael John Petry (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), pp. 121-137.

on our thinking by Kant's critical project, in which experience is limited by the forms we, as subjects, impose on it.<sup>25</sup> For Fichte, *Trieb* is also linked to the idea of freedom, and, to use Gunter Zöller's words, 'stands for the tendency of a being to determine itself',<sup>26</sup> without external limits. Ultimately, when what 'Trieb' is has fully revealed itself, all these meanings given to the word will have been taken up and been properly understood as necessary moments of *Geist* coming to know itself. In order for *Geist* to capture these moments, it is necessary that these moments have been allowed, through a presentation in which words are made to interact with their context, to present themselves.

This approach to *Wissenschaft* betrays an utter indifference to its reality, and irrevocably estranges us from the truth. *Wissenschaft* thus turns out to be not about knowing but only about what is known, which is something to which we, as knowers, do not belong: 'Kenntnisse betreffen fremde Objekte; in dem Wissen von Philosophie, das nie etwas anders als ein Kenntnis war, hat die Totalität des Innern sich nicht bewegt und die Gleichgültigkeit ihre Freiheit vollkommen behauptet.'<sup>27</sup> By merely collecting objects without seeing them as being connected (both to others and themselves) we betray our indifference to the truth,<sup>28</sup> and hence our knowledge can never become more than a 'tote Meinung', the living spirit remains hidden, and we fail to see that there is truth at all: '[e]s

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<sup>25</sup> Or, in Schiller's terminology, the 'sense drive' (*sinnlicher Trieb*) and the 'form drive' (*Formtrieb*) make it possible for us to have knowledge, but simultaneously impose limits on each other, which can only be overcome in the *Spieltrieb*.

<sup>26</sup> Günter Zöller, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy: The Original Duplicity of Intelligence and Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.66.

<sup>27</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> In this sentence Hegel already suggests that we cannot think of the Absolute as a totality in which there is complete, in the sense of undifferentiated, identity (which proved to be one of his major criticisms of Schelling's identity philosophy). In order to be truly, and actively, involved in a totality, indifference ('Gleichgültigkeit') should be limited, and not be given complete freedom.

(a philosophical system which collects 'Kenntnisse', AG) hat nicht erkannt daß es Wahrheit gibt.<sup>29</sup>

'Erkennen' is an important word for Hegel, and refers to real knowing, which is truly able to recognise itself in what offers itself as *Totalität*, and thus to allow this totality to develop all its (internal) connections. In real philosophy there should be a movement from what is 'bekannt' - that which we thought we knew but which, as soon as we start thinking about it turns out to be a 'fremdes Objekt' - to what is 'erkannt'; a movement which also entails that what was considered to be 'bekannt' becomes unstable, and is no longer a fixed point from which we can start building huge complexes of knowledge. What is posited as known in advance ('vorausgesetzt') should not be left as it is, but should be moved and taken up by a *Wissen* which is worthy of its name, as it is self-conscious knowing, which is aware of what and how it knows. It knows what it is doing, and is not simply busy with 'Hin- und Herreden'.<sup>30</sup> If not, we will never be able to know what God, Nature, Subject and Object, or whichever starting point we might want to use as a foundation, really are; and they will be simply the same, and just as 'unerkannt', when we return to them after having built a system which is able to house the 'Vollständigkeit der Kenntnisse'.<sup>31</sup> In order to do real philosophy, the 'Bedürfnis' has to be felt not so much as a lack, but as a need to produce, rather than merely grasp (which implies that something is already there for us to be grasped, whereas Hegel's point is that

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<sup>29</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> *PhdG*, p. 35. 'Es ist die gewöhnlichste Selbsttäuschung wie Täuschung anderer, beim erkennen etwas als bekannt vorauszusetzen und es ebenso gefallen zu lassen; mit allem Hin- und Herreden kommt solches Wissen, ohne zu wissen wie ihm geschieht, nicht von der Stelle.'

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35: '[sie] machen feste Punkte sowohl des Ausgangs als der Rückkehr aus'. As I will discuss in chapter two, Hegel's point that objects should be 'erkannt' instead of 'bekannt' also has implications with regard to the words we use for those objects: we only know what we mean when we use a word such as God, or subject, or nature, when it has been given full content by the development of all its potential meanings, through the interaction with its context. Hegel's use of the word 'bekannt', for instance, especially in the context of *Glauben und Wissen*, also brings into play its denotation of a confession (of faith); when something is 'bekannt', we can only testify, but never really know its truth.

we can only truly grasp something at the end of the process of coming to understand),<sup>32</sup> the ‘Totalität des Wissens’, which only then can become a true ‘System der Wissenschaft.’<sup>33</sup> When reason, and not indifference,<sup>34</sup> is truly free, it is able to do precisely this: ‘[d]ie freie Vernunft und ihre Tat ist eins, und ihre Tätigkeit ein reines Darstellen ihrer selbst.’<sup>35</sup> However, in the philosophical systems of Hegel’s time, reason is still struggling to be free, and, as such, remains divided (‘entzweit’) from what it wants to know; there still is a huge gap between the subject and object of knowledge.

### 1.1.1. The source of the ‘Bedürfnis der Philosophie’ in Kant and Fichte

Why is reason struggling in the systems developed by Kant and Fichte?<sup>36</sup> Both are discussed in Hegel’s *Glauben und Wissen*, in which Hegel analyses the shortcomings of their respective philosophies, in order to prepare the way for his own. The most fundamental problem, Hegel argues in the introduction, is the strict demarcation of

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<sup>32</sup> For Hegel there is an important difference between ‘das Auffassen’ and ‘das Begreifen’ of an object, which can both be translated by the verb ‘to grasp’. Initially, in sense-certainty, an object is there for us immediately, it is a pure ‘this’, of which we, as yet, cannot (and should not) expect an understanding: ‘[w]ir haben uns (at the stage of the immediate knowing available in sense-certainty, AG) ebenso *unmittelbar* oder *aufnehmend* zu verhalten, also nichts an ihm, wie es sich darbietet, zu verändern und von dem Auffassen das Begreifen abzuhalten.’ (*PhdG*, p. 82). In ‘Begreifen’ a complete, inclusive (as all its moments are ‘inbegriffen’) grasp of an object has been achieved.

<sup>33</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 46. ‘Es muß das Bedürfnis entstehen, eine Totalität des Wissens, ein System des Wissens zu produzieren.’

<sup>34</sup> See n. 28.

<sup>35</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> It is debatable whether it is justified to talk of a system in Kant’s philosophy. Hegel himself did, e.g. in *Glauben und Wissen*: ‘Hier is noch der interessanteste Punkt des Kantischen Systems aufzuweisen...’ (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Jenaer Kritische Schriften III: Glauben und Wissen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1986), p.33), but Kant himself still viewed systematicity as ‘an ideal that is never actually completed’ (see the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp.20-21), and the lack of systematicity (and of a proper foundation) was the main source of Reinhold’s criticism of Kant. On Kant’s views on the systematicity of his philosophy, see also n. 21.

reason to the realm of finitude,<sup>37</sup> where it has to remain within its own, subjective, boundaries and is limited to an endless and superficial progress – a progress in which no real results are ultimately achieved, as it can never return to its starting point – by which the absolute truth can never be known, but only believed in (and thus can only be ‘bekannt’). The *Entzweiung* between subject and object, finitude and infinitude, the unity of concepts and the empirical manifold is felt, but cannot be overcome:

[d]ie Qual der bessern Natur unter dieser Beschränktheit oder absoluten Entgegensetzung drückt sich durch das Sehnen und Streben, das Bewußtsein, das es Beschränktheit ist, über die sie nicht hinaus kann, als Glauben an ein Jenseits dieser Beschränktheit aus; aber als perennierendes Unvermögen zugleich die Unmöglichkeit, über die Schranke in das sich selbst klare und sehnsuchtslose Gebiet der Vernunft sich zu erheben.<sup>38</sup>

When reason’s true nature is revealed and lived by, Hegel argues, a region is made available (by reason itself) in which reason is transparent to itself, and is able to see the true nature of the *Totalität*, in which the *Entzweiung* is overcome, and there no longer is a need and longing for reason to be united with itself.

In his discussion of Kant, Hegel points out that although Kant’s subjective idealism sets firm and insuperable boundaries for human knowledge, the ‘wahrhafte Vernunftidee’ can be found in his philosophy, and is expressed in the question ‘wie sind synthetische

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<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 11: ‘In einer solchen nur Endliches denkenden Vernunft findet sich freilich, daß sie nur Endliches denken, in der Vernunft als Trieb und Instinkt findet sich, daß sie das Ewige nicht denken kann.’ It is clear that Hegel wants to think of reason as a ‘drive’ that, through the vehicle of human reason, can come to an understanding of itself (precisely because it has a self that can be found).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Urteile a priori möglich?<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, Kant only addressed its subjective part in order to show that ‘ein vernünftiges Erkennen’ is impossible. Hence, Kant failed to meet the ‘Aufgabe der wahren Philosophie’, which is not to dissolve the opposites inherent in his philosophy, but ‘das absolute Aufgehobensein des Gegensatzes, und diese absolute Identität ist weder ein allgemeines subjektives nicht zu realisierendes Postulat, sondern sie ist die einzige wahrhafte Realität, noch das Erkennen derselben ein Glauben, d.h. ein Jenseits für das Wissen, sondern ihr einziges Wissen.’<sup>40</sup> As this passage shows, Hegel sees the task of real, and what he calls ‘speculative’,<sup>41</sup> philosophy as understanding and knowing reality in such a way that the opposites are taken up in absolute knowing, and are seen as integral parts of the whole of reality.<sup>42</sup> Kant did not dare to develop the full potential of the synthetic *a priori*:<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 17. See Kant, *KrV*, B19.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.15. As this passage indicates, already in *Glauben und Wissen* Hegel sees the Absolute as the identity in which opposites are not merely dissolved, in the sense that they have ceased to be, but are taken up and united in such a way that their being opposites is also maintained.

<sup>41</sup> Through a reflection on the reflexive philosophies of Kant and Fichte, and consequently negating the oppositions inherent in their philosophies, true, speculative, reason is allowed to develop itself, and overcome the fixed determinations imposed by the understanding (‘Verstandesbestimmungen’). Cf. *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 52: ‘[i]n diesem Dialektischen (i.e. Hegel’s (which I will explain in a later section of this chapter), not Kant’s “abstrakt-negatives Dialektisches” (which sees reason as impotent of knowing anything real, AG), wie es hier genommen wird, und damit in dem Fassen des Entgegengesetzten in seiner Einheit oder des Positiven im Negativen besteht das *Spekulative*.’ Cf. also Rüdiger Bubner’s explanation of speculative philosophy: ‘[d]ie wahre und historisch endgültige Philosophie bereitet sich ihren eigenen Weg derart vor, daß sie auf die zeitbedingten Formen als Erscheinung ihrer selbst im unvollkommenen Medium der Reflexion eingeht. Die von der Vernunft angewiesene, erneute Reflexion dieses Reflexionszusammenhangs bedeutet dessen Aufhebung. Nachdem die Philosophie sich auf Reflexion eingelassen hat, kann sie diese auch dialectisch überwinden.’ Rüdiger Bübner (hrsg), *Geschichte der Philosophie in Text und Darstellung: Deutscher Idealismus* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), p. 329.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Paul Guyer, ‘Absolute idealism and the rejection of Kantian dualism’ in Karl Ameriks, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 37/38: ‘Hegel does not simply reject Kantian dualisms, above all that between the form of human thought and the real nature of being [...], rather, he thinks that the dualisms Kant identified are themselves manifestations of the real nature of being.’

<sup>43</sup> As Guyer puts it: ‘[i]n Hegel’s eyes, Kant was thus a Moses who brought philosophy to the border of the promised land but could not cross the Jordan into absolute knowing.’ (op. cit., p. 38)

[d]iese ursprüngliche Einheit, d.h. eine Einheit, die nicht als Produkt Entgegengesetzter begriffen werden muß, sondern als wahrhaft notwendige, absolute, ursprüngliche Identität Entgegengesetzter, ist sowohl Prinzip der produktiven Einbildungskraft, der blinden, d.h. in der Differenz versenkten, von ihr sich nicht abscheidenden, als der die Differenz identisch setzenden, aber von den Differenten sich unterscheidenden Einheit, als Verstand.<sup>44</sup>

In Kant, the original unity is present, but only as a seed which is incapable of germinating.<sup>45</sup> It is not yet the original identity of opposites, but only its product, as reason is split up in two parts which both fail to grasp this unity fully, since Kant has rendered them impotent of doing so. Imagination is left blind, because it cannot distinguish anything properly; whereas its opposite, the understanding, sees itself as a unity that is fundamentally divided from the opposites it posits as identical. The solution to Kants problem is only available at the end, as a conclusion, but not already truly and fully present at the beginning, and can therefore not provide the true *a priori* Hegel is looking for.<sup>46</sup> There is no real unity, as the unifying principle, *Sein*, is for Kant merely a copula; it has of itself no content, and cannot, as it is unconscious, fully know itself, and is therefore unable to enter the realm of ‘das sich selbst klare und sehnsuchtslose Gebiet der Vernunft’.<sup>47</sup> Kant has decided against thinking a ‘wahrhafte

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<sup>44</sup> Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> Hegel calls it Kant’s merit that by placing the idea of true *Apriorität* in the form of transcendental imagination, and thereby even placing the beginning of the idea of reason in the understanding, he has shown to understand thinking not subjectively, but as true form which has content, and it is therefore *Triplizität*, in which thinking and being are one. In this triplicity lies the *Keim des Spekulativen*, which Hegel proclaims he will allow to germinate and further develop in his absolute idealism. See *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 28. Already in his early works, Hegel used organic metaphors in his presentation of what he saw as true philosophy.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19/20. ‘[s]o hat Kant in Wahrheit seine Frage [...] gelöst; sie [synthetic judgements *a priori*, AG] sind möglich durch die ursprüngliche absolute Identität von Ungleichartigem [...]. Das Vernünftige, oder wie Kant sich ausdrückt, das Apriorische dieses Urteils, die absolute Identität, als Mittelbegriff, stellt sich aber im Urteil nicht, aber im Schluß dar; im Urteil ist sie nur die Copula: ist, ein Bewußtloses.’

<sup>47</sup> As Dieter Henrich has shown, in developing these thoughts Hegel greatly benefited from the ‘Anstoß’ his thinking received from Friedrich Hölderlin’s thought in ‘Urtheil und Seyn’, although

Einheit, eine organische Einheit eines intuitiven Verstandes’,<sup>48</sup> even though the thought has presented itself in his thinking.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, the character of Kant’s philosophy proves to be such that knowledge can never be more than purely formal, and in which reason is absolutely opposed to a ‘Jenseits’ it cannot attain.

As Hegel already pointed out in the *Differenzschrift*, a similar objection can be made against Fichte, in whose philosophy the speculative principle is also present, but who ultimately never goes beyond the negative reasoning of ‘Reflektionsphilosophie’, which fails to produce true content. The principle presented by Fichte is the identity of subject and object, ‘das reine Denken seiner selbst’, in the form of ‘Ich ist Ich’.<sup>50</sup> But, as in Kant, speculation does not remain true to itself:

[s]owie aber die Spekulation aus dem Begriff, den sie von sich selbst aufstellt, heraustritt und sich zum System bildet, so verläßt sie sich und ihr Prinzip und kommt nie in dasselbe zurück. Sie übergibt die Vernunft dem Verstand und geht in die Kette der Endlichkeiten des Bewußtseins über, aus welchen sie sich zur Identität und zur wahren Unendlichkeit nicht wieder rekonstruiert.<sup>51</sup>

Reason renders itself unable to return to itself as soon as it enters the realm of reflection, of endless deduction and abstraction, and of moving from one point to the next without ever being able to capture the whole as a *Totalität* to which beginning and end both belong. For Hegel, a real merit of Fichte’s philosophy is that it shows an awareness of what it lacks: ‘es wird anerkannt, daß die einzige Wahrheit und Gewißheit,

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SE IPSAM COGNOSCERE, with which Henrich finishes his chapter on Hegel and Hölderlin ultimately only fits Hegel, for whom the Absolute can be fully known to itself. (Dieter Henrich, *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), p. 40)

<sup>48</sup> Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> *Differenzschrift.*, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*



das reine Selbstbewußtsein und das reine Wissen, etwas Unvollständiges, durch etwas anderes Bedingtes, d. h. daß das Absolute des Systems nicht absolut sei, und eben deswegen zu etwas Anderem fortgegangen werden müsse.<sup>52</sup> However, as Fichte's principle is not a germ in which the whole is already contained, but a complete void ('das völlig Leere') which is radically opposed to the world 'des Ganzen', this world will necessarily always remain 'ein Anderes'.<sup>53</sup>

Not only in its self-conscious knowing – however limited – but also in the method of Fichte's philosophy Hegel sees a positive aspect: 'vors erste [wird] von etwas schlechthin Wahrem und Gewissem ausgegangen, dem Ich, dem Wissen selbst in allem Wissen.'<sup>54</sup> The problem however, according to Hegel, is that this starting point is not *vollständig*: it is not contained within itself, and, as it starts to produce knowledge about the world, can only do so in the form of an endless chain of deduction of finite parts, which are never really connected and can never become a whole, as its unifying principle, the I, is essentially incomplete and thus has to be rejected by real philosophy.<sup>55</sup> Yet, what is it that can be the starting point of true philosophy?

### 1.1.2 'Womit muß der Anfang der Wissenschaft gemacht werden?'<sup>56</sup>

If *Wissenschaft* is obtained in 'das Erkennen des Absoluten', how can we ever start the quest which will provide this insight, as we must first have a firm grasp of what *Wissen* we are after? In *Glauben und Wissen*, Hegel's discussion of Fichte makes clear what the

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<sup>52</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103/104.

<sup>56</sup> *WdL I*, p. 65.

beginning should not be: philosophy is precisely problematic when it starts with a negation, with an empty nothing that is opposed to reality, in order to try and apprehend reality.<sup>57</sup> Neither can we begin with a hypothesis, since this means that we start looking for truth in the wrong place, as something which can be found in the world of which we, and the truth, are not yet a part.<sup>58</sup> It only makes sense to look for something when you know what you are looking for: you cannot simply start with nothing. Nothing cannot be synthesized into anything, and you cannot endlessly abstract from things which are void in the first place. However, the reflexive, abstract philosophy Hegel sees as problematic is also a positive philosophy, in the sense that it is experienced *as* problematic. The task which presents itself, and in this sense the *Bedürfnis der Philosophie* can at the same time be expressed as its *Voraussetzung* (necessary condition),<sup>59</sup> is to get rid of all reflections, all opinions, and take up what is really there: the Absolute.<sup>60</sup> The Absolute is both beginning and end: ‘es ist das Ziel, das gesucht wird. Es ist schon vorhanden; wie könnte es sonst gesucht werden?’<sup>61</sup> We must – it is absolutely necessary, hence the ‘muß’ in Hegel’s question; the beginning cannot be made otherwise – become aware that reason’s restrictions, the reflections in which it finds itself imprisoned, can only be solved by realising that these restrictions presuppose

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<sup>57</sup> Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 111. ‘[D]er Anfang mit dem Gegensatze ist teils ein vorläufiges, problematisches Philosophieren, welches mit Dingen die Nichts sind, mit leeren Abstraktionen sich umtreibt, und erst in der nachfolgenden Synthese ihnen Realität verschafft.’

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 69, where Hegel criticizes the problematical philosophizing of the later Reinhold.

<sup>59</sup> Hegel, *Differenzschrift*, p. 24. In translating Hegel’s terms into English, it is extremely difficult to do full justice to their richness of meaning. ‘Necessary condition’ does not fully capture what Hegel wants to say, as he is not looking for the requirements which have to be met so that philosophy can begin; rather, he is looking for a starting point in which philosophy is already present, and which we truly come to realise at the end of our journey. Start and finish then come together; and the initial starting point, which Hegel here shows to have a twofold character – it is both the Absolute as the goal that is sought, but is already there and the ‘Herausgetretensein des Bewußtseins aus der Totalität’ through which knowing and being are originally torn asunder (‘entzweit’) – , proves to be a ‘vorausgesetztes’; we can only fully grasp its content at the end, even though the content is present at the beginning. In this sense, Hegel’s vocabulary is also ‘vorausgesetzt’: we only understand all of its meanings once we understand all of what he is saying, an aspect to which I will return in the next chapter.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 69

<sup>61</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 24.

the freedom in which the 'Keim des Spekultativen' can be developed organically. If this liberation does not take place, thinking remains 'Hin- und Herreden' and an arbitrary, contingent 'Dafürhalten', in which the truth is obscured by what we take it to be.<sup>62</sup> Thinking must be liberated from its self-imposed shutters, and the finitude of the starting point of problematic philosophy could never achieve this: 'die Endlichkeit des Anfangspunkts [macht] unmöglich, daß die Geburt der Erkenntnis ein wahrhaftes Ganzes ist.'<sup>63</sup> True philosophy can only be born - and again Hegel uses a metaphor suggesting the organic character of the system of knowledge - through the destruction of its reflexive negations. Yet, this destruction is to be seen as an act that is simultaneously creative; in the dialectical movement through which immediate being fluidly progresses and organises itself into to a fully mediated totality, all of its moments are negated but also maintained,<sup>64</sup> as Hegel makes clear at the beginning of the *Phänomenologie* by using one of his favourite examples, the plant.<sup>65</sup> We cannot simply begin with nothing, and then build a house of knowledge which is unfounded, and empty, but must start with what is ultimately there, and which presents itself as *vorhanden* after we have destroyed everything that stands in its way, but without which we never could have reached it. What is *vorhanden* is pure Being, as Hegels shows in the *Logik*, and

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<sup>62</sup> See *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 43, where Hegel explains why we cannot start with a definition, as we would then only use something which is *bekannt*, not *erkannt*, and which we use as a means to represent (*Vorstellen*) the truth. Both through *Vorstellen* and *Dafürhalten*, the Absolute is obscured by what is placed in front of it.

<sup>63</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> For this Hegel uses the term 'Aufhebung', a term which Hegel himself shows to have a double meaning: '[d]as Aufheben stellt seine wahrhafte gedoppelte Bedeutung dar, welche wir an dem Negativen gesehen haben; es ist ein *Negieren* und ein *Aufbewahren* zugleich.' *PhdG*, p. 94. A further important meaning, which seems to be at play in Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung*, is 'to raise', so that through *Aufhebung* of each phase progress is made.

<sup>65</sup> *PhdG*, p. 12: '[d]ie Knospe verschwindet in dem Hervorbrechen der Blüte, und man könnte sagen, daß jene von dieser wiederlegt wird; ebenso wird durch die Frucht die Blüte für ein falsches Dasein erklärt, und als ihre Wahrheit tritt jene an die Stelle von dieser. Diese Formen unterscheiden sich nicht nur, sondern verdrängen sich auch als unverträglich miteinander. Aber ihre flüssige Natur macht sie zugleich zu Momenten der organischen Einheit, worin sie sich nicht nur nicht widerstreiten, sondern eins so notwendig als das andere ist, und diese gleiche Notwendigkeit macht erst das Leben des Ganzen aus.' I will return to this example in chapters 2 and 3.

this is the true, unmediated beginning from which the true *System der Wissenschaft* unfolds. That this is so cannot be shown without ‘vorangehende Reflexionen’, through which the true *Anfang* becomes apparent; and only by getting rid of these reflexions, does ‘reines Sein’ appear.<sup>66</sup> When thinking and knowing are to become true *Wissenschaft*, they have to take up the negative in order to see the positive that is within: only then, when it becomes clear that the negative can only truly be when the positive is also present, can we make a real start, since it is at that moment that we have become part of what thinking really is: *Begreifendes Denken*, which captures the *Totalität* in itself, as a process which starts in itself as the movement from the negative to the positive which was already contained in the negative.<sup>67</sup>

## 1.2. The Absolute

So already in his early works, by (partly) rejecting Kant and Fichte, it gradually becomes clear what knowledge, and what starting point, Hegel is looking for: 'wahrhaftes Erkennen [...] fängt vom Absoluten an, das weder ein Teil, noch unvollständig, noch allein für Empirie Gewißheit und Wahrheit, noch durch Abstraktion, sondern durch wahrhaft intellektuelle Anschauung ist.'<sup>68</sup> True knowing can only originate in the

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<sup>66</sup> As Dieter Henrich convincingly shows in his *Hegel im Kontext*, this method, the *via negationis*, is used very tellingly, and necessarily, at the beginning of the first chapter of the *Seinslogik*, where Hegel uses *Reflexionsbestimmungen* ('unbestimmte Unmittelbarkeit' and 'Gleichheit mit sich') to express the thought of pure being, which, when reflected on, can only be negated: '[d]ie beiden einzigen Bestimmungen, durch der Gedanke "Sein" in anderer Weise ausgedrückt werden soll, sind also negierte Reflexionsbestimmungen. Sie taugen nur dazu, auf den Gedanken, der mit 'Sein' gemeint ist, dadurch zu verweisen, daß sie ihn als gänzlich frei vom Strukturen der Reflexion erklären.' (Henrich, op.cit., p. 86)

<sup>67</sup> See e.g. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 57: 'im begreifenden Denken (which has gone beyond the merely reflexive by negating the reflexivity and thereby creating proper content, AG) [gehört] das Negative dem Inhalte selbst an und ist sowohl als seine *immanente* Bewegung und Bestimmung wie als *Ganzes* derselben das *Positive*.'

<sup>68</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*. 105.

Absolute, which is, and is to be grasped, in and through a true intellectual intuition, a phrasing which implies a criticism of conceptions of intellectual intuition that have failed to capture its essence,<sup>69</sup> which is that of a knowing that has come to a full awareness of what, and how, it knows, in which all the parts, and all previous methods of knowing, are shown to produce a unified whole, as, through the negation of all the appearances in which the whole presents itself it becomes apparent that all there is to know is already contained in the germ that develops itself as all that it not is negated.<sup>70</sup> As we saw in his discussion of Kant, for Hegel Kant truly ('in Wahrheit') solved the question whether synthetic judgements *a priori* are possible: 'sie sind möglich durch die ursprüngliche absolute Identität von Ungleichartigem'. Yet, in Kant this identity only presents itself as a conclusion, while in the judgement A=B the 'is' has not been properly understood as productive of identity rather than difference: 'im Urteil ist sie nur die Copula: ist, ein Bewußtloses; und das Urteil selbst ist nur die überwiegende Erscheinung der Differenz; das Vernünftige ist hier für das Erkennen ebenso in den Gegensatz versenkt, wie für das Bewußtsein überhaupt die Identität in der Anschauung, die Copula ist nicht ein Gedachtes, Erkanntes, sondern drückt gerade das Nichterkanntsein des Vernünftigen aus; was zum Vorschein kommt und im Bewußtsein

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<sup>69</sup> Hegel's main target here, apart from Fichte, in whose method an intellectual intuition is what allows us to have an immediate awareness of ourselves as involved in the activity of thinking, is probably Hölderlin, whose 'Urtheil and Seyn' (cf. note 47) influenced Hegel's criticism of Fichte in showing that Fichte's self-conscious 'I' is not fundamental enough, and that in order to fully grasp the unity of subject and object, a more fundamental unity is pre-supposed: being. For Hölderlin, however, being ultimately cannot be known (as it is prior to the knowing subject and the object of knowledge) and articulated, but as the Absolute, can only be approached by theory ('unendliche Annäherung'), and expressed in aesthetic experience. (cf. Charles Larmore, 'Hölderlin and Novalis' in Karl Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 147/148, and Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 391/392). On Fichte's conception of the intellectual intuition, see Rolf-Peter Horstmann, 'The early philosophy of Fichte and Schelling' in Karl Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 126-127, and Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 109-113.

<sup>70</sup> The negation of the negative, through which the positive is revealed, is reflected in structure of the sentence quoted above ('weder...noch').

ist, ist nur das Produkt.<sup>71</sup> If we come to a full awareness of what it means to judge A and B to be identical, being is not merely a copula that is applied to A and B from the outside, but is that in and through which A and B are what they are, which is both identical and different. We can only draw the conclusion that they are so, Hegel wants us to understand, if this identity and difference is already inherent in their being from the start. In the judgement  $A=B$  what mainly appears to us is their being different, yet when we really come to an understanding of what allows us to make this judgement – which is the true *a priori* – we get hold of an Absolute as that which holds everything together, and in which thinking and being are a unity that has come to an awareness and a full understanding of itself, and thus has real content and is not an empty abstraction.<sup>72</sup> For their *Entzweiung* to be truly overcome, subject and object have to be united in such a way that their being different is also accounted for, and is somehow already contained within the Absolute, as Hegel puts it in the *Differenzschrift*: ‘[d]as Absolute selbst aber ist darum die Identität der Identität und der Nicht-Identität; Entgegensetzen und Einssein ist zugleich in ihm.’<sup>73</sup> With this formulation Hegel moves beyond Schelling, for whom identity within the Absolute entails utter indifference between subject and object, and moreover, is an identity that is beyond our intellectual grasp, and can only be intuited in art.<sup>74</sup> In the preface to the *Phänomenologie* Hegel breaks away from Schelling more clearly when he dismisses his Absolute as too abstract, and

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<sup>71</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*, pp. 19/20.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Glauben und Wissen*, p.18, where Hegel explains how we can come to an understanding of the original unity, the synthetic *a priori*: ‘der Begriff ist leer ohne Anschauung, denn die synthetische Einheit ist nur Begriff, indem sie die Differenz so verbindet, daß sie zugleich außerhalb derselben in relativem Gegensatz ihr gegenüber tritt; der reine Begriff isoliert ist die leere Identität; nur als relativ identisch zugleich mit dem, welcher er gegenüber steht, ist er Begriff und erfüllt nur durch das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung; sinnliche Anschauung  $A=B$ ; Begriff  $A^2= (A=B)$ .’ Understanding something, and thus arriving at (or really producing, hence the  $A^2$ ) a concept that is meaningful, can only occur when the understanding truly connects with what it finds itself initially opposed to, i.e the sensible intuition. A pure concept is necessarily empty (or blind, in Kant’s words) as it is isolated from whatever it wants to understand.

<sup>73</sup> *Differenzschrift*, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> See F.W.J. Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, hrsg. Horst D. Brandt und Peter Müller (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992), pp. 452-478.

argues that a unity between subject and object, between thinking and being, can only really be when it is concrete:

so sehen wir hier (in Schelling's philosophy, AG) gleichfalls der allgemeinen Idee in dieser Form der Unwirklichkeit allen Wert zugeschrieben und die Auflösung des Unterschiedenen und Bestimmten oder vielmehr das weiter nicht entwickelte noch an ihm selbst sich rechtfertigende Hinunterwerfen desselben in den Abgrund des Leeren für spekulative Betrachtungsart gelten. Irgendein Dasein, wie es im *Absoluten* ist, betrachten, besteht hierin in nichts anderem, als daß davon gesagt wird, es sei zwar jetzt von ihm gesprochen worden als von einem Etwas; im Absoluten, dem  $A=A$ , jedoch gebe es dergleichen gar nicht, sondern darin sei alles eins.<sup>75</sup>

To be able to come to a full understanding of what an object really is, it has to be more for us than a mere 'something' – the 'bare particular' we started with in immediate sense-certainty – but should be allowed to develop itself, through its interaction with what it is not (through which it does come to exist in – and through – something it differs from<sup>76</sup>), and by the taking up of these differences, into something that is concrete and can be fully understood. Hegel's use of the word 'concrete' shows that he is very much aware of its having its root in *concrecere*, which means 'to grow together', 'to form itself'. Something that is concrete is thus 'das *wirkliche* Ganze, [...] zusammen mit seinem Werden': in forming itself into a coherent whole, and in our coming to

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<sup>75</sup> *PhdG*, p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> One of Hegel's problems with Schelling's Absolute is, as we can read in the passage discussed here, that a something 'besteht in nichts anderem'. Hegel has an enormous talent to burden seemingly colloquial phrases (as this phrase could equally well be translated as 'to consist of nothing else', or 'nothing of the sort', as Walter Kaufmann does in his translation of Hegel's preface), with rich philosophical implications. The implication here being, of course, that something can only become what it potentially is through its interaction with others, which ultimately acknowledge ('Anerkennen') its existence. For Kaufmann's translation (on this particular phrase, however, he does not provide further comment) see: Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1965), pp. 26/27.

understand that this formative process is an integral part of a thing being what it is – without which we would not be able to really understand it – an object becomes concrete for us. Through his use of the word, 'concrete' becomes a telling example of how for Hegel, if philosophy is to be concrete (and it has to be, since we start with what is there) it can only be presented in language that itself is concrete, as it has content that has to be clarified through its being developed by the reader.<sup>77</sup>

To present a system in which there is a unifying principle, but which also explains how being determines itself into a concrete and differentiated, yet coherent, whole is the task Hegel sets himself, and of which the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* is the first part.<sup>78</sup> The remainder of this chapter deals with the way Hegel's ideas of a systematic philosophy are further developed in this work.

### 1.3.1 Substance is subject

In Hegel's view, in order to present a system in which truth is allowed to develop so that it can eventually be known, it is of the utmost importance to show that truth is not merely a substance, but also a subject: '[e]s kommt nach meiner Einsicht, welche sich nur durch die Darstellung des Systems selber rechtfertigen muß, alles darauf an, das Wahre nicht als *Substanz*, sondern ebensosehr als *Subjekt* aufzufassen und auszudrücken.'<sup>79</sup> We can only understand reality as the expression and determination of its being if the abstract I we find in Fichte, as that which posits reality, is given substance, and thus is that which determines and ultimately fully becomes itself. Only through this determination, its form, are we able to grasp reality as the concrete

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<sup>77</sup> I will return to this aspect of Hegel's language more fully in the next chapter.

<sup>78</sup> See n. 14.

<sup>79</sup> *PhdG*, p. 23.



manifestation of what is *an sich*.<sup>80</sup> Yet, the determination somehow must already be present in the *an sich*, otherwise being would never feel the need to produce itself as what it is.<sup>81</sup> An *Ansich* in which there is ‘ungetrübte Gleichheit und Einheit mit sich selbst’, would, and could,<sup>82</sup> never become aware of this need, and could never be known as it would remain abstract forever. The word ‘ungetrückt’ (‘untroubled’ or ‘unclouded’) is significant, and belongs to the cluster of organic metaphors I will discuss extensively in chapter four. The implication is that truth is something that can never be completely clear and self-evident from the start, but that its being troubled or obscured is the instigation of a process of interaction with itself (comparable to the clarification of wine) and its environment, through which it ultimately becomes clear to itself. Moreover, as ‘trüb’ is mostly used to indicate a quality of liquids, this word also hints at the fluid nature of the truth; it is not something solid, something that can be isolated and fixed, but is in continuous motion, and in and through this motion reveals itself as what it is.

Only a substance that is simultaneously a self, a subject, and thus contains the principle of setting itself in motion – a motion that will ultimately reveal, through the incorporation of all that is initially seen as other than what it is,<sup>83</sup> its inner nature (which

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<sup>80</sup> Hegel himself explains the notion of *an sich* by using the example of the embryo, that is potentially a human being, but can only become *für sich* in having a fully developed rationality, through which it is possible to become and be aware of (*für sich* implies both that we have come into our own, but also that we have a good view of what we are, as it is directly in front of us) what we essentially are. See *PhdG*, p. 25.

<sup>81</sup> As Hegel will explain more fully at a later stage in this preface, only in a knowing which has come to an understanding of itself (*begreifendes Denken*) and which has negated the fixed determinations applied to being by reflexive thought (which thus fails to grasp that being can only be fully understood in its determining itself) can being be grasped as a totality in itself, as involved in a continuous process which starts in itself as the movement from the negative to the positive that was already contained in the negative. See *PhdG*, p. 57: ‘im begreifenden Denken [gehört] das Negative dem Inhalte selbst an und ist sowohl als seine *immanente* Bewegung und Bestimmung wie als *Ganzes* derselben das *Positive*.’

<sup>82</sup> As, being completely equal to itself, there would be nothing to be aware of.

<sup>83</sup> As it is serious about what it is not, and sets itself the arduous task of becoming one with it (instead of merely toying with itself) in order to be productive of a totality in which difference has been accounted for, and so is not the transcendent being which, being completely equal to

is grasped in ultimately understanding that this outer nature is identical with its inner nature, in the sense that it is the outward presentation of what it essentially is) – can express itself as what it is, as its form is immanent in its being: ‘[g]erade weil die Form dem Wesen so wesentlich ist als es sich selbst, ist es nicht bloß als Wesen, d.h. als unmittelbare Substanz oder als reine Selbstanschauung des Göttlichen zu fassen und auszudrücken, sondern ebenso sehr als *Form*, und im ganzen Reichtum der entwickelten Form; dadurch wird es erst als Wirkliches gefaßt und ausgedrückt.’<sup>84</sup>

Truth can only be fully grasped as soon as it has been developed in its totality: ‘das Wahre ist das Ganze. Das Ganze aber ist nur das durch seine Entwicklung sich vollendete Wesen. Es ist von dem Absoluten zu sagen, daß es wesentlich *Resultat*, daß es erst am Ende das ist, was es in Wahrheit ist; und hierin eben besteht seine Natur, Wirkliches, Subjekt oder Sichselbstwerden zu sein.’<sup>85</sup> The Absolute is essentially result, and as such can be understood as the becoming, the presentation of what it already is, and it is only when we have fully grasped the result that we are able to see that its nature (in the sense of its essence, but also in the sense of *physis* as its externalisation) lies in being the subject that makes its own content into a developed and concrete whole, and thus shows itself as what it is. The ‘Selbstdarstellung’ of the Absolute is what real philosophy should allow to take place, and in doing so should accept that true understanding can only occur at the end, when initial obscurities have clarified themselves. Hegel’s approach in the *Phänomenologie* is to track the evolution of the different shapes of what he calls *Geist*, and to see them as manifestations of the Absolute: ‘[d]aß das Wahre nur als System wirklich oder daß die Substanz wesentlich

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itself, is indifferent to its otherness: ‘der es kein Ernst mit dem Anderssein und der Entfremdung sowie mit dem Überwinden dieser Entfremdung ist.’ *PhdG*, p. 24.

<sup>84</sup> *PhdG*, p. 24. On several occasions (and twice in this passage) Hegel stresses the coincidence of grasping and expressing reality.

<sup>85</sup> *PhdG*, p. 24.

Subjekt ist, ist in der Vorstellung ausgedrückt, welche das Absolute als *Geist* ausspricht.<sup>86</sup>

Yet, how exactly are we to understand Hegel's concept of *Geist*?

### 1.3.2. *Geist*

For Hegel, *Geist*'s coming to a selfunderstanding by going through its development is what true knowing essentially is: '[d]er Geist, der sich so entwickelt als Geist weiß, ist die *Wissenschaft*.'<sup>87</sup> Knowing can only occur in and through being aware of something, and therefore the task Hegel sets himself in the *Phänomenologie* is to show the development of knowing by tracking the different ways consciousness is aware of an object: '[d]as Wissen, wie es zuerst ist, oder *der unmittelbare Geist* ist das Geistlose, das *sinnliche Bewußtsein*. Um zum eigentlichen Wissen zu werden oder das Element der Wissenschaft, das ihr reiner Begriff selbst ist, zu erzeugen, hat es sich durch einen langen Weg hindurchzuarbeiten.' The first shape, our becoming aware of something through an immediate sense-perception, can only be grasped as such when we have developed the spiritual power (which we have only potentially at the moment we are born, and therefore is still immediate) to reflect on what we perceive. As Hegel shows, the history of knowing shows a continuous progression of shapes of knowledge. Only when all these shapes have been examined and incorporated, and grasped as shapes – as appearances of knowledge, rather than real knowledge, and each with their successive limitations so that progress to a further stage is inevitable – has *Geist* fully developed itself. So it is only in the end, when the standpoint of *Geist* is fully available to us, that we can truly know what *Geist* is, and Hegel explains that to get to this standpoint we have no other option than to start with how knowledge appears to us. However, the journey

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<sup>86</sup> *PhdG*, p. 28.

<sup>87</sup> *PhdG*, p. 29.

through the successive stages of knowing can be taken in two different ways: ‘sie kann [...] als der Weg des natürlichen Bewußtseins, das zum wahren Wissen dringt, genommen werden, oder als der Weg der Seele, welche die Reihe ihrer Gestaltungen [...] durchwandert, daß sie sich zum Geiste läutere, indem sie durch die vollständige Erfahrung ihrer selbst zur Kenntnis desjenigen gelangt was sie an sich selbst ist.’<sup>88</sup>

As Walter Kaufmann points out in his article ‘Hegel’s conception of phenomenology’, the two paths – the first being ‘the science of the experience of consciousness, and the second being the ‘phenomenology of spirit’ – are not synonymous: ‘[t]he former suggests a rigorous investigation of the various forms of consciousness, all the way from sense certainty to the recognition of spirit in whatever is actual. The latter suggests a study of the manifestations of spirit. The former focuses on the subject, the consciousness whose experiences are studied, while the latter calls attention to what appears, the spirit.’<sup>89</sup> The first path leads us to *Geist* as the form of consciousness in which being becomes real, as being, as substance, has now gone through the process of being determined and subjected to a self, or collectivity of selves:

Als die *Substanz* ist der Geist die unwankende, gerechte *Sichselbstgleichheit*; aber als *Fürsichsein* ist sie das aufgelöste, das sich aufopfernde gütige Wesen, an dem jeder sein eigenes Werk vollbringt, das allgemeine Sein zerreißt und sich seinem Teil davon nimmt. Diese Auflösung und Vereinzelung des Wesens ist eben das *Moment* des Tuns und Selbsts Aller; es ist die Bewegung und Seele der Substanz und das

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<sup>88</sup> *PhdG*, p. 74.

<sup>89</sup> Walter Kaufmann, ‘Hegel’s conception of phenomenology’ in Edo Pivčević (ed.), *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 218.

bewirkte allgemeine Wesen. Gerade darin, daß sie das im Selbst aufgelöste Sein ist, ist sie nicht das tote Wesen, sondern *wirklich* und *lebendig*.<sup>90</sup>

Through the successive attempts of all the individual shapes of consciousness, all of which have transformed being through its taking up and acting on separate parts of what first appeared to consciousness as general being ('das allgemeine Sein'), being is now really 'all-gemein', as the dissolution of what was 'allgemein', but only immediately so, occurs through the joined efforts of individual shapes of consciousness. Being is thus transformed into a reality in which, as it is a collectively produced self, individuals can recognise themselves as what they are, as parts which can only truly be by belonging to a whole they have made themselves. Only in and through *Geist* can immediate being be dissolved and turned into a living reality in which what things essentially are is revealed. So, not only does *Geist* refer to the spiritual power through which we become conscious of what presents itself to consciousness, but also to the specific form of consciousness that is the collective achievement and expression of all previous forms of consciousness.

What *Geist* is can also be studied by following Hegel's second path, which was to take up *Geist's* successive manifestations; by coming to an understanding of the historical achievements through which *Geist* appears: as art, religion, and philosophy. Only by carefully examining all of these manifestations, and in doing so coming to understand them as necessary stages that all contribute to the development of *Geist*, and thus having a 'vollständige Erfahrung ihrer selbst', can *Geist* come clear about itself, and know itself as what it is.<sup>91</sup> Only *Erfahrung* can provide us with knowledge that is concrete, and in the introduction to the *Phänomenologie* Hegel further elaborates on the nature of experience.

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<sup>90</sup> *PhdG*, p. 325.

<sup>91</sup> Hegel here uses 'läutere' to describe the process of clarification, a word which can be used for chemical processes of purification, but also has important connotations of religious and moral

### 1.3.3. Dialectical movement

When discussing the method through which knowing is to progress, and the problem how we can decide something is true when the criterion for truth is not available to us from the outset, Hegel explains that we do not have to look for an external criterion, as in the method he propounds, consciousness checks itself, and is thus responsible for its own continuous development:<sup>92</sup>

Das Bewußtsein ist einerseits Bewußtsein des Gegenstandes, andererseits Bewußtsein seiner selbst; Bewußtsein dessen, was ihm das Wahre ist, und Bewußtsein seines Wissens davon. Indem beide *für dasselbe* sind, ist es selbst ihre Vergleichung; es wird *für dasselbe*, ob sein Wissen von dem Gegenstande diesem entspricht oder nicht. Der Gegenstand scheint zwar für dasselbe nur so zu sein, wie er ihn weiß; es scheint gleichsam nicht dahinterkommen zu können, wie er *nicht für dasselbe*, sondern wie er *an sich* ist, und also sein Wissen nicht an ihm prüfen zu können. Allein gerade darin, daß es überhaupt von einem Gegenstande weiß, ist schon der Unterschied vorhanden, daß *ihm* etwas das *Ansich*, ein anderes Moment aber das Wissen oder das Sein des Gegenstandes *für* das Bewußtsein ist. Auf dieser Unterscheidung, welche vorhanden ist beruht die Prüfung.<sup>93</sup>

In becoming conscious of something, we become aware both of ourselves as being conscious, and of an object of knowledge. If we take our being conscious of an object as the object we want to gain knowledge about (which is what Hegel aims to do), we find

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purification. The question can thus be raised whether or not *Geist* can also be taken to refer to a cosmic spirit that realizes itself through finite human consciousness (Charles Taylor's *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) eloquently propounds this view). An extensive discussion of this question, however, lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>92</sup> Here Hegel's example of the plant is also informative, in that it, too, is that which is responsible for its own development.

<sup>93</sup> *PhdG*, pp. 77-78.

that the difference between what something is *an sich*, and how something appears to us can be found within ourselves. As soon as we become aware of this, we can embark on a process of continuous checking, in which consciousness finds itself forced to change its conception of knowing as soon as it finds it does not meet its object.

In this process the object of knowledge (which is how knowledge appeared to us) is changed as soon as we become aware that it was mainly an appearance, and not real knowing, and this also implies that we may have to adapt our criterion: ‘indem es (consciousness, AG) also an seinem Gegenstande sein Wissen diesem nicht entsprechend findet, hält auch der Gegenstand selbst nicht aus; oder der Maßstab der Prüfung ändert sich, wenn dasjenige, dessen Maßstab er sein sollte, in der Prüfung nicht besteht; und die Prüfung ist nicht nur Prüfung des Wissens, sondern auch ihres Maßstabes.’<sup>94</sup> This process, which is what Hegel calls the dialectical movement, can only occur when we, as knowers, actively apply this process, and thus allow ourselves to experience what it is to know something: ‘[d]iese dialektische Bewegung, welche das Bewußtsein an ihm selbst, sowohl an seinem Wissen als an seinem Gegenstande ausübt, *insofern ihm der neue wahre Gegenstand* daraus *entspringt*, ist eigentlich dasjenige was *Erfahrung* genannt wird.’<sup>95</sup> Gaining experience implies that we change our conception of knowledge in such a way that what appeared to be true is denied, but that the contradiction is simultaneously preserved as it proved a necessary step in coming to an understanding of what and how we know: ‘[die] neue Gegenstand enthält die Nichtigkeit des ersten, er ist die über ihn gemachte Erfahrung.’ Yet, Hegel again stresses, in order for experience to be what it is, it has to be completed: ‘die Erfahrung, welche das Bewußtsein über sich macht, kann ihrem Begriffe nach nichts weniger in sich begreifen

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<sup>94</sup> *PhdG*, p. 78.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

als das ganze System derselben oder das ganze Reich der Wahrheit des Geistes, so daß die Momente derselben in dieser eigentümlichen Bestimmtheit sich darstellen, nicht abstrakte, reine Momente zu sein, sondern so, wie sie für das Bewußtsein sind.<sup>96</sup> Only in fully experiencing the process of coming to know something does our knowledge become concrete.

Although Hegel stresses the fact that the dialectical movement that we call experience is a movement in which knowing is active, in an important sense it is also passive. What Hegel wants to show is that this dialectical movement, a movement that is driven by the contradiction of what appears to us – as what appears shows itself to be false as soon as we become aware of its being an appearance – is ultimately the movement of reality, and that thus we are not only active, but are also led by what is already there. What is there, but only immediately, should be allowed to develop in order for it to become concrete, as we can only truly understand what something is ‘zusammen mit seinem Werden’. Ultimately, the activity of knowing and being are one, as the latter in-forms, and activates the former, as it follows the movement and order of its object: ‘[d]as wissenschaftliche Erkennen erfordert [...] sich dem Leben des Gegenstandes zu übergeben oder, was dasselbe ist, die innere Notwendigkeit vor sich zu haben und auszusprechen.’<sup>97</sup> In what way this movement, the life of an object, can be presented and expressed in language will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>96</sup> *PhdG*, p. 80.

<sup>97</sup> *PhdG*, p. 52.



## Chapter 2 The presentation of philosophy and the role of language

As we saw in the previous chapter, for Hegel our coming to know what really is follows a dialectical movement, since as soon as we reflect on what and how we know, we come to understand the inadequacy of our knowledge, and move on to a further stage, from immediate sense-perception all the way up to *Geist*, as the shape in which reason has truly grasped itself, and now is able to develop the full potential of Kant's synthetic *a priori*.<sup>98</sup> The dialectical movement in our coming to know what is reflects, or is led by the dialectical movement of being, which moves from pure immediate being, which has to negate itself in order to become something, all the way up to a fully mediated totality. *Wissenschaft*, for Hegel, is just as much about knowing as about coming to know, as the two are inextricably linked. Only through this process can thought be given true content, and be made into a concrete whole, as thinking becomes fully aware of what it knows through the experience of the process through which reality determines and clarifies itself. In this chapter I will examine the ways in which this process is reflected in the language in which thinking is presented, and show that - and in what ways - language, if it is to reveal that which is living and concrete, is to be living and concrete itself,<sup>99</sup> as it reveals its content through a process of *Selbstdarstellung*. I will also show that, and in what ways, this process of self-revelation is brought about through interaction with the reader, who - through being made to actively engage with the way what is is presented in

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<sup>98</sup> *PhdG*, p. 324: '[d]ie Vernunft ist Geist, indem die Gewißheit, alle Realität zu sein, zur Wahrheit erhoben und sie sich ihrer selbst als ihrer Welt und der Welt als ihrer selbst bewußt ist.' Cf. *WdL I*, p.17.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Alexandre Koyré: '[l]e langage du philosophe doit être vivant et concret, parce que sa pensée doit être vivante et concrète'. Koyré argues that precisely for this reason philosophical language should not contain words that have been especially created by the philosopher (as these are necessarily abstract), but should make use of words that are already 'vorhanden', and develop their potential, and this is precisely what Hegel does (as the 'new' vocabulary he uses is developed from 'elements' that are already there, such as 'Anundfürsich'). See Alexandre Koyré, 'Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégélienne,' in *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 194. Cf. also p. 210.

language - is to gain experience of what the dialectical movement really is, but also of being part of thinking *Geist*.<sup>100</sup>

In the preface to the second edition of the *Wissenschaft der Logik I* Hegel again occupies himself with question how philosophy is to be presented. As so often, he starts negatively, by commenting on how philosophy's material should not be presented, i.e. as something that has been 'vorgefunden', instead of a thinking that is produced in and through its method and presentation. Such a presentation can be nothing but a repetition of the content it has found:

solche Bearbeitung [hat] die spekulative Seite [nicht] betroffen; vielmehr ist im Ganzen dasselbe Material wiederholt, abwechselnd bald bis zu trivialer Oberflächlichkeit verdünnt, bald der alte Ballast umfangreicher von neuem hervorgehollt und mitgeschleppt worden, so daß durch solche, häufig ganz nur mechanische Bemühungen dem philosophischen Gehalt kein Gewinn zuwachsen könnte.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> In this thesis, I will concentrate on the way Hegel uses language (choice of words, rhetorical devices such as the use of metaphor, personification or sentence construction) to present (his) philosophy, and in doing so I will focus mainly on the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, as it is the book in which, as Hegel himself calls it '[das Element des Wissens] sich bereitet' (*PhdG*, p. 39), in which what is knowing is prepared, and it is this process, and the presentation of this process that is the main interest of this thesis. *Darstellung* can of course also refer to the general outline of the *Phänomenologie*, with its predominantly tripartite structure, through which Hegel aims to capture the various stages consciousness has to go through in order to reach true knowledge. On this point, see Hans Friedrich Fulda, *Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel* (München: Beck, 2003), p. 89 ff. Cf. also Otto Pöggeler, 'Die Komposition der Phänomenologie des Geistes', in *Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 3* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), pp. 27-74. Finally, *Darstellung* can also be considered in the light of Hegel's work as a whole, in which he aims to present philosophy as a system. The question which then presents itself is whether the *Enzyklopädie* should be seen as the ultimate form in which the systematic character of knowledge is to be presented. On this question, see L. Bruno Puntel, *Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 10, Darstellung, Methode und Struktur: Untersuchungen zur Einbeit der Systematischen Philosophie G.W.F. Hegels* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1973). See e.g. p. 32: 'Die einzige vollständige Gestalt seiner Philosophie hat Hegel in der Gestalt einer *Enzyklopädie*, eines Grundrisses, vorgelegt. Ist die der *Enzyklopädie* zugrundeliegende Gestalt des Systems die angemessene, die endgültige, die einzig mögliche?'

<sup>101</sup> *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 19.

The form in which philosophy is to be presented is not to be mechanical - through which its content becomes a monolithic block that can only be dragged along but can never be made to move itself - or chemical - as in this case what there is also remains what it is but only in diluted form -, since those approaches will not teach us anything new about its content as they are doomed to remain outside the subject they want to investigate. 'Zuwachsen', through which we will truly learn something about the content we want to investigate, can only take place if we begin again, with what is there, and allow what is already there to develop itself. Its exposition should reveal that what we started with contains the principle of its movement, and is not a method that is externally applied, but follows the movement of its content:

[d]as Reich des Gedankens philosophisch, d.i. in seiner eigenen immanenten Tätigkeit, oder, was dasselbe ist, in seiner notwendigen Entwicklung darzustellen, mußte deswegen ein neues Unternehmen sein und dabei von vorne angefangen werden; jenes erworbene Material, die bekannten Denkformen, aber ist als eine höchst wichtige Vorlage, ja eine notwendige Bedingung [und] dankbar anzuerkennende Voraussetzung anzusehen, wenn dieselbe auch nur hie und da einen dünnen Faden oder die leblosen Knochen eines Skeletts, sogar in Unordnung untereinander geworfen, dargibt.<sup>102</sup>

We can only truly begin again, Hegel concludes, by critically engaging ourselves with the 'Denkformen' we know (as 'bekannt'); even though these sometimes appear to us as a totally chaotic jumble in which there is no life at all, since its elements - presenting themselves as the dead limbs of a skeleton - cannot be made to interact. The 'Denkformen' there are can first and foremost be found in language, and it is therefore the language that there is that we have to be made conscious of:

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Die Denkformen sind zunächst in der *Sprache* des Menschen herausgesetzt und niedergelegt [...] In alles, was ihm (a human being, AG) zu einem Innerlichen, zur Vorstellung überhaupt wird, was er zu dem Seinigen macht, hat sich die Sprache eingedrängt, und was er zur Sprache macht und in ihr äußert, enthält eingehüllter, vermischter oder herausgearbeitet eine Kategorie; so sehr natürlich ist ihm das Logische, oder vielmehr: dasselbige ist seine eigentümliche Natur selbst.<sup>103</sup>

Language is the expression of thought, and thus contains - albeit mostly obscured and confused - what thinking is.<sup>104</sup> As language is naturally - and this will prove an important point - our own, we can - through reflecting on what language is and does - by being made self-conscious in our roles as active and passive language-users, permeate what is to be thought, as we are already contained in it. Yet how can this self-consciousness of language - in and through which we are to think - be achieved?

Before discussing this question, a few brief remarks need to be made about whether interpreting parts of Hegel's works, such as the *Phänomenologie*, in relative isolation from the rest of the text is justifiable, as one of Hegel's main points is that what something is can only be truly grasped through its being (part of) a totality. To fully understand

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<sup>103</sup> *WdL I*, p. 20.

<sup>104</sup> As Robert Leventhal explains, this does not imply that Hegel sees language as the 'external envelope of thought, and the corresponding hermeneutical position that we ought to try to get at the 'internal intention' that resides behind the statement.' As I will explain in chapter four, for Hegel there is no 'behind', as what language is to reveal can only be revealed in and through the interaction of its outer manifestations. Besides, as Leventhal clearly explains, 'an internal intention' would imply something fixed and determinate, whereas Hegel's point is precisely that language is not the expression 'of a self-sufficient and enclosed internal intention', but is a 'mechanism of change or transformation' (which is an interesting metaphor, since Hegel, as we also saw in the passage quoted above, again and again uses metaphors that emphasize the natural and organic character of 'true', speculative language and thought), 'in which the supposedly "inner" breaks out completely while shifting the meaning or sense of that which is expressed to something that is beyond the individual (as language does not only belong to the individual, but is also an 'Allgemeines', AG) and the specific intentionality of the speaker.' I will return to this point at the end of this chapter. See Robert S. Leventhal, *The Disciplines of Interpretation: Lessing, Herder, Schlegel and Hermeneutics in Germany 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 312-313.

Hegel's text – in the sense that all of the text's potential is developed and grasped – appears only to be possible on the basis of a continuous (re)reading of the text (as a whole),<sup>105</sup> yet, as Puntel argues, it is also possible to interpret parts of the text as being explications of the dialectical movement that holds the whole together, and this thesis will follow the line of interpretation Puntel calls 'Buchstabieren'.<sup>106</sup> What a text says - and this thesis will follow Puntel in that also small units can be treated as texts in their own right - can only be revealed by a close reading in which words, phrases and sentences are not left as they are, but are allowed to interact – and as such exemplify what Puntel calls the 'Elementar- und Gesamtstruktur' of Hegel's thought –<sup>107</sup> so that their potential is developed.

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<sup>105</sup> It might well be argued that a text-immanent interpretation, in which a text is interpreted only on the basis of the content and the formal aspects of the text itself, cannot do full justice to Hegel's philosophical project, and that it is only possible to fully develop the text's potential if we allow it to interact with its context, which, as the *Phänomenologie* also shows itself to be a discussion of historical modes of knowing (in the light of their historical context), appears to refer at least to the history of philosophy, but also to history itself, and the history of religion and art. Interpretation then seems to become an inexhaustible enterprise, yet if we keep in mind that what knowing and understanding is about is not a collection of all available facts (in this case all possible interactions with the text's context), but about having experienced that the whole is held together through its being a systematic unity, it can be justified that, once we have a hold of this systematic unity, and understand how knowledge comes to be, not all possible connections have to be made in order to interpret a text, but that we can do so if we take a part to be an explication of the systematic unity of (Hegel's) thought, which is the line of interpretation advocated by Puntel, and followed in this thesis.

<sup>106</sup> Puntel, op. cit., pp. 20-21: '[i]nsofern mit dem Ausdruck 'das Buchstabieren Hegels' gesagt und gefordert wird, daß sich der Interpret an den genauen Text Hegels halten und ihn explizieren soll, kann es keinen Zweifel geben, daß darin die grundlegende Regel der Hegelinterpretation zu erblicken ist. Aber die sich in diesem Ausdruck aussprechende 'buchstabliche' Treue zum Denken Hegels kann in das Gegenteil ihrer eigentlichen Intention (which is to try and follow as closely as possible what is happening in the text itself, without *hineininterpretieren*, AG) umschlagen, wenn sie vor lauter Buchstaben nicht mehr den wahren und wirklichen *Text* zu Gesicht kommt. [...] Die sich nicht voll begreifende Einstellung des Buchstabierens kann sehr leicht dazu führen, daß ein bestimmter Text völlig isoliert, d.h. nur auf sich beschränkt und nur in sich ausgelegt wird. Die grundsätzliche Frage ist hier was unter einem *Text* Hegels zu verstehen ist. [...] [A]lle 'Texte' Hegels [sind] in eine ursprünglich *elementar-strukturelle Sinnenebene* eingebettet, deren ständige Berücksichtigung und Vergegenwärtigung die grundlegende Bedingung der Möglichkeit für die Erschließung auch der kleinsten literarischen Einheit ausmacht. Das Buchstabieren Hegels kann daher nicht nur und nicht primär dahingehend verstanden werden, daß eine beliebige 'Stelle' Wort für Wort erklärt wird, sondern: das Buchstabieren Hegels besagt grundsätzlich, daß der Sinn jedes Wortes, jeder Stelle, jedes 'Textes' erst im Rahmen der zur Ausdrücklichkeit erhobenen Elementar- und Gesamtstruktur des Hegelschen Denkens ermittelbar ist.'

<sup>107</sup> It may be asked, and this question is also raised by Puntel himself (e.g. op. cit., pp. 25-27 and 47-60) whether structure is the right term, as for Hegel that which holds everything together is

## 2.1. Dialectical movement in language

Experience of what is true is possible, as we saw in chapter one, if truth is not only taken to be a substance, but also a subject, and as such is allowed to form itself – and ultimately grasp itself – as what really is. This (in)formative process Hegel describes as follows:

[d]ie lebendige Substanz ist ferner das Sein, welches in Wahrheit *Subjekt* oder, was dasselbe heißt, welches in Wahrheit wirklich ist, nur insofern sie die Bewegung des Sichselbstsetzens oder die Vermittlung des Sichanderswerdens mit sich selbst ist. Sie ist als Subjekt die reine *einfache Negativität*, eben dadurch die Entzweiung des Einfachen; oder die entgegensetzende Verdopplung, welche wieder die Negation dieser gleichgültigen Verschiedenheit und ihres Gegensatzes ist: nur diese sich *wiederherstellende* Gleichheit oder die Reflexion im Anderssein in sich selbst – nicht eine *ursprüngliche* Einheit als solche oder *unmittelbare* als solche – ist das Wahre. Es ist das Werden seiner selbst, der Kreis, der sein Ende als seinen Zweck voraussetzt und zum Anfange hat und nur durch die Ausführung und sein Ende wirklich ist.<sup>108</sup>

The problem with the beginning of this passage is that as soon as we try to find out where the process starts we run into difficulties: we cannot merely approach this sentence as having a subject which is determined through its predicates. We can neither start with the living substance, the apparent subject of the sentence, nor with being, nor

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essentially movement, and a structure (which is a word, as Puntel explains, Hegel himself never used) has connotations of being inherently rigid and fixed. Puntel's reason for using this word is that movement in and of itself cannot determine anything, but that the *Selbstdarstellung* of being is characterized by both movement and determination, and it is both aspects Puntel wants to capture with the word structure (which is thus also to be thought of as that which is employed in the act of structuring). On the use of metaphor to explicate structures of thought, cf. Paul Ziche, *Mathematische und naturwissenschaftliche Modelle in der Philosophie Schellings und Hegels* (Stuttgart- Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1996), pp. 24-28.

<sup>108</sup> *PhdG*, p. 23.

with the *Subject*, as all three seem to presuppose and to determine each other: substance only becomes alive through being which becomes a reality in its being a subject, which in its turn depends on the substance it is to subject (and in doing so, turns the living substance into a real subject).<sup>109</sup> We cannot start with substance, being, or the I as a pure starting point, but only with their being mutually involved, and only in the process through which being is subjected, does it become a reality the truth of which can be grasped and understood, and it is only in its being a movement, which is simultaneously a mediation through which what is to be thought is produced, that it truly manifests itself.

Not only is this process reflected in the continuous interaction between subject and predicate(s) in this sentence, but through his use of the word 'oder' Hegel also stresses that in reality as a simultaneous process of differentiation and unification, the exclusive either/ or dichotomies of reflexive thinking are overcome, and that when we have fully grasped this process we understand total reality as that in which the identity of identity and non-identity manifests itself in a continuous and fluid movement. What initially appears different – as being determining itself is also a 'Sichanderswerden' – is ultimately grasped, through the mediation of this difference, as the manifestation of being in which what was being is still present but is now understood as forming itself, in and through its appearing for consciousness, into a concrete whole in which all its appearances are mediated and united. It is through the mediation of appearances, which occurs as soon as we realise that what appears is an appearance of what really is, that we can come to understand that the appearance of difference is both false and true: in becoming concrete, being presents itself, and is thus still what it was, yet in shaping itself is no

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<sup>109</sup> 'To subject' in the twofold sense of 'becoming the subject of', and 'to subjectify', to master something or make it your own.

longer the abstract being it originally was, and is thus in an important sense also different from what it was. The appearance of difference is thus also true as it is in being producing itself that difference enters the stage, and its appearance is shown to be necessary, as without it, we would not be able to recognize anything, and the Absolute would indeed be the ‘Nacht [...] worin alle Kühe [...] schwarz sind’.<sup>110</sup>

In the Absolute, there is difference that is not indifferent, and which is thus willing to interact and produce itself and become concrete: the negation of immediacy that occurs in being becoming subjected is not of a ‘gleichgültige Verschiedenheit’ which can never be united to its opposite, but leads to a ‘sich *wiederherstellende* Gleichheit’ in which being, as it finds itself reflected in that which it is not, is known as equal to itself, and it is only then that the truth has finally produced itself. As we saw earlier, clarity is ultimately only achieved in the end, through the ‘Erkennen des Absoluten’, and what can be known – which, being ‘trüb’,<sup>111</sup> feels the *Bedürfnis* to interact in order to come clear about what it is – still has to go through the process of clarification. Interestingly, subjectivity, considered in isolation (‘als Subjekt’), is said to be pure (‘rein’) negativity, which of itself would not be able to accomplish anything, yet as it is the negation of something that is already there, it is the ‘Entzweiung des Einfachen’, through which the original unity, and the apparent simplicity of things we take to be ‘bekannt’,<sup>112</sup> is split, a split which in its

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<sup>110</sup> *PhdG*, p. 22. Cf. also Hegel’s criticism of Schelling’s Absolute, as discussed in chapter 1, pp. 26-27.

<sup>111</sup> See chapter 1, p. 29.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Einfach’, like Dutch ‘eenvoudig’ or English ‘simple’, can mean both consisting of just one, but can also mean uncomplicated, easy to grasp, and thus is a word that becomes, like ‘natural’ in ‘natural consciousness’ (see introduction, n.18) highly ironical. The original unity is apparently just one, and therefore taken to be straightforward, but can only be grasped as what it really is through its already being a triplicity, in which what is initially taken to be ‘die *einfache Negativität*’ and ‘das Einfache’ are shown to depend on each other in order to – through destroying each other’s simplicity - be a productive unity, which can only resolve itself by going through all the complications it necessarily has to go through. In the end, calling something ‘simple’ has shown itself to be a representation that, as it is a simplification, only captures part of what there is. The truth, even if it has been clarified, can never be simple.



turn has to be negated in order to return to a unity in which connections have been made, so that it can be 'erkannt'. What is not yet clear can only become clear through differentiation, which, initially, is the only clarity there is.

The final sentence of this passage shows that being determining itself through differentiation is the process through which it ultimately fully develops what it already is *an sich*, and through which it establishes itself as a self that can be recognized. This process is to be captured as a circle – an important and recurrent metaphor, to which I will return in chapter three – in which what being is to become is an end that is necessarily returned to, and can only become real through its becoming, by going through its motion (*Ausführung*). Only through its complete *Ausführung* does it become clear that the process through which being revealed itself was one with an immanent teleology: its goal (*Zweck*) is already latently present in its beginning, and returned to in its completion. The word *Ausführung* in this sentence becomes very rich in meaning; not only is it suggestive of activity, in which being is determined and in which truth comes to light, but it also intimates a staging of all the respective moments, or scenes,<sup>113</sup> in which *Geist*, the protagonist of the *Phänomenologie*, appears and takes on all of its roles.<sup>114</sup> Finally, *Ausführung* can also be read as a 'leading away from' the dark in which the truth cannot be perceived, and which thus brings the truth to light. Significantly, Hegel leaves open

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<sup>113</sup> This meaning is activated by its being part of a cluster of theatre or acting metaphors, through which Hegel emphasizes our coming to know what really is through a careful consideration of its appearances: 'Vorstellung', 'Erscheinung', 'Gestalt', 'Auftreten', 'Character', 'Szene', 'Vorhang', etc. Even 'Kreis' can be taken to belong to this cluster, as being the auditorium in which the play is staged, or can also refer to the stage itself, if circular. The suggestion seems to be that in interaction with what is staged the spectators are taken up in, become part of what is staged, i.e. the coming into its own of *Geist*. Cf. also the next note.

<sup>114</sup> Several critics see the *Phänomenologie* as a kind of *Bildungsroman*, see e.g. Paul Redding's entry on Hegel in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>, access date 09-05-2013), par. 3.1: 'its (of the *Phänomenologie*, AG) structure has been compared to that of a *Bildungsroman*, having an abstractly conceived protagonist – the bearer of an evolving series of 'shapes of consciousness' or the inhabitant of a series of successive phenomenal worlds – whose progress and set-backs the reader follows and learns from.'

the question who is responsible for the *Ausführung*: it may be being, as the object of knowledge, but it could equally be its subject, the *Wissen* of (those involved in) true philosophy. Apparently, Hegel wants us to think of both simultaneously.<sup>115</sup>

The process Hegel wants to track, the subjectification of being through which it can ultimately be known, is presented in such a way that we can only come to an understanding by allowing the text's parts to interact and to develop all of their potential, and by becoming aware that as soon as we try to determine something's identity by adding a predicate (the living substance is ...) the sentence as a totality eludes us. By being made to wonder about aspects such as the relation between subject and object (and their interchangeability), and the multi-dimensionality of words, the reader comes to an awareness that what is to be thought is to be made into what it is, and that what is to be thought refers both to ourselves as a knowing (and reading) subject and to the object of our thought, and that both are changed and developed in and through their interaction.<sup>116</sup> The *Ausführung* of the textual process is thus also made a responsibility of the reader, who through the initial obscurity of the text - is challenged to subjectify it in order to make it a coherent whole, and, in doing so, become part of the process, and gain experience of what this process entails.

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. also *PhdG*, p. 13: 'die Sache ist nicht in ihrem *Zwecke* erschöpft, sondern in ihre *Ausführung*.' Again a very rich sentence, as 'erschöpfen' can mean to both to treat exhaustively, or to exhaust, (which is the meaning we are most likely to think of as soon as we start to understand Hegel's point that the object of knowledge cannot be posited in advance as a goal that is to be reached by a method that has not yet understood itself, an understanding that can only be reached in the *Ausführung* of knowing), but can also mean to create, which appears to be contradictory to both *Zweck* and *Ausführung*, but makes sense as soon as we realise that for Hegel creation is not *ex nihilo*, but refers to the whole process in which true knowledge comes to be.

<sup>116</sup> In the *Vorrede* to the *Phänomenologie*, Hegel describes the dialectical movement as a twofold process through which thought comes to know what is to be thought as follows: '[d]as innere Entstehen oder das Werden der Substanz ist ungetrennt Übergehen in das Äußere oder in das Dasein, Sein für Anderes, und umgekehrt ist das Werden des Daseins das sich Zurücknehmen ins Wesen. Die Bewegung ist so der gedoppelte Prozeß und Werden des Ganzen, das zugleich ein jedes das andere setzt und jedes darum auch beide als zwei Ansichten an ihm hat; sie zusammen machen dadurch das Ganze, daß sie sich selbst auflösen und zu seinen Momenten machen.' (*PhdG*, p. 43.)

## 2.2. Rhetoric and reader involvement

Not only by allowing the dialectical movement – through the interaction with the reader – to be expressed in language, but also through the use of several rhetorical devices Hegel presents philosophy in such a way as to make the reader gain experience of what is to be thought, but also to create an awareness in the reader that he or she is to play an active role in the process.<sup>117</sup> At the very beginning of the preface to the *Phänomenologie*, Hegel immediately alerts his audience by stating that the enterprise he is about to embark on is not what the reader is used to (‘nach der Gewohnheit’) expect from philosophical writings: ‘etwa eine historische *Angabe* der Tendenz und des Standpunkts, des allgemeinen Inhalts und der Resultate, eine Verbindung von hin und her sprechenden Behauptungen und Versicherungen über das Wahre – , kann nicht für die Art und Weise gelten, in der die philosophische Wahrheit darzustellen sei’.<sup>118</sup> The reader is asked to reconsider his or her preconceptions, and is invited to be sceptical with regard to a merely historical indication (*Angabe*)<sup>119</sup> – words intimating that what is presented this way is something that already belongs to the past – of what in the course of the *Phänomenologie* prove to be concepts that are vital elements in philosophy – such as

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<sup>117</sup> As in the process of coming to know knowing is both active and passive, the role of the reader in unfolding the text is also both active and passive: in the act of reading we become aware that as soon as we try to determine the meaning of parts of the text, in order to grasp the whole, we can only do so by allowing the parts to interact with each other, through which the whole enfolds, and that it is our trying to disclose the text - for the sake of which the text needs to appear as something that is in need of being disclosed - that is the start of the process of interaction within the text.

<sup>118</sup> *PhdG*, p. 11.

<sup>119</sup> Through its placement in the sentence (and also through its being put in italics, although the question is whether the emphasis is originally Hegel’s, or has been added by one of the later editors) the word ‘Angabe’ is stressed, and we are thus forced to think twice about it, and (re)consider its implications. Simultaneously, we are asked to consider the fact that it is in the nature of words to be given meaning in context, and that we, as readers, should be alert to what words are generally taken to mean, reconsider this meaning, and be open to the other meanings and connotations that are also possible. We usually take the word ‘Angabe’ to mean indication of, or information on, a state of affairs, yet, by having us take a closer look at the word, Hegel also wants us to realise that what is referred to by the word ‘Angabe’ is not only indicated, but also something that is merely given to us, and should be accepted as such, without further reflection on our part. This, of course, is the opposite of what Hegel is after.

‘Standpunkt’, ‘Inhalt’ and ‘Resultat’ – , and which can only attain their content and meaning as ‘das wirkliche Erkennen’ unfolds itself, but which at this stage, in a preface that is merely an ‘Angabe’, could never go beyond a vacuous ‘hin und her sprechen’ in which meaningful connections cannot be established.

Nevertheless, Hegel continues by making a positive remark about the nature of philosophy: ‘die Philosophie [ist] wesentlich im Elemente der Allgemeinheit, die das Besondere in sich schließt’.<sup>120</sup> How exactly we are meant to take this statement – what does the ‘element of the general’ mean exactly, and how can philosophy only *be* essentially in it – is not made clear, but that is part of Hegel’s strategy: we, as readers, cannot know in advance, and should be forced to find out for ourselves, in the course of the work, what is meant, and can thus become part, as individuals, of philosophy as general. The rhetorical device Hegel uses here, *prolepsis*, – introduction of words, arguments or images the meaning of which will be revealed, or disclosed gradually, as the text progresses – is also used with great effect by Plato, whose aim also was to provoke the reader into thought and, through the use of rhetoric, to make him or her part of the activity of knowing.<sup>121</sup> Through the use of *prolepsis*, the reader becomes aware that a proper understanding – *Begriff* – of what knowing is, and of the words in which it is expressed is only possible in the end, after what has been ‘vorausgesetzt’ can be properly understood through the mediation with its context.<sup>122</sup> Of course, and this is what Hegel also wants us to become aware of through the experience of reading as a process of clarification, *prolepsis* can only be successful if what is to be clarified already contains in

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<sup>120</sup> *PhdG*, p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> See Charles Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), pp. 48-61. Kahn argues that Plato uses *prolepsis* in order to shock or puzzle the reader, and that this initial shock or wonder ‘acts as a stimulus on inquiring minds.’ (Kahn, p. 66), which may also be one of Hegel’s aims.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. ch. 1, p. 22, esp. n. 59.

itself the principle of its own development, if there already is content that presents itself, in its being determined, as different from what it is *an sich*.

However, Hegel warns us, one of the misconceptions ensuing from philosophy being ‘im Elemente der Allgemeinheit’, is that, in philosophy, ‘die Sache selbst’, what real knowing essentially is, can be expressed completely in its goal, implying that the exposition of philosophy is something which does not essentially belong to it.<sup>123</sup>

Knowledge should not be an ‘Aggregat von Kenntnissen’,<sup>124</sup> a collection of dead parts which do not (yet) form a whole, which is what a science such as anatomy is generally considered to be. Neither should we, in a work of philosophy, expect ‘Beistimmung oder Widerspruch’ with other philosophical systems.<sup>125</sup> This expectation is said to be based on a solidified opinion (*Meinung*) with regard to the opposition between true and false.

Again the reader is provoked into thought: what can be meant by this opposition being a mere opinion, even if it is an opinion that is becoming increasingly fixed (‘fest’)? As we are made to focus on the word *Meinung*, we are also alerted to a very important aspect: an opinion is what is mine (*mein*) only, it is something which can never be shared, and is thus in stark contrast to the ‘Element der Allgemeinheit’, in which philosophy is an enterprise in which the truth is common to all, and shared by everybody, and which takes up – or encloses – what is individual (‘das Besondere in sich schließt’). ‘Schließt’ is a highly significant word, as it also suggests a logical movement (as ‘schließen’ can also mean to conclude),<sup>126</sup> and already intimates that logic should not be viewed as a purely

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid. ‘[S]o findet bei [der Philosophie] mehr als bei anderen Wissenschaften der Schein statt, als ob in dem Zwecke oder den letzten Resultate (an echo of the ‘historische Angabe’: the appearance suggested by the philosophy the reader is used to, is that results are already a thing of the past, and not something that should be achieved in and through philosophy, AG) die Sache selbst und sogar in ihrem vollkommenen Wesen ausgedrückt wäre, gegen welches die Ausführung eigentlich das Unwesentliche sei.’

<sup>124</sup> Cf. ch.1, n. 23.

<sup>125</sup> *PhdG*, p. 12.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. introduction, n.16.

formal science of (reflexive) thinking, but that logic can only be real when thinking and being are a unity, in which the form of thought is not the abstraction from all content, but is in-formed through the becoming concrete of the object of thought.<sup>127</sup>

Diversity in philosophical systems, Hegel proceeds, is not to be explained in terms of a contradiction implying that what is right in the one must be false in the other, but should rather be understood as an evolving development of truth, of which negativity is an integral part. Our initial understanding is obfuscated by our prejudiced outlook ('als sie [die Meinung] in der Verschiedenheit nur der Widerspruch sieht'<sup>128</sup>). We are already meant to become aware that unreflected perceptions (*Wahrnehmungen*: what we take, rather than what we understand to be true, and can thus easily mis-take) can distort the truth. Hegel turns to nature to illuminate what process he is referring to: in order to state what a plant truly is, we do not give precedence to its having buds or flowers – which is then 'fixed' as what a plant essentially is – , and deny the other forms in which it presents itself as false forms of existence. The nature of all the forms in which the flower makes itself known, is fluid (rather than 'überflüssig'), not solidified or exclusive: '[a]ber ihre flüssige Natur macht sie zugleich zu Momenten der organischen Einheit, worin sie sich nicht nur nicht widerstreiten, sondern eins so notwendig als das andere ist, und diese gleiche Notwendigkeit macht erst das Leben des Ganzen aus.'<sup>129</sup> The contrast to the dead parts of anatomy could not be greater; we are shown that we can think of unity in terms of the forms as equally necessary *Momenten*,<sup>130</sup> which cannot be said to oppose each other,<sup>131</sup> and together make up the life, and being alive, of the object as a whole.

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. *WdL I*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>128</sup> *PbdG*, p. 12.

<sup>129</sup> *PbdG*, p. 12.

<sup>130</sup> The term is used by Hegel with all its connotations, so that we are also meant to think of mechanical moments, which balance each other out. Hegel thus subtly provides a link between organic and anorganic nature.

As will become clear in the *Phänomenologie's* chapter on self-consciousness, life, for Hegel, is not a concept that merely refers to organic life. What Hegel in this passage says about the nature of the plant is equally true for the nature of everything, as will appear if we truly come to know it. *Leben*, as Hegel explains in chapter IV, is the immediate object of consciousness (in its relation to the sensible world), to which it finds itself opposed. Its being (*Sein*) is not an abstraction, but the 'einfache flüssige Substanz der reinen Bewegung in sich selbst'.<sup>132</sup> In the process of individuation this substance divides ('entzweit') itself: '[d]ie einfache Substanz des Lebens also ist die Entzweiung ihrer selbst in Gestalten und zugleich die Auflösung [der] bestehenden Unterschiede; und die Auflösung der Entzweiung ist ebensowohl Entzweiung oder ein Gliedern.'<sup>133</sup> The circular movement of division and dissolution, the internal dynamics that sets everything in motion and through which the totality develops and maintains itself, is what life essentially is:

[d]ieser ganze Kreislauf macht das Leben aus, - weder das, was zuerst ausgesprochen wird, die unmittelbare Kontinuität und Gediegenheit seines Wesens, noch die bestehende Gestalt und das für sich seiende Diskrete, noch der reine Prozeß derselben, noch auch das einfache Zusammenfassen dieser Momente, sondern das sich entwickelnde und seine Entwicklung auflösende und in dieser Bewegung sich einfach erhaltende Ganze.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Hegel purposefully uses a double negation instead of a simple assertion. *Negation*, in contrast to the initial *Widerspruch* that is applied externally (and through which our understanding is limited to either/or statements), is essential to what Hegel sees as true philosophy, as it produces movement, and ultimately, after everything has been negated, produces the totality that knows itself.

<sup>132</sup> *PhdG*, p. 140.

<sup>133</sup> *PhdG*, p. 142.

<sup>134</sup> *PhdG*, p. 142.

In our coming to know the world there is constant interaction between all the moments of an object that in themselves (or even simply taken together in a ‘Zusammenfassung’) could never fully account for what an object truly is. The ‘life’ of every object of ‘das wirkliche Erkennen’, that which is responsible for producing all the different aspects, for bringing them together and making them interact, does only fully reveal itself, as appears from the sentence quoted above, by negating its separate aspects (‘weder’, ‘noch’), and thus produces a whole in which there is constant movement between the parts that are both developed and dissolved.<sup>135</sup> Hegel wants us to understand that our initial judgement (‘was zuerst ausgesprochen wird’) of something will never capture this totality, and that a full understanding is only possible at the end, when all the individual parts have been negated in order to achieve a totality that is truly alive.

The problem that Hegel wants us to become fully aware of in the *Vorrede* is that we do not tend to think of philosophy in this way, of its being a living totality we have to come to understand by taking part in it: ‘[a]ber der Widerspruch gegen ein philosophisches System pflegt teils sich selbst nicht auf diese Weise zu begreifen, teils weiß das auffassende Bewußtsein gemeinhin nicht, ihn von seiner Einseitigkeit zu befreien oder frei zu erhalten und in der Gestalt des streitend und sich zuwider Scheinenden gegenseitig notwendige Momente zu erkennen.’<sup>136</sup> Through its presentation, the sentence provokes the reader, and in doing so draws him or her into the process of coming to understand what *Erkennen* really is: the contradiction is personified and made

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. Hegel’s *Enzyklopädie*, §§216-222, in which the concept of life is said to be the soul of everything that is real, i.e. it is that which is responsible for its movement. It is the process ‘seines Zusammenschließens mit sich selbst’ (§217), a phrase that clearly indicates that for Hegel (as was already intimated in the opening page of the *Phänomenologie* (‘die Philosophie [ist] wesentlich im Elemente der Allgemeinheit, die das Besondere in sich schließt’), see p. 6 of this paper), logic is not the science in which thought is pure form, abstracted from its content, but can only be real, and can only give us truth, when form and content are a unified whole. G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse 1830 I (Werke 8)* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986).

<sup>136</sup> *PhdG*, p. 12.



the subject of the sentence, and we can only make sense of this sentence by identifying ourselves with the contradiction, by taking up its point of view, and by coming to understand that what we naturally do is to place ourselves outside a system of thought in order to contradict and deny (parts of) it. Hegel suggests a different outlook, which allows us, who are in the next clause presented as belonging to an ‘auffassendes Bewußtsein’, to free ourselves from the one-sidedness of our either/ or outlook, in order to be able to also take up different perspectives, in order to ultimately achieve the perspective of the whole, and to fully understand the function of the *Widerspruch*, as being the motor, or the soul,<sup>137</sup> of the movement through which what was immediate can enrich itself and become a mediated totality. The subject of the sentence, the personified ‘Widerspruch’, takes on a different guise in the subsequent clause (where it becomes the ‘auffassende Bewußtsein’), and is ultimately, in the last clause, challenged not to have itself determined by the specific character of these guises, but to take on, or rather recognize itself, in a third guise (a ‘Gestalt’) of necessarily opposed moments. The dialectical, tripartite, structure of reality is thus adumbrated in Hegel’s presentation, and can only come to light if the reader actively interacts with the text.

A further important aspect of this sentence is its paratactical structure (a structure that Hegel very frequently uses, as we also saw at the beginning of this chapter), in which the parts are connected by ‘und’ and ‘oder’ and thus stand in an insubordinate relation to each other, suggesting that all parts (or moments) are equally important in making up the whole,<sup>138</sup> and that in each part of the sentence we come to realise a different aspect of

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. *PhdG*, p. 39: ‘[d]ie Ungleichheit, die im Bewußtsein zwischen dem Ich und der Substanz, die sein Gegenstand ist, stattfindet, ist ihr Unterschied, das *Negative* überhaupt. Es kann als der Mangel beider angesehen werden, ist aber ihre oder das Bewegende derselben.’ See also *WdL I*, p. 17.

<sup>138</sup> In this aspect of Hegel’s style, he may have been inspired by Friedrich Hölderlin, who dismissed the hypotactical style, and used parataxis with great effect in extremely long, convoluting sentences. In one of his ‘Aphorismen’, Hölderlin explains his preference, and

the totality. Only by becoming aware of the ways we (as natural consciousness) are involved in knowing the world and ourselves is it possible for us to liberate ourselves from our one-sidedness, and to see that all the aspects, all the moments continuously interact and that all of them are necessary in producing a unified whole, to which the parts are ultimately subjected, and which can only take place through actively engaging with the text.

### 2.2.1. Knowing as activity and *Darstellung* of what is

Throughout the preface, Hegel emphasises the active nature ('Tun' / 'betreiben') of *Erkennen*, both in its real and in its apparent character. The activity involved in the type of philosophy Hegel is attacking is a relatively easy one: '[s]olche Bemühungen mit dem Zwecke oder den Resultaten sowie mit den Verschiedenheiten und Beurteilungen des einen und des anderen sind daher eine leichtere Arbeit als sie vielleicht scheinen.'<sup>139</sup> The monotonous rhythm of the sentence suggests an intense boredom with such philosophy: it is apparent knowledge which is a mere summing up, and in which nothing truly happens. Besides, 'die Sache selbst' gets lost in all the differentiating: '[d]enn statt mit der Sache selbst sich zu befassen, ist solches Tun immer über sie hinaus; statt in ihr zu

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comments on what he calls a logical ordering of words or periods, and remarks: '[d]ie logische Stellung der Perioden, wo dem Grunde (der Grundperiode) das Werden, dem Werden das Ziel, dem Ziele der Zweck folgt, und die Nebensätze immer nur hinten an gehängt sind an die Hauptsätze worauf sie sich zunächst beziehen, - ist dem Dichter gewiß nur höchst selten brauchbar.' In: J.Ch.F. Hölderlin, *Theoretische Schriften*, hrsg. Johann Kreuzer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998), p. 17. The hypotactical style is dismissed, as it implies a dichotomy between form and content, whereas Hölderlin wants to emphasize that content and form should be an organic whole, which enfolds itself in in the act of reading. The 'logic' of a sentence is not a thing apart from its content, but should also be seen as a process, in which there is continuous interplay between words and phrases. On Hölderlin's possible influence on Hegel's style and alleged obscurity, see also Terry Pinkard, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 137/138.

<sup>139</sup> *PhdG*, p. 13.

verweilen und sich in ihr zu vergessen, greift solches Wissen immer nach einem anderen und bleibt vielmehr bei sich selbst, als das es bei der Sache ist und sich ihr hingibt.<sup>140</sup>

The activity involved in apparent knowing is ultimately empty, as it, in continuously making distinctions, fails to reach its object and ultimately remains on its own, without being able to produce any real truth. The barrenness of this type of *Wissen* is contrasted with a knowing in which the subject longs to forget itself in, and give itself to its object, and become fully united with it. The most difficult type of knowing, however, which transcends both in that it is simultaneously active and passive, is the one in which what is can be presented as what it is: '[d]as leichteste ist, was Gehalt und Gediegenheit hat, zu beurteilen, schwerer, es zu fassen, das schwerste, was beides vereinigt, seine Darstellung hervorzubringen.'<sup>141</sup> The object of knowledge is, in the first clause, described as that which has content ('Gehalt') and 'Gediegenheit', again a highly suggestive word. Hegel probably wants us to think of the object of knowledge as something solid or pure,<sup>142</sup> but the word can also refer to the way an object coincides with its presentation:

'Gediegenheit' as the locus where 'Ausdruck und Gedanke gleichsam zu einem Ganzen zusammengewachsen sind'.<sup>143</sup> However, this latter aspect cannot yet be developed at the first stage, in which the object is merely judged, and not yet grasped. By 'fassen', the

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> *PhdG*, p. 15.

<sup>142</sup> And thus refers to the way the object is grasped ('aufgefaßt') in a reflexive judgement, through which it is destined to remain an 'element' that can never truly interact and become one with its environment.

<sup>143</sup> See the entry on 'Gediegenheit' in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jakob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*. Interestingly, the entry also gives 'Gediegenheit' as that which presupposes ('voraussetzt') 'eine Weiterbildung', a denotation that is very much in line with both Hegel's conception of how the totality becomes real ('zusammen mit seinem Werden'), and with the proleptic character of Hegel's presentation. 'Gediegen' thus becomes a very interesting metaphor, in that it reveals itself - through its meaning of 'solid' or 'pure' on the one hand, and - as being the past participle of 'gedeihen' (to grow slowly) - as belonging both to the cluster of mechanistic metaphors and the cluster of organic metaphors. In chapter four I will return to Hegel's use of clusters of metaphors.

second stage, Hegel refers to the ‘unmittelbares Wissen’ of the truth, but this is not yet a knowing that knows what it knows, and has a proper grasp (*Begriff*)<sup>144</sup> of the truth.<sup>145</sup>

That immediate knowledge cannot be the final stage is further developed on the next page:

[w]enn nämlich das Wahre nur in demjenigen oder vielmehr als dasjenige existiert, was bald Anschauung, bald unmittelbares Wissen des Absoluten, Religion, das Sein – nicht im Zentrum der göttlichen Liebe, sondern das Sein desselben selbst – genannt wird, so wird von da aus zugleich für die Darstellung der Philosophie vielmehr das Gegenteil der Form des Begriffs gefordert. Das Absolute soll nicht begriffen, sondern gefühlt und angeschaut [werden], nicht sein Begriff, sondern sein Gefühl und Anschauung sollen das Wort führen und ausgesprochen werden.<sup>146</sup>

If we were to have only an intuition that the Absolute exists, we could never reach a full understanding – and expression – of philosophy through *Begriffe*, but would only be able – through feeling or intuition – to show *that* the Absolute exists. Yet what Hegel wants to show is that ultimately – although this is the most difficult task of all – true knowledge of the Absolute, if it has come to a full understanding of itself, can be expressed. In this expression or presentation both previous moments – the judging and immediate grasp of things – are taken up and united. As the antecedent of the ‘beides’ that are united, however, we are also meant to understand that which knows and that which is known, and probably even the ‘Gehalt und Gediegenheit’ of the first clause, through the unification of which the content of the object of knowledge is developed

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<sup>144</sup> *Begriff* is one of the richest words in Hegel’s philosophical vocabulary. When we have a true understanding of what a concept (*Begriff*) entails, we have a grasp (‘Griff’) of the way it has enfolded as a totality, so as something that includes, or encloses (‘begreifen’) all its parts.

<sup>145</sup> On ‘fassen’, cf. ch. 1, n. 32.

<sup>146</sup> *PhdG*, p. 15.

into an organised - and organic - whole, and it is only then that the proper ‘Ausdruck’ can be given to the ‘Gedanke’, as the ‘Form des Begriffs’ has now been allowed to manifest itself. The ‘Darstellung’, the presentation of true philosophy, is ultimately something that takes place in and through the activity of thinking that is conscious of its thinking and knows that and what it thinks, and through which what posits itself (‘darstellt’) as an object for consciousness is allowed to reveal itself as what it is.<sup>147</sup> As Puntel puts it: ‘[d]as Wahre ist nur als Prozeß seiner Selbstenthüllung,<sup>148</sup> the truth only really is in the process in which being reveals itself through its presentation, in which what appears reveals itself as what it essentially is.

### 2.2.2. The presentation of truth as process and the speculative sentence

To do justice to the process character of truth, it is impossible to capture what is true in a factual, fixed, sentence, as dogmatic philosophy holds: ‘[d]er *Dogmatismus* der Denkungsart im Wissen und im Studium der Philosophie ist nichts anderes als die Meinung, daß das Wahre in einem Satze, der ein festes Resultat ist oder auch der unmittelbar gewußt wird, bestehe.<sup>149</sup> This is only useful in the case of factual information, such as when Caesar was born, or that my cat is grey, but ‘die Natur einer solchen sogenannten Wahrheit ist verschieden von der Natur philosophischer

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<sup>147</sup> These thoughts are already present in Hegel’s *Differenzschrift*, in which he describes true philosophy as springing from the source of a *Geist* that is alive and ‘selbsttätig’, and through which reason can liberate itself and become active and, in doing so, reveal itself as being rational: ‘[d]ie freie Vernunft und ihre Tat ist eins, und ihre Tätigkeit ein reines Darstellen ihrer selbst.’ See *Differenzschrift*, p. 46. For Hegel, *Darstellen* is fundamentally different from *Vorstellen*: a *Vorstellung* is a representation of what really is, and thus (partly) obscures it, whereas a *Darstellung* is its presentation, either in immediate or mediated form.

<sup>148</sup> Puntel, op.cit., p. 291.

<sup>149</sup> *PhdG*, p. 41.

Wahrheiten.<sup>150</sup> True philosophical thought can only be expressed if its content is not something distinct from itself; in language in which there is movement - and thus no 'bestehen'<sup>151</sup> - and in which negativity is incorporated in order to produce a meaningful whole.

A sentence that reveals this movement is what Hegel calls a speculative sentence ('ein spekulativer Satz'). Through its form, such a sentence may look 'fixed' (e.g. 'Gott ist das Sein', or 'das Wirkliche ist das Allgemeine'), but, as Hegel claims, reflection on its content should disrupt the relation between subject and predicate we are used to expecting: '[d]er philosophische Satz, weil er Satz ist, erweckt die Meinung des gewöhnlichen Verhältnisses des Subjekts und Prädikats und des gewohnten Verhaltens des Wissens. Dies Verhalten und die Meinung desselben zerstört sein philosophischer Inhalt; die Meinung erfährt, daß es anders gemeint ist, als sie meinte, und diese Korrektur nötigt das Wissen, auf den Satz zurückzukommen und ihn nun anders zu fassen.'<sup>152</sup> In reflecting on a sentence such as 'Gott ist das Sein', we experience that the predicate, '*das Sein*' has a substantial meaning, in which the subject, God, runs over ('zerfließt'). We find out that being is not simply a predicate, but God's essence,<sup>153</sup> and as soon as we realise this God is no longer the fixed subject of whom being is predicated: 'dadurch scheint Gott aufzuhören was er durch die Stellung des Satzes ist, nämlich das

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> 'bestehen', in the previous sentence, can be read as both 'to exist in' and 'to stand (still), and Hegel wants us to think of both. Interestingly, 'bestehen', in its latter meaning, is especially used for the standing still, and thus the thickening and coagulation of fluids (through which things become troubled and obscured again). Interestingly, through this latter meaning it becomes part of a cluster of metaphors to which 'gediegen' also belongs, as this can also mean 'coagulated' ('geronnen'). The implication thus being that the truth can only truly exist if its fluid nature is allowed to present itself. Cf. the entry on 'bestehen' in the *Grimm Wörterbuch*.

<sup>152</sup> *PbdG*, p. 60.

<sup>153</sup> And that the sentence thus comes to express a relation of identity rather than of subject and predicate. Cf. p. 59: 'die Natur des Urteils oder Satzes überhaupt [wird] durch den spekulativen Satz zerstört und der identische Satz, zu dem der erstere wird, [enthält] den Gegenstoß zu jenem Verhältnisse.'

feste Subjekt.<sup>154</sup> As what appeared solid and certain – the God we took for granted – becomes unstable, thought feels slowed down, as it is made to return to and reconsider the subject – which now appears lost in the predicate – , instead of being able to progress smoothly from subject to predicate:

[d]as Denken, statt im Übergange vom Subjekte zum Prädikate weiterzukommen, fühlt sich, da das Subjekt verlorengelht, vielmehr gehemmt und zu dem Gedanken des Subjekts, weil es dasselbe vermißt, zurückgeworfen; oder es findet, da das Prädikat selbst als ein Subjekt, als *das* Sein, als das *Wesen* ausgesprochen ist, welches die Natur des Subjekts erschöpft, das Subjekt auch unmittelbar auch im Prädikate; und nun, statt daß es im Prädikate in sich gegangen die freie Stellung des Rasonierens erhalte, ist es in den Inhalt noch vertieft, oder wenigstens ist die Forderung vorhanden, in ihn vertieft zu sein.<sup>155</sup>

Only in abstract formal logic can we easily move from S to P,<sup>156</sup> but as soon as thinking wants to make itself concrete, by occupying itself with what is, rather than with its own laws, we become aware that something can only become concrete if we allow what is to be substantial, and to have it determine itself, rather than apply arbitrary and external determinations to it. Jere O'Neill Surber, in an essay on Hegel's (absent) philosophy of language, explains what happens in a speculative sentence as follows: 'whenever the "Ss and Ps" of the formal judgment are replaced by actual words, we come to realize that the "subject" is not simply identical with the "object," as the "is" of the formal copula would seem to assert, but that the two stand in an internally complex relation involving

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<sup>154</sup> *PhdG*, p. 59.

<sup>155</sup> *PhdG*, p. 59.

<sup>156</sup> As it has a purely arbitrary content, which is in no need of being developed, since it has been completely separated from its form.

difference and mediation as well as identity.<sup>157</sup> Apart from the fact that the speculative sentence becomes speculative as soon as we see it as a relation of identity (which for Hegel also entails difference) rather than a relation between subject and predicate, and that it is doubtful whether ‘Gott’ and ‘das Sein’ can be referred to as ‘actual words’ – Hegel’s point rather seems to be that these words have to be given concrete meaning, and thus to become ‘actual’ through speculative thinking – the process Hegel describes is one which does not take place merely because we are confronted with words rather than symbols, but can only take place through actively reflecting on the content of a sentence, and to leave behind the type of thinking (‘das Rasonieren’) through which we are used to taking a sentence of the type S is P as indicative of ‘das gewöhnliche Verhältnis des Subjekts und Prädikats’. Philosophy should be presented in such a way that our preconceptions of what a philosophical text should be like are challenged; by becoming aware that, in order to break the self-imposed shutters of reflexive thinking, we cannot simply take words and sentences for granted (to which we have been alerted by Hegel’s use of *prolepsis*, personification and parataxis), but that we also may have to read a ‘normal’ sentence differently from what we expected.<sup>158</sup> In speculative thinking, we not only feel ‘zurückgeworfen’ in the sense that we have to return to the beginning of the sentence, and reconsider the subject in order to give it content (‘die Forderung’ – the challenge – to go deeply into the subject has presented itself), but also in the sense that we are made to reflect critically both on ourselves as thinkers – and on what thinking really is – and on ourselves as readers, thus becoming aware of the limits and possibilities of language. Hegel wants to activate the reader into making the text, and ultimately philosophy, his or her own.

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<sup>157</sup> Jere O’Neill Surber, ‘Hegel’s Philosophy of Language: The Unwritten Volume’ in Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (eds), *A Companion to Hegel* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 251-252.

<sup>158</sup> Surber does have a point when he says that a speculative sentence is a sentence that becomes speculative if we take it speculatively by actively considering its content. Cf. Surber, *op. cit.*, p. 252.



Hegel stresses that the sublation through which a sentence becomes speculative only really occurs when the ‘entgegengesetzte Bewegung’ that is implicit in the sentence is to be made explicit: ‘diese entgegengesetzte Bewegung muß ausgesprochen werden; sie muß nicht nur jene innerliche Hemmung, sondern dies Zurückgehen in sich muß dargestellt sein.’<sup>159</sup> This ‘aussprechen’ apparently has to be taken quite literally: only in saying a sentence out loud, and by emphasizing certain words or parts (through which we in a sense also make it our own), can we come to understand that a sentence could also be read differently.<sup>160</sup> It is only through a consideration of these different readings, through the *Ausführung* and subsequent incorporation of all the different ways a sentence can be read,<sup>161</sup> that we are able to understand what is said in its totality.<sup>162</sup> Speculative thought is only possible when what appears is shown to be both the same as, yet different from, what is, as Hegel also intimated through his use of the paratactical sentence, and we can now see that ‘oder, was dasselbe ist’ can also be read in a speculative way, through which reading the subject is given substance. Only then can the presentation (and reading) of philosophy be more than the endless repetition through which we ultimately learn nothing of what is, as it is not allowed to develop: ‘[d]ie für sich wohl wahre Idee bleibt in der Tat nur immer in ihrem Anfange stehen, wenn die Entwicklung in nichts als in einer [...] Wiederholung derselben Formel besteht.’<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *PhdG*, p. 61. On this aspect of the speculative sentence, cf. also Puntel, pp. 32-34.

<sup>160</sup> A related interesting aspect is that, as soon as we have said a sentence out loud, it ceases to be mine only, and subjects itself to interpretation by others, and my attempts at interpretation may thus be corrected and adjusted. Cf. *PhdG*, p. 233: ‘Sprache und Arbeit sind Äußerungen, worin das Individuum nicht mehr an ihm selbst sich behält und besitzt, sondern das Innere ganz außer sich kommen läßt und dasselbe Anderem preisgibt.’

<sup>161</sup> In the context of what Hegel says with regard to the speculative sentence, the meaning of *Ausführung*, through interaction with words such as *Rhythmus*, *Metrum*, *Harmonie* and *Akzent*, is even further enriched, as we become aware it is also used for a musical performance, in which, as in speculative thinking, the harmony of the totality is produced through the interaction, and subsequent dissolution of all its individual parts, and also of what initially discords, or rather, appears to discord. On *Ausführung*, cf. pp. 45-46 of this chapter.

<sup>162</sup> As Adorno puts it, ‘[m]an muß einen ganzen Satz kennen, in jedem Augenblick des Vorhergehenden retrospektive gewahr sein.’ (op. cit., p. 366).

<sup>163</sup> *PhdG*, p. 21.

Hegel also shows that words in themselves cannot reveal what is contained in them, but can only do so if particular instances are allowed to interact with their context, through which they can be given concrete meaning, and thus cease to be general and abstract: ‘was mehr ist als ein solches Wort (a word that we initially use to refer to something, without having an understanding, AG), der Übergang auch nur zu einem Satze, enthält ein *Anderswerden*, das zurückgenommen werden muß, ist eine Vermittlung.’<sup>164</sup> This is not only true for words such as ‘God’ or ‘the Absolute’, but for all words, as Hegel not only makes us aware of through his use of *prolepsis*, but also by using many words equivocally, by using ordinary terms – or terms used in sciences such as biology or physics (such as *Kraft* or *Kreislauf*) – when we expect philosophical terminology, or by introducing new vocabulary (such as *Anundfürsich*). Why Hegel uses terms we expect in different contexts Puntel explains as follows: ‘es [gilt] jenen spekulativen Sinn zu enthüllen, den ein gegebener Terminus enthält und der dem “gewöhnlichen” Verständnis verborgen bleibt. [Die Philosophie] Hegels kann in dieser Hinsicht als der Versuch betrachtet werden, den “im gemeinen Sprachgebrauch” enthaltenen und dem gewöhnlichen Verständnis verborgenen spekulativen Sinn [...] aufzuzueigen.’<sup>165</sup> Hegel’s aim is to make us aware that in general, as part of natural consciousness, we use language unthinkingly, and take the meaning of words for granted. In experiencing that in reading, and in reflecting on what we read, words have been, and are given meaning in a continuous process, of which we are also a part, we come to understand that we cannot fix the meanings of

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<sup>164</sup> *PhdG*, p. 25. Again an intriguing example of a paratactical sentence, in which there is a tripartite structure: ‘Übergang’ and ‘Anderswerden’ are sublated into ‘Vermittlung’.

<sup>165</sup> Puntel, op. cit., p. 54. Hegel himself also commented on the ‘spekulativer Geist der Sprache’ (and especially of the German language) in the second preface to the *WdL*: ‘manche ihrer (of the German language, AG) Wörter [sind] der weiteren Eigenheit, verschiedene Bedeutungen nicht nur, sondern entgegengesetzte zu haben, so daß darin ein spekulativer Geist der Sprache nicht zu verkennen ist; es kann dem Denken eine Freude gewähren, auf solche Wörter zu stoßen und die Vereinigung Entgegengesetzter, welches Resultat der Spekulation für den Verstand aber widersinnig ist, auf naive Weise schon lexikalisch als *ein* Wort von den entgegengesetzten Bedeutungen vorzufinden. Die Philosophie bedarf daher überhaupt keiner besonderen Terminologie’. *WdL I*, pp. 20-21. Cf. also Koyré, op. cit. pp. 194-197.

words in definitions, but that their meanings are as fluid as the reality they aim to reveal.<sup>166</sup>

Only through (inter)action can we come to a real understanding, and this is by no means an easy task, as Theodor Adorno emphasizes: ‘[d]ie Arbeit und Anstrengung des Begriffs, [erwartet] die Hegelsche Philosophie nicht bloß von sich sondern in einem über jedes gewohnte Maß von Rezeption qualitative hinausgehenden Sinn vom Leser.’<sup>167</sup> For Adorno, being ‘zurückgeworfen’, implies that we have to think for ourselves, and reflect critically on the words we read. Perhaps the most famous example of a sentence in which we feel ‘zurückgeworfen’ is ‘*Sein, reines Sein*’,<sup>168</sup> the start of the chapter on ‘Sein’ in the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, which is definitely a sentence that makes us pause, and that, like the speculative sentence, is effective through its challenging our preconceptions of what a sentence should be, and thus, through how it is said, makes us reflect both on what is said, and on our role as thinking subject. In reading those words we are left to wonder *what* ‘being, pure being’ is, or can be, and this is precisely Hegel’s point: being in and of itself is nothing, and its purity implies that we cannot know what it is, cannot say anything about it: ‘[e]s ist *nichts* in ihm anzuschauen, wenn von Anschauen hier gesprochen werden kann; oder es ist nur dies reine, leere Anschauen selbst. Es ist ebensowenig etwas in ihm zu denken, oder es ist ebenso nur dies leere Denken.’<sup>169</sup> As soon as we can say ‘being is ....’, being has been determined, has been formed into a concrete ‘Dasein’, in which it presents itself as different from ‘reines Sein’, and can thus be known. As we become aware of our missing the copula ‘is’ in the opening words, we

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<sup>166</sup> On the function of the using words equivocally, see also Adorno, op. cit, pp. 340-350, e.g. p. 344: ‘[w]o Hegel ihrer (equivocation, AG) sich schuldig macht, handelt es sich meist um [...] die Explikation dessen, daß zwei distinguierte Momente ebenso verschieden wie eins sind.’ Language thus comes to reflect the Absolute as the identity of identity and non-identity.

<sup>167</sup> Theodor Adorno, ‘Skoteinos oder Wie zu lesen sei,’ in *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 357.

<sup>168</sup> *WdL I*, p. 82.

<sup>169</sup> *WdL I*, pp. 82-83.

also become aware that this is what we, as knowers, will have to supply in order to come to know what is, that it is our activity that is required in the determination of what immediately presents itself to us. 'Das Sein, das unbestimmte Unmittelbare ist in der Tat *Nichts* und nicht mehr noch weniger als Nichts.'<sup>170</sup> Being that is left as it is is nothing, and it needs to be acted on, has to be processed by us, in order to reveal being as what it is, and to give content to our thought. Simultaneously, in reading the sentence, we become aware that the content of a sentence is also something that has to be produced by actively involving ourselves with what is immediately there.

The need to be both active and passive in following what Hegel tells us (or through his alleged difficulty, appears to hide from us) is further elaborated by Adorno: '[w]er [...] Hegel sich anvertraut, wird geleitet zu der Schwelle, an der über seinen Wahrheitsanspruch zu entscheiden ist. Er wird zu Hegels Kritiker, indem er ihm folgt.'<sup>171</sup> This last sentence is important, in that for Hegel, as we can also read in the introduction to the *Phänomenologie*, Kant's *sapere aude* should not imply that we are completely self-reliant and can only make decisions and judgements by abstracting from everything through which we are determined – such as family, society and history – but that if we truly dare to think, we occupy ourselves with what presents itself to us, that which already is *vorhanden*, which we, through critical reflection, liberate from the way it appears to us.<sup>172</sup> In doing so we become involved in what thinking really is, and experience we are not 'das leere Nichts' of abstract thought –<sup>173</sup> through which we can only identify ourselves with what is predicated ('im Prädikate in sich gegangen') – but are able, through the negation of the ways in which what is appears – to subjectify what appears

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<sup>170</sup> *WdL I*, p. 83.

<sup>171</sup> Adorno, p. 374.

<sup>172</sup> *PhdG*, p. 73.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. *PhdG*, p. 491.

to us, to make it our own, and thus to return to the subject with understanding, which is simultaneously a creation of what the subject - and object - really is.<sup>174</sup> Critically interacting with the text thus also implies that in this process - in which understanding evolves - both reader and text are changed. In this process metaphors play an important part, and in what way they do so will be the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>174</sup> On 'erschöpfen', see n. 115. In speculative thinking, the subject is no longer 'vorgestellt', but is 'begriffen', and it is through this process that the knowing subject can recognize itself in the subject, as its object of thought: '[i]ndem der Begriff das eigene Selbst des Gegenstandes ist, das sich als *sein Werden* darstellt, ist es nicht ein ruhendes Subjekt, das unbewegt die Akzidenzen trägt, sondern der sich bewegende und seine Bestimmungen in sich zurücknemende Begriff. In dieser geht jenes ruhende Subjekt selbst zugrunde; es geht in die Unterschiede und den Inhalt ein und macht vielmehr die Bestimmtheit, d.h. den unterschiedenen Inhalt wie die Bewegung desselben aus, statt ihr gegenüber stehenzubleiben.' (*PhdG*, p. 57). Only when the subject is seen as producing – and, as knowing subject, taking up – the differences that originate from within itself can true knowledge arise. Hegel here makes a distinction between two guises in which the subject presents itself: first, the subject as 'das *gegenständliche* fixe Selbst' which produces a manifold of determinations, and the subject as 'das wissende Ich', as that which produces connections. See *PhdG*, p. 58.

### Chapter 3 The role of metaphor in the presentation of thinking

If, for Hegel, a truly philosophical text is a text that reveals its potential meaning - both of its parts, i.e. of individual words and phrases, and of the text as a whole - through a process in which parts and whole are in continuous interaction, how can, and do, metaphors function in this process? As a metaphor is a word, to use M.H. Abrams' definition, 'which in standard ("literal") usage denotes one kind of thing, quality, or action is applied to another, in the form of an identity',<sup>175</sup> it may be particularly suitable to reveal that what initially appears to us is what it is, but, as it is an appearance of what is, is also not what it is. Besides, since through the use of metaphor we are made aware that there is such a thing as 'standard usage', we are made to wonder whether our habitual way of taking things to be what they are is indeed the only way, or whether or not there may be different perspectives on what there is, and in what way these perspectives are related. The role of metaphors in Hegel's thought will be addressed in the following chapter, by discussing Hegel's use of metaphor in the light of his own remarks on metaphor, against the background of some influential theories on (philosophical) metaphor.

#### 3.1. Hegel on metaphor: the relation between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*

In the introduction to the *Enzyklopädie*, Hegel again discusses the difficulty of making a beginning in real philosophy, not only because its method - through which we come to

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<sup>175</sup> M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (fourth edition) (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1981), p. 63.

know - cannot be presupposed as something distinct from its object,<sup>176</sup> but also because its object - unlike the objects of other sciences - is not directly given to us through representations.<sup>177</sup> Since philosophy, like religion, not only deals with absolute truth, but also with what is finite - nature and human spirit - in relation to each other and in relation to the Absolute, it is possible for philosophy to presuppose an acquaintance ('Bekantschaft') with its objects.<sup>178</sup> As we saw earlier, we can only start with what is 'bekannt' to us, but then have to realise that what is 'bekannt' is not yet 'erkannt', and that what appears to be known can only be the start of a process that ultimately leads us to knowledge of what really is.<sup>179</sup> It is necessary to start with our representations of objects in order to come to understand objects as they really are:

[d]ie Philosophie kann daher (as we can start with representations of what is finite, AG) wohl eine *Bekantschaft* mit ihre Gegenständen, ja sie muß eine solche [...] voraussetzen, - schon darum weil das Bewußtsein sich der Zeit nach *Vorstellungen* von Gegenständen früher als *Begriffe* von denselben macht, der *denkende* Geist sogar nur *durchs* Vorstellen hindurch und *auf* dasselbe sich wendend zum denkenden Erkennen und Begreifen fortgeht.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> See ch.1, the preface and introduction to the *Phänomenologie*, and the introduction to the *Wissenschaft der Logik I*.

<sup>177</sup> *Enz. I*, § 1: 'Die Philosophie entbehrt des Vorteils, der den anderen Wissenschaften zugute kommt, ihre *Gegenstände* als unmittelbar von der Vorstellung zugegeben sowie die *Methode* des Erkennens für Anfang und Fortgang als bereits angenommen *voraussetzen* zu können.' An ironical sentence, since, as we saw in chapter 1, speculative philosophy can only come to be as knowing becomes aware of what is lacking in its previous forms. Cf. also §4: 'In Beziehung auf unser gemeines Bewußtsein zunächst hätte die Philosophie *das Bedürfnis ihrer eigentümlichen Erkenntnisweise* darzutun oder gar zu erwecken.' The *Bedürfnis* (or 'Entbehrung') thus proves to be highly advantageous to philosophy, whereas the apparent advantage of the other sciences turns out to be very problematic. The word 'zugegeben' (rather than Kant's 'gegeben', see e.g. *KrV*B74: 'durch die [Vorstellungen] wird uns ein Gegenstand gegeben') also becomes significant in this context, as, like 'bekannt', it suggests that what is represented is merely admitted, or testified, to be true, whereas its truth is not yet known. Cf. p. 15, n.31

<sup>178</sup> *Enz. I*, § 1.

<sup>179</sup> See ch. 1, p. 15.

<sup>180</sup> *Enz. I*, § 1.

Consciousness sets out by making representations of objects, and then moves on to making concepts, yet a full understanding is only achieved in thinking *Geist*. It is the content of consciousness we are determined by, and this content is the same, independent of its being felt or intuited, or available to pure thought. In § 3 Hegel makes an interesting remark on the nature of this determination:

[i]ndem die Bestimmtheiten des Gefühls, der Anschauung, des Begehrens, des Willens usf., insofern von ihnen *gewußt* wird, überhaupt *Vorstellungen* genannt werden, so kann im allgemeinen gesagt werden, daß die Philosophie *Gedanken, Kategorien*, aber näher *Begriffe* an die Stelle der Vorstellungen setzt. Vorstellungen überhaupt können als *Metaphern* der Gedanken und Begriffe angesehen werden.<sup>181</sup>

Ultimately, when thinking knows itself, and understands its determinations, they have ceased to be mere representations, and have been taken up and transformed into concepts.<sup>182</sup> Representations, Hegel adds, can be seen as metaphors of thoughts and concepts, a highly intriguing remark, especially as Hegel gives no further indication as to what a metaphor is, and how it functions.<sup>183</sup> What is clear is that, in reflecting on our representations, they somehow come to fulfil a mediating role which ultimately leads to

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<sup>181</sup> *Enz.* I, § 3.

<sup>182</sup> What Hegel says in this passage appears to clash with what he said in §1, as here representations are said to be replaced by concepts, whereas in §1 *Geist* was said to be able to progress to true thought and understanding only by going through all of its representations, in a passage which strongly suggests that in coming to an understanding of what representations represent, they are not simply replaced, but are maintained in a different form, i.e they are *aufgehoben*. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the fact that in §3 Hegel focuses on what can be said 'im allgemeinen', whereas in true philosophy the particular is taken up in the general: 'die Philosophie [ist] wesentlich im Elemente der Allgemeinheit, der das Besondere in sich schließt' (*PhdG*, p. 11). A more likely explanation, however, may be found in Hegel's remarks in these opening paragraphs on the difference between philosophy and religion: although their subject matter is the same, in religion the truth is felt, intuited or believed in, whereas in philosophy the truth is finally understood. In philosophy, religion's *Vorstellungen* of the truth are understood, and become *Begriffe*. On this aspect, cf. Samuel IJsseling, *Retoriek en Filosofie: Wat gebeurt er wanneer er gesproken wordt?* (Bilthoven: Ambo, 1975), pp. 149-151.

<sup>183</sup> This is the only mention of metaphor in the *Enzyklopadie*; Hegel addresses the use of metaphor more explicitly in the *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, as will be discussed shortly.



understanding. This reflection - in which we come to see our *Vorstellungen* as representations and are thus able to negate them - is necessary: '[d]amit aber, daß man Vorstellungen hat, kennt man noch nicht deren Bedeutung für das Denken, noch nicht deren Gedanken und Begriffe.'<sup>184</sup> The ultimate aim of philosophy is to think pure thought, and this is one reason why so many people find philosophy difficult and incomprehensible:

[d]ie Schwierigkeit liegt einesteils in einer Unfähigkeit, die an sich nur *Ungewohntheit* ist, abstrakt zu denken, d.h. reine Gedanken festzuhalten und in ihnen sich zu bewegen. In unserem gewöhnlichem Bewußtsein sind die Gedanken mit sinnlichem und geistigem geläufigen Stoffe angetan und vereinigt, und im Nachdenken, Reflektieren und Räsonieren *vermischen* wir die Gefühle, Anschauungen, Vorstellungen mit Gedanken [...].<sup>185</sup>

In habitual consciousness thought is clouded and obscured not by what presents itself immediately - which, as we saw earlier, is also initially unclear -<sup>186</sup> but by what is added to it externally,<sup>187</sup> and through which thinking is forced to unite itself with what does not belong to *die Sache selbst*, and in doing so becomes even further confused, as it now mistakes feelings or representations for thoughts.<sup>188</sup> The other reason why philosophy is deemed unintelligible is that consciousness feels a yearning to have a familiar image before itself, as otherwise it does not know what to think: '[e]s komt der Ausdruck vor,

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<sup>184</sup> *Enz. I*, §3.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> See e.g. p. 29.

<sup>187</sup> In 'Nachdenken' and 'Reflektieren', habitual consciousness thus does not really think, but merely reflects (rather than reflects on) what it has been given, and which it takes to be the truth. Thought can thus never purify itself, as it is 'angetan' (infected) by what is inimical to it.

<sup>188</sup> 'Vermischen' can mean both to mix (with) and to confuse. See the entry in the *Grimm Wörterbuch*. Again it is a reference (like 'verdünnen' in *WdL I*, p. 19.) to the procedures of chemistry, through which interaction is achieved, but this interaction between substances is not a movement that is self-induced, unlike the 'Selbsterzeugung' of living organisms. This aspect will be further developed in chapter four.

man wisse nicht, was man sich bei einem Begriffe, der gefaßt worden, *denken* solle; bei einem Begriffe ist weiter nichts zu denken als der Begriff selbst.<sup>189</sup> If thought has fully grasped what is, it is able to think pure concepts, and has no wish for what it should think. Yet, most people are used to being told what to think, and we hold what is forced upon us, and what we are used to hearing, as that which is most comprehensible: '[a]m *verständlichsten* werden daher Schriftsteller, Prediger, Redner usf. gefunden, die ihren Lesern oder Zuhörern Dinge vorsagen, welche diese bereits auswendig wissen, die ihnen geläufig sind und die sich von selbst verstehen.'<sup>190</sup> We think we understand what we are told because we have heard it all before, and what is prompted ('vorgesagt') thus appears to be self-evident. The irony of course is that what appears to be self-evident is not self-evident at all; natural consciousness is used to consider something self-evident when it can be accepted unthinkingly, and for which it therefore need not be active. Only in active, critical thinking can *die Sache selbst* be liberated from the way it is presented to consciousness, and be allowed to present itself, and thus be truly self-evident. The problem with representations is thus not so much that they merely represent what is true - since, when we understand that they do so, they become part of the dialectical process in which *Vorstellungen* are *aufgehoben*, and turned into *Begriffe* - but rather that they are accepted as what is true, so that consciousness need go no further. Yet, is this also the case for metaphors? Apparently it is, if the 'Dinge', the images used by writers and preachers, are metaphors, but in this passage Hegel refrains from commenting more clearly on the nature of a metaphor and its function.

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<sup>189</sup> *Enz.* I, §3.

<sup>190</sup> 'verständlich' can refer to, a.o., what is comprehensible, pertaining to the understanding, sensible and what can be clearly heard or understood, and Hegel probably wants us to be aware of all of those meanings.

### 3.2. What a metaphor is and does

In the *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* metaphor is discussed more extensively - initially only in the context of art, but, as will become clear from the discussion below, most of his remarks have repercussions on the use of metaphor in a philosophical text - and Hegel sets out by distinguishing, as Aristotle already did in his *Poetics*, between a simile and a metaphor. In both cases there is a comparison ('Gleichnis') between what is 'für sich selbst klar' and an 'Erscheinung der konkreten Wirklichkeit', yet, as a simile contains the word 'as' ('wie'), there is a clear distinction between what something really means ('der eigentliche Sinn') and 'das Bild', whereas in a metaphor this distinction remains implicit.<sup>191</sup> Hegel determines metaphor as follows: '[s]ie ist eine ganz ins kurze gezogene Vergleichung, indem sie zwar Bild und Bedeutung einander noch nicht gegenüber stellt, sondern nur das Bild vorführt, den *eigentlichen* Sinn desselben aber tilgt und durch den Zusammenhang, in welchem es vorkommt, die wirklich gemeinte Bedeutung in dem Bilde selber sogleich deutlich erkennen läßt, obgleich sie nicht ausdrücklich angegeben ist.'<sup>192</sup> What a metaphor does is that it gives us a concrete image rather than what is really meant, a *Begriff*, and that as soon as we become aware - through the interaction of the image with its context - of its being a metaphor, the original, concrete meaning is destroyed, a destruction which simultaneously develops what was already 'für sich selbst klar', but has now also been allowed to reveal itself as what it is.

Interestingly, Hegel's definition, in which he on the one hand claims that a metaphor only presents us with an image (instead of the intended meaning), and on the other hand

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<sup>191</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 516.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 517. In his discussion of metaphor, Hegel uses the word 'eigentlich' both for the image used (as in this case) and for its 'Bedeutung' (as in the previous passage).

emphasises the interaction between 'Bild' and context, through which the intended meaning can be known, seems to adumbrate both a substitution view of metaphor, and an interaction view of metaphor, such as developed by, among others, Max Black. The substitution view holds, to use Black's words, 'that a metaphorical expression is used in place of some equivalent *literal* expression.'<sup>193</sup> The reader's task is then to use the meaning of the metaphor in order to discover the intended meaning: '[u]nderstanding a metaphor is like deciphering a code or unraveling a riddle.'<sup>194</sup> One reason why a writer would want to set the reader this task could be that there is, as yet, no word available as the literal expression for what is intended;<sup>195</sup> another reason may be stylistic purposes: the reader is supposed to enjoy the solving of the puzzle, the author's skill, or the mild shock administered by being presented with an unexpected image.<sup>196</sup>

The interaction view of metaphor, as advocated by Black, sees the function of a metaphorical statement as forcing the reader to consider what he calls the 'principal subject' of a sentence in the light of a 'subsidiary subject', and *vice versa*.<sup>197</sup> In doing so, what happens is that a system of 'associated implications' of the subsidiary subject - both the 'commonplaces' we normally associate with a subject, but also implications established by the writer by having the metaphorical statement operate within a certain context, or within a certain cluster of related metaphors - are brought to bear on the principal subject, through which the metaphor 'selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject',<sup>198</sup> and through which, in turn, the subsidiary

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<sup>193</sup> Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 31.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>195</sup> Black gives an example from mathematics, in which a bounding line was spoken of as the 'leg' of an angle (*op. cit.*, p. 32).

<sup>196</sup> See Black, p. 34.

<sup>197</sup> For his version of the interaction view, see Black, pp. 38-47.

<sup>198</sup> See Black, p. 44.

subject is seen in a different light.<sup>199</sup> What is ultimately effected through interaction is that the meaning of a statement, or text, is to be seen as the resultant of the interaction between the two subjects, their context, and the associations brought to bear on the text by the reader. Through interaction the reader is asked to deploy 'simultaneous awareness of both subjects but not reducible to any comparison between the two.'<sup>200</sup> If we now return to Hegel's discussion of metaphor, we will find that metaphor is indeed treated both from a substitution view, according to which its use is viewed negatively - and from Hegel's version of the interaction view, which is seen positively, and which may also help to shed light on his own use of metaphor.

What happens, according to Hegel, whenever a metaphor is used - as the concrete representation of what is to be revealed - is that we are made aware of its being a representation, and that it is this awareness which allows us to convert the representation, instead of unthinkingly accepting the concrete image as merely identical to its 'Bedeutung'. In this sense, a metaphor appears to be able to do precisely that which the 'Dinge' we are told by preachers and rhetoricians failed to do, which is to make us wonder about what we see, hear or read, and thus instigates critical reflection on what we are given, in order to allow for the process through which what is represented can be developed. Yet, in his elaboration on the definition of metaphor, Hegel claims that, in art, precisely because the meaning that is pictured can only become clear through interaction with its specific context, a metaphor can never be more than ornamental ('äußerer Schmuck').<sup>201</sup> Apparently there is a difference between, on the one hand, the use of metaphor in art, where - as soon as the work has been interpreted, and its

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<sup>199</sup> The example given by Black is 'man is a wolf', and Black finishes his discussion by remarking that '[i]f to call a man a wolf is to put him in a special light, we must not forget that the metaphor makes the wolf seem more human than he otherwise would.' (op. cit., p. 44)

<sup>200</sup> Black, p. 46.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 518.

meaning has become clear from within the self-contained world of a work of art ('ein für sich selbständiges Kunstwerk') - a metaphor becomes a static ornament that serves no other purpose than embellishment of this particular work of art, and the use of metaphor in language which, either in its everyday or philosophical use, can be seen as a vehicle of thought.<sup>202</sup> Metaphor in art, it can be argued, is thus treated according to the substitution view; it is a riddle that can be solved, and which, once solved serves no other purpose than to please.

### 3.2.1 Language as the vehicle of *Geist*

In what follows Hegel first discusses the nature of everyday language, and states that this already contains a great many metaphors, a fact he explains as follows: '[s]ie entstehen dadurch, daß ein Wort, welches zunächst nur etwas ganz Sinnliches bedeutet, auf Geistiges übertragen wird.'<sup>203</sup> In the evolution of language the metaphorical element tends to disappear, as we become so used to the more abstract meaning that we tend to forget its original, sensible meaning: '[n]ach und nach aber verschwindet das Metaphorische im Gebrauch solch eines Wortes, das sich durch die Gewohnheit aus einem uneigentlichen zu dem eigentlichen Ausdruck umwandelt, indem Bild und Bedeutung dann bei der Geläufigkeit, in jenem nur diese aufzufassen, sich nicht mehr unterscheiden und das Bild uns statt einer konkreten Anschauung nur unmittelbar die abstrakte Bedeutung selber gibt.'<sup>204</sup> In using language 'nach der Gewohnheit', without

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<sup>202</sup> In art, the 'wirklich gemeinte Bedeutung' is thus, for Hegel, not the truth of things, but how we are supposed to interpret the work: what is 'gemeint' is the artist's intention, and once we have grasped that intention, the metaphor has done its work.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 518. Hegel comments that this is especially true for words related to knowledge, such as 'fassen' and 'begreifen'.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 518.

reflecting on its origins, we fail to see that meanings change, and that language has a dynamic character, as it is not only a means of communication, but can also be seen as the expression of the evolution of human spirit through history. Metaphors used in everyday language become worn out, and eventually die.<sup>205</sup> Yet, Hegel's aim appears not so much to revive these metaphors, but to make us aware that they once were metaphors, and that, in consciously using everyday language (and thus, in Black's words, to become aware of our 'associated commonplaces'), in being made to reflect on what we say and what we are told, we not become aware of our spiritual origins. In becoming aware of the meanings that once were active in words,<sup>206</sup> *Geist* can come to an understanding of itself.

This aspect of language, that it can be taken as a manifestation of *Geist*, Hegel himself already hinted at in the *Phänomenologie*, when he speaks of language as the 'Dasein des Geistes',<sup>207</sup> and is developed in an interesting way by Owen Barfield, in his study *Poetic*

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<sup>205</sup> The discussion on 'dead' metaphors, and whether they can really die, is an interesting one, but falls beyond the scope of this thesis. On this issue, see e.g. Donald Davidson, 'What Metaphors Mean', in Sheldon Sacks (ed.), *On Metaphor* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 35-36, or I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 101-102.

<sup>206</sup> And, of course, in the case of 'fassen' still are, as, like the Dutch 'vatten', or the English 'to grasp', it is still also used to indicate the activity of grasping something with your hands, but Hegel's point appears to be that we are oblivious of this as soon as the context demands that we take the word to refer to the activity of understanding.

<sup>207</sup> See e.g. *PbdG*, pp. 478-479, where Hegel not so much stresses the presence of historical shapes of *Geist* in language, but shows that language is the medium in which *Geist* manifests itself as an intersubjective entity, that allows for 'Anerkennung' of the other and ourselves: '[die Sprache] ist das für andere seiende Selbstbewußtsein, welches unmittelbar als solches vorhanden und als dieses allgemeines ist. Sie ist das sich von sich selbst abtrennende Selbst, das als reines Ich=Ich sich gegenständlich wird, in dieser Gegenständlichkeit sich auch als dieses Selbst erhält, wie es unmittelbar mit den anderen zusammenfließt und ihr Selbstbewußtsein ist; es vernimmt ebenso sich, als es von anderen vernommen wird, und das Vernehmen ist eben das zum Selbst gewordene Dasein.' In 'Vernehmen' we are expected to be active, in order to really understand what is said, and is thus completely different from our listening to the 'Vorsagen', which is merely mimicked, and not actively processed into knowledge we have truly made our own. Knowing (which in this passage in the *Phänomenologie* is discussed in terms of morality; of knowing as 'das Gewissen') again is shown to be a communal effort, in which all are expected to actively take ('nehmen', rather than 'vernehmen') their part. Cf. also *PbdG*, p. 235 and p. 325, and *WdL I*, p. 20. It is 'Vernehmen' that ultimately leads to 'Vernunft' (the word 'Vernunft' being the past participle of

*Diction*, who argues that meaning in language is 'the natural expression of man's being and consciousness at [a given] time'.<sup>208</sup> Meaning is produced in the interaction between man and his environment, which initially is perceived as merely given, and not yet understood. Barfield argues that it is too simple to say that 'the earliest words were "the names of sensible, material objects" *and nothing more*', but that "'metaphorical" values were latent in meaning from the beginning.<sup>209</sup> Man, in perceiving the world around him, and in giving names to its objects, did so by supposing the "'sensible objects" themselves to have been something more [...]; they were not, as they appear to be at present, isolated or detached from thinking and feeling.<sup>210</sup> As language and thought developed, the 'single' meanings of words such as 'to see', 'to grasp', 'ground', or even 'abstract',<sup>211</sup>

split up into contrasted pairs - the abstract and the concrete, particular and general, objective and subjective. And the poesy felt by us to reside in ancient language consists just in this, that out of our later, analytic, 'subjective' consciousness, a consciousness which has been brought about along with, and partly because of, this splitting up of meaning, we are led back to experiencing the original unity.<sup>212</sup>

What metaphors can do is restore this unity, so that what is initially perceived as self-evident, can, through differentiation - which can be made explicit through the use of metaphor - be grasped conceptually, so that we are able to see, in Shelley's words, 'the before unapprehended relations of things'.<sup>213</sup> For Hegel, apprehension would also imply

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'vernehmen', see Paul Ziche, 'Abstrakte Metaphern und anschauliche Begriffe. Indirekte Darstellung, Kants "Regeln der Reflexion" und die Funktion von Metaphern in der Philosophie' in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 112.2/2005 (Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag), p. 397.)

<sup>208</sup> Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 102.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> 'Abstract' being derived from *traho*, meaning 'to draw', or 'to drag'. Cf. Barfield, p. 64.

<sup>212</sup> Barfield, pp. 85/ 86.

<sup>213</sup> Quoted from 'A Defense of Poetry', in Barfield, p. 68.



comprehension: in coming to understand what our *Vorstellungen* are, we come to understand them as manifestations of *Begriffe* which ultimately reveal themselves fully in the process of thinking. In being made aware that words have different meanings, we become aware that there are different perspectives on the world, that *Vorstellungen* can be taken in different ways, and are thus invited to critically reflect on our own perspective, but we simultaneously become aware that these meanings can be seen as the expressions of subsequent shapes of consciousness, and that we are thus able to track the historical evolution of *Geist*.

### 3.2.2. Metaphor as a means to restore unity

After discussing the use of metaphor in everyday language and the invention of new metaphors (section  $\gamma\gamma$ ), Hegel addresses the goal and purpose of metaphor: '[w]as endlich den Zweck und das Interesse des Metaphorischen angeht, so ist das eigentliche Wort ein für sich verständlicher Ausdruck, die Metapher ein anderer, und es läßt sich daher fragen: weshalb dieser gedoppelter Ausdruck oder, was dasselbe ist, weshalb das Metaphorische, das in sich selbst diese Zweiheit ist?'<sup>214</sup> Metaphors are habitually seen as what makes speech more vivacious, and this vivaciousness ('das Lebhaftes') is taken to reside in their enabling the audience to have a determinate image of what is said: '[d]as Lebhaftes besteht in der Anschaulichkeit als bestimmter Vorstellbarkeit, welche das immer allgemeine Wort seiner bloßen Unbestimmtheit enthebt und durch Bildlichkeit versinnlicht.'<sup>215</sup> Yet, if this is what a metaphor does, it is indeed no more than 'Vorsagen': what is to be made clear has already been determined (but not by itself), and what should

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<sup>214</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 520.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

come alive cannot be developed, as it has been fixed, and made to stand still ('besteht'). Hegel's question shows us what he sees as the true function of metaphor: it should render unstable what we take to be self-evident, so that we realise that what is to be expressed, *die Sache selbst*, reveals itself to us through differentiation, and that we can only truly grasp what presents itself to us as something that is alive if it is, as we saw in *Phänomenologie*, taken as 'die Vermittlung des Sichanderswerden mit sich selbst', so that the truth is ultimately arrived at in a 'sich *wiederherstellende* Gleichheit'.<sup>216</sup> True life, Hegel continues, cannot reside in a single metaphor, such as in a work of art: 'das wahre Leben muß nicht in den vereinzelt oder aneinandergereihten Metaphern gesucht werden.'<sup>217</sup> Only in being made to interact - both with other metaphors - which is one of the reasons why, in Hegel's texts, metaphors operate in clusters -<sup>218</sup> and with 'das eigentliche Wort'-<sup>219</sup> can what is to be said be expressed, and 'das Interesse des Metaphorischen' should probably be taken quite literally: the ideal function of a metaphor is a mediating one which allows us to proceed from *Vorstellung* to *Begriff*.<sup>220</sup> Only by operating in clusters can metaphors be effective in expressing the whole of what is to be said, as otherwise 'das Ganze' would become 'schwerfällig' and 'durch das Gewicht des Einzelnen erdrückt'.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> *PhdG*, p. 23.

<sup>217</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 520.

<sup>218</sup> I will return to the question why metaphors operate in clusters in the next chapter.

<sup>219</sup> Again, 'eigentlich' is used ambiguously: it refers both to the word that is taken, by habit, to speak for itself (but can only be made to do so in a speculative reading which can be effected by the use of metaphor, as in the case of 'selbstverständlich'), and to the truth the word is meant to reveal.

<sup>220</sup> Besides, a metaphor can also make us aware of language as the medium which is truly 'allgemein', in which we can come to recognise both ourselves and the other. Cf. n. 207 above.

<sup>221</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 520. 'Schwerfällig' (which is part of a cluster of words related to gravity, such as 'träge' and 'Hemmung') suggesting that, through excessive stress on the individual, the totality can hardly be made to move. 'Schwerfällig' can also be taken to mean that the truth in this way is not easily digested, which would link it to the cluster of 'food-processing' metaphors ('Verdauen', 'Genuß') to be discussed in the next chapter.

The true purpose of the metaphorical, for Hegel, appears to lie in its being the instigator - like the rhetorical devices discussed in the last chapter, and, of course, the speculative sentence - of speculative thought: '[a]ls Sinn und Zweck der metaphorischen Diktion überhaupt ist deshalb [...] das Bedürfnis und die Macht des Geistes und Gemüts anzusehen, die sich nicht mit dem Einfachen, Gewohnten, Schlichten befriedigen, sondern sich darüberzustellen, um zu Anderen fortzugehen, bei Verschiedenem zu verweilen und Zwiefaches in eins zu fügen.'<sup>222</sup> Speculative thought is, as we saw earlier, only possible when *Geist* becomes aware of the need to distinguish what appeared to the simple, and which is then able to restore the original unity as an identity of opposites. The metaphorical can thus be explained as the becoming aware of *Geist* of the need to liberate outward appearances from their being mere appearances, in order to reveal the truth within: 'ein [...] Grund für das Metaphorische liegt darin, daß der Geist, wenn ihn seine innere Bewegung in die Anschauung verwandter Gegenstände vertieft, sich zugleich von der Äußerlichkeit derselben befreien will, insofern er *sich* im Äußeren sucht, es begeistert, und nun, indem er sich und seine Leidenschaft zur Schönheit gestaltet, auch seine Erhebung darüber zur Darstellung zu bringen die Kraft beweist.'<sup>223</sup> Through the use of metaphor *Geist* is set in motion, and made to reflect on the relation between apparently different objects and to become aware of its own powers in being able to grasp 'the before unapprehended relations of things'. In doing so, what appeared to be merely outward is understood as what it is, through its subjectification in *Geist* as human thought, which seeks itself - what is to be thought - in the objects under scrutiny. In

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<sup>222</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, pp. 520-521. Interestingly, Black also sees metaphorical thought as a means to gain insight (and not 'as an ornamental substitute for plain thought'), which allows us to see the subject in a new light, and according to which we can see metaphors and models used in science as 'speculative instruments' (a phrase borrowed from I.A. Richards). Yet, for Black the outcome of this speculation is unpredictable, and allows us to '*see new connections*', whereas for Hegel, speculation allows us to see and understand the relations that were hidden from view, as they were blocked by our *Vorstellungen*, and which now become manifest in their being understood.

<sup>223</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 522.

allowing ourselves, instigated by metaphors that alert us to the conceptual to be found within the representational, to be in-formed by our representations, through which their *Begriff* can be fully developed, we simultaneously become aware of our spiritual powers, and feel ourselves elevated above the outward, the sensual that initially presents itself as concrete.<sup>224</sup>

### 3.2.3 From abstract to concrete, and from concrete to abstract

In the next paragraph, Hegel shows himself critical of the use of metaphor that springs from 'the lust of imagination', a lust that prevents us from being ever able to move beyond the merely concrete: 'der metaphorische Ausdruck [kann] aus der bloß schwelgerischen Lust der Phantasie hervorgehen, welche einen Gegenstand weder in seiner eigentümlichen Gestalt noch eine Bedeutung in ihre einfache Bildlosigkeit darstellen kann, sondern überall nach einer verwandten konkreten Anschauung verlangt.'<sup>225</sup> If we cannot move beyond the representational, because we demand a concrete picture instead of what immediately presents itself to us, we will never be able to see things as they really are, either in their immediate shape, their 'eigentümlicher Gestalt', or in what is ultimately to be grasped in their 'Bildlosigkeit', in their being a pure concept.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> This passage is reminiscent of Kant's remarks on the sublime in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in which Kant argues that that which can truly be called sublime is only to be found in our minds: in the feeling of the sublime we become aware of the powers of reason, which allow us to feel elevated above any fear or pain caused by the observation of a sensual object ('das eigentlich Erhabene kann in keiner sinnlichen Form enthalten sein, sondern trifft nur Ideen der Vernunft', *KdU*, B77).

<sup>225</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 522.

<sup>226</sup> In what way concepts are grasped in 'Bildlosigkeit' will be discussed in the next chapter.

Thus, in what Hegel calls the 'denkende Betrachtung der Gegenstände'<sup>227</sup>, there is a movement from what first appeared to us as concrete reality in our *Vorstellungen* - but which is still a completely abstract reality as it has not been grasped conceptually - to a completely concrete totality, in which what was abstract and empty thought has been allowed to develop itself by going '*durchs* Vorstellen hindurch'<sup>228</sup>, and to finally become truly abstract, in the sense that it has abstracted what is real from what was initially taken to be concrete reality, and can thus occupy itself with pure, but not empty, thought, in which its *Vorstellungen* have been *aufgehoben*, and through which thinking is now able to think itself, i.e. 'reine Gedanken festzuhalten und in ihnen sich zu bewegen'.<sup>229</sup>

### 3.2.4 'Unterbrechung des Vorstellungsganges'

Hegel concludes his remarks on metaphor in a critical vein, when he applauds the ancient Greeks for their 'plastische Strenge' in which they usually abstain from the admixture of the metaphorical,<sup>230</sup> and again dismisses the use of metaphor as a representation that is externally applied and does not belong to *die Sache selbst*: '[d]ie Metapher aber ist immer eine Unterbrechung des Vorstellungsganges und eine stete Zerstreung, da sie Bilder erweckt und zueinanderstellt, welche nicht unmittelbar zur Sache und Bedeutung gehören und daher ebensosehr auch von derselben fort zu Verwandtem und Fremdartigem herüberzuziehen.'<sup>231</sup> If using metaphor implies that

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<sup>227</sup> *Enz. I*, §1.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* 'Festhalten' should not be read in the sense of 'to pin down', as real thought is essentially movement (of which we are reminded in the next clause), but in the sense of 'to hold closely', as thought is now able to truly embrace its object.

<sup>229</sup> *Enz. I*, §3.

<sup>230</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 522: 'Ihre (of the ancient Greeks, AG) plastische Strenge und Gediegenheit duldet keine solche Vermischung, wie das Metaphorische sie enthält'.

<sup>231</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 523.

images are added, as 'Blumen des Ausdrucks',<sup>232</sup> that are purely ornamental, and which do not really tell us anything about that which is to be expressed, but can only lead us to the artist's intended meaning, they form a hindrance on the path that should lead from *Vorstellung* to *Begriff*. Yet, it may be argued, it is precisely in their being an interruption of the 'Vorstellungsgang' that metaphors make conceptual understanding possible, as is also suggested by Hegel's more positive remarks on the use of metaphor. If a metaphor represents an object in an unexpected way, we can be shocked into reflection on our habitual way of seeing things, and into a becoming aware that our *Vorstellungen*, if they are allowed to proceed without our actively going through ('hindurch') them, will never lead to a true *Begriff* of what things really are.<sup>233</sup>

Finally, in what way do Hegel's remarks on metaphor throw light on his own frequent use of metaphor? What is clear is that Hegel dismisses the use of metaphor that is perceived, as soon as its intended meaning has been grasped, as merely ornamental, and which thus fails to lead us to a *Begriff*, as the images produced have shown to belong

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid. Interestingly, Hegel again reverts to the example of the flower. On the use of the flower as a metaphor for metaphors, cf. Paul Ziche, 'Metaphern und Identität: Schellings Metaphern und die Darstellung philosophischer Identitätsstrukturen,' in Brady Bowman (hrsg.), *Darstellung und Erkenntnis: Beiträge zur Rolle nichtpropositionaler Erkenntnisformen in der deutschen Philosophie und Literatur nach Kant* (Paderborn: mentis Verlag, 2007), p. 195, and pp. 207-210.

<sup>233</sup> On the question whether a metaphor is to be seen as a device that effects a disruption of its context (a disruption that also allows us to recognize an expression as metaphorical), see Ziche (2005), pp. 399-401. Ziche shows that this view of metaphor is problematical for two reasons: firstly, it is difficult, in philosophical discourse, to determine precisely what context is to be expected (which is required if we are to experience a 'Kontextbruch'): '[d]er Philosophie einen ganz bestimmten, zu erwartenden und erst damit auch zu durchbrechenden Kontextbereich zuzuordnen, hieße, ihr bestimmte Gegenstände zuzuordnen - dies ist jedoch schon aufgrund des Allgemeinheitsanspruchs der Philosophie problematisch.' A second reason is that philosophy makes frequent use of so called 'dead' metaphors, which are not immediately perceived as metaphors, let alone as disturbing their context, as they have become part of what is perceived as 'eigentliches Vokabular der Philosophie'. Even in the case of the revitalisation of deceased metaphors, such as the use made by Schelling and Hölderlin of words such as 'Urteil' or 'unbedingt' (in Hegel's case we might think of 'allgemein' or 'Vorstellung'), Ziche argues, do not bring about a disturbance of context. It might be argued, however, that precisely in the bringing to life of words the meaning of which we thought we could accept unthinkingly, a disturbance is effected, not with the rest of the text, but with, in Black's words, 'the associated commonplaces' we as readers, 'nach der Gewohnheit', bring to the text, and through which we are made to reflect critically on our preconceptions.

'nicht unmittelbar zur Sache und Bedeutung'.<sup>234</sup> What a metaphor can achieve, especially in a text that is made unstable through the use of other rhetorical devices such as discussed in the previous chapter, is that it forces the reader to critically reflect on the nature of representations. Precisely in their being as an interruption of the 'Vorstellungsgang' metaphors alert us that representations should not be made to 'bestehen',<sup>235</sup> but be allowed to fluidly interact with each other, so that what is represented can be liberated from its being merely concrete, and can what is to be thought be fully explicated and developed. It is in metaphors being perceived as a disruption that we become aware that what really is cannot simply be disrupted and torn apart, and it is through this awareness that the underlying continuity of being and thinking is revealed. Ultimately metaphors serve a dialectical purpose in their being the instigation of speculative thought, in enabling thinking to proceed to a conceptual understanding through the *Aufhebung* of its representations. Through this *Aufhebung* of metaphor the original unity of what there is, or what is to be thought, is simultaneously restored, and revealed to be, like the metaphor, 'eine Zweiheit in sich selbst', an identity of identity and non-identity. Yet, if ultimately, in absolute knowing, a pure conceptual understanding of what is has been achieved, this seems to imply that in pure conceptual

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<sup>234</sup> One of the reasons why Hegel is critical of the use of analogies in science is also that they are applied to the object externally, without having an understanding of *die Sache selbst*. See *PhdG*, p. 48, and *Enz. II*, § 246, where he again dismisses *Anschauung* as the means to gain access to the Absolute: '[n]och weniger ist eine Berufung zulässig auf das, was *Anschauung* genannt worden und was nichts anderes zu sein pflegte als ein Verfahren der Vorstellung und Phantasie (auch der Phantasterei) nach *Analogien*, die zufälliger oder bedeutender sein können und den Gegenständen Bestimmungen und Schemata nur äußerlich aufdrücken.' Cf. the discussion of Hegel's dismissal of the analogy in the next chapter.

<sup>235</sup> This is similar to what Hegel remarked in relation to the speculative sentence (and, indeed, many metaphorical statements can be seen as examples of the speculative sentence, in that what is initially taken to be a sentence in which a subject is determined by a predicate is then seen as a sentence expressing a relation of identity) when he explains that through the 'zerfließen' of the subject into the predicate, the original subject appears to be lost, and that subsequently thought feels 'gehemmt' and 'zurückgeworfen'. Yet it is precisely because thought is made to stop and reflect on what is presented, and then forced to return to the subject that the subject can be given substance, which cannot be achieved by merely stringing together a number of predicates that fail to tell us anything substantial about the subject.

thought - thought thinking itself - what a metaphor initially stood for has fully clarified itself, and that a metaphor thus has ceased being a metaphor, as it no longer serves a function. Whether this is the case - and if so, in what way - will be discussed in the next chapter, by having a closer look at two (clusters of) related metaphors.



## Chapter 4 The use of organic metaphor in the process of clarification:

### 'preparation' and 'digestion'

For Hegel, as we saw in the previous chapters, the dialectical movement through which reality is ultimately produced has a twofold character. On the one hand it is characterized by the process of *Selbstdarstellung* of being, through which being externalises itself, and in doing so becomes concrete, and manifests itself as what it is. On the other hand, it also typifies the process through which *Geist* - in gaining a full experience of its object of knowledge through the contradiction of all the appearances in which being presents itself - is able to subjectify being, to make it its own, and to proceed from its initial *Vorstellungen* of an object to its *Begriff*.<sup>236</sup> Only in and through *Geist* can reality ultimately be grasped, and expressed as what it is.<sup>237</sup>

Towards the end of the *Phänomenologie*, in a passage on 'Kunstreligion' - in which absolute Being is no longer an 'einfaches Gestaltloses Wesen' through which it can have no more than 'selbstlose Wirklichkeit',<sup>238</sup> but is already taken to be *Geist*, even if it has not yet come to a full understanding of itself-<sup>239</sup> Hegel describes this twofold process in highly poetic terms. In 'Kunstreligion', *Geist* is developed into a reality, which is taken to manifest itself in nature:

Es ('das Wesen' which has now become *Geist*, AG) hat hier die Bewegung seiner Verwirklichung durchlaufen. Sich aus seiner Wesenheit herabsetzend zu einer gegenständlichen Naturkraft und deren Äußerungen, ist es ein Dasein für das Andere,

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<sup>236</sup> On the dialectical movement, see ch. 1, pp. 34-37.

<sup>237</sup> When *Geist* has come to a full *Begriff* of being, it has also come to full understanding of itself, and this latter aspect of the process can thus also be seen as the *Selbstdarstellung* of *Geist*.

<sup>238</sup> *PhdG*, p. 525.

<sup>239</sup> *PhdG*, p. 525: '[d]as *Wesen* aber, das mit *dem Selbst unmittelbar geeinigt ist*, ist *an sich* der Geist und die *wissende Wahrheit*, obzwar noch nicht die gewußte oder die sich selbst in ihrer Tiefe wissende.'

für das Selbst, von dem es verzehrt wird. Das stille Wesen der selbstlosen Natur gewinnt in seiner Frucht die Stufe, worin sie, sich selbst zubereitend und verdaut, sich dem selbstischen Leben darbietet; sie erreicht in der Nützlichkeit, gegessen und getrunken werden zu können, ihre höchste Vollkommenheit; denn sie ist darin die Möglichkeit einer höheren Existenz und berührt das geistige Dasein; - teils zur stillkräftigen Substanz, teils aber zur geistigen Gärung ist der Erdgeist in seiner Metamorphose dort zum weiblichen Prinzip der Ernährung, hier zum männlichen Prinzip der sich treibenden Kraft des selbstbewußten Daseins gediehen.<sup>240</sup>

In this passage, nature - which in itself is silent substance, and unable to make itself understood -<sup>241</sup> is involved in a process in which it is both active and passive, in which it comes to be and comes to be known as what it is. In presenting itself, in its externalisations, to a self endowed with consciousness, these externalisations, through a process of interaction in which what is presented is 'devoured' ('verzehrt'), are made to in-form human thought, and can thus make themselves understood, and what is nature can be expressed as what it is. In being active, nature is said to be preparing itself ('sich selbst zubereitend'), in order to be used, or to be acted upon, and for this latter aspect of the process Hegel uses words such as 'gegessen und getrunken werden', 'verzehrt' and 'verdaut'. Not only in this passage, but throughout the *Phänomenologie*, Hegel makes frequent use of metaphors related to eating and drinking, and the (organic and chemical) processes involved in both production and preparation and consumption and digestion.

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<sup>240</sup> *PhdG*, p. 526.

<sup>241</sup> As we saw earlier, for Hegel *Vernunft* can only come to be when what is has been 'vernommen' (heard) as what it is, see n. 207. The idea of nature revealing itself in and through *Geist*, through the interaction, the 'Wechselwirkung', between man and nature, is also very much present in Hölderlin's writings, cf. 'Ideal wird, was Natur war' in his *Hyperion* (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Gedichte und Hyperion* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1999), p. 541.

In this chapter - through an analysis of those related two clusters of organic metaphors - I will investigate in what way this process of *Selbstdarstellung*, as observed in the organic, helps us understand the fundamental structures of reality, and how, and in what way, the organic comes to serve as as metaphor for what is to be thought. I will also show why Hegel makes use of metaphors that operate in clusters - and why metaphors often appear to operate in different clusters - and to show in what way, in the 'sich selbst klare und sehnsuchtslose Gebiet der Vernunft' that is ultimately entered when we have come to 'das Absolute Wissen',<sup>242</sup> what is to be revealed through these metaphors has fully clarified itself, but I will also argue that, as even in absolute knowing thinking is a process with more than one aspect, metaphors can and do still serve a function.

#### 4.1 The organic ('das Organische')

Before taking a closer look at the two clusters of metaphors, and the twofold process they are meant to clarify, I would like to start by discussing the question what Hegel means by 'organic' and 'organic processes'. In the chapter on observing reason ('Beobachtende Vernunft') in the *Phänomenologie*, he addresses the question in some detail. Observing reason captures reality as being determined by general laws, through which the object of knowledge becomes fixed, and can be described and classified in static categories. As Hegel shows, by applying these characteristics from the outside, observing reason fails to do justice to the inner nature of the objects under scrutiny, and is thus only able to apply contingent 'labels' to its objects:<sup>243</sup> '[w]as wesentliche Merkmale

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<sup>242</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 12.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. the introduction ('Einleitung') to the *Phänomenologie*, in which Hegel criticises the type of knowing in which knowledge and object of knowledge are firmly opposed, and which therefore can never achieve anything but 'mit Antworten auf alles dieses (whatever presents itself, contingently, as an object of knowledge, AG) sich herumzuplacken.' (*PhdG*, p.70) Cf. also *PhdG* p. 51: '[d]ie Wissenschaft darf sich nur durch das eigene Leben des Begriffs organisieren; in ihr

genannt werden, sind ruhende Bestimmtheiten, welche so, wie sie als *einfache* sich ausdrücken und aufgefaßt werden, nicht das, was ihre Natur ausmacht, verschwindende *Momente* der sich in sich zurücknehmenden Bewegung zu sein, darstellen.<sup>244</sup> By determining and thus isolating an object through so called essential characteristics, its being (part of) a totality – that can ultimately only present its inner nature through the continuous interaction of all of its parts or moments, of what appear to be ‘essential characteristics’ – can never present itself, and consequently, can never be grasped or expressed. That which constitutes (‘ausmacht’) the nature of things does not lie in a fixed determination (‘ruhende Bestimmtheit’), but is to be found in its being a movement that withdraws to its own centre.<sup>245</sup> Only by conceiving of reality as a process through which things are related to themselves and to other things can reality be grasped and expressed: ‘diese abgesonderte Dinge haben keine Wirklichkeit; die Gewalt, welche sie auseinanderreißt, kann sie nicht hindern, sogleich in einen Prozeß wieder einzutreten; denn sie sind nur diese Beziehung.’<sup>246</sup> Even though observing reason violently cuts loose the ties that hold objects together, the isolated objects cannot remain in isolation, and cannot but re-enter the process through which they are related to both themselves and other objects, since they are only real in this interaction, and are necessarily drawn to what holds them together.<sup>247</sup>

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ist die Bestimmtheit, welche aus dem Schema äußerlich dem Dasein aufgeklebt wird, die sich selbst bewegende Seele des erfüllten Inhalts.’

<sup>244</sup> *PbdG*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>245</sup> A very important and rich sentence, yet how we are meant to interpret this sentence is not immediately clear, both because of its structure, but also because of the meaning of a word like ‘ausmachen’. I will discuss this sentence more extensively in a later section of this chapter, in the context of what will be discussed below, and also in relation to the two clusters of metaphors.

<sup>246</sup> *PbdG*, pp. 194-195. This is reminiscent of the process of reading Hegel’s long and intricate sentences, in which, as soon as we focus on one part, we find we cannot really do so, and are forced to consider the ways in which the various parts of the sentence are related, and depend upon each other.

<sup>247</sup> The example Hegel gives is of acids and bases; a substance can be acidic or basic only in relation to other substances.

What consciousness learns from the proceedings of observing reason, from its trying to determine particulars through applying general laws or characteristics to them, is that there is such a thing as pure law: '[a]ls die Wahrheit dieses versuchenden Bewußtseins sehen wir das reine Gesetz, welches sich vom sinnlichen Sein befreit; wir sehen es als *Begriff*, der im sinnlichen Sein vorhanden, aber in ihm selbständig und ungebunden sich bewegt, in es versenkt frei davon und *einfacher* Begriff ist.'<sup>248</sup> Again, a very subtle sentence, in which the perspectives of observing reason and reason that knows itself are both to be found. For observing reason, as we will see, the truth is the law, and this is an important step, but it is a law that has no real connection to what is presented 'im sinnlichen Sein'; it is still its own law (in which it is not yet freed itself from the either/ or dichotomies of reflexive thought) and through which it thus fails to come to a *Begriff* of what it observes (and also fails to come to a self-understanding). 'Wir', on the other hand, who are able to reflect on the proceedings of observing reason, are able to see that the law can be the concept, but only if it is allowed to be truly determined by what is present 'im sinnlichen Sein.'

The law can now be seen as the concept - but as we will see, is not yet grasped as such by observing reason - which is present in the sensible manifestations studied by observing reason, but which is not determined, or 'conceived' by these observations, but which determines itself, and the way it appears, by being essentially movement, and, as such, is that through which all the appearances are *aufgehoben* and formed into a coherent whole that can be understood. This result – what consciousness has learnt through the shape of observing reason – now presents itself as an object for consciousness, and its nature can be further developed:

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<sup>248</sup> *PhdG*, pp. 195-196. The two perspectives can only really be revealed by reading the sentence out loud, and by giving emphasis to certain words (e.g. 'wir'). Cf. ch. 2, p. 61.

[s]olcher Gegenstand, welcher den Prozeß in der *Einfachkeit* des Begriffes an ihm hat, ist das *Organische*. Es ist diese absolute Flüssigkeit, worin die Bestimmtheit, durch welche es nur für Anderes wäre, aufgelöst ist. Wenn das unorganische Ding die Bestimmtheit zu seinem Wesen hat und deswegen nur mit einem anderen Dinge zusammen die Vollständigkeit der Momente des Begriffes ausmacht und daher in die Bewegung tretend verloren geht, so sind dagegen an dem organischen Wesen alle Bestimmtheiten, durch welche es für Anderes offen ist, unter die organische einfache Einheit gebunden; es tritt keine als wesentlich auf, welche sich frei auf Anderes bezöge, und das Organische erhält sich daher in seiner Beziehung selbst.<sup>249</sup>

The process through which being externalizes itself is organic, Hegel explains, in the sense that it produces itself in a continuous process,<sup>250</sup> in which all its determinations are dissolved. Dissolution (through which something is made fluid) implies that these determinations are not lost (as in the case of inorganic things, which can only be fully conceived in relation to another thing, and not to itself) but are taken up and held together ('gebunden') in an organic unity,<sup>251</sup> in which no determination is seen as essential, and it is in and through the movement through which a thing is related to itself that the organic maintains itself. Moreover, it is in the dissolution and unification of the

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<sup>249</sup> *PhdG*, p. 196.

<sup>250</sup> Hegel sees blood as a prime example of a substance that produces itself. In the *Enzyklopädie*, Hegel not only emphasizes blood's fluid character ('Flüssigkeit') through which it sets the organism as a whole in motion, and is responsible for its being alive, but also describes this motion as a 'return to itself': '[d]as Blut [erregt] den ganzen äußeren Organismus, bewegt, [und disponiert] ihn zu seinem Rückgehen in sich.' See *Enz.* § 354, Zusatz, p. 448. As Dietrich von Engelhardt points out, blood, for Hegel, through its being fluid, also acts as a mediator between what is airy and what is solid: '[a]ls flüssig steht das Blut nach Hegel zwischen Luftigem und Festem – es vermittelt beide, ist auf beide bezogen, ist an sich selbst Luftiges und Festes.' What is fluid is able to unite and mediate between 'Luftiges und Festes' as it already is, in itself, airy and solid. See: von Engelhardt, 'Die biologischen Naturwissenschaften in Hegels Naturphilosophie', p. 150.

<sup>251</sup> The organic unity, of course, is the concept that is revealed in the unfolding, and self-determination of being, and through which we are able to understand what e.g. a plant really is, but also refers to the unity of reason, that will eventually recognize itself in the organic.

determinations that the organic being fully opens up to the other,<sup>252</sup> and can make itself known as what it is.

The problem, however, with which observing reason finds itself confronted, in trying to understand what the organic is, is that in treating the organic simply as a thing, or collection of parts, that can be observed and classified, is that it can never come to a conceptual understanding of its object in which the individual parts or shapes mutually interact in order to develop a comprehensive whole. In trying to understand living nature, observing reason, as Cinzia Ferrini explains, commits 'the conceptual fallacy of employing finite modes of thought to cognize the self-maintaining dynamism and the self-actualizing form of living phenomena.'<sup>253</sup>

The organic as 'self-maintaining dynamism', through which it actualizes and expresses itself, cannot properly be grasped by observing reason, even though it employs the notion of purpose, *Zweck*, in its classification of natural phenomena. Yet, as Hegel explains, the problem is that this purpose is posited as something other than itself.<sup>254</sup>

What observing reason fails to grasp, is that in its relation to the outside world - through consuming it or using it to its advantage -, organic nature ultimately maintains itself so that its purpose can only be found within the object itself, and that what is produced is

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<sup>252</sup> 'offen' here used as implying both that what something is is revealed, but also that it is open in the sense of being easy to penetrate (by reason). In the latter sense, it links up with 'verdauen', but also with words such as 'verdauen', 'assimilieren', 'durchdringen', etc., an important cluster of metaphors, to which I will return at the end of this chapter, that reveal the character of the process through which we come to know as an interaction ('Wechselwirkung') between object and subject of knowledge, in which we are both active and acted upon by what is, and gradually, by both 'going into', and 'taking up' what presents itself to us, not only make the object our own, but are simultaneously owned by it.

<sup>253</sup> Cinzia Ferrini, 'Reason Observing Nature', in Kenneth R. Westphal (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 105.

<sup>254</sup> *PhdG*, p. 198: '[d]iesem beobachtenden Bewußtsein zwar ist er nicht das eigene *Wesen* des Organischen, sondern fällt ihm außer demselben und ist dann nur jene äußerliche, *teleologische* Beziehung.'

none other than itself: '[d]as Organische bringt nicht etwas hervor, sondern *erhält sich nur*, oder das, was hervorgebracht wird, ist ebenso vorhanden, als es hervorgebracht wird.'<sup>255</sup>

What is reached (or returned to) is that what the organic ultimately is, is a self, and in doing so, a sense of self is acquired: '[w]as es also durch die Bewegung seines Tuns erreicht, ist *es selbst*; und daß es nur sich selbst erreicht, ist sein Selbstgefühl.'<sup>256</sup> Yet, Hegel emphasizes, the self can only be felt, and not yet comprehended: '[w]ie der Instinkt des Tieres das Futter sucht und verzehrt, aber damit nicht anderes hervorbringt als sich, so findet auch der Instinkt der Vernunft in seinem Suchen nur sie selbst.'<sup>257</sup> Reason is still instinct, and is not yet able to understand itself as what it is, and recognise itself in what is, as yet, only observed, *bekannt* but not yet *erkannt*: 'er (reason as instinct, AG) [erkennt] sich in seinem Funde nicht.'<sup>258</sup>

Observing reason still fails to see that the organic expresses itself in the fluid totality of all its manifestations, still fails to grasp its object as organic life, where, in Ferrini's words, 'the immediacy in which the object exists is the inner difference or concept itself, namely different beings (for instance bud, blossom and fruit in a plant) are not to be comprehended as mutually exclusive, conflicting determinations, but as vanishing differences, because they are reciprocally necessary moments of an organic phenomenon,'<sup>259</sup> and thus still fails to express and articulate what is brought to the fore ('hervorgebracht') by the organic. As Ferrini explains, '[i]n applying the finite modes of the understanding to the absolute fluidity and self-manifestation of life, reason takes sensible real finite things as representing the universal, the ideal, the infinite,'<sup>260</sup> and fails

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<sup>255</sup> *PhdG*, p. 198.

<sup>256</sup> *PhdG*, p. 199.

<sup>257</sup> *PhdG*, p. 199/ 200.

<sup>258</sup> *PhdG*, p. 198.

<sup>259</sup> Ferrini, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*



to see that the concept can only be grasped through the dissolution of, and mediation between, all that is initially taken to be different and separate. Reason thus also fails to do justice to its own nature, in which the full potential of the synthetic *a priori* is developed, and which is able to mediate between what initially appears as opposed.

Reason is only able to express the concept of the organic in grasping it as a unity, in which the externalisations - its individual (body) parts or moments - are thought of as outward manifestations of the inner drive through which it maintains itself. As Hegel had shown earlier, the process of articulation and expression is simultaneously a process in which all the individual expressions or externalizations are dissolved, and through which ultimately the whole is produced, to which - through the incorporation of what initially appeared to be other, and merely individual - the other now firmly belongs:

umgekehrt ist das Aufheben des individuellen Bestehens ebenso das Erzeugen desselben. Denn da das Wesen der individuellen Gestalt, das allgemeine Leben, und das Fürsichseiende an sich einfache Substanz ist, so hebt es indem es das *Andere* in sich setzt, diese eine *Einfachheit* oder sein Wesen auf, d.h. es entzweit sie, und dies Entzweien der unterschiedslosen Flüssigkeit ist eben das Setzen der Individualität. Die einfache Substanz des Lebens also ist die Entzweigung ihrer selbst in Gestalten und zugleich die Auflösung dieser bestehenden Unterschiede; und die Auflösung der Entzweigung ist ebensosehr Entzweien oder ein Gliedern. Es fallen damit die beiden Seiten der ganzen Bewegung, welche unterschieden wurden, nämlich die in dem allgemeinen Medium der Selbständigkeit ruhig auseinandergelegte Gestaltung und der Prozeß des Lebens ineinander; der letztere ist ebensosehr Gestaltung, als er das Aufheben der Gestalt ist; und das erste, die Gestaltung, ist ebensosehr ein Aufheben, als sie die Gliederung ist.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> *PhdG*, p. 142.

*Selbstdarstellung*, the expression of what something is, can thus only occur through the interaction with what is initially perceived as other. This other is both the individual shape, or shapes, in which being is presented, but also the shape of consciousness - whether it is observing reason or, as in the passage above, self-consciousness - which tries to come to an understanding of what initially appear as individual expressions, and which are not yet understood as being involved in one continuous movement in which they are made to interact, and through which they are held together, and can ultimately be formed into a coherent and concrete whole, through which process reason simultaneously comes to an understanding of itself. Forming itself as what it is is on the one hand a formation of individual shapes or parts - a *Gliederung* -, but these formations can only really be in-formative if they are not left as they are - as individuals - but are taken up into a concrete totality, in which being as a whole is expressed. The word *Gliederung* is indicative of the organic nature of this formative process, in its referring to the process through which an organism shapes and organises itself into a whole with limbs or parts, which, of course, can only function in, and be understood as, their being part of a living totality.<sup>262</sup>

#### **4.1.1 The inner and the outer**

If the organic is to be grasped as a unity in which the 'Gestaltung' or 'Gliederung' of an object is taken as the outward manifestation of what it essentially is - its inner nature -, how exactly are we meant to take this relationship between 'outer' and 'inner'? For observing reason, the 'Gestaltung' of the organic is still seen as something distinct from what it essentially is, as it tries to determine the nature of living things by means of the

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<sup>262</sup> Cf. Hegel's discussion of the organic in the *Enzyklopädie*, § 342, ff.

categories of *Sein* and *Bleiben*,<sup>263</sup> through which it fails to grasp both the unity between what the organic is - its *Begriff* - and the way it presents itself, and thus also fails to recognize its own nature. As Ferrini explains, 'Hegel shows [...] the incapacity of consciousness to recognize itself *in* what it experiences. The inner, essential, conceptual unity of universality and activity does not exist for observing consciousness: since it is natural (i.e. unreflexive, immediate, external to the observed objects), it seeks these moments immediately (in the form of *Sein*) and externally (in the form of *Bleiben*).'<sup>264</sup> Observing reason, instead, changes this unity into a contradiction in which the organic is grasped as a relation, but only as a relation from which 'das mitten inne liegende 'Tun'<sup>265</sup> is excluded:

[e]s entsteht auf diese Weise das organische Wesen als eine Beziehung zweier *seiender* und *fester* Momente, - eines Gegensatzes, dessen beide Seiten ihm also einesteils in der Beobachtung gegeben scheinen, andererseits ihrem Inhalte nach den Gegensatz des organischen *Zweckbegriffs* und der Wirklichkeit ausdrücken; weil aber der Begriff als solcher daran getilgt ist, auf eine dunkle und oberflächliche Weise, worin der Gedanke in das Vorstellen herabgesunken ist. So sehen wir das erste ungefähr unter dem Inneren, die andere unter dem *Äußeren* gemeint, und ihre Beziehung erzeugt das Gesetz, *daß das Äußere der Ausdruck des Inneren ist.*<sup>266</sup>

In its determination, and fixation, of the moments in which the organic presents itself, and in its taking these determinations as representations of the concept of the organic (and also in its positing the principle responsible for its being (its *Zweckbegriff*) as

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<sup>263</sup> *PhdG*, p. 202.

<sup>264</sup> Ferrini, op. cit., pp. 105/106.

<sup>265</sup> *PhdG*, p. 201. 'das mitten inne liegende 'Tun', of course, refers both to the activity of self-maintenance of the organic, but also to the activity of reason involved in being the true synthetic *a priori*. Observing reason thus also excludes itself from really grasping the relation it posits.

<sup>266</sup> *PhdG*, p. 202.

something external to its reality, which thus becomes an absolute, transcendent, ground that can never be understood), observing reason destroys the possibility of a conceptual understanding of the organic, and thus fails to see the nature of the relation between what it observes as oppositions, as reason itself remains fundamentally opposed from its object. Only by allowing its *Vorstellungen* to be engaged in a continuous *Vorstellung*, in which there is continuous movement, and in which what initially appears to be different is allowed to be dissolved, can thinking be really informed, and know what is to be thought. In the superficial *Vorstellen* of observing reason, however, thought gets lost, as it fails to move, to actively reflect on its *Vorstellungen*, and thus to see the movement. In its treatment of its *Vorstellungen*, by determining them in accordance with its own preconceptions of what a representation is, observing reason not only fails to grasp the concept, but also fails to see what a representation is. It therefore can never have more than a vague ('ungefähr') notion of the relation between concept and representation, between purpose and reality, or between an individual organism's outer aspect and its inner, universal, nature, and it is this vague notion it expresses in the law that 'the outer is the expression of the inner'.

In what follows Hegel shows that observing reason, in its positing the inner of the organic as something simple and pure, as 'die *einfache* Seele, der reine *Zweckbegriff* oder das *Allgemeine*',<sup>267</sup> as something that, although it is taken to be expressed in outward manifestations, does not remain in, but lies beyond what is expressed, fails to get hold of this inner. We cannot start with the inner as merely simple, pure and general, since this lacks the power of differentiation, and thus of showing itself as what it is.<sup>268</sup> The outward

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<sup>267</sup> *PhdG*, p. 203.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. *Enz. I* §§138-140, in which Hegel also explains that the inner can only produce itself through its outward manifestations, and that in positing the essence of an object as 'das bloß Innere', reflexive thought will never be able to proceed beyond merely outward abstractions: '[e]s

is not so much the expression of an inner; the inner rather is the outer, and the concept, or the general, can only be grasped in and through its manifesting itself as continuous process, through which all the *Besonderheiten* - its concrete manifestations such as bud, blossom and fruit - are taken up in the general, and the concept can be known: '[d]as Wesentliche des Organischen, da es an sich das Allgemeine ist, ist vielmehr überhaupt, seine Momente in der Wirklichkeit ebenso allgemein, d.h. als durchlaufende Prozesse zu haben, nicht aber an einem isolierten Dinge ein Bild des Allgemeinen zu geben.'<sup>269</sup> What the organic is can thus never be grasped in the form of the laws of observing reason: '[d]as Gesetz will den Gegensatz als ruhende Seiten auffassen und ausdrücken und an ihnen die Bestimmtheit, welche ihre Bestimmtheit aufeinander ist.'<sup>270</sup> A mere law, like the formal sentence of 'das rasonierende Denken', fails to give substance to what is observed, as what has been observed is treated as 'ein ruhendes Subjekt, das unbewegt die Akzidenzen trägt', and in which the two sides that are opposed, like the subject and predicate in the formal sentence, fail to be really connected (they do not have 'ihre Bestimmtheit aufeinander'), but are merely joined together ('verknüpft').<sup>271</sup> Only through continuous interaction between what initially appears to be accidental can what is initially isolated be allowed to determine itself, but this can only occur if reason dares to go beyond observations as fixed determinations, and to allow its observations, both through critical reflection on the observations it is used to making, and through observation of the organic as a continuous process, to develop into *Begriff*.

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ist der gewöhnliche Irrtum der Reflexion, das *Wesen* als das bloß *Innere* zu nehmen. Wenn es bloß so genommen wird, so ist auch die Betrachtung eine ganz *äußerliche* und jenes Wesen die leere äußerliche Abstraktion.' See also *Enz. II*, § 246, and the discussion of language as the expression of an inner in ch. 2., p. 40, n. 104.

<sup>269</sup> *PhdG*, p. 211.

<sup>270</sup> *PhdG*, p. 211.

<sup>271</sup> *PhdG*, p. 57.

#### 4.1.2 The organic and *Begreifendes Erkennen*

For Hegel, the organic, as the movement of self-maintenance, is thus first and foremost to be understood as the ‘Bewegung des Sichselbstsetzens’, through which being ultimately returns to itself via the continuous process of the ‘Vermittlung des Sichanderswerdens mit sich selbst’,<sup>272</sup> and through which what is to be thought comes to in-form human reason; yet this understanding is reached through observing organic processes in nature, in which what the organic essentially is, presents itself, and can be grasped as such.<sup>273</sup> As Dietrich von Engelhardt explains, Hegel saw philosophy of nature as mediating between the empirical and the theoretical, through which human reason, in a ‘begreifendes Erkennen’, was to understand its observations and to develop its concepts: ‘Naturphilosophie heißt metaphysische Grundlegung der Naturerscheinungen, der Naturkräfte und Naturprozesse. Leitend ist der Ausdruck des “begreifenden Erkennens” als einer philosophischen Vermittlung von Abstraktheit und Konkretheit, von theoretischer Generalisierung und empirischer Individualisierung gegenüber dem “sinnigen Erkennen” der Naturwissenschaften als Tatsachenerkenntnis, Kausalerklärung und Gesetzesbildung sowie theoretischer Systematisierung.’<sup>274</sup> This is exactly what Hegel aims to do through his explication of ‘das Organische’: by referring to concrete images he wants to convey what happens on a more abstract and fundamental level, while simultaneously showing that these two levels are inextricably linked, since the outer, what is presented to the senses, is held together (‘gebunden’) by the inner. In *das*

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<sup>272</sup> *PhdG*, p. 23.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. also *Enz II*, § 337, Zusatz: ‘[d]as Organische ist schon an sich das, was es wirklich ist, es ist die Bewegung seines Werdens.’

<sup>274</sup> von Engelhardt, ‘Die biologische Wissenschaften in Hegels Naturphilosophie’, p.123. Cf. also von Engelhardt, *Hegel und die Chemie, Studie zur Philosophie und Wissenschaft der Natur um 1800* (Wiesbaden: Guido Pressler Verlag, 1976), p. 81.: ‘Hegels Naturphilosophie ist eine begrifflich-reale Konstruktion der Natur. Einheit und Diskretheit der Naturbereiche und ihrer einzelnen Phänomene und spezifischen Kräfte folgen aus der Beziehung von Begriff und Realität. Jeder Bereich steht unter einem bestimmten Begriff, die in der Entwicklung der Erscheinungen dieses Bereiches zunehmend in Realität übergeht.’

*begreifende Erkennen*, 'das Innere der Natur', the general which remained beyond observing reason as an empty abstraction, is ultimately grasped through reflection on observations of concrete natural phenomena, and its *Begriff* is thus 'das Innere des Innern', as Hegel explains in the *Enzyklopädie*: '[w]enn die Gattungen und Kräfte das Innere der Natur sind und gegen dies Allgemeine das Äußere und Einzelne das Verschwindende ist, so fordert man noch als dritte Stufe das Innere des Innern, welche nach dem Vorhergehenden die Einheit des Allgemeinen und Besonderen wäre.'<sup>275</sup> Grasping this unity is only possible if we indeed refrain from a purely theoretical or purely practical, empirical, point of view.<sup>276</sup> Through theoretical reflection on observations and experiments of individuals in nature, the concept can be grasped ('begriffen') and unfolded in human reason, through which process human reason also comes to know itself: '[d]ies ist nun die Bestimmung und der Zweck der Naturphilosophie, daß der Geist sein eigenes Wesen, d.i. den Begriff in der Natur, sein Gegenbild in ihr finde.'<sup>277</sup>

#### 4.1.3 The organic as analogy for thought?

The organic - the *Selbstdarstellung* of what is - is therefore not merely an analogy which helps us understand the fundamental structure of reality, but should be seen as the explication, and realisation of that structure. Through the organic, nature reveals itself as

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<sup>275</sup> *Enz.* II, § 246, Zusatz, p. 22.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*: '[m]it dem Erfassen dieses Innern ist die Einseitigkeit des theoretischen und praktischen Verhaltens aufgehoben und zugleich beide Bestimmungen Genüge geleistet. Jenes enthält eine Allgemeinheit ohne Bestimmtheit, dieses eine Einzelheit ohne Allgemeines; das Begreifende Erkennen ist die Mitte, in welcher die Allgemeinheit nicht ein Diesseits in mir gegen die Einzelheit der Gegenstände bleibt, sondern indem es sich negativ gegen die Dinge verhält und sich diesselben assimiliert, findet es die Einzelheit ebenso darin, läßt die Dinge gewähren und sich frei in sich bestimmen. Das begreifende Erkennen ist so die Einheit des theoretischen und praktischen Verhaltens: die Negation der Einzelheit ist als Negation des Negativen die affirmative Allgemeinheit, die den Bestimmungen Bestehen gibt; denn die wahrhafte Einzelheit ist zugleich Allgemeinheit in sich selbst.'

<sup>277</sup> *Enz.* II, § 246, Zusatz, p. 23.

the 'Gegenbild' of *Geist*, and thus as an image that belongs to 'die Sache selbst', which, as we saw in the previous chapter which is what, in Hegel's eyes, a metaphor essentially is. An analogy, for Hegel, is something that is applied from the outside, an external determination, and is doomed to have a purely contingent relation to what is, as it can never reveal itself as having the 'Notwendigkeit des Begriffs'.<sup>278</sup> Empirical observations can only be understood, and explained, in their being a manifestation of the concept, and not the other way around, as Hegel emphasizes in the *Enzyklopädie*, in a passage in which he dismisses the use of analogies with disdain:

[e]s ist schon erinnert worden, daß, außerdem daß der Gegenstand nach seiner *Begriffsbestimmung* in dem philosophischen Gange anzugeben ist, noch weiter die *empirische* Erscheinung, welche derselben entspricht, namhaft zu machen und von ihr aufzuzeigen ist, daß sie jener in der Tat entspricht. Dies ist jedoch in Beziehung auf die Notwendigkeit des Inhalts kein Berufen auf die Erfahrung. Noch weniger ist eine Berufung zulässig auf das, was *Anschauung* genannt worden und was nichts anderes zu sein pflegte als ein Verfahren der Vorstellung und Phantasie (auch der Phantasterei) nach *Analogien*, die zufälliger oder bedeutender sein können und den Gegenständen Bestimmungen und Schemata nur äußerlich aufdrücken.<sup>279</sup>

Reality, the process that posits and produces itself, is what should essentially determine our thought, and if we allow it to do so we are able to grasp its fundamental structure. If

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<sup>278</sup> See *PhdG*, p. 48: '[w]enn aber die Notwendigkeit des Begriffs den loseren Gang der rasonnierenden Konversation wie den steiferen des wissenschaftlichen Gepräges verbannt, so ist schon oben erinnert worden, daß seine Stelle nicht durch die Unmethode des Ahnens und der Begeisterung und die Willkür des prophetischen Redens ersetzt werden soll, welches nicht jene Wissenschaftlichkeit überhaupt verachtet.' Hegel shows himself to be critical of the Romantics, who allegedly reject all method, and for whom the ground of reality cannot be known, but only intimated. Cf. also *Enz.* II, § 246.

<sup>279</sup> *Enz.* § 246, pp. 15/16. Cf. also *PhdG*, p. 49, where Hegel criticizes the unreflected use of determinations: '[s]tatt des inneren Lebens und der Selbstbewegung seines Daseins wird nun eine solche einfache Bestimmtheit von der Anschauung, d.h. hier dem sinnlichen Wissen, nach einer oberflächlichen Analogie ausgesprochen und diese äußerliche und leere Anwendung der Formel die *Konstruktion* genannt.' Hegel's main target in this passage is Schelling, for whom knowledge of the Absolute could be gained through a method he called construction, and in which the intellectual intuition plays a central role.



we open ourselves up to the phenomena around us, we are able to see ‘Dasein in seinem Begriffe’: the concept as being instantiated in nature, and which can, in a ‘begreifendes Erkennen’, be conceived by us.<sup>280</sup>

The problem with an analogy, rather than a metaphor, is that if it does show or tell us anything about the inner nature of reality, it does so purely contingently, as it is not led by the determination of the concept.<sup>281</sup> Natural phenomena are to be understood as manifestations of concepts, which can, by studying these phenomena, be grasped by human reason, in the process of which nature, as immediate becoming, is mediated, and becomes *für sich* in *Geist*. If we truly understand what happens in the unfolding of a flower, we understand it as being a manifestation of the process that also determines thought.<sup>282</sup> Organisms in nature express what they are through being in continuous movement, in which parts interact and thus form a living whole, which can only be grasped in a system that is itself organic, in which all the parts are in continuous interaction with the whole.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Cf. *Enz.* §354, Zusatz, p. 449, in the passage where Hegel discusses the nature of blood: ‘[d]ie unendliche Verteilung und dieses Auflösen des Teilens und dieses Wieder-Teilen ist der unmittelbare Ausdruck des Begriffs, den man hier sozusagen mit Augen sieht.’

<sup>281</sup> This was one of the reasons why Hegel was opposed to the philosophy of nature of the Romantics, which made frequent use of analogies. See a.o. von Engelhardt, *Hegels Philosophie der Chemie*, p. 83.

<sup>282</sup> It might be argued that initially the example of the flower is an analogy, and that only, after having followed *Geist*’s course throughout the *Phänomenologie*, when we return to the beginning with a full understanding of what true knowledge of *die Sache selbst* entails, with a ‘begreifendes Erkennen’, that we realise it is not just an analogy, but that in the unfolding of the flower the concept expresses itself.

<sup>283</sup> See *PhdG*, pp. 210-211. It is thus doubtful whether the organic is to be seen as an analogy for the system of philosophy, as Stewart claims:

[Hegel] portrays the notion of a systematic philosophy by means of an organic analogy. The development of a plant at its different stages is necessary for the plant as a whole, and no single stage represents the plant’s entire history [...] Just as when a plant grows and develops, each of its individual stages is necessary for the succeeding stages, individual concepts in a philosophical system have their meaning in the context of other concepts from which they were developed. [...] What this simile makes clear is that the system, for Hegel, involves the sum total of the individual parts as they develop themselves organically. Thus, just as the plant is not merely the sum total of its parts at a given moment in its development, but rather as the organic whole of its

#### 4.1.4 'Was ihre Natur ausmacht'

Before discussing the two clusters of organic metaphors mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and to investigate what these metaphors can tell us about the nature of reality, I would briefly like to return to a sentence mentioned earlier, in which observing reason was criticised as follows: '[w]as wesentliche Merkmale genannt werden, sind ruhende Bestimmtheiten, welche so, wie sie als *einfache* sich ausdrücken und aufgefaßt werden, nicht das, was ihre Natur ausmacht, verschwindende *Momente* der sich in sich zurücknehmenden Bewegung zu sein, darstellen.'<sup>284</sup> 'Ausmachen', in the context of the issues put forward in the chapter on observing reason, and which have been discussed above, becomes a highly meaningful word, since, if we reflect on the meanings it is, and has been, generally given,<sup>285</sup> we will find that most of these meanings are activated through interaction with this context, and that through this activation, 'ausmachen' can be taken as being part of, and thus to interact with, both of the aforementioned clusters of metaphors,<sup>286</sup> through which it also becomes possible to shed more light on the nature of the movement that is mentioned, the 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung'. 'Ausmachen' can mean 'to determine' (what something is, or its being true), which definitely is what Hegel wants us to understand here, and is probably the most obvious, and least metaphorical, meaning in the light of its immediate context, which is that of the

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developmental stages, so also the philosophical system is the complete development or unfolding of individual concepts.' (op. cit., pp. 78-79)

Precisely because real philosophy is the 'complete development or unfolding of individual concepts', it is determined by these concepts. Through observing the plant in its development, and coming to understand what living nature essentially is, the concept of the organic unfolds itself in us. In order to be true, our thinking should allow itself to be determined by the concept, and to take its course. In its evolution, the system of philosophy is itself organic, rather than analogous to it.

<sup>284</sup> *PbdG*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>285</sup> See the lemma 'Ausmachen' in *Grimm* and in *Adelung* – *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, available on <http://lexika.digitale-sammlungen.de/adelung/online/angebot>

<sup>286</sup> And part of other clusters as well, as will become clear in the discussion that follows.

nature of 'Bestimmtheiten'. Yet, if we take 'ausmachen' to mean 'to determine', it is not immediately clear who or what is responsible for the determination: whether it is the object determining itself through its movement (and through which this movement is shows itself to be an 'ausdrücken'), or the subject determining the object through grasping all of its moments (through which the movement becomes an 'auffassen'). Yet, this is precisely what Hegel wants us to see: the movement is a 'gedoppeltes Prozeß' in which what is presents itself in its development, and through which simultaneously what it is, its essence, is developed in thought ('das Werden des Daseins [ist] das sich Zurücknehmen ins Wesen').<sup>287</sup>

A further meaning of 'ausmachen' is 'to bring to an end', through which it becomes linked to words such as 'Ausführung', and through which the movement can be characterized as one which, in withdrawing to its own center, or self, also reaches its completion.<sup>288</sup> What is reached in the end (if the 'Vorstellung' is allowed to show itself in its entirety, as one continuous movement), in its reality, is what it already is *an sich*, so that its goal or purpose can indeed only be grasped as a *Selbstzweck*, which, as we saw above, was what observing reason failed to do.

The latter meaning, however, can also be taken in the sense of extinguishing (i.e. of a fire), or even killing something, through which 'ausmachen' becomes the activity through which the subject makes the object his or her own, both through the active 'taking in' of the object,<sup>289</sup> and through the negation of all that it is not, which both refers to the

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<sup>287</sup> *PhdG*, p. 43.

<sup>288</sup> Cf. *PhdG*, p. 23, and the discussion of this passage, and the word 'Ausführung', in ch. 2, pp. 45-46.

<sup>289</sup> cf. *PhdG*, p. 325, which is discussed on pp. 32-33. See also the discussion of coming to understand as 'Vernehmen', ch.3, n. 207, and, of course, the 'verzehren' which is to be found in the quotation given at the beginning of the chapter. 'Verzehren' can also be said of a fire consuming itself, and both 'ausmachen' and 'verzehren' thus also belong to a cluster of 'fire' metaphors, through which the organism presents itself as 'der unendliche sich selbst anfachende und unterhaltende Prozeß' (*Enz II*, § 336), the process that maintains itself and stirs itself up, yet

destruction of all the 'Bestimmtheiten' imposed upon the object by observing reason, and to making the separate *Momente* in which being externalised itself disappear in the movement in which thought takes up all these moments and unites them.

Furthermore, 'ausmachen' can refer to a chemical process, i.e. that of cooking, where 'ausmachen' is used to refer to the process of boiling something until it is done, through which it becomes linked to the cluster of food-preparing metaphors mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. A further interesting meaning that Hegel might want to bring into play is 'to deliver something (i.e. nuts or fruit) from its shell, in order to reveal its inner core'. 'Was ihre Natur ausmacht' is thus not to be found in one of the guises, or determinations, in which something presents itself, but ultimately in what is produced from within these guises, its true or inner self. As we saw in the previous section, this 'Innere des Innern' can only be grasped if thought actively involves itself with the individual things it is presented with, and 'assimilates' the individual shapes into a general concept, of which now both being and knowing are a part. Nature's inner core, its essence, is thus to be found in nature itself, and is not a transcendent being beyond our understanding.<sup>290</sup>

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in which the individual organism eventually dies through its being consumed, and is ultimately continued in *Geist*. See *Enz II*, § 376.

<sup>290</sup> A thought that is also present in lines by Goethe (from *Zur Morphologie*) that Hegel refers to in his discussion of 'das Innere des Innern' (see above, pp. 98/99):

'Alles gibt sie reichlich und gern;  
Natur hat weder Kern  
noch Schale  
Alles ist sie mit einem Male'

Quoted in *Enz II*, § 246, Zusatz, p. 22. Hegel also refers to this poem in *Enz I*, § 140: 'Ins Innere der Natur - sagt ein Dichter -

dringt kein erschaffner Geist,  
Zu glücklich, wenn er nur die *äußere* Schale weißt.

Es hätte vielmehr heißen müssen, eben dann, wenn ihm das Wesen der Natur als *Innere* bestimmt ist, weiß er nur die *äußere* Schale.'

Finally, if we look at the structure of the sentence, we see that as soon as we reflect on its meaning, and on the question who is responsible for the 'ausmachen' of the nature of determinations, the sentence itself becomes an example of a 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung' (which is also, as we saw earlier,<sup>291</sup> what a speculative sentence is, as it forces the reader to return to the subject, and in doing so, give it substance) of which the reader is challenged to become a part. In trying to make the sentence our own, we become aware that as soon as we determine the subject of 'ausmachen', as either nature (or being) or as the knowing subject, the whole of what is said eludes us, and that we can only make sense of the 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung' if we see it as a twofold, simultaneous process, in which both being and thinking *Geist* come to be known as what they are through the explication of being, in which its 'verschwinde *Momente*' both determine, and are determined by, thinking, and through which reason ultimately reaches '[Ü]bereinstimmung mit der Natur'.<sup>292</sup>

#### 4.2. The preparation of true knowing

In order for thought to become truly speculative, it has to allow itself to be led by nature, or by the substance that presents itself to thought, instead of starting out with the preconceptions imposed by reflexive thought, through which, as we saw above, thinking can never go beyond itself, and we can never truly achieve *Erkenntnis*. In the introduction to the *Enzyklopädie*, as we also saw in the previous chapter,<sup>293</sup> Hegel criticised this thinking that proceeds according to the preconceptions it is used to for being a mere *Nachdenken*, through which we will never be able to go beyond mere fact, beyond

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<sup>291</sup> See ch.2, pp. 58-61.

<sup>292</sup> Cf. ch. 1, p. 12.

<sup>293</sup> See ch.3, p. 69, n. 187.

something that has already been produced: 'das Faktum der Philosophie ist die schon zubereitete Erkenntnis, und das Auffassen wäre hiermit nur ein *Nachdenken* in dem Sinne eines *nachfolgenden* Denkens.'<sup>294</sup> We should not just accept what has already been prepared, but can only do so through a *Nachdenken* in which we are active, and reflect on what we are immediately presented with. It is this need for substance, for concrete content, which led thinking to empiricism, as Hegel explains in the *Enzyklopädie*,<sup>295</sup> and it was empiricism, observing reason, that taught thinking that what is true must be actual: 'was wahr ist, [muß] in der Wirklichkeit sein und für die Wahrnehmung da sein.'<sup>296</sup> However, as we also saw in the section on observing reason, one of the problems with empiricism is that it, like dogmatic metaphysics, ultimately has no other justification than a mere belief in its *Vorstellungen*: '[d]er *Empirismus* hat diese Quelle (experience, AG) [...] mit der Metaphysik selbst gemein, als welche für die Beglaubigung ihrer Definitionen - der Voraussetzungen sowie des bestimmten Inhalts - ebenfalls die Vorstellungen, d.h. den zunächst von der Erfahrung herrührenden Inhalt zur Gewähr hat.'<sup>297</sup>

*Erkennen*, therefore, can only come about if it is neither 'schon zubereitet' nor 'zunächst von der Erfahrung herrührend',<sup>298</sup> but only through a process, as we saw in the passage at the beginning of this chapter, in which nature, as the substance that immediately presents

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<sup>294</sup> *Enz.* I, Vorrede zur zweite Ausgabe, p. 17.

<sup>295</sup> *Enz.* I, § 37 ff.

<sup>296</sup> *Enz.* I, § 38. Cf. Ferrini, p. 92, who takes this sentence to be "the highest" justification of empiricism and of reason's drive to seek its infinite determinations *in* the world, because this is the reason for the collapse of the empty "beyond"! Yet, as she correctly adds, 'this thesis also contains the unavoidable "lowest" inadequacy of the particular sensible "this here" to be what is true, because the truth of things does not genuinely exist in external finitude, but in thought: whatever is external is merely true in itself.'

<sup>297</sup> *Enz.* I, § 38.

<sup>298</sup> 'Herrühren' means 'to originate from' or 'to have its ground in'. With regard to the etymology of 'herrühren', *Adelung* remarks that '[m]it dem thätigen rühren hat es nichts als den Klang gemein; näher scheint es dem Lat. oriri verwandt zu seyn'. Nevertheless, as Hegel makes frequent use of the verb 'rühren' (or cognates such as 'berühren', as can be found in the passage discussed in this section) in relation to the process through which being is developed in thought, I would like to argue that Hegel wants us to think of this 'active stirring' of our experience, with which human reason will have to actively involve itself in order to bring about true knowledge.

itself to thinking *Geist*, both prepares itself and is prepared in such a way that it can make itself understood as what it is, and can therefore be expressed as such. In this section I will now return to this passage, and analyse what light its metaphors are meant to show on the process, the 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung' through which we come to know. I will first quote the passage again:

Es ('das Wesen' which has now become *Geist*, AG) hat hier die Bewegung seiner Verwirklichung durchlaufen. Sich aus seiner Wesenheit herabsetzend zu einer gegenständlichen Naturkraft und deren Äußerungen, ist es ein Dasein für das Andere, für das Selbst, von dem es verzehrt wird. Das stille Wesen der selbstlosen Natur gewinnt in seiner Frucht die Stufe, worin sie, sich selbst zubereitend und verdaut, sich dem selbstischen Leben darbietet; sie erreicht in der Nützlichkeit, gegessen und getrunken werden zu können, ihre höchste Vollkommenheit; denn sie ist darin die Möglichkeit einer höheren Existenz und berührt das geistige Dasein; - teils zur stillkräftigen Substanz, teils aber zur geistigen Gärung ist der Erdgeist in seiner Metamorphose dort zum weiblichen Prinzipie der Ernährung, hier zum männlichen Prinzipie der sich treibenden Kraft des selbstbewußten Daseins gediehen.<sup>299</sup>

The process in which being realises itself, and ceases to be pure essence, is first of all said to be one through which it becomes other than itself - being *an sich* - and presents itself, in its externalisation in nature, as 'ein Dasein für das Andere, für das Selbst, von dem es verzehrt wird.' Yet, who or what is it that we are meant to understand here as 'das Selbst', and why is what there is, said to be devoured by it? In order to shed light on this question I will first turn to some passages from the *Enzyklopädie*. In § 246, Hegel explains the realisation of (organic) being as follows:

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<sup>299</sup> *PhdG*, p. 526.

[d]iese Trennung des allgemeinen, sich äußerlichen Organismus und dieser nur punktuellen, vorübergehenden Subjektivität hebt sich vermöge der an sich seienden Identität ihres Begriffs zur *Existenz* dieser Identität, zum *belebten Organismus*, der an ihr selbst sich gliedernden Subjektivität auf, welche den nur *an sich* seienden Organismus, die physische allgemeine und individuelle Natur von sich ausschließt und ihr gegenübertritt, aber zugleich an diesen Mächten die Bedingung ihrer Existenz, die Erregung wie das Material ihres Prozesses hat.<sup>300</sup>

This is in line with Hegel's arguments in the *Phänomenologie* to show that reality is ultimately to be understood as the self-determination of being, according to the unity of its concept. In its being alive, the concrete individual opposes itself to what it is *an sich*, its concept as general, even though it depends on the concept as the condition of its existence (as the thing that it is). Yet, as is explained in the *Zusatz*, this presentation of the organic fails in the sense that the concept is still immediate, and can therefore not be known other than as the 'innere Zweck' through which the organic is determined, and which is externalised in physical realities that are, as yet, still indifferent to each other.<sup>301</sup> In being alive, a totality is produced through the interaction of all these separate physical moments in which the individual organic being presents itself, which is simultaneously a 'Werden des Allgemeinen': not only the individual, but also the concept can now be known as what it is, through a reflection on the complete process that is presented by the individual. This realisation of the general in the individual is described as follows: '[d]as Individuum hat also seine unorganische Natur noch an ihm selbst und ernährt sich aus sich selbst, indem es sich selbst, als seine eigene Anorganität, aufzehrt.' What the individual 'feeds upon' is its concept, which initially, when the individual is still a pure

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<sup>300</sup> *Enz.* II, § 342.

<sup>301</sup> *Enz.* II, § 342, Zusatz: '[w]as dieser Darstellung des Organischen, überhaupt dem unmittelbar Organischen fehlt, ist, daß der Begriff hier noch unmittelbar ist, nur als innere Zweck im Elemente der Gleichgültigkeit, seine Momente aber physische Realitäten sind, die nicht in sich selbst reflektiert sind, nicht ein jener Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber tretendes Eins bilden.'



this, is completely abstract, 'die Allgemeinheit als die unwirkliche Gattung'. In the process of becoming concrete, what was abstract and general is thus devoured, and the individual, and ultimately its sort (*Gattung*), can be known as what it is.<sup>302</sup>

The self is thus both the individual organism and the concept that it instantiates and comes to realise. Yet, as nature in itself is 'selbstlos', since it is not endowed with self-consciousness, it is dependent on *Geist* to reveal and articulate its character. As we saw earlier,<sup>303</sup> a living animal, in maintaining itself through instinct, only achieves a sense of self, a 'Selbstgefühl', yet will never be able, as it lacks reason, to understand itself as a self, as what it is. The self that is therefore ultimately responsible for bringing about knowledge of what is, is to be found in self-conscious human reason, in which 'das selbstlose Wesen' is developed, and, in doing so, changed into *Geist*. The 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung' is thus the movement in which the concept, the self on which the individual 'feeds', is realised in self-conscious *Geist*, through which the concept becomes known as what it is.

The process through which knowing comes to be, and being becomes known, can indeed only be understood as a simultaneous, twofold process. This two-sidedness may explain why Hegel uses the metaphor of 'verzehren' or 'aufzehren'<sup>304</sup> in connection with 'ernähren', as in the case of the *Enzyklopädie*, or in connection with 'sich selbst zubereiten' and 'verdauen', as in the case of the *Phänomenology*. The preparation of what is known is brought about in a process in which *Geist* is in continuous interaction with its substance, and in which individual becoming, in its being processed in and by *Geist*, is

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<sup>302</sup> Through reproduction organic life ultimately maintains itself as sort, in a process in which the individual is *aufgehoben*, as 'die Macht gegen das Einzelne und der Prozeß derselben; sie hebt dieses Einzelne auf, das die Wirklichkeit der Gattung ist.' *Enz. II*, § 342, Zusatz.

<sup>303</sup> See p. 91.

<sup>304</sup> Both *Adelung* and *Grimm* give these verbs as synonyms, meaning 'to consume', although 'verzehren' can also be used in the stronger sense of 'to destroy'.

simultaneously 'ein Werden des Allgemeinen'. We cannot, as we learned from the proceedings of observing reason, consider things in isolation, either from each other or from ourselves, as knowing subject, since we will ultimately not be able to get hold of what has been isolated, as it remains, like the 'leere Tiefe' of God as a 'Gestaltloses Wesen', something beyond our grasp.<sup>305</sup> What is real can be known in its being determined and concrete,<sup>306</sup> and which is therefore able to determine thought.

What is real, that what in this passage is called the 'Frucht' in which nature produces itself, grows and, in doing so, becomes concrete,<sup>307</sup> and in doing so also reveals itself as having 'zwei Ansichten':<sup>308</sup> it is both the fruit that we observe as part of the process in which nature manifests itself, but also *Geist*, in which 'die selbstlose Natur' is developed and articulated.<sup>309</sup> The clause 'sich selbst zubereitend und verdaut' emphasizes and further develops this double aspect. First of all because its subject is ambiguous: the 'sich' can refer to nature becoming what it is in producing itself - its fruit - according to its inner *Zweck*, yet simultaneously this is a process in which *Geist* is in-formed and thus also forms and develops what can be known, and in doing so, also forms and develops itself,

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<sup>305</sup> Cf. *Enz. I*, Zusatz: 'Indem nun dies Sinnliche (abstract matter as the ground on which all sense-objects depend, and which empiricism has isolated as 'das Sinnliche überhaupt, die absolute Vereinzelung in sich und daher das Außereinanderseinde', AG) für den Empirismus ein Gegebenes ist und bleibt, so ist dies eine Lehre der Unfreiheit, denn die Freiheit besteht gerade darin, daß ich kein absolut Anderes gegen mich habe, sondern abhänge von einem Inhalt, der ich selbst bin.'

<sup>306</sup> Cf. *Enz. II*, § 38: 'es gibt keine Materie; denn wie sie existiert, ist sie immer ein Bestimmtes, Konkretes.'

<sup>307</sup> Cf. ch.1, p. 27, on 'concrete' being rooted in *concretere*, meaning 'to grow', or 'to form itself'.

<sup>308</sup> *PhdG*, p. 43.

<sup>309</sup> Cf. n. 241 on Hölderlin's 'Ideal wird/ ist was Natur war.' Cf. also 'Die Tragische Ode' ('Grund zum Empedokles'), in which artistic man is said to be the 'flower of nature': '[d]er organischere künstlichere Mensch ist die Blüthe der Natur.' *Theoretische Schriften*, p. 82. Interestingly, *Geist* itself is also - like fruit and blossom - a natural product, and is produced in the fermentation of wine, or in the distillation of spirits (again, a very interesting word). *Adelung* gives the following definition: '[e]in flüssiges, flüchtiges, wirksames, und mit dem Wasser mischbares Wesen, welches theils in der Gährung entwickelt, theils auch durch die Destillation aus verschiedenen Körpern gezogen wird, und die wirksamsten Theile derselben enthält'. *Geist* is thus what is produced through natural processes, yet is simultaneously active itself ('wirksam'), capable of dissolution, and of taking up what is most 'wirksam', and it is all these characteristics, Hegel intimates, that *Geist*, as 'die wissende Wahrheit', will come to understand as belonging both to its object, and to itself.

and comes to know its own nature. The process in which the fruit ripens is simultaneously the process in which rot sets in, and the individual comes to perish,<sup>310</sup> yet as *Geist* comes to digest ('verdaut') this process, the individual fruit comes to be understood as an instantiation of its concept. Secondly, the grammatical structure of the sentence is also indicative of the process as one in which being and thought, nature and *Geist*, are both active and passive: 'sich selbst zubereitend', a present participle, suggests that the subject - be it nature or *Geist* - actively engages itself in the act of preparation, whereas 'verdaut', a past participle, suggests that what prepares itself is, or has been, digested, and is thus passive.<sup>311</sup> The subject of the next clause, however, 'sie', can only refer to nature, which, in its offering itself up as something from which we can partake, which we can make our own, reaches its perfection, which is simultaneously the possibility of an even higher fulfilment, i.e. in *Geist*. Nature is said to 'berühren', to move, or to set in motion, 'das geistige Dasein', which is thus forced to become active itself. Yet, 'berühren' also links up with 'zubereiten' and 'ausmachen': stirring is what we do when preparing ingredients in such a way that one dish, one coherent totality, is what results. Moreover, 'rühren' is also suggestive of the way being, as gegenständliche Naturkraft', initially presents itself to *Geist*: its immediate shape, in yielding itself to self-

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<sup>310</sup> Cf. *Enz. II*, § 348, Zusatz: '[d]ie Reife der Frucht ist auch ihr Verderben; denn ihre Verletzung hilft, sie reifen machen.' In this passage Hegel explains that the process of ripening is precipitated if the fruit is acted upon, which, of course, is also what reason is expected to do with what presents itself to it.

<sup>311</sup> This rather awkward grammatical structure (as we would, 'nach der Gewohnheit', have expected either two present participles or two past participles) can also be taken as an 'Unterbrechung des Vorstellungsganges', or 'Hemmung', which, like the speculative sentence and rhetorical devices such as metaphor, is meant to instigate speculative thought. Cf. Ch. 3, pp. 81-84. In this use of grammatical structures Hegel may also have been influenced by Hölderlin, cf. the opening words of 'Das Untergehende Vaterland': 'Das Untergehende Vaterland, Natur und Menschen insofern sie in einer besondern Wechselwirkung stehen, eine besondere idealgewordene Welt, und Verbindung der Dingen ausmachen', in which we also see this shift from present to past participle ('untergehend' and 'idealgeworden'). *Theoretische Schriften*, p. 33. An important difference between Hegel and Hölderlin is that for Hölderlin, as soon as the world is determined through the application of 'Verbindungen' and becomes ideal, its origin, absolute being ('the Vaterland'), eludes us, whereas Hegel's aim is to show that the process of interaction between man and world is such that absolute being can ultimately be fully grasped by thought.

consciousness, is said to be an 'ungebändigte[r] Taumel',<sup>312</sup> a continuous flux, which will have to be organised, and to organise itself, according to the rational principles that are to be developed in *Geist*. In this tumble, what is true is there, but cannot yet be distinguished, as it has not yet been clarified, which is also made apparent in the famous sentence in the *Vorrede*, in which the 'Erscheinung' of the world, its immediate aspect, is said to be 'der bacchantische Taumel, an dem kein Glied nicht trunken ist.'<sup>313</sup> All the individual parts involved in this 'tumble', like *Geist* itself, are still clouded and obscured, and have to clarify themselves as they are developed. In its externalisation being reveals itself as being held together by conceptual ties that in-form thought, through which thought itself also becomes aware of itself as 'das geistige Band', that is able to unite that which has been separated by reflexive thought.<sup>314</sup> Without these ties, we would either have to remain within the either/ or dichotomies of reflexive thought, or substance would run amok, as it does in '[das] begrifflose substantielle Wissen' which prefers intuition to knowledge of the Absolute, and which thus allows for '[das] ungebändigte Gären der Substanz'.<sup>315</sup> Only in thinking in which substance is completely developed according to its conceptual ties is the Absolute realised as an identity of subject and object that can be fully grasped.

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<sup>312</sup> *PhdG*, p. 527.

<sup>313</sup> *PhdG*, p. 46.

<sup>314</sup> Cf. *Enz.* II, § 246, Zusatz, in which, in criticizing chemical analysis for its taking apart what should be grasped as a totality, Goethe's *Faust* is alluded to:

Encheiresin naturae nennt's die Chemie  
Spottet ihr selbst und weiß nicht wie.  
Hat die Teile in ihrer Hand,  
Fehlt leider nur das geistige Band.

(*Faust*, 1. Teil, Studierzimmer, V, 1940-41 u. 1938-39.

'Encheiresin naturae' literally means 'nature's grasp', and refers to a theory developed by Jakob Reinhold Spielmann, a chemist whose ideas Goethe was familiar with, in which elements are held and joined together by a natural force. See: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, hrsg. Sybille Demmer (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997), p. 376 (note to p. 58).

<sup>315</sup> *PhdG*, p. 18.

One of the most interesting examples of 'digestive' metaphors is probably *Geist* itself, the metaphorical use of which we become aware of in the extremely intricate final clause of the passage,<sup>316</sup> in which the 'Erdgeist',<sup>317</sup> in its 'Metamorphose', is said to develop itself ('gedeihen'<sup>318</sup>) according to its two principles, i.e. as substance ('stillkräftiger Substanz', i.e. nature) and as subject, through which nature is developed in *Geist*. For this latter aspect of the process Hegel uses the words 'geistliche Gärung', through which combination the 'natural' meaning of *Geist*, as a product of the organic process of fermentation,<sup>319</sup> is activated, and through which *Geist* as a 'dead' metaphor is brought to life. *Geist* is the product of nature, whichever way we look at it, and can thus be seen as a supreme example of a metaphor that does not entail an admixture ('Vermischung') of an image that is added externally, and of which use of metaphor Hegel showed himself to

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<sup>316</sup> An exhaustive analysis of this clause (if that were possible) is beyond the scope of this thesis. An important aspect, however, is that in this clause Hegel presents the two-sided process as one in which nature, the 'stillkräftige[r] Substanz', reveals itself as the passive (although not completely passive, as it is still *kräftig*), female principle of nutrition, and *Geist* as the active, male, principle of the 'sich treibenden Kraft des selbstbewußten Daseins.' (On Hegel's use of 'Trieb' and 'treiben', see ch. 1, pp. 12-14) These two principles, of course are to unite themselves and become one, and in doing so, produce absolute knowing. Metaphors related to sexual intercourse and/or procreation (e.g. the copula 'is' as 'das mitten inne liegende Tun', or 'das göttliche Erkennen' - in which the Absolute is an entity that can only be believed in - as 'ein Spielen der Liebe mit sich selbst', *PhdG*, p. 24) abound, and also make up an important and rich cluster. Hegel's use, in this passage, of the word 'Metamorphose' (rather than 'Verwandlung'), will be discussed below.

<sup>317</sup> Again, a reference to *Faust*, in which, at the beginning, Faust invokes the powers of *Erdgeist*, as the spiritual being that manifests itself in the natural phenomena on earth, to reveal to him the secrets of nature. According to alchemists, all celestial bodies were related to a 'Geist', responsible for its formation. See *Faust*, p. 373, note to p. 20. As I will discuss in the next paragraph, *Geist*, in religion, is still a mystery to itself, still does not know itself completely, which is also reinforced through the reference to *Erdgeist*, on whom Faust is dependent in order to find the 'Innere des Inneren.'

<sup>318</sup> On 'gedeihen' and 'Gediegenheit', see also p. 55, and esp. n. 143.

<sup>319</sup> See n. 309. 'geistliche Gärung' is also reminiscent of the title of a work by Franz von Baader, *Fermenta cognitionis*, with which Hegel was familiar, and in the *Enzyklopädie* wrote of with some approval (*Enz. I*, Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe, p. 27). Cf. also 'dead' metaphors such as the 'ripening' of ideas, or to 'brood' on a plan (cf. Dutch 'ergens op broeden'). Gehler's *Physikalisches Wörterbuch* gives the following definition of 'Gährung': 'innere Bewegung durch welche ihre chemische Bestandteile in neue Verbindungen gesetzt werden', and the 'geistliche Gärung' is definitely to be thought of as an inner movement, although it not so much applies new ties, but rather explicates the conceptual ties through which *Geist* is informed, and through which *Geist*, as unifying principle, is able to grasp reality as a unified whole. See: Johann Samuel Traugott Gehler: *Physikalisches Wörterbuch oder Versuch einer Erklärung der vornehmsten Begriffe und Kunstwörter der Naturlehre [...], II.* (Leipzig, 1789 - 1801), p. 342.

be extremely critical,<sup>320</sup> but is an image that is shown to directly ensue from 'die Sache selbst.'

Finally, an important aspect of this passage is that, as the 'eating' and 'drinking' metaphors are used in the chapter on religion, we become aware that this is the way our relation to the Absolute is represented in religion, and that the language of religion abounds in such images, whether it is in the bread and wine of Ceres and Bacchus, or the flesh and blood of Christian religion.<sup>321</sup> In becoming aware that these representations are metaphors, *Geist* becomes aware of language as the 'Dasein des Geistes',<sup>322</sup> in which the various ways in which *Geist* finds itself in the world are captured. In religion *Geist* is able to find itself in the world, but its unity with its substance can only be revealed as an immediate awareness, as a unity that can be felt, but not yet understood, and thus is represented as something we become aware of, and get hold of and use, through and with our bodies, as the natural, organic beings that we are, but not yet through reason:<sup>323</sup> its 'einfache Wesen' is thus 'als brauchbare Ding nicht nur das Dasein das gesehen, gefühlt, gerochen, geschmeckt wird, sondern ist auch Gegenstand der Begierde und wird durch den wirklichen Genuß eins mit dem Selbst'.<sup>324</sup> The 'wirkliche Genuß', however, is still only concrete - in order to become one with the Absolute we do have to partake of the Holy Communion -, and has not yet been developed and understood as the

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<sup>320</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, pp. 522-523. Cf. ch. 3, pp. 81-82.

<sup>321</sup> *PhdG*, p. 526. In the *Enzyklopädie*, Hegel also refers to Genesis: 'Der Mensch aber muß vom Baume der Erkenntnis des Guten und Bösen gegessen haben, durch die Arbeit und Tätigkeit des Gedankens hindurchgegangen sein, um nur als Überwinder dieser Trennung seiner von der Natur zu sein, was er ist.' (*Enz. II*, § 246, Zusatz).

<sup>322</sup> Cf. ch.3, p. 75.

<sup>323</sup> That in religion *Geist* has not yet completed its process, that it has not yet come to full self-understanding is also suggested by the repetition of the word 'teils', it still has only partly developed as substance and as spirit.

<sup>324</sup> *PhdG*, pp. 526-527.

process through which *Geist* comes to an understanding of itself, and this is what is to take place when *Geist* reaches the stage of 'das absolute Wissen'.

#### 4.2.1. *Geist* 'digesting' itself in absolute knowing

Only when *Geist* has returned to itself, through experiencing all its moments, is it truly *Geist*, as it knows itself as what it is, as we can read in the final pages:

nichts [wird] gewußt, was nicht in der *Erfahrung* ist oder, wie dasselbe auch ausgedrückt wird, was nicht als *gefühlte Wahrheit, als innerlich geoffenbartes* Ewiges, als *geglaubtes* Heiliges, oder welche Ausdrücke sonst gebraucht werden, vorhanden ist. Denn die Erfahrung ist eben dies, daß der Inhalt - und er ist der Geist - *an sich*, Substanz und also *Gegenstand des Bewußtseins* ist. Diese Substanz aber, die der Geist ist, ist das *Werden* seiner zu dem, was er *an sich* ist; und erst als dies sich in sich reflektierendes Werden ist er *an sich* in Wahrheit der Geist. Er ist *an sich* die Bewegung, die das Erkennen ist, - die Verwandlung jenes *Ansich* in das *Fürsich*, der *Substanz* in das *Subjekt*, des Gegenstandes des *Bewußtseins* in Gegenstand des *Selbstbewußtseins*, d.h. in ebensowohl aufgehobenen Gegenstand oder in den *Begriff*. Sie ist der in sich zurückgehende Kreis, der seinen Anfang voraussetzt und ihn nur im Ende erreicht.<sup>325</sup>

In religion, as we saw above, *Geist* experienced itself in the world, but this experience was only available as 'concrete pleasure' ('wirklicher Genuß'),<sup>326</sup> but not yet understood. In absolute knowing, experience is completed, and grasped as what it is, in a knowing that has been fully developed, and truly is *Erkennen*. The two aspects in which the process through which *Erkennen* comes to be presents itself are, in this passage, captured through

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<sup>325</sup> *PhdG*, p. 585.

<sup>326</sup> 'Genuß' is hard to translate into English, as it means both 'to use' and 'to enjoy'.

the metaphors of 'Verwandlung' and 'Kreis'. Interestingly, 'Verwandlung', through which *Ansich* is turned into *Fürsich*, or *Substanz* into *Subjekt*, is a much richer term than the 'Metamorphose' through which *Erdgeist* revealed itself as both substance and self-consciousness.<sup>327</sup> In religion, as we saw, the unity of substance and subject has not yet been 'aufgehoben' into *Begriff*, but is immediately experienced in our use of nature, which is taken to be a manifestation of *Geist*, but not yet understood as such. The process that is observed by religious consciousness, and for which the term 'Metamorphose', is used, has not yet been completely changed into, and recognised as the movement of 'das begreifende *Erkennen*', and thus has not fully returned to itself. Metamorphosis is a natural process that is observed by *Geist*, and inspires wonder as it suggests mysterious forces in nature (c.f. Goethe's 'geheime Verwandtschaft'), but which are still beyond the grasp of reason. Moreover, at least in Goethe's definition, metamorphosis is a linear process ('nach einander'), in which the fruit is taken to be the ultimate goal and fulfilment of the seed, and in which there is no return to its beginning. For Hegel, however, as the example of the plant at the beginning of the *Phänomenologie* illustrates, what a plant is can only be understood if its moments are taken together in a continuum, and are not to be thought of as discrete ('nach einander'), but as 'zugleich', as simultaneous and equally important.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> 'Metamorphose' refers to natural processes through which an organic being changes its appearance, e.g. the bud of a plant turning into a flower in full bloom. Goethe's *Versuch die Metamorphose der Pflanzen zu erklären* (1790) was a seminal text on the metamorphosis of plants, and Hegel may have been familiar with this text (or with its ideas) at the time he wrote the *Phänomenologie*. In this text, Goethe explains metamorphosis as the force through which an organism is capable of change, while remaining one and the same, see e.g. §4: 'Die geheime Verwandtschaft der verschiedenen äußern Pflanzentheile, als der Blätter, des Kelchs, der Krone, der Staubfäden, welche sich nach einander und gleichsam aus einander entwickeln, ist von den Forschern im allgemeinen längst erkannt, ja auch besonders bearbeitet worden, und man hat die Wirkung, wodurch ein und dasselbe Organ sich uns manigfaltig verändert sehen läßt, die *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* genannt.' See: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Versuch die Metamorphose der Pflanzen zu erklären* (1790), text available on <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/3642/1>, access date 4/01/ 2013.

<sup>328</sup> See *PhdG*, p. 12.



'Verwandlung' thus reveals itself as a very appropriate word, as it not only captures the aspect of natural change (as it can be used as a synonym for metamorphosis),<sup>329</sup> but is also suggestive of the cyclical, continuous, movement,<sup>330</sup> in which what is to be thought is developed in *Geist*, and in which what is returned to is both beginning and end.<sup>331</sup> In returning to itself after having gained a full experience of itself, *Geist* has not only captured, and understood, the process of 'Vergegenständlichung' through which what is externalises itself in nature (and which is manifested in such processes as metamorphosis), but has also understood itself as the spiritual development of what was nature, an aspect that is suggested by 'Verwandlung', which, instead of 'Metamorphose', can also mean transsubstantiation. In religion, we saw that transsubstantiation was still taken literally, as the mystical force responsible for changing water into wine, whereas in 'das Absolute Wissen' it is grasped as what it is, as the return of spirit to itself, after having gone through its externalisations in nature. 'Verwandlung' is thus also suggestive of the movement through which one process changes into another, while being essentially the same, and hence shows itself to be an apt metaphor for the 'two-faced' process through which being and thinking develop, and are to be developed, into what they are.<sup>332</sup> 'Verwandlung', as metaphor, can thus also be taken as a metaphor for what a metaphor is and does, which is to mediate between concrete and abstract, between

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<sup>329</sup> See the lemma on 'verwandeln' in *Grimm*. On the beginning being also the end of thought, see chapter 1, esp. pp. 21-24.

<sup>330</sup> As its root is the Old High German 'wântalon' (related to 'to wander'), which can mean both to move backwards and forwards, and to turn (even to turn round its axis, cf. Du. 'wentelen'), and is therefore also suggestive of the cyclical movement Hegel wants to capture. See: the lemma on 'verwandeln' in *Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (nach Pfeifer), available through the *Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, <http://www.dwds.de>.

<sup>331</sup> The reason that Hegel uses 'im' rather than 'am' Ende obviously has to do with the fact that the movement of *Geist* is a circular rather than a temporal or linear one, but also draws our attention to the teleological structure of this movement, in which what thinking and being ultimately develop into (their end), is already – *an sich* – present in their beginning.

<sup>332</sup> And is thus also a suitable metaphor for the process taking place in language, in which 'das Innere' - as what is to be said, or as what I want to say - is developed as it subjects itself to 'das Allgemeine'. Cf. *PhdG*, p. 235: 'weil das Innere in Sprache und Handlung sich zu einem Anderen macht, so gibt es damit dem Elemente der Verwandlung preis, welches das gesprochene Wort

*Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, as the 'Verwandlung des Vorgestellten und Bekannten in den Gedanken.'<sup>333</sup>

### 4.3 Absolute knowing as thought thinking pure thought?

Yet, if thought has clarified itself in absolute knowing, does that imply that metaphor no longer serves a function, since all there is to know is now available as pure, conceptual thought? In this final section I will try to show that in 'das Absolute Wissen', even if in an important sense thought has completely purified itself, there still is an important role for metaphors to play. Firstly, in what way can thought be said to be purely conceptual? Ultimately, in absolute knowing, in which all the shapes in which being and *Geist* manifested and expressed itself are, and have been, taken up and 'digested', knowing is said to have gained 'das reine Element seines Daseins, den Begriff'.<sup>334</sup> Its content is the inner that now emerges both freely and necessarily from within its appearances, and through which the knowing subject is able to recognise itself completely in its object:

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und die vollbrachte Tat verkehrt und etwas anderes daraus macht, als sie an und für sich als Handlungen dieses bestimmten Individuums sind.' Cf. ch. 2, p. 40, n.105, and p. 62.

<sup>333</sup> The title given to one of the parts of the 'Vorrede' (see the Index of the *Phänomenologie*). Interestingly, as his remarks on metamorphosis in the *Enzyklopädie* suggest, Hegel distances himself from Goethe's ideas in developing his own conception of nature as a system of levels ('Stufen'): '[d]ie Natur ist als ein *System von Stufen* zu betrachten, deren eine aus den andern notwendig hervorgeht und die nächste Wahrheit derjenigen ist, aus welcher sie resultiert, aber nicht so, daß die eine aus der andern *natürlich* erzeugt würde, sondern in der inneren, den Grund der Natur ausmachenden Idee. Die *Metamorphose* kommt nur dem Begriff als solchem zu, da dessen Veränderung allein Entwicklung ist.' (*Enz. II*, § 249) Hegel's conception of metamorphosis thus seems much closer to 'Verwandlung' than to Goethe's definition of 'Metamorphose'. Cf. Wolfgang Bonsiepen, 'Hegels kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der zeitgenössische Evolutionstheorie' in *Hegels Philosophie der Natur: Beziehungen zwischen empirischer und spekulativer Naturerkenntnis*, hrsg. Rolf-Peter Horstmann und Michael John Petry (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), pp. 151-171.

<sup>334</sup> *PhdG*, p. 588.

[d]er Inhalt ist nach *der Freiheit* seines *Seins* das sich entäußernde Selbst oder die *unmittelbare* Einheit des Sichselbstwissens. Die reine Bewegung dieser Entäußerung macht, sie am Inhalte betrachtet, die *Notwendigkeit* desselben aus. Der verschiedene Inhalt ist als *bestimmter* im Verhältnisse, nicht an sich, und [ist] seine Unruhe, sich selbst aufzuheben, oder die *Negativität*; also ist die Notwendigkeit oder Verscheidenheit, wie das freie Sein, ebenso das Selbst; und in dieser selbstischen *Form*, worin das Dasein unmittelbar Gedanke ist, ist der Inhalt *Begriff*. Indem also der Geist den Begriff gewonnen; entfaltet er das Dasein und seine Bewegung in diesem Äther seines Lebens und ist *Wissenschaft*.<sup>335</sup>

In absolute knowing, Hegel claims, the self has permeated and subjectified all there is to know, and in doing so has also come to understand itself as the negativity (or the necessity or difference) through which its content can finally be grasped according to its pure form,<sup>336</sup> as the self, the subject of knowing, is now able to recognise itself as, and in, the form that has been produced from within the different shapes in which content presented itself throughout the process of differentiation. Its form, or shape, has been completely liberated from the shapes in which it originally appeared in consciousness: 'seine reine, von seiner Erscheinung im Bewußtsein befreite Gestalt, der reine Begriff und dessen Fortbewegung hängt allein an seiner Bestimmtheit'.<sup>337</sup> It is only as form, which as such is no longer dependent on any of its former appearances, but is only to be considered in the light of, or in relation to, its completed determination, that knowing is to be considered pure *Wissenschaft*, and as such has revealed itself as the 'unmittelbare

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<sup>335</sup> *PhdG*, pp. 588-589.

<sup>336</sup> In the Vorrede Hegel challenged us, through the personification of the *Widerspruch*, to come to an understanding of what we normally do in our coming to know, which is to deny what we take not to be true. In natural consciousness the *Widerspruch* was not yet fully understood, as it was taken to be a contradiction that was applied to the object of knowledge from the outside. In absolute knowing, negativity, through which the object has now been completely mastered, has itself been fully mastered, and revealed itself as a subject, a self, that completely and firmly belongs to knowing. Cf. pp. 52-53.

<sup>337</sup> *PhdG*, p. 589.

Gleichheit mit sich selbst',<sup>338</sup> through which knowing has now become transparent to itself, in the 'sich selbst klare und sehnsuchtslose Gebiet der Vernunft',<sup>339</sup> in which we can clearly distinguish and determine all the moments that are involved in knowing,<sup>340</sup> not as phenomenological shapes, but in their logical form. What has become clear is what *Vernunft* is, as 'selbstische Form', and it is these logical forms that can be considered without longing ('Sehnsucht'), as 'die gegenständliche Form der Wahrheit und des wissenden Selbsts' have been united 'in unmittelbarer Einheit'.<sup>341</sup> Thought is now able to think itself, as all that is to be known and thought has now been produced, in the pure form of what thought really is, and can be contemplated as such.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> *Glauben und Wissen*, p. 12.

<sup>340</sup> See *Enz. I*, § 164, in which Hegel explains that in absolute knowing all the moments of knowing have shown themselves to be what they are in relation to the other moments ('aus und mit den anderen'), and have revealed themselves to be both identical and different: the particular has proved to be that which is distinguished or determined, but in absolute knowing it is simultaneously an *Allgemeines*, a general concept in which all the individual *Meinungen* have been taken up, but also as a singular concept that can be understood in itself. This identity of identity and difference is what Hegel calls the '*gesetzte* Ungetrenntheit der Momente in ihrem Unterschiede - die Klarheit des Begriffes in welchem jeder Unterschied keine Unterbrechung, Trübung macht, sondern ebenso durchsichtig ist.'

<sup>341</sup> *PhdG*, p. 589.

<sup>342</sup> Absolute knowing in this sense is reminiscent of Aristotle's *théoria*, the thinking in which *nous* has become a fully realized actuality, and in which thinking is also said to think itself, and is thus the *noêsis noêseôs noêsis* of the *Metaphysics*: thinking as a thinking of thinking (1074b34), and it is this thinking which Aristotle, in referring to Anaxagoras' conception of *nous* in *de Anima*, calls the only thinking that is 'simple, unmixed and pure' (405a17), and which, when separated from all in which thought is enmattered, is 'alone just what it is, and this alone is immortal and eternal' (430a23-24). An important difference between Aristotle and Hegel is of course that for Aristotle human thought, in becoming in-formed by what is to be thought - through which its potentiality is actualized - , is essentially dependent on what is to be thought - the immanent forms -, whereas for Hegel subject and object mutually depend on each other, and through their interaction, in which both are active *and* passive, produce absolute thought. On Aristotle, cf. Charles Kahn: 'Noêsis is not an act which I perform, but an act which takes place in me.' See Charles Kahn, 'Aristotle on Thinking,' in Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), p. 375. On the reverberations of *de Anima* in Hegel's chapter on absolute knowing, see Allegra de Laurentiis, 'Absolute Knowing,' in Kenneth R. Westphal (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 246- 263. De Laurentiis interestingly points out that Hegel both 'borrows generously from Aristotle's analogy between pure intellect and light as actualization of a transparent medium' (p. 259), and the 'analogy [...] between knowing and feeding as kinds of assimilation' (p. 248), which in Hegel's use, as I tried to argue, turn out to be not just an analogy, but reveal themselves as metaphors that belong to 'die Sache selbst'.

<sup>342</sup> *PhdG*, p. 598.

Yet, as Hegel shows in the final pages of the *Phänomenologie*, the thinking of pure forms is only one aspect of absolute knowing: apart from logic, absolute *Geist* has not only gained insight into its 'reine Bewegungen', but also into its corresponding reality in which all the phenomenological shapes have been taken up: '[u]mgekehrt entspricht jedem abstrakten Momente der Wissenschaft eine Gestalt des erscheinenden Geistes überhaupt. [...] Die reinen Begriffe der Wissenschaft in dieser Form von Gestalten des Bewußtseins zu erkennen, macht die Seite ihrer Realität aus.'<sup>343</sup> The object of thought, as we saw earlier, is not only the 'unmittelbare Einheit des Sichselbstwissens', but also 'das entäußernde Selbst', its manifestations in space and time, in nature as immediate becoming and as history as 'das *wissende, sich vermittelnde* Werden - der an die Zeit entäußernde Geist'<sup>344</sup> It is in this knowing of itself that *Geist* can completely substantiate itself, and become an Absolute that is no longer a 'leere Tiefe', but 'die Offenbarung der Tiefe' as 'das Aufheben seiner Tiefe oder seine *Ausdehnung*'.<sup>345</sup> 'Das Absolute Wissen' is thus also shown to have a twofold character, in that it is both *Wissenschaft* of its logical organisation as self, and an active remembering of the all the *Erscheinungen* that presented itself during *Geist's* journey to self-knowledge: '[d]as Ziel, das absolute Wissen, oder der sich als Geist wissende Geist hat zu seinem Wege die Erinnerung der Geister, wie sie an ihnen selbst sind und die Organisation ihres Reichs vollbringen. Ihre Aufbewahrung nach der Seite ihres freien, in der Form der Zufälligkeit erscheinenden Daseins ist die Geschichte, nach der Seite ihre begriffenen Organisation aber die *Wissenschaft des erscheinenden Wissens*.'<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> *PhdG*, p. 590.

<sup>345</sup> *PhdG*, p. 591.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

In this other aspect of absolute knowing, the 'Werden' of *Geist* as the process in which *Geist* comes to an understanding of itself through the incorporation of its externalisations in history, metaphors can and do still have a function, as we can see in these final pages: 'dies Werden stellt eine träge Bewegung und Aufeinanderfolge von Geistern dar, eine Galerie von Bildern, deren jedes, mit dem vollständigen Reichtume des Geistes ausgestattet, eben darum sich so träge bewegt, weil das Selbst diesen ganzen Reichtum seiner Substanz zu durchdringen und zu verdauen hat.'<sup>347</sup> *Geist* has, in its role as self, to acquaint itself with all its manifestations (in order to come to a full understanding of itself), and this becoming acquainted is again presented as a two-faced process, both as an active penetrating ('durchdringen', through which *Geist* is mediated, and is subjected to itself), and as a passive digesting ('verdauen') of these manifestations, through which they become fully understood. Hegel here uses the same metaphor as in the chapter on religion, although in this case what is digested are not natural processes but spiritual ones. What the metaphor of 'verdauen' emphasises in this passage, like 'Verwandlung' in the previous one, is not only the aspect of change (from substance as object to subjected substance),<sup>348</sup> but also the cyclic nature of the process,<sup>349</sup> and the aspect of movement, the 'sich in sich zurücknehmende Bewegung', which, as we saw earlier, is what *Erkennen* essentially is. Even if, in 'absolute knowing', *Geist* has come to an understanding of itself and the nature of knowing and has, in its return to itself, become identical to itself, this

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<sup>347</sup> *PhdG*, p. 590.

<sup>348</sup> Interestingly, the substance that is digested is said to be both 'eine träge Bewegung und Aufeinanderfolge von Geistern' and 'eine Galerie von Bildern'. The latter image emphasizes again that the process is one in which a *Vorstellung* (even though it is a *Vorstellung* of spirits) is turned into *Begriff*, whereas the 'träge Bewegung' suggests that *Geist* is slowed down by the heavy mass (the 'ganze Reichtum') of its substance.

<sup>349</sup> As Hegel explains in the *Enzyklopädie*, the process of digestion is a circular one, in which blood (re)produces itself: 'Der Chylus (lymphatic fluid produced in the small intestine during the process of digestion, AG), dies Product des Bluts, kehrt ins Blut zurück; es hat sich selbst erzeugt. Dies ist der große innere Kreislauf der Individualität, dessen Mitte das Blut selbst ist; denn es ist das individuelle Leben selbst.' See: *Enz. II*, §354, Zusatz, p. 449. On Hegel and contemporary biology, see also Dietrich von Engelhardt, 'Die biologischen Wissenschaften in Hegels Naturphilosophie'. Cf. also Michael John Petry (ed.), *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, Vol. III (London/ New York: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp. 337-338.

identity is to be thought of as one in which *Geist* is still active, is knowing what it knows, and in doing so is also moved by what is moving, even if it is a 'träge Bewegung'. As the identity achieved in the Absolute is an identity of identity and non-identity, there still is difference between knowing subject and thought as substance. In order to make us aware that knowing is movement through which identity is established, but which simultaneously entails difference (through which the 'sich selbst klare Vernunft' does not achieve complete transparency, since in that case it would not be aware of anything, as there would be nothing to see), it seems that the language in which thought is presented somehow needs to incorporate this movement, through which the reader is challenged to become part of 'das wirkliche Erkennen'.

Metaphor, in its being an 'Unterbrechung des Vorstellungsganges' can achieve this: '[a]ls Sinn und Zweck der metaphorischen Diktion überhaupt ist deshalb [...] das Bedürfnis und die Macht des Geistes und Gemüts anzusehen, die sich nicht mit dem Einfachen, Gewohnten, Schlichten befriedigen, sondern sich darüberzustellen, um zu Anderen fortzugehen, bei Verschiedenem zu verweilen und Zwiefaches in eins zu fügen.'<sup>350</sup>

Metaphors move ('berühren') us into thought,<sup>351</sup> but will only really tell us something about the substance of our thought if they reveal themselves as belonging to 'die Sache selbst', which is precisely what organic metaphor achieves, in its showing us that thinking is a never-ending 'Kreislauf', which continuously produces itself in taking in what it is presented with.

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<sup>350</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, pp. 520-521.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 522: 'ein [...] Grund für das Metaphorische liegt darin, daß der Geist, wenn ihn seine innere Bewegung in die Anschauung verwandter Gegenstände vertieft, sich zugleich von der Äußerlichkeit derselben befreien will.'

The function of metaphor, apart from its effecting an 'Unterbrechung des Vorstellungsganges', is to mediate: between the 'zwei Ansichten' of the process, between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, and between what is concrete 'Sein für Anderes' and the concept that is produced from within these manifestations, and which, in its becoming understood is also made concrete.<sup>352</sup> In subjectifying substance, thinking *Geist* is informed by what it initially finds itself opposed to, the concrete manifestations of being, and in doing so, in developing what is to be thought, in the idealisation of what was nature, *Geist* comes to recognise itself in nature, which for Hegel, as we saw above,<sup>353</sup> is the 'Gegenbild' of *Geist*, its mirror image. Through contemplation of processes such as 'verdauen' and 'verzehren', *Geist* comes to see the 'Bild des Allgemeinen',<sup>354</sup> the concept as it manifests itself in these processes, and in doing so is able to abstract the 'Innere des Inneren' from its concrete manifestations. In coming to an understanding of itself *Geist* follows an inverse path - or rather the same path, but from a different perspective (*Ansicht*), through which it returns to itself:<sup>355</sup> from purely abstract essence it becomes more and more concrete as it acts upon and takes in, 'digests', its substance, and changes its *Vorstellungen* into *Begriffe*, through which it also gets an image, a 'Bild', of itself, and the process in which it is involved, for which words such as 'verdauen' and 'Gärung' are used metaphorically. Metaphors, in their role as mediators, thus alert us to see the abstract in the concrete, to proceed beyond our initial *Vorstellungen*, and help us to make concrete, and to gain insight into what was initially pure and abstract.<sup>356</sup> In their uniting what is different, but which is ultimately, but not yet, understood to be the same ('oder, was

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<sup>352</sup> As what exists is necessarily concrete. See p. 110, n. 313. Cf. also *Enz. I*, § 164, in which *Begriff* as the substance that has been completely subjectified in *Geist* is said to be absolutely concrete: it has become identical to itself - through negation of its otherness - and knows of this identity.

<sup>353</sup> See p. 99.

<sup>354</sup> See p. 97.

<sup>355</sup> Hegel again and again stresses that this process is a circular movement, through which being necessarily returns to itself. Cf. a.o. *PhdG*, p. 23.

<sup>356</sup> Cf. Ziche (2005), who argues that metaphors in philosophy not only act as concrete illustrations for abstract concepts, but can also act the other way around, in that metaphors, precisely because their concreteness is initially perceived as a 'Kontextstörung' also achieve an



dasselbe ist'), metaphors force *Geist* to take upon itself the 'mitten inne liegende Tun' through which the Absolute can be grasped as the identity of identity and non-identity.

Metaphors thus reveal themselves as 'Momente des Begriffes' through which the concept becomes concrete, and as we saw earlier, this concreteness can only be achieved if these moments are allowed to interact: '[d]ie Momente des Begriffs können insofern (if they are considered as producing a concrete concept, not in their role as 'Reflexionsbestimmungen', in which it is only their formal character which is of interest, AG) nicht abgesondert werden; [...] indem im *Begriff* ihre *Identität* gesetzt ist, kann jedes seiner Momente unmittelbar nur aus und mit den anderen gefaßt werden.'<sup>357</sup> This is what Hegel's use of clusters of metaphors, in which metaphors mutually inform each other (as in the case of 'verdauen' and 'Verwandlung'), but also show themselves to resist neat categorisation in that most of them partake of several, often very diverse clusters,<sup>358</sup> makes us aware of: only if we allow the individual - both the individual object of thought, but also ourselves as individual thinkers - to interact with, and to be informed by, its context,<sup>359</sup> can we come to real understanding.

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'Abstraktion durch indirekte Veranschaulichung' (p. 404). Metaphors thus serve a dual purpose: [d]ie Funktion von Metaphern in philosophischen Kontexten steht ganz offensichtlich zwischen strikter Logik und Anschaulichkeit. Sie haben Anteil an beidem und können deshalb zwischen beiden vermitteln. Umgekehrt formuliert: Um zwischen strikt abstrakter Begrifflichkeit und Anschaulichkeit vermitteln zu können, erhalten sie Anteil an beiden. [...] So verstanden, gehören Metaphern zum Prozess der begrifflichen Durchdringung eines Gegenstandes.' (p. 406).

<sup>357</sup> *Enz.* I, § 164.

<sup>358</sup> As was shown in the discussion of the examples of 'ausmachen' and 'Ausführung', but which applies to several other important metaphors. Both 'Kreis' and 'Verwandlung' (which can also mean 'scene change'), for instance, are part of the cluster of theatre metaphors (see n. 113), which cluster also alerts us to the fact that our *Vorstellungen* are representations of the truth, and should be critically reflected on, but also to the fact that our *Vorstellungen* should be taken as one continuous *Vorstellung*, a complete 'Ausführung' if it really is to produce the truth.

<sup>359</sup> Which, again, is something we can learn from considering the organic, and shows why the organic is an apt metaphor for thought. Cf. Vittorio Hösle, 'Pflanze und Tier,' in Michael John Petry (hrsg) *Hegel und die Naturwissenschaften* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1987), pp. 392-393: '[d]ie *innere* Strukturierung eines Organismus, mit dem Hegelschen Terminus: die Gestalt, ist also durch die *Außen*relation zu *anderen* Organismen ebenso bedingt, wie sie auf letztere eine bedingende Wirkung ausübt.'

## Conclusion

*'Lees maar, er staat niet wat er staat'*

Martinus Nijhoff, 'Awater'

This sentence from the poem 'Awater' by Martinus Nijhoff, my favourite Dutch poet, for me encapsulates much of what I have tried to show and argue for in this thesis with regard to Hegel's philosophy and his use of metaphor. True philosophy, as we saw in chapter one, can only come about if, on embarking on the enterprise of knowing, we feel, or are made aware of, a 'Bedürfnis' in what we accept as 'bekannt', to feel wonder about what we are confronted with, and thus are challenged to move on to an 'Erkennen', through actively involving ourselves with what we are used to accepting as 'given', whether the given is the 'facts' presented to us by empiricism, an Absolute that can only be intuited, or the book in front of me. Through critical reflection on this 'given' (which, as Hegel showed in the *Phänomenologie*, is simultaneously a reflection on ourselves as knowers), we become aware of its inadequacy, and of the inadequacy of our knowing, to reveal anything about 'die Sache selbst': the truth of what we know, but also of how we know. This becoming aware of what truth is not proves to be very fruitful, since this negativity reveals itself as the motor behind the process through which true philosophy, 'das wirkliche Erkennen', is developed: the dialectical movement, through which the 'given' we start with is allowed to enfold itself. An important implication of starting out by saying what something is not is that the truth of what we were given can only be reached in the end, after having gone through all the negations of the shapes in which both object and our knowing of the object presented themselves. The truth cannot be presented as a result, however, since that would imply that we would again be

confronted with a 'given', but, as Hegel argues in the *Vorrede*, and tried to show in his presentation, should be shown in its totality, 'zusammen mit seinem Werden'.

The presentation of philosophy, which was discussed in chapter two, should be such that this 'Werden' is incorporated in the language in which the text is presented, through which the reader is challenged to make the text his or her own, and in developing the text's potential through critically engaging with it, to become part of what philosophy truly is. Sentences, phrases, and even individual words, should not leave 'the Sache' or the reader as it is, but should provoke movement, and should force us to interact with the text, by making us feel that we cannot simply accept what we are told, and are to question what we are given. Sentence structures such as parataxis, awkward syntax, rhetorical devices such as *prolepsis* and personification all are used with great effect in drawing us into the text, and make us aware that as soon as we try to determine what is said, as soon as we try to 'fix' a particular meaning, we cannot do so, and are made to consider what is said from other perspectives. Initially, we are left in the dark as to the meaning of phrases such as 'Element des Wissens' or 'das allgemeine Blut', of individual words such as 'Fürsichsein' or 'Sichselbstgleichheit', and become aware that only if we read on ('lees maar'), and then return to these words and phrases, and consider them in the context of the whole that we are able to come to an understanding, both of the whole - that is produced through the interaction of all individual parts - and of individual words and phrases. In reading Hegel, in being forced to read on and then return to what we read, we also become aware that words that initially appeared familiar, such as *Begriff*, *Leben* or *Vorstellung*, words we thought we could accept as 'given' and self-evident ('er staat wat er staat'), as we assumed them to belong to standard (philosophical) vocabulary, become unstable, and that we also have to reconsider and develop their meaning. That we have to reconsider and return to words and sentences implies in an

important sense that our progress in making the text our own is often halted, and that we sometimes find ourselves forced to remain with what is said, in order to develop our dialogue with the text, and to have questions raise themselves. In doing so we become aware that, in being made to stand still, we are moved into thought,<sup>360</sup> and have to readjust our perspective.

Speculative thought is only possible when thinking *Geist* becomes aware of the need to distinguish what initially appeared to be pure and simple, but from which nothing could be developed. Yet, before truth can be grasped in its totality, in its *Begriff*, what is is determined through our *Vorstellungen* of what truly is. In our becoming aware of our *Vorstellungen* being what they are, i.e representations of the truth rather than truth itself, we are made to feel the need to critically reflect on our representations, in order to produce truth as the totality in which all individual, separate *Vorstellungen* have been made to interact in order to produce one, concrete, concept. The function of metaphor, as discussed in chapter three, is - through presenting an object by means of an unexpected *Vorstellung* ('man is a wolf', 'the concept is life') which initially appears not to belong to what is represented - to produce an awareness that what appears to us is not what it seems to be ('er staat niet wat er staat'), and that we should not unreflectingly take *Vorstellungen* for granted. The metaphorical can thus be explained as the becoming aware of *Geist* of the need to liberate outward appearances from their being mere appearances, in order to reveal the truth that they contain, as Hegel stated in the

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<sup>360</sup> Cf. Adorno: 'Ehre tut Hegel erst den Leser an, der nicht bloß [...] fraglose Schwäche ihm ankreidet, sondern noch in ihr den Impuls wahrnimmt; versteht, warum dies oder jenes unverständlich sein muß, und dadurch es selber versteht. Vom Leser erwartet Hegel ein Doppeltes, das dem dialektischen Wesen nicht schlecht anstünde. Er soll mitgleiten, vom Fluß sich tragen lassen, das Momentane nicht zum Verweilen nötigen. Sonst veränderte er es trotz größter Treue und durch sie. Andererseits jedoch ist ein intellektuelles Zeitlupenverfahren auszubilden, das Tempo bei den wolkigen Stellen so zu verlangsamen, daß diese nicht verdampfen, sondern als Bewegte sich ins Auge fassen lassen.' (pp. 354-355)

*Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*: 'ein [...] Grund für das Metaphorische liegt darin, daß der Geist, wenn ihn seine innere Bewegung in die Anschauung verwandter Gegenstände vertieft, sich zugleich von der Äußerlichkeit derselben befreien will.<sup>361</sup> Metaphor urges us to be active, and to connect what is to be connected: '[e]s zeigt sich, daß hinter dem sogenannten Vorhange, welcher das Innere verdecken soll, nichts zu sehen ist, wenn *wir* nicht selbst dahintergehen.'<sup>362</sup>

For Hegel, knowing and thinking is very much a 'joint venture' in which all individual efforts are taken up in one 'Allgemeines' to which all our individual 'Meinungen' contribute (and through which they are simultaneously revealed as being a 'Meinung', something that is mine only), and in which 'wir' can come to recognise ourselves as a unity to which we belong. The concept becomes concrete in being this 'Allgemeinheit', which has been produced through the interaction of all individual determinations. As soon as the concept has become a concrete totality, we are also able to see that, in their being moments of the truth, all individual shapes and representations are identical to each other. 'Oder, was dasselbe ist': in the process through which we come to know, (re)presentations of an object are ultimately understood as both identical to, and different from, each other and the truth. The 'sogenannten Vorhang' both obscures and reveals the truth,<sup>363</sup> as the inner is produced from within its outward manifestations, and does not prove to be an unattainable 'Jenseits' we will never come to know. So, in an important sense, 'er staat niet wat er staat' is not true of Hegel's philosophy and presentation, since, as soon as we are able to return to what we have been presented with, on the basis of an understanding of the whole, we see that all individual

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<sup>361</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I*, p. 522.

<sup>362</sup> *PhdG*, p. 135.

<sup>363</sup> The 'Vorhang' could thus be seen as a metaphor for metaphor.

manifestations have also revealed themselves as manifestations of the truth, and that all parts have been equally important in producing the whole.

Metaphor, like other rhetorical devices used by Hegel, thus appears to be a means to shock us into thinking critically about what is in front of us, but ultimately, if the process it has helped instigate has produced a totality, also reveals itself as belonging to 'der Sache selbst', as was shown in the case of organic metaphors such as 'verdauen' and 'Gärung'. These metaphors, especially in their interaction - and through their interaction with other clusters of metaphors - give us insight in the cyclic, continuous, nature of the process of *Selbstdarstellung* - a process which, like Hegel's metaphors, resists neat and rigid categorisation - in which being externalises itself and reveals itself as what it is, and through the explication of which in thought, thinking *Geist* also comes to an understanding of itself.

The process of clarification metaphors, in their many roles, have contributed to does not lead to a knowing in which truth is only 'simple, unmixed, and pure' - as this is purely the domain of logic in its being concerned with its 'Reflexionsbestimmungen' - but reveals 'das Absolute Wissen', like all the previous manifestations of *die Sache selbst*, as a *Wissen* whose manifold aspects can only fully be revealed in language that is multidimensional itself. The last pages of the *Phänomenologie* are extremely dense and rich in meaning, and continuously Hegel makes use of devices such as personification, *parataxis* (oder ...) and metaphor to draw us into the text and challenge us to bring about all the different aspects that absolute knowing entails, through an active *Verwandlung* of that which presents itself, and by subsequently uniting the different perspectives of the absolute truth. All contributions taken together form ('bilden'<sup>364</sup>) 'die Erinnerung und die

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<sup>364</sup> A case in point, as it means 'to form', to 'build', but also 'to depict' or 'to give an image of', and it is through this formation, which is effected through the mutual interaction of both 'sides'

Schädelstätte des absoluten Geistes, die Wirklichkeit, Wahrheit und Gewißheit seines Throns, ohne den er das leblose Einsame wäre':<sup>365</sup> only through active remembrance of all the particular appearances, shapes and *Meinungen*, in which what is merely individual is destroyed, but is reborn in *Geist*, does the Absolute reveal itself as a living 'Allgemeines', and no longer a 'leblose Einsame' in which we can recognise ourselves because our contribution is, and has been, required in bringing it about. In order to bring philosophy to life, it can only be presented in language through which we are challenged to destroy the merely particular - individual phrases and images - in order to produce a totality to which these particulars are then shown to belong (which is simultaneously a continuous readjustment of our interpretation, in which all its 'shapes' are *aufgehoben*), and to embark on an activity that, as words and thoughts continue to interact within the totality, can give us infinite pleasure and reward, and in which we can always continue to read ('lees maar ...'): 'aus dem Kelche dieses Geisterreiches schäumt ihm seine Unendlichkeit.'<sup>366</sup>

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of knowing that the 'Bild des Absoluten' is now there before us, to which the complete 'Galerie von Bildern' has contributed.

<sup>365</sup> *PhdG*, p. 591.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* Of course there is much more to be said about these last lines, about the word 'Schädelstätte', for instance, which of course refers to Golgotha, but which also refers back to Hegel's remarks on phrenology in the chapter on observing reason, or about the 'Kelch', which not only means drinking goblet (and in the context of this page thus proves to be a further reference to the Last Supper) but also the calyx of a flower, through which it becomes linked to the cluster of plant and flower metaphors that Hegel so abundantly makes use of, and with which he sets out in the *Vorrede*, and we can go on and on, as new connections can continuously be brought to light, but this is precisely the point: in the presentation of philosophy that is to reveal itself as absolute knowing all these possible interpretations are already contained in the text, but are, like *die Sache selbst* that first presented itself to us, still *an sich*, and can only be revealed through the active interaction with the text.

## Afterword

After studying philosophy for eight years, English for seven years, and having read books since I was five, I must admit that 'lees maar, er staat niet wat er staat' can definitely be applied to me as a reader. I am a terribly slow, inefficient and erratic reader, and probably could have finished this thesis in half the time I spent on it, had it not been for my wandering reading habits. Trying to concentrate on what it was that Hegel was saying, I very often found myself staring out of the window, thinking about Johan Cruyff's famous dictum 'je ziet het pas als je het door hebt', but also about stories such as Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno'. In this story, the protagonist, captain Amasa Delano, who takes the world to be what he thinks it is, and who fails to pick up all the hints, suggestions and symbols he is presented with, is revealed not the only one to be deluded by his perceptions, but the reader - to his or her shock - is forced to admit to having fallen victim to prejudice and preconceptions as well, and not to have picked up Melville's subtle hints. On the first page of the story, there is this paragraph, and I often was reminded, not only of the story, but especially of this paragraph while reading Hegel, and I would like to quote it, also because I think it is one of the most beautiful paragraphs ever written in the English language:

The morning was one peculiar to that coast. Everything was mute and calm; everything gray. The sea, though undulated into long roods of swells, seemed fixed, and was sleeked at the surface like waved lead that has cooled and set in the smelter's mould. The sky seemed a gray surtout. Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters, as swallows over meadows before storms. Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come.



Amasa Delano fails to see the movement, fails to see the world as it is, fails to see that things are troubled, like the fowl, and thus fails to see what is to come.

I hope that, while trying to concentrate on Hegel's texts, I have been able to pick up at least a number of the hints and suggestions he offers the reader, but, at any rate, reading Hegel has proved an extremely challenging, often frustrating, increasingly rewarding and often inspiring experience, and I am sure that I will return to his work, as I will to Melville's, again and again.

I consider myself fortunate that, in the course of my philosophy studies, I attended many lectures in which reading philosophical texts proved to be a joyful experience, and I am glad that Piet Steenbakkers, Teun Tieleman, Jan van Ophuijsen, Ernst-Otto Onnasch and Paul Ziche were my teachers, even though - or perhaps even because of the fact that they taught the art of reading philosophy in very different ways.

I would like to thank Ernst-Otto Onnasch for the inspiring and encouraging conversations we had on Hegel, in which he always challenged me to take up a different perspective, and to be more daring in my approach to what philosophy has to offer. And above all, many thanks to Paul Ziche, whose extremely helpful, intelligent and kind advice helped me to structure what often was still a 'Bacchantische Taumel' in my head, and who proved to be the best supervisor I could have wished for.

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