

# **The Phenomenology of Mind Study Guide**

**The Phenomenology of Mind by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**

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# Plot Summary

This is one of the greatest works of modern philosophy known in the Western or Occidental tradition of mankind. The author is a German. Gottfried Wilhelm Hegel is touted as one of the most brilliant minds of his time. His reputation was effectively established during his lifetime. The extent to which this has occurred during the history of philosophy is not entirely clear. Some became famous while living, others posthumously and in other cases, such as Nietzsche, there is a myth that he only became famous after his death, but he was well known during his lifetime as a great thinker. Hegel lived his life in Germany. He did have one child out of wedlock, but was respectful and responsible towards both the mother and his son. He did also marry and have children with another woman.

The Philosophy of Mind came out when Hegel was in his late 30s. He put it together with a publishing deal rather than writing the whole thing while hoping for a publisher. There was great drama in how this came about. This was intended to be part of an embracing beginning rather than the completion of his philosophical treatises.

The greatest qualities of Hegel's philosophy is that it is all encompassing. It is also gloriously well organized. Of course, like everything, once a reader is really immersed in it, he or she will notice gaps in his theory. In the Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel begins by introducing a discussion of consciousness itself. Then he proceeds through subjective awareness and into objectivity. He then takes these individual ideas and puts them into a cultural and societal framework. He leads these into ethics and morality and then works with the more spiritual aspect of the mind. The book ends with the crescendo of philosophy, "Godmind" for short; the Absolute and Absolute Knowledge in Hegelian terms. This is one of the classical contributions to humanity within the field of philosophy after 1500AD and from the European perspective.

There is gender related information within the book. In this treatise it reflects the German norm of Hegel's era and the historical tradition of women's domestic roles and how these relate with, set the stage for, are exempt from, and submit to the public laws that govern communities and societies as a whole.



# Consciousness: Sense Certainty: This, and Meaning

## Consciousness: Sense Certainty: This, and Meaning Summary and Analysis

This includes the following: The Prefatory Note, the Translator's Introduction, the Preface, the Introduction and the first chapter, which is the sensory 'root' of consciousness. The translator performs the function of a professor by providing background information about Hegel and about how this particular book came into being. This includes a defense of philosophy on the whole. It also gives a generalized account of how Hegel approaches philosophy in relation to science and to religion. During the Preface and Introduction, Hegel works to situate this work within the greater context of knowledge over all and then, more into focus, within philosophy itself. What is remarkable and enjoyable is that Hegel puts the Phenomenology in relation to the history of 'Western' philosophy and also locates it 'laterally' within the scope of its field.

Hegel devotes considerable energy in the Preface and Introduction to the defense of science. While this may seem odd to the contemporary reader, bear in mind that he wrote the book just about 200 years ago. He defended what has become one of the most powerful governing forces in society today at a time when it was far more vulnerable to attacks for different reasons.

He also devotes some pages to defending the value of philosophy, which, like intellectualism has come under attack in our day and culture as well as having been 'under fire' by many during his era. Part of his defense is to show how science could not ever have been born were it not for the intimate relationship it had with philosophy. A great deal of it has to do with mental training. In Hegel's time, it was not that philosophy mimicked the methods of science, but that science had learned from philosophy the main elements of its process. Then, later, as it grew into its own systems and methods, its 'partner' philosophy also grew.

A main purpose of Hegel's entire treatise, is to show and to cultivate the scientific mind from what he calls 'the natural consciousness'. Here he does not mean the scientific method and course work now familiar to most, but the difference in how the mind works to understand based upon knowledge rather than sense perception.



# Perception, Thing and Deceptiveness

## Perception, Thing and Deceptiveness Summary and Analysis

Here Hegel introduces some basic important concepts. He is preparing readers to be able to address the development of the scientific consciousness from the natural one. To do so, he must address certain aspects of consciousness itself. The title of this portion clearly indicates how he intends to do this. He provides a discussion of perception and how appearances relate to the actual nature of reality and life. He also communicates about how these appearances are deceptive.

The prose in this is quite complex. Perception is the starting point. Consciousness rests upon perception. This includes the difficulty that in order to proceed with cultivating the mind for truth we have to recognize how perception is conducive to knowledge and how it at the same time is deceptive. This requires 'understanding'. Hegel ends up providing a definition of 'understanding' within this context. He describes it as a necessary attitude of consciousness towards any given object that transcends the purely physical qualities. Perhaps it is wise, given the change in temporal & cultural context to realize that this also involves having a different attitude with respect to the physical qualities themselves: ergo, the view through a microscope is very different and yields truth similar to ordinary perception but somehow the reality includes both the 'naked eye' perceptions and the microscopic perspective and more. From his time frame and ours then, there is value in direct perception, but to arrive at the truth also requires the recognition that something is lacking or that there is much truth that is being 'missed'.

In order to make the transition between raw perception and scientific understanding, Hegel communicates about the notion of 'thing'. At first, it is nothing but the self-evident. In this, we have the recognition of direct sensory consciousness. However, in order to find the truth, we have to open our minds to the possibility of there being something more and different to any given 'thing'. Here Hegel indicates another aspect of how we are going to do this. This too requires conceptualization. Now we must combine utilizing our sensory abilities with the ability to doubt and to question: to inquire further into matters in an effort to arrive at the truth. Hegel introduces the importance of determinateness here. The presence of specific qualities that define and distinguish one thing from another is crucial to definition and realization of the truth. Only by doubting that which we perceive can we have any hope of finding truth that is other than what appears. However, if we completely distrust our perceptions then to derive the truth from what we perceive quickly becomes hopeless.

Therefore, when consciousness seeks truth it must make extensive observations of any thing which incorporates both these positions of trust in perception and justified suspicions of these same perceptions. Hegel's terminology for how this operates: universality- how one thing reveals truths found in every example of a thing of a



particular kind, and determinateness- the qualities of a thing that make it unique and also those that make it definable as being of a precise kind.

Finally, for this manner of thinking, Hegel points out that one must use a sense of 'opposite' and that abstraction is a power that is needed but that must be willing to flow back and forth from how it exists within objects and entities and systems, to the more empty condition of their mental appearances as pure abstract concepts. Effectively, Hegel says that while abstractions are rather empty nothing without the ways they exist within the world, it is still significant to recognize them in and of themselves as 'pure abstract principles'. One of the strangest necessary functions of the human mind in its progression towards the scientific consciousness is the willingness to defy 'common sense' even whilst recognizing the value of that common sense for

working in the world on a social level. What this is, Hegel explains, is the recognition of the unintentional and intentional deceptive aspect to perception. It can, he claims, even go so far as to permit the coexistence of logical contradictions within the actual world as we experience it.



# Force and Understanding; Appearance

## Force and Understanding; Appearance Summary and Analysis

First, Hegel sets forth some definition of force, which he views in more than one way. He explains that 'force' is a relational process and an understanding. He informs readers that force involves both an understanding of unity and of difference. It is easy to read Hegel as referring to human interaction but one might expect that he would be as much referring to the work of physicists amongst whom 'force' is also an incredibly important concept. Here Hegel states that when there is understanding, there is a unity of differences and that there is a systematic sense of the relationship of those differences and how they form into the unity. Behaviorally, one could describe this as what is in operation when a parent hits a child in contrast to those occasions when the same or another parent provides an explanation and a nonviolent approach. In both cases there is a need for increased understanding. The delivery is not the same. Obviously this basic principle according to Hegel also holds amongst grown men and to some extent is what is happening even in the case of wars. Force is often some attempt to transport understanding from one entity to another. When understanding is transformed by force which does not have to be violent most of the time previously existing differences have altered what emerges into a new unity that includes aspects of differences that had likely not been taking into account during the previous unity.

There is an ascension of 'force' in relation to action, difference and understanding. Force is a vital and natural component of 'life's energies'. It tends to involve the transformations of the understanding by how differences interact. This is true conceptually, socially, and very probably chemically. Force is deeply involved on the mental level because of the role of the understanding in human relations as interpersonal activity and also with respect to people's large scale systems of human understanding such as science, logic, religion and strategy. Hegel reports that the understanding begins to function as what he calls a 'realm of laws'.

When people perceive in terms of these 'laws' as what previous philosophers called 'noumena' and treat them as separate from events and things in themselves 'phenomena' this is one step in 'knowledge' and it is a peak in how Hegel means the word Understanding. He means this as a technical philosophical term based upon the work of his predecessors in the same field. Only after this, when the human sees that some new way of living and thinking in the world that works these 'thought perceptions' with 'external thing' perceptions will a new form emerge. Hegel slams those who came before him in philosophy by terming the new unity: self-consciousness. Outside of the field, it would not be so controversial but within theology and philosophy he has pretty much just told them, "Those brilliant men of the previous centuries were not even self-conscious in their epistemological approach." Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge, theories and structures of knowing.





Hegel refers to more than one aspect of force. There is force expressed and force withdrawn. There is force 'thrown back in upon itself'. He goes into each of these in a little more detail.

One important feature of the discussion of force as relational is that Hegel asserts that percipient and that which is perceived are equally a part of the whole in any event involving force. These two are interrelated. What he says is going on when there are events of force is that transformations occur. Contradictory elements objects or perceptions are altered and united. When this occurs, one or more new objective form or forms is or are created as an effect of the movement of force. It is well worth noting that while rather abstract in this portion of his presentation, Hegel is referring to biological and sociological occurrences of force and forces.

Two more forms of force, are 'attractive force' and 'inciting force'. Sociologically this is quite easy to understand. These function quite well in the realm of science but also show up explicitly within society especially when readers keep in mind that Hegel wrote this book during a period of war in Europe that reached the very town he was living in when he sent the final section to the publisher. Attractive force later became easily known and understood through chemistry. Electromagnetic attractions are what facilitate the formation and reformation of chemical compounds. Inciting forces are better comprehended sociologically: political and religious strife typically include some action, often in the form of an expressed idea that incites some kind of response or reaction from others either individually or on larger scales. In terms of chemistry or the biological life in general, the inciting force can also be recognized as being when the warmth of the Sun or the presence of water in the soil stimulates, "incites", the onset of more vigorous growth in plants.

Hegel concludes this portion of the work with a few more terms. He has introduced the idea of 'law', and of 'emptiness', along with having 'universals'.

Mediation, he reiterates, is the vital activity of consciousness relating concepts and abstract principles to facts and objects of perception then back again, when consciousness and perception and therefore the world is changed by the process itself.



# The Truth Which Conscious Certainty of Self Realizes

## The Truth Which Conscious Certainty of Self Realizes Summary and Analysis

Here, Hegel proceeds to trace cornerstones of consciousness. Obviously, the reason for doing so is to assess how we are able to decipher the truth as humans. In order to progress into scientific knowledge and understanding it is necessary to 'begin at the beginning' as the saying goes. The beginning of this entire undertaking is consciousness and self-consciousness. One of the most challenging features of the project that Hegel has undertaken in writing this book is that it is necessary to be thorough which can make the going slower and the results far superior.

The author has organized the book well so that readers are moving along in an orderly manner. Such a vast subject makes it all too easy to do otherwise, but disorder in the mental movement through this can readily ruin the value of the process and make the results nearly nothing.

Consciousness, Hegel explains, is relational. This means that although we can and need to perceive consciousness and object (and subject) separately, the unity of the two is actual rather than merely formal or linguistic.

He begins to show how this works by basing his analysis on biological reality. As such, his first explorations of self-certainty rely upon an examination of consciousness as it occurs in life. He does not dismiss plant life, but pays very little attention to it. Animal life and consciousness are more complex.

Ego in this context is a healthy necessary 'essential functional component' of consciousness and self-identity. Desire, Hegel informs readers, is integral to life. Impulses, instincts, desires are all part and parcel of consciousness but in and of themselves these and the emotions are 'animal consciousness'. These exist within humans in their own form, but in and of themselves although consciousness are not the same as clear sentience. Self-certainty has a relationship to whatever is or are the objects of its perceptions and to itself. It is the relational nature of consciousness that can create an actual feeling of or the anxiety suffered as 'feeling as if I/he/she do not or does not exist' whenever a conscious individual is subjected to isolation.



# Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness

## Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness Summary and Analysis

This chapter has multiple sections as Hegel leads readers through what is intended to be a developmental progression. The first section of this is 'Lordship and Bondage'. The label may be misleading. Lordship and bondage are partially about dominance and submission. However, in the case of consciousness this also has a great deal to do with self-certainty which Hegel began to describe to us in the preceding chapter.

Hegel explains that each part of the lordship and bondage relationship seeks self-certainty of consciousness. The servant or bondage part has for its self certainty the relation to object. When the servant is fulfilled by his or her work, and when the relationship to the lord/ship is right then the 'bondage' position is not bad and results in this self-certainty where the servant's will is directed by the lord's but the results of the work actually done is fulfilling. The lordship position involves self-certainty through the submission and subservience of others who act out the will of the lord. In modern terms this is running a company and being a boss or being an employee and working for others. Ultimately, even the boss only succeeds through understanding that he or she is working for others whilst employees gain their success by doing work for a boss, because he or she likes 'the boss' and/or because he or she likes the work and/or the pay.

However, Hegel explains that the lord discovers that the type of self-certainty desired by this relation to the bondsman is not fulfilling because of some kind of 'self contained counter effect' that it has. Once this is understood, the lord makes the discovery that certain aspects of the bondsman's position are required in order to experience the proper and better type of self-certainty.

In this chapter Hegel also discusses life & death struggles and how they are in relation to self-certainty of consciousness. He points out that when one life triumphs over another by killing the other, there is a unique sense in which self-certainty is achieved: this shows the individual consciousness to exist entirely independently of the victim's. However, Hegel also writes that there is something about even this that ultimately leads to the killer suffering from some kind of dissatisfaction with respect to self-consciousness. Perhaps it relates to the continued existence of the dead in the mind of the killer and yet the dependence of the 'victim' upon the victor for the existence within any consciousness past the point of death. In all of these cases it is because self-identity includes and requires the power of negation. What is is intimately connected with what it is not by negation.



# Freedom of Self-Consciousness: Stoicism & Scepticism: The Unhappy Consciousness

## Freedom of Self-Consciousness: Stoicism & Scepticism: The Unhappy Consciousness Summary and Analysis

This chapter starts with the self as both free and abstract. The reason that this form of consciousness is unhappy is that it desires completeness while being aware that there is a gap between what it has attained and what it is wishing to achieve. In this case, the completeness is in the consciousness itself. In some sense this is akin to the awareness of growing children that they have the potentiality for becoming adults. Teens are often frustrated because not only are they close to reaching this point, but the fact that they are not quite there, or that they have reached it but others have not fully accepted it, is very intense.

The development of Reason as an apex of consciousness, emerges within individuals and cultures as a result of effort and struggle according to Hegel. From his day, the book came out just over 200 years ago, the mind managed to become dominant in mankind's societies in Europe through the periods of the Reformation and the Renaissance. Reason comes about through the development of self-consciousness. The developments are actual alterations of the Mind. The thinking free consciousness that goes through these transformations does have content, and functions both self-reflectively and in direct relation with objects.

Another way of understanding the position of the Unhappy Consciousness is to see that, for it, the lordship and bondsman modes of consciousness are coexisting but are not integrated. The long processes of mediation and transformation are what change this double consciousness into one functionally unified whole. In the meantime, the unification can come about because despite the duality and "doubling" effect, the Unhappy Consciousness is sufficiently advanced to be able to see that the unity is a genuine possibility. When these come together the unity is known as a reconciliation.

The philosophies of Stoicism and Scepticism are both means of mediation as well as discernable results of previous levels of development. The mediation process includes both negation and also the positive. This is implied in Hegel's earlier discussion of forces, even in the case of violence; Hegel's book came out during a time of war within his own region, and there is "what is/what is not & how these are transformed through interaction." The exposure and impact transforms them. New information is often brought to light and hence the energy of conflict can be transformative in a manner that can be quite beneficial when handled well. The destruction of opposition is but one



effort, and the ways of relating with opposing forces vary. Society and culture are in many respects, as are hierarchies, the "dancing interplay" amongst these. Within individuals, the most dominant conditions will often emerge in these states of consciousness.

Scepticism involves the awareness of harboring inner contradictions. Stoicism, Hegel says, only emerges in cultures where there is the combination of high levels of fear along with high levels of mental development. Stoic thought is free and often reflective and focuses more on the universal. The main advantage of the Stoic philosophy is that self-consciousness is a thinking being.



# Free Concrete Mind: Reason, Reason's Certainty and Reason's Truth

## Free Concrete Mind: Reason, Reason's Certainty and Reason's Truth Summary and Analysis

Reason is a stage of mind, according to Hegel. It is a developmental phase in which self-consciousness is aware of itself in relation to objects and in relation to universals. It can comprehend universals as belonging to forms such as self-consciousness as well as to those universals found as externally existing forms of objects. Hegel does not directly refer to entities in their function as "objects of perception" (not to be confused with the "thinghood" of inanimate objects). Every entity exists for another as an object of perception. Hegel focuses on this stage of the evolution of consciousness during this chapter. As with the earlier parts he carries on making thorough work of a subject matter which is inclusively pervasive and as such gigantic.

For those unused to it, "concrete" in Hegel's terminology simply means experiential and actual. In other words: it is true and it is functional rather than solely operating as idea. It has form and universals. In our era, people are apt to refer to universals as principles, but this as such has not been presented within the context of Hegel's philosophy. The cultural and technological transformations that have occurred since Hegel first formulated this book would be held by him and his own manner of thought to be entirely relevant. In this section of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel describes individuality as a concrete and actual mode of existence.

For anyone as yet uncertain, Hegel definitely does believe, think, and demonstrate that the sensory world does yield truth and knowledge. He views this as true both with respect to self and self-consciousness and with the world of objects. Remember that his purpose here is to help the mind develop from the state of natural consciousness into the scientific modality of consciousness. This does involve some elements that seem to have been included by Greek systems of logic such as the problem of coexisting contradictory information in the world. Also, the difficulty created by a recognition of the existence of falsehood whether intentional or accidental, whether the lie or the error as being able to be found and determined in a world and in the consciousness in which truth and correctness are also found—this difficulty is recognized and addressed. In fact, today, as in Hegel's own era, individuals can quickly see upon careful inspection of daily operations that it is quite true that humans handle truth and falsehood, error and correct information as a matter of course. As such, all Hegel has done is to take this rather self-evident truth and set it forth as a condition of human reality that he accepts.

Hegel discusses the importance of individuality herein. He goes into the significance of difference, negation, unity and sameness. In fact, the consciousness at this level of development frequently comes upon the need for and use of "twofold" consciousness.



Uniqueness of thing, or of self, identity, requires the negation and rejection of "otherness." To reject "otherness" as such, requires the recognition and acceptance of it as that. The universal is found in and with its form but not separate from the forms in which it occurs. Hegel has specifically brought up and included the challenge regarding how consciousness uses a twofold function to unite with itself and with perceptions but also to divide from and to negate for the purpose of recognizing or creating difference.

In this chapter on Reason's development, Hegel refers to two books that are major contributions to the field of philosophy. One of these is *The History of European Thought*, and the other is *Elementa Physiologie*. Both are works that furthered the cultural transformation in Europe known as the Reformation. Meaning and perception are both integral features to a mind's healthy transformations towards the scientific outlook. Hegel claims that no one can proceed however until self-certainty has been established. This self-certainty can also be referred to as the "in itself" and the "for itself."

Determinate features are essential to science. From our contemporary perspective it might not be immediately clear how pervasive instruction in scientific principles and methodologies are in the culture. For those reading this, although the mind might not be highly trained in empirical scientific methods, there has doubtless been at least some instruction in this. As such, readers of the summary are better positioned to understand that when Hegel referred to "determinate qualities" he meant to be referring to how specific qualities are used in making decisions to categorize information for scientific purposes.

Hegel devotes some of this chapter to the distinction between genus and species. He does not mean this in the precise manner of contemporary biological science, however.



# Observation as a Process of Reason: Observation of Nature

## Observation as a Process of Reason: Observation of Nature Summary and Analysis

Here Hegel brings together another level of organization. Here he begins at the stage of mind that he calls Reason. Observation Hegel shows, is a reliable process. In the movement towards scientific consciousness readers must now consider 'observation'.

Hegel notes that a consciousness requires a condition of stable self-certainty before it can proceed to use observation at the level of Reason. This also relies upon the "self-evidence" of self-existence and of the external world as 'real' and that objects and entities are recognized as having existence independent of the observer. This means that when not in a relation of direct mutual perception that either there will be other relations of mutual perception that sustain the same object and/or that there is something that is perceived which has identity "in itself."

Observation is functional with respect to Nature and to the Mind. In other words, Hegel does make the claim that mind, consciousness, is in fact able to observe itself: this is "reflection" or mind "fallen into itself" or otherwise "turned in towards itself." This has also brought to bear the twofold condition of mind when self-consciousness functions both as observer and as self-observing.

One version of why this twofold system or means exists is revealed by Hegel again to be the powers of division and unification. "Reconciliation" is the discovery or recreation of unity within a system, situation or relation of entities or objects. Through negation and determinateness, objects and entities achieve separation which is a vital component to identity. Positive qualities and contents are the other element of this.

These dual powers of observation allow for making distinctions and for coming to know both forms and their universals. However, it is not necessarily this simple. Hegel explains that both truth and essence are found through observation. Elsewhere he explains how it is the case that this is true even though error and falsity are both possible. Given this, he goes on to tell readers that the transformative power of observation generates something that triggers a new type of observation.





# Observation of Organic Existence

## Observation of Organic Existence Summary and Analysis

Hegel brings the notion or principle of law back into the text. He provides the following definition of law: a law is the relation of any given element to the formative process of an organic being. He brings up law in an effort to show how it fits into the function of observation with respect to the organic world. Hegel also defines "organic entity as something which can be observed to be an object, that has purpose, that is self-preserving and that returns to itself. The elements that Hegel normally refers to in the text are not those of the contemporary Periodic Table of the Elements but rather are the ancient kind. The advantage of the archaic ones is that they are directly observable by human kind as such. These are simply: water, earth, air and fire. Observable, with clearly distinguishable qualities that appear with profound consistency, these serve as "the elements of Nature" for the purposes of this discussion.

Earlier Hegel described universals as being real but having their reality rooted in form. He opened the work with some provision for problems that come up because of thinkers accidentally harboring "empty" conceptions, rather than holding them in the proper understanding of having contents through their external being. In this chapter, Hegel puts law and nature (the observable) into new relationship.

The notion, Hegel tells readers, relates directly to consciousness whilst reality relates to the external realm. Here, he is again showing that notions are actual. He has to do this to explain that his "notion" is not merely a figment nor an error of Idealist philosophy. At the same time, as part of the movement into proper scientific consciousness, the notion is shown to have direct relation to external objects. The reality of the notion is then dependent upon the external reality for its being in relation, and yet it can be said to exist independently within consciousness at the same time.

The result of the connection between these two is that Hegel writes: "the inner is expressed through and as the outer." In this way he shows that the inner and the outer have more than one relation with one another. The two can function as opposites of one another. However, one can also lead directly into the other and yet be dependent upon that which it has entered for its very being.

Hegel then tells readers more about "law." Law itself describes the relation between the inner and the outer set forth in the above paragraphs. Law manifests by the movement of that relationship through both time and moments. In this context events can be viewed as "lateral" and time as "vertical." The important point is to understand how Hegel is providing a qualitative definition of law, even though he explains that "law" consists not of things per se, but of a set of relationships.



# Observation of Nature as an Organic Whole

## Observation of Nature as an Organic Whole Summary and Analysis

Hegel introduces some new terms in this chapter. This all falls within the subheading from above and pertains to organic nature and the analysis thereof. The following come within the context of existing within the animal world. Three of the most basic properties of such entities are Sensibility, Irritability and Reproduction. The philosopher defines each of these.

Sensibility requires and pertains to an entity whose end is itself. In Hegel's view this applies to each individual animal and human being. The purpose, he tells readers, is contained within the process of the life of the entity. Due to this interpretation the idea that an animal or human could be alive and without purpose is not possible. However, it also shows that from such a view the answer to the question "What is the meaning of your life?" in the case of individual nonhuman animals is uniformly "to be myself." The animal simply lives and automatically fulfills its purpose by doing so. All argument and discussion about whether the difference created by human consciousness changes that rule of being or not will be abandoned at this time as there is neither time nor space to address it here. Sensibility, he later says, can be likened to the nervous system within a living animal.

The next new technical term introduced is "Irritability." This has the "twofold" form now often heard of. In this case it is simply that an organism has the capacity to "act out" or to withdraw in reaction or response to stimuli. Hegel also calls this "elasticity." Self-reflection implicitly, but not explicitly, goes with withdrawing inward in contrast to outward expression. He likens this to the muscular system of an entity.

Hegel also discusses reproduction. The philosopher likens reproduction to be analogous to the intestinal system.

Finally, Hegel provides one more definition. Most have heard of "Gestalt" therapy. What a Gestalt is, according to Hegel, is an individual system with a definite structure. In its most general sense it is very broadly applicable to this situation.



# **Observation of self-consciousness & Observation of the relation of s.-c. to its immediate actuality. Physiognomy and Phrenology**

## **Observation of self-consciousness & Observation of the relation of s.-c. to its immediate actuality. Physiognomy and Phrenology Summary and Analysis**

This chapter is devoted to Mind in relation to external reality. Hegel delineates the self-conscious process of mind in a new formula to emphasize a different aspect of it. He describes his perception of the mind-body connection through writing that there is mind's thinking in relation to reality, and mind's biotic relation to reality. The results of these movements of thought cause the formation of principles or laws. He then shows readers more about how these work, along with what naturally follows from this.

There are laws of thought. These are connected with logic. In Hegel's time, complex logic and its systematic relation to information technologies was unknown. However, some logic and complex mathematics and physics had already been developed or discovered. While these are very important, they are tied directly into the limited gains made possible through observation. So laws of thought are significant yet their limitations indicate the limitations of observation both with respect to the mind and to the external world.

There are also psychological laws, according to Hegel. These he introduces as "laws about psychic events." These represent a new level of thinking that results from revelations about the failure of the power of observation. When they "congeal" into a large enough group, these psychological laws serve as the foundation for the actual science of psychology. New attitudes towards "otherness" serve as the main alteration of function.

Earlier Hegel introduced the twofold quality to much of the progress of consciousness. This was based in the power of the mind to exist "'or itself" both as observer and as an object of observation through the power of "self-reflection." The divisive power, along with the capacity for both inward consideration and observation of external factors, allows for examining the relationship between unique individuality as "over and against" universality. It is recognized that both exist simultaneously within one entity: the one being is the "concrete individuality."

This provides ample opportunity for the self-consciousness to continue to transform. The psychological laws permit this in relation to consciousness through action within the



external world and also as a consequence of self-reflection. Thought processes used are mainly two, described by Hegel as assimilation and blending with respect to likeness, while opposition of ideas, actions and forces are also used and handled to transform and to transmute previously held knowledge and understanding.

Hegel concludes his exposition of how the self-consciousness can transform using laws of thought and psychological principles by referring to "indifference." Here it may not be lack of awareness or "not caring" but rather that there is not a reaction of opposition nor of being a controlling influence with respect to the consciousness.



# Observation of the Relation of Self-Consciousness to Its Immediate Actuality- Physiognomy and Phrenology

## Observation of the Relation of Self-Consciousness to Its Immediate Actuality- Physiognomy and Phrenology Summary and Analysis

Here the author follows precisely upon what came before. The self-consciousness is now focused on how it is relating to the world and to itself via its own embodiment. This means its physical body more so than the actions that it takes. However, these are viewed as connected.

There is a matter that the translator addresses through a note to the readers. This is to explain why phrenology and physiognomy or craniology are discussed: during Hegel's lifetime phrenology and physiognomy and craniology were both controversial and popular. This was so much the case that Hegel had to include some dialogue about them in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

The underlying principle that ties these together is that they are about the relationship of truth, consciousness and physical embodiment. Does the physical form indicate other characteristics of individuals or not? In some form, people continue to act and react on the basis of the idea that this is at least partially true. However, in the pseudo-sciences mentioned the same matter is addressed, but in more detail. For example, the shape of the skull and any bumps or dips on the hard head were analyzed in an effort to decipher character traits.

Hegel discusses what forms the basis of individuals and their personal character. First, he claims that the original body does have some bearing upon this. Second, he writes that what people do with their bodies is relevant. He states that the individual and the inner reality are expressed through action. Behavior is held to genuinely express the inner truth of the individual.

There is some ambiguity about this in Hegel's formulation. On the one hand he acknowledges that the embodiment of the individual is relevant to the reality of the self-consciousness and to what the entity does through and with his or her own body during the life. He also says that it is possible for an entity to have inner truth that is not expressed or only expressed with difficulty. Such suppression, inhibition or other restriction of potentialities within an individual is often caused by external factors but simultaneously reveals something else true of the entity—such as how easily it is manipulated by others. Likewise, Hegel also describes the truth of concrete individuals as manifesting without any doubt. He indicates that when there is some conflict within

the inner nature of an entity then the resultant deeds represent at times victories and at other times failures of one 'side' of the internal conflict within the one individual.



# The Realization of Rational Self-Consciousness Through Its Own Activity

## The Realization of Rational Self-Consciousness Through Its Own Activity Summary and Analysis

This chapter begins with a note from the translator, Baille. He points out that theoretical reason goes with observation. The reason of observation is itself conjoined to both knowledge and science. In the sections that follow there is a movement from this "theoretical reason" into "practical reason." Practical reason is used more as a "technical term in this context" and means: rational actions, or reason readily expressible through activity.

Readers are again reminded that two centuries of scientific and cultural development have followed since Hegel's writing, and are reminded that Germany continues to be culturally different from the USA. Hegel sprang forth from German culture and the most accurate descendant of his view is contemporary Germany.

Hegel informs readers that the ancients repeatedly said that to live wisely and virtuously what one needs to do is to conform to the culture in which one lives. It is therefore going to be rather easy for those of average understanding once they mature enough to do this. However, if someone has an individuality that conflicts a great deal with his or her native culture, then relocation might be a highly effective strategy for making a happy life.

He introduces "independent self-consciousness" as having a double meaning. On the one hand it is the phrase that best defines the newest level of this concrete individuality while at the same time this is in essence "thinghood" with respect to its functionality as an object of knowledge.

In this section the author takes us to another level with respect to the development of consciousness. Through the progression from natural consciousness to scientific consciousness, this level is where simple self-certainty grows into awareness of individuality. Further, this self-consciousness is aware of its ability to express its inner truth through action in the world. At this point, there is reality in both the external world and the inner realm of consciousness and the two are intimately connected.



# Pleasure and Necessity

## Pleasure and Necessity Summary and Analysis

This section also begins with a note from the translator. These show in the text simply as a short essay printed in a different font. In this case, Hegel's cultural and historical context have exerted a potent impact on what is covered by the text. The era was heavily influenced by the Romantic school of thought. In this case, the example Baille uses is Rousseau. In the German speaking world, Goethe's book *Werther* was renowned. In addition to Romanticism, the literary culture was also inculcated with Sentimentalism's influence. For these reasons, Baille informs readers that what follows is in some respect a study of Hedonism.

Hedonism has held a place culturally and religiously throughout history. In some cases, there has been strong support for pleasures of widely diverse kinds and for the mental states that result from them. Others have argued the case for moderation, granting pleasure a limited yet valuable role in human society. At the opposite end, there have been those who, often in reaction to the first rather than those "in the middle of the road," have reacted against the pleasures of Hedonism citing the travails that its excesses have wrought amongst families and societies.

In this chapter, Hegel cites a few of the "categories," Hegel has already defined these to readers as where ego & reality unite in consciousness. In the Western tradition of philosophy the most prominent proponent of philosophical categories was Immanuel Kant. Kant devoted books to this topic seeing as the fundamental questions surrounding these categories of mind have everything to do with the development of scientific and other forms of highly structured knowledge.

The categories that Hegel brings up in this chapter are: Desire, Unity, Difference, and Relation. Desire relates to primitive will, and the others are all necessary for the development of mind and individual consciousness with respect to the world. Here, at last we come around for the other component of this chapter: Necessity. Necessity and Fate are both mentioned. Once the future has become the past it is often clear how some events were inevitable. Some future events can be predicted with clarity and ease while others remain unknown. The sense of freedom and sense of Fate are often set in opposition. Necessity occurs with respect to consciousness and knowledge. Hegel uses Necessity in that the other categories, Unity, Difference and Relation, are all necessary for the development of consciousness in the world.





# The Law of the Heart and Frenzy of Self-Conceit

## The Law of the Heart and Frenzy of Self-Conceit Summary and Analysis

It is actually here that Sentimentalism and Hedonism are introduced. Following this he enters into the "law of the heart." In common terms readers should view this as a reference to emotionally integrated consciousness and modes of functioning. The advantages and disadvantages of this are explored during this chapter.

Hegel asserts that while there is this tendency for humanity to "follow the heart" there is a major problem because society somehow also creates and exerts a force that goes against this very law. Duty, money or other factors may be this "counter force" but whatever it is, Hegel says, it is there. Hegel calls whatever it is that causes people to obey those forces that go against their "law of the heart" to be oppressive. He includes "Necessity" as part of what goes against the law of the heart.

The main goal in this section of the book is for consciousness to face its struggle with this. To "transcend and to cancel out" whatever has opposed the law of the heart is the goal of individual self-consciousness. After the philosopher explains a bit more about the details of this he goes on to describe the larger process that is at work.

The movement that develops the conscious mind goes through the following phases:

1. individual "heart" is recognized by self-consciousness;
2. forces that contradict the individual's feelings occur;
3. there is a struggle to live in accordance with one's own heart within society;
4. there is a transformation of the individual's "emotionally integrated consciousness";
5. universal "heart" is discovered through one's own;
6. the sense of uniqueness "of the heart" falls away and the loss is great;
7. more struggle;
8. the reemergence of a sense of unity of heart that somehow includes and transcends individuality;
9. the surrender of individualism as a mode of operation, but not of individuality;

10. identification with the "laws of the land" in which one lives as enactments of real content that pertains to the individuals dwelling therein as partially representing the "law of all hearts"...the heart of the people "at large" or "in general."



# Virtue & the Course of the World

## Virtue & the Course of the World Summary and Analysis

Hegel moves onto what follows after the processes relating to the laws of heart and their universalization. The Course of the World, Hegel tells readers, are the events and things of the world as external reality. He informs readers that much of this is sad and unpleasant. The law of the heart involves working to overcome those forces that oppose it which results in a healthy developmental process for individuals and society. At this next step Hegel shows the same world as a locus of great opportunity.

External activities and events, Hegel explains, are the location where good has the opportunity to become manifest through the actions of human beings. Here Hegel introduces what can be or seem to be a frightening social process in which the individual is taught or forced to learn submission of the personality to the "good and the true" as it exists within society. A main obstacle to this is that the individuality is 'conceited' and wants its own self and wishes to constitute the "law." However, in truth it does not. Clearly, this was the most precarious for those in societal systems that were not democracies: the "ruling elite" are most vulnerable to having their individual "conceit" catered to as public law or as being themselves above or beyond the laws of the land.

The universalization process through virtue provides the counter force to this "conceit of individuality." Virtue brings good into the world. However, the process is apt to have the quality of struggle and some suffering. The objective content of the good actually does reside in the individuals who act it out. This is a reiteration of the whole notion that the universals do have existence in reality but only through the content of those who perform them and those events of which they are a part.

Hegel shows that it is the individuals who live them out who make these virtues spring to life in society. While he calls "virtue" the key factor or source, he also claims that there is quite a lot of good inherently within the world and that these actions bring it forth. He concludes the chapter by explaining that the capacities and powers of given individuals are their means or "weapons," if need be, for bringing the good into further manifestation in the world "at large."



# Individuality Which Takes Itself to be Real In and For Itself

## Individuality Which Takes Itself to be Real In and For Itself Summary and Analysis

The book continues as a treatise. The subject matter is vast and encompassing. Hegel is doing his best to present it with sufficient structure and in an orderly manner. By this point in the text, the activity is based upon "cumulative knowledge."

The individual human will tend to follow the same premise as Hegel presents in earlier chapters as being the way that animals operate. There is a very powerful, advantageous difference in the human being. Nevertheless, initially each person will live from a mentality that matches that of organic nature. The purpose of the entity is effectively its very functions and behaviors. In the case of the animals Hegels showed that the purpose of any animal is what it does: hence, there is no such thing as purposeless behavior regardless of appearances. Likewise, the reality of the individual is expressed through the living of life itself and the purpose thereof can be viewed as built in. That is the human in relation or on the same level as the "organic consciousness."

To understand the process that changes this, one must see how it is that the preceding sections build upon one another. The transformation involves the sense of inner reality and the capacities for self-reflection not found in the animals at all. This yields a level of intentionality not available to the animals, just as it also makes the virtues and personal truths more a matter of choices that can be manifested. It is still true that the individuals truths can be realized in the culture of which they are part, but with the trick that they must

conquer that within or about themselves that runs counter to the universal needs of society and the attendant conceit of their personalities. The other trick is that they can face challenges regarding the ways that their truth might be suppressed that needs expression. In these cases, although Hegel has not spelled it out in this chapter, it is typically a matter of the individual finding the proper form through which to express an inner truth. When expressed in any of the correct forms, the self-expression will not produce a societal problem but when poorly expressed in some cases it might.



# **Introductory Note Self-Contained Individuals Associated as a Community of Animals, and the Deception Thence Arising: The Real Fact**

## **Introductory Note Self-Contained Individuals Associated as a Community of Animals, and the Deception Thence Arising: The Real Fact Summary and Analysis**

There is a note from the translator in a distinctive font at the beginning of this chapter as well. Baille distinguishes between "the fact of the matter" and "a matter of fact." The former refers to the conditions themselves surrounding any kind of event. The latter is more representative of an attitude and a simple assertion of the truth of something.

Hegel explains that absolute reality at this point in the development is not manifesting properly. The notion is empty. There is some sense of contradiction in that an entity knows its own nature by means of its inner awareness in some respects, while at the same time, in other ways, an individual discovers his or her true nature through the events of his or her life. How this transformation takes place, from an empty notion into one that has content is to follow.

Action and consciousness are both key players in this. Hegel shows the contrast between the effects of action and "seeming." The former relies upon honest action whereas the latter depends upon deceptive activity. Seeming is closely related to emptiness. There is a notion, perhaps relating to the internal truth of an individual, that is going unexpressed: and as a consequence can be seen as empty. Action can transform the external world into an arena in which the inner truth comes forth. This is closely associated with negativity because it in fact destroys the emptiness or the pre-existing conditions. What had been preventing the realization of this aspect of the individual from coming forth is destroyed by the activity that brings the truth into manifestation.

Action also brings whatever was in the consciousness into being in the world. This sets the actions up, along with consciousness to create or to expose the dynamics between the particular and the universal. Hegel cites these as being interrelated and explains that they "intercommunicate": work and deeds transform both the individuals who perform the labour and that which is acted upon. The world itself then, really is changed.

One of the greatest distinctive qualities of humans is the sentience which allows us to make decisions about what to act on and which optional actions to set aside. Work and



deeds are the main medium through which individuals express their individuality within the framework of human society. It might well be argued that for all of those who perform work they feel does not express themselves at all or well, what is expressed is the reality of their submission to other forces: regardless of whether or not this is their preference. To some extent that might well be equated with the position of the bondsman. Those who perform tasks well do acquire some kind of power and awareness, and when working for pay from others will find that they have at least some needs met by serving others—whoever they work for but of equal importance, whoever is served by the works they do. In cases where the individuality is still "trapped at the level of self-conceit" then it might be "what is best." Through work, the individual is constrained to "do their share of work," "gets needs met by working" and "learns and uses skills" even though there is a sense of it being "forced" because the individual is selfish enough or immature enough to "not really want to" be of service to the community in this manner.

Hegel ends this portion of the work by claiming that "the fact of the matter" will assert itself "at all costs," which is a bit like stating that the truth will come out one way or another. He also states that there is a relationship between "thing" and "fact" that is analogous to the relationship between sense-experience and perception.

# Reason as Lawgiver

## Reason as Lawgiver Summary and Analysis

At this juncture Hegel brings up the whole matter of laws once again. This time however he is predominantly embracing societal regulations as well as those forms of law that he discusses earlier in this work as being the relation between inner and outer as expressed through actions and events in the world.

This section is actually quite brief. The tone of the book remains consistent. Hegel is espousing what is meant to be theory only inasmuch as theory is truth. That is, this entire venture for him is about getting at the truth and expressing it to mankind. The very nature of life, he assures readers, makes philosophy a necessary and valuable means to seek the truth and knowledge of it. Philosophy, he has explained, is the "father" of science. This postulate has rendered itself apparently true during the centuries that have passed since he conducted this writing and thinking. Science looks to have outgrown a great deal of philosophy but continues to rely upon the foundations laid therein as its groundwork. Scientific knowledge still relies upon the philosophical attitudes that sensory information, systematic questioning, and investigation and discovery can in fact combine to yield accurate knowledge.

The universal law of heart leads to virtue as ways of working within society. This leads to some "dissolution" of individuality's sense of self-conceit and is bound up with the surrender of the personality to a kind of twofold sense of annihilation and perpetuation.

In this section Hegel communicates two very basic points, both of which have appeared within Christianity and with which most readers will be somewhat familiar in practice, if not in depth or extensively. Hegel refers to the dictums to speak the truth and "loving one's neighbor as oneself." Both are recommended. It is easy to see that whenever people are interested in discerning the truth of nature and or life that basic practices of honesty will further this process. Prominent objections to the truth that are not malicious typically relate to fear or relationships involving questions of dominance and submission. For example: perhaps only the Master is permitted to speak his truth whereas the Bondsman is to keep silent.

This is precisely the dynamic which allows political leaders to form the details of the laws for those living with monarchs or other nondemocratic political organizations. The rulers set out the laws, and the rest speak their own truth "at their own risk."

Despite the complexities, Hegel asserts that Reason has a great role in putting law into the land through virtue as both private and public acts. The dictum to love one's neighbor as oneself is the urgency to universalize the practice of compassion and an attitude of inclusion along with reminders to take care towards oneself.



# Reason as Testing Laws

## Reason as Testing Laws Summary and Analysis

Here Hegel focuses mainly on property, possession, and their opposites—freedom and the idea of "no property." He does this as one means of showing how reason tests laws. The section is fairly short.

He begins by describing property and no property as being opposites and coexisting ideas. Universality and particularity both exist within "no property" and "property." Here there is some unusual complexity, since the universal has its reality within the particular and the particular contains the actual form of the universal. He also tells readers that even when there is no ownership there is still need-based possession and use of a thing. Ultimately he informs readers that property is a superior concept to "no property" because, for one thing, it encourages people to think "long term" rather than "short term." The two can function independently or together. For example: one can have things and the company or presence of entities. One can own. While the notion of ownership tends to be more offensive with respect to living people especially due to its connotations with slavery, it is also true that "ownership" applies in the sense of having close relations and duties of protection and caring often associated with familial relationship. In this case it can be seen as something not innately "bad" or even "negative." However, the positive contains the negativity associated with "not mine." This again is due to how the active determinate quality requires both the negative and the positive assertion for its reality.

Ownership and possession can in fact be held separately or in unity. One may have or harbor someone or something that "belongs to another," thereby having possession and use of a said thing without having ownership of it. For the majority, it is often but not always preferable to have possession of whatever or "whomever" one owns.

Hegel explores how these concepts fit into society when he discusses communism and the distribution of wealth. He explains that when items and resources are distributed according to the needs of the people then there will be an apparent disparity and numerous differences amongst the people. This will often give some appearance that something is not fair. He compares this with the idea of communism that all wealth be evenly distributed. His main point is not about laziness or lack of worthiness amongst people but rather simply that the vast majority of people will have in a way that does not accurately reflect his or her needs. The author does not go into problems caused by greed or bad leadership within the context of this discussion.

Given property, Hegel claims that there is a sense of equality that emerges because of others acknowledging ownership and possession by, in the case of the example, himself. He refers to the response or reaction that something is his, "which all others acknowledge and keep themselves away from".



This concludes Hegel's discussion of Free Concrete Mind. What follows is the beginning of the author's discourse on Spirit, which in German is Geist.

# Spirit

## Spirit Summary and Analysis

Hegel starts by telling readers that Reason is Spirit. There are notes at the bottom that explain why it is that the English word Spirit is being used in this translation. Spirit does mean Mind, but only when Mind has achieved a "higher and very special level of functioning." The primary condition of this mind that is Spirit is its unity with the truth and the truth being understood to be in unity with the world and with life. This is a reiteration of Hegel's earlier wisdom that the universal exists with content.

Spirit does what earlier stages of mind did, in that it has a twofold function. It serves an observational type of function wherein it is ever able to make itself an object to itself while simultaneously existing as subject and substance within the world of which it is a part. Hegel claims that, at this point, what had formerly been a simpler form of self-consciousness has transformed: now spirit is self, and self-consciousness is increasingly able to operate from this level of being. Here it is worth a warning: some readers may be tempted for whatever reason by the old "empty concept," but the spirit here meant is living and includes all of the world.

Hegel also makes an effort to describe how Spirit interrelates with events. He refers to them as "moments" and shows or tries to express to readers how the constant motion of life is part of Spirit and the movement of Spirit in life involves all of these moments. However, any effort to isolate some portion of these is indicative of the state of the mind. He implies that this is a lesser or inferior condition but without any nasty'condescension.

Hegel introduces ethics in this chapter. The chapter also contains the drama of events of the world and their relation to self through struggle. He talks about the truth within self and world. He refers to the loss of self to or through the world's externalized forms of ethics. He explores the way that this relates to religious morality within self and within society. He claims at the finish of this introduction to the relationship that conscience is born and forms a kind of combination of rebirth and cultivation of the Spirit (mind) up to a new level.



# Objective Spirit- The Ethical Order

## Objective Spirit- The Ethical Order Summary and Analysis

This portion of the book begins with numerical notes offering readers the original German words from which the English words have been chosen. This provides an accurate sense of the conscientious attitude of the translator in preparing this version of Hegel's work for the English language audience.

Hegel explains that each action is divisive. This division is not to be understood negatively. Action divides both substance and consciousness, he says. The division leads to the necessity of mediation by self-consciousness. Hegel assures readers that the results will be ethical behavior.

This chapter write up includes material listed in the book itself as subsections. The first of these is "The Ethical World: Law Human and Divine: Man and Woman." It is headed by the alternative font which indicates the translator's own editorial.

He sets out the norms of daily life as the main 'theatre' for ethical choices and considerations. The ethical world is the community within which Hegel as the author found himself living in. The readers are expected to look directly to the community, family and nation in which they reside for main indicators of social laws and customs. Hegel simply points out that unlike removed academic or clinical practice, these concerns are faced or confronted in their whole as life in society.

Hegel acknowledges that cultures and times in history reveal that there are ethical distinctions in various societies. This he posits along with the recognition that in many a community there is some attribute of the customs and rules that do not suit the individuals in them. He refers to this in earlier chapters when he discusses how individuality has often fought and lost itself to the "public order" even though it can be regained within that system along with "conscience." Now he is focussed on making the observation that many ethical regulations are defined by the large group of humans who set them. He calls the level at which they exist "social consciousness" and notes that when these conflict with an individual there will be some challenges in resolving the problem. Certain aspects of familial relations fall within divine law and love. Other sociological relationships are "reduced" or "restricted" according to Hegel to the human laws. He focuses upon burial practices to express this. He seems to have read the Grecian play Antigone in which the divine ethical nature of the family life is set over and against the laws of society amongst non-relatives.

The second subsection that has been included is "Ethical Action, Knowledge, Human and Divine, Guilt and Destiny." Here to, the family is set as over and against the social order. "Pathetic" is explained to be the recognition of the reality of emotion in this section.



The ancient Greeks, during their city-state era are used as the example. The role of women comes up within this context since in Hegel's culture and era there was the predominance of women in the household and only constrained social functions for women in society at large. Due to this, Hegel follows the ancient Greek Oedipal tales and reports that women are more intimately associated with divine law as the divine law is the familial law; the social order of laws are for citizens and for Germans in 1800 this means almost exclusively adult men. Duty is the key word of this subsection of the text.



# Spirit in Self-Estrangement- The Discipline of Culture

## Spirit in Self-Estrangement- The Discipline of Culture Summary and Analysis

Here, Hegel shows himself to have been greatly inspired by a well translated fiction novel during the time that he wrote the Phenomenology of Mind. This chapter continues to deal with ethical development for the individual as mind or spirit and also how this occurs as a social entity in any given nation. Unlike the preceding section, here Hegel emphasizes the situation for the individual rather than for the family as opposed to the civilization.

Hegel goes into how the ethical framework evolves past the simple opposition between Family as "divine law" and Civil Society as "human law." He writes about this stage in terms of "self-estrangement." It is somehow at once another level of ethical knowledge, responsibility and understanding but at the same time it is also definitely intended to show that the individual is passing through a major transition in self-relation.

Hegel writes about a major change that takes place with a specific type of Insight. This insight causes people, according to Hegel, to begin to turn to religion in order to make further progress and it also leads them to culture. Once they have inspected culture, these people can find that, with continued effort, Spirit turns itself somehow back in upon itself and in doing so manages to make further progress. At this stage, first self disappears to consciousness but all else finds itself the total and coexisting cause of consciousness where self is simply "that which is perceiving what is."

When there is this great transformation of the individual through total engulfment by "what is" and then, as that has once again turned into self-awareness, the self-estrangement actually goes away and a new form of consciousness emerges. This is Enlightenment. Once the entity is expressing the universal of enlightenment on the individual level, Hegel writes that "the Here and Now" regain their precedence in the lives of the enlightened.

The final "capstone" is that Hegel claims another new level is reached. This time it is in terms of moral consciousness. Hegel emphasizes that in this case the change is "subjective" or occurring within an individual rather than in the mass scale rules of the culture.



# Enlightenment incl. subsections a & b

## Enlightenment incl. subsections a & b Summary and Analysis

Here Hegel looks at Enlightenment as an insight that is directed against belief. He sets it to practical use right away, in this case by attacking impure motives and the nonsexual perversions he notes earlier that conceit causes. In doing so, he overcomes any essential objection to philosophy on the basis of its being "impractical." Insight, he claims, is relevant with respect to belief.

The first subsection is labeled to be knowledge and insight overcoming superstition. He then proceeds to explain to readers that this Enlightened state is in fact, not merely imagined and that it has consequences. It is definitively superior to previous modes of consciousness that have types of philosophy associated with them.

Hegel discusses how belief is transformed into enlightenment. It involves doubting and questioning everything. It involves entertaining issues relating to truth and deceit. It requires reviewing delusion and Hegel even goes so far as to examine renunciation. He determines that renunciation is counter productive.

"Enlightenment" he tells readers, "makes belief learn what it means," (p. 328). This implies the change in the form of beliefs as a direct consequence of the work of the enlightened mind upon them. Since superstition is normally based upon inadequate knowledge of or experience of someone or something, one affect of enlightenment's working, like science's, is to destroy and clear away superstitions that have been held based upon partial truths that the newfound wisdom of applied insight has eliminated.

Then Hegel goes on, claiming that Belief and Enlightenment often run counter to one another. In opposition, he argues, one threatens the territory of another. Enlightenment often attacks beliefs and the former "take offense" or are indeed genuinely threatened by this new mode of doubting or questioning them. While highly valuable for its power to negate its opposition, it does not have strong self-identity as enlightenment; it lacks the confidence in its positive self assertions that one would expect of this stage of consciousness, especially since it is supposed to be so heightened.

His analysis continues. Again, he refers to the double system of thinking—the simultaneous reality of consciousness as the internal experience and the reality that that very consciousness is recognizing as outside of itself.

Here Hegel may surprise readers. He claims that when there is disruption within some pair or system, that this is not always a bad thing. He tells readers that when such a unity divides itself, even out of strife, that this fact reveals that the unity or what it represents contains within itself a whole view. He treats this as a definite improvement over a one-sided perception about events or even beliefs. When the insight works



through the mediations necessary as it re-examines beliefs, hegel asserts that the long term results will be knowledge. This will be the case whether what is sought is knowledge of self or that of the world or their composite. His final statement at the section's end is "Both worlds are reconciled and heaven is transplanted to the earth below," (p. 342).



# Absolute Freedom & Terror

## Absolute Freedom & Terror Summary and Analysis

The title of this new chapter is clearly dramatic. At this level, self-consciousness has an extent of self-certainty. However, the freedom associated with this level is caused by the disappearance of all distinctions and differences. Hegel tells readers that, since this is the case, this absolute freedom is actually only expressible through negativity. By virtue of this, Hegel explains, absolute freedom is closely connected with death.

Death is the one state where this annihilation of difference occurs. Also, it hinges upon the destruction of the innumerable distinctions that give determinate qualities but simultaneously, and through doing so, limit freedom in certain ways.

Hegel briefly discusses the raw terror of death. Given that there was a war on at the time, all too close to where he was, one can see how it might be an unavoidable consideration. In this case, the philosopher refers to the affects upon soldiers of this fear.

Behaviorally, the greatest effect is submission on the part of the men. Hegel says that soldiers come to view death itself as "their lord and master" and whenever there is relief from the direct fear of it they "recover." In the realm of mind, this influences consciousness in a precise manner.

The mind, having faced and been granted a reprieve from death, loses this absolute freedom of "nondifference" and resumes a more positive state that is at the same time much more limited. No longer empty or nonexistent, determinate consciousness resumes.

Hegel describes this phase of mind as one that can be passed through. Beyond it, he claims lies the region of moral consciousness and the moral life of the spirit. This is where he is concentrating his energy in the next segment of the Phenomenology.

The author has continued to write in an expository tone. The work is so complex that readers can see why it would require a treatise. If it were speech, he would require a lengthy set of monologues just to get the full meaning across prior to entertaining matters of clarification and disagreement with the listeners.





# Spirit in the Condition of Being Certain of Itself: Morality

## Spirit in the Condition of Being Certain of Itself: Morality Summary and Analysis

At this time Hegel uses something that he communicated about earlier but in a new manner and new relationship. Previously, he did discuss ethics, particularly as they occur in society. However, in those chapters he referred to laws and customs. He did provide some information about the divine versus human regulatory contrasts when he wrote about the family in contrast with the state as the source of governance in individuals.

Given all of that, Hegel at this time takes readers into morality. However, he broaches this in terms of a form of consciousness in itself.

The number one quality that emerges in this part of Hegel's study is "duty." Within this context, the fulfillment of duty, often enough to one's family or to one's nation, is the very locus of the moral life. His work appears when there is a discernable philosophical tradition within which his discussion occurs. The Romantics, and the works of such giants as Immanuel Kant were prevalent. His own work is intended to be a progression from this.

Duty obviously relates to the individual and to society. It can be found in relation to family members readily enough and also to other groups and organizations. Duties within the family serve as original models for individuals. The types of duties change with respect to level of maturity and societal role. Public works, and citizenship are also relationships that facilitate inclusion through sense of duty. Duty is a vital element of morality for Hegel.

Duty has a direct relation to action. As pointed out earlier, action is the medium through which reality and that which has reality only for consciousness are both able to be enacted within the externally existing world. In its simplest form, Hegel explains that for the moral consciousness, duty will directly dictate a course of action within the life of he or she who acts. How this relationship works, Hegel expounds further in the following chapter.



# The Moral View of the World

## The Moral View of the World Summary and Analysis

Duty is the starting point here as mentioned above. The self-consciousness that Hegel is seeking now, is one that is specifically moral in structure. What makes this distinctive from ethical judgments Hegel explored in previous sections? Here his intention is to find a level of self-consciousness that is itself moral. In the preceding chapters, ethical decisions were made from individuality but they were not so much in relation to religion or to morality as such, but had grown through individual development and relation to societal custom.

In this case, Hegel is intentionally reviewing morality as ethics with respect to religion and practical life, in contrast to ethics in relation to culture. In order to do this, he claims that a moral view of the world itself is a mandated starting point for consciousness.

Duty, according to Hegel, is the element of the moral self-consciousness that is, or is in closest relation with, the Absolute. When people succeed in being focused upon their duties then they are functioning from this moral level. Keep in mind that Hegel is about knowledge, not mere speculation. However, speculation is often an important method of approaching the truth.

The philosopher tells readers that the fulfillment of duty is morality being enacted and satisfied. He moves on from this rather straightforward view into working to develop a superior form of understanding what the reality of the moral self-consciousness is.

Morality, it turns out, operates according to "moments." These are united by consciousness. He is simply recognizing that the compendium of events, time and circumstances in reality are interrelated. The Absolute and truth move through duty and action and make their appearance in the world. However, Hegel faces debate within himself and postulates both that perhaps morality does not exist within nature and maybe it does. If it does not, then for the first time there is a new challenge: here consciousness can make manifest within the world morality, but unlike with the other modes of self-consciousness there is not the same security of the universal existing in truth in the world not purely because of human consciousness. The trouble is that it seems that unless there is a direct connection between Absolute Knowledge, morality and the externally existing world, then morality would only be real as a form of consciousness rather than as truth as universal and within the world itself and also within consciousness.



# Dissemlance

## Dissemlance Summary and Analysis

Hegel opens the chapter by referring to the spiritually complete individual. As espoused previously, for Hegel, the spiritual life and the day-to-day world take place together. The two are inseparable. Customarily he has also shown consciousness and the external world to be in such union but he also acknowledges that mind as such, if not also mind as spirit, has a capacity to function in ways that do not so directly touch or interact with facts of the world in a cause-effect manner.

Self-consciousness, Hegel, informs readers, has contradiction and dilemma in the case where it strives to manifest morality. He refers to diverse ethical notions and activities or tendencies to action, some of which have no clear systematic relation to one another. A side effect is that psychologically, the moral consciousness is an amalgam of inconsistencies. These are the source of what he calls "dissemlance," because it can set off a shift or switch within an entity from a duty bound moral orientation and activity into suddenly making decisions that emerge from contradictory beliefs or suddenly loosed from moral moorings. For example, an action might be both moral and what the acting agent "felt like doing" in one case, whereas in another circumstance the same being might abide by the "felt like it" dictum but in a way that results in an immoral action being taken. The moral consciousness with duty at its head are key factors in this. However, in order to make the entire being spiritually complete, the dissemling must be unpacked and altered so that a coherent new whole with a more systematic self-consciousness emerges and thrives.

Here again Hegel claims that to act correctly upon duty is the highest moral function of an individual. The dissemling condition simply indicates that morality is incomplete within that particular self-consciousness. Hegel works through further postulations and decides that morality does have the same relation to reality as the other modes of self-consciousness had: that is, it has existence in reality and in the world. However, it is the reality represented by human consciousness that serves as the main medium through which the reality of morality finds itself manifest in the world of facts.

Contradictory elements can lead to hypocrisy or similar behaviors. Hegel admits this and reveals that it is caused by contradictions within the self-consciousness or limitations of an entity related to his or her nature.

Hegel asserts that conscience, which he introduced earlier in the text, is not identical with this form of the moral self-consciousness. Conscience is intimately and directly connected with external reality and through its immediacy has a greater quality of "naturalness" to its expression. Conscience is a superior form of moral self-consciousness and at its height is expressed as "a beautiful soul." It has the ability to act within an extremely diverse set of circumstances that have moral implications. Through this alone, the dissemling can be superseded, transcended, or grown beyond.



# Religion (incl) Religion in General

## Religion (incl) Religion in General Summary and Analysis

The end of the previous book culminated in the "beautiful soul" as Absolute Spirit and from this state of consciousness morality has been transformed into something "built in." Absolute Spirit has developed into a functioning state of consciousness that has the indwelling conscience that so pervasively expresses itself through individual entities that each of them appears as "beautiful souls."

Now Hegel explains that at this level, Mind has the need and hopefully also the ability to transform entirely or develop into the next stage of consciousness: Absolute Spirit incarnate. However, once the Absolute is established as a fundamental principle and modus operandi, the complete spiritual being can function within the world. Morality is merely one of this entity's functions. Here Hegel stakes a claim that the Absolute is not simply Idealistic philosophy; the Absolute does not solely exist in consciousness as a manufactured knowledge of mankind but is actually an ontological condition.

For those readers not aware of it, ontology is philosophy's version of the physicists' atomic and subatomic theories and is about the most fundamental reality. Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge. All empirical sciences are about the epistemological level of the world. Epistemology is heavily affected by ontology just as it makes a tremendous difference if you attempt to build a house upon sand, water, stable terrain or on a fault line or in the valley below a volcano.

Religion also addresses matters of epistemology and a whole lot more. In this case, Hegel is viewing all of the world's religions as necessary expressions of the diversity present within the world. Hegel succinctly reviews modes of consciousness up to this point. The progression has been: consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, spirit, religion and Absolute Spirit. However, previously the absolute spirit was only viewed as an object of consciousness, and as a state of consciousness that might be attainable.

From here on, Absolute Spirit becomes a form of subjectively present self-consciousness.

Hegel touches upon how the belief in the Underworld or the realm of death transforms into the belief in Heaven. Whatever it is, he says that this stems from the (living peoples') observation that what was a determinate individual has somehow returned to the realm of pure universals without the previous form.

At the end of this section, Hegel expresses that when this superior level of self-consciousness and natural consciousness are in happy and peaceful union with one another as modes, then there ceases to be a disparity in their twofold operation. When spirit is operating at this level the result is what Hegel calls Natural Religion. However,



when this same spirit learns and recognizes properties and principles of transcendence, the result is Religion in the form of Art, according to Hegel. The unity that supersedes or transcends these both as it turns out is Revealed Religion, of which Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all examples. What follows is a more detailed inspection of each of these by the philosopher.



# **A Natural Religion: a God as Light, Plants and Animals as Objects of Religion, The Artificer**

## **A Natural Religion: a God as Light, Plants and Animals as Objects of Religion, The Artificer Summary and Analysis**

Natural religion comes first because the movement of consciousness is from the immediate to the more abstract or transcendent, followed by the integration through mediation of the transcendence with the immediacy to reach new 'heights' of awareness.

Hegel first addresses God as Light, within the context of Light & Darkness and their respective roles. Conscious activity is analogous to the Light. Conscious awareness and ego are what Hegel likens to Light and to the Sun. For those reasons, these are closely associated with God in terms of Natural Religion. He also points out that the relationship, including what is exposed to consciousness as an effect of the Light, incorporates the lordship and bondage facets of consciousness. The force of Darkness as such, not as 'evil' but literally as the Dark, provides the contrast within consciousness and perception of the world. Self-consciousness and awareness or the speculation and conclusion of some greater power comes as an affect of changes in awareness created by the distinction between Light and Dark. The proverbial spark of the Absolute then is the emergence of the Light of consciousness, observable externally as the light from the Sun shining upon the earth.

The realm of the animals and plants Hegel calls a kind of diffusing selfless Self, where the spirit of self-consciousness flows in with the others. However, in an ironic observation, Hegel writes that struggle and fighting are a major part of what goes on at this level. The main force is actually the rage associated with the reality and ability to actualize separateness and individuality, causing one being to be set against another.

Finally, Hegel addresses the "artificer." What this really amounts to is the effect of thought combined with action upon reality. Hegel argues that at this stage it is not yet spiritual, it is a kind of automatic scratching but of a developing consciousness scratching against the world. Forms are changed and parts of the forms, curves and lines or smells and shapes of what already exist are brought forth into new relations with each other. This occurs because of the actions and the mind of this artificer. After a great deal of cultivation, this "artificer" blossoms into an artist, and the vague unspiritual forms and lines become the Religion of Art.



# Religion in the Form of Art: The Abstract, The Living, The Spiritual Work of Art

## Religion in the Form of Art: The Abstract, The Living, The Spiritual Work of Art Summary and Analysis

This begins when the artificer has transformed into a purposive self-conscious artisan. Hegel does not disclose matters relating to the difference between tool making and the creation of intentional art, but focuses upon the work of art. What both processes have entirely in common is that once this involves focused creation then the creator has become what Hegel calls a spiritual workman.

Hegel states that the spirit which creates this artwork is the same as that of a free country. Readers need to bear in mind that Hegel's nation was at war. Not only this, but democracy and a German state rather than principalities was political blasphemy within the country, but not entirely unheard of. As such, his notion of a free country is a bit of a leap and may well be rather unlike what his readers take as a matter of course. He continues to express how art relates to the ethical sphere of life and culture to such an extent that readers might entirely lose how this is connected with his original intent for this section.

When Hegel discourses upon the abstract work of art, his focus is actually upon the hymn. For the visual artist this might be a shock, but for those to whom music is the main form of artwork, then this is not so peculiar. God re-enters, but during this segment of the discourse it looks more to be the case that God is accepted as present and it is more a matter of finding Him within the framework of Art and later religions in contrast to searching for Him in the same manner that one might seek a mythical location. Is it even really there? How can we find it? Do we have to believe in it as a real place in order to even seek it out? What if we get to the right place but it is not there? Is that because it never was, or just that something happened so that now it is not? Ultimately, God has been assumed, heard and found but not presumed to have been properly understood within this chapter. Whether as Oracle, ancient Grecian revelries of Bacchus or other forms of Art, Hegel calls these all part of the Religion of Art.



# Revealed Religion

## Revealed Religion Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Hegel introduces revealed religion through one particular type of artwork. In this case, he refers to the statue. Perhaps because this requires such craftsmanship, and since it so clearly expresses the transformative powers of the human mind to imitate life and to pay homage in a culturally and distinctively human centered way to 'the Divine Being'.

While this image of the divine is initially external, Hegel also looks with reference to the inner nature. Upon examination he reports that the statue represents the Absolute within self-consciousness as Subject, and also sees it revered through the external. He thanks the Grecian pre-Christian cults and their artworks as providing him with an excellent method of understanding and sharing these religious insights.

As readers would expect by this point, what transforms at this stage through this religious modality are both self-consciousness and consciousness as it relates to the Divine Being as external to itself. Hegel explains that it is through the processes, the mediations involved that the Divine Being is revealed.

Again unexpectedly, Hegel has begun his exploration of revealed religion with Pre-Christian thought, has included Christianity and has also passed through ideas which crop up now and again, even by 1800 Germany—"God is dead." However the death of God as such is far from the end of this quest of self-consciousness. Here is one place where the difference between Hegel's work of 1800 and Nietzsche's of the 1870s reach an undeniable schism.

To concisely express what Hegel shows in this chapter is not realistically possible. However, suffice it to say that in the end, he shows that self-consciousness as Absolute Spirit can express the inner divinity of man and in that respect achieve unity with the Absolute which has, at the level of ultimate reality, always been the same as the Divine. He also argues that the divine is the human.





# Absolute Knowledge

## Absolute Knowledge Summary and Analysis

Here at last readers approach the summit of this "mountain."

For those whose self-consciousness is able to make it this far, there is yet another sequence of mediation and transcendence to do. For those who did not, then the author hopes that this will at least provide a real "map of the terrain ahead" for those wishing and willing to make the climb to such a peak of consciousness but not yet able to make it. Hegel does in fact trace transformations of consciousness during this final chapter of the book.

The Absolute has been discovered as an object of consciousness that also has reality in the world. Hegel has concluded and endeavored to show that the Absolute is more than simple Idealist philosophy that erroneously imbues some attributes of consciousness to the world itself. He has made clear efforts to show through this work the progression of the naturally occurring human consciousness towards a self-consciousness which can certainly perform and conduct high quality scientific examination of the world. At this point, Hegel shows that this consciousness striving for union with reality and the Divine, inclusive of the world and every individual at all points, in order to ensure readers that the knowledge resulting from this use of the human mind will yield genuine knowledge.

The truth is the Absolute. Self-consciousness as Absolute self-consciousness. However he also attempts to clarify that these mental states are far more than simple mental conceptualizations. Although working independently of them, there are various Eastern schools of thought who have reached some of the same conclusions. One basic shared point is that there are spiritual psychological mind states that are decipherable, that contain information at least some of which can be presented conceptually, but that are not only the concepts that can be used to indicate them. This is not too different from the idea that there are names and there are individuals who have and use those names. The name alone can help, but to have experience with the individual and to have the name is quite different.

In certain respects this concluding chapter is a summary review of all that has gone before, but without all the details. This can be quite helpful towards understanding that consciousness's development is a progression. He concludes by setting forth a goal: Absolute self-conscious Spirit. History and Science, when the sum of their knowledge is taken together, is what will lead people to that goal. "Absolute Knowledge or Spirit Knowing Itself as Spirit" is the destination of consciousness. However, the author writes in the assumption that even once such a level as that is achieved, that humanity will in fact be able to make further progress. In this case his final remarks serve as a testament and integral part of his famous system of philosophy: that the whole matter of life and the world is a spiritual progression through time. This is something that young people always love and tend to agree with often enough. It means elders can both



support and learn from the next generation and that every generation will face the trepidations of having become outmoded. Ultimately, Hegel has done his best to provide those who come after him with an excellent means to advance their consciousness beyond his own.



# Characters

## G W F Hegel

Gottfried Wilhelm Hegel is the author of the philosophical treatise: The Phenomenology of Mind. There is a brief description of his life supplied on the cover of many translations of this work. He is known to have lived about 60 years. He wrote despite on-going war in his region. He is known to have fathered an illegitimate son whom he helped to raise although he married a different woman altogether and also had children with his legal wife.

Hegel is currently held to be one of the greatest philosophical minds and best writers of all time. His work is rooted into history, and is not presumed to overstep the bounds of the time period in which it was produced. This means that his efforts were intended to take into account the progress for humanity that earlier philosophers had made and that he would doubtless bow to and hope that mankind would make beyond his era. His work is considered to be within the parameters of the European philosophical tradition.

Hegel's philosophy is best understood with respect to its own field of endeavor. Hegel's approach to and participation within the field of philosophy was that of a powerful individual within a field of great human endeavor.

## J B Baille

Baille is the translator. There are several translators in the field of philosophy and many specialize in the works of one particular philosopher. He has provided English readers with extensive notes so that they can relatively easily check to see which German words he has translated in which way. This is to back up his unspoken claim that he is providing an accurate translation of what Hegel has written. Like everyone, Baille is well aware that to translate is a special responsibility and that all works of translation will face criticism, some highly skilled and some not so.

Baille has provided extensive notes to readers throughout the length of the entire treatise. While for some this may take away from a sense of complete purity of Hegel's work, for many others these help to keep clear a book that is renowned for its complexity.

## Zeus

This god of ancient Greece, during the era of Greek city-states, is mentioned late in the text during Hegel's discourse on religion. This deity is used to facilitate Hegel's explanation of the transformations of consciousness with respect to the divine.



## Lavater

This was one of the most famous proponents of physiogny in England and Germany circa 1800. The work he did during his life had a major cultural influence on Hegel and that man's contemporaries. It was due in part to him that Hegel addressed the topic of physiogny in the Phenomenology of Mind.

## George II

This is the name of a King of England. He lived and was on the throne of England during the time that the philosopher Hegel was alive. One of his public policies was to restrict knowledge or information regarding the science or pseudo-science of physiogny within the nation of England. He was not the first English Monarch to do this. As such, he revived pre-existing laws rather than inventing entirely new ones.

## Antonines

This is the name of a Roman Emperor. He appears within Hegel's text during a translator's note. The translator explains that this Emperor ruled during a time when the Romans made great gains in terms of the creation and use of jurisprudence and written laws. This shows up at the very beginning of the discourse about rights and legal status within The Phenomenology.

## Lichtenburg

This man appears within Hegel's exposition about phrenology and physiogny. Lichtenburg wrote a book which Hegel both read and used as a reference within the Phenomenology of Mind.

## Diderot

Diderot was a fiction author who influenced Hegel during the time that Hegel wrote the Phenomenology of Mind. The work was originally written in French, but was translated into German. Hegel based his notion of the "self estranged spirit" on a character called Rameau.

## Goethe

Goethe is one of the most famous Germans of the realm of literature. Hegel mentions his translation of a French masterpiece. However, Goethe was also famed for the "Sturm und Drang" period of German literature. Goethe's fame grew as Europeans began to outgrow Romanticism as the prevalent form in aesthetic and literary society. He turns up during Hegel's discussion of the "self estranged spirit."

## Immanuel Kant

Kant crops up within Hegel's Phenomenology when Hegel communicates with readers about "categories." These were heavily researched and organized by Kant, who was a German predecessor of Hegel's. Kantian categories are extremely important in the development of the Western mind since they are about knowledge and mind, and include concerns about how human consciousness relates with external reality. As such these are intimately involved with the question, "Can we know anything? If so, how?" Answering this question is mandatory for scientific progress, and also for Hegelian philosophy.



# Objects/Places

## The Statue

Hegel discusses the statue in relation to the emergence of the divine consciousness and the religion of art late in the book.

## The University of Leeds

The university in England where the translator wrote the letter that appears at the very beginning of the Baille translation of The Phenomenology of Mind.

## Critical Journal of Philosophy

The journal of philosophy in which some of Hegel's work first appeared within the field.

## Jena

The name of a town in German territory where Napoleon went to battle with a Prussian General. It was a location near enough to Hegel to cause him some concern.

## History of Philosophy

This is the English version of the title of another work of philosophy by Hegel. In it he expresses more than history, but rather his philosophy of history.

## Cranioscopy

A set of theories and information determined in this time and culture to be a "pseudoscience." The ideas of cranioscopy have emerged and then been suppressed in Europe at various times. During Hegel's lifetime, this "science" had gained some popularity but was extremely controversial.

## Phrenology

Phrenology is a "brother" of cranioscopy. This is also currently viewed as a false imitation of a science. In phrenology, the theory is that by obtaining thorough knowledge of the shape of anyone's head from the outside while he or she lives, that one will be able to make accurate assessments regarding disposition and abilities and possibly more.



## Greece

The Greek city-state era figures in Hegel's philosophy in relation to religion. He does not ever directly mention democracy in his work, but he and others surely notice that it had been exercised in Greece for a time.

## France

The location of Diderot's fiction novels by virtue of the nationality of the author. France was also influential during Hegel's lifetime, and at war with Prussia.

## Prussia

Prussia had held an empire that was in what is now a range of land between Eastern Germany and Western Russia. At the time of Hegel's writings, Prussia was strong enough to have her own military. It was in fact a Prussian military force that faced off with French Napoleonic troops just as Hegel completed *The Phenomenology*.



# Themes

## The Development of Consciousness into the Scientific Mind

Hegel undertakes to show how the naturally occurring human consciousness can be developed in such a way so as to effectively learn and pursue knowledge and development of the fields of science in general. In order to do this, there is an extent to which he has to defend both knowledge and science in general. However, there is no chapter specifically devoted to the empirical sciences in direct relation to a particular stage of consciousness or self-consciousness. This may make it appear as if in reality, he got a bit off track.

However, it is true that the groundwork he takes readers through does set forth what is needed to do this. Millions in this culture today have received at least basic training in the scientific method and the basic principles of the main branches of the empirical sciences as part of their education. For those familiar with this, it is quite true that Hegel's defense of the reality of knowledge is important as he is correct that philosophy is the grandfather of much of modern science, and not only sciences such as psychology.

In philosophy, epistemology is the branch of the field that is focused on knowledge. What makes knowledge possible? What is knowledge? How do we know what we know? Hegel tackles all of these questions within this book and, in doing so, sets things up very well for readers to come to greater confidence in the mind's application to the gaining, ordering and use of scientific knowledge.

## Spiritual Growth

Hegel posits that Spirit is in fact the mind functioning at what might be referred to as a particular wavelength. What he means of course is that once a specific level of development is achieved, then the mind's function transcends all the processing associated with "normal consciousness" and operates from a modality that is better understood to be and recognized as living spirit.

The way that readers might react to this description of Hegel's work in this text depends largely upon their own backgrounds and perceptions. For people who have previously had their religious and intellectual development cordoned off from one another, the material in this book might be even more astounding than it would be for those who have been practicing philosophy for some time.

The significance of Hegel's work to the spiritual realm is undeniable. Ultimately, he is either an opponent or a profound ally. Of course, he may well be right on many counts, but still incorrect in some. His description of mind gives rise to mankind to be able to





recognize knowledge and mental development as movement towards improved contact with the divine, including within the context of Christianity. The root nature of the Absolute is crucial, since there are tremendous theological implications to the basis of consciousness and spirit and their relations to life, to God, and to knowledge.

That Hegel shows that consciousness can develop and in doing so can become more spiritually well formed has numerous implications in itself. This approach is more akin to science in that it has taken kinds of transformation that may have been held to be biological or the result of inspiration into a comprehensible, systematic means of training that can allow for progress in most, if not all, persons. This is quite impressive in its own right. One can see how it could be considered to be a strong support to religion or a threat to religions because it can function on its own. His ultimate conclusions are worth review by serious theologians.

Ultimately, Hegel says that Absolute reality and truth are not simply philosophical Idealism but are actual. He shows that they are accessible to mankind through the human consciousness and also through processes that incorporate the world as we find it in conjunction with the human consciousness. He tells readers that, in the end, the process will provide the promise of endless progress. He also implies that the knowledge yielded by the use of the scientific method and the sensory processes, when united correctly with consciousness, does yield the truth or ever more accurate renditions of the Absolute. The latter, he also indicates, is itself spiritual reality, by virtue of being reality as such.

## **Spirit & Mind as Human Progress**

Hegel leads readers through the development of consciousness. He makes it quite clear that he believes that childhood development includes a replay and review of the history of mankind "in a nutshell." He addresses this same issue by going through the changes of human consciousness from what he calls its natural state into the scientific mind. After the level of the scientific mind is reached, Hegel encourages continued development and includes phases and kinds of mind that transform mental consciousness into a specifically spiritual condition and function.

Even at the end of the book Hegel points out the relationship of history and science as vital to making clear the connections between historical progress of culture and mind within humanity. He uses this throughout the text as he provides sequences of examples of what he means.

Part of what makes this work by Hegel so excellent is that he describes the parts of the issues in a manner that becomes manageable and comprehensible to the reader. He includes methodology. He proceeds using the very system of transformations that he explains to readers are what works. In this respect he does provide readers something as valuable as what the scientific method does for science. Once you know the procedures, it is much easier to make headway. Without knowledge of the processes, it is extremely difficult to make any progress at all.



Hegel finishes off this work by showing that the potential for progress is endless. He provides this system of thought to posterity. This way, one sees that he has conducted this philosophical work with a view to making a contribution to humanity on the whole and to the long term future over and above earning money and improving his career during his lifetime—also a goal.

Consciousness develops. Humans are special in that we are able to do this by choice, just as we can select exercise to become fit. Thanks to the freedom of being human we can choose to cultivate this aspect of ourselves.



# Style

## Perspective

There are two voices in this book. One is Hegel's and the other is that of the translator Baille. Baille's general attitude towards Hegel's writings are that they are written by a genius and show all of the complexity of that. As such, they are viewed as well worth having astute and highly trained scholars provide guidance for readers endeavoring to go through it.

Hegel was well read in philosophy and highly literate. He did not feel that he needed to write down to his audience. He expected to be read mainly by others in the field and then, later, by anyone else with the mental power and stamina to read him. He was not intentionally unclear, but made an effort to clarify within a context of great complexity rather than simplicity.

The author wrote the entire work in the third person, with very rare self-references. He does not alter his tendency towards grammatical complexity. By the end, one has either grown accustomed to it, will have dedicated himself or herself to working away at it, or will have given up.

## Tone

The tone of this masterpiece is predominantly educational. However it really is not educational in the style of a text book. It is designed to showcase a development. Nowadays we would call this "theory" or "high theory." From our perspective, the tone is that Hegel has taken the trouble to both prepare and espouse in this book an entire theory. It is mainly a theory of knowledge, but also involves a developmental history of mankind up to the time of his creating the work.

From the perspective of today's reader it retains a great deal of significance. However, there are a few points that are a bit odd. One is his defense of science. This is only odd because today's readers are living with another two centuries of intense scientific cultivation and the proliferation of education in the sciences. Hegel was in favor of these but had no experience of living with the systems and results of pursuing this effectively.

Of course Hegel does not touch on women's rights but the whole massive set of cultural changes that have emerged in many societies including German culture means that an increasing number of women participate in the study and understanding of his material. However women are extensively discussed when Hegel is comparing "divine law" and "human law." In this context, Hegel means the rules that govern familial relations and those that constitute "laws of the land" or nation. In this particular sphere, due to the sociological restraints that German women were experiencing at that time, women are closely linked to "divine law" whereas men in their public roles as citizens are reflective of "human law."



In the end, the feeling is that Hegel intended to make a major contribution to the field of philosophy and probably wished to benefit humanity on the whole by sharing the contents of this written work. He hoped to add to the healthy growth of mankind by improving the understanding of mind and spirit through history. In philosophy, the study of knowledge is known as epistemology and that is, in the main, the category of philosophy into which this work falls. However, his effort was all embracing and as such serves as an excellent basis upon which others can do more.

## Structure

This book is quite unusual in its internal structure. Hegel relies upon a complex combination of headings and subheadings. These may reflect error and the pressures under which he wrote the work or they may yet again expose how the complex grammatical possibilities within the German language especially enabled him to come up with this particular set of subdivisions.

He has devised the text to follow a clear progression. Unlike many books, however, the depth of the material makes it all too easy for readers to feel bogged down when deep within any given section, or to lose their sense of overall position with respect to the situation. The beginning is consciousness in its most basic form. He follows that by introducing self-consciousness on the whole and specifically for humans. Beyond this point a new level of complexity is achieved that is focused upon more sophisticated mental development within humanity.

He first goes through an examination of ordinary reason and then proceeds to study and expound upon the notion of Spirit. At this point he also intentionally transcends the individual mind through union with society. This includes all individuals, of course and so bounces back and forth necessarily between group concerns, such as ethics and laws, with their individualized forms such as personal decisions. Awareness of personal freedom as a heightened level of enlightened consciousness emerges and Hegel goes into some detail about how this enlightened being lives within the world of morality and conscience.

Later, he moves through religion which, while always present during the earlier parts of the book, has now become paramount. He devotes two final books to this topic. The first covers an great expanse of religious methodologies and practices. He includes Nature, art, theatre and revealed religions all within the great embrace of his exposition. Finally, when he has analyzed all of this and clarified himself to readers, he provides discourse regarding absolute knowledge, which is what Hegel has ended up being most famous for.



## Quotes

"Here it has to begin all over again at its immediacy...and as if it had learned nothing from the experience of the spirits that had preceded. But recollection (Erinnerung) has conserved the experience....yet at the same time it commences at a higher level," p.476.

"This movement within itself expresses the absolute Being qua Spirit. Absolute Being, when not grasped as Spirit, is merely the abstract void," p. 450.

"The Oracle...is the necessary and first form of divine utterance," p. 417.

"These ancient gods, first born children of the union of Light with Darkness, Heaven, Earth, Ocean, Sun, earth's blind typhonic fire," p. 416.

"This therefore is Religion in the form of Art," p. 402.

"It knows that it has the universal, the law, immediately within itself, a law which, because of this characteristic of being immediately within consciousness as it is for itself, is called the Law of the Heart," p. 209.

"The individual exists in himself and for himself," p. 175.

"...and the friendliness of the individual in making allusion to a notion in childlike friendliness which is childish," p. 169.

"The irrational freedom of 'fancying,'" p. 169.

"The kind of Idealism which does not trace the path to that result, but starts off with the bare assertion of this truth, is consequently a mere assurance, which does not understand its own nature, and cannot make itself intelligible to anyone else," p. 134.

"Reason is the certainty of being all reality," p. 135.

"Consciousness will determine its relation to otherness or its object in various ways," p. 134.

"If they were distinguished as Nature and Spirit or God, the unconscious inner working and weaving would have nothing of the wealth of developed life required in order to be nature, while Spirit or God would have no self-distinguishing consciousness," p. 339.

"...one kind of enlightenment calls absolute Being that predicateless Absolute, which exists in thought beyond the actual consciousness from which this enlightenment started; the other calls it matter," p. 339.

"The true being of a man is, on the contrary, his act," p. 183.



## Topics for Discussion

Is family law divine law? Why or why not? Discuss the difference between Hegel's view and your own, thus clarifying both.

Do you think that consciousness can perform both of these functions: to observe itself and to also make accurate observations about the world? Defend your answer.

Do you find it difficult to understand Hegel, even in English translation? Why or why not?

What are the implications when the law of Family and the law of Government "fall into line" with one another? Is it possible to have a functional society that has this "familial" or "divine" rule at its base? Perhaps that is already what we have. Please discuss this.

What are some of the implications for people who face unquestionable conflict between the kind of governance that they find at home and that which they discover within public society? To which are they duty bound to adhere when there is a conflict of authority?

Unlike in Hegel's day, massive schooling and other projects bring people within parts of the community and "under common public authorities" from an early age. Is this good, bad or both? Defend your answer.

What are the most basic differences between the categories of religion that Hegel covers: Nature Religion, Religion of Art, and Revealed Religion? Include main characteristics of each.

Do you agree or disagree with Hegel about the fundamental relationship between consciousness and "external reality"? Explain your answer in terms of Hegel's theory. Feel free to refer to contemporary science and culture in your discussion.

Describe the process of mediation. College students taking courses in Hegel may have heard of this within the framework of "the dialectic" or "thesis, antithesis, synthesis."

Is Hegel's philosophy a form of Idealism (meant in terms of epistemology here rather than the common usage of it being about values)? Explain your answer.

By the end of the book, Hegel has espoused a rather complete theory. Do you personally agree that Hegel describes various "levels of development of consciousness" in humans that can be observed within those we meet? If so, provide supporting evidence. If not, then describe why you do not think so.