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# HEGEL

*Abductive Inference, Autonomy, and the Faith of Abraham*

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> *I do aver that I love my country, that I*
> *am proud of its institutions, that I have a*
> *feeling . . . which is the proudest thing in*
> *me, that there is no man above me—for*
> *my ruler is only myself, in the position*
> *of another, whose office I impose upon*
> *him—nor any below me.*
>
> –Nathaniel Hawthorne,
> Dr. Grimshawe's Secret

Any consideration of Hegel's interpretation of the faith[1] exemplified in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son at God's command must bear in mind Johannes de silentio's criticism of Hegel on just this issue in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*.[2] But though Hegel forms the contrast against which each of the *problemata* of that work are framed, Johannes does not engage Hegel's interpretation of the religious significance of the faith of Abraham. Instead, as Jon Stewart shows in *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, the passages Johannes takes as his foil concern either issues in Hegel's politics, as in *problemata* 1 and 3, or, as in *problema* 2, with aspects of Hegel's logic that have "nothing

to do with Johannes de silentio's discussion."[3] As a result, Stewart concludes "Johannes de silentio and Hegel are talking about two different things."[4] But Hegel dealt with the religious import of Abraham's faith in a number of places throughout his career, and while Kierkegaard did not have access to the views on Abraham one finds in Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* (e.g. the first 20 pages of "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate"),[5] an edition of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* was brought to press in 1832, the year following Hegel's death. Had Kierkegaard been interested to work through those lectures, de silentio could have engaged Hegel directly over the issue of the significance of faith for a people's identity. For it is to religion, not political philosophy, that one must turn if one is interested in Hegel's understanding of Abraham's trip to Mt. Moriah as the expression of a people's faith.

But Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* were given at four different times over the last decade of his career (in 1821, 1824, 1827, and 1831), and the discussion of Judaism in particular undergoes revision over the course of that decade. This makes a direct contrast of Hegel's views with Johannes somewhat difficult. This difficulty is compounded by the need to read Hegel's discussion of Judaism in those lectures in the context of his philosophical system. This being so, rather than endeavor to address Johannes's critique of "Hegel" directly, the current paper aims to consider Hegel's discussion of the faith of Abraham within the context of his own views. In the process of tracing the contours of Hegel's position on these issues I hope to open the door to an appropriation of some of the rationalist and romantic elements animating the Hegelian project, in particular concerning his logic, metaphysics, and social philosophy.

3. Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 326.

4. 331; see 315–16, 329–33. Stewart argues that Hegel and Johannes are talking "at cross purposes" (321 and 323) because Kierkegaard is interested in critiquing not Hegel, but some of the contemporary Danish Hegelians—in particular Johan Ludvig Heiberg, Hans Lassen Martensen, and Rasmus Nielsen (307–9, 327–35). Kierkegaard has Johannes address Hegel, on this reading, because Hegel is "a convenient target by means of which to set up [Kierkegaard's] own view and a convenient symbol that would have a clear significance to his contemporary Danish reader" (323).

5. G. W. F. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox and Richard Kroner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), 182–301.

## 1. The Faith of Abraham in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*

Though the relationship between philosophy and religion is a central concern throughout Hegel's work, it was only after settling in at Berlin that he devoted himself to a systematic treatment of the philosophy of religion. Though there are large-scale structural features in common across the decade in which Hegel gives these lectures, much of the detail is revised substantially (Hodgson's editorial introductions to the three English volumes of the religion *Lectures*—itself a small book—offers an extensive treatment of these changes). Throughout all four lectures Hegel divides his treatment of religion into three stages: an examination of the concept of religion and the character of the social practices that realize that concept at any given time (published as Volume 1: *Introduction and the Concept of Religion*);[6] a consideration of various determinate religions in Western history as stages in the working out of humankind's understanding of its place in the world (Volume 2: *Determinate Religion*);[7] and a treatment of Christianity as the sociohistorical realization of the concept of religion at work in this process (Volume 3: *The Consummate Religion*).[8] In all four lectures Determinate Religion takes primitive natural religion as a starting point and Roman state religion as an end point. But the place of Judaism in the transition from primitive to Roman religion varies. This variation is not substantial, and most of the differences between earlier and later versions of Determinate Religion are the result of Hegel familiarizing himself with more foreign religions, particularly those of China and India, and endeavoring to understand their place in the West's intellectual development. One might wonder whether cultures with such little interaction with the sociohistorical development that Hegel is interested in tracing ought to be treated as moments in that development; I will bracket these concerns in most of what follows, aiming instead to focus on the metaphysics of personal identity that underwrites this philosophical anthropology. I begin with a brief survey.

6. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1: *Introduction and the Concept of Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart, J. P. Fitzer, and H. S. Harris  (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

7. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 2: *Determinate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart, and H. S. Harris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

8. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 3: *The Consummate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart, and H. S. Harris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

With the exception of the 1824 lectures, Hegel divides *Determinate Religion* into three stages—primitive religion, the religions of spiritual individuality in ancient Judaism and ancient Greece, and the Roman state religion. The following from the end of the introduction to the 1827 lectures on Determinate Religion is representative of Hegel's view throughout the decade:

> So far as the historical development is concerned, nature religion is the religion of the East. The second form of religion, namely that in which the spiritual elevates itself above the natural, is in one aspect the religion of sublimity (that of the Jews) and in the other aspect the religion of beauty (that of the Greeks). . . . The third form, the religion of external purposiveness or expediency, is Roman religion . . . which constitutes the transition to absolute religion. (22:520–21)⁹

As we will see, the collective activities of a people, and the self-understanding that unites those activities under a set of shared purposes, is central to Hegel's theory of personal identity and sociohistorical development. One way of tracing a line of thought through Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, then, is to focus on his understanding of the purposive character of the practices surrounding a given religion's cultus. And one way of bringing this feature to light is to consider the general shape of his story of religious development in Determinate Religion, beginning with what Hegel calls "primitive religion."

According to Hegel, primitive religion represents the divine in a form fit for sensation and the immediate inclination of a sapience just emerging from sentient life. Here the purposes that unite a people are pre-reflective desire and aversion with regard to natural events (2 2:518–19 [1827]).¹⁰ Hegel sees the emergence of socially self-conscious communities out of this primitive religion occurring in two moments—in the development of the city-states of ancient Greece and in the religious conviction of ancient Judaism. Hegel characterizes this as the birth of *spiritual individuality*. The transition from primitive natural religion to the Jewish religion of spiritual individuality is a transition from the pursuit of purposes associated haphazardly with pre-reflective inclination and a desire to gain control over capricious divinized nature, to a religion where the divine is conceptualized as an agent, a locus of power and subjectivity with control over nature, whose purposes are immutable and universal (2:134–35,

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9. See also the selection from the 1831 lectures on this point at 2:514n.

10. When referencing the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* I will include in square brackets the year in which the referenced passage occurs as part of Hegel's lectures, unless the year is already clear from my discussion.

139, 152–54 [1821]; 444–48 [1824]; 674–75 [1827]). This universality occurs only on the side of these purposes' origin in the absolute subject of God, however—as pursued within the community they are not truly universal, for despite God's identity as the sole power and source of these laws and values the Jewish people conceived of themselves as a *privileged* people, as one that bore a unique relationship to the divine (2:157–59 [1821]; 434–36 [1824]; 683ff [1827]; 683–85n [1831]) Additionally, Hegel thinks ancient Judaism's purposes are externally imposed upon the people in a way that does not express the proper relationship between a society and its customs. As we will see, the story of God's command that Abraham sacrifice his son is representative of the external character of these purposes.

The second element of Determinate Religion at the stage of spiritual individuality is the religion of ancient Greece. In contrast with the ancient Jewish conception of the divine as a single absolute power, the Greek gods form a community, each with his or her own sphere of influence and relation to the other gods. Hegel praises the Greek cultus for its ability to permeate communal life with the ideals these gods represent, but they as yet remain ideals of human character—strength, wisdom, beauty, fidelity, family, and so on (2:387–89 [1824]; 642–44, 662–64 [1827]). Despite raising individuals up to a level where they recognize themselves as a community, the purposes that animate Greek religious worship do not unite the members of these communities under one common self-conception or aim. But in the Roman religion this panoply of gods is unified around the purposes of the Roman state, and thereby the disparate cultic practices of the people are associated with the ongoing life of the empire (2:388–89 [1824]). Nevertheless, Roman purposes remain external to spirit's development; they do not represent the self-expression of self-consciousness as such (2:406–7 [1824]; 521 [1827]). It would take the infusion of the Judaic conception of God, wedded to a new view of the relationship between the divine and the individual, to effect the emergence of a truly universal purpose out of the ancient Roman cultus. As Hegel sees Christianity, then, it unites the truly universal *concept* of God found in Judaism with the properly universal cultic *practices* that come out of the Greco-Roman religious tradition (I will have more to say about Hegel's views on Christianity below).

Throughout the lectures, Hegel takes the faith of Abraham and Job to be emblematic of the Jewish relationship to the divine.[11] Nevertheless, his

11. One of the major changes throughout these lectures is the place of the discussion of the different proofs for the existence of God, which Hegel correlates to different religious standpoints. I will ignore this issue in what follows, as it does not directly bear on the treatment of classical Judaism itself.

interpretation of Judaism evolves over the decade in which he gives the lectures, with the most striking development occurring at the start, between the 1821 and 1824 lectures.[12] The 1821 treatment of the world-historical significance of Jewish conceptions of the divine differs little from the view Hegel came to in the years prior to the writing of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*[13] (published in 1807), typified by the discussion of Judaism at the start of "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate."[14] Here the emphasis lies on God as Lord and his people as his servants; fear of God and submission to his will is the definitive mark of classical Jewish religion in the early lectures: "The relationship [is that] of servant to a Lord; the fear of the Lord is what defines it" (2:156; bracketed remarks preserved from the translation). Though Hegel celebrates ancient Judaism for its religious conviction that the divine is not a natural or animistic force and is instead a self-conscious subject and seat of universal power, wisdom, and justice, his view of the religion in 1821—and of the faith that Abraham exemplifies in it—remains primarily critical: "God's people is the one that he has accepted on condition that they shall fear him, and have the basic feeling of their dependence, i.e., of their servitude" (2:158). Crucially for Hegel, the purposes of God in ancient Judaism are external to the will of the worshipper—they are not the purposes of a community of autonomous actors. Instead, they are to be followed simply in virtue of the fact that God has willed them: "Virtue or piety would be a purpose in and for itself, [whereas] in fact it is only fear of the Lord, only absolute submission [to his will] that is valid—submission itself is the goal, is what counts" (2:139; bracketed remarks preserved from the translation).

But the 1824 lectures develop a more favorable treatment of ancient Jewish faith, and the contour of this treatment would remain more or less constant through 1831. In contrast with the earlier writings' emphasis on Judaism as a religion of servitude, in the 1824 lectures Judaism is taken to be a religion of *liberation*, of freedom from the contingencies of worldly dependence exemplified in primitive natural religion, a liberation effected by making oneself wholly dependent upon the divine. Because God is conceived as an absolute

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12. Despite the apparent continuity in Hegel's views of Abraham between the early writings and the 1821 lectures, there is evidence that Hegel's reading in the later period is in flux from the very start. There are three sections of *Determinate Religion* from 1821 that received somewhat different formulations in that year; two of the three of these sections occur in the material on the Jewish religion (2:134–35n.).

13. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

14. Published in the *Early Theological Writings*. This translation is a pastiche of a number of Hegel's early writings; see H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight, 1770–1801* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 330ff for a discussion.

power governing nature, nature is conceived to be wholly dependent upon God; by submitting their will to the Lord, the Jewish people thereby acquire a kind of independence from nature through a total dependence on the Lord (2:384). Fear of the Lord is still an emblem of this religious faith, but now that fear, and the submission it elicits, is associated with freedom from worldly concern (2:443–44). The faith in God that follows one's fear of the Lord is typified not as servitude, but as "liberation, being free from all dependence" (2:444). "It is this trust, this faith of Abraham's, that causes the history of this people to carry on; it also constitutes the turning point in the book of Job" (2:446). Yet this mindset affords liberation only from nature, and God in this religion "will not tolerate anything that possesses autonomy" (2:387). Though after 1821 Hegel is willing to emphasize the progressiveness of the Jewish conception of the divine as against primitive natural religion, this interpretation of the faith of Judaism as submission to an externally authoritative Lord who is master over his people remains constant throughout the lectures.[15] And so it is to *autonomy* that we must turn if we are to understand why Hegel finds classical Jewish faith problematic.

15. In terms of changes in substance, in 1827 Judaism is "elevated" above Greek religion as a religion of spiritual individuality (2:641–42, 669). Both religions still represent transitions out of the sensuous immediacy of primitive natural religion, but the Jewish religion is supposed to have effected this transition by conceiving the divine as something to be grasped in thought rather than through sensuous representation, as in the Greek religion—the Jewish religion of sublimity conceives of spirit as "elevating itself . . . beyond naturalness and finitude, and is no longer afflicted with and clouded by the external (as is still the case with the form of beauty)" (2:642). The only major change with regard to Judaism in the 1824 lectures that is not carried through to later lectures concerns the structure of the 1824 presentation, not its substance. While in 1821 Judaism is grouped together with Greek religion as a middle step between natural religion and Roman state religion, with Christianity treated as a new moment, in 1824 Judaism and the ancient Greek religion are grouped together with Roman religion as an intermediate point between natural religion and Christianity. In 1827 Hegel reverts to the 1821 division, and in 1831 Determinate Religion is reorganized again. Hegel in 1831 still conceives of Determinate Religion in three stages—primitive natural religion, a stage where the spiritual is set over against the natural, and the religion of freedom or self-determined purpose. But the second stage, conceived as a religion of "cleavage" (2:516n) or the "internal rupture of religious consciousness" (2:725) is understood to include Chinese, Hindu, and Buddhist religions—the religions of the East, which in previous lectures were associated either with primitive natural religion or as transition points between natural religion and the religions of spiritual individuality. Now, however, Judaism is grouped together with Phoenician religion (the religion of anguish) and Egyptian religion (the religion of ferment) as a transitional religion at the start of the third stage of Determinate Religion, the religion of freedom. The second two moments of the religion of freedom are now the religions of ancient Greece and Rome (2:736–60).

## 2. Conceptual Determinacy and the Metaphysics of Kinds and Properties

It does not take a great stretch of one's imagination to think of Abraham's trip to Mount Moriah, and the faith exemplified in his willingness to sacrifice his son there, as an expression of servitude to a Lord who commands submission to his will simply because it is his will. But to understand why Hegel takes this servitude to offer a defective conception of self-consciousness, one must understand Hegel's views on the faith emblematic of Christian conceptions of humanity's relation to the divine.[16] And to understand Hegel on Christianity one must understand some of his logic and metaphysics. Rather than imagining a transcendental canon for reason, judgment, and understanding that could be given by attending to the categorial structure of thought fixed once and for all, Hegel believed that to understand the nature of our discursiveness we have to understand the way our concepts—and the categories that delimit them—undergo development over the course of their use in reasoning. At the same time, he thought that some things in the world were themselves undergoing processes of conceptual self-determination—in particular, persons and societies. By tracing the genealogies of some of the concepts he found most important (including those for God, the state, and personal identity) Hegel proposed to show that historical change itself could be understood as the working out, the revision and development, of a single concept. The concept he thought he saw taking shape in the development of these other concepts was the concept of conceptual determinacy itself—the better we have been able to think the various determinate things we think, the better have we understood the nature of determinate thought itself, Hegel argues. Here Hegel was driven by his views on logic, specifically on the understanding we acquire of the concepts falling under categories of individuality, particularity, and universality when we conceive them via the roles they play in different sorts of syllogistic inference. It is in the first three chapters of the Subjective Logic—those on the concept, the judgment, and the syllogism (*Science of Logic* 600–704, discussed in the *Encyclopedia Logic* 223–59)—that these views are worked out.[17]

As was common practice in logic texts of the period, Hegel in this section begins with a discussion of concepts, proceeds to a consideration of judgment,

16. One might also look to the discussion of the Lord and Bondsman in the Self-Consciousness chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* for an understanding of why Hegel views this sort of relationship as defective, of course.

17. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanity Books, 1969), and *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

and finishes with a treatment of syllogistic inference. The concepts Hegel takes as basic are those occurring in categories of individuality, particularity, and universality. Though some of what follows will require modifying this slightly, for now think of the linguistic analogues of these categories as singular terms, common nouns, and predications, denoting objects, kinds, and properties (Hegel habitually speaks of individuality, particularity, and universality in what we today would call both the formal or linguistic and material or world-denoting modes). Though what we would regiment as common nouns and predicates can occur on both sides of the particularity/universality divide, I will be concerned mostly with particulars as common nouns and universals as predicates (this will be modified slightly when concerning genus/species relations below). The aim is to come to some understanding of Hegel's view of persons (individuals) as members of cultural groups (particulars) unified by having in common a set of properties (universals) definitive of their sociohistorical communities.

For each category there are two kinds of relations that concepts may stand in with regard to the other categories, one with each. This results in three forms of judgment. A universal (conducting electricity) can subsume an individual (this rod) as in the judgment "This rod conducts electricity," or that universal can subordinate a particular (being metal) as in "All metal conducts electricity."[18] Particulars, in addition to being subordinated to universals, can also subsume individuals: "This rod is metal." Finally, individuals can be subsumed by particulars and by universals (as in the first and the third of these sentences).[19] The categories of individuality, particularity, and universality, and the basic forms of judgments they stand in, were in turn individuated by Hegel according to three syllogistic figures.[20] For it is Hegel's contention that we do not understand these categories, or the judgments their concepts enter into, until we understand the role such concepts play as middle terms in, respectively, inductive, deductive, and abductive inference. In his "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis," the last of six essays written for *Popular Science Monthly* between 1877 and 1878, Peirce makes the same division of syllogistic figures

18. Hegel does not use "subsumption" and "subordination" in this way; I adopt it for ease of exposition. See his discussion of subsumption and inherence (*Subsumtion* and *Inhärence*) at 645–50 of the *Science of Logic*.

19. Whether a concept is a particular or a universal will be a matter of context, of course—in "these shoes are white" the term "white" functions as a universal; but in the context of the judgment "to be white is to be colored," it is a particularization of the more universal concept "being colored."

20. "The relationship of individuality, particularity and universality is . . . the *necessary and essential form-relationship* of the determinations of the syllogism" (*Science of Logic* 667, emphasis in the original).

that Hegel makes in the *Science of Logic*.[21] Using the instances of individuals, particulars, and universals introduced above, we can represent Hegel's figures as follows (I include Peirce's examples as well):

21. Charles Sanders Peirce, "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis," in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Vol. 1 (1867–1893)*, ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 186–199. Peirce already made this distinction in lectures given at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1866, published as "On The Natural Classification of Arguments," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 7 (May, 1865–May, 1868): 261–87, and in 1867 Peirce presented a paper to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences that distinguishes different ways of thinking about the content of our concepts: "Upon Logical Comprehension and Extension," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 7 (May, 1865–May 1868): 416–432. As we will see, these latter distinctions help track the function that those different forms of syllogistic inference play in the revision of conceptual content over the process of inquiry. But Peirce does not mention Hegel in any of these papers, and I do not know whether Peirce developed this classification independently of Hegel—the use of Peirce I put to making sense of Hegel's logic is my own. Regardless of direct influence, Peirce and Hegel end up saying rather similar things, particularly concerning what Peirce will call "abduction," "hypothesis" or "retroduction," in Hegel's third figure syllogism. See Paul Redding, "Hegel and Peircean Abduction," *European Journal of Philosophy* 11, no.3 (December 2003): 295–313. Redding argues that Peirce's theory of abduction is influenced by Hegel's attempt to make sense of Kant's idea of reflective judgment, on which we are presented with a particular and then search for a universal to understand it. Interestingly, Hegel's third-figure inference, corresponding to what Peirce called "abduction," is the syllogistic inference that takes a universal as a middle term. In the *Logic* this inference is associated with analogy (which will be a focus of discussion below) and at this point another clue to the ancestry of these ideas comes into view. For in September of 1831, just two months before Hegel's death, Francis Wayland, president of Brown University, gave an address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Rhode Island entitled "A Discourse on the Philosophy of Analogy," (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1831). Wayland opens his talk by saying it is a subject that "so far as I have been able to discover, has not yet attracted the notice of any writer in our language" (4). He then proceeds to argue that in addition to inductive inference and demonstrative (or deductive—see 21) inference, the development of the sciences requires a theory of analogical inference, for "demonstration and induction never discover a law of nature" (12) and "the use of the instruments of proof can never . . . of itself, insure the progress of discovery." One versed in Hegel and Peirce will find Wayland's discourse resonant with themes in both philosophers' works, but Wayland does not mention Hegel. Nor does Peirce, so far as I know, ever mention Wayland. Nevertheless, the talk was published in pamphlet form in 1831, so Peirce could have had access to it before the Lowell Institute lecture of 1866, and it stands as another suggestive link between Hegel's third figure inference as analogy, its apparent roots in Kant's notion of reflective judgment, and Peirce's theory of abduction or hypothesis (on which see Redding's paper). But I am as yet unaware of whether there is anything more than suggestion to any of these links.

## Table 1. Deduction: Hegel's First Figure (IPU) Peirce's Example

| 1) IP | 1) This rod is metal. | 1) This ball is from the urn. |
|---|---|---|
| 2) PU | 2) All metal conducts electricity. | 2) All the balls in the urn are red. |
| 3) IU | 3) This rod conducts electricity. | 3) This ball is red. |

This inference is deductive: the judgment that an individual thing is subsumed by a particular, together with the judgment that that particular is subordinated to a universal, licenses an inference to the judgment that the individual is subsumed by the universal. In a deductive syllogism the particularity of a concept—its subordination under another universal—makes it fit for use as a middle term mediating that universal with an individual thing. The conclusion (IU) is the judgment that results from that mediation of particularity (P). Once this structure of the syllogism is made out, it takes only a simple permutation of sentences to derive the other two figures.[22] But whereas the conclusion of a first figure inference is deductively ensured, the conclusions of the other two are not. The second figure inference corresponds to induction:

## Table 2. Induction: Hegel's Second Figure (PIU) Peirce's Example

| 1) IP | 1) This rod is metal. | 1) This ball is from the urn. |
|---|---|---|
| 2) IU | 2) This rod conducts electricity. | 2) This ball is red. |
| 3) PU | 3) All metal conducts electricity. | 3) All the balls in the urn are red. |

Here individuality mediates a relation of subordination between a particular and a universal, in virtue of the observation that the individual (or a set of them) is subsumed by both the particular and the universal. Finally, taking a universal concept as a middle term we have the third figure, which Peirce will call "abduction," "hypothesis," or "retroduction," and which later philosophers will call "inference to the best explanation."

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22. See the *zusatze* to §181 of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, and compare Peirce at 187–88 of "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis."

**Table 3. Abduction: Hegel's Third Figure (IUP) Peirce's Example**

| 1) IU | 1) This rod conducts electricity. | 1) This ball is red. |
|---|---|---|
| 2) UP | 2) All metal conducts electricity. | 2) All the balls in the urn are red. |
| 3) IP | 3) This rod is metal. | 3) This ball is from the urn. |

This inference is a case of hypothesizing that a thing that one knows to fall under a universal (exhibits a property) also falls under a particular (is a member of a kind) because, in the context of a commitment that the universal subordinates that particular (that those kinds exhibit those properties), this would explain why the thing falls under that universal.[23] It is worth noting that whereas philosophers have historically considered deductive inference to be the apex of rational cognition, Hegel gives third figure inference pride of place in his logical system. For it is with this inference that we express our rational grasp of universals in mediating the relationship between individuals and particulars.

In the course of working out this line of thought Hegel applies these divisions to a wide range of logical distinctions. In particular, Hegel treats of both non-essential subject/predicate relations, like the color of a rose, and relations holding between natural kinds and their essential properties. Peirce's examples, by contrast, deal with non-lawlike statistical generalizations. It is important to note, then, that these forms of inference range over a variety of individual/particular/universal relations (and what stands in for particularity in Peirce's case—being from an urn—is not happily thought of as a common noun). But with the exception of the association between the third figure syllogism and inference by analogy, to be considered below, I will focus on the particularity/universality complex that shows up in the relation between kinds and their essential properties (common nouns and modally robust predications), and that between species and the genera that subordinate them (classes of common nouns standing in hierarchical relations).

We can see that the *Schlusspiel* marked out by Hegel's syllogism affects the extension and comprehension of the terms falling under the categories of individuality, particularity, and universality in three distinct ways. Call the

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23. Notice that, on the usual translation of Aristotelian syllogistic into predicate logic, this inference is formally a case of the fallacy of affirming the consequent. Thus, it is essential that we understand an abductive inference as an inference whose goodness is material and not formal. This point is of course central to Hegel's claim that by making logic a matter of merely formal inferential transitions philosophers have misunderstood the nature of our discursiveness; see, e.g., discussion of "The Notion in General" at the start of Volume II of *The Science of Logic*, 577–95.

"extension" of a term the objects it refers to on some interpretation. Call its "comprehension" the array of entailments that are implicated by the use of the term on some interpretation. Let "content" be the genus of which extension and comprehension are species. In a paper presented to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1867 entitled "Upon Logical Comprehension and Extension," Peirce uses this distinction to mark some of the different ways a term's content can change over the course of inquiry (Peirce replaces "comprehension" and "extension" with "depth" and "breadth" in that paper, but I will use the more traditional terms). Peirce's distinction between the *informed* comprehension and extension of a term and its *substantial* comprehension and extension can be used to shed light on Hegel's account of the syllogism. The former is meant to capture the implication relations and referents of our terms at a particular time, and the latter is an ideal "state in which the information would amount to an absolute intuition of all there is, so that the things we should know would be the vey substances themselves, and the qualities we should know would be the very concrete forms themselves" ("Upon Logical Comprehension and Extension," 426).

For those of us used to working in an extensional predicate calculus, it can seem odd to talk of a term's content *changing* from one informed state to the next. After all, the model by which we interpret the language fixes the content of the terms and predicates once and for all, and on that basis computes the truth-values of sentences. On such a view of logic there is no sense in talking about a term changing its content except insofar as one uses the term under a different model. But if we are instead working with a theory of meaning that takes inferential relations as basic and computes the content of terms on that basis, and if further this theory is meant to apply to our actual practices of reasoning about and so coming to understand the world, then it becomes reasonable to allow that a term's content can change while working within one and the same model for the language. The suggestion, then, is to think of different inferences as functions that, over the course of inquiry, take us from one interpretation of our terms to successive ones.

By these lights, deductive inference has the function of explicating the comprehension of a singular term implicit in the subsumption of that singular term under a common noun. It does so by deriving as a conclusion the subsumption of that singular term under a predicate that is part of the pre-existing comprehension of (i.e. is subordinated to) the common noun. In this regard deductive inference does not affect the content of our concepts so much as make explicit what was implicit in a preexisting set of judgments. Inductive and abductive inference are otherwise, however. For an inductive inference

increases the comprehension of a kind-termkind-term (a common noun); by accepting an inductive link between a property and a kind one is licensing the predication of that property to any singular term subsumed under the corresponding kind-termkind-term. Indirectly, then, inductive inference will also affect the comprehension of all the singular terms in the extension of that common noun. Abduction, meanwhile, both increases the extension of a kind-term and increases the comprehension of a singular term. By classifying this rod as metal on the basis of its disposition to conduct electricity, I both increase the extension of the kind-term "metal" and increase the comprehension of the singular term, the understanding we in the language now have of the object denoted by that singular term (I am eliding difficult issues regarding when abductive and inductive inference are warranted, of course, and concerning the more distal implication relations that are affected by changes in comprehension). This understanding is facilitated by the fact that the subsumption of a singular term under a common noun implicitly predicates of the singular term all of the concepts contained in the comprehension of that common noun. And deductive inference, as we have seen, allows us to make these implications explicit.

In the canonical form of Hegel's third figure inference, we reason with a universal so as to classify an individual as a member of particular kind. In this way we explain a given property on the basis of a kind-identity, with the comprehension of that kind-identity remaining unaffected. But Hegel also discusses the third figure as analogical inference at 692–95 of the *Science of Logic* and pp.252–54 of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, and here we see a process that enriches a kind-term's comprehension by (potentially) increasing its inferential application, the predicates implicated by the employment of that kind-term. In both the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia* Hegel gives the following as an example of analogical inference:

> The earth is inhabited
> The moon is an earth;
> Therefore the moon is inhabited.

In both cases he writes that the middle term is an individual thing (the earth) that is understood in terms of its kind-identity; it is "taken as a concrete that in its truth is as much a universal nature or genus as an individual" (*Science of Logic*

693–94; cf. *Encyclopedia Logic* 252). This is what Hegel has to say about analogy in the *zusatze* to §190 of the *Encyclopedia Logic*:

> In the syllogism of Analogy we conclude from the fact that some things of a certain kind possess a certain quality, that the same quality is possessed by other things of the same kind. . . . Analogy is the instinct of reason,[24] creating an anticipation that this or that characteristic, which experience has discovered, has its root in the inner nature or kind of an object, and arguing on the faith of that anticipation. (254)

It is clear that kinds and properties are playing different roles in these two sorts of third figure inferences. In the first inference a single *property* (conducting electricity) is used to infer a *kind-identity* (being metal). But in the inference concerning the earth and the moon, the *kind-identity* (being a planet; an "earth") is used to infer that some one thing of that kind has some *property* had by another thing of that kind—in this case, being inhabited. Call the first inference *an abduction of a kind on the basis of a property* and the second *an abduction of a property on the basis of a kind*. Each of these forms of inference contribute to the determination of conceptual content in different ways. While the abduction of a kind on the basis of a property has the effect of enlarging a kind-term's sphere of extension (the individuals it ranges over) and so potentially explaining some property that an individual exhibits, it does not tell us anything new about the inferential link between the kind and the property in question. After all, we must rely on that link as a rule uniting the kind and the property if we are to infer the kind-identity on the basis of the property.

Things are otherwise with the abduction of a property on the basis of a kind, however. For the conclusion of an analogical inference is a hypothesis that, if verified in a range of cases, permits one to make an induction over those cases to the *establishment* of a rule or generalization that links the property and the kind together.[25] The abduction of a kind on the basis of a property expands a kind-term's extension but does not change its inferential role, for that sort of inference depends upon an antecedent grasp of a rule linking a kind and a property (it does change the inferential role of the singular term, of course). But the abduction of a property on the basis of a kind is (potentially) a stage in a

24. Wallace has "instinct or reason," but the German is *der Instinkt der Vernuft*. My thanks to Robert Brandom for bringing this to my attention.

25. In many cases we are not content unless we also have some causal story linking the kind and the property in question, but I leave this to the side.

process that would institute such a rule, and thereby enrich our understanding of what it means to be a member of that kind.[26] Though Hegel does not make this distinction explicitly, we will see that it corresponds to two different ways in which persons exert control over their social and individual identities, so that to understand what it is for persons to be *autonomous* one must understand what it is for them to engage in these kinds of inferential practices.[27]

We need one further distinction from Hegel's logic to see how this works—like the others, it encodes a corresponding metaphysical commitment. Thus far I have focused on Hegel's treatment of universality and particularity in terms of property and kind relations (cf. *Encyclopedia Logic* 232; *Science of Logic* 602, 638–40). But Hegel also speaks of particularity and universality as conceptual containment relations marking off species/genus classifications (cf. *Encyclopedia Logic* 229; *Science of Logic* 605–6, 620, 701–2).[28] With particularity

26. Of course, if the right property/kind relations obtain one can also *deduce* a kind on the basis of a property (only mammals produce milk; this animal produces milk; therefore this animal is a mammal) or a property on the basis of a kind (that this is copper means that it conducts electricity). But these deductions depend upon already having the rule or generalization linking the property and kind in question.

27. Peirce does appear to mark the distinction, however. In "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis," Peirce writes about abduction (hypothesis) that it is "where we find some very curious circumstance, which would be explained by a general rule, and thereupon adopt that supposition. Or, where we find that in certain respects two objects have a strong resemblance, and infer that they resemble one another strongly in other respects" (189). The first of these criteria corresponds to the inference of a kind on the basis of a property; the second of a property on the basis of a kind (reading resemblance as a classification). He also writes that "hypothesis substitutes, for a complicated tangle of predicates attached to one subject, a single conception" (198). This would be a characterization of the inferring of a kind on the basis of a property—or a "tangle" of properties. Peirce does not call the abduction of a property on the basis of a kind *analogical* inference, however, as he understands by "'analogy" a process of drawing deductive consequences from a combination of inductive and abductive inferences; 285–86 of "On the Natural Classification of Arguments."

28. Hegel marks a transition from property-talk to genus/species talk at the transition from the Judgment of Reflection to the Judgment of Necessity in the *Science of Logic*, 649–50. Hegel will also sometimes speak both of property/kind and species/genus relations within the context of a single discussion of particularity/universality; cf. *Encyclopedia Logic* 241–42 and *Science of Logic* 649–57. He does this for methodological reasons, as he rejects a treatment of conceptual content on which a given set of categories is fixed once and for all. In his discussion in the *Science of Logic* of the difference between the coordination of different species as particularizations under a genus and the subordination of a given particularization to a universal, Hegel characterizes as "sterile" the things logicians are led into saying when they conceive of subordination and coordination as "completely rigid relationships" (*Science of Logic* 616; see also the disparaging remarks about the prospect for a Leibnizian universal characteristic at 685). He believes that by the time he is dealing with the logic of the notion, he has already entitled himself to use these categories to talk about being and essence—the focus of discussion in the first two

we can discriminate a wider range of specificity—to be able to see the world as containing copper, gold, and silver, and not merely metal, is to be able to see the world more determinately, to avail oneself of a greater comprehension of it. And with universality we can bundle together and understand in common a wider range of particular individuals. Knowing that copper, gold, and silver are kinds of metals lets us classify the world and pick out regularities. With greater precision in discriminating particularity we gain a greater comprehension of the individuals that populate the world; with a greater precision in discriminating universality we gain a greater comprehension of the organization of the world's manifold variety. Notice that in the context of the subordination of a specific kind of metal (e.g. copper) under the kind-term "metal" we now classify "metal" as a universal rather than a particular. Unlike the distinction between common nouns and predicates, the distinction between universals and particulars can vary with inferential context.[29]

According to the first way of thinking about universality and particularity, a set of properties (universals) differentiates a kind from other kinds (a particular from other particulars) in virtue of the relations that those properties stand in to other kinds and their properties. But a further level of kind fine-structure comes into view when we consider properties that relate a kind to other kinds as species of a common genus. The former distinction enables us to comprehend individual things as particulars related to different particular things, while the second places a particularized individual in community with other individuals under a common kind.

sections of the *Science of Logic* to which the notion is the third (cf. *Science of Logic* 591 and 596). In the introductory chapter of the logic of the notion, entitled "The Notion in General," Hegel contrasts his approach toward logic and the content of thought with the approaches of others, emphasizing that his view requires us to consider conceptual relations not just in virtue of logical form, but also in terms of a concept's "specific determinateness" (589), writing that "this formal science must be regarded as possessing richer determinations and a richer content . . . than is usually supposed" (594).

29. I do not have the space to enter into this here, but there are concerns that ought to be raised with Hegel's willingness to apply these categories across the subject/predicate distinction. A substantial line of thought that emerged in twentieth century philosophy of language argued that kind-terms (common nouns) should not be thought of as predicates. Background for this development can be found in Peter Geach's attack on Aristotelian and medieval theories of logic and language in *Reference and Generality: An Examination of Some Medieval and Modern Theories*, 3rd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980; 1st ed., 1962) and "History of the Corruptions of Logic," in *Logic Matters* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972): 44–61, and in Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1960). More recent instances along this line of thought include Anil Gupta, *The Logic of Common Nouns: An Investigation in Quantified Modal Logic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), and Michael Durrant, *Sortals and the Subject-Predicate Distinction*, ed. Stephen Horton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001).

### 3. Inanimate Nature and the Self-Determination of Persons

As Robert Brandom has convincingly argued, Hegel's discussion of mediation and negation can be helpfully recast in terms of material implication and incompatibility.[30] Objects on this metaphysics-cum-logic are individuated in thought by tracking the material implication and incompatibility relations that express the paradigmatically causal relations that the object's properties stand in to other individuals, other instances of particularized universals. Knowing that some individual thing is made of metal suffices, so long as one comprehends the kind-term "metal," to know that it bears the property of electrical conductivity; in the formal mode, that this kind-term implicates that predicate. Thus, to comprehend an individual as a member of a kind (to subsume it under a particular) is to know the properties it bears as a member of that kind (so long as one comprehends the kind-term, of course). On the logical side these predicates stand in implication and incompatibility relations with other predicates implicated by different kind-terms and situational contexts. And in terms of the metaphysical side of this point, the properties that objects have are only properties insofar as they stand in determinate (often causal) relation to other properties and objects, with kinds as determinate loci of regular property possession.[31] Thus, to be given an individual's kind is to be given a comprehension of that individual as an object in community with other objects. That comprehension, on the side of the thinking subject, stands in a space of reasons carved out by the modal web with which we think its kind-specific predications. On the side of nature that comprehension is represented in the essential properties the object has as a member of its kind, the universals that the particular individual evokes as it interacts with other universally-implicating particular individuals. But there is an important asymmetry between the way these relations are determined among the inanimate natural world and the way they are determined among persons in a community of other persons. Understanding this asymmetry is a condition on understanding Hegel's theory of modernity as autonomy, itself the key to his views on the sociohistorical significance of different religious traditions.

That acids corrode metals and are neutralized by bases; that magnesium is flammable while gold is not, yet both, being metal, are malleable; these

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30. Robert Brandom, "Holism and Idealism in Hegel's *Phenomenology*," in *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 178–209.

31. "[Properties] are only determinate in so far as they *differentiate* themselves from one another, and *relate* themselves *to others* as to their opposites," *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §114, p.69; emphasis in the original.

are facts about property/kind and genus/species relations, facts that specify a community of interacting objects and determine the nature of the individuals in that community, without any participation on the part of the individual things in specifying which facts will determine their identities. But on the side of spirit the identities of the individuals in question, while likewise governed by patterns of kind-identity and property implication, are determined by the activities of those individuals.[32] For persons are individuals whose particularity is in part self-determined. That a bit of hard stuff is copper, and that it thereby is metal, conducts electricity, is malleable, and stands in various relations with other natural objects and their properties, is a matter of the agent-independent operations of causal law. But that any one of us is, say, a professional, a good friend, or a political activist—and just what it means to be such things in our community—is at least in part a function of these individuals' self-determination. Unlike the properties and kind-identities that individuate inanimate natural things, the properties and kinds that determine the identity of persons are themselves shaped by historical development.

Just as is the case with natural properties and kinds, some properties and kind-identities of the social sphere will be incompatible with other properties and kind-identities under a common universal, a kind that unites a group as a people. But here these incompatibilities are subject to two sorts of control on the part of the individuals within their extension—first, persons can sacrifice various particular desires and inclinations in the interest of determining their individual identities (as we educate our children to be tolerant of others, or as the student gives up a chance to socialize so that she can do well in school); and second, we can set up our social institutions so as to allow that two forms of identity are jointly permitted that otherwise might be regarded as incompatible (as, say, being a woman and being a head of state)—"just as the former exhibits the power of Spirit over its actual existence, so does the other exhibit the power of Spirit over the specific Notion of itself" (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §669, 407). This power that spirit has over itself is the power to self-consciously determine a community of persons and their identities, a power one does not find in the inanimate natural world. It is a power of defining a universal that comes to subsume us all—a kind-identity for the community of we who say "we" to one another.

These processes come to be represented in thought by the two sorts of abductive inference discussed in part 2—the first is the abduction of a kind on the basis of a property, and the second is the abduction of a property on

32. That the self-regulating activity of living things is an important bridge category between inanimate nature and spirit is a point I pass over here mostly in silence.

the basis of a kind. By the first process we individually enlarge a social kind-concept's extension by conforming ourselves to its rules, thereby determining the comprehension of oneself as an individual; and by the second we collectively determine the content of that kind-concept, its comprehension, as the spirit that unites us. But because persons are self-determining things, the sort of abduction at work here is not the sort at work in our thought about inanimate nature. For the particular/universal relations of nature are fixed independent of human activity, and there our thought is obliged to conform itself to the implication and incompatibility relations that exist independent of us. In our thought about inanimate nature we reason according to structures of *heteronomous* abductive inference. But we have two degrees of autonomy in determining our identities as persons—individually we can decide how to exist as particulars within our communities, and collectively we can determine what sorts of norms will govern our communal practices. These are *autonomous* abductive inferences. Whereas we are forced to conform our thought to the property/kind and genus/species relations of nature, spirit is the realm of self-determination.

In contrast to the story that one could tell of the development of our concepts of inanimate nature, the genealogy of a social universal is not just the story of our uncovering the independent individuality of the things that fall under it. Instead, the history of the development of a people's self-conception *just is* the working out of whatever kind of people they are, individually and collectively. This process is driven by the activities of the individuals within that community, though coming to a historical realization of this fact in institutions capable of sustaining its expression is long and arduous. Hegel sees modernity as the blossoming of that realization. From the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

> §351 The *labour* of the individual for his own needs is just as much a satisfaction of the needs of others as of his own, and the satisfaction of his own needs he obtains only through the labour of others. As the individual in his *individual* work already *unconsciously* performs a *universal* work, so again he also performs the universal work as his *conscious* object; the whole becomes, as *a* whole, his own work, for which he sacrifices himself and precisely in so doing receives back from it his own self. (213, emphasis original)

To see what Hegel is on about here, we have to understand his interpretation of the story of divine death and resurrection. We will then be in a position to appreciate why Hegel believes that the institutional frameworks and capacities

for self-expression that best exemplify what he takes to be the theme of that story, a theme of autonomy, are modern frameworks. This will prepare us for some closing thoughts on the role of religious practice as the expression of that autonomous power peculiar to spirit in nature.

## 4. Religious Allegory and a People's Self-Conception

Throughout his youth Hegel struggled for a universal sufficient to subordinate as great a range of particularity among individual things as possible, and so of a particular kind of thing that we and the world are for which this universal denotes an essential property or a subordinating genus-kind. This struggle was driven by his urge to see the world not as some haphazard collection of indiscriminate particular things bumping about disconnectedly, but as a unified whole whose doings were intelligible given the kind of thing that it is. In this Hegel was a paragon of eighteenth-century rationalism. But Hegel was also immersed in the romanticism of the nineteenth century, and he believed that whatever prospect there was for comprehending human beings under a universal sufficient to integrate the range of their particularity would have to take seriously their embodied, lived existence, particularly in its sociohistorical (and its organic) aspects.[33] Early on, he began to focus on the processes of organic genesis and growth as a categorial frame for logic and metaphysics, and he came to believe that human societies develop in ways that are structurally similar to the development of organic things.[34] He also believed that concepts themselves undergo a kind of developmental process, a gradual determination of content through use in human activity, according to a process akin to organic growth, the development of social institutions, and the maturation of a person's self-identity.[35] Religious worship is a place where Hegel applies these cross-

33. Hegel's early works on love and mythmaking are a testament to the influence this had on Hegel from the beginning; Peirce's discussion of love as the driving force behind the cosmos bears comparison with Hegel in this regard, as does a consideration of how Peirce's tychism about the laws of nature might be used to revise the account given in the previous two sections of this paper.

34. See Richard Kroner's introduction to Hegel's *Early Theological Writings,* 15–17, 27–31, 52–53; and H. S. Harris in *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight* 101–4, and *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts, 1801–1806* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 381 and 441ff. At 523–44 of *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts,* Harris offers an illuminating analysis of a marginal diagram Hegel drew depicting spirit as an organism in the years just before the *Phenomenology* was published.

35. See Robert Brandom's "Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism: Negotiation andAdministration in Hegel's Account of the Structure and Content of Conceptual Norms," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (August 1999): 164–89 for the argument that selves, actions, and concepts all have the same structure and unity by the lights of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I take it that Hegel believes

categorial modalities with abandon, and even from his time as a *gymnasium* student he was tracing the development of different religious traditions in the context of this organic holism.[36]

These early works are marked by oscillations between religious experience and philosophical reflection as the mode under which to unite the world's particularities. But in the first years of the nineteenth century Hegel began to fix their respective places in what would become his system of knowledge, and by the publication of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807 his mature view was in shape. At the center of this breakthrough stands the philosophical interpretation Hegel gives the story of the incarnation of God in the Revealed Religion (paradigmatically, in Christianity). In the *Phenomenology* and afterward, Hegel interprets the story of the God-man's death, resurrection, and return to the community in spirit both as a model for the relationship between social organization and personal identity, and an allegory for how conceptual content is made determinate by a process of continuous revision through inquiry. On Hegel's reading, the story of Christ's incarnation, sacrifice, and return in spirit represents a view of persons as individual things that acquire their particular identities within their societies only in virtue of their willingness to sacrifice those identities that are incompatible with that which they wish to be, while this very practice of sacrifice collectively articulates whatever social order they come to have, and so whatever people they collectively are. This abstract idea was, Hegel thought, made concrete in the practices surrounding Christian worship. In the society-wide identification of the individuals of the Christian community with Christ's sacrifice of particularity for universality—the sacrifice of his mortal coil for the salvation of humanity—the members of that community come to identify themselves, individually and collectively, with those expressions of value supposed to be universal and collectively pursued, not simply as something imposed upon them by an external authority, but as something they understand as an expression of their own identities.[37]

that the processes governing organic growth and institutional change share the same categorial affinities as do those Brandom argues govern the development of personal identity, purposive action, and the determination of conceptual content (these are lessons I take away from the Observing Reason and Religion sections of the *Phenomenology*).

36. *Hegel's Development: Toward the Sunlight*, 3–7

37. *Phenomenology*, §784: "The *death* of the divine Man, *as death*, is *abstract* negativity, the immediate result of the movement which ends only in *natural* universality. Death loses this natural meaning in spiritual self-consciousness, i.e. it comes to be its just stated Notion; death becomes transfigured from its immediate meaning, viz. the non-being of this *particular* individual, into the *universality* of the Spirit who dwells in His community, dies in it every day, and is daily resurrected." (p. 475, emphasis original) The individual sacrifice and identification of the community members with Christ so as to receive a share in

Hegel's breakthrough, achieved around the time of the writing of the *Phenomenology*, was to see that this picture-thinking representation could be plumbed for a conceptual content suitable for thinking across a range of categorial modes—that this story of God might at once be the story of sociality, personal identity, and conceptual content itself. And so with the writing of the *Phenomenology* Hegel made philosophical cognition definitively preeminent over religious worship.

> §785 This self-consciousness therefore does not actually *die*, as the particular self-consciousness is pictured as being actually dead, but its particularity dies away in its universality, i.e. in its knowledge, which is essential Being reconciling itself with itself. The immediately preceding element of picture-thinking is, therefore, here explicitly set aside, or it has returned into the Self, into its Notion. (475)

Hegel came to see the story of God's incarnation, death, and resurrection as a story about any determinate identity whatsoever: "Everything is a *syllogism*, a universal that through particularity is united with individuality" (*Science of Logic* 669). With this he was prepared to fix the relation between religious worship and philosophical reflection. Religion throughout the ages teaches in picture-thinking form a truth about a people's identity, but philosophical reflection is required to take that truth out of its religious representation and cast it in the guise of thought (cf. *Phenomenology* §788, 479).

## 5. Autonomy and Modernity

Genuine freedom is for Hegel, as for Kant, autonomy rather than anomalousness. We are free not when our actions are undetermined, but when our actions are determined by a rule we recognize as self-legislated. Hegel also shares Kant's view of the Enlightenment as a project for the development of autonomous citizens. When freedom is understood as autonomy, the proper contrast is not with determinism but with heteronomy—we fail to be free when we are governed by rules that are not our own (or, in the case of alienation, when they are in fact our own and yet we do not recognize them as such). Hegel writes of this state under the guise of the Unhappy Consciousness section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There Hegel considers a religious practice in which a people's values are made universal but only on condition that they

his spirit is most prominent in the Gospel of John, though it appears elsewhere in the New Testament and would become a cornerstone of Christian theology.

submit themselves to the external authority supposed to be the immutable source of these values.

> §230 Hence, for consciousness, its will does indeed become universal and essential will, but consciousness itself does not take itself to be this essential will. The surrender of its own will, as a *particular* will, is not taken by it to be in principle the positive aspect of universal will. (138)

The bare recognition of a capacity to determine our individual and social identities does not yet give us any determinate content for such an identity. Instead, that determination results from our coming together and trying to get things done. By collectively sharing some determinate purpose, something we all recognize as valuable and strive to see realized, we are by the nature of that practice obliged to begin sorting out the incompatibilities that are brought with it, contingently and as a function of the kind of task we have set for ourselves. Thus even if at the outset of our collective endeavor we do not share much in common, the practical constraints elicited by the cooperative activity necessary to realize a shared purpose will, over time, draw us closer together and specify the relations obtaining among us.[38] In this sense a shared purpose stands to the members of a community as a universal subsuming different individuals—for purposes are properties that can be common across all of us. And constellations of purpose, embodied in sets of values or social practices, can also operate as genus-universals subsuming each of as species under this common identity, obliging us to sacrifice those particularities (whether kind-identity or property) that are incompatible with the realization of these values. In this way our shared purposive activity tends to make us into a kind of thing we otherwise would not have been. Seen by these lights, the process of working out a social telos is the process of both (1) determining for ourselves individually what kind of particular persons we wish to be within our society, and (2) finding a higher-order purpose that subsumes our various particular purposes (finding a universal purpose that is an essential property of each of us as the particular kind, the member of *this* society, we are). The two aspects of this process are further specifications of the two sorts of abductive inference discussed in sections 2 and 3. Because our purposes define our self-identities, and because we are, as selves, pure being-for-self, we can use our individual and collective purposive action

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38. This all depends upon having selected a purpose that will admit of such unity, and a willingness on the part of individuals to sublimate their particularities to the realization of that purpose, of course.

to shape institutional development so as to allow for and become radically new kinds of persons.

Hegel finds in religion just such a shared purposive activity uniting a people as particular individuals under a common universal: "The principle by which God is defined for human beings is also the principle for how humanity defines itself inwardly, or humanity in its own spirit" (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 2:515 [1827]). The Christian religion is the religion that would give birth to modernity precisely because the purposes expressed in Christian forms of worship are at bottom, Hegel thought, the purposes that animate modern institutions—a community of self-determined persons standing in reciprocal recognition with one another, aware that by these practices they are constituting the social and personal identities realized within them.

This general theory of conceptual content interpreted through the lens of the incarnation can now be leveraged to give us a determinate conception of human beings. It is because Hegel thinks of human beings as certain *kinds* of things—embodied, social, autonomy-craving creatures—that the universal he proposed to draw us under is one that gives us some understanding of the particularities we find actually realized among us and our cultures. Hegel believes that this struggle for autonomy and recognition is a driving motivation for purposive activity on the part of self-consciousness, and thus he believes that historical transitions can be understood in terms of this struggle. Hegel will eventually be led to say, as he famously does in the introduction to his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, that "the History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom" (19).[39]

It was this philosophical interpretation of the Revealed Religion, and the correlate reading of history as the gradual working out of the content of this idea in a form suitable to interpenetrate a society and communicate it to its members in a specific set of practices, that allowed Hegel to develop his mature system. At the center of this system is his interpretation of historical development as the development of this idea, an idea that gives the read on the nature of persons, societies, God, and conceptual content itself. Because he believes the Christian story of the divine expresses a truth about our social practices of self-determination, because he thinks this theo-political point is characteristic of the "life of the concept" itself, and because he thinks this life is driven by self-consciousness's innate urge for freedom and recognition, Hegel is willing to read the history of such human endeavors as art, religion, statecraft, and philosophy as particular instances of the way in which this universal, this

39. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Willey Book Co., 1944).

concept of God, the self, society, and conceptual content itself, is actualized over the course of historical development.

## 6. From Faith to Trust

Given Hegel's interpretation of modernity as autonomy, it is not surprising that the submission to the will of the Lord exhibited in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son would be interpreted as an exemplification of pre-modern conceptions of the individual's relation to her community.[40] But whatever right there may be to conceive modernity as the development of autonomous communities, or to think of pre-modern tradition as laying the conceptual groundwork on which this self-knowing and the practices that support it could emerge, anyone who would think critically about Hegel's sociohistorical storytelling must take into consideration facts about the development of religious and political institutions that Hegel was unaware of.[41] But I leave an

40. Whether Christianity is much better situated to underpin modernity is subject to debate, of course. After all, it is central to the Christian mythos that God sacrificed *his own* son, while Abraham at the last received a reprieve—the lamb that replaced Abraham's son was the son of God himself in the Christian version of this sacrifice. Even if Trinitarian doctrine would have it that the sacrifice was self-determined, it does well to bear in mind Jesus' plea and resignation in the garden of Gethsemane, and the stories in Matthew and Mark of Jesus on the cross crying out to God asking why he has been abandoned. One finds submission to the will of the Lord in Christianity as well. And while I have not discussed this at all, I do want to register that Hegel's own view, though it develops over the course of the decade in which he gives the lectures, remains embarrassingly parochial and rather slap-dash when it comes to discussing non-Western religious traditions. This is especially evident when considering Hegel's treatment of Islam, which is practically nonexistent, and in the Eurocentric readings he gives of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

41. To take only one line of thought relevant to Hegel's own project, consider that we now understand the ancient Egyptian religion to be much older than Hegel supposed, occurring not contemporaneously with ancient Judaism but predating it by over a millennium. And with the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics we found that the story of divine death and resurrection, and its role in sociohistorical mythmaking, occurs already in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, remaining a staple of the ancient Egyptian religious life. In this tradition each pharaoh upon his death was thought to be reborn as Osiris, the lord of the afterlife, while the new pharaoh was crowned as his son Horus. In this way the ancient Egyptian religious mythos played an important role in securing continuity and order within the ancient Egyptian community, and the transitions out of the lawlessness and subjugation to external rulers characteristic of the two Intermediate Periods in ancient Egyptian history (into the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom respectively) were associated with a concerted return to these Old Kingdom traditions. Over the course of ancient Egypt's two thousand year history, this mythopoeic story was gradually disseminated out from being the exclusive right of the pharaoh into first the royal court and educated upper classes until, by the Alexandrian period, anyone could purchase papyrus copies of the Book of the Dead at market for their own use in religious ritual. Add to this the rise of modern biblical scholarship, beginning in Germany in the decades after Hegel's death, together with what we have come

engagement with Hegel over the particulars of his philosophical anthropology for another time. Instead, I will close out this paper by returning to the logical and metaphysical insights that animate these facets of Hegel's *Realphilosophie*, in the process tying together the main themes at work in this discussion.

Abductive inquiry into nature proceeds according to a kind of faith we have in the order and regularity of an independent reality, an operation of the "instinct of reason creating an anticipation that this or that characteristic . . . has its root in the inner nature or kind of an object, and arguing on faith of that anticipation" (*Encyclopedia Logic* 254). Here our thought is obliged to conform itself to the implication and incompatibility relations that obtain independent of our will. But the determination of our understanding of our personal identities is not bound by a regularity fixed independent of our own activity.[42] I characterized this difference by saying that the abductive determination of personal and social identity is an autonomous process, not a heteronomous one. The practices constitutive of our social lives afford persons two dimensions of autonomous self-determination, one by the increase of a kind-term's extension and the other by the increase of its comprehension. The kind-terms at issue are those for such social identities as professional colleague, friend, neighbor, educator, and citizen of a nation.

As we saw, the abduction of a kind on the basis of a property increases a concept's extension by drawing a new individual under it. Persons engage in this process by individually binding themselves to the kind-identities that are available within their communities, choosing to exhibit those properties that are essential to the identities they subsume themselves under, and sacrificing those properties that are incompatible with that identity. The abduction of a property on the basis of a kind, by contrast, allows persons to change the comprehension of a kind-identity by instituting new relations of entailment and incompatibility fixed by the abduced property supposed to be essential to that identity. The former activity is the process whereby *individuals* determine who they will be within a society; the latter activity is the process whereby *groups* of individuals collectively determine what sorts of kind-identities will be recognized within that community, and so on the whole what kind of community they will be—once again, "just as the former exhibits the power

to understand concerning the doctrines and influence of the mystery religions in the ancient Mediterranean, and one must come away with a view on the sociohistorical significance of the Christian mythos that is somewhat unlike Hegel's.

42. This is not to deny the possibility of an essence of persons *qua* persons; it is just to note that most of what we are actually interested in by way of personal identity is not what some metaphysicians have christened with "essence."

of Spirit over its actual existence, so does the other exhibit the power of Spirit over the specific Notion of itself" (*Phenomenology of Spirit* §669, 407). These two sides of spirit's capacity for self-determination afford human beings a power unlike anything found in the inanimate and organic natural world. It also puts us into relations with one another that are likewise unknown in the nonspiritual world. Even though someone is of a certain kind in our community, and so has a certain status here, their capacity for self-determination means that we cannot be deductively ensured that they will exhibit the properties implied by that kind membership. We must, in a sense, take it on faith that they will.

This is not the faith we have in an independent reality whose determinations are fixed by natural law, however; it is the faith of persons standing in a reciprocal relationship with one another, each recognizing the other as a source of self-determination bound by various relations of obligation and permission. To talk about this difference we need a way of marking off the structural features of a community of heteronomous individuality from those features characteristic of societies with autonomous individuals. Call the former a community of faith and the latter a community of trust.[43] The community of faith is a community whose members are bound together by relations of self-determination that they do not recognize as self-determined. As against the community bound together by faith, the community of trust is united by relations of self-determination and reciprocal recognition among individuals who are aware of their roles in this process. In this they live as self-conscious spirit, expressions of a new form of identity that, prior to their engaging in this relationship with one another, did not exist. No community, of course,

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43. Though he does not take up Hegel's discussion of religion, this distinction is partly owed to Robert Brandom's *A Spirit of Trust*, the manuscript for his reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It might seem that talk of "trust" is not the right way to frame the distinction I am marking here. For in section 147 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes: "The subject is thus directly linked to the ethical order by a relation that is more like identity than even the relation of faith or trust," *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). But the discussion surrounding this passage makes clear that there is no tension here. Hegel thinks that the ethical life of an individual, by which he means the body of laws and customs that define his community, is one that, properly understood, is not a *relation* that the individual stands in as an independent thing over and against another independent existent thing. We can put this point by saying that Hegel denies that one's national identity, say, is a two-place relation one stands in to one's nation. Instead, he thinks that individuals are *constituted* by their social identity—we might say they are one-place relations or unary predicates (perhaps more properly, they are kind-restricted quantifiers). None of this need conflict with the observation that to so constitute one's identity in this regard one must stand in relations of trust with one's fellows, as those fellows genuinely *are* independently existing things. My thanks to Brandon Hogan for bringing this passage to my attention.

can extricate itself from fate entirely; self-determination is subject to the contingencies of nature, and every autonomous community will have its own historically conditioned telos, something that its individuals must struggle to come to understand and direct. But a people whose spirit comes about as the result of their engaging with their fellows in the process of self-consciously constituting a recognitive community, collectively and individually making various trade-offs so as to form a more perfect union with one another by determining what will count as the kinds and properties that define them, is a people bound by relations of trust. In the practice of this form of life, which one might want to allow was a sort of worship (or a successor concept to it), a people place their faith not with an independent other, an implacable natural order or a lawgiver in dominion over his subjects, but with one another, living as mature, self-aware individuals in a society of equals.[44] Such a community stands in relations of *trust* with that (i.e. one another) which determines the property/kind relations characteristic of their identities, not one of *faith* with a supposedly immutable independent power.

The image of Abraham with his son on Mt. Moriah is an image of the very faith that Hegel thinks anathema to modernity. It is an image of a people bound together under a heteronomous abductive inference. This is not to say that for we Hegelians faith has no role to play in modern society; still less is it to deny someone like Johannes de silentio his Abraham, or to make light of the struggle for faith Johannes discusses. In fact, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel frequently speaks of the need for the "witness of Spirit" in the individual lives of a religious community if its concept is to be realized, and it is easy to read Hegel agreeing with the admonishment in the epilogue to *Fear and Trembling* that

> every generation begins primitively, has no different task from that of every previous generation. . . . No generation has learned from another to love, no generation begins at any other point than at the beginning, no generation has a shorter task assigned to it than had the preceding generation.(108)

Compare this with Hegel's characterization of history in the final paragraph of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the "slow-moving succession of Spirits" that each self must in turn "penetrate and digest," needing to "start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing

44. Richard Rorty's *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) merits consultation here.

from the experience of the earlier Spirits" (492). But Hegel can also say that while every generation must take up this task, and though this may require the witness of spirit, every *modern* generation must also struggle to come to *trust* with one another.[45] And the autonomy of trust is a social purpose that cannot be sustained by a submission of self to heteronomous faith.[46]

45. This is not to rule out the developmentally progressive viability of a future generation's coming to religious faith in the manner of self-abnegation, and one might look to the way in which the notion of submission has been used at different periods within Islamic cultures for a suggestion as to how such a faith might proceed ("Islam" from a word meaning "submission"). The current point is simply that any such faith would have to accompany the self-conscious self-determination, and warranted trust in one's fellows, if it were to count as a properly *modern* faith.

46. I do not mean to be suggesting that Kierkegaard (or Johannes) thinks such a faith could play this social role. It is central to the line of thought developed in *Fear and Trembling* that the faith emblematic of Abraham is one that operates *outside* the conventions of an ethical community, involving a "teleological suspension" of the ethical. These remarks are meant to help clarify Hegel's view rather than pit Hegel against Kierkegaard.