

The Struggle of Life and Death

Life as the Circuit of Life and Death

169. The results of the previous gestalts are sufficient to characterize the nature of life. It is a circle that contains two moments.

- 1) In a first moment, that of the first, simple universality of life, life is a) *the simple essence of time* steadily flowing in self-equalizing instants that have the dignity of space—as in the mathematical expression in which distance (space) equals velocity times time. b) It is *the universal medium* of differences that are real differences, a life world, a biosphere, composed of all the living beings with their differences from each other. c) It is a flow of the different parts or members of the life world, the one negating, feeding off of, living on, the death of the other.
- 2) In a second moment, that of the higher universality of the concept, it is the transformation of these differences, *developed time*, an evolution to higher forms, *time turning on itself as development or evolution*—as in the mathematical expression of the freely falling body in which distance equals velocity times time squared (32ft per second squared, on earth) The second moment depends on the first: life can only transform and elevate the differences of its members if it has its own stability, the stability of its axis as it turns on itself. But this stability of life consists of the *fluidity* of its differences. It is a unity in which all the different members exist for themselves while being united in *the life force that runs through them*.

Life is thus the infinity of the concept in the mode of being, *the simple concept*. And so now, as consciousness emerges as self-conscious, the new experience of this gestalt has been prepared by what was said earlier regarding infinity: “This simple infinity of the concept, turning back on itself in a polarized circuit of self-movement, is the essence of life. It is the soul of the world. It is the universal blood that runs through all things. It is not troubled or disrupted by any difference because it is itself in every difference, just as it transforms every difference into itself.” The being of life is no longer the abstraction of pure *being* or “this.” Nor is it the abstraction of universality or *essence* of the understanding, the forces concealed within the appearance. Its being is sensuously realized *existence*—the fluid force that turns infinitely on itself as a self-sustaining substance. The differences of the members or parts of the life world, as they struggle against one another, must be grasped as moments of the infinity of the movement of life, ever turning on itself. I.e., the individual living being must be comprehended within the totality of life, not taken separately by itself as if its essence lay *within* the separate individual—contrary to the distorted reflection of the concept that the understanding of modern science takes life to be, e.g., in taking the essence of life to be found in the DNA or genome of the organism.

170. The parts or members of the life world each have their own being for themselves, but this being-for-self is immediately reflected into the oneness of the whole since the same life runs through them all. At the same time, this oneness is the very dividing of life itself into these self-standing parts or members. The oneness that divides itself is not the pure positive plenitude of

being of Parmenides, which was previously diagnosed as a duality or dividedness that becomes an achieved oneness. Life is but the negative oneness of infinity, of endless turning about itself. This oneness that turns on itself has its stability only in this movement. And the differences of the members, the individual living beings, have their own stability only as a result of the fact that they belong to this oneness of life as a whole. And so we return here to the issue of the one and the many, examined previously in the gestalt of the understanding. We now see how this problem is exemplified in the relation between the unity of life and the multiplicity of the living beings. Life is a oneness that divides itself into a many, which exist as different from each other only as they return back into oneness. It is what we have seen in the inverted world: the self-repulsion of what is equal to itself, and the return back to equality of the unequal or different.

Each part or member of the life world is a “gestalt” or whole in its own right that is different from the other parts or members. Each living being thus has its determinate characteristics in relation to the others. But this reference of one determinate being to another is not a flight into otherness. The lion, in referring to the lamb, refers back to itself. Before it dies, the lion reproduces itself, its species, thanks to the lamb that it devoured. The divided parts or members are transformed by the unity of life itself, ever evolving into higher forms of life, approximating each in its own way to the perfection of life’s infinite self-movement. It might seem then that this unity is some third, *other* element that does the transforming—i.e., a distinct life force that is other than the individuals, as Bergson argued. But then we would still be in a realm of otherness where the life force would be something other than the individual living being, and vice versa. In the distorted reflection of the concept, the unity of life as a whole is regarded as something *within* the separate individual—whether taken intuitively, as in Bergson, or analytically, as in the explanation of life by the genetic code.

But the unity of life is nothing apart from the multiplicity. The stability of the different members of the life world both partakes of the infinity of life itself and constitutes that infinity. Thus the members of the life-world, resulting from the self-division of life, in turn divide themselves from themselves, i.e., they reproduce themselves, and so actively participate in the transformation of the differences into new beings that are also for themselves, in a circuit or spiral of life that is continually transforming and elevating itself.

171. Previously we distinguished the stability of life as a whole as a simple universality from the second universality in which this stability is disrupted and inverted. Looking at this latter circuit more closely, we see that it is made up of two moments. The first moment is that of the stability of the self-standing gestalts of the different members or parts of the life world, i.e., “life.” The second moment is the subjugation of this stability under the influence of the infinity that is the essence of life, i.e., “death.” Life is thus a unity of living and dying beings, a polarity of life and death.

In the first moment of “life,” difference has been transformed by the oneness of life from what it would otherwise be—from being a relation to something other, and so lacking in stability and being in itself—to being a relation to and for itself. Unlike the rock as something that is purely

passive on which the forces of nature operate, the flower treats the surrounding forces of nature as operating for and through itself. In interaction with the wind and the rain, the rock gradually wears away. But the flower, faced with the same weathering of the elements, grows, and so becomes more itself. And before its time of disappearing back into the oneness of life has arrived, i.e., before its death, it reproduces itself in new forms of itself, and in this way overcomes its own death.

In the pole of life there is the stability of the gestalt of the individual being as a being-for-itself. In this moment of life, the particular member stands *against* the universality of the infinity of the whole that would dissolve it. The individual living being denies the fluidity of life and its own continuity with that fluidity. It keeps itself apart from this, its inorganic nature,¹ living from it by consuming it. Each living being thus strives to preserve itself in its life by incorporating its environment, and by devouring other living beings, i.e., by consuming its own essence. In this moment of life, the *oneness* of the life force is the universal fluid *medium* that contains its parts or members, i.e., the different individual living beings existing alongside one another within the life-world, but no longer indifferent to each other, interpenetrating without touching, as with the juxtaposed things of the mineral realm. Rather they maintain themselves by devouring one another.

By devouring one another, however, the first pole of life gives rise to the pole of death, that of the subjugation of the individual to the totality, the disruption of life that leads to a higher form of its realization. In this perspective the simple universal fluidity of the whole is the essential being-in-itself of life while the different gestalts of the members have the characteristic of being-for-other. I.e., the individual living beings, engaged in whirling processes of living and dying, of consuming other living beings and reproducing new life, are essentially engaged in the reproduction and continuation of life itself. Although the individual living beings *appear* to exist for themselves, from this perspective they *essentially* exist only to sustain the essence, the universality of life itself.

However, the fluidity itself comes to be only through these processes, through the differences and negation of differences on the part of the members of the life-world, each existing for itself. And so the relation is once more reversed: the parts would be that which has being-in-itself, while life as a whole would be what is other. The whole is from this perspective something *for* the different parts which live off of and devour the medium of life itself. The essence of life is only *realized* in the existence of the individual living beings. Thus the relationship of whole and part is inverted, and the two moments of life circle around one another. Life is itself then an inverted world in which being-for-itself and being-for-other, essence and appearance, infinitely change sides. But whereas in the gestalt of understanding, in the inverted world in which white and black, sweet and sour, positive and negative, etc., refer infinitely to one another, nothing there exists for itself. Here, with the emergence of life, the circuit of reciprocal energy gives rise to beings that exist for themselves, if only momentarily, sporadically—as if in quest of a more permanent realization.

The two sides of life with which we began (fluid life force of the medium, individual living beings), first regarded as positive, given forces, have now come forward in a self-negating, self-repulsing manner. In one moment the individual members of the gestalt of life appeared to exist stably as beings for themselves. In the second moment they now appear to exist for the self-standingness of life itself. In this second moment the universality of life, which first appeared to exist as the negative power of dissolution, then appears to operate for the sake of the individual living beings themselves, as they consume their universal, inorganic essence to attain thereby their being-for-self.

The universality of life in this way enters within the living being, as the inner feeling of the soul that animates the individual living being. Desire is the feeling of the soul of the absence of the other that it needs to become itself. What it ultimately desires is life itself. The individuality of each comes with the feeling of unity with itself or being-for-self, but only in its relation to the other that it desires for itself. This unity with self or being-for-self transforms the opposition to the other, since it is only through this opposition that each is for itself. Its being-for-self, its individuality, is not something about itself as a separate thing, a separate essence within the individual. Its unity with itself, which it gives itself by devouring its essence, is both the fluidity of the universal difference and at the same time the universal dissolution. The desiring consciousness of the organism, the feeling soul, is not what it is in order to be what it is not. It negates itself as being-in-itself, in order to incorporate within itself the being of the other. It is life through death. But this is the very process by which the individual living being is itself engendered from life as a whole.

The essence of life, we now see, is only found in this devouring of its essence on the part of the individual living beings. It is only in this process that we truly find the universal life, the simple substance of life. In devouring the other *outside* of it, the individual living being transforms the otherness by positing the other from *within* itself, i.e., by dividing itself and reproducing itself. Each being thus performs for itself the division of itself that was first attributed to the universality of life as a whole. The undifferentiated fluidity of life with which we began (corresponding to the logical-dialectical moment of being and immediacy) is thus transformed through this process of self-incorporating and self-reproduction on the part of individual living beings themselves (corresponding to the logical-dialectical moment of essence and negativity). And so the simple substance of life is in this way the dividing of itself into different individual gestalts of the beings that live for themselves, and equally it is the dissolution of these stable differences. But the dissolution of the dividing, i.e., the death of the individual, is at the same time the condition for the dividing of the individual members, i.e., their reproduction and the generation of newer and higher forms of life.

In this way the tranquility of the universal medium, in which the different gestalts of life at first appeared to exist alongside one another as indifferent universals, is dissolved into and by the process of life, which is the subjugation of this tranquillity by the infinity of life turning on itself, devouring itself and at the same time increasing and multiplying, developing and evolving, itself.

The process of life, involving the dissolution of life through death, is the condition for the generation of the gestalts of life themselves. Thus we see how what at first appears as *given*, the stable forms of living beings, alongside the negation of this stability in the whirl of life, is now comprehended as an achieved *result*. In this way, the universality of the medium also undergoes transformation. The fluid element of life with which we began is only the *abstraction* of essence, and life is only there in the *actuality* of individual gestalts. The *essence* is *actual* or *existent* only in the dividing of the members themselves, i.e., in the inner division by which they create their inner cells and organs, and in the reproduction of themselves in new gestalts of life.

To summarize, we have the following moments of life:

- 1) the continuity of essence that is *given*, the medium that runs through all the individual life forms that are contained within it;
- 2) the stable forms that exist discretely for themselves, alongside one another in their different shapes;
- 3) the pure process of these forms devouring one another and reproducing themselves;
- 4) the collapse of all these moments into one another,
- 5) the self-development and dissolved development, the life and death, of each individual living being,
- 6) and in and through this development the self-sustaining simple whole is *achieved*.

The Origin of Species

172. The *immediate* oneness of life involves the medium of the stable forms of life. The medium is dissolved through the processes of individual living beings, the devouring of the medium and reproducing new forms of life. The oneness of life has through these processes become a *reflected* oneness. The life that turns back on itself infinitely while evolving new forms of life is implicitly self-consciousness.

In the transformation from the immediate perspective of the *being* of life to the developed, reflective perspective—which is that of *existence*—life is not simply something that is given but something that produces itself as a result of its own processes. If the first moment of this process is that in which the living being devours the *other* living being, the second moment is the one in which the living being divides and reproduces *itself*, life overcoming death. The essence of life as an infinity is actualized or achieves existential validity through this movement from the negation of otherness to the reproduction of other beings that are continuous with oneself, i.e., the re-production of the *species*.² Between the abstract *universality* of life as the simple medium, and the concrete processes of life which consist in *individuals* devouring the medium as they devour each other, a third moment arises, resolving this contradiction: that of *particularity* or specificity, the particular species that is reproduced through all such movement. The *species* is in

this way the implicit object of the processes of life, which are involved not only in the *circular* reproduction of the abstract essence of life in general, but in the *spiraling out* of particular forms of that essence, the particular species to which the individuals belong. Thus emerges a new form of objectivity, that of the species. As in the preceding forms of objectivity, the species implicitly refers to a consciousness for which it is an object.

We now have a *fifth* form of objectivity, replacing and subsuming the previous forms of the meant *this* of sense certainty, the *thing* and its properties of perception, the universal *force* of the understanding, *life* as the immediate object of desire, and the *species* as the mediated, developed object of self-consciousness *per se*. The species is a universality, as in the previous gestalt. It is however not simply *given* to a consciousness—i.e., the individual living being as the object of desire—but one that is explicitly the *result* of processes that lead to it and must be grasped as such. It therefore requires a consciousness that is not simply given to itself, but is a return to itself from out of its givenness, i.e., a self-consciousness.

We see in this progress that each of the forms of consciousness corresponds to a distinct object of the natural world, unfolding according to the logic of the concept from the immediacy of pure being, the object of sense experience, to the externally reflected determinate being, the object of perception, to the supersensible essence or universality, the forces of inorganic nature that are the object of understanding. And from there back to being as a reflected essence or existence, a being that revolves about itself, which, in the first instance, is life as the object of desire—the natural presupposition for the emergence out of the natural world of self-conscious beings. In a first moment, life divides into the indestructible universality of the abstract essence and the individual beings that come to be and pass away in the medium of life. In a second moment, devouring its own medium, the organism internalizes life, both in the plant's sensibility to the elements of its environment—sun, air, water and earth—and in the feeling soul of the animal with its perception of other living beings. In a third moment, the processes of life and death in turn produce the reflected universality of the species, which continues beyond and through the mortal lives of individuals.

If the object of desire is the other individual living being, the species calls for or evokes a distinct, corresponding form of consciousness. The *individual living being* cannot directly have the species itself as its object, for the object of its desire is only another individual being (the grass for the cow) as it is reciprocally the object for another (a hungry wolf), in the circuit of living and dying. Its object is not the species itself that transcends death. The cow does not concern itself with the species of cows, but with its own individual existence, and, for a short periods of time, with the care of its offspring and with the comfort and concerns of its immediate herd. It would be more appropriate to say that the individual living being is the object of the species than that the species is the object of the individual. From the perspective of the species, the individual living being is a being-for-other. I.e., individuals exist for the sake of reproducing the species. The species thus has the characteristic of being-in-itself, as was the case for the abstract essence of life in general, but now this being-in-itself has the stable, reflected form of a

persisting, determinate essence that reproduces itself through the unstable, transitory individuals. However, just as life in general does not exist for itself, but becomes fodder for the lives of individual living beings mutually devouring one another, so the species, which is the positive outcome of this process, through the self-dividing and reproduction in which the living beings prolong themselves beyond death, does not exist for itself and so seems once more to dissolve into the general melee.

Thus arises a contradiction between the living beings that exist for the species, and the species that does not exist for itself. But the species is the reflected movement of life turning back on itself from out of its dissolution, life as a higher, transformed result of its own turning about itself. It should not therefore collapse back into the indeterminism of life as a whole. Through the development of species, life takes a direction, and so this contradiction calls for a solution, for a consciousness that would itself be a species-consciousness existing both *in and for itself*. And that is precisely the nature of human self-consciousness.

Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions of Desire

173. The consciousness that has the species as its object, which is a species for itself, is self-consciousness. The self-conscious individual has herself as object at first in the form of “I,” this simplest form of self-consciousness. We will see how this object unfolds in the experience of the gestalt of self-consciousness, revealing in this unfolding its species nature.

174. The “I” that is the object of self-consciousness is indeed the species, a reflected universality resulting from the reflection of life on itself—life negating death, negating negation itself, in the persistence of the species. The highest product of this reflective movement of the infinity of life, in which life finally produces an existential form of itself that equals its essence, is an individual that does not merely reproduce itself and die, but who continues beyond her own individual life in the life of her species. The phenomenological reflection in which we are now engaged consists precisely in the surpassing of our own individual existences as we consciously experience within ourselves the unfolding of the human species as a whole.

To summarize the results so far: The force that turns back on itself is the essence of life itself, infinitely revolving around itself. The higher product of its reflective movement is the species, the determinate gestalt of life that is produced in ever more perfected forms by the living and dying individuals. The individual living beings, reproducing themselves in the face of death, ultimately exist for the species, but the species does not exist for itself without a consciousness for which it is the appropriate object, i.e., without a self-consciousness, an individual life form that takes the species itself to be its object. Self-conscious human life is thus the perfected product of the evolution of life, as it revolves about itself infinitely, developing itself in its circuitous spiraling to ever higher forms that more adequately reflect its essence. Self-consciousness is the consciousness that first of all, in desire, has life itself as object—in the form

of succulent fruit and savory meat—and secondly, in overcoming this first moment, returns to the self as the species who has become self-conscious.

The object of self-consciousness, one's own species-nature in its simplest form, is "I." "I" am the species, the universal that is at first immediately merged with the individual. However, just as "this" was supposed to be an individual being, but turned out to be a universal, so "I" am initially *meant* to be an individual consciousness, but am essentially a universal or species consciousness. The phenomenological experience of the consciousness of "I" will consist in the unfolding of this universality from out of the meant individuality with which this consciousness necessarily begins.

"I" is an identity of consciousness with itself, as expressed in the seeming tautology, "I am I." This is a difference that is no difference in the sense that there is a return to oneself from out of the difference from oneself in the pursuit of objects of desire, i.e., the overcoming of the first self-standing moment of desire. And so in the return to myself in the second self-standing moment "I" am an *achieved* identity. It is the overcoming of the first self-standing moment in which the difference *is* a difference, a real difference, but one that is nevertheless stamped with negativity. The gestalt of the individual living and desiring being is this first self-standing moment, the standpoint within self-consciousness that self-consciousness must overcome in order to become one with itself. The object that self-consciousness must overcome to become one with itself is life itself. Life in itself is an infinity but it is not an infinity that is for itself. Human existence is the highest product of this infinity of life, the species being for itself, the being *for which* the totality of life exists.

Self-consciousness divides itself into life and self-consciousness—into life, as the first self-standing moment, which self-consciousness must overcome in order to return to itself from out of this inner difference, in its second self-standing moment. Self-consciousness achieves certainty of itself only in this overcoming and in the transformation, the higher evolution, of the gestalt of the living being which is its first immediate object—for example, when the living being, through agriculture, becomes the product of human work.

In my immediate, sensuous relation to this other, to the life that I must overcome to become myself, I am first of all a living, desiring being. Desire is the vital mode of self-consciousness that has life itself for its object. Desire is life turning on itself in the inwardness of self-consciousness. The emptiness of the inwardness that was the object of understanding is thus experienced by the self-conscious individual within oneself as the movement of one's own desires. Desire is the inner emptiness, the experienced lacking of the object, of the self-conscious being seeking fulfillment in the outside object and, through union with this object, returning to oneself fulfilled. We recall how the understanding sought to fill up the emptiness in the inwardness of the thing with its force, play of forces, different laws etc. And yet with its explanations, what it enjoys in its various attempts to represent the object is its relation to itself. Now this relation to self comes forward in the self-relating living object, which consciousness experiences in the inwardness of itself in its own desires. Hence the new consciousness which is

self-conscious begins with the inner emptiness which it must fulfill through its own activity by realizing its desires.

Phenomenological Self-consciousness begins with desire, the next stage after “Consciousness.” Here is the truly human stage, since the essential features of “Consciousness” are also found in organisms. Even Understanding has a natural counterpart in the universality of the species-consciousness that operates within and through the individual consciousness of the organism. We recognize that desire is the first differentiated moment of self-consciousness, corresponding to life, which we have analyzed in all its complex movement and evolution. But self-consciousness simply experiences all this in its desire. The analysis of life as it is in-itself and for-us sets the stage for us to follow the development of self-consciousness as it experiences life for-itself.

Self-consciousness begins with the certainty that this object of desire—which we know as its first self-standing moment—is inessential. We recognize that this certainty arises out of the previous moments of consciousness in which the object by itself is experienced as failing to achieve a true identity with itself. Self-Consciousness now posits the negativity of the object as its truth by destroying the object, by eating it up. Instead of standing before the object as if the object had essential being in itself—the basic stance of the first three moments of consciousness—a self-consciousness individual has arisen who is finally aware of her own essentiality. And so for her now the object is what is inessential. The self-conscious individual hungers and thirsts after this object, not because it has essential being, but because it is essentially *for me*, that which I desire in order to complete or fulfill myself. In the tempting consciousness of her own God-like essentiality, Scripture says that Eve reaches out and takes the apple for herself.

It is only now that the certainty that the self-conscious individual has in the object is *true* certainty—i.e., not a certainty that disappears into an object that is other than it, but a certainty that is actualized in the transformation of the other into oneself. In this transformation, certainty is no longer a disappearing subjective certainty—as was the case for the previous gestalts of consciousness. It is a self-realizing objective certainty. However, as long as the object is merely the individual living being, that fleeting individual form in life’s circuit about itself, I fail to find the object that truly fulfills me. I fall back into the whirl of life from which I would escape through the return to myself as a self-conscious species being.

And so, in the first place, I, the self-conscious individual, am certain that the object exists for me—that all the objects of the surrounding paradise have been created just for me. And so we understand why Eve and Adam take the succulent low-hanging fruit that would fill their inner emptiness, immediately realizing their desires by eating it up. And for a moment, perhaps for an hour or two, each is filled with bliss. They are in paradise! And then unaccountably they fall from this high state, for *they get hungry once more*. The world was supposed to be *my* world, I think, centered in desire on *my* individual existence. But in the return of hunger I discover that I am dependent on the world—contradicting my original sense of objective self-certainty—my self-certainty experienced in the consumption of the desired object.

As long as the object is merely the individual living being, i.e., the fleeting form of life in its circuit about itself, self-consciousness fails to find the object that truly fulfills it, the object in relating to which it truly relates to itself. I fall back into the whirl of life from which I would escape, i.e., I get hungry once more. I can escape this cycle of satisfaction and dissatisfaction only by finding an object that transcends the cycle, the object that is the higher result of the whirl of life. As we have seen, this object is not the individual living being, but the *species existing for itself*. The individual desiring consciousness can only effect a truly satisfying return to self by overcoming the cycle of life through an other that is, like oneself, a species consciousness.

175. We have seen that the individual living being is more than the merely negative object that it appears to be for the desiring consciousness. It is at the same time itself a self-standing gestalt since it participates in the universality of life. It is the incarnation of a species that perpetuates itself beyond the limited life-span of the individual. The self-conscious, desiring individual who first sees the object of desire in its mere individuality, and so in a purely negative manner as something simply to be negated, must experience the truth that the individual living being is a moment of the indestructibility of life as a whole. As long as one's primary object is the individual living being, there is the return of hunger, of desire, of the sense of dependence on life, contradicting the independence of the self that relates only to itself. The apparent certainty in the satisfaction of self through the consumption of the living object, but then the loss of self again in the renewal of desire, is conditioned by this truth. The truth is that this object is not something purely negative, merely ephemeral, transitory, mortal. This object that I desire is, fundamentally, an expression of undying life itself. As long therefore as the self-conscious individual remains at the level of the individual life form—both in terms of the object of desire and in terms of one's own "meant" individuality—i.e., as long as one is immersed in vital desires, there is only the repetition of the circuit of life: while the object is for me, I am also for the object. I thus experience my dependence on the object, and through it, on the natural world—contradicting my certainty of being for myself. I experience this fundamental truth about the living being that I consume through a simple fact: after having satisfied my hunger by devouring the object, I become hungry once more. In this recurring hunger, thirst, and other natural desires such as sexual desire, I experience within myself, in the inwardness of my feeling soul, the cycle of life.

The true meaning of desire is found only in the perspective of the totality of life as a whole, finding its expression in the inner feeling soul of the individual. In its distorted reflection of the concept, the scientific understanding of biology and psychology seeks the meaning of life directly in the individual by herself, in genes and hormones and/or childhood repressions. In such explanations, scientific understanding remains at the level of the first self-standing moment. In such explanations, moreover, the individual is deprived of her connection with the larger totality, which she directly experiences in the intimate, compelling form of desire.

We comprehend in this experience how the circle of life is expressed within the individual, in that feeling of the soul that is desire, i.e., the intrinsic emptiness and longing of the separate

individual in relation to the infinity of life. We recognize that to truly fulfill this longing consciousness must rise above that separate individuality through another consciousness that is like oneself. The human individual has *essentially* surmounted this individuality, for he is the species that has come to be for himself. He must therefore *realize* his essential nature through another self-conscious individual. And so whereas the animal is content with the cycles of desire, its satisfaction, and the return of desire, the human individual is profoundly discontented.

The certainty of self that is to be achieved must therefore be realized through a being who is more than merely an ephemeral individual being, more than a mere appearance of the undying life as a whole, i.e., a being in which the unquenchable circle of life, the abstract indeterminate essence, has achieved a stable existence for itself. The transformation of the other into oneself that would be a real fulfillment is not possible through an individual that is only a moment of the abstract essence of life or an expression of the unconscious impulses of a species. For then life itself, or the species itself, remains outside of the individuality of the relation. True fulfillment requires an object who would consciously represent the species, so that what one takes into oneself, and so realize for oneself, is the species itself, and there is nothing left outside of that relation. The true object of desire must be self-standing or substantial even as still stamped with negativity as a being-for-me. There would be no true, lasting certainty in the satisfaction of desire if the other who is the object of desire did not have the self-standingness of a being who participates in the universality of life, but does so consciously, who experiences life as also for herself. The satisfaction of desire must be a true fulfillment of self, and not a mere elimination of something that is almost nothing. One cannot realize oneself through a non-being. For the satisfaction to be real, for the transformation of the other into self to be a true fulfillment, the other that is transformed into oneself must reciprocally achieve thereby her own self-standing being, i.e., realize herself too in this mutual self-transformation.

As long as the relation to the object is purely, one-sidedly, simply negative, the self-conscious individual devours the object but does not truly transform it and so rise along with it to a higher level. And so the desire, fleetingly satisfied, re-emerges along with *another* object of desire. The essence of desire, expressed in this re-emerging of desire and desirable objects, consists in this essential dependence on something other than myself. I remain immersed in the natural world. The self-conscious individual, for whom the world ought to be only for him, thus experiences his contradictory dependence on the world. He does so in a way that is only possible for a being who is at the same time essentially independent because he is a species being, not merely an individual being through which the species plays its games. Since the new consciousness arises out of the defeat of the previous forms of consciousness which deny their own essentiality, self-consciousness is absolutely for itself. It cannot therefore content itself with the otherness of animal instinct, which is the unconscious or involuntary operation of organic life within the individual, the species reproducing itself through the individual. The self-conscious individual therefore must search for a way out of the repetitions of natural desire, this otherness of the circle of life in which he loses himself along with the destruction of his object. He must relate to an

individual who transcends both the individuality of the living and dying being and the abstract universality of life. His true satisfaction can only consist in finding such an individual.

However, the self-conscious individual finds that his own individual efforts at satisfying his desires are inadequate for this purpose. And so it seems that he can never attain the goal of returning to himself by surmounting the first self-standing moment of life that stands between the emptiness of desire and true fulfillment in an achieved identity with self as a self-consciousness. But if the self-conscious individual is unable to achieve such a goal by his own *individual* efforts, by a direct assault on the life-world, an indirect solution is available. He can achieve the satisfaction of a true return to self if the other that he is unable definitively to negate would do him the favor of negating herself. There must therefore be an other who would perform this self-negation, an other whose nature it is to be both self-standing and self-negating. The negativity of the object, we know, is the essential postulate of this gestalt of self-consciousness. But the *simple* negativity of the living and dying individual is inadequate for performing the role of fulfilling the essential desire of self-consciousness to achieve a true certainty of self. And so there must be an object for consciousness that in its very self-standingness is a negation of its own negativity, a reflected negativity, a being who in the negation of herself before him only returns to herself, realizing herself at the same time that he realizes himself through her.

The solution to this problem has already been outlined in the concept of the species. The self-standingness of the living being, by which life resists being a mere means to the satisfaction of the desiring consciousness, is the work of the species as the higher reflected product of the circle of life. But the ordinary species works within the individual unconsciously through the species instincts of self-preservation by which the individual maintains and reproduces itself by devouring or fleeing the other. The species that operates in this activity is an unconscious *force in itself*, but not *for itself*. What is required then is a species that is for itself and yet allows itself to be used by the self-conscious individual in his quest for fulfillment and self-realization. Such an object, the true object of the desire of a self-conscious individual, can therefore only be *another* self-conscious individual. As an object that is both negative, for him, and at the same time self-standing, for herself, she too is inherently a self-consciousness. Consciousness, we recall, is not what it is (i.e., it is a self-negation) in order to be what it is not (i.e., to achieve or fulfill itself as a self-consciousness.) And so the true object of desire must be another self-consciousness, a living being that is capable of negating herself—i.e., not merely of dying in the jaws of another, but by dying to her own merely organic life. The true object of the desire of the self-conscious individual, that which would truly fulfill his longing, can only be another self-conscious individual who reciprocally seeks to fulfill herself through him.

The overcoming of the first self-standing moment of desire consists in a double negation, the negation in which the object of desire is for me, and then the negation of the negation in which she becomes, in being for me, also at the same time for herself. In life, which is the initial object of desire, negation takes the following forms:

- 1) There is the simple negation, that which is wholly relative to an other, namely to the desire itself—the negative object that exists for the desire. i.e., the object that, like the sheer being of sense certainty, exists merely to disappear in the desire. But the simple negation of an individual living being is inadequate for the present purpose, since the living being participates in the undying circle of life. And so in this process consciousness is caught up in the circle of life, expressed in the endless re-emergence of the desire and its object.
- 2) There is the determinate negation, in which something has its own being, but this being is determined in relation to something else. We have seen in the gestalt of perception that determinate being leads to a flight into otherness, which is contradictory to the goal of self-consciousness to return to itself out of otherness.
- 3) The first universality of the understanding only takes up the onesidedness of perception in terms of universality and its simple inversion into the inwardness of essence or law. The flight into otherness is not brought to rest in the tranquility of law, since law is itself only the universality of difference.
- 4) And finally there is the infinite negation, the negation of self-repulsion that turns back on itself. This is the nature of the second universality, which is the reflection of the concept, whose paradigmatic law is the universal law of gravity. Such is moreover the negation that characterizes universal nature as a whole, the inorganic universal nature that is the extended body of self-consciousness itself. Nature itself as a whole is *absolute* negativity, the inherently self-negating essence, whose first moment is the pure externality of space. In surmounting its own otherness, nature leads beyond itself, developing from the inwardness of self-related time with its evolutionary development, beginning with t^2 in the freely falling body, to the inwardness of consciousness. Its highest product is the species that would be not only a universality in-itself, an inner force like the force of gravity, but also for itself. The species that would be for itself is the self-conscious human being. And consciousness of the object, as we have seen from the previous phenomenology, leads necessarily to self-consciousness. The self-negation of nature as a whole is thus the womb of human self-consciousness. It is Spirit externalizing (simply negating) itself in order to return to itself from out of its own self-negation in and through the mutual recognition of free self-conscious beings.

The self-conscious human individual is thus the species that exists both in and for itself. She and he are the ultimate product of the self-negation of universal nature, arising beyond itself, negating itself in the living beings who together live a species life, i.e., the life of Spirit. The desiring self-consciousness will never achieve true self-satisfaction therefore through natural means, for nature exists only to go beyond itself, to negate itself in a being that intrinsically surmounts all otherness to be for itself. The desire of the self-conscious individual can therefore only truly be satisfied in another self-conscious individual.

The Fulfillment of Spirit: An I that is We, and a We that is I

176. There are these initial moments of self-consciousness:

- 1) The first immediate object of self-consciousness is the undifferentiated oneness of “I,” i.e., the spontaneous feeling of being the center of the world.
- 2) But the immediacy of “I” is at the same time implicitly an absolute mediation. In this respect, “I” am first of all turned toward the world in the state of desire for something I am not (not yet). Through its sensibility of sight the lion *knows* the succulent lamb. I.e., it is outside of itself in a quasi-oneness with the lamb. And yet it is implicitly conscious of itself as also *not* the lamb. Knowledge by itself is thus contradictory: through knowledge the knower is what it is not and is not what it is. Moving to solve the contradiction, the lion *desires* the lamb—the being it is not—to fill up the emptiness of its inwardness—the non-being that it is. While desire contains the *ideal* solution, the contradiction is *actually* solved through the action by which the lion becomes *wholly* one with the object of its desire by taking it into itself, transforming it into itself, and so returning to itself in the satisfaction of the desire, which is not its elimination but its realization.
- 3) An individual animal appears to live for itself, but only in species-determined ways, by pursuing or fleeing other individuals that also appear to live for themselves, but which live by instinctively pursuing or fleeing the first individual—the dance of the lion and the lamb. If they are successful in the pursuit of their prey, or in escaping their predators, the individuals only survive to reproduce their species before they die. This circular process of mutual negation, the dance of life and death, culminates in the reproduction of the species, something enduring that persists through the lives and deaths of the individuals. It is thus their species natures that ultimately rule these individuals. Consequently, the being-for-self of the individual animal is fundamentally incomplete, for it is ultimately subordinate to the species.
- 4) But how can an individual live for the species, if the species does not live for itself—has no being-for-self of its own? A new contradiction arises between the individual that is for the species and the species that is not for itself. The relation between individual and species thus reproduces at a higher level the contradiction between the permanence of the universality of life as a whole and the impermanence of the living and dying individuals that constitute and reproduce that whole at the same time as they express it. It is the evolution of the particular species that essentially mediates this contradiction between universality and individuality. The true solution to the contradiction between universality and individuality then is the *developed existence* of the concept, i.e., a species that exists for itself in an individual—an individual who consciously lives the life of the species.
- 5) It is not however enough for the individual who is a species-being to simply *be* what it is; the individual species-being must *realize* itself as the species by actively overcoming the first self-standing moment of desire, i.e., the movement of life within itself, and so come back to itself as “I” from out of the self-disruption of desire. Thus, in the return of the hunger, I experience within myself the above contradiction between the individual that lives for the species and the species that does not live for itself. Hunger is the operation of the species in me, my powerlessness before the power of the species. There is now

however a species being that does not live for itself, but yearns to do so. That being is me—a self-conscious being who is initially mired in the circle of life.

- 6) The overcoming of this mediation/disruption requires the *doubling* of self-consciousness: “I” and another “I.” We recall that the realization of force required the doubling of forces. E.g., the force of gravity doubled in the force of the earth and the force of the sun. What is primary is not unity, the Parmenidean Being, or the “synthesis” of the thesis and antithesis, a mediating third party. What is primary and enduring is duality, a polarized reciprocity of forces in which each side is for itself in being for the other. Now this doubling is experienced within self-consciousness itself. From being in-itself, this necessity for doubling on the part of the natural world has become for-itself.

The veritable object of the desire of self-consciousness must be an object that posits her own otherness as a nullity, and achieves self-standingness thereby. The veritable object of self-consciousness can only be a living being who achieves self-standingness *through herself*, i.e., by herself positing her otherness and by cancelling that difference—returning to herself from out of her otherness. The lion demonstrates the nullity of the lamb’s being-in-itself by devouring it, but then experiences its subordination to the power of the species in becoming hungry again. Here the other who is the object of desire negates *her own* otherness. She declares that she is for him. But in so doing she realizes herself, because simultaneously he reciprocates this action.

This is the being that is the species for herself, the individual who in the universal fluidity of life separates herself from that fluidity so that life may be *for* her. Her separation is not for a short time only as the individual performs the work of the species in reproducing other individuals—but throughout all of her activities as she directly participates in the transcendence of her own species life. Through such an object, the desire of self-consciousness is no longer an individual desire, unconsciously governed by the species, but the universal desire of the species for another like herself. The other being, the true object of this universal desire, would thus come to the “I” of self-consciousness proclaiming that her own otherness in respect to him is nothing. She does so by coming to the desiring “I” and also saying, “I.” Her difference from the desiring “I” is thus no difference. For her, then, he is the object of her desire in the same way she is for him.

177. Only a self-consciousness that is *for* a self-consciousness can in fact truly be a self-consciousness. Only by being *for another* self-consciousness can a self-consciousness be *for himself*, achieving the veritable satisfaction of his desire as a self-consciousness through the objective certainty of his own self that only another self-consciousness can give him. In ordinary desire, the certainty the self-conscious individual has that the world is for himself is contradicted by the return of the desire. His self-certainty thus undermined. But in desiring another self-consciousness, who declares that she is for him as he is for her, his certainty of being for himself is confirmed. The being-for-other that emerges in desire can only be reconciled with being-for-self if the other that is the object of the desire is another self-consciousness who posits her own otherness as nothing. Only through another self-consciousness that posits her own otherness as nothing can the initial consciousness be one with himself in his own being-other. These three moments of self-consciousness thus lead to the truth of self-consciousness: 1) immediate unity of

“I am I;” 2) disruption of the immediacy through the otherness of desire; 3) the overcoming of the disruption through another self-consciousness who also says “I.” The relation of “I” to myself in “I am I” is no longer an immediate relation, but one that is mediated by *another* “I.” I am related to myself then through another who is also “I.”

Self-consciousness is first of all this: “I” am aware of myself. In this relation there is the concept as the manner of knowing, and the concept as the essence of the object that is known. The two sides of the concept here are the same. It is as I that I know myself, and I know myself as I. The “I” that is the object of its concept is therefore no longer really an object. But then the “I” that I know is not really an object, something other than consciousness. The moment of consciousness is thus suppressed rather than realized. Consciousness is always consciousness of ... something other than consciousness. The *immediate* oneness of “I” must be disrupted to achieve its truth, for it must not be something merely given, a fact of nature, but something that is achieved, that achieves itself. But the first object of desire, the individual living being, appears to be something radically other than the concept I have of it as existing for me, as *my* object. Here the two sides of the concept contradict the essential oneness of self-consciousness. My way of knowing through natural desire, the impersonal forces within me, is at odds with the way of knowing of “I.” I know the object through hunger and thirst as my object. My way of knowing it as “I” consists in seeing it as *mine*. But then, even if I overcome its resistance to me and actually make it mine, I become hungry once more. In the return of the desire I realize that the world is not for me, but rather that I am for the world. In the experience of the recurring desire I know the world as not-mine, not for me, and so my essential concept of it is contradicted along with my way of knowing it.

Despite my certainty that it is essentially for me, the experience is that living object of desire has its own being apart from me. This immediate object of desire is itself a being with its own self-standingness through the fluidity of life, the indestructible substance, the fluid essence that is equal to itself but has no determinate identity with itself. The processes of life achieve the determinateness of self-identity through the reflected unity of the particular species. But inasmuch as the species does not exist for itself, the object of my desire falls back into the whirl of life, as I do along with it as long as I remained mired in vital desires. However, inasmuch as the species exists for itself, it is a self-consciousness. It is then just as much “I,” a being for itself, as it is mine, an object for me. Only in rising above individual organic desires to the universal desire for another I, another self, do I find an other than is no longer truly other than *my* self. My concept as a way of knowing, as “I,” is then no longer other than the object of that concept, that other “I,” and in this way the concept of the other, of the object of desire, acquires its truth.

The concept of *Spirit* is present in this doubling of self-consciousness into “I” and “I.” What must follow is the experience of what Spirit is: the absolute substance that is the oneness of the different self-consciousnesses. This absolute substance is realized in the freedom of the different consciousnesses through their very opposition to one another: an I that is a we, and a we that is I. There are two infinite substances—the infinity of the self-relating otherness of Nature in the

evolutionary spiral of life, and the return of life from out of this otherness into itself, the evolution of the substance that is for itself, the substance that is subject. In the “indestructible substance” of life, the different living beings overcome their differences through the mutual negation of one another. In the “absolute substance” of Spirit, however, the different consciousnesses affirm their oneness in their very difference, in their contradiction with one another, in their self-determined negation *of themselves*.

At first however it seems that each negates the other in the ordinary manner of living and dying beings. In my relation to another self-consciousness, “I” say: “I am *not* you; I am I.” But the other self-consciousness says the very same thing. And so *we see* that the two standpoints, each of which affirms the negation of the other, are essentially the same. We see their oneness. But the two self-conscious individuals at first see only their difference, their radical opposition. They *mean* to affirm their difference from each other, but they cannot *say* what they mean, since each says the same thing, “I.” Implicitly they must be aware of this contradiction. The rest of Phenomenology consists in the movement from this implicit oneness, a oneness in itself and for us, to an explicit oneness, a oneness for the self-conscious individuals themselves.

The development of Phenomenology up to now can be summarized in three steps:

- 1) Between the colorful appearances of the sensible world on this side—the side of *being*—
- 2) and the empty night of the supersensible universalities, and forces on the other side—the side of *essence*—
- 3) there is the reflection of the essence into the sensible world itself, which is *existence*.
 - 1) This realization of the essence in sensible existents is first of all the indestructible essence of *life* realizing itself through the living and dying organisms. But a merely natural life remains a whirl of otherness turning endlessly around itself, i.e., of living and dying *individuals* expressing and reproducing the undying *universality* of life. As long as the self-conscious individual seeks fulfillment through the satisfaction of natural desires, he/she remains mired in the vicious circle of life.
 - 2) Through the processes of the abstract, indeterminate universality of life, the living and dying individuals produce the *particularity* of the different species, evolving ever more closely in their determinateness to the indestructible heart of life itself. The evolution of species is thus the true expression of life itself, as the various particular species approximate to the undying perfection of life that is their essence.
 - 3) It is only when this process culminates in a species that exists for itself that it can fulfill the desire of self-consciousness for an other that can be one with itself, an I that is we and a we that is I. In this way, spirit emerges out of nature, in which it was always implicitly present.³

- 4) And so having arrived at the concept of Spirit, consciousness now steps between the gaudy daytime of sensible beings, and the dark night of the supersensible universalities and forces, into a sensible world that has been informed by this universality, that is permeated with essential significance: the *spiritual* daytime of present existence.

178. Self-consciousness can be in and for itself only through being for another self-consciousness that is also in and for itself. The truth of self-consciousness is not a unity, as might at first seem to be the case, but a duality. Self-consciousness achieves its oneness with itself, its recognized self-certainty, only through its doubling in a second self-consciousness. Thus while the other self-consciousness is *for* the first self-consciousness (“She is for me”), the first self-consciousness is equally at the same time *for* the other one (“I am for her”), and, to that extent, *not* for himself, and so not certain of himself. Only the other self-consciousness can overcome this uncertainty on the part of the first. The true certainty of being-for-self on the part of one self-consciousness can only be achieved through its *recognition* as a being-for-self by another self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, like life, is thus an infinity, an endless turning about itself in its relation to another self-consciousness. But the infinity-in-itself of life has now become the infinity-for-itself of Spirit.

This relation between self-consciousnesses involves many twists and turns in which its significance is unfolded. In this unfolding the two sides must be seen in their difference and at the same time in a difference that is no difference, although even in this disappearing of difference they always maintain their opposed positions—i.e., there is no fusion in an undifferentiated oneness, i.e., back into an immediacy, since the immediacy of “I” immediately repels itself into mediation. The seemingly tranquil undifferentiated immediacy of “I” thus repels itself in self-negation, in the rejection of its immediacy or givenness, first in the moment of desire for an object to fill the emptiness of this non-being, and secondly in the quest of “I” myself for recognition from another “I.” The essence of self-consciousness, as an “I” that immediately *is* “I,” is objectively realized through a contradictory doubling of self-consciousnesses into one “I” and another “I” who is *not* “I.” This doubling of self-consciousnesses persists in all the significances of their relationships, which are doubled as well. Whichever further determination is posited for self-consciousness, then, its opposite is also posited. The elaboration of the spiritual oneness that only exists in the doubling, in the relation between opposing self-consciousnesses, is the movement, the unfolding, of a quest for recognition.

179. *For us* the two sides are internally necessary to each other from the very beginning. However, in the experience of self-consciousness *for itself*, which proceeds from the givenness of this gestalt, the other self-consciousness is an unexplained fact of experience, appearing to come to the first self-consciousness *from outside of himself*. The first self-conscious individual says “I” and regards the world as existing for him. *And then* another self-conscious individual enters his world, also saying “I,” and also regarding the world as for *herself*—and *not* for the first self-consciousness. In saying “I am I” each *means* to say: “I, *this singular individual alone*,

am I, not you.” But neither can say what he or she means, since each not only says the same thing, but *means* the same thing—i.e., they mean the opposite of the sameness inherent in the words that they actually say.

The result is a doubling of significances with opposite meanings. Firstly, as the other self-conscious individual affirms the world as for *herself*, the first self-conscious individual experiences the loss of himself and his world, for he discovers another self-consciousness who affirms *herself* as essential, while treating the first self-consciousness as inessential. In the immediacy of his experience as a being-for-other in his encounter with the other self-consciousness, the first self-consciousness momentarily loses his being-for-self. He thus discovers that he is himself a being-for-other—something that is possible for him only thanks to the other self-consciousness. At the same time, secondly, the other self-consciousness appears to the first as another self, for like him the other self-consciousness also says “I.” In this respect, the first sees his own self in the self of the other. This second moment contradicts the first.

180. Faced with the challenge to his own would-be essentiality coming from the other self-consciousness, the first self-conscious individual must confront his own being-for-other, which he can experience only through the second self-consciousness. By himself he is always outside of himself in his preoccupation with the world, with the objects of his desires, experiencing his otherness in the recurrence of his desires and so caught up in the circle of life in which he loses himself. At first the world seems to be *for* him—reflecting the essence of this gestalt of self-consciousness as the outcome of the prior movements of consciousness. And then, in the renewal of his hunger, he experiences his otherness as dependent on the world, contradicting his fundamental being-for-self. Hence, what he truly desires is an other in whom, instead of losing himself, he can be one with himself. However, this oneness that he desires with the other initially takes a paradoxical form: the “other self” says “I am *not* you; *I* (alone) am I.” And he says the same. I.e., each is an other for the other. There is then here a oneness of otherness.

Faced with this challenge from the other self-consciousness, who *stably* treats him as an other—not intermittently as with the ordinary objects of desire—the first can now objectively confront his own being-for-other in a transformed manner that is only possible thanks to the other self-consciousness. The otherness of nature that he originally experienced in getting hungry again is something about which he can do nothing because he *is* an organic being, and as such he is necessarily caught up in the circle of life. But now his otherness becomes an otherness on the level of consciousness. As an other for another self-consciousness, there is something he *can* do to overcome this otherness. As an otherness-for-self-consciousness, he can recuperate his being-for-self, his fundamental truth, through her recognition of his being-for-self. Thanks to the other self-consciousness, he is now longer swallowed up in the circle of life, but has achieved a certain permanence as an other for another person. He is now in a more favorable position for recuperating his own essentiality, his being-for-self that has been taken away from him by the intruding other.

He does so in two ways. First, he must transform the other self-consciousness in such a way as to become certain of himself as what is essential. Thus, he affirms the *inessentiality* of the other as he reaffirms his own essentiality. “She says that I am for her, but who is she to talk?” At the same time, secondly, he must transform his own understanding of himself, for he cannot simply return to her original, immediate, spontaneous self-understanding of himself as essential. He has made the discovery that the other self-consciousness is another self. He makes this discovery in a negative manner, for he sees that he must deny the essentiality of the other in exactly the same way that she has denied his own essentiality. Already then there is here the reciprocity of recognition, but as a reciprocity of negativity, each directed against the other, a reciprocity of otherness. This transforms the initial situation entirely. At first he was immediately certain of himself, but now he must consciously create his own identity and value.

Being a self, an “I,” has now become a matter of contention, something at a distance from himself that he must conquer, realize or achieve, not something that is immediately given. In the light of this awareness the first self-consciousness must transform his own understanding of himself. He sees himself now in a new, reflected light, not as immediately one with his vital individuality with which he first appears to be merged, but as a universal whose essence is beyond mere individuality, capable of being instantiated in another individuality who regards herself as essential—even if, as he thinks, falsely, as a mere pretense or appearance. His recovery of himself as essential must therefore take place on a new level, with a new understanding of himself that accords with this experience—an experience that has only become possible thanks to the other self-consciousness.

181. Thanks to the other self-consciousness the first therefore discovers his own otherness, but in a twofold sense: first as that which is inessential from the point of view of the other, and second as a real dimension of himself that only exists thanks to the other. His recuperation of himself, his return to himself from out of such otherness—no longer the otherness of natural desire, but the otherness now of self-consciousness—must accordingly take place in a two-fold manner: in relation to his alleged inessentiality, and in relation to his otherness or objectivity for the other. These two aspects of the situation are contradictory. 1) He returns to himself from out of this inessentiality-for-the-other by transforming his being-for-other, doing to the other what she does to him, i.e., treating her as inessential, as she has treated him. 2) In a completely contrary sense, he must do to the other what he wants her to do to himself, i.e., recognize her as another self without whom he could not be what he is: an objective being-for-self. In this respect, he must elevate his being-for-other into a being-for-self.

At first he appeared to be the *only* being-for-self, in a world that existed only for him. Then, because he became hungry once more, he discovered that he is dependent on the world, another living being for other living beings. In such otherness the hunter becomes the hunted, the famished becomes food for other famished creatures, and lust ignites more lust. Now however his otherness is elevated to being an other for another self-consciousness, and in this way even in his otherness he escapes the circle of life and enters the sphere of self-consciousness. Since he

has now become an other for a self-consciousness, another self in which he sees himself, his otherness can become the expression of *his own* self-consciousness. He can direct his otherness-for-the-other then *against* the other self-consciousness, treating the other self-consciousness as inessential in this transformed manner: if the other sees me as an object for her, I do the same to her, not however simply by regarding her as inessential, but by turning my own objectivity for her against her, using it in my own way as a weapon. If for example she sees me as a man to be used and possessed, I will use my masculine powers to control her for my own purposes. Being a man for another self-consciousness is thus radically different from the biological determinations of desire of the natural order. Biological instinct is now subsumed under the new dialectic of self-consciousnesses. Thirst, hunger, and sex constitute a development of desire, from the inorganic to the organic to the human. But then, with the sexual relation on the human plane it must be transformed according to the logic of self-consciousness, in which the relation to oneself takes place through the other self. In this way the essentially self-conscious individual uses his own being-for-other—as an object for the other’s desire—to realize his being-for-self.

Secondly however, in direct opposition to all of this, after having reduced the other to inessentiality in his return to himself, he must give the other self-consciousness back to herself. Inasmuch as he sees the other as another self, he must do to her what he would have her do to himself. His objective qualities for her are real dimensions of himself, dimensions of self which are only meaningful in relation to another. His objective properties of masculinity, for example, exist as sensed, perceived, understood, and appreciated or desired by others. He thus realizes that he depends on the other to be himself as an objective being. Moreover, he seeks love and respect freely given. But according to the first strategy, he will not give her the same. He wants to control—i.e., destroy—her freedom, thus contradicting his own desire to be freely respected as a being-for-himself. And so, in direct opposition to the first strategy, he must give the other self-consciousness back to herself. Inasmuch as he sees his own self in the other, he must do for the other what he would have her do for himself. I.e., because he seeks to realize his own freedom and being-for-self, and in order to achieve this goal, he must let the other go in her own freedom. He therefore abandons his plan for controlling her, and lets her make her own decisions without trying to control them.

The Infinite Exchange of Self-Consciousnesses

182. So far we have looked at this process from the point of view of the first self-conscious individual, who at first or immediately supposes himself as existing in a world of his own, but then finds his world disrupted by the second self-conscious individual. However, in the experience of the second self-conscious individual, it is the first self-conscious individual that disrupts the certainty of *her* being-for-self. And so everything that was said earlier from the first standpoint must be repeated in terms of the second, but in an opposite sense. The second self-conscious individual finds her world disrupted by a self-consciousness whose world she has disrupted in the first place. Instead then of the activity of one self-consciousness, we have also to

take into account the activity of the other which differs significantly from the first. In this way we are now dealing with something new in Phenomenology: we have to deal with not one, but two *gestalts* of self-consciousness, simultaneously and in opposite positions to one another.

The other self-consciousness is equally self-standing, equally enclosed in her own world, and there is nothing in her that does not take place except through herself. And so she must equally come to terms with her own otherness-before-the-other, as well as the other in which she recognizes herself. But now the other self-consciousness is replying to her objectification of him, returning the favor by using his objectivity-for-her as a weapon for his own recuperation of his being-for-self. The second self-consciousness has initiated the cycle of otherness, but now finds herself ensnared by her own action. She saw the other as a man to be used to satisfy her desires. But now she is caught up by his allure, by his power. He is using her now, just as she used him. She stepped into a trap!

We have to do here then with an infinite exchange, the endless turning of the two self-consciousnesses around each other as each side determines itself in its contradictory relation to the other. But this infinity of self-consciousnesses goes beyond that which we saw in the infinite whirl of life where the individual living beings, which would be for themselves, turned out to be disappearing moments before the universal indestructible substance, the fluid self-equal essence of life. We recall that between the two extremes, of the universality of life and of the individuals who would be for themselves but fail, in their very relation to one another, to achieve lasting existence, the middle point of the particular, the determinate species, provides a form of life that achieves a lasting self-standingness. Prior to the emergence of self-consciousness this self-standingness of the species is only in-itself, not for-itself. Self-conscious existence constitutes then the next stage in the evolution of and beyond life. Now an individual who is a species being confronts another individual who is also a species being, i.e., two individuals who consciously participate in the life of the species, and so rather than dying in the promotion of their species, they live the species life itself in their relation to one another. Instead then of losing their being-for-self in their relation to other living beings, devouring the other and being devoured in turn, here the individuals *achieve* their being-for-self only thanks to their existence in and for one another—even if in the first place this takes place negatively, through a new form of otherness that each can only acquire through the other self-conscious individual.

The animal is a being-for-self, however incompletely and limited in duration, without awareness of its being-for-other. The majesty of the lion is all the greater as it is unconscious of its majesty—i.e., as it is *not* self-conscious. Thus the lion, lacking the sense of being-for-other, lacks self-consciousness. The animal is always outside of itself in the world around it, seeking to fulfill its desires. True self-consciousness is therefore only possible as a return from otherness, in the first place from the otherness of natural desire, but more profoundly, from the otherness that is conferred by another self-consciousness. With human beings, vanity therefore enters the world. When *Ecclesiastes* proclaims, Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, it affirms the essence of human self-conscious existence. But such vanity is no longer truly in vain—as is the majesty of

an animal kingdom without consciousness of its own glory, a majesty that only exist for the human being who contemplates that majesty.

We are now observing the very movement by which the species *achieves* being-for-self within the experience of self-consciousness. The self-conscious individual overcomes the fluidity of life in his own development by first passing through and overcoming the first self-standing moment of his relation to his object, in his deep dissatisfaction with the fleeting satisfactions of natural desires. Thanks to such dissatisfaction, he seeks higher, more lasting experience, even if it is only a lasting dissatisfaction. And this he finds as a being-for-other for the other self-consciousness. Whereas sexual pleasure is momentary and fleeting, the game of seduction and possession can last a lifetime—as the 3000 pages of Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* elaborately illustrates.

In the initial desiring moment of self-consciousness, the object is viewed negatively as something simply *for* consciousness himself. The self-standingness of the object of desire takes the desiring consciousness by surprise, for, if the self-conscious individual is truly for himself, he spontaneously believes, he should never get hungry again. And so with the repetition of his hunger, he experiences his dependency on the world, contradicting his simple self-certainty in a way that is only possible for a being that is at the same time, essentially, independent. By contrast, the animal consciousness is not surprised by the cycles of desire, for in the mortal existence of the individual the species is successfully if unconsciously pursuing the goal of reproducing itself. And so as the species goal within it is fulfilled, the individual animal experiences no deep dissatisfaction as a result of the cycle of desire. Only the conscious species-being, the human self-consciousness, can be surprised and disappointed in the return of desire. The human individual must overcome the circle of desire because species-being, the freedom of being-for-self, is not something merely given, but something that must be achieved by the beings themselves. Instead of taking his independence for granted, as something simply given, the self-conscious species-being must *realize* his independence by overcoming his dependence, going from abstract essential freedom, freedom in principle, to freedom in fact, to existential freedom.

The self-standingness of the object of desire was not due to the individual object of desire by itself, but to its participation both in the circle of life as a whole and its belonging to the determinate life of the species. But this self-standingness that is due to the species is not an object for the individual living beings that actualize their species essence instinctively, unconsciously. To overcome his dependence on the object of his desire, the self-conscious individual must confront the being of the species itself, which is only possible when the species exists for itself. It is only in and through a species-being that is for itself, i.e., another self-consciousness, another “I,” that the veritable desire of the self-conscious being for lasting satisfaction can be realized.

At this second stage of the development of self-consciousness, the self-conscious individual finds himself confronted with another self-conscious individual, who, like him, is a species-being, a self-standing essence that is for herself. He therefore desires her for himself. But he has

no ability to force her to regard herself as for him—as initially appeared to be the case regarding the apple that he plucked or the rabbit he snared that was simply devoured. He can possess her body, but not her self. While he desires her for himself, at the same time he experiences himself to be an object for her. From her point of view, he is inessential, a part of *her* world, as something *for her*. His encounter with the other is thus first of all the experience of his powerlessness before her gaze. Just as he sees her to be a desirable object for him, he also sees that he is the same for her—an object in her eyes. We comprehend that this experience opens up the path to the true realization of his desire, for the true fulfillment of her desire consists in *recognition* of his own essentiality, his own being-for-self, by another self-conscious individual, another being-for-self, for only in this recognition does he achieve *true or objective* certainty of herself, overcoming his uncertainty in the experience of his dependence on nature.

The objective proof of self-certainty that he seeks has the following moments: 1) Initially, immediately, he is certain of himself as “I”—the center of the world. This, we know, is the outcome of the previous gestalts of consciousness that regarded the object as essential and consciousness as inessential. Since self-consciousness presupposes this history as something already given, he goes out confidently and takes the tempting apple, or snares the guileless rabbit, that is just waiting in the world for him. 2) But in the return of hunger, his self-certainty as a being-for-self may, he is tempted to think, be just a subjective delusion on her part. 3) But if the other person—whom he experiences as a being-for-self—regards him as a being-for-self, this provides objective proof, independent of his subjective opinion, that he is truly such.

Each consciousness discovers in its experience of the other consciousness that it cannot do to its own self what the other does to it. In the first place, it is only thanks to the other self-conscious individual that the first discovers his own self-standingness as an objective being. He cannot achieve such self-standing objectivity by himself, but only through another self-consciousness for which *he* is an object. When he is merely conscious of himself, the object that he is for himself, his physical being as an object of sensory and perceptual consciousness, would have no self-standingness of its own. As he externally *perceives* it, his body is one thing among others, for perception by itself is a flight into otherness. As he *understands* himself, he is only a vehicle for the forces of nature. And as in his *desire* for something, he only experiences from within himself the renewal of his hunger, as he falls back into the otherness of circle of life where he is a being-for-other for a being that he regards as a nullity. But now, thanks to “the look” of the other self-consciousness,⁴ his otherness is elevated, transformed, into being an object for a self-standing self-consciousness. Even when such otherness is regarded by the other as inessential, such elevated objectivity belongs to the realm of self-consciousness, beyond that of life—i.e., to the sphere in which he must ultimately achieve his fulfillment.

Secondly, as each self-consciousness treats the other *as* an other, as an inessential object that is for oneself, each discovers that the other is doing the same. The other is therefore another self. In this recognition, the one self-conscious individual must ultimately let the other to go in her freedom, for that is what he is striving to do for himself, and the other is another self. However,

while the first self-consciousness can let the other go in her freedom, he cannot do the same for himself. Only the other self-consciousness can grant such freedom by recognizing that he has his own a being-for-self, and thereby letting him go in his freedom. The first, finding his initial being-for-self mired in the circle of life, cannot do this for himself. By himself, as a separate *individual* self-consciousness seeking to realize his desires in the natural world, he inevitably falls into the dependency, the unself-standingness, of individual living and dying beings, which is the defeat of being-for-self and the loss of the initial, spontaneous certainty of self. However, another self-consciousness recognizes him as more than the mortal individual being that is the instrument of the species. He sees the other do the same as he does, and so recognizes that the other is another self. To the extent that he recognizes that she is another self, he must do to her what he wants her to do to himself. He demands his freedom from the circle of nature, and the recognition of his essential selfhood, from her. And she demands her freedom, and her recognition of her own selfhood, from him. He can only achieve his goal of recognition as a self-consciousness if the other grants it. And the same is true for the other. A one-sided activity would be useless, since only through both together can the goals of each be realized.

Achieving such mutual recognition constitutes the essential goal of Phenomenology, which is realizable only through a series of deaths, both literal and metaphorical, to more limited forms of self-conscious existence in which recognition is partial, incomplete, self-contradictory.

Phenomenology describes and analyzes this history that leads ultimately to freedom and fulfillment. But since it is a history in which consciousness must ascend from one step to the next, finding each step by itself to be both insufficient and unsatisfactory but also necessary, Phenomenology can be called the highway of despair and the Golgotha or crucifixion of Absolute Spirit.

183. Every activity on the part of self-consciousness has a double significance. Each activity is against itself as much as it is against the other. And it is just as much the activity of the one self-consciousness, as it is that of the other. The activity of regarding the other as inessential, for example, is not only directed against the other self-consciousness, but that very activity, in essence, is equally the activity of the other self-consciousness directed against the first. Self-consciousness is a gestalt of doubling and duality of oneself and another self, for it is the essence or universality that is realized in individual sensuous existents. This was also true of the previous forms of consciousness, but since they regarded themselves as inessential, and did not consciously reflect back on themselves, their universality had the form of simple universality, rather than that of the developed universality that disrupts such simplicity into otherness, and then returns from this otherness back to itself, and so becomes self-conscious. But what is the otherness into which such self-consciousness is disrupted? It is first of all the otherness of natural desire—the first self-standing moment of this gestalt. But ultimately it can only be the otherness of another self-consciousness. For what the individual self-consciousness does is always the expression of the species, of the universal. The individual never acts solely as an individual, but as a species being he always puts his goals in universal terms, in a language that he shares with another self-consciousness. And so while he *means* to be an individual “I,” he cannot say what

he means, and when he does say “I” he only says what the other says. The individual cow, governed instinctively by the particular nature of its species, simply eats the individual grasses it finds around itself. But it never formulates the goal of grass in general or eating in general, while sharing this goal with other beings having the same purpose—or controlling the food supply so that the other cannot have it

Just as the doubling and play of forces led to the recognition of the tranquility of law, the individual activity of a self-conscious being is always the conscious expression of a universal law: what you do to the other is what is done to you; and therefore you ought to do to the other what you want the other to do to you. And so a particular activity, regarded in its essentiality or as the expression of law, is just as much the activity of the one as it is that of the other. Hence, Kant held that every human activity, formulated in terms of a goal to be realized, is the expression of a general maxim, and morality is nothing more than the reflective validity of the maxims of action. A maxim that is directed only for oneself, to the exclusion of the other, cannot be willed because in its intrinsic universality it turns back against its legislator .

Consider then the following chain of thought:

- 1) I want this for myself (the starting point in desire).
- 2) Translated in universal terms, the *meant* individuality of conscious desire expresses the implicit assertion that *a person desires property*.
- 3) From this implicit universality comes a possible maxim or general rule of action: if a person desires the property of another person, he should take it if he can do so without excessive harm to himself.
- 4) But the law implicit in this maxim is self-destructive. If I can take property from you, by the same law you can take property from me. But this is something I *don't* want; this contradicts my desire. The self-conscious individual, inevitably reflecting on the maxim of his action, thus discovers its contradictory nature. To realize himself as a self-conscious being, to overcome the negative reverberations of the spontaneous desire, he ought therefore to be motivated from within himself to reject the action that manifests this maxim. And so the individual ought to affirm a maxim that would be consistent, e.g., the moral law that forbids stealing, against his spontaneous or natural desire for the other's property.

And so, while the lion simply takes and devours the lamb, unselfconsciously, the human individual, in the inevitable reflection of self-consciousness, sees in a similar action regarding another self-conscious individual his own destruction *as a self-conscious species being*. Since he is the species incarnate, what he does to the other he essentially does to himself. In the concrete exchange of the self-consciousnesses what he does to the other is what the other does to himself. And so what he desires for himself he ought to desire for her. In the totality of the exchange, the action of each, when taken in isolation as purely for the individual by himself, inevitably becomes inverted—i.e., achieves the opposite of what is desired.

We see that the Kantian *Moralität*, in which the individual reflects on his maxim *in isolation*, rather than as the expression of the various concrete social exchanges that unfold in this Phenomenology, is a distorted reflection of the concept.⁵ It is a way of short-circuiting the complex historical process of social exchange with all its deaths and transformations. As the audience of this historical play of consciousnesses, we would like to call out to the protagonists: wait, don't do that, recognize one another in your essential equality with one another! Do unto others as you would have them do unto you! But the players in the history of consciousness have not yet arrived at our perspective of hindsight and essential truth. They must therefore undergo the experience of the tragedies that await them with all their suffering and painful, but elevating and saving, transformations. They will only come to the truth the hard way. The essential truth has been known for ages, but as an ineffective abstraction, a powerless *ideal*. Only through this hard way can the essence of humanity be truly *realized*.

184. We see here what we saw previously in the objective play of the forces which descended from the shifting, unstable exchanges in the supersensible world and achieved a stable presence to the understanding in the tranquility of the law. But whereas previously the understanding consciousness sat back and passively contemplated this play and this law, now this is all happening in the inwardness of consciousness for itself, i.e., in the higher realization of self-conscious existence. Previously, we saw that the play of forces gives rise to the law that governs the forces, uniting them as extremes in the middle, in the inwardness of the object with which consciousness is merged. Now the extremes are the play of two consciousnesses themselves, each for him/herself in the doubled relationship whose center unites them in accord with a law that issues from their own self-consciousnesses: what I do to the other, I do to myself. This is no longer a law that rules *over* the individual forces, law as the universality of otherness, but a law that the individual issues from within her/himself, the law of *self-realization*.

This mid-point of the relationship falls apart when the extremes are taken by themselves, for they fail to reach their goal of self-consciousness in separation from each other, falling back into the omnivorous circle of life. The extremes only achieve self-consciousness when they meet in the middle, when they exchange with each other in mutual recognition. As in the gestalt of perception and delusion, the exchange is a delusory one when it consists in each regarding the other as inessential. But even then such a delusory exchange is a transformation of each side, for each recognizes that the other does what *s/he* does, and so is another self-consciousness. When the first self-consciousness regards the other self-consciousness as inessential, he recognizes that the other self-consciousness is doing the same thing, and so is another self. And therefore the first self-consciousness, in the very act of positing the inessentiality of the second, recognizes the other's essentiality. The first says: "I am not you; I, *and only I*, have the right to say 'I.'" But this very assertion, which denies the other's claim to be "I"—which means, to be the center of the world—implies that the other says the same thing, makes the same claim. The difference here is no difference, but only the seeming tautology of "I am I" repeated over and over. In this recognition that the other is another self-consciousness, each goes outside of oneself into the other self-consciousness. In being-outside oneself in the other each extreme remains a being-for-

self, having an outsideness that is *for* oneself. Each simultaneously both *is* the other, and is *not* it. The being-for-self on the part of each of the extremes is transformed in its transcendence into the other, rising beyond the circle of life in this way. Each becomes a being-for-self that is only for itself through the being-for-self of the other, and so each realizes his/her being-for-self rather than taking it as given.

There is a radical development, however, from the earlier analysis of perception according to which perception is both one with its object and not one, as it is implicitly also for itself. Understanding, too, is merged with the inwardness of the thing, even as it stands apart and observes the play of forces within this inwardness. Their oneness with their objects is the primary moment, while their being-for-self is only implicit. In realizing its desire, the organism does not only become one with the object outside of itself, but turns the object into itself. It *really* unites with the object, rather than only ideally. And so is momentarily a being-for-itself. But this moment soon passes, and the individual being is replaced by another in a movement in which only the species continues, as the striving of life to become truly for-itself, to become self-conscious. In self-consciousness this oneness with the object of consciousness has become explicit, something that is *for* each of the consciousnesses. Since the object here is another self-consciousness, this being-for-self in the other is *self*-conscious, a return to oneself in and through another self. Now self-consciousness actively enters into the exchange as something for him/herself.

This outsideness of consciousness means that consciousness is not primarily or solely an inner sphere of representations and ideas, as early modern philosophy up to the time of Kant represents it. This perspective expresses a distorted reflection of the concept, in which the perspective of the totality is displaced by the interiority of the separate individuals belonging to this totality. Consciousness is first of all outside itself “in the world,” as Heideggerian and Sartrean existentialisms, following Hegel, variously maintain. What this means for self-consciousness is that he sees that she sees him. He is outside himself now in that he sees himself through her eyes. He takes his outsideness as a being-for-other as something for-himself. In taking his outsideness, his being for her, as something that is also *for* him, the self-conscious individual is distinguished from the forms of consciousness that take themselves to be inessential in relation to their respective objects. Likewise, he takes her to be inessential, to be a being for-him, and she takes this this inessentiality that she is for him and actively transforms her objectivity, her being-for-other, into a being-for-herself.

The oneness with the other self-consciousness at first occurs in a contradictory manner. Paradoxically—expressing the law of inversion of the concept—in experiencing the look of the other, the individual who is looked at directly encounters the subjectivity, the being-for-self, of the one who is looking. He implicitly thinks: I know she is using me as an object for herself—and therein I recognize her freedom, her being-for-self. I experience the essentiality of the other when the other regards me as inessential. But when I objectify the other, when I regard the other as inessential--a taking the object I am for her and using this against her—I fail to connect with

her essential being. Instead, I merge with that very inessentiality, that externality of the being-for-other that is my object. I merge with the objectivity of the thing that I make of her, not with the subject that she is, not with a self-consciousness, and in doing so I have become one with a degraded being.

The objectifying look is thus an authentic revelation of being-for-self only for the one who is looked at, i.e., only for the one who, in the look of the other, experiences her being-for-other. In the degradation she experiences through the look of the other, in her being-for-other, she recognizes the being-for-self of the one who objectifies her, and in this way she has being-for-self as her object, even though at a distance, as a goal that is embodied outside of her, as an ideal for her to realize. She thinks: she only sees my body, my utility for him. He is degrading me, objectifying me, by his possessive attitude. In feeling that she is in his power, she acknowledges thereby his powerfulness, his centrality, his being-for-self, and thereby keeps alive this height of self-consciousness as an objective for herself. The one who does the looking however is degraded by the object with which he merges. In explicitly degrading the other, he implicitly, essentially, degrades himself, while revealing to the other her potential freedom as a self-consciousness. As a result, the strategy of achieving being-for-self by reducing the other self-consciousness to otherness is doomed to failure. *We* see the inevitable failure of such a strategy, but the consciousnesses themselves must *experience* the delusory nature of this approach to their entwinement through the painful disruptions to which it leads.

Self-consciousness implicitly or essentially remains for itself even in the degraded and degrading form of its oneness with the other self-consciousness. In fact she *achieves* self-consciousness only *through* the degradation he inflicts on her, in which he implicitly degrades himself. But this is the path of development. Just as the frustration of returning hunger reveals the true depth of the desire of self-consciousness, and stimulates the desire for authentic self-realization, so the experience of degradation by the look of the other reveals the loftiness of the objective—genuine free recognition—that is degraded, and so stimulates a desire to surmount the degradation. However, by directly seeking the realization of self-consciousness for and by oneself alone, through a one-sided use of the other, by the law of inversion the individual only achieves a self-conscious degradation.

While each is outside him/herself in the other, at the same time, each is absolutely *not* the other. In referring to the unity of self-consciousness there is either the immediacy in which a self-consciousness mistakes itself as merged with its individual being, as *this* I--and so falls into the circle of life—or there is the oneness of the infinite exchange which maintains and realizes the duality—an I and a We. There is no merging of consciousnesses in any higher “synthesis.”⁶ And so we must revise our picture of the relationship. If in a superficial presentation the middle was the unifying self-consciousness in which the extremes were united, the deeper view consists in recognizing that each is the middle for the other. The one self-consciousness mediates his relation to himself and comes together with himself through the other self-consciousness, who does the same: she is an essence that is for herself only through her relation to him. The two

sides recognize themselves as mutually recognizing each other. I am I only through and thanks to the other I that I am not.

¹ Hegel uses this expression, “inorganic nature,” to refer to the universality of life itself as something that is outside of the individual organism in its existence for itself and at the expense of other living beings.

² Miller and Pinkard, as well as Hyppolite in his French translation, translate *Gattung* as “genus” or, in French, “genre,” but this not only obscures the common English reference of “species,” as in Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, it also overlooks an important historical influence of this passage. In his *1844 Manuscripts* Marx follows Hegel’s idea of the relation between the “species,” *Gattung*, and human nature by calling the human being a *Gattungswesen* – which was famously translated into English as “species being.” The young Marx, who is commenting on these early passages of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, also says that the human being lives a “species-life” or “*Gattungsleben*.”

E.g. Marx writes, in the influential English translation, that “Man’s individual and species-life are not *different*, however much – and this is inevitable – the mode of existence of the individual is a more *particular* or more *general* mode of the life of the species, or the life of the species is a more *particular* or more *general* individual life.” (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/comm.htm>) In German this is “Das individuelle und das Gattungsleben des Menschen sind nicht *verschieden*, so sehr auch – und dies notwendig – die Daseinsweise des individuellen Lebens eine mehr *besondere* oder mehr *allgemeine* Weise des Gattungslebens ist, oder je mehr das Gattungsleben ein mehr *besonderes* oder *allgemeines* individuelles Leben ist.” Marx stresses the forms of Hegel’s *Logic* that underly this passage: universality, individuality and particularity.

³ Hyppolite comments on the insertion of the concept of Spirit in this movement from life to desire: “This movement from desiring self-consciousness to the multiplicity of self-consciousnesses suggests several comments: first of all, about the meaning of a deduction of this kind. ‘Deduction’ is obviously an inappropriate word here, because the dialectic is teleological, that is, through exploring the horizons of desire it discovers the meaning of that desire and poses its conditions. The condition of self-consciousness is other self-consciousnesses.” (163)

Rather than teleological, Hyppolite’s explanation of the transition consists in the kind of “transcendental deduction” that characterizes Kant’s thought, asking the question, what are the grounds of the possibility of a certain given category? Hyppolite answers: the condition of self-consciousness in an individual is the fact of other self-consciousnesses. But Hegel’s approach is quite different from this Kantian approach. On the one hand a certain given category, such as self-consciousness, arises out of earlier the forms of “consciousness” as a result of their inner contradictions. The new category or stage of the development of the logic of the concept or conceptual logic, with its form of subjective consciousness as well as the related object of that consciousness, arises out of the limitation of the earlier concept, or stage of the concept. The dialectic is not teleological in the sense of *depending* on a final goal—so that an earlier position only makes sense when one turns to a later one. The finality arises out of the intrinsic features of the concept, its limitations, and the contradictions that arise from absolutizing those limitations.

Hyppolite often fails to focus on such logic, bringing in such external finalities to explain the transitions. And so he writes, “In the *Early Theological Writings* Hegel envisions the relations between God and men among certain peoples as a relation between master and slave. He speaks of man’s enslavement to law in Jewish legalism as well as in Kantian moralism. In these conceptions there is no possible reconciliation between the *universal* and the *particular*. It is important to note this if we are to understand the transition from the concrete master-slave relation to unhappy consciousness, which contraposes the universal and the particular within consciousness.” (172-3) This is saying that the opposition of man and God in the later section on unhappy consciousness, elaborated in the light of Hegel’s early writings, is what makes intelligible the transition beyond the master-slave relation. This would indeed be a teleological “deduction” if that is all there is to Hegel’s argument. A general pattern that is perhaps more intuitively accessible in the common sense understanding of the relation between God and man is in this way retroactively applied to the master-slave development, which loses thereby its specificity and logical force. Later developments do illuminate earlier ones, but the reverse is also the case. The specific intelligibility of the earlier

gestalt of consciousness is what gives rise to the later one, and makes the appearance of the later one itself intelligible.

⁴ Regarding “the look” of the other, see Sartre’s vivid description of the encounter of the self-conscious being-for-self with the other self-consciousness in *Being and Nothingness*.

⁵ Later in his *Phenomenology*, Hegel calls the initial form of concrete social exchange *Sittlichkeit* or “ethical life,” but he does not oppose this to *Moralität* as an individualistic point of view but regards the standpoint of morality to reflect a higher stage of *social* consciousness. This contradicts a common interpretation of Hegel’s position on “ethical life” and “morality” that is mistakenly derived from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*.

⁶ This is one of Sartre’s main criticisms of Hegel in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre thinks that Hegel dissolves the individuality of the conscious beings in the higher unity of Spirit. But an “I that is we, and a we that is I” should be understood in terms of the infinity of mutual exchange, of giving and receiving, rather than of an abstract unity. Hence Hegel rejects the “Unitarian” concept of God for the Trinitarian one, in which the Holy Spirit is the unity-in-love of the Father and the Son, but such a unity does not eliminate the duality in the doctrine of the three equal persons of God.