

G. W. F. Hegel

Faith & Knowledge

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kind without weakness and perfidy, nor such intellect as here occurs without platitude; good fortune cannot come to pass without meanness, nor ill fortune without fear and cowardice, nor any kind of fortune, without being contemptible. In the same way, when philosophy after its own fashion, takes up the finite and subjectivity as absolute truth in the form of the concept, it cannot purify them [i.e., the finite and subjectivity] by connecting subjectivity with an infinite [the concept]. For this infinite is itself not the truth since it is unable to consume and consummate finitude (*die Endlichkeit aufzuzehren*).

In philosophy, however, the actual and the temporal as such disappear. This is called cruel dissection destructive of the wholeness of man, or violent abstraction that has no truth, and particularly no practical truth. This abstraction is conceived of as the painful cutting off of an essential part from the completeness of the whole. But the temporal and empirical, and privation, are thus recognized as an essential part and an absolute In-itself. It is as if someone who sees only the feet of a work of art were to complain, when the whole work is revealed to his sight, that he was being deprived of his deprivation and that the incomplete had been in-completed. Finite cognition is this sort of cognition of a part and a singular. If the absolute were *put together* out of the finite and the infinite, abstracting from the finite would indeed be a loss. In the Idea, however, finite and infinite are one, and hence finitude as such, i.e., as something that was supposed to have truth and reality in and for itself, has vanished. Yet what was negated was only the negative in finitude; and thus the true affirmation was posited.

The supreme abstraction (*Abstractum*) of this absolutized negation is the Ego-concept, just as the thing is the highest abstraction (*Abstraction*) pertaining to position [i.e., to affirmation]. Each of them is only a negation of the other. Pure being like pure thinking—an absolute thing and absolute Ego-concept—are equally finitude made absolute. Eudæmonism and the Enlightenment fuss belong to this same level—not to mention much else—and so do the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte. We shall now proceed to a more detailed confrontation of these three philosophers with one another.

A. Kantian Philosophy

Because the essence of the Kantian philosophy consists in its being critical idealism, it plainly confesses that its principle is subjectivism and formal thinking. Secure in its standpoint, which makes the unity of reflection supreme, it reveals what it is and aims at, by telling its story quite frankly. The name of Reason which it gives to the concept may, at the worst, impede the disclosure or mask it. On its lower levels, in cases where an Idea truly does provide the basis, the confused way in which the Idea is expressed makes it difficult to recognize it in the first place; and secondly, the rational ground is soon transformed back into something conditional that pertains to the intellect. But, for the rest, when the Kantian philosophy happens upon Ideas in its normal course, it deals with them as mere possibilities of thought and as transcendent concepts lacking all reality, and soon drops them again as mere empty thoughts. The highest Idea which it encountered in its critical business [i.e., the Idea of God in the Ontological Argument] it treated at first as if it were empty musing, nothing but an unnatural scholastic trick for conjuring reality out of concepts.¹ Then in the final stage of its development,² Kant's philosophy establishes the highest Idea as a postulate which is supposed to have a necessary subjectivity, but not that absolute objectivity which would get it recognized as the only starting point of philosophy and its sole content instead of being the point where philosophy terminates in faith.

The Kantian philosophy remains entirely within the antithesis. It makes the identity of the opposites into the absolute terminus of philosophy, the pure boundary which is nothing but the negation of philosophy. We must not, by contrast, regard it as the problem of the true philosophy to resolve at that terminus the antitheses that are met with and formulated perchance as spirit and world, or soul and body, or self and nature, etc.

1. Compare *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 603; B 631.

2. Hegel probably means to refer to *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (1793), Book II, Section 1, subsections B and C (*Akad.* VI, 62–78). But compare also *Critique of Practical Reason*, 1 (1787), Book II, Chapter II, Section V (*Akad.* V, 124–32).

On the contrary, the sole Idea that has reality and true objectivity for philosophy, is the absolute suspendedness of the antithesis. This absolute identity is not a universal subjective postulate never to be realized. It is the only authentic reality. Nor is the cognition of it a faith, that is, something beyond all knowledge; it is, rather, philosophy's sole knowledge. Philosophy is idealism because it does not acknowledge either one of the opposites as existing for itself in its abstraction from the other. The supreme Idea is indifferent against both; and each of the opposites, considered singly, is nothing. The Kantian philosophy has the merit of being idealism [326] because it does show that neither the concept in isolation nor intuition in isolation is anything at all; that intuition by itself is blind and the concept by itself is empty;³ and that what is called experience, i.e., the finite identity of both in consciousness is not a rational cognition either. But the Kantian philosophy declares this finite cognition to be all that is possible. It turns this negative, abstractly idealistic side [of cognition] into that which is in itself, into the positive. It turns just this empty concept into absolute Reason, both theoretical and practical. In so doing, it falls back into absolute finitude and subjectivity, and the whole task and content of this philosophy is, not the cognition of the Absolute, but the cognition of this subjectivity. In other words, it is a critique of the cognitive faculties.

For I thought that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was, to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. [. . .] Thus men, extending their inquiries beyond their capacities and letting their thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure footing, it is no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and to confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas, were the capacities of our understanding well considered, the extent of our knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) once discovered, and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things; between what is and what is not comprehensible by us, men would perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in the avowed igno-

3. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 51, B 75: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."

rance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse with more advantage and satisfaction in the other.

With these words, Locke expresses in the Introduction to his *Essay*⁴ the goal of his undertaking. They are words which one could just as well read in the introduction to Kant's philosophy; for it similarly confines itself to Locke's goal, that is, to an investigation of the finite intellect.

Within these bounds, however, and notwithstanding its ultimate results which are quite different, the Kantian philosophy expresses the authentic Idea of Reason in the formula, "*How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?*" Kant reproaches Hume for thinking of this task of philosophy with far too little definiteness and universality. This is exactly what happened to Kant himself; and like Hume he stopped at the *subjective* and external meaning of this question and believed he had established that rational cognition is impossible. According to his [327] conclusions all so-called philosophy comes down to a mere delusion of supposed rational insight.

How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? This problem expresses nothing else but the Idea that subject and predicate of the synthetic judgment are identical in the *a priori* way. That is to say, these heterogeneous elements, the subject which is the particular and in the form of being, and the predicate which is the universal and in the form of thought, are at the same time absolutely identical. It is Reason alone that is the possibility of this positing, for Reason is nothing else but the identity of heterogeneous elements of this kind. One can glimpse this Idea through the shallowness of the deduction of the categories. With respect to space and time one can glimpse it, too, though not where it should be, in the transcendental exposition of these forms,⁵ but later on, in the deduction of the categories, where the original synthetic unity of apperception finally comes to the fore.⁶ Here, the original synthetic unity of apperception is recognized also as the principle of the figurative synthesis,⁷ i.e., of the forms of intuition; space and time are themselves conceived as synthetic unities, and spontaneity, the absolute synthetic activity of the productive

4. Hegel quotes from the German translation by H. E. Poley (Altenburg, 1757). We give the text from Book I, chapter 1, section 7 (ed. Yolton, London, Everyman, 1961, I, 8-9).

5. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Aesthetic, sections 3, 5.

6. *Ibid.*, B 131-9 (compare A 115-25).

7. *Ibid.*, B 150-3, 160-1.

imagination, is conceived as the principle of the very sensibility which was previously characterized only as receptivity.

This original synthetic unity must be conceived, not as produced out of opposites, but as a truly necessary, absolute, original identity of opposites. As such, it is the principle both of productive imagination, which is the unity that is blind, i.e., immersed in the difference and not detaching itself from it; and of the intellect, which is the unity that posits the difference as identical but distinguishes itself from the different. This shows that the Kantian forms of intuition and the forms of thought cannot be kept apart at all as the particular, isolated faculties which they are usually represented as. One and the same synthetic unity—we have just now determined what this means here—is the principle of intuition and of the intellect. The intellect is only the higher potency; in it the identity which in intuition is totally immersed in the manifold, simultaneously sets itself against the manifold, and constitutes itself within itself as universality, which is what makes it the higher potency. Kant is therefore quite right in calling intuition without form [i.e., concept] blind. For in [mere] intuition [without form]⁸ there is no relative antithesis, and hence there is no relative identity of unity and difference. This relative identity and antithesis is what seeing or being conscious consists in; but the identity⁹ is completely identical with the difference just as it is in the magnet. The antithesis is not suspended in sensuous intuition, as it is in intellectual intuition; in the empirical intuition *qua* sensuous the antithesis must emerge; so it keeps its standing even in this state of immersion. Hence, the antitheses step apart as two forms of intuiting, the one as identity of thinking, the other as identity of being, the one as intuition of time and the other of space.¹⁰—Similarly, the concept is empty [328] without intuition. For the synthetic unity is only concept because it binds the difference in such a way that it also steps outside of it, and faces it in relative antithesis. In isolation the pure concept is the empty identity. It is only as being relatively identical with that which it stands against, that it is concept; and it is [thus] plenished

8. I.e., the pure intuitions of space and time considered in separation from the functions of the intellect.

9. Hegel clearly means "the unity" here. The opposite poles of the magnet are its essential nature. Thus when it is broken they are not separated but duplicated.

10. Hegel appears here to sketch an explanation of what Kant asserted to be incapable of further explanation: "why space and time are the only forms of our intuition" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 145–6).

only through the manifold of intuition: sensuous intuition $A = B$, concept $A^2 = (A = B)$.¹¹

The main point is that productive imagination is a truly speculative Idea, both in the form of sensuous intuition and in that of experience which is the comprehending of the intuition. For the expression "synthetic unity" might make the identity look as if it presupposes the antithesis¹² and need the manifold of the antithesis as something independent and existing for itself; the identity might look as if it was by nature posterior to the opposition. But in Kant the synthetic unity is undeniably the absolute and original identity of self-consciousness, which of itself posits the judgment absolutely and *a priori*. Or rather, as identity of subjective and objective, the original identity appears in consciousness as judgment. This original unity of apperception is called synthetic precisely because of its two-sidedness, the opposites being absolutely one in it. The absolute synthesis is absolute insofar as it is not an aggregate of manifolds which are first picked up, and then the synthesis supervenes upon them afterwards. If we sunder the absolute synthesis and reflect upon its opposites, one of them is the empty ego, the concept, and the other is the manifold, body, matter or what you will. Kant puts it very well (*Critique of Pure Reason* [second edition, 1787], p. 135): "through the empty Ego as simple representation nothing manifold is given."¹³ The true synthetic unity or rational identity is just that identity which is the connecting of the manifold with the empty identity, the Ego. It is from this connection, as original synthesis that the Ego as thinking subject, and the manifold as body and world first detach themselves. Thus Kant himself distinguishes the abstract Ego or the abstract

11. This formula says that the judgment is the second "power" (A^2) of productive imagination, the first "power" being sensuous intuition ($A = B$). In its appearance as judgment the intellect is the reflective awareness of the identity of Subject and Predicate in their difference. Hegel's present paradigm of judgment is the subsumption of a particular under a universal (cf. above p. 69). As he takes the particulars to have the form of being and the universals to have the form of thought, he can now say that the judgment is the reflective awareness of the identity of being and thought in their difference. The next step would lead from particular beings to objects and from concepts to the subject. So we get judgments as the reflective awareness of the identity of object and subject in their difference.

12. Hegel here uses the Kantian term *Antithesis*, not his own *Gegensatz*.

13. Kant says: "through the I as simple representation, nothing manifold is given."

identity of the intellect from the true Ego, the absolute, original synthetic identity, which is the principle.

This is how Kant truly solved his problem, "How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?" They are possible through the original, absolute identity of the heterogeneous. This identity, as the unconditioned, sunders itself, and appears as separated into the form of a judgment, as subject and predicate, or particular and universal. Still, the rational or, as Kant calls it, the *a priori* nature of this judgment, the absolute identity as the mediating concept (*Mittelbegriff*) manifests itself, not in the judgment, but in the [syllogistic] inference.¹⁴ In the judgment the absolute identity is merely the copula "is," without consciousness. It is the difference whose appearance prevails in the judgment itself. Here, the [329] rational is, for cognition, just as much immersed in the antithesis as the identity is immersed in intuition for consciousness in general. The copula is not something thought, something cognized; on the contrary it expresses precisely our non-cognizance of the rational. What comes to the fore and enters consciousness is only the product, i.e., the subject and predicate as terms of the antithesis. Only these terms are posited as object of thought in the form of judgment, and not their being one. In sensuous intuition concept and real thing do not confront each other. At the same time in the judgment the identity extricates itself as the universal from its immersion in the difference, so that the difference appears as the particular; the identity confronts this immersion as its opposite. Yet the rational identity of identity as [the identity] of the universal and the particular¹⁵ is the non-conscious in the judgment, and the judgment itself is only the appearing of this non-conscious identity.

The whole transcendental deduction both of the forms of intuition and of the category in general cannot be understood without distin-

14. *The Critique of Pure Reason* (A 298–309; B 355–66) relates the pure principles of understanding, i.e., of the "intellect" to the forms of judgment, and the Ideas of Reason to the forms of syllogism.

15. This is a literal translation. Perhaps we should read "*die vernünftige Identität als die Identität des Allgemeinen und Besonderen*": "the rational identity as the identity of the universal and the particular." Or else, "*die vernünftige Identität der Identität und der Differenz (des Allgemeinen und Besonderen)*": "the rational identity of the identity and the difference (between the universal and the particular)," which would agree with formulations on p. 74 below, and in the *Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System* (compare D 156).

guishing what Kant calls the faculty of the original synthetic unity of apperception from the Ego which does the representing and is the subject—the Ego which, as Kant says, merely accompanies all representations. [Secondly,] we must not take the faculty of [productive] imagination as the middle term that gets inserted between an existing absolute subject and an absolute existing world. The productive imagination must rather be recognized as what is primary and original, as that out of which subjective Ego and objective world first sunder themselves into the necessarily bipartite appearance and product, and as the sole In-itself. This power of imagination is the original two-sided identity. The identity becomes subject in general on one side, and object on the other; but originally it is both. And the imagination is nothing but Reason itself, the Idea of which was determined above.¹⁶ But it is only Reason as it appears in the sphere of empirical consciousness. There are those who, when they hear talk of the power of imagination, do not even think of the intellect, still less of Reason, but only of unlawfulness, whim and fiction; they cannot free themselves from the idea of a qualitative manifold of faculties and capacities of the spirit. It is they above all who must grasp that the In-itself of the empirical consciousness is Reason itself; that productive imagination as intuition, and productive imagination as experience are not particular faculties quite sundered from Reason. They must grasp that this productive imagination is only called intellect because the categories, as the determinate forms of the experiential imagination, are posited under the form of the infinite, and fixated as concepts which, also, form a complete system within their [or its] own sphere. Productive imagination [330] has been allowed to get by easily in the Kantian philosophy, first because its pure Idea is set forth in a rather mixed-up way like other potencies, almost in the ordinary form of a psychological faculty, though an *a priori* one, and secondly because Kant did not recognize Reason as the one and only *a priori*, whether it be of sensibility, of intellect, or what have you. Instead he conceived of the *a priori* only under formal concepts of universality and necessity. As we shall now see, he turned the true *a priori* back into a pure unity, i.e., one that is not originally synthetic.

Thus the In-itself was established in the power (*Potenz*) of imagination, but the duplication of this power was conceived as a reflected

16. See pp. 69–70.

one, namely as judgment, and the identity of this power was likewise conceived as intellect and category, that is, as similarly reflected and relative. Because the relative identity was fixated as the universal or the category and the relative duplication as that of the universal and the particular, their absolute identity—that is, the identity of the relative identity and the relative duplication—was also bound to be cognized in reflected form, that is, as Reason. Imagination, however, which is Reason immersed in difference, is at this level raised only to the form of infinitude and fixated as intellect. This merely relative identity necessarily opposes itself to, and is radically affected by, the particular as something alien to it and empirical. The In-itself of both, the identity of this intellect and the empirical, i.e., the *a priori* aspect of judgment, does not come to the fore; philosophy does not go on from judgment to *a priori* inference,¹⁷ from the acknowledgment that the judgment is the appearing of the In-itself to the cognition of the In-itself. It is for this reason that the absolute judgment of idealism as expounded by Kant [i.e., the synthetic judgment *a priori*] may, and, on this level [the *Potenz* of Reason as intellect], must be grasped in such a way that the manifold of sensibility, empirical consciousness as intuition and sensation, is in itself something unintegrated, that the world is in itself falling to pieces, and only gets objective coherence and support, substantiality, multiplicity, even actuality and possibility, through the good offices of human self-consciousness and intellect. All this is an objective determinateness that is man's own perspective and projection. Thus the whole deduction gets the easily grasped meaning that the things in themselves and the sensations are without objective determinateness—and with respect to the sensations and their empirical reality nothing remains but to think that sensation comes from the things in themselves. For the incomprehensible determinateness of the empirical consciousness comes altogether from the things in themselves, and they can be neither intuited nor yet cognized. In experience, the form of intuition belongs to the figurative synthesis, the concept to the intellectual synthesis.¹⁸ No other organ remains for the things in themselves but sensation; for sensation alone is not *a priori*, or in other words, it is not grounded in man's cognitive faculty for which only appearances exist. [331] The objective determinateness of sensations is their unity, and this unity is merely the self-consciousness of an experiencing

17. Compare p. 72 note 14 above.

18. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 151.

subject. So it is no more something truly *a priori* and existing in itself than any other subjectivity.

It would seem, then, as if critical idealism consisted in nothing but the formal knowledge that the subject and the things or the non-Ego exist each for itself¹⁹—the Ego of the I think, and the thing in itself. They do not, however, exist for themselves in the sense of each being a substance, one posited as soul-thing, the other as objective thing. Rather, the Ego of the I think is absolute *qua* subject, just as the thing in itself beyond the subject is absolute, without any further categorical determinateness in either case. Objective determinateness and its forms first come in with the connection between them [the Ego and thing-in-itself]; and this identity of theirs is the formal one that appears as causal nexus; the thing in itself becomes object insofar as it obtains from the active subject some determination which for this reason alone is one and the same in both of them. Apart from this they are completely heterogeneous, identical only as sun and stone are in respect to warmth when the sun warms the stone.²⁰ The absolute identity of the subject and the object has passed into this formal identity, and transcendental idealism into this formal or more properly, psychological idealism.

Once subject and object have been separated, the judgment reappears doubled on the subjective and the objective side. On the objective side it appears as transition from one objective [fact] to another, these objectivities themselves being posited in the relation of subject and object, and in that of the identity of both; and [on the subjective side] it appears likewise as a transition from one subjective phenomenon to another. Thus, gravity is the objective [fact] which *qua* subjective, or particular, is body, but *qua* objective or universal is motion. Or imagination is the subjective which *qua* subjective or particular is Ego and *qua* objective or universal is experience.

On their objective side Kant has set up these relations of appearance as judgments in the system of the principles of judgment.²¹ This must be recognized as true idealism inasmuch as the identity of what

19. *Für sich* does not here have the special sense that Hegel gives to it; it is simply Kant's *an sich*.

20. See Kant's *Prolegomena*, section 20. (*Akad.* IV, 301n); compare also p. 93 below.

21. Hegel must be referring either to the whole "System of all Principles of Pure Understanding" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 148–235; B 187–294) or to that part of it which is called "Systematic Representation of all the Synthetic Principles of Pure Understanding" (A 158–235; B 197–294).

side by side in a pervasive atomism; and certainly the enlightened separation of church and state fits in here very nicely. In this Idea of pervasive atomism an intuition of the Universe cannot be an intuition of it as spirit; for that which is spirit is not present in the Universe in the atomic state; and altogether the catholicity of religion consists [here] only in negativity and in the universality of singular being. So, although the subjectivity of yearning has raised itself to the objectivity of intuition, and reconciliation is effected, not with actuality, but with that which lives, not with singularity, but with the Universe, still even this intuition of the universe is itself transformed back into subjectivity. For on the one hand this intuition is virtuosity—or in other words it is not even the yearning, but only the search for the yearning; and on the other hand the intuition is not to constitute itself organically, nor is the authentic virtuosity to express itself properly in laws, and achieve its objectivity and reality in the body of a people and of a universal church. Instead outward expression is to have a strictly inward significance, it must be an immediate outburst or emulation of some singular and particular enthusiasm. The genuine externalization, the work of art, must not be present.

C. Fichtean Philosophy

In Kant's philosophy, thought, the infinite, the form of the objective is what comes first. The absolute antithesis between thought [on the one hand,] and being, the particular, the finite [on the other,] is within the cognitive subject, but not consciously: the antithesis is not objective for the subject. Or alternatively we might say that the absolute identity in which the antithesis is suspended, is purely objective, it is just a thought. It comes to the same thing either way, for this form of absolute objectivity, the identity as something beyond cognition, never converges with the subjective [side, i.e., with] cognition, to which the absolute antithesis is transported. In the philosophy of Jacobi it is the consciousness of the antithesis that comes first; and in order that it may be represented as resolved, the antithesis that is within cognition flees into its counterpart, i.e., into a realm beyond cognition, just as in Kant. There is, indeed, still a middle between this transition to absolute opposites, but this middle is itself something subjective: it is a yearning and a grief. In Fichte's philosophy, this yearning is synthesized with the Kantian objectivity, though not in such a way that the two opposite forms are extinguished in a true identity and indifference and the absolute middle emerges. Rather, Jacobi's subjective unification within the living experience of the individual is itself taken over in a merely objective form. In Kant's philosophy there is not the least sign of worry about the contradiction between empty universality and living particularity. In the theoretical sphere the contradiction is absolutely affirmed; and in the practical sphere, whose concept implies the suspension of the contradiction, a formalism of legal theory and morality emerges which is without vitality and truth. Jacobi's philosophy secures the identity of the universal and the particular in individuality, but the individuality is subjective. Hence a union of this kind can be nothing but worry and yearning, and particularity must become something permanent, something hallowed and absolute. In Fichte, this subjectivity of yearning is itself turned into the infinite, it is something thought; it is an absolute requirement, and as such it is the climax of the system: the Ego *ought* to be equal to the non-Ego. But no point of indifference can be recognized in it.

We have pointed out already¹ how the system rises toward the negative side of the Absolute, toward infinity, toward the Ego as absolute thinking. In this respect it is pure [388] idealism. But since this negative side is itself set up as what is absolutely positive, the idealism becomes something formal^t and is confronted by a realism. It is able to establish the identity of the antithetic opposites [i.e., to achieve intellectual intuition] only in the infinite; or in other words it turns the abstractive thinking, the pure activity that is opposed to being, into the Absolute. So it does not truly nullify the antitheses. Like the idealism [of his system] Fichte's intellectual intuition is merely a formal^t affair. Thought is confronted by reality, the identity of the intellectual intuition is confronted by the antitheses. The only identity here is the relative identity of the causal nexus in the [mutual] determination of one opposite by the other.

The task of philosophy as it was determined by the tradition (*Kultur*) of Locke and Hume is to compute and explain the world from the standpoint of the subject. The very opposition that holds between the world and the subject is transferred into the world that is to be explained. It splits [in Kant] into an ideal side and a real side in such a way that the ideal side in its relative antithesis to the real becomes the pure identity that abstracts from reality, i.e., the pure concept on the one hand; while on the other hand it is also the identity that is connected with reality, it is time, space, categories, the ideality of the real. In this cleavage of the world the objective, universal aspect of the real now consists solely in what belongs to the ideal side. Hence this idealism, which aims to explain the objective world, derives objectivity directly from the principle of the ideal side, i.e., from the Ego, the universal which in its overall opposition to the world is the subject. For this critical idealism has recognized objectivity as the ideal factor, and has thereby suspended the being in and for itself of the objective.

Fichte has highlighted this critical idealism which is quite evidently concerned with the form [of objectivity] only, in sharper outline. The universal aspect of the world that is opposed to the subject, is posited as Ego because it is posited as universal, as ideal, as thought. But the particular is necessarily left behind, so that if we accept the popular conception of philosophy and make explanation our business, the most interesting side of the objective world, the side of its reality, remains unexplained. To Kant, the real as given to sensation is some-

1. See pp. 61-65 above.

thing merely empirical which can be dismissed right away as unworthy of consideration. This is as unsatisfactory as Fichte's demonstration that sensation is something merely subjective, that the color red, [for example,] is first spread over a plane by the subject's hand, and thereby acquires objectivity.² For the problem is not at all about ideality, but about reality, and it does not matter whether the reality concerned is an infinite mass of sensations or of thing-qualities. In the practical part of the *Science of Knowledge* to be sure, it did [389] look as if the reality that is absolute for the ideal side, the things as they are in themselves were supposed to be constructed on the basis of how we ought to make them. But there is nothing deduced there except an analysis of the concept of striving and drive in a rational being and some reflective concepts about *feeling*, such as that feelings must be *different*. As for the task of constructing the system of things as they *ought* to be, only the formal^t concept of *ought* is analysed; apart from this formal essence there is not the slightest trace of the construction of feeling itself as a real system or of the construction of the totality of the ought. For the ought admits, in and for itself, of no totality at all. On the contrary, the manifoldness of reality appears as an incomprehensible primitive fact (*Bestimmtheit*), an empirical necessity. Particularity and difference as such are [accepted as] something absolute. The relevant standpoint for

2. This is Hegel's summary of the following Fichte text:

"And this red is something positive, a simple sensation, a determinate state of yourself?"

"I understand."

"You should, therefore, see the red strictly as something simple, as a mathematical point, and you do see it only as such, do you not? In *you* at least, as your affection, it seems to be a simple determinate state, without any complexity, something that should be visualized as mathematical point. Or do you find it otherwise?"

"I have to admit you are right."

"But now you spread this simple red over a broad plane which you undoubtedly *do not see*, since you see *strictly speaking* only the red. How do you manage to arrive at this plane?"

"Strange indeed. —Yet I think I have found the explanation. To be sure, I do not see the plane, but I *feel* it when I pass my hand over it. My sensation through sight continues to remain the same during this [process of] feeling and this is why I extend the red color over the whole plane which I *feel* while I always *see the same red*." (Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, in *Werke* II, 199-212; also Roderick M. Chisholm's translation, pp. 35-47, especially p. 41. Wherever Hegel refers directly to *The Vocation of Man* he does so to its first edition, Berlin, 1800.)

this reality [of the particular] is the empirical standpoint of any singular individual. For every such individual his reality is the incomprehensible sphere of common actuality in which he happens to be enclosed. We do not have to remind the reader that the formal idealism which proves that the empirical reality in its entirety is only a subjective thing, a feeling, is quite irrelevant to the absoluteness of the empirical reality. For this form does not alter the common and incomprehensible necessity of empirical existence in the slightest. Whether reality appears to us as the qualities of things or as our sensation, we cannot think for a moment that we have here a genuine idealization (*Idealität*) of actuality and of the real side [of experience].

We have brought out the formalism of this so-called idealistic [philosophical] knowledge in our discussion of Jacobi's philosophy³ which had the most definite and candid awareness of it. So we do not need to clarify it further with respect to Fichte's philosophy. Fichte shares it with the others, because of the principle of subjectivity and because the absolute identity exists only for faith and not for cognition and knowledge. What this formalism comes down to basically is that either the pure concept, the empty thought, supervenes incomprehensibly upon a content, a determination of the concept, or vice versa: the determination supervenes incomprehensibly upon the indeterminateness [of the pure concept]. In Jacobi's dogmatism the objective, the given, is called the first upon which the concept supervenes later. Fichte, on the contrary, makes the empty knowing, the Ego into the first, which is essentially one and the same as the empty intellect of the analysing philosophy (*Wissen*); or, in other words, Fichte's Ego is an identity upon which determination supervenes subsequently as something alien, something which is incomprehensible since it does not originate in the Ego. But this contrast between Jacobi and Fichte makes not the slightest difference to the matter at issue.

According to Fichte's idealism the Ego does not sense and intuit things; it intuit only its sensing and its intuiting and knows only of its [390] knowing. Thus, the one and only primordial certainty [in his view] is pure and empty activity, action pure and free; there is strictly nothing but pure knowing, and pure intuiting, and sensing: Ego=Ego. We shall see later how the whole world of sense that is

3. Compare pp. 142-6 above.

thus nullified gets its reality anyway, through the absolute act of will. But what is incomprehensible is the knowledge of this reality, the relation of the absolute emptiness and indeterminateness of the knowledge to determinateness and to this reality. The particular and the universal are alien one to the other just as Jacobi's empirically given determinateness is alien to the indeterminateness, that is, to the concept employed by the analysing intellect. But Fichte's way of knowing only the knowing, his way of knowing only the bare identity prepares through its own formalism a road to the particular. Fichte acknowledges that the sole truth and certainty, that is, pure self-consciousness and pure knowing, are incomplete, are conditioned by something else; or in other words, that the Absolute of the system is not absolute, and that for this very reason we must go on to something else. This acknowledged incompleteness of the absolute principle and the acknowledged necessity of going on to something else in consequence form the principle of the deduction of the world of sense. Because of its absolute deficiency the completely empty principle [Ego=Ego] from which [Fichte] begins has the advantage of carrying the immediate necessity of self-fulfilment immanently within itself. It must go on to something other [than itself] and from that to something else in an infinite objective world. The necessity rests upon the principle's being nothing but a part and upon its infinite poverty being the infinite possibility of wealth.⁴ In this way it plays a double role. In one role it is absolute, in the other strictly finite; and in the latter quality it can serve as the point of departure for the entire empirical infinity. Now, how could any principle have a higher degree of *apriority* than this one which immediately entails the necessity of the whole?

Looking at it on its own account, moreover, the formalism of this principle has the great advantage that it can easily be made comprehensible. The difficult requirement of intellectual intuition has aroused general complaint, and we have sometimes heard tell of people who went mad in their efforts to produce the pure act of will and the intellectual intuition.⁵ Both the complaint and the madness were no doubt occasioned by the name of the thing, not by the thing itself,

4. See pp. 181 ff. below.

5. Fichte's writings on *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794-97) had elicited a host of critical and satirical responses. The best known "complaint" was perhaps that of Friedrich Nicolai; and it was Jean-Paul (Richter) who told the story of the man driven mad. Hegel singles out Reinhold's response in the *Difference* essay.

which Fichte⁶ describes as common and easy enough, the only difficulty being perhaps to convince oneself that it really is just this simple everyday thing. The intuition of anything at all as alien to pure consciousness or Ego, is empirical intuition; though the Ego too is, as Fichte puts it, equally given in common consciousness.⁷ Abstracting from everything alien in consciousness on the other hand, and thinking oneself, is intellectual [391] intuition. Abstracting from the determinate content in any sort of knowledge and knowing only pure knowing, knowing only what is purely formal[†] in knowing, this is pure absolute knowledge. Now surely, this abstraction is easy enough to make, and everyone knows something he could abstract from. Nor need anyone be bothered about what has been abstracted from; for it does not get lost, indeed it comes back again in its whole empirical extension and breadth both for knowledge and for action; except that philosophy makes this contingency of ordinary consciousness methodical without diminishing its contingency and ordinarieness in the least.

The methodical aspect of this knowledge, or the philosophy about ordinary consciousness consists in this: first that the point of departure is something absolutely true and certain, namely the Ego, the knowing in all knowledge, pure consciousness. But then, since pure consciousness shows itself immediately to be the principle of deduction only because it is strictly incomplete and finite, its truth and certainty are of a kind that is rejected by philosophy. For philosophy can only find truth and certainty in what is not incomplete, not an abstraction, not conditioned.

The emptiness of philosophical knowledge becomes the principle of advance; for it is something radically deficient, and hence immedi-

6. Hegel is referring to the discussion of *Anschaung* in Book II of *The Vocation of Man*. Fichte does not say that it is "common and easy," but he does speak of the critics of his position in ways which suggest that they are failing to comprehend it because it is too obvious. "Do not let yourself be silenced by sophists and half-philosophers: things do not appear to you through any representation . . . everything that you perceive outside yourself is always you yourself. This consciousness has been very aptly called 'intuition.'" (Fichte, *Werke* II, 228; Chisholm, p. 64). "In intuition you can indeed become lost to yourself . . . it is even natural and necessary that you become lost to yourself. This is the observation to which those who defend a supposed consciousness of things existing in themselves outside us appeal" (*ibid.*, p. 231; Chisholm, p. 67).

7. "Even in that same consciousness where you become lost to yourself in the object [i.e., Hegel's "common consciousness"] there is always something which is only possible through an unnoticed thinking of yourself and a close observation of your own state" (*ibid.*, 232; Chisholm, p. 67).

ately in need of something other than itself, which becomes the point of attachment for the other that is its condition. The objective world supervenes upon pure knowledge as something alien that completes it. It does this by way of an inference from there being something missing in the point of attachment to the necessity of what is missing, an inference from the incompleteness of the Absolute, which is itself just one part, to the other part that completes it. But the insight that there is a deficiency in what is posited as Absolute, that the Absolute is just a part, is only possible through the Idea of totality or in general, through the awareness that for the sake of the so-called intellectual intuition, for the sake of thinking oneself and of pure knowing, we have abstracted from the alien other which is afterwards taken back again. Why does not this idea of the totality itself, the measure against which pure knowing shows itself to be incomplete, step forth as the Absolute? Why is the Absolute [in Fichte] something that is recognized as being only a part and as deficient? No reason can be found for it except that this part has empirical certainty and truth; of course everyone knows that he knows. Empirical truth of this sort is given preference over the absolute truth of the totality! The inference from one part to the other parts is nothing but a picking up again of what was abstracted from. This is to say: deduction is nothing but a transformation of signs, of the *minus* sign into *plus* sign; for the result of the abstraction [i.e., pure knowing] is directly but negatively connected with what it was abstracted from, and the latter is present in a negative form in the former. [392] In pure knowing, the world of sense is posited as a *minus*, the world of sense has been abstracted from, it has been negated. The inference to it consists in positing it now as a *plus* and in positing this *plus* as condition of pure self-consciousness. In the freedom of the rational being the objective sphere toward which its freedom is directed, is posited as a *minus*, so that the deduction of this sphere for freedom consists in giving the objective sphere the *plus* sign, or, in other words, positing it as being. An empty money-bag is a bag with respect to which money is already posited, to be sure, though with the *minus* sign; money can immediately be deduced from it because, as lacking, money is immediately posited.

In and for itself cognition by way of a deduction of this sort is not genuine cognition at all; for cognition that is genuine begins with the Absolute, and the Absolute is neither a part nor incomplete. Its truth and certainty are not just for experience, nor are they [reached] through abstraction, but through genuine intellectual intuition.

Fichte's cognition which proceeds from deficiency rests ultimately on the givenness of objects for the analysing thinking, the same givenness which Jacobi, Koeppen and others attribute to the manifold and its coherence when they happen upon it in the revealed facts of consciousness that they believe in—but what Jacobi and Koeppen happen upon has a positive sign, whereas in Fichte it has a negative sign. Jacobi and Koeppen find the very same thing present, that Fichte finds absent. Hence, this idealism is the true inversion of formal knowledge; but it is not, as Jacobi has claimed,⁸ the inversion of the cube of Spinozism, for Spinoza's cube cannot be turned over; it floats in free ether and there is no above and below for it. Much less is there any ball or turtle on which it is grounded.⁹ Rather, it has its balance and its ground within itself, it is its own ball and turtle. The irregular polyhedron of formal knowledge, on the other hand, rests on an earth that is alien to it, an earth in which it is rooted and which bears it. So there is an above and below for it. The ordinary sort of formal knowledge has the manifold of experience as its ground but it draws up many a peak of concepts from the ground into the ideal atmosphere. Fichte's formal knowledge reverses [the pattern of] this ordinary knowledge. It begins in the atmosphere where the very same thing [i.e., the manifold of experience] is encountered but only negatively and ideally; and being aware of this ideality, it lets down its negatively present content with a plus sign as reality.

What, now, can be said of the product of a cognition of this sort, which begins with the part that is certain and proceeds step by step from part to part wishing to express its deficiency as a totality posited for knowledge? It would seem as if the product not only can, but must be the totality. For it is only through the Idea of totality that we can recognize that our absolutely certain First [pure knowing] is only a part; so the Idea does seem to be our presupposition. [393]

8. "Strange that the thought never occurred to him [Spinoza] of turning his philosophical cube over; of making the upper side, the side of thought which he calls the *objective* side, into the lower side which he called the subjective, *formal* [formell] side. So he never investigated whether his cube would remain the same and preserve the sole true philosophical shape of the matter. Unfailingly such an experiment would have changed everything for him. What had been substance for him, the cubic, the *one* matter of two totally different beings would have disappeared before his eyes. Instead of it, a pure flame would have flared up, a flame burning solely out of itself, a flame in need of no place and of no nourishing fuel: Transcendental Idealism." Jacobi, *Werke* III, 11–2.

9. Compare p. 125–6 above.

And since it is thus what is truly First it would seem that the course of the development [both of the argument and of experience] must set it forth. But precisely because something recognized as a part and as deficient is supposed to have absolute truth and certainty, it is impossible that the entire progression should be totality. Pure experience, which knows nothing of a part and has not fixed the part in reflection as something which has being (*Wesen*) in the strict sense, can, of course, begin with a part and describe and set forth the whole circle by advancing from part to part; for experience, because it is experience, is not caught in the shackles of reflection which turns the part into an in-itself, and so makes it impossible to reach the whole. But a totality produced by, or rather found in experience does not exist for cognition, even if it is given as totality in presentational awareness (*Vorstellung*). For in cognition the parts must be absolutely determined by the whole; the whole must be the First of cognition. Fichte's formal cognition, transforming the negatively given into something positive, does not begin with the whole, but proceeds from the part to other parts; so it cannot transcend its partiality (*Teilwesen*) either in presentational awareness generally or in cognition. It seems that without the absolute Idea hovering before it, [Fichte's] empty [i.e., formal] knowledge would not recognize itself as something incomplete; but the Idea itself signifies here nothing but the negativity of something else that is needed, and this something else is only a finite being again, a part, an other thing, and so on *ad infinitum*. The absolute Idea shows itself to be strictly something formal,† because [Fichte makes] the part which is the finite linking point [between form and content or the ideal and the real], a being in itself, something absolute. This completely destroys any true Idea of totality. So what the deduction produces, with its sleight of hand by which negative is transformed into positive, is, of necessity, just the mass of common empirical reality, a nature that is finite throughout, a sense world. The abstraction from what is alien to the Ego was not a speculative abstraction, that is to say, the alien was not nullified. On the contrary, the very same formula in the very same context of ordinary actuality was posited again, but with a negative sign, in the form of a deficiency. As in the ordinary conception of experience (*gemeine Empirismus*), the mirror receives the sense-world and posits it ideally within itself, only to give it back afterwards just as it received it. And this giving back, this naming of what is lacking in the lack is called an immanent transcendental deduction.

The starting point is absolute, yet finite. Its finitude makes it im-