

On the Preface of Hegel's *Phenomenology*: The Birth of "Mediation" Ohta, Kohtaro (2018)

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1. Hegel's perceptions of his time and the need of philosophy
2. Critique against the philosophies of Hegel's time
3. Developments leading to *Phenomenology* as a system of mediation

Hegel published *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie*) in 1807 (Hegel 1970a) and remarkably enough, he wrote a promotional text for his book in a newspaper (vgl. Hegel 1970b, S. 593). At the beginning of the article, he states that the book "represents becoming knowledge [*stellt das werdende Wissen dar*]" (Hegel 1970b, S. 593). *Phenomenology* is the first part of his philosophical system, as it describes the development of his logic or substantial philosophy, which is the prerequisite for the complete *Logic*.¹⁾ He further explains the overall structure of *Phenomenology* in the article.

The phenomena of the spirit are such that the first immediate existence (i.e., the consciousness) takes its forms from the senses via understanding, self-consciousness, and reason (as the stations of the way [*die Stationen des Weges*])²⁾ to the absolute or pure knowledge or the essential elements of

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- 1) At this point, Hegel had a plan for his system, comprising *Phenomenology* (Part 1), *Science of Logic* (Part 2), and *Science of Nature and Spirit* (Part 3). However, "the first part" of the first edition of *Phenomenology* was later deleted (just before his death); thus, *Phenomenology* can no longer be the first part and introduction of his system since it was planned to be part of the philosophy of spirit (i.e., subjective spirit) that belongs to a systemic trilogy (science of logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of spirit) in *Enzyklopädie* (cf. Hosokawa 2002, p. 94 f.). The preface of *Phenomenology* mentions it as "the first part of science" (Hegel 1977b, p. 20), because Hegel died abruptly before he could correct it (cf. Hegel 1973, notes of Japanese translator, 26(2), 30(1), 33(3)).
- 2) "Stations [*Stationen*]" and "way [*Weg*]" are also used in the introduction of *Phenomenology*, and Hegel says they mean much the same (Hegel 1977b, p. 49).

Logic, where the conviction of consciousness and the knowledge of objects coincide. The most important stations of the great journey of the spirit are consciousness (sense, perception, understanding), self-consciousness, observational (theoretical) and behavioral (practical) reasoning, as well as the moral, educated, ethical, and religious spirits. The stations on the spirit's journey initially presented as chaos are clarified as necessary and point to the final destination or absolute knowledge.

Phenomenology describes the entire journey in which the consciousness has varied experiences on the way to the final goal of absolute knowledge, of which we are the mediators. Thus, *Phenomenology* brings the various phenomena of the spirit into a scientific order according to their necessity and is (originally) the first part of his system.

The following is a summary of Hegel's explanation of his promotional text for *Phenomenology*, followed by a concise description of its exceptionally long Preface, which contains his motive for writing it and the thought process at that time that aroused the interest of many people:

In the preface, the author explains what seems to him to be the need of philosophy at its current standpoint, the presumptuousness and nonsense of the philosophical formulas, which at present demeans philosophy, and what matters in general for philosophy and its study [*In der Vorrede erklärt sich der Verfasser über das, was ihm Bedürfnis der Philosophie auf ihrem jetzigen Standpunkte zu sein schein; ferner über die Anmaßung und den Unfug der philosophischen Formeln, der gegenwärtig die Philosophie herabwürdigt, und über das, worauf es überhaupt bei ihr und ihrem Studium ankommt*]. (Hegel 1970b, S. 593)

In the above quotation, Hegel sums up *Phenomenology's* long Preface, which constitutes almost one-tenth of the entire text, in three points, helping us understand his substantive intention for the difficult-to-understand, voluminous text. The three points are formulated as follows:

- (1) The need of a philosophy that corresponds to the times.
- (2) The criticism of contemporary philosophy, which does not meet the needs of the time, forgets the original task of philosophy, adopts a haughty attitude, and degrades philosophy.
- (3) The critique of the philosophies that are the product of the times to clarify the main means to establish the true philosophy that meets the needs of the new era.

The Preface to *Phenomenology* presents Hegel's research results after his struggles as a young philosopher in Jena for the philosophical realization of the ideal through the mediation of the form of reflection. In his development of *Phenomenology*, Hegel criticized other philosophers. However, his critique was simultaneously a self-critique of his earlier standpoint. For example, the young Hegel accepted Kant's morality or Platonic love but later criticized them.

In the Preface to *Phenomenology*, Hegel critiques the dualism of Kant, the ego of Fichte, the intellectual intuition of Schelling, and the immediate cognition and love of the Romantics, which are also instances of self-critique.³⁾

In the Preface to *Phenomenology*, Hegel emphasizes the originality of his philosophy while including self-critique and critique of other philosophical theories, which become elements of his system and acquire a new meaning in it. However, it is difficult to summarize this preface because of its length and wide range of topics.

This chapter critically follows Hegel's argument in the Preface. It considers the following three perspectives: (1) the contemporary necessity of philosophy, (2) the criticism of contemporary philosophies, and (3) the main means of establishing true philosophy.

1. Hegel's perceptions of his time and the need of philosophy

(a) Reflective culture and philosophy

The term "the need of philosophy [das *Bedürfnis der Philosophie*]" (Hegel 1977a, pp. 89, 91, 93, 113) first appeared in *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* in 1801.⁴⁾

Hegel considers post-Cartesian European culture to be a dualistic culture characterized by dichotomies, such as spirit and matter, finite and infinite, freedom and necessity; with the progress of culture, this antithesis "has passed over into such forms as the antithesis of reason and sensibility, intelligence and nature and, with respect to the universal concept, of the absolute subjectivity and [. . .] objectivity" (Hegel 1977a, p. 90).

In other articles, Hegel denotes the dualistic culture after the modern era as "reflective culture [*Reflexionskultur*]" (Hegel 1970c, S. 181; Hegel 1970d, S. 298). He determines that the culture of his time arrived at the extreme of a segmentation of culture.

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- 3) In general, Hegel criticized his former standpoint. For example, during his time in Bern, he tried to overcome the positivity of Christianity from the perspective of Kant's moral autonomy. However, during his time in Frankfurt, he began to criticize Kant because his order of obligations oppressed the human mind. Thus, the critique is a self-critique as well. In Frankfurt, he wrote that "feeling sublates the positivity and objectivity of the commandments. Love sublates the restrictions of feeling. Religion sublates the restrictions of love [*Gesinnung hebt die Positivität, Objektivität der Gebote auf; Liebe die Schrauben der Gesinnung, Religion die Schrauben der Liebe*]" (Hegel 2018, S. 389). This sentiment can be interpreted as the description of the development of his self-critique. Moreover, his changing standpoint from love (in Frankfurt) through religion to philosophy (in Jena) also shows the development of his self-critique. His critique of Schelling's intellectual intuition and love of the Romantics in the preface of *Phenomenology* follows the same pattern.
- 4) Hegel uses the phrase "the need of philosophy" later in *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*: When understanding yields contradictions, the need of philosophy emerges to solve it (vgl. Hegel 1970g, S. 55).

If the segmentation and confrontation prevailing in reflective culture have reached such an extreme, it is also a sign that this segmentation will soon be overcome, and that the revival of totality is imminent. Hegel states that “totality at the highest pitch of living energy is only possible through its own re-establishment out of the deepest fission” (Hegel 1977a, p. 91).

In particular, the philosophy that overcomes confrontations and segmentation for a living totality is desirable under such circumstances.

When the power of unity disappears from people’s lives and dichotomies lose their living connection and mutuality and become independent, the need for philosophy arises (Hegel 1977a, p. 91).

The need of philosophy arises from dichotomies and segmentation. Hegel recognizes that the culture and epoch torn by reflection have reached the zenith of maturity. The new philosophy of the time should sublimate the dichotomies and segmentations anchored in the reflective culture. Therefore, the need of philosophy is the “need for the reconstruction of totality” (Hegel 1977a, p. 93).

In *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy (The Difference)*, Hegel explains the task of philosophy as follows:

The task of philosophy consists of uniting these presuppositions (i.e., the finite and the absolute): [to] posit being in non-being, as becoming; to posit dichotomy in the Absolute, as its appearance; to posit the finite in the infinite, as life. (Hegel 1977a, pp. 93-94)

In *The Difference*, he postulates that the new philosophy is justified by the reality of time. The new philosophy considers the dichotomies and segmentation that have permeated the whole epoch as phenomena of the absolute and locates them in the life of the spirit to construct the absolute as an object of consciousness and sublimate the pain of the time.

The task of philosophy in *The Difference* is rephrased in *Phenomenology* as follows:

The life of [the] Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. (Hegel 1977b, p. 19)

This citation implicates Hegel’s claim that *Phenomenology* is the birthplace of the new philosophy corresponding to the new era. Hegel calls his time “a birth-time” and “a period of transition” (Hegel 1977b, p. 6), which is also an expression of his pretension.

(b) The French Revolution and Hegel's recognition of time

The transition period into the new era is the time when the spirit that built the human world destroys the old, then matures and appears as a new spirit in the new "sunrise [*der Aufgang*]" (Hegel 1977b, p. 7).

The sunrise of the new spirit comes immediately, but not without any mediation or antecedent. The spirit is constantly changing, advancing, and ceaselessly destroying one old building after another. This transition is too subtle for ordinary people to notice, but when it reaches a certain limit, it causes a drastic change, and the new building suddenly appears.

Just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of merely quantitative growth, there is a qualitative leap, and the child is born, and the Spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms. . . The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunrise, which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world. (Hegel 1977b, pp. 6-7)

The "sunrise" is the new spirit emerging from the horizon revealed by the French Revolution.

Notably, Hegel describes the French Revolution as "a bright sunrise [*ein herrlicher Sonnenaufgang*]" (Hegel 1970e, S. 529), which explains Hegel's highly coherent evaluation of the French Revolution.

The French Revolution was an epoch-making political event in his time, but Hegel also considers it an important event for the philosophy and thought of the times. Thus, the time came in which "man stands upside down, i.e., on the head and builds reality after this thought [*der Mensch sich auf den Kopf, d. i. auf den Gedanken stellt und die Wirklichkeit nach diesem erbaut*]," and "man has come to recognize that thought should rule spiritual reality [*der Mensch ist dazu gekommen, zu erkennen, daß der Gedanke die geistige Wirklichkeit regieren sollen*]" (Hegel 1970e, S. 529).

"Thought" here means "thought of human rights." The French Revolution spread the idea of human rights, broke old privileges and regimes, and made freedom and reason principles of the human will. For Hegel, it was an expression of the possibility that the union of the subjective and the objective, the finite and the infinite, this world and other worlds had just occurred through the thought or "real reconciliation of the divine with the world has just come [*es ist zur wirklichen Versöhnung des Göttlichen mit der Welt nun erst gekommen*]" (Hegel 1970e, S. 529).

However, Hegel does not evaluate the French Revolution quite so positively. He claims that the reconciliation of dualistic confrontations that the French Revolution brought about were abstract and formal and inevitably led to social ruptures. Individual wills were only imitations of the universal will. Moreover, "the principle of atoms and individual wills [*das Prinzip der Atome, der Einzelwillen*]" (Hegel 1970e, S. 534) sits on the throne and expresses itself directly, without the

mediation of laws and institutions. Hegel sees in this the cause for the imminent failure of the French Revolution and the social ruptures (vgl. Hegel 1970e, S. 534 ff.).

He does not change his evaluation of the French Revolution in *Phenomenology*, and this view is reiterated in *Lectures of the Philosophy of History* [*Vorlesugen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*].

(c) “Absolute freedom” and “infinite judgment”

The world that produced the French Revolution is widely regarded as the state of “absolute freedom,” the freest human self-awareness ever achieved in history.

This undivided substance of absolute freedom ascends the throne of the world without any power [. . .] to resist it. (Hegel 1977b, p. 357)

Simply put, “absolute freedom” means self-consciousness, which finds itself directly and without mediation in all real beings, negates all objectivity, and puts its own will in all objects. Hegel notes that “this individual consciousness is no less directly conscious of itself as universal will” (Hegel 1977b, p. 358).

Therefore, in such “absolute freedom,” personal will does not pass through social organizations and institutions, is not cultivated, and does not elevate itself up into the universal will. Instead, it seeks to destroy and circumvent organizations and institutions and rise directly into the universal will without mediation. Therefore, it cannot achieve any fruitful universal work or a project.

The world of “absolute freedom” is the direct connection of the impudent individual consciousness, which causes total regression in others and subordinates its absoluteness to the simple and ruthless universal consciousness, beyond the objective and various intermediaries (institutions and organizations). In this world, the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness are two extremes that are directly opposite each other without connecting mediators. Their relationship is “one of wholly unmediated pure negation” (Hegel 1977b, p. 360).

Therefore, an individual who does not build himself up through the mediation of others and directly takes the name of the universal finally reaches the negation of others, namely, death and fear (Cf. Hegel 1977b, p. 361).

Therefore, to use the logical word that Hegel uses in the other parts of *Phenomenology*, we can describe the world of absolute freedom or the French Revolution as one of “the infinite judgment [*das unendliche Urteil*]” (Schmidtz 1957, S. 144 ff.).

Infinite judgment means directly, and without mediation, uniting the subject and the predicator, though it is qualitatively different. If we use the formulation in *Phenomenology*, observational reason attempts to find itself in objective nature and arrives at “phenology,” the “infinite judgment” that “the self is a thing” (Cf. Hegel 1977b, pp. 208-209).

This judgment is the true proposition finally arrived at by reason, which presupposes a belief in

its existence in all objectives. However, for such reason, the infinite judgment that “the self is a thing” implies the unmediated union of subject and object, which are qualitatively distinct; that is, it is “the self-sublating judgment” (Hegel 1977b, p. 210), and it implicates the adverse judgment directly, that “a thing is the self.”

The reasoning that arrives at the truth of “the self is a thing” in “the form of being” (Hegel 1977b, p. 209) via observation of nature is induced by the speculative nature of this judgment and transitions through “in the form of being-for-self” (Hegel 1977b, p. 209) to “a thing is the self” (i.e., from observational reasoning to behavioral reason).

The infinite judgment expresses, for the self-consciousness that experiences it, the immediate and unmediated meeting of subject and predicate; for us, it is the point of connection of the meditation of essence and self. Hence, Hegel says that “the moment of that infinite judgment is the transition of immediacy into mediation or negativity” (Hegel 1977b, p. 209).

Thus, based on the above explanation, the world of absolute freedom of *Phenomenology* can easily be imagined as the world of infinite judgment, in which absolute freedom or the unmediated union of individual and universal will governs.

In *Phenomenology*, the world of absolute freedom is the product of the conflict between wealth and sovereignty in the world of culture, or the level of thought is the product of the conflict between enlightenment and religious faith. However, consciousness as absolute freedom does not know that it is historically and socially mediated and directly believes in its absoluteness without meditation. As already mentioned, such misunderstandings lead to death and fear (vgl. Schmidtz 1957, S. 145).

(d) The emergence of the new spirit and the need of philosophy

How does Hegel explain the emergence of absolute freedom, which directly negates all mediators from the world of culture, wherein separation and confrontation prevail?

In *Phenomenology*, the world of absolute freedom emerges directly from the world of utility. Usefulness refers to the utilitarian relation of wealth that dominates the world of culture. The domination of wealth means that the individual becomes the absolute end and others, the means of the individual (vgl. Hegel 1990, p. 67 [paragraph 182]). However, the individual cannot pursue all his desires without relationships with others. He must therefore rely on others.

The labor of the individual for his own needs is just as much a satisfaction of the needs of others as of his own, and [he obtains] the satisfaction of his own needs [. . .] only through the labor of others. (Hegel 1977b, p. 213)

Thus, “just as everything is useful to man, so man is useful too” (Hegel 1977b, p. 342). Hegel describes such human relationships in civil society as useful.

Everything is, thus, as much something in itself as it is for an “other”; in other words, everything is useful. (Hegel 1977b, p. 342)

Thus, in civil society or the world of culture, the wealth measured by money prevails; all things are considered from the point of view of “usefulness.”

Enlightenment is the self-consciousness that sublimates all goals from utility’s perspective and considers them in relation to humans (i.e., the self).

It fights against religious beliefs with the weapon of utility and dissolves the other world (the world of God) into the world of utility. Thus, the real and the divine worlds are united in their usefulness.

In the object of pure insight, both worlds are united. Useful is the object in so far as self-consciousness penetrates it and has in it the certainty of its individual self, its enjoyment (its being-for-self) . . . The two worlds are reconciled, and heaven is transplanted to the earth below. (Hegel 1977b, p. 355)

The dualism of the modern world, described as the world of culture (i.e., the dualism of this and another world; the real and the divine), is coordinated and reconciled in utility. However, in this world of utility, the quantitative and abstract relations of wealth dominate. The self-consciousness permeated by utility is only quantitatively related to all the others from the standpoint of private utility.

In this way, all relations are reduced to utility (i.e., utilitarian and unilateral relations), negating all concrete and diverse ties. As a result, self-consciousness expresses its unmediated universality by negating various intermediaries, such as institutions, organizations, and groups, which are reflected in a world of absolute freedom.

Since this self-consciousness emerged from the world of utility, absolute freedom is the consciousness that believes it will be the direct and unmediated universal will. Thus, Hegel states that “the world is for it (absolute freedom) simply its own will and this is [the] general will” (Hegel 1977b, pp. 356–357).

The French Revolution, which embodied absolute freedom, presented some ideological tasks: the settlement of dualisms—self and other, subject and object, this world and another world—and the realistic reconciliation of the divine and the world. The spirit that treats the newly appearing ideal existed directly before the people at the time.

This new spirit was obtained by the “self-forming spirit” after some detours, as was its purpose. However, the results and the goal have no real essence of their own but become real only when they unite with their processes of realization. Hegel remarks on this idea in the Preface to *Phenomenology* as follows:

The real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about. (Hegel 1977b, p. 2)

For Hegel, the conceptual apprehension of something depends on the necessary process that produces the thing, that is, the apprehension of an entity by the process of creation.

By the expression “need of philosophy” Hegel meant that the division of time and reality mediated by the historical process should be interpreted in unity to meet the need for a new philosophy. Philosophy must evolve from love to knowledge to the system of knowledge, to sublimate separate realities and recover totality, which is the need (i.e., task) of philosophy. “Now is the time for philosophy to be raised to the status of a science” (Hegel 1977b, pp. 3–4).

However, what is the situation of separation from which the tasks of philosophy emerge, demanded by the times?

2. Critique against the philosophies of Hegel's time

(a) Reflective philosophy as a product of time

The French Revolution highlighted the task of thinking: the reconciliation of thinking and being, subject and object, this world and another world. This task was not completed in the historical and real world because the abstractness of the absolute freedom of self-consciousness, characterized by utility, remained unsettled.

According to Hegel, the philosophies of his time cannot address the reconciliation of worldly things with heavenly things for which the French Revolution paved the way. Ultimately, they are trapped in the dualistic paradigm that characterizes modern reflexive culture and shuns authentic philosophy.

As noted earlier, Hegel characterized such philosophies in his *Phenomenology* advertisement as “the presumptuousness and the nonsense of the philosophical formulas, which at present demeans philosophy.”

However, what does Hegel mean by “the presumptuousness and the nonsense of the philosophical formulas?”

For Hegel, philosophical reason fundamentally must not be partial but holistic knowledge. Philosophy must be the science whose object is infinite, which embraces the finite and thus, serves as the idea in the realist integration of the finite and the infinite, the proper aim of true philosophy. Accordingly, Hegel expressed the sixth of his habilitation theses as follows: “Idea is the synthesis of the infinite and the finite, and all philosophies are in the ideas [*Idea est synthesis infiniti et finite et philosophia omnis est in ideis*]” (Hegel 1970f, S. 533).

In *Glauben and Wissen*, Hegel states that the idea of absolute integration of the infinite and the

finite is “not the postulate impossible to realize, but it is the only true reality [*nicht zu realisierendes Postulat - sondern sie ist die eizige wahrhafte Realität*]”⁵⁾ (Hegel 1970d, S. 302).

Philosophy was to be based on rational knowledge and bear the ideal as its authentic object. However, the philosophies of his time broke the ideal and the unification of the infinite and the finite by integrating the absolute (the ideal) into the other world of the finite and abandoning rational cognition.

Hegel critically characterizes the philosophies of his time as follows:

That reason should renounce its being in the Absolute, exclude itself from it, and only act negatively against it, now became the highest point of philosophy [*daß die Vernunft auf ihr Sein im Absoluten Verzicht tun sollte, sich schlechthin daraus ausschlösse und nur negative dagegen verhielte, wurde nunmehr der höchste Punkt der Philosophie*]. (Hegel 1970d, S. 289)

Although philosophy should be the holistic knowledge that unites subjectivity and objectivity, the finite and the infinite, it moves away from the highest ideal and recognizes the sensual and the phenomena, that is, the finite as the only being and the infinite and the eternal as nothingness; philosophy expels them and excludes them from rational knowledge.

Therefore, the philosophies of Hegel’s time give up their only aim to know the infinite, limit themselves to the finite, forget their original mission and degrade themselves.

Such philosophies that abandon the cognition of the infinite, live in the world of the finite, and believe in the absolute reality is denoted critically in *Glauben und Wissen* as “the dogmatism of absolute finitude and subjectivity [*der Dogmatismus der absoluten Endlichkeit und Subjektivität*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 380) or “realism of the finitude [*Realismus der Endlichkeit*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 297).

The fault of reflexive culture is that the divisions between the finite and the infinite or the subjective and the objective are fixed at wide extremes. Hegel believes that it is the task of philosophy to overcome this dualism and restore totality.

Therefore, Hegel sought to examine the philosophies that were too beholden to stubborn dualism in his time to pursue what he saw as the task of philosophy.

(b) Critique of the reflective philosophies in *Glauben und Wissen*

Hegel addresses the different, dualistic philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte, calling them “subjective, reflective philosophies,” and criticizes them in *Glauben und Wissen*.⁶⁾

5) Hegel argues that “the idea is the truth in and for itself, the absolute unity of concept and objectivity [*die Idee ist das Wahre an und für sich, die absolute Einheit des Begriffs und der Objektivität*]” (Hegel 1970g, S. 367), and he insists that philosophy should cognize such ideas with rational thought.

6) The description of Kant’s, Jacobi’s, and Fichte’s philosophies that will be provided later is a

Hegel's sentiments are based on his observation that the three philosophers separate the finite and the infinite, and the subject and the object by reflection or understanding, recognizing reality only in the finite and subjective, thus placing the infinite beyond the reach of human cognition. They remain in this dualistic paradigm and find the criteria for cognition finite and subjective, which is a common feature of subjective and reflective philosophies (vgl. Hegel 1970d, S. 295).

Hegel criticizes the dualistic, reflexive philosophies that spring from dualistic culture to appreciate the standpoint that enables him to overcome division and confrontation in his quest to be a leader of philosophy that meets the needs of the new era.

Therefore, to understand the Preface to *Phenomenology*, it is helpful to review how Hegel criticizes and interprets the three subjective reflective philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte because, in the Preface, he explains his mediation of philosophy for the first time through this critique.

Hegel sees the absolute distinction between the finite and the infinite and the impossibility of knowing the infinite as common features of the three philosophies. Still, he also notes that they contradict each other. He states that Kant's philosophy is the objective side of reflective philosophy and Jacobi's thought is the subjective. Fichte's philosophy is a synthesis of the two (vgl. Hegel 1970d, S. 296).

This explanation sounds schematic; however, for Hegel, it is necessary to demonstrate the validity of his philosophy. Based on *Glauben und Wissen*, the following discussion briefly reviews how Hegel interprets the three philosophies.

1) Kant's philosophy

Although the three philosophies systematize the culture of reflection, Hegel holds that Kant's philosophy is the most fundamental problem to sublimate the principle of the reflection culture. From his youth, Hegel was firmly convinced that Kant's philosophy is "the foundation and starting point for modern German philosophy [*die Grundlage und den Ausgangspunkt der neueren deutschen Philosophie*]" (Hegel 1969, S. 59).

Hegel sees a "dual spirit [*zweierlei Geist*]" (Hegel 1970d, S. 269) in Kant's philosophy, as does Schiller (Schiller 1868). In Kant's arguments, he finds the principle of the speculative idea he had been searching for; however, he criticizes Kant for exterminating the principle by reflection and degrading it to the subjective.⁷⁾

summary of the detailed description provided in Ohta 2018, Chapter 5.

- 7) Schiller refers to Kant's transcendental philosophy and says that his system highlights the contradiction between elements, such as content and form and material and formal; however, it does not adhere to the spirit of Kant's system.

In a transcendental philosophy, where everything depends on freeing the form from the content and keeping the necessary from everything accidental, it is easy to get used to thinking of the material as merely an obstacle [for] sensuality because it [merely] stands in the way of this

Kant claims that human cognition cannot bridge the gap between phenomena and the thing-in-itself. He argues that in human cognition, to understand is to cognize phenomena, and to reason is to cognize the infinite beyond the phenomena or the thing-in-itself.

As Kant famously expresses, “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind [*Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer, Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind*]” (Kant 1977, S. 99). Thus, Kant considers the cognition of phenomena based on experiences as the absolute cognition that constitutes truth, and the cognition of a thing-in-itself without an experimental basis is empty.

Kant believes that the possibility of metaphysics can be justified by the familiar question: “how is a synthetic *a priori* judgment possible?” However, he rejects rational knowledge of the infinite by limiting the possibility of knowledge to the finite, experimental knowledge via the reflective understanding.

Hegel, however, finds in the synthetic *a priori* judgment the ideal of reason: the identity of subject and predicate, of the specific and the universal, of being and thinking (vgl. Hegel 1970d, S. 304, 318).

The ideal of reason or “speculative ideal [*speculative Idee*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 388) is expressed in *Transcendental Deduction* [*Tranzendentale Deduktion*], where Kant copes with *quid juris*: the validity of the correspondence of categories produced by thought and the objects in the objective world.

Kant calls the unification of pure apperception the highest point [*der höchste Punkt*] (Kant 1977, S. 137) of *Transcendental Deduction*. Instead, Hegel finds the true principle of idealism in the integrity of the pure apperception: the absolute and fundamental identity of the subject and the object. Notably, according to Kant, the pure apperception is the representation of “I think [*ich denke*],” which accompanies all representations or self-consciousness [*Selbstbewußtsein*] (Kant 1977, S. 136). The perception of objects stems from such an identity of self-consciousness.

Kant says, “the pure apperception supplies a principle of the synthetic unity of the manifold in all possible intuition at hand [*die reine Apperzeption gibt ein Principium der synthetischen Einheit des Mannigfaltigen in aller möglichen Anschauung an die Hand*]” (Kant 1977, S. 174). This “fundamental and synthetic unity of the apperception [*ursprüngliche synthetische Einheit der Apperzeption*]” (Kant 1977, S. 139) is, according to Hegel, “the first and original [*das Erst end Ursprüngliche*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 308), from which the thought and being, and the subject and object

business [as] a necessary contradiction [to] reason. Such a mode of representation does not [correspond] in any way [to] the spirit of the Kantian system, but it could well be [in its expressions] [*In einer Transcendental-Philosophie, wo alles darauf ankommt, die Form von dem Inhalt zu befreien und das Notwendige von allem Zufälligen rein zu erhalten, gewöhnt man sich gar leicht, das Materielle sich bloß als Hindernis zu denken und die Sinnlichkeit, weil sie gerade bei diesem Geschäft im Wege steht, in einem notwendigen Widerspruch mit der Vernunft vorzustellen. Eine solche Vorstellungsart liegt zwar auf keine Weise im Geiste des Kantischen Systems, aber im Buchstaben desselben könnte sie gar wohl liegen*]. (Schiller 1868, S. 33)

appear, not merely as the subjective, as Kant posits, but the “per-se [*Ansich*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 309 usw) and the true synthesis of the conflicting or “reason [*Vernunft*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 308) itself.

However, Kant denies “the truly speculative side [*die wahrhaft speculative Seite*]” (Hegel 1970d, S. 328) of his philosophy, where the fundamental unity of self-consciousness between the subject and object is made a subjective and finite unity.

Hegel often compliments Kant because Kant denotes the perception by understanding caught by experience as “phenomena” (vgl. Hegel 1970d, S. 341, 363). However, Hegel contests Kant for his dogmatical interpretation of the perception of the phenomena by understanding only absolute perception and denying the rational perception beyond the phenomena, where cognition by understanding is “the true cognition which does not cognize the object [*eine wahre Erkenntnis, die den Gegenstand nicht erkannte*]” (Hegel 1969, S. 39). That is, Hegel opposes Kant's self-contradiction.

According to Hegel, this self-contradiction stems from the imperfect solution of the famous antinomies.

Hegel appreciates Kant's establishment of the finitude of understanding in the antinomies and conception of phenomena. However, Kant concludes that human should limit his knowledge to experience or phenomena so that he does not get caught in the web of unsolvable antinomies.

Kant admits that the determinants of thought or understanding are the only determinants of phenomena. Still, he considers knowledge through experience or phenomena to be the only possible knowledge, making it absolute knowledge. Therefore, the antinomies do not mediate between the (finite) phenomena and the things themselves but separate the two and restrict the true reality to the world of experience or phenomena.

According to Hegel, Kant's solution to the antinomies unintentionally makes knowledge of mere reality true knowledge. For Kant, antinomies are not the mediators that enable humans to go beyond phenomena and reach a higher level of truth or reason. He demeans antinomies to something subjective and makes the knowledge of reality the absolute knowledge. Therefore, in Hegel's view, Kant fails to resolve the antinomies.

2) Jacobi's philosophy

Jacobi does not consider categories to be subjective. Rather, he believes them to be constrained:

what should arise and be present in a way we can understand must arise and be present in a conditioned way; thus, as long as we understand, we remain in a chain of conditioned conditions [*alles, was auf eine uns begreifliche Weise entstehen und vorhanden sein soll, auf eine bedingte Weise entstehen und vorhanden sein muß; so bleiben wir, so lange wir begreifen, in einer Kette bedingter Bedingungen*]. (Jacobi 1976, S. 154)

According to Jacobi, cognition is the totality of evidence that comprises the chain of causes and results. However, our knowledge of the world of finite experience is limited because the explanation depends on the limited causes and results in the cause-effect chain.

Jacobi regards the terms of understanding, the product of thought, as limited and finite and claims that knowledge based on these terms cannot overcome the infinite. The infinite is beyond cognition with concepts and must be left to religious beliefs.

This belief [. . .] posits the eternal as the absolute object [. . .], separate[s] the knowledge from the absolute object [. . .], and excludes rational cognition because knowledge is recognized only as something subjective and formal knowledge [*dieser Glaube, der das Ewige, als absolutes Objekt und von ihm getrennt und unvereinigt das Erkennen setzt und vernünftiges Erkennen dadurch, daß das Erkennen nur als etwas Subjektives und formales Wissen anerkannt ist, ausschließt*]. (Hegel 1970d, S. 381)

Jacobi thus holds that religious faith and conceptual thought are in contradiction, and rational knowledge of the infinite must be direct knowledge without conceptual, limited, and mediated knowledge. Hegel calls Jacobi's philosophy the subjective side of reflective philosophy because of his claim that knowledge of the infinite becomes direct knowledge or subjective worship of the infinite.

Hegel supports Jacobi's insight that knowledge limited by others cannot grasp the infinite because of its finitude; however, he disagrees with the conclusion that knowledge of the infinite (God) must be a direct and unmediated belief as, according to Hegel, the finite or mediated can sublimate to totality. Hegel, thus, states that Jacobi does not understand that:

empirical consciousness would perish in the perception of reason, all finitude would sink into the infinite, and only a totality would be recognized [. . .] in itself that is neither isolated understanding nor isolated reason [*das empirische Bewußtsein in Vernunftanschauung zugrunde ginge, alle Endlichkeit sich im Unendlichen versenkte und nur eine Totalität als das Ansich, das weder isolierter Verstand noch isolierte Vernunft ist, erkannt würde*]. (Hegel 1970d, S. 375)

3) Fichte's philosophy

The principle of Fichte's philosophy is the identity of the subject and object, as in "Ego=Ego" and "intellectual intuition" (vgl. Hegel 1977a, p.119).

Ego is necessarily the identity of the subject and the object: Subject-Object, [which is] absolutely without further mediation [*Ich ist nothwendig Identität des Subjects und Objects: Subject-Object; und dies ist es schlechthin ohne weitere Vermittelung*]. (Fichte 1971, S. 98)

Fichte attempts to derive all forms of knowledge from this absolute identity. For Fichte, the fundamental integrity of self-consciousness in Kant's pure apperception is the self-justifying act of the unrestricted ego. He considers it the basis of his philosophical system to carry out "a systematic deduction of all forms of consciousness [*eine systematische Ableitung des gesamten Bewusstseins*]" (Fichte 1971, S. 477).

Hegel praises this aspect of Fichte's philosophy and calls it "an authentic product of speculation" (Hegel 1977a, p. 173). He notes that "Fichte's philosophy has the deep merit of having reminded us that the necessity of the determinants of thought must be derived in their necessities [*der Fichteschen Philosophie bleibt das tiefe Verdienst, daran erinnert zu haben, daß die Denkbestimmungen in ihrer Notwendigkeit aufzuzeigen, daß sie wesentlich abzuleiten seien*]" (Hegel 1970g, S. 117).

However, at the beginning of his *Science of Knowledge*, Fichte posits the "Ego=Ego" principle directly without mediation (first principle), which is immediately opposed by the non-Ego (second principle). Therefore, the first principle, "Ego=Ego," fundamental to Fichte's system, is constrained by the non-Ego or the object. Then, the synthesis of ego and non-ego is pursued (third principle). However, Fichte premises the confrontation between "Ego=Ego" and non-Ego and their synthesis as "a partial" (Hegel 1977a, p. 126) rather than true identity.

Partial identity incorporates another partial identity, rendering the synthesis incomplete: infinite progress (Hegel 1977a, p. 134). Therefore, Fichte's absolute identity of "Ego=Ego," like that of Jacobi's on the other side of cognition (religious belief), remains a subjective postulate. Knowledge cannot go beyond the non-identity (reflection) of "Ego is not Ego."

In Fichte's philosophical system, the absolute identity of "Ego=Ego" is declared to be the principle of speculation; however, it remains the postulate and never constitutes a system (Cf. Hegel 1977a, pp. 127-128).

(c) Evaluation of reflective philosophy in the preface of *Phenomenology*

Hegel considers two aspects of Kant's philosophy. Although Kant sharply distinguishes between phenomena (the finite) and the thing-in-itself (the infinite), his philosophy possesses the logic to abolish dualism.

In the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, Kant describes the act of unifying a variety of phenomena in self-consciousness as pure apperception. Hegel reinterprets it and makes it the first and fundamental principle from which the subject and the object emerge separately. Therefore, it is that which really exists.

Pure understanding and the categories mediate several phenomena and self-consciousness. According to Hegel, Kant depends on the ideal of reason, that is, on the identity of thought and being, of subject and object in the Deduction of the Categories. He concludes, however, that human cognition must not go beyond experience, lest it becomes entangled in antinomies as it attempts to

know the infinite with categories of understanding.

Thus, Kant transforms the categories from the objective to the subjective, even though they were originally intended to mediate between the two. However, Hegel believes that the categories of understanding are caught in antinomies because they are limited, not subjective.

Jacobi posits that the categories of understanding are finite and limited. Cognition with the categories wanders in the finite phenomenal world and is a limited cognition. The comprehension of the understanding can only derive limited conclusion from the limited causes, and it must remain within the limited causal sequence. Therefore, the cognition of the infinite (God) is impossible for the limited and conditional categories of the understanding and is a matter of religious faith or direct knowledge.

Hegel welcomes Jacobi's statement that the knowledge of the understanding is limited and finite. However, he disapproves of Jacobi's conclusion that knowledge of the infinite is an unmediated and direct knowledge (religious faith), which is free of constraints and mediation.

Hegel criticizes Jacobi as follows:

Jacobi did not recognize this true nature of essential thinking, that is, to sublimate mediation in the mediation itself [*diese wahrhafte Natur des wesentlichen Denkens, in der Vermittlung die Vermittlung selbst aufzuheben, hat Jacobi nicht erkannt*]. (Hegel 1970g, S. 133)

Hegel thinks that Jacobi does not understand the true nature of thought: Limited and mediated understanding rises to rational knowledge through antinomies.

Fichte begins his system with "Ego=Ego" or the fundamental identity of self-consciousness, wherein the subject and the object appear separately, and which Kant found in pure apperception. Fichte does his utmost to derive all kinds of knowledge from it, which Hegel calls "an authentic product of speculation."

However, in Fichte's system, the principle of "Ego=Ego" is postulated without mediation, and it is constrained immediately by non-Ego; thus, Ego must exert an "endless effort [*ein unendliches Streben*]" (Fichte 1971, S. 261) to overcome this confrontation. Therefore, the principle of "Ego=Ego" must remain an endless requirement.

Overcoming the shortcomings of Fichte's system would thus require a long path of mediation that elevates the experiential ego to the absolute ego through confrontation with the non-ego. This understanding marks the starting point of *Phenomenology*.

The critique of reflective philosophies paved the way for *Phenomenology*. In addition, Hegel describes the historical context in which the reflective philosophies appear to prove the necessity of his new philosophy.

In the Preface to *Phenomenology*, Hegel describes the historical development of the emergence of the dualistic cultural situation in three steps:

(1) In former times, finite men were connected with heaven (the infinite) by thoughts and ideas. The finite and the infinite, the earthly (this world) and heavenly (another world), are connected with the thread of thought and belief, and life in this and the other world attains peace and tranquility.

Hegel describes "the substantial life" (Hegel 1977b, p. 4) of the ancient people beautifully:

Formerly, they [men] adorned [themselves] with a vast wealth of thoughts and imagery. The meaning of all that is hung on the thread of light by which it was linked to that heaven. Instead of dwelling in this world's presence, men looked beyond it, following this thread to an other-worldly presence, so to speak. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

(2) However, the world of such beautiful harmony was gradually torn asunder. Earth and heaven, this world and another world, the finite and the infinite were made unbridgeable and opposed to each other, and men turned their attention only to the earthly and finite. Hegel says:

The eye of the Spirit had to be forcibly turned and held fast to the things of this world, and it has taken a long time before the lucidity . . . could . . . make . . . attention to what has been called "experience," an interesting and valid enterprise. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

In modern society, people escaped from the medieval God-centered community, focused on the earthly, experiential, present and finite, and tried to find the truth there. Thus, the divine, heavenly, and infinite were pushed out of human reach.

(3) Nowadays, however, men are striving as hard to recover the divine, the heavenly, and the infinite as they once sought to divert their attention from the heavenly to the earthly.

Now we seem to need just the opposite: sense is so fast rooted in earthly things that it requires just as much force to raise it. The Spirit shows itself as so impoverished that, like a wanderer in the desert craving [. . .] a mere mouthful of water, it seems to crave for its refreshment only the bare feeling of the divine in general. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

The epoch of reflective philosophies, which separate the finite and the infinite as well as the earthly and the heavenly, forms the historical background of *Phenomenology*. In this epoch, the Romantics, including Jacobi, are primarily criticized because they base their arguments on immediate knowledge.

By running together what thought has put asunder, by suppressing the differentiation of the Notion and restoring the feeling of essential being: in short, by providing edification rather than

insight. . . not Notion, but ecstasy, not the cold march of necessity in the thing [. . .], but the ferment of enthusiasm, these are supposed to be what sustains and continually extends the wealth of substance. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

Hegel did not criticize Schelling's immediate knowledge in *Glauben und Wissen*. However, in *Phenomenology*, he criticizes the Romantics, including Fichte, and immediate knowledge as only "a monochromatic formalism" (Hegel 1977b, p. 9) without content and beyond all experience and the phenomenal world.

Hegel criticizes the supporters of immediate knowledge because they look "disdainfully at determinateness and deliberately holds aloof from Notion and Necessity as products of that reflection, which is at home only in the finite." (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

Hegel's formulation mirrors Jacobi's criticism in *Glauben und Wissen*. He does not hesitate to criticize the arrogance that negates the necessary development of things through the concept and regards truth as attainable without any mediation.

However, Kant's and Fichte's attempts to reach the truth conceptually were insufficient. Hegel learned from Kant that knowledge through understanding can reach the knowledge of reason through the mediation of antinomies.

From Fichte, he learned how the absolute ego organized itself into an organic system through various experimental egos. Finally, Hegel finds a way to show scientifically that consciousness or the "I" can develop into absolute knowledge (i.e., knowledge through reason) through knowledge of phenomena (knowledge through understanding).

(d)The paradigm of reflective culture: Confrontation between enlightenment and romanticism

Hegel articulates the thought of his time from a historical perspective in the preface of *Phenomenology*. He divides the development of human life from pre-modern to modern to his time into three stages: substantial life \Rightarrow reflective life \Rightarrow divine life. This division corresponds to the development of human thought: old metaphysics \Rightarrow empiricism (enlightenment) \Rightarrow immediate knowledge (romanticism).

These three perspectives of philosophy are later formulated in *Enzyklopedie* as "three standpoints about objectivity" and are criticized in *Vorbegriff*, the introduction to his *Wissenschaft der Logik*, whose element is the identity of knowledge (subject) and object.

For Hegel, thought in his time meant an arena of conflicting ideas. The Enlightenment absolutizes the earthly, the experimental, and the finite as the place for the truth, while many repress the divine and infinite as beyond human knowledge. However, Romanticism aims to grasp the divine and infinite through inspiration or intuition beyond the sordid, finite, experimental world.

The Enlightenment and Romanticism confront and complement each other, creating a schism in

reflective culture. Hegel attempts to clarify the situation in *Phenomenology*. Hegel explains the essential situation in the Preface.

This polarization seems to be the Gordian knot with which scientific culture is currently struggling, [. . .] which is still not properly understood. One side boasts of its wealth of material and intelligibility; the other side at least scorns this intelligibility and flaunts its immediate rationality and divinity. (Hegel 1977b, p. 8)

3. Developments leading to *Phenomenology* as a system of mediation

(a) From the critique of reflective philosophy to systematic knowledge

Phenomenology attempts to reconcile and integrate the Enlightenment, which sees the finite world of sensory experience and understanding as the locus of truth, and Romanticism, which directly grasps the divine, the infinite, and the essential through intuition and inspiration.

This task requires a perspective that understands both the sensual finite world and the divine infinite world as contradictory yet complementary. This perspective means that the finite (the sensuous world of experience) and the infinite (the sensible world of God), though seemingly contradictory, can only exist if the finite is seen as a phenomenon of the infinite, that is, the finite can exist only through the mediation of the infinite.

Only such a view can override the one-sidedness of the Enlightenment, which absolutizes the finite, and the one-sidedness of Romanticism, which separates the infinite from the finite and substantializes it. Enlightenment and Romanticism are the products of reflexive culture's dualism; they complement each other in this dualistic paradigm, which they cannot overcome.

Hegel attempts to establish the integral view of knowledge and create a new paradigm. Such knowledge must have the form of a system, which, in Hegel's view, should characterize the philosophy of the time.

(b) *Phenomenology* as a new paradigm

The times demanded a holistic knowledge that would reconcile the finite and the infinite, the earthly and the divine, that is, the products of reflective culture and philosophy.

To show that now is the time for philosophy to be raised to the status of a science would, therefore, be the only true justification of any effort that has this aim, for to do so would demonstrate the necessity of the aim [and] would indeed at the same time be the accomplishing of it. (Hegel 1977b, pp. 3-4)

People do not directly perceive infinity but what they immediately perceive is the finite world, which

is the phenomenon of the infinite. Therefore, the task of *Phenomenology* is to construct an infinite by means of finite phenomena, as indicated in the title.

Phenomenology connotes phenomena progression from immediate to a whole through the necessity of concept by limiting things that need a scientific system. Such a system does not exist, even if the times demand it.

It is, thus, that [which] consciousness, as the middle term between universal Spirit and its individuality or sense-consciousness, has for the middle term the system of structured shapes assumed by consciousness as a self-systematizing whole of the life of Spirit—the system that we are considering here, and which has its objective existence as world-history. (Hegel 1977b, p. 178)

Phenomenology describes the development of consciousness. As the science of the experience of consciousness, it begins with the most immediate sensory consciousness, passes through various kinds of consciousness in its development, and finally reaches universal and absolute consciousness (absolute knowledge).

The development of consciousness occurs in historical reality through its interactions with objects. The process by which consciousness forms experiences depends on the history of the development of human consciousness as a background, and the history of culture, which is also the development of consciousness itself, is “the history of the cultural development of the world traced, as it were, in a silhouette.” (Hegel 1977b, p. 16)

(c) Understanding or reflection as mediated knowledge

Thus, what mediates between individual consciousness and universal knowledge when individual, sensory consciousness passes through different forms of consciousness and arrive at universal self-knowledge (absolute knowledge) through the mediation of objects of different consciousness?

The reflection or understanding to distinguish and separate things are called mediators. The understanding is first defined in *Phenomenology* as the mediator of scientific (absolute knowledge) and non-scientific (sensory consciousness) knowledge.

Only what is completely determined is at once exoteric, comprehensible, and capable of being learned and appropriated by all. The intelligible form of science is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness, as it approaches science, justly demands that it [should] attain rational knowledge through ordinary understanding. (Hegel 1977b, pp. 7-8)

As Descartes built his scientific system using *bon sens*, which is the judicial capability shared by all people to distinguish truth from failure, Hegel built an exoteric philosophy system using the

mediator of distinguishing concepts formed through understanding.

Of course, philosophy itself opposes general common sense and is esoteric. During his time in Jena, Hegel noted as follows:

By its nature, philosophy is something esoteric, neither made for the mob in itself nor capable of preparation for the mob; Philosophy is philosophy only because it is precisely opposed to understanding, and thus even more so to common sense; in relation to common sense, the world of philosophy is a perverted world [*Die Philosophie ist ihrer Natur nach etwas Esoterisches, für sich weder für den Pöbel gemacht noch einer Zubereitung für den Pöbel fähig; sie ist nur dadurch Philosophie, daß sie dem Verstande und damit noch mehr dem gesunden Menschenverstande . . . gerade entgegengesetzt ist; im Verhältnis zu diesem ist an und für sich die Welt der Philosophie eine verkehrte Welt*]. (Hegel 1970c, S. 182)

Like Aristotle, Hegel admits the possibility that ordinary people can understand philosophy. However, he opposes simplifying philosophy and reducing it to common sense. It is a matter of raising common sense (the exoteric) to the level of philosophy (the esoteric) through its mediation.⁸⁾

In particular, *Phenomenology* starts from natural consciousness, whose element is common sense, and describes the development or “the detailed history of the education of consciousness” (Hegel 1977b, p. 50), in which consciousness makes itself absolute spirit. Natural consciousness could be the expression of common sense produced by reflexive culture and characterized by dualistic concepts, such as consciousness and object, subject and object.

8) Plutarch tells the following story about Alexander in his *The Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans*:

For when he was in Asia and heard Aristotle had published some treatises of that kind, he wrote to him, using very plain language to him [regarding] philosophy, the following letter: “Alexander, to Aristotle, greeting. You have not done well to publish your books of oral doctrine; for what is there now that we excel others in, if those things which we have been particularly instructed in be laid open to all? For my part, I assure you, I had rather excel others in the knowledge of what is excellent than in the extent of my power and dominion. Farewell.” And Aristotle, soothing this passion for pre-eminence, speaks, in his excuse for himself, of these doctrines as in fact both published and not published: as indeed, to say the truth, his books on metaphysics are written in a style which makes them useless for ordinary teaching and instructive only, in the way of memoranda, for those who have been already conversant in that sort of learning. (Plutarch 1937, pp. 805–806)

Hegel commented on the story and said:

Philosophy must indeed recognize the possibility of [. . .] people rising up to it, but it need not humiliate itself to be the people [*Die Philosophie muß zwar die Möglichkeit erkennen, daß das Volk sich zu ihr erhebt, aber sie muß sich nicht zum Volk erniedrigen*]. (Hegel 1970c, S. 182)

Natural consciousness is called natural, although it is a product of reflective culture. It is the product of the reflective culture or the artificial; however, it considers itself to be the original natural consciousness.⁹⁾

Phenomenology aims to lead natural consciousness to philosophical knowledge through the mediation of understanding.

It (an exposition of how knowledge makes its appearance) can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge or as the way of the soul which journeys through the series of its own configurations as though they were the stations appointed for it by its own nature, such that it may purify itself for the life of the Spirit, and finally achieve through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself. (Hegel 1977b, p. 49)

This path of natural consciousness is one in which it gradually realizes that it is not the natural being, but against the truth. It is, therefore, “the pathway of doubt,” “the way of despair,” and the “thoroughgoing skepticism” (Hegel 1977b, pp. 49-50).

If the reflection of understanding would mediate between natural consciousness and absolute knowledge, understanding or reflection would have to be the necessary mediating knowledge, which makes the integral knowledge of the truth as a whole possible.

The reason is, therefore, misunderstood when reflection is excluded from the true and is not grasped as a positive moment of the Absolute. [It] is a reflection that makes the True a result, but it is an equal reflection that overcomes the antithesis between the process of its becoming and the result. (Hegel 1977b, pp. 11-12)

(d) Substance=subject: Formation of the system of mediation

For Hegel, “the true is the whole” (Hegel 1977b, p. 11). The whole is not the simple aggregate of individual elements but the organic totality of the interrelationship between parts. Thus, *Phenomenology* aims to construct totality from the individual components through their interrelation before consciousness.

9) Bonsiepen notes that “in the ‘preface,’ Hegel has a very specific natural consciousness in mind, which is formed by the reflective culture in modern times. It fixes the division of modern culture without being able to undo it. ‘Phenomenology’ wants to overcome this particular form of natural consciousness [*In der ‘Vorrede’ hat Hegel ein ganz bestimmtes natürliches Bewußtsein vor Auge, das durch die Reflexionskultur der Neuzeit gebildet ist. Es fixiert die Entzweiung der modernen Kultur, ohne sie aufheben zu können. Die ‘Phänomenologie’ will gerade diese besondere Form des natürlichen Bewußtseins überwinden.*]” (Bonsiepen 1977, S. 62).

Since the individual comprises the organic totality, the individual and the whole are essentially identical. Therefore, the individual is the phenomenon (or reflection) of the whole. Epistemologically, knowledge of the phenomenon is considered reflective knowledge of the whole (absolute knowledge).

Therefore, the whole (absolute knowledge) must construct itself, mediated by the phenomenon it reflects. In this sense, the whole (the substantial) is "the process of its own becoming" (Hegel 1977b, p. 10), mediated only by the phenomenon that is the subject. Hence, Hegel explains his argument of substance as subject in the preface to *Phenomenology*.

The living substance is being, which is in truth Subject, or what is the same, is in truth only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. (Hegel 1977b, p. 10)

The whole of consciousness is the subject, which posits itself and becomes true and realistic knowledge only through the mediation of reflection. We must recall that Hegel's meditation means the self-mediation of the whole (absolute).

Hegel's thesis "Being is absolutely mediated" (Hegel 1977b, p. 21) fundamentally grounds his metaphysical worldview. In *Phenomenology*, he defines mediation as follows:

Mediation is nothing beyond self-moving selfsameness or [a] reflection into self, the moment of the "I" which is for itself pure negativity or becoming; in general, this mediation, on account of its simple nature, is just immediacy in the process of becoming and is the immediate itself. (Hegel 1977b, p. 11)

In addition, Hegel succinctly describes what he means by mediation. According to Hegel, mediation first means "a becoming-other that has to be taken back" (Hegel 1977b, p. 11). It is the behavior of the subject that recognizes itself in the other and returns to itself.

Mediation is possible through moments, such as reflection (negativity), ego, becoming, and (becoming) immediacy. They are the inevitable and necessary terms of Hegelian philosophy. This is the result of his long and tortuous investigation, which we have discussed so far.

He describes the phenomena of spirits as a system of mediation and integrates the epistemological and the ontological dimensions of the "I" and the historical dimension of becoming. Hegel is able to distinguish his philosophy from that of his time by establishing the concept of mediation. For example, to say that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is the birthplace of Hegel's philosophy means that it is the text in which the concept of mediation is established.

This study has examined Hegel's intention in the Preface to *Phenomenology* by looking at the newspaper advertisements for his book.

In the Preface, Hegel wanted to deal with the tasks that the times posed. The French Revolution was at the center of his cognition at that time. On the occasion of the first triumph of the spirit of the French Revolution, or *la Bataille de Valmy*, Goethe made the familiar remark: “From here to today, a new era in universal history begins [*Von hier und heute geht eine neue Epoche der Weltgeschichte aus*]” (Goethe 1988, S. 235). Hegel shared the same sentiments.

For Hegel, the French Revolution was, above all, a declaration of man’s absolute freedom. Absolute freedom refers to human self-consciousness, which declares that alienated objects, such as God and the state, should be rationalized by human thought and will.

Human wish and thought are now considered the foundation of real human society, and human thought is the principle that dominates all. Alternatively, this is expressed by the famous words in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, as the ideal of “the realistic settlement of God with the world [*die wirkliche Versöhnung des Göttlichen mit der Welt*]” appears in “a glorious sunrise [*ein herrlicher Sonnenaufgang*]” (Hegel 1970e, S. 529).

However, as mentioned above, the self-consciousness of absolute freedom that the French Revolution produced excluded all intermediaries and relied on its universality, which ultimately brought death and terror.

The ideal established by the Revolution (i.e., the balance between man and God, the earthly and the divine) is destroyed by the abstractness of absolute freedom such that the dualistic separation produced by the reflective culture of modern times cannot be overcome. Under these circumstances, Hegel demonstrates the legitimacy of the French Revolution’s ideal by critiquing the reflective philosophies produced by reflective culture.

As emphasized, Hegel’s critique of reflective philosophies is not transcendental. However, he closely followed the reasoning of the reflective philosophies by noting and criticizing their maladaptive nature and contradictoriness. Hegel noted the persistent dualism of subject and object, finite and infinite, this world and another world, and tried to determine when this dualism can be overcome.

Hegel grappled with the great philosophies of his time in the new horizon of thought opened by the French Revolution, expressing his unique thought for the first time in the Preface to *Phenomenology*. From this long and challenging Preface, it is evident that Hegel was seriously concerned with the problems of his time. He famously states in the Preface to *Elements of Philosophy of Right* that “everyone is a son of his time; so, philosophy also is its time apprehended in thoughts.” (Hegel 1990, p. 7) This simple statement is a testament to how he developed his philosophy to address timely problems, which this study confirms by investigating the Preface to *Phenomenology*.

Afterword by the translator

Kohtaro Ohta (b. 1947) is an emeritus professor at Hiroshima University of Economics

(Hiroshima, Japan). He published *Hegel no Baikai Shiso* [Hegel on Meditation] (Ohta 2018), and I have translated Chapter 7 of his book here.

Hegel published *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie*) in 1807, and he wrote a promotional text for his book in a newspaper. Prof. Ohta attempted to construe *Phenomenology's* exceptionally long Preface with the help of this promotional text and understand Hegel's intention in the book.

First, Prof. Ohta engages with the need of philosophy. Hegel recognizes that the culture and epoch torn by reflection have reached the zenith of maturity. The new philosophy of the time should sublimate the dichotomies and segmentations anchored in the reflective culture. Therefore, the need of philosophy is the "need for the reconstruction of totality."

The French Revolution offered the best opportunity for realizing the need of philosophy. It was an epoch-making event in his time, but Hegel also considers it an important event for the philosophy and thought of the times. Thus, the time came in which "man stands upside down, i.e., on the head and builds reality according to this thought." (Hegel 1970e, S. 529).

However, Hegel does not evaluate the French Revolution quite so positively. He claims that the reconciliations of dualistic confrontations that the French Revolution brought about were abstract and formal and inevitably led to social ruptures. Individuals' wills were only imitations of the universal will. Moreover, "the principle of atoms and individual wills" (Hegel 1970e, S. 534) sits on the throne and expresses itself directly, without the mediation of laws and institutions.

According to Hegel, the philosophies of his time cannot address the reconciliation of worldly things with heavenly things for which the French Revolution paved the way. Ultimately, they are trapped in the dualistic paradigm that characterizes modern reflexive culture and keep away from authentic philosophy. Hegel addresses the different, dualistic philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte, calling them "subjective, reflective philosophies," and criticizes them in *Glauben und Wissen*.

For Hegel, "the truth is the whole," and the whole is not the simple aggregate of individual elements but the organic totality of the interrelationship of parts. Thus, *Phenomenology* aims to construct totality from the individual components through their interrelation before consciousness. We immediately perceive the finite world, which is the phenomenon of the infinite. Therefore, the task of *Phenomenology* is to construct the infinite through finite phenomena, as indicated in the title, or to construct the concrete universal by means of the sensual and concrete individual.

Hegel grappled with the great philosophies of his time in the new horizon of thought created by the French Revolution, expressing his own unique thought for the first time in the Preface to *Phenomenology*. From the long and challenging Preface, it is evident that Hegel was seriously concerned with the problems of the time.

I hope this translation will help understand the *Phenomenology* and demonstrate the value of studying Hegel further.

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