

# Hegel on Recollection



Hegel on Recollection:  
Essays on the Concept of *Erinnerung*  
in Hegel's System

Edited by

Valentina Ricci and Federico Sanguinetti

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P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-5164-7, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5164-0

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people gave us their support throughout the realization of this project. Among them, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to professors Luca Illetterati and Francesca Menegoni at the University of Padua: with their advice and constant encouragement, they guided us through the many stages that led us to the publication of the present volume.

We also would like to thank the contributors for their hard work and their strong commitment to the project.

A special thank goes to Christopher Martinuzzi and Philon Ktenides for their patient and scrupulous linguistic revision.





# INTRODUCTION

VALENTINA RICCI  
AND FEDERICO SANGUINETTI

The volume we present here is a collection of essays on the role of the concept of recollection (*Erinnerung*)<sup>1</sup> in the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. The choice to focus on this concept has been determined by the conviction that *Erinnerung* plays a crucial role not only for the understanding of individual parts of Hegel's system, but also for the understanding of the system as a whole. The speculative significance of such a concept is to be found in the fact that it engages and simultaneously structures some central issues of Hegel's philosophy, such as the relationship of temporality and eternity, history and logic, subjectivity and objectivity, nature and culture, empirical subjectivity and the intersubjective and absolute dimension of spirit.

The volume takes up an important theoretical challenge, i.e. to examine the concept of *Erinnerung* at different levels of the system in order to offer a contribution to the formulation of a unitary and comprehensive account of this concept, through the acknowledgment of the specific character and the autonomy of its different instances. The essays presented here, therefore, aim at encouraging the development of a unitary interpretation of the concept of recollection through the detailed discussion of its role within different, specific parts of Hegel's system. This undertaking is led by the persuasion that the relationship between the different instances of this concept constitutes a privileged key to the interpretation of the system and allows a deeper understanding of some essential speculative moments of the system itself.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the volume's structure and content, however, we wish to situate the present study within the broader field of Hegelian scholarship. One of the main reasons that led to plan this

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<sup>1</sup> In the course of the volume, we will often leave the German word "Erinnerung" untranslated, since no English word can fully convey the richness of its original meaning and of the specific nuances it acquires depending on the context.

volume has been the lack, in the context of Hegel-studies, of a thorough discussion of the concept of *Erinnerung* including all the parts of the system where this concept plays a significant role. This is not to imply, however, that the literature does not offer precious tools for the analysis and discussion of the issue. On the contrary, one can find many such tools: what seems to be missing in the studies that deal specifically or engage to some extent with the topic is a comprehensive kind of approach, providing a detailed discussion of the role of *Erinnerung* in the individual parts of the system and being at the same time mindful of the global import of the concept within Hegel's system; this would allow for an attempt to lay the foundation of a comprehensive perspective. In what follows, therefore, we present and discuss what has been published up to this point in the field of Hegelian studies regarding the concept of recollection. We will then proceed to the actual introduction of our volume and its contents.

## 1. Status Quaestionis

The concept of *Erinnerung* has often been implicitly indicated as a central concept within the speculative structure of Hegel's system. However, to offer an exhaustive survey of the secondary literature dealing with the concept of *Erinnerung* is certainly not an easy task. The reason for this difficulty is twofold. On the one hand, there are few significant monographs focusing *specifically* on recollection and the whole of its semantic and speculative richness. On the other hand, the concept of *Erinnerung* is discussed in essays and studies that are very different from one another regarding both their focus and their aim.

1) During the last century, a consideration of the concept of *Erinnerung* has emerged within analyses focusing on specific spheres or parts of the system. This group includes the commentaries to the parts of the system where *Erinnerung* plays an important role and some more specific articles. Among these:

(a) commentaries devoted to the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, especially to the *Encyclopedia Psychology*<sup>2</sup> or, more generally, articles and

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<sup>2</sup> See for example: I. Fetscher, *Hegels Lehre vom Menschen: Kommentar zu den 387 bis 482 der „Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften“* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 1970), 160-161; R.D. Winfield, *Hegel and Mind: Rethinking Philosophical Psychology* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), in particular 84-88; W. DeVries, *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity. An Introduction to Theoretical Spirit* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 125-134; D. Stederoth, *Hegels Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes. Ein komparatorischer Kommentar* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 356-362; J. Rometsch, *Hegels*

texts analyzing the role of recollection in this part of the system;<sup>3</sup> (b) commentaries devoted to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>4</sup> and other texts dealing with the role of *Erinnerung* in the *Phenomenology*;<sup>5</sup> (c) commentaries and works on the *Science of Logic*;<sup>6</sup> (d) other studies

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*Theorie des erkennenden Subjekts. Systematische Untersuchungen zur enzyklopädischen Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 177-186; M. Inwood, *A Commentary on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 288, 355, 367, 382, 400-405, 418, 463, 472, 476, 480-496, 507-517; H. Güssbacher, *Hegels Psychologie der Intelligenz* (Berlin: Königshausen-Neumann, 1988), in particular 54-63.

<sup>3</sup> See for example: A. Peperzak, "Vom Gefühl zur Erinnerung," in *Hegels philosophische Psychologie*, ed. D. Henrich (Bonn: Bouvier, 1979), 159-181; D. Brauer, "La 'memoria productiva'. Acerca de la concepción de Hegel del recuerdo y la memoria," *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofía* XXVIII/2 (2002): 319-337; H.F. Fulda, "Vom Gedächtnis zum Denken," in *Psychologie und Anthropologie oder Philosophie des Geistes*, ed. F. Hespe, B. Tuschling (Stuttgart/Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1991), 321-360; J. O'Neill Surber, "Hegel's Philosophy of Language: The Unwritten Volume," in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. S. Houlgate and M. Baur (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 243-261, in particular 254-255; J.A. Bates, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY, 2004), in particular 69-86.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance: J. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. S. Cherniak and J. Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 9, 33, 39, 548, 554, 563, 595, 599; A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. A. Bloom, trans. J.H. Nichols Jr. (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 142-143, 161-168, 232-234; O. Pöggeler, *Hegels Idee einer Phenomenologie des Geistes* (Freiburg, München: Alber, 1993), 331; L. Siep, *Der Weg der Phenomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 235-239, 256; G. Lukács, "Die Entäußerung als philosophischer Zentralbegriff der 'Phänomenologie des Geistes'," in *Materialien zu Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. H.F. Fulda and D. Henrich (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 284-291; D. Verene, *Hegel's Absolute. An Introduction to Reading the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: SUNY, 2007), xiv, 27, 35, 93, 107; P.J. Kain, *Hegel and the Other. A Study of the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: SUNY, 2005), 225-230; A. de Laurentiis, "Absolute Knowing," in *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. K.R. Westphal (Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 246-264.

<sup>5</sup> M. Jiménez-Redondo, *Das Denken des Lebens als absolute Erinnerung. Die Rolle der Sprache, in Hegel-Jahrbuch* (2007): 282-287; D.P. Verene, *Hegel's Recollection. A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985); P.J. Labarrière, "La sursomption du temps et le vrai sens de l'histoire conçue," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* LXXIV (1979): 92-100.

<sup>6</sup> See in particular M. Theunissen, *Sein und Schein. Die Kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), 32, 104ff., 308, 320ff. Other texts in this category include G.R.G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford:

analyzing the role of *Erinnerung* in the philosophy of history,<sup>7</sup> in the philosophy of art,<sup>8</sup> and in the philosophy of religion.<sup>9</sup> In several of these essays the concept of *Erinnerung* is simply mentioned and is not the object of a specific and detailed discussion.

2) On the other hand, the concept of *Erinnerung* has constituted the starting point for comparisons between Hegel and other authors.<sup>10</sup>

3) Among the scholars who provided deeper readings of the concept of *Erinnerung*, the first deserving mention is certainly E. Bloch,<sup>11</sup> who discerned in the notion of *Erinnerung* the root of the substantially closed character of Hegel's system. Bloch sees Hegel's *Erinnerung* as the heir of

Clarendon Press, 1950), 9-10, 12, 80-81; J. Burbidge, *On Hegel's Logic. Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1981), 11-13, 64, 248; B. Longuenesse, *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics* (Cambridge et. al.: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 83, 102-108; F. Cirulli, *Hegel's Critique of Essence. A Reading of the Wesenslogik* (New York, London: Routledge, 2006), 48; D.G. Carlson, *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 254; K. Hartmann, *Hegels Logik* (Berlin, New York: DeGruyter, 1999), 34, 163, 201, 214; G. Di Giovanni, "A Reply to Cynthia Willett," in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, ed. G. Di Giovanni (Albany: SUNY, 1990), 96-97.

<sup>7</sup> See J. D'Hont, *Hegel, philosophe de l'histoire vivante* (Vrin: Paris, PUF, 1966), 406ff.; R. Piepmeyer, "Weltgeist—Erinnerung—Er-innerung," in *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (1981-1982): 145-155; H. Ottmann, "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht." *Anerkennung und Erinnerung bei Hegel*, in *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (1995): 204-210.

<sup>8</sup> See D.J. Kwon, *Das Ende der Kunst: Analyse und Kritik der Voraussetzungen von Hegels These* (Würzburg: Königshausen-Neumann, 2004), 70ff.

<sup>9</sup> See C. Bouton, *Temps et esprit dans la philosophie de Hegel. De Francfort à Iéna* (Paris: Vrin, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> See for example S. Otto, V. Vitiello, *Vico, Hegel. La memoria e il sacro* (Napoli: Città del sole, 2001); G. Cacciatore, "Storia, memoria, immagini tra Vico e Hegel," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi Vichiani* 33 (2003): 199-208; I. Harnischmacher, "Die Revision der Erinnerung im Denken. Hegels Theorie des Gedächtnisses—Benjamins Theorie des Eingedenkens," *Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie* 26-27 (2008): 67-85; B. Liebsch, "Probleme einer genealogischen Kritik der Erinnerung: Anmerkungen zu Hegel, Nietzsche und Foucault," *Hegel-Studien* 31 (1996): 113-140; C. Malabou, "La duplicité du souvenir. Hegel et Proust," *Cahier du College International de Philosophie* 2 (1986): 137-143; F. Michelini, "Sostanza, *Erinnerung*, movimento riflessivo. Sul confronto di Hegel con Spinoza nella *Scienza della Logica*," in *Anima, tempo, memoria*, ed. G. Severino (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000), 101-120; W. Kisner, "Erinnerung, Retrait, Absolute Reflection: Hegel and Derrida," *Owl of Minerva* 26/2 (1995): 171-186.

<sup>11</sup> See E. Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt. Erläuterungen zu Hegel* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962); see also E. Bloch, "Hegel und die Anamnese," in *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 1 (1962), 167-181.

the Platonic concept of *anamnesis* and of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation, according to which reality would be always already comprised in its principle. Even though recollection cannot be reduced to the psychological recapitulation of the past, it internalizes (*verinnerlicht*) the latter in the present and thus results in being an act of disregard toward the future.<sup>12</sup> Although Bloch emphasizes that Hegel—as opposed to Plato—does not regard actuality as something that is always already given,<sup>13</sup> but as something that takes shape through its own becoming, Hegel’s system remains closed within the “magic circle” of *anamnesis*.

Also the Hegelian process of the result, therefore, is within the circle of anamnesis as within a magic circle. Everything here is full of New: however, in every final moment, especially at the end of the circle in general, the newest (in Hegel’s gigantic breaking philosophy, and in spite of it) must have always already been the oldest, with its prearranged, preordained, complete beginning. This prevents even the system of development from remaining a system open to development: it is subdued to the First, although the latter is not developed and not consumed, after which it starts. The *restitutio in integrum* brings back the *expeditio in novum* with the rope of *epistrophé*.<sup>14</sup>

R. Bodei<sup>15</sup> argued against this interpretation by trying to save the system’s openness to the future and criticizing Bloch’s Platonizing interpretation.<sup>16</sup> According to Bodei, the meaning of *Erinnerung* as the

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<sup>12</sup> In this respect, according to Bloch, Hegel is more similar to Plato than he himself would have been ready to admit. See E. Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt*, 500: “The more Hegel defends his view against a weaker (merely psychological-reproductive) reading of the concept of recollection, the less recollection as inwardization escapes the depth of a Platonic anamnesis of the result of becoming. And the fact that Hegel, at this point, is so opposed to the reproduction of the result of becoming as the reproduction through representations, means precisely that the dialectic of the ‘truth [...] in which no member is not drunk,’ is closer to the Platonic anamnesis seen as total reproduction than the most splendid system of development since Aristotle and Leibniz would like to.” (Our translation).

<sup>13</sup> See E. Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt*, 500-501: “So that truth, for Hegel, is not only, as for Plato, something that does not change and is eternal, but truth is, on the contrary, a result (although it manifests, or makes concrete, only the being-in-itself in the being-in-and-for-itself).” (Our translation).

<sup>14</sup> E. Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt*, 503. (Our translation).

<sup>15</sup> See R. Bodei, *Sistema ed epoca in Hegel* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> See *ibid.*, 14: “Hegel’s image of the owl, thus, is already a reference to the future, which is confirmed by the overall sense of his work. The owl’s nightly escape is not only resignation, ‘anamnesic’ meditation of the past, but also and at

recapitulation of an epoch does not imply a negation of the future, but involves the qualitative distance of the *novum*,<sup>17</sup> a distance that scatters the dichotomy of pre-determination and emptiness of a utopian future.<sup>18</sup>

The *Erinnerung* of absolute knowing does not imply, as Bloch claims, a renouncing of the progressive aspect of the dialectic in favor of a rumination of the past or of a knowledge that amounts to recollection (in a Platonic sense), but is a retracting before the jump; it is, as Hegel says in a text that is contemporary to the chapter on ‘absolute knowing,’ i.e. the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, a *recapitulation* of spirit’s weakened shapes before spirit faces a *further progress*: ‘The individual whose substance is the more advanced Spirit runs through this past just as one who takes up a higher science goes through the preparatory studies he has long since absorbed, in order to bring their content into mind: he recalls them in the inward eye, but has no lasting interest in them.’<sup>19</sup>

J.L. Vieillard-Baron also criticizes Bloch’s reading.<sup>20</sup> He emphasizes Hegel’s distance from Hölderlin and Novalis and criticizes the interpretation of the Hegelian *Erinnerung* as an *anamnesis* bound to some sort of

the same time *preparation of the future*.” (Our translation).

<sup>17</sup> See R. Bodei, *Sistema ed epoca*, 88-89: “From this viewpoint, the question of the ‘closure of history’ is nothing but the *delimitation, performed by Hegel himself, of the historical and theoretical scope of validity of his own philosophy*. The perspective of *negating the future*, therefore, is not there (as Bloch himself maintains). Simply, Hegel’s perspective is one claiming that every new emerging ‘epoch’—defined by the interval of relative continuity between two revolutions—rises with a qualitative leap whose outcome is not predictable in advance and requires a new philosophy.” (Our translation).

<sup>18</sup> See R. Bodei, *Sistema ed epoca*, 90: “[T]he new is already visible in the present, the rose is nailed to the cross, and philosophy distinguishes precisely the *new actuality* both from the old one and from the utopian or prophetic one.” (Our translation).

<sup>19</sup> R. Bodei, *Sistema ed epoca*, 180-181. (Our translation). See also *ibid.*, 181: “Generally, this aspect remains hidden for two reasons: *a*) because the *Phenomenology* is not seen as part of a systematic whole—as Hegel was planning it—and its conclusion is regarded as a really ‘absolute’ conclusion rather than a beginning ‘at the same time from a higher level’; *b*) because the apparently dead end of *Erinnerung* is interpreted as spirit’s withdrawing into itself and not, at the same time, as the *point of inversion*—the apparent zero velocity at the peak of the trajectory—that precedes and accompanies every revolution of spirit.” (Our translation).

<sup>20</sup> J.L. Vieillard-Baron, “Le passé et la reminiscence: Hegel,” in *Le problème du temps. Sept études*, J.L. Vieillard-Baron (Paris: Vrin, 1995), 57-82.

nostalgia toward the past.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, he emphasizes Hegel's distance from Schelling, thereby denying that the "mythic" component of *Erinnerung* aims at the transformation of philosophy into mythology.<sup>22</sup>

Hegel, to begin with, excludes psychology's and mythology's pretense to exhaust the sense of recollection; both regard *Erinnerung* as the reproduction of what has been, be it due to nostalgia toward the past and the death or to the projection of the past into the future understood as a new golden age.<sup>23</sup>

Against Bloch, Vieillard-Baron underscores a sort of Gnostic character of Hegel's *Erinnerung*.<sup>24</sup>

Far from being Proclus' *epistrophé*, Hegel's recollection invites us to a divinatory reflection [...]. Therefore, Ernst Bloch's thesis entirely contradicts Hegel's idea: recollection, according to Hegel, enacts a 'hope principle;' it alone opens a historical future that is capable of taking on the great hopes of mankind. This hope is nothing but the eternal present of the life with God.<sup>25</sup>

H. Marcuse<sup>26</sup> also disagrees with the idea that Hegel's *Erinnerung* is responsible for the system's closed character with respect to history and temporality. On the contrary, he tries to find the foundation of a theory of history in Hegel's logic. Marcuse interprets the *Erinnerung* of being in essence as an ontological movement transcending the psychological

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<sup>21</sup> See *ibid.*, 59.

<sup>22</sup> See *ibid.*, 65.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. (Our translation). See also *ibid.* 67-68: "Recollection does not refer to a prior world, and the mythic narrative of the *Phaedrus* is actually simply a mode of exposition. The world indicated there is not prior, but higher. Recollection does not suggest a return, but an overcoming." According to Vieillard-Baron, this means that in Hegel there is no such a thing as a cosmic recollection of Neoplatonic inspiration. *Erinnerung* is the *Erinnerung* of thought, although it cannot be reduced to a psychological dimension. See *ibid.*, 68: "To attribute to Hegel a 'cosmic anamnesis' based on the model of the Neoplatonic emanation is therefore an unwarranted conclusion—this emanation would exceed the too limited scope of an act of thought. On the contrary, it is to the activity of thought and to that alone that Hegel attributes recollection." (Our translation).

<sup>24</sup> See *ibid.*, 79-81.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 81. (Our translation).

<sup>26</sup> H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. S. Benhabib (Cambridge Mass., London: MIT, 1987).

dimension of the individual.<sup>27</sup> This movement is what grants the ontological possibility of a theory of history in Hegel:

The discovery of recollection as an ontological feature of spirit is the final proof of the ontological history of spirit [...].<sup>28</sup>

If time is thus the element of externalization in which spirit manifests itself, its ontologically “recollecting” dimension enables spirit to prevent its own externalization in time from turning into an alienation in time as in its absolutely other; rather, it enables spirit—as being in time—to be reflexively comprehended in the structure of self-consciousness.

The very character of time which makes it an element of externalization at the same time contains the possibility of recollection as interiorization and

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<sup>27</sup> See H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, 68: “‘Recollection,’ of course, has nothing to do with the psychic phenomenon which we today mean with this term. It is a universal *ontological* category, a ‘movement of being itself’ which ‘re-collects itself in accordance with its own nature’ [...]. It is the ‘going into self’ of beings and their return back to self. But the decisive point is that unlike the mediations and negations of the something, which ran afoul (*verlaufen*) precisely because they occurred in the dimension of immediacy, this new movement is no longer confined to this dimension but can regress backward, thereby entering a new dimension—that of ‘timeless’ having been, or essence.” L. Di Carlo argues against Marcuse’s position in *Tempo, autocoscienza e storia in Hegel* (Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 2004). See *ibid.*, 88: “The logical *Erinnerung*, besides being psychological recollection, is also a descending to the foundation of the thing, to its essence, an *Erinnerung* that is a withdrawing, a descending to the essential inwardness that is behind the appearance of the ‘being there’.” (Our translation). Di Carlo explicitly criticizes Marcuse’s (but also Verra’s and Schmitz’s) exclusively ontological and a-temporal interpretation of Hegel’s notion of *Erinnerung* (see *ibid.*, 88-89, footnote 3): “According to my interpretation, the withdrawal of being also has a psychological meaning in virtue of the fact that this withdrawal presents itself as a temporal phenomenon: essence is being that is past, but an a-temporal past. This implies that essence founds a sequence of instances of ‘being-there’ that follow one another in time, in the same way as the young becomes old in virtue of the reflection of the essence ‘man’ in both of them. Recollection-*Erinnerung* is thus a descending in the essential inwardness of an immediate ‘being-there’ of the past.” (Our translation). Di Carlo’s study has the merit of providing a full and detailed discussion of the role of *Erinnerung* between the *Phenomenology*, the *Science of Logic*, and the system. With the aim of unifying different meanings of Hegel’s concept of *Erinnerung*, the text moves between different levels, but does not expound the relationships between the different levels in a rigorous and detailed way.

<sup>28</sup> See H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, 317.



the overcoming of externalization.<sup>29</sup>

Besides the debate generated by Bloch's reading of Hegel's concept of *Erinnerung*, H. Schmitz's article "Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung"<sup>30</sup> is worth mentioning. Schmitz recognizes a twofold movement in the concept of *Erinnerung*: from the outside to the inside and from multiplicity to unity. Schmitz's main merit is to recognize that the subject of this twofold movement cannot be spirit alone (and even less spirit in its merely subjective dimension). It is rather something that expresses the very essence of the movement of Hegel's thought (the absolute), as the negation of what is external and the re-emerging of the latter in the inwardness through a process of self-comprehension.

V. Verra<sup>31</sup> has focused on the connection between the concepts of *Erinnerung* and *Bildung*. By regarding *Erinnerung* as the twofold

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 316. See also *ibid.*, 306: "Difference must exist but only such that it is not real; it must be the kind of difference only through which spirit displays and produces the complete unity with itself. Such unity and freedom in difference is possible, however, only as a distinctive form of *knowledge*. Because spirit knows externalization to be its *own* and knowingly posits it, it does not alienate itself from itself and is not caught by it but remains by itself. It also remains by itself insofar as it no longer needs to turn back inward and *away* from this externalization because it becomes for-itself in it. In this fashion Spirit comes to know itself as objectivity, as objective existence," and *ibid.*, 316: "Hegel offers a solution to this problem insofar as for him the 'living and immediate becoming' is *sublated* into the 'process of becoming which is reflected-into-itself' in the course of the history of spirit as a whole. Both modes of becoming are forms of the externalization of spirit as a *whole*, but in the course of the history of spirit the externality of nature is simultaneously taken back and led over into the 'form' of self consciousness. However, viewed as the history of spirit in its entirety, this 'becoming-reflected-into-self' is still a form of externalization, a mode of becoming in otherness; this process is also a coming-to-itself of absolute spirit, its own recollection of itself. In conclusion, Hegel once more puts forward this inner dualism of spirit, namely, of being-in-itself on the one hand and *externalization* and recollection on the other, essentially and estrangement."

<sup>30</sup> H. Schmitz, "Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung," in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 9 (1964): 37-44. Schmitz's article seems to grasp the complexity of the movement of *Erinnerung* as well as the multiplicity of places where it is discussed in a conceptually relevant way. The brevity of the text, however, does not enable the author to expound the semantic richness of this concept and to fully argue for his theses.

<sup>31</sup> V. Verra, "Storia e memoria," in *Su Hegel*, ed. C. Cesa (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 5-30.

movement of recollecting something past and of appropriating oneself<sup>32</sup> within the same act, Verra identifies *Erinnerung* as the activity distinguishing human nature from merely organic nature. Whereas the universal which is not yet spirit (e.g. the organism) does not make itself internal to itself in its own realization, *Erinnerung* marks “the transition from a merely formal universality to a ‘true’ universality, which is to be found precisely in spirit’s persistence.”<sup>33</sup> In this way, the human being is characterized as a historical animal:

In other words, the temporal development acquires—through the intersection of preservation-universalization-appropriation constituted by *Erinnerung*—a consistency and an organic structure that saves history from the danger of dissolving in the accidental and of being reduced to a series of shapes that are disconnected from one another or anyway isolated from the truest and profoundest essence of the process taking place in time and history. By rewording a famous phrase, one might say that through *Erinnerung* Hegel tries to discover and define the human being as a ‘historical animal,’ since it is precisely *Erinnerung*, as the condition of *Bildung*, that distinguishes spirit from every other form of inferior life, even though at an initial and somehow primordial level.<sup>34</sup>

A further well-known interpretation of Hegel’s concept of *Erinnerung* is offered by J. Derrida,<sup>35</sup> who reads this concept in light of the reconstruction of Hegel’s semiology he develops starting from his discussion of Hegel’s psychology. More specifically, Derrida regards memory-*Erinnerung* as the “signifying” activity that animates the intuitive, spatio-temporal content and the production of the sign:

This activity, which consists in animating the intuitive (spatial and temporal) content, of breathing a ‘soul,’ a ‘signification,’ into it, produces the sign by *Erinnerung*—memory and interiorization.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. (Our translation). See also *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 28. (Our translation). See also V. Verra, “Storia e seconda natura in Hegel,” in *Su Hegel*, ed. C. Cesa (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 66: “It is well known that Hegel was constantly trying to distinguish the historical from the natural process, the former being authentically progressive, the latter being purely repetitive.” (Our translation).

<sup>35</sup> J. Derrida, “The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), 69–108.

<sup>36</sup> See *ibid.* 77: “*Erinnerung*, thus, is decisive here. By means of *Erinnerung* the content of sensible intuition becomes an image, freeing itself from immediacy and

4) In the course of the last decade, the concept of *Erinnerung* has received more attention from scholars who seem to have been interested in a more general and detailed study on the topic.

The work of interpreters such as A. Nuzzo and T. Rossi Leidi testifies that the lack of a monographic study on the speculative function(s) of the concept of *Erinnerung* has been noted and exhibits an effort to compensate for this lack. In several essays, Nuzzo has developed a specific analysis of the notion of *Erinnerung* in different contexts and has identified it as a central notion in Hegel's system.<sup>37</sup> In her last book, *Memory, History, Justice in Hegel*,<sup>38</sup> Nuzzo collects the results of her studies on *Erinnerung* with the aim of providing new insight on Hegel's idea of history, vindicating it from uncharitable interpretations and trying to reevaluate its relevance. The main tool for these tasks is the examination of the connection between history and memory.<sup>39</sup> According to Nuzzo, Hegel's system presents two different models for the understanding of history: on the one hand, a phenomenological understanding of history as collective memory, which she terms "ethical memory;" on the other hand, a systematic understanding of history structured according to the principles of justice and contradiction. The transition from the two understandings of history is made possible, according to Nuzzo, by the logical foundation of the philosophy of history, which, however, does not grant the compatibility or equivalence of the two models, but rather ranks the second model as higher. While history, in the phenomenological understanding, is conditioned by memory-*Erinnerung* in an "ideological, mythological, and metaphysical"<sup>40</sup> sense, in the systematic understanding a twofold subversion takes place. The systematic memory-*Erinnerung*, which is

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singularity in order to permit the passage to conceptuality." See also *ibid.*, 87.

<sup>37</sup> See A. Nuzzo, "Dialectical Memory, Thinking and Recollecting. Logic and Psychology in Hegel," in *Mémoire et souvenir. Six études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. A. Brancacci and G. Gigliotti (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2006), 89-120; A. Nuzzo, "History and Memory in Hegel's *Phenomenology*," *The Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 29/1 (2008): 161-198; A. Nuzzo, "Memory, History, and Justice in Hegel's System," in *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 31/2 (2010): 349-389.

<sup>38</sup> A. Nuzzo, *Memory, History, Justice in Hegel* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Nuzzo speaks of *Erinnerung* as "memory" without sufficiently clarifying the terms of an extremely complex translation, most importantly as concerns the contemporary debate on history. This seems to be at least in part justified by the context of the book, which aims to make Hegel's notion of *Erinnerung* fruitful for contemporary reflections.

<sup>40</sup> A. Nuzzo, *Memory, History, Justice*, 165.

founded on speculative logic, on the one hand acquires an absolute creative capacity which it manifests in the products of absolute spirit, and on the other hand it loses its own mystifying character and is subject “to the factual authority of history, to the objectivity of historical truth, and to historical justice.”<sup>41</sup>

T. Rossi Leidi<sup>42</sup> has devoted a rich volume to the notion of *Erinnerung*, which examines its different, specific functions in the philosophy of subjective spirit (including the version presented in the Jena system drafts), in the *Science of Logic* (with the merit of not limiting the analysis to the well-known transition from being to essence), in the *Phenomenology* and in the philosophy of history. While Rossi Leidi denies that one can find a “theory” of *Erinnerung* in Hegel’s system, he does not restrict himself to this negative conclusion. On the contrary, precisely because no theory of *Erinnerung* is to be found in Hegel’s philosophy, Rossi Leidi refers to a “broad” meaning of *Erinnerung* as Hegel’s *Weltanschauung*, as the guiding notion of Hegel’s system.<sup>43</sup> The term *Weltanschauung*, here, is not employed accidentally: Rossi Leidi retraces a constellation of meanings of the term “Erinnerung” within the late Romantic and Idealistic culture around the end of the eighteenth century, which—even if pertaining to different theoretical contexts—revolves around the connection of *anamnesis* and internalization. It is from this cultural framework, according to Rossi Leidi, that Hegel inherited the concept of *Erinnerung*—and it is from the same framework that he distances himself by defining the concept of *Erinnerung* in the *Phenomenology*’s concluding pages: Hegel develops a view of *Erinnerung* between history and knowledge of the absolute, as history of the *Bildung* of spirit itself. Precisely this historical and immanent dimension of the absolute, according to Rossi Leidi, is what distinguishes Hegel from the Romantics, who tend to understand the absolute in a meta-historical dimension.<sup>44</sup> The function of *Erinnerung* in the system, according to Rossi Leidi, can be understood starting from the phenomenological view: resting on the second of the three syllogisms that conclude Hegel’s *Encyclopedia* (the nature-spirit-logic syllogism, § 576), Rossi Leidi suggests a

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> T. Rossi Leidi, *Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung. Subjektivität, Logik, Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2009). See also T. Rossi Leidi, “Die ‘Erinnerung’ und die Bildung des Selbstbewusstseins des Geistes,” in *Bewusstsein zwischen Natur und Geist*, ed. W. Neuser and W. Lenski (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010), 65–73.

<sup>43</sup> See T. Rossi Leidi, *Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung*, 261.

<sup>44</sup> See *ibid.*, 278.

correspondence between the activity of *Erinnerung* and the activity of spirit as a whole. Spirit, in the course of its *Bildung*, sublates its immediacy by internalizing it and elevates itself to the absolute, which realizes itself precisely through the mediation of individual human beings in history.

## 2. Our Volume: Contents

The collection of essays we present aims at providing a detailed examination of the role played by the concept of *Erinnerung* within the different spheres of the system. When planning the book, we tried to cover all of the moments of Hegel's production that present significant instances of the concept. Each chapter has been assigned to a scholar specializing on a specific part of the system, so that the present collection could profit from the specific sensibility of each scholar in order to fully illuminate the function and implications of the concept of *Erinnerung*.

The volume is composed of nine chapters, which cover Hegel's writings starting from the Jena phase, with the *Phenomenology* and the system drafts, until the Berlin years with the third edition of the *Encyclopedia* and the lectures, through the *Science of Logic*. We decided to start from the *Phenomenology* and from its last chapter on absolute knowing in order to emphasize that Hegel's very concept of philosophical science presupposes the concept of *Erinnerung*. From there, following a systematic order, the chapters focus on the role of *Erinnerung* in the logic, and then in the different spheres of the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (Anthropology and Psychology, plus a chapter devoted to the connection between the psychological and logical dimension of thought), the Philosophy of Objective Spirit (philosophy of history) and the Philosophy of Absolute Spirit (art, religion, and philosophy).

The first chapter focuses on absolute knowledge in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here recollection plays a central role as it enables the inwardization and comprehensive understanding of the moments that constitute the path of consciousness's experience: *Erinnerung* is therefore responsible for the very attainment of absolute knowledge. In virtue of the role of recollection, absolute knowledge develops according to a complex dialectical relationship between the historical-temporal domain and the logical domain, the latter being the dimension to which absolute knowledge grants access.

The second chapter is devoted to the transition from the doctrine of being to the doctrine of essence in the *Science of Logic*. Here, Hegel claims that "knowing *inwardizes, recollects [erinnert]* itself out of

immediate being.” The aim of this chapter is to explain the meaning and the function of the notion of *Erinnerung* in this context: first, it outlines a comparative analysis of the negative self-referential and paradoxical dynamic underlying this passage of the *Science of Logic* and the ones at the basis of the *Erinnerung* process in the Psychology and in the final moment of the phenomenological path, i.e. absolute knowing. The final part of the chapter shows that the structure characterizing the *Erinnerung* process in the three levels under consideration—psychology, phenomenology and logic—is not accidental and is not meant to support a psychological reduction of the logical system either. Rather, the paradoxical structure of *Erinnerung* highlights the deep and necessary relationship between objective thought as self-determining subjectivity in the logic on the one hand and the subjectivity gaining access to objective thought in the Psychology on the other.

The third chapter analyzes the function of *Erinnerung* within Anthropology. Within this context a complex meaning of the term *Erinnerung*, i.e. internalization, recollection and reflection in itself is at stake in the transition from the determinacy existing in the natural world to the interiority of spirit. More specifically, on the one hand *Erinnerung* as internalization and recollection describes the process of external sensation. On the other hand, at the very end of this section, *Erinnerung* as reflection in itself of the actual soul ensures the dialectical transition from Anthropology to Phenomenology.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Hegel’s Psychology. It deals with Theoretical Spirit, the *Encyclopedia* section where Hegel discusses the development of the capacities of intelligence and where *Erinnerung* finds its proper systematic thematization. The chapter shows that the whole *knowing* process displayed by intelligence is to be understood as a complex movement of *Erinnerung*.

In the fifth chapter the author argues that recollection is relevant not only in the transition from being to essence in the *Science of Logic*, but also in the sections regarding the categories of relation and the genesis of the concept. According to the author, the deduction of the concept displays a logical memory that completes and fulfills the initial recollection of being by essence. Contrary to recollection, which determines the division between being and appearance by means of reflection, logical memory internalizes reflection within substance. As such, the concept is acknowledged as the permanent and objective movement of thought within itself. Focusing on the last sections of the Doctrine of Essence concerning the categories of causality, the author illustrates how the logical form of self-relation is established according to a mnemonic method.

The aim of the sixth chapter is to elucidate the methodological meaning of the concept of *Erinnerung* in Hegel's philosophy of history. This chapter proceeds in three steps. Firstly, it provides the systematic features of Hegel's concept of method. Secondly, it studies the Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* in order to articulate the meaning of *Erinnerung* with respect to the structural moments of the exposition of world-history. Thirdly, it raises the question of how to understand the totality which *Erinnerung* is meant to express and argues for the conception of a historicity without historicism.

The seventh chapter discusses the role of *Erinnerung* in Hegel's *Aesthetics*. More specifically, it examines its role in Hegel's conception of the artistic genius and the dynamics governing artistic creativity. The analysis brings into light the tensions affecting the subjective moment of the artistic production due to the fact that such a moment is the center of both an internalizing and an exteriorizing movement. The genius is situated at the meeting point of centripetal forces—which attract what is external and inessential to the spiritual inwardness and shape the sensible, external material by providing it with a spiritual appearance—and centrifugal forces, which necessarily give his work an external reality and a place in a definite context, thereby offering it to its public.

The eighth chapter offers an extensive examination of the role of *Erinnerung* in the different works Hegel devoted to the philosophy of religion, including the early writings, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Through this analysis, the chapter identifies two main views of recollection: the first, emerging from the early writings, regards it as a form of abstract subjectivism and therefore as a defective aspect of Protestantism. The second view, emerging from the later works, assigns to *Erinnerung* a high, speculative value.

The ninth chapter is devoted to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and aims at illuminating Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy through the examination of the concept of *Erinnerung*. In particular, this analysis enables one to clarify questions related to the distinction of the history of philosophy from a simple narration of opinions, and to the manner in which philosophy is connected to, and at the same time different from, other configurations of spirit. Although Hegel does not extensively employ the notion of *Erinnerung* in the text of the *Lectures*, the chapter shows that this notion can enable one to understand the different strands of Hegel's argument in a unitary and consistent way.

### 3. Our Volume: Results

As already mentioned, the general framework of this project is the hypothesis of a unitary function of *Erinnerung* in Hegel's system, along the lines of what recent scholarship has done in the last years about the concept of recognition. In our view, there is no such thing as a unitary *narrow* meaning of *Erinnerung*, corresponding to an individual dynamic of this concept within the system or to a conceptual device that can be found at work at different levels of the system. At the same time, the itinerary presented in this volume displays a certain conceptual continuity and unity: depending on the context one examines, *Erinnerung* mediates between the different forms of inwardness and exteriority, or subjectivity and objectivity, that are presented at different degrees of development according to the systematic place in which the movement of *Erinnerung* takes place. Such movement, as the essays in this volume show, is at work in the fundamental moments of Hegel's system.

The studies we present here aim to contribute to the definition of a dynamic structure of the concept of *Erinnerung*, which acquires different specific configurations and concentrates in itself an entire range of dynamics that cannot be reduced to the psychological process of recollection. We believe that a clearer understanding of the different instances of the notion of *Erinnerung* is the necessary premise in order to grasp the *fundamental* meaning of *Erinnerung* at work throughout its different occurrences. In this sense, the operation we carry out in this volume seems necessary in order for further research to be conducted in the future without forcing its deep meaning to adapt to a partial or unilateral interpretation.

Starting from the pervasive character of this notion within Hegel's thought, therefore, our aim is mainly to bring attention on *Erinnerung* as a central concept within Hegel's system as a whole. Although *Erinnerung* can be assimilated neither to the whole dialectical process, nor to its outcome as such, the understanding of the kind of operation it carries out enables us to illuminate some of the most complex parts of Hegel's philosophical system, since—as we hope to show—*Erinnerung* plays a crucial role in Hegel's idea of philosophical science.



## EDITORIAL NOTE

When editing this collection, we tried to make it as consistent as possible concerning the formal aspects.

The titles of Hegel's works (including published works, unpublished manuscripts having a unitary character, and student notes from his university courses, known as *Lectures*) are all italicized. The titles of specific parts or chapters of a work are indicated with capital letters (e.g.: Anthropology, Psychology, Doctrine of Being).

We are aware that achieving a complete consistency is extremely difficult: nevertheless, we tried to enable the reader to orient herself among works, parts or chapters of works, and Hegel's views on a specific subject, which are often to be found in different works.

The key terms of Hegel's philosophy are not capitalized (e.g.: spirit, concept, being, essence, nature, time, space, absolute, etc.), except the term "Idea"—this criterion has been also applied to the quotes drawn from the English translations of Hegel's works. The translations have been slightly revised: we decided to translate "Geist" with "spirit" (as opposed to "mind") and "Begriff" with "concept" (as opposed to "notion"). However, when referring to secondary literature, we preserved the author's choices.



## CHAPTER ONE

# THE ROLE OF *ERINNERUNG* IN ABSOLUTE KNOWING: HISTORY AND ABSOLUTENESS

VALENTINA RICCI\*

The *goal*, absolute knowing, or spirit that knows itself as spirit, has for its path the recollection [*Erinnerung*, VR] of the spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the present chapter is to explore and discuss the significance of *Erinnerung* in the development of absolute knowing, which is the culminating shape of consciousness's experience that Hegel describes in the last chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. One working assumption that I will defend in later sections is that *Erinnerung* is essential to the very nature of absolute knowing, or "spirit that knows itself as spirit." My primary aim will be to analyze and explicate the implications of this assumption for an understanding of Hegel's idea of absolute knowing.

In the last pages of the *Phenomenology* Hegel claims that spirit attains self-knowledge, or absolute knowing, through the *Erinnerung* of its own experience. More precisely, Hegel *identifies* *Erinnerung* with the path that spirit takes in order to reach the goal of self-knowledge. In what follows, I will show the way in which the unfolding of this path is essentially linked to spirit's temporality and to the historical dimension in which spirit's experience takes place. *Erinnerung*, I will argue, is the activity encompassing all the essential steps that spirit has to accomplish in order to achieve the

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\* I would like to thank Prof. G. Cecchinato, Prof. F. Menegoni, Prof. M. Schwab, and D.R. Siakel for reading and commenting on previous versions of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *PhG*, 433-434, [§ 808].

full self-comprehension that constitutes absolute knowing. Indeed, I believe that we should understand absolute knowing itself to be an exemplary case of *Erinnerung*. In other words, as the concluding moment of the *Phenomenology*, the chapter on absolute knowing provides a model of what it suggests by exemplifying the identification between, or simultaneity of, a proposed account of knowledge and the enacting of that account, insofar as it collects the preceding stages of consciousness' experience and, at the same time, it sublates and presents them in a higher, unified, and consistent shape in virtue of which they all acquire full meaning and justification.

The implications of my reading of the role of *Erinnerung* in absolute knowing mainly concern the problematic relation between science and history, or *absoluteness* and history. Absolute knowing is not only the concluding moment of a path—a destination—but also constitutes, in an equally important way, the transition to the fully developed science that will start with the logic. This raises the following question, however. If I am right, and Hegel conceives of absolute knowing as *Erinnerung qua* “conceptually comprehended history,” then what happens to the “absolute” component of spirit’s self-knowledge? Does this historical character imply that absolute knowing is not really absolute, as it depends on the “recollection” of a historical development? Is it possible to reconcile the absoluteness of science—the destination of the phenomenological path—and its essentially temporal/historical character? I believe it is. And I argue, furthermore, that making sense of these two equally legitimate, but apparently opposed features of absolute knowing, is a Hegelian task par excellence.

## 1. Time, History and *Erinnerung* in Absolute Knowing

To begin with, let us briefly rehearse Hegel’s conception of absolute knowing, namely—as it is well known—the conclusive moment of a set of experiences that consciousness has traversed on the path set out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In each of the previous stages that consciousness has traversed, Hegel characterized consciousness as opposed to its object of experience or knowledge, in ways that produce inadequate forms of knowledge. Consciousness regarded such experiences as extraneous to itself and, thus, not fully understood them. In progressing through its stages of self-knowledge, consciousness developed an increasingly broader comprehension of its object(s), eventually achieving awareness that all its experiences were necessary parts of its experience *as a whole*; and, more specifically, as components of a more comprehensive, all-

embracing form of knowledge. Hegel describes this awareness as consciousness's identification with its self-consciousness, or with its realization that the knowledge of its own experience—experience of the world, we might say—coincides with its knowledge of itself. In other words, with absolute knowing, which is the final stage, all of consciousness's experiences are “collected,” understood, and made part of its self-comprehension and identity as a meaningful whole. This, I submit, is precisely the sense in which the subject of absolute knowing is consciousness developed or “grown” into *spirit*. Spirit, on this understanding, emerges from consciousness' all-embracing comprehension of all forms of knowledge, action, and social and political organization produced by humanity. From a Hegelian phenomenological perspective, this does not entail that spirit may be identified with everything that pertains to human beings. Rather, we should regard spirit as that which *emerges* from the self-comprehension of the human, i.e. from the mediated and reflective relationship with its own manifestations. Therefore, absolute knowing is most clearly understood as spirit's self-comprehension.<sup>2</sup> Such self-comprehension, at any rate, pertains to spirit's previous experience, the one that has been *told* in the various stages of the *Phenomenology*. There is a strong relation, it seems, between absolute knowing and what has concretely *happened* to spirit during its journey.

This observation introduces the first, essential point that we need to discuss in order to illuminate the role of *Erinnerung* in the attainment and nature of absolute knowing: *time*. Time, as the dimension in which those experiences have taken place, constitutes one of the most complex issues treated in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology*. Part of the complexity arises from the fact that Hegel provides two different and not easily reconcilable accounts:

But as regards the existence of this concept, science does not appear in time and in actuality before spirit has attained to this consciousness about

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<sup>2</sup> On absolute knowing, especially in relation to the topics addressed here, see (among others) G. Baptist, “Das absolute Wissen. Zeit, Geschichte, Wissenschaft,” in *G.W.F. Hegel. Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. D. Köhler and O. Pöggeler (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 245-261; A. de Laurentiis, “Absolute Knowing,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. K.R. Westphal (Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 246-264; W. Jaeschke, “Das absolute Wissen,” in *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes heute*, ed. A. Arndt and E. Müller (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 194-214; R. Pippin, “The ‘Logic of Experience’ as ‘Absolute Knowledge’ in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*,” in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. A Critical Guide*, ed. D. Moyar and M. Quante (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 210-227.

itself. As spirit that knows what it is, it does not exist before, and nowhere at all, till after the completion of its work [...].<sup>3</sup>

According to this passage, time is the dimension in which science appears once the identity of consciousness and self-consciousness, (hence also the structure defining absolute knowing) has been reached. Time, in other words, appears as the dimension in which spirit attains the full awareness of itself and consequently as the only dimension in which absolute knowing, or science, can manifest. Only *after* the completion of this kind of work, and thus only at the end of a *process* that is thoroughly *historical*, does spirit come into existence.<sup>4</sup> Further on, Hegel refers to the apparent richness of the immediate—i.e. not yet comprehended—experience and the apparent meagerness of the mediated knowledge concerning such experience:

Cognition, because it is the spiritual consciousness for which what *is in itself* only *is*, insofar as it is a *being for* the self and a being of the *self* or concept, has for this reason at first only a meager object, in contrast with which substance and the consciousness of this substance are richer. The disclosure or revelation which substance has in this consciousness is in fact concealment, for substance is still *self-less being* and what is disclosed to it is only the certainty of itself.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to the substance of experience, as it presents itself to consciousness in its immediacy, the object of knowledge appears to be less detailed, less rich in concrete determinations. The apparent richness (“disclosure”) of substance, towards which the knowing activity of consciousness is directed, however, is unmasked as “concealment.” The actual, true determinations of substance are in fact hidden within that

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<sup>3</sup> *PhG*, 428, [§ 800]. The translation has been slightly modified (“actuality” translates “Wirklichkeit,” whereas Miller opted for “actual world”, which might make sense, but is not what Hegel wrote).

<sup>4</sup> This statement might induce one to think that, according to the interpretation presented here, spirit appeared only once in history, and precisely at Hegel’s time, when absolute knowing appeared. Of course, I do not mean to claim such a view, and as I will show in the course of the chapter, the kind of work consciousness does in order to become aware of itself and its experience is something that is *constantly* going on in human history, and never stops, but always gives rise to new forms of self-comprehension, and different stages in spirit’s development. That this process is a historical process means that it has an essential connection with human experience, and proceeds along with it.

<sup>5</sup> *PhG*, 428, [§ 801].