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A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSITION OF THE HEGELIAN CONCEPT OF 'SPIRIT' WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GERMAN IDEALISM.

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Abstract
Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit was an eventful publication within the German idealism. The popularity of the 'spirit' came with Hegel's publication of the philosophy of the spirit that featured in the third part of the Encyclopedia of philosophical sciences. Hegel has lots of influences dating back to the days of Enlightenment after the revolution staged by Napoleon. There was also the influence coming from many a German idealist, and even remotely from Aristotle. These influences greatly shaped his thoughts in the philosophy of the spirit. Thus the Hegelian system was out to unify human knowledge via the dialectical process. This informs his rejection of dualism and the Kantian 'Thing in itself.' Hegel is credited with the saying that 'nature presupposes the spirit.' The various stages of consciousness of the spirit in its manifestations of the objective, subjective and absolute spirit are often seen as substituting for the Trinitarian God of Christians. Hence the Hegelian concept of the spirit is an enigma worth investigating. Therefore the objective of this article is to throw some light on Hegel's meaning of the concept of the 'spirit' by placing his idealism against the background of German Idealism.

Keywords: Exposition, Hegel, Phenomenology, Spirit, German Idealism

Introduction

Hegel is known for his eventful publication of the phenomenology of the spirit, and particularly his concept of spirit. Both the initiated and uninitiated in the philosophy of Hegel

know that the popularity of the Hegelian concept of the spirit corresponds to its obscurity in terms of its meaning. The difficulty associated with understanding the Hegelian spirit is often compared to that of the Trinitarian God of Christians. A body of philosophical literatures abound that claim that Hegel substitutes the *Geist* for the God of Christians. However we are not pursuing this line of thought. Ours is not so much to criticize Hegel as to understand his sense of the spirit within the broad German idealist system.

Most philosophers are more interested in the philosophy of the spirit that featured in the third part of the Encyclopedia of philosophical sciences ascribed to Hegel. An insight is gained in Hegel's philosophy of the spirit when placed side by side with the philosophies preceding his revolutionary philosophical thought. Much appreciation of Hegel's philosophical system is widely acknowledged. Thus according to T. Rockmore (1997: 2-3), Hegel opens a wide spectrum of insight into speculative philosophy that grasps knowledge as in an organic whole, following as it were, the spontaneous movement or the immanent rhythm of the concept. One notable goal is to combat skepticism and oppose a subject-predicate analysis. In this way doubt is eliminated, and the human ability to know is established contrary to the tenets of skepticism. On his part, J. McCarney (2000: 11) makes the same point as he sees in Hegel a systematic thinker for whom ''the true is comprehensible as 'the whole' and that the word 'science' means 'reason and reflection.'' Thus, Hegel distinguishes himself from Spinoza's belief that reality is one. What continues to reecho in Hegel's philosophy is the belief in the world that is rational, which means that reality is not aporetic to reason. Again, Hegel rejects the doctrine of dualism that colored the philosophies before him. Robert Stern (2013: 20) notes that Hegel's optimism is that this goal will be achieved by means of a dialectical process. We know that every philosopher philosophizes against his own background and milieu. George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (27 August 1770 -14 Nov. 1831) is no exception. The proper context of Hegel's philosophical enterprise leads back to the time of Enlightenment, generated by upheavals occasioned by Napoleon's revolutions in France up to the Romanticism that followed it.

The influence of Hölderlin, Friedrich Schelling, and Kant on Hegel is undeniable. Of note is that Hegel did not swallow the views of his predecessors every hook, line and sinker. For instance, the Kantian critical philosophy with its noumenal world of the 'Thing-in-itself' did not interest him. T. Rockmore (1997: 2) says of Hegel that he defends the spirit of critical philosophy of Kant against its letter, which is speculative idealism. And that he was vehement in defense of a modified form of Kant's transcendental idealism. The phenomenology of the spirit has its roots firmly grounded in German idealism. And we have philosophers who have given various senses of the word 'spirit', drawing their inspiration from the German idealist tradition. T. Rockmore (1997: 2) interests himself in Hegel's theory of knowledge. According to him, it is a ''single theory of knowledge'' running through different phases from *Erkennen* to absolute knowing. The Hegelian methodology is evidently triadic, i.e., dialectical with emphasis on the concept of science. This dialectical process follows a fundamentally conceptual necessity, which depends on following the change of object in consciousness. Hegel's philosophy of the spirit is explicit on the architectonic levels of consciousness. The influence of Aristotle on Hegel is quite profound in his treatment of the subject of consciousness. This is why Hegel starts with the philosophy of nature featuring plants and animals before his ascent to the level of the self-reflective spirit. This is to say that the stage of

organisms (plants and animals) remains the unconscious level for Hegel. It featured in Hegel's anthropology and psychology that nature's consciousness is implicit or that the spirit presupposes nature. The understanding is that though the spirit at the level of nature is implicitly conscious, the same spirit does not know how it comes to know itself in a self-reflective action. For Hegel (1977: 58), the truth of self-certainty is established by reason, a distinctive mark of human beings vis-à-vis animals. In the same text above it is said that Hegel goes beyond Aristotle and distinguishes his spirit from the latter's 'seele.'

It equally acknowledged that the Hegelian philosophical science avoids the Kantian formalism, as it does not impose schema. Similarly Eric von der Luft (1987: 29) distances the Hegelian spirit from the sphere of physiognomy and phrenology. The reason is that while these operate with the principle: 'the inner is the expression of outer', they often use less complex factor to explain the more complex ones. And this showcases in the long run the pitfalls of dualism and reductionism – the assumption of concepts as mental images as in Descartes. Thus Eric puts the records straight in clearing whatever constitutes a misunderstanding in the way of Hegelian spirit so as to show its right sense.

> The spirit (inner) is marked with motion or is in process. The outer is what the spirit does or rather the end of the spirit's process. And that this 'outer' embodies two aspects, namely that it lives in the inner whose expression it is; it is considered as dead, a thing in so far the spirit has completed its action. The spirit is therefore the unification of the two aspects and not the individual aspects taking singly. (1987: 29).

The processual 'spirit' of Hegel thus answers the question of what the spirit is by pointing to what it does in its dialectical unfolding or action. The spirit is a unity and is not taken singly in its double expressions. With the hindsight of an inquisitive investigation, our study will highlight the spirit's import as it incarnates within the society, transforming it from within and guaranteeing its freedom. To do this, we hereby present the outline of our work in two broad approaches. In the first part we shall discuss Basic Hegelian concepts, German Idealism, and Hegelian Idealism. Then in the second part we discus Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit, Hegel's philosophy of spirit and the species of Hegelian spirit. Sequel to this will be the conclusion. We begin with the first part, which begins with the clarification of basic Hegelian concepts.

Clarification of basic Hegelian concepts

The conceptual analysis remains a necessary gateway to understanding a philosopher's viewpoint. In fact, these concepts capture the overall content of Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit as well as philosophy of spirit. The views of the some philosophers of like minds are in cooperated here also for in-depth comprehension. We have such concepts as 'Absolute Knowing', 'Consciousness and Self-consciousness', 'Idea and Concept'. An elaborate treatment of these concepts may not be the case except where necessary.

a) Absolute Knowing:

Donald Philip Verene (2007: 1-4) has observed that Hegel used the apparatus of reflection and understanding in the preface to the phenomenology to correct what he calls defective

philosophizing. One such measure is to do away with empiricism and rationalism as knowing processes. The knowledge arrived at by these means is simply superficial and does not get to the inner life of experience. Instead Hegel proposes reason and speculation as veritable alternatives. Thus the movement from reflection to speculation is the sure route to the truth. And this alone constitutes the way to absolute knowing. Explaining Hegel's mind on absolute knowing, Verene (2007: 5) designates it as: 'the true is the whole' (das Wahre ist das ganze). And where the whole is compared to a circle; in which the true (das ganze) is considered as a process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning. For T. Rockmore (1997: 184), absolute knowing presupposes the concept of absolute. There are various senses of the absolute. One sense equates it to the final ultimate explanatory principle as in Descartes' cogito and Kant transcendental unity of apperception. The German word 'absolute' with its Latin derivation means to 'set free.' It evokes the idea of 'apeiron' (unlimitedness) of the pre-socratic philosopher, Anaximander. Fichte's version of the absolute is that which is 'not relative'; the spirit must posit a noumenon (a thing- in- itself). It is a case of the absolute being derived through abstraction from the real. Schelling, it was who transforms Fichte's epistemological concept into an ontological principle. Schelling too recognized the unity of subjective and objective poles of cognition in his transcendental idealism of 1800, where he conceives history as a series of intervening truths of practical philosophy. In the *Differenzschrift*, Hegel designates reason as the philosophical organ by which the absolute knows itself and which remains the ground for its grounding; without any outside determination. For the first time in the theory of knowledge, Hegel brings in the question of historical dimension to the problem of knowledge. By so doing, knowledge is removed from its abstract conditions as in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and instead replaced by how it occurs. Denise Souche-Dagues captures it thus:

> The general function of the absolute in Hegel's epistemology is clear. Throughout his corpus, it is intended to supplement Kant's abstract conception of pure reason through a conception of spirit, or cognition from the subject's perspective. Whereas Kant aims to think individual objects through the understanding, Hegel desires to grasp their interrelation through reason. Following others in the German philosophical tradition, he intends the absolute as an ultimate principle, which is independent of all further principles, to think structured unity, thereby overcoming dichotomy in all its forms through monism. (1990).

T. Rockmore (1997: 179-194) distinguishes the Cartesian way of knowing from that of Hegel. Whereas Descartes uses the term of representation of its object or even in religion where the subject represents the other considered external to it, the Hegelian subject reaches closure in the concept. Hence there is the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness. This is then followed by the introduction of ''absolute knowing'' and ''science.'' Kant and Descartes hold that in the process of knowing, the subject knows that which is outside of itself. Hegel, on the contrary, holds that the highest form of knowledge is arrived at self-knowledge considered as knowing oneself in otherness and otherness as oneself. Thus the problem of knowledge is brought to an end in the subject's full grasp of itself.

One distinguishing mark of absolute knowing in contrast to all other forms of knowledge according to G. A. Magee (2010: 27) is that in the latter ''All mundane forms of knowledge are concerned with determinate, finite objects . . . whereas Absolute Knowing is a knowing without any determinate object. Thus the normal standpoint of knowledge in which there is always a separation between subject and object is simply cancelled in Absolute Knowing. It is in a sense, 'pure knowing'. Hence Hegel demonstrates that this cancellation of subject and object is the vehicle by which we arrive at knowledge of one true object, the whole or Absolute itself. Absolute knowing has an edge over reflection and understanding. For D. P. Verene (2007: 11), reflection and understanding fragment reality in superficial ways, making distinctions between the knower and the known but absolute knowing employs reflection at the service of reason in which ''the knower attempts to reflect on itself, not on what it takes to be other than itself. This self-reflection is the step that consciousness requires in order to transpose reflection into speculation and thus allow understanding to be superseded by reason.

b) Consciousness and Self-consciousness:

In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant makes the object of experience depend on the knowing subject. The consequence being the reduction of the object to a mere appearance with an unfathomable link to an un-cognizable reality that he labeled a 'thing in itself.' On his own, Descartes treats consciousness as establishing the reality of his own existence in the cogito as a fundamental principle of knowledge. He recognized two domains of reality, namely 'res cogito' and 'res extensa' (a thinking thing and an extended thing) as independent substances. The result in both instances is dualism. Hegel believes that there is something fundamentally wrong with their construal of the notion of consciousness. The problem of dualism according to Hegel is as a result of imperfect understanding and application of the concept of consciousness. Hegel insists that consciousness must be consciousness of both the subject and the object. Hence, T. Rockmore explains the structure of consciousness for Hegel thus:

> Consciousness knows and grasps only what is in its experience; for what is in this is only spiritual substance, and truly as object of the self. But Spirit becomes object because it is this movement of becoming another to itself, i.e., becoming an object to itself, and of sublating this otherness. And experience is the name we give to just this movement, in which the immediate, the inexperienced, i.e., the abstract, whether it be of sensuous being, or only thought of as simple, alienates itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in its reality and truth, also as has become property of consciousness. (1997: 15).

Consciousness in Hegel is something unique. It is a spiritual experience or movement whereby what is experienced becomes one with the spirit, and thus cancels out any form of alienation or difference between the subject and the object, since what it reveals is a unified reality in consciousness. Having bridged the gap between the subject and object in his environment, Hegel introduces the unique character of self-consciousness. P. Ifergan writes:

> Consciousness as the concept of Spirit is intended to capture the idea that Spirit, as a process of unifying the simple and the infinite, the identical and the

> different, progresses toward the state where knowing itself is tantamount to knowing its otherness, knowing itself as comprising difference. This process of finding identity in different is encapsulated by the concept of self-consciousness. (2014: 119).

Hegel's philosophy is, therefore, best described as descriptive phenomenology and social ontology. Thus the human person is considered in his humanness; namely a subject of desires, reciprocal recognition, and free being. The transition from the ordinary consciousness to self-consciousness is the dawn of a new social reality in Hegel. This sort of self-consciousness is inter-subjectively mediated. This means that there is mutual reciprocity in the recognition of the other, since each person is considered equal to the other and no longer as unequal.

c) Idea and Concept:

The word 'idea' has a technical meaning in Hegel. In its Hegelian sense, writes S. Arvi (2015), the 'idea' stands for 'what the spirit actualizes in its historical process of development.' In the Encyclopedia, the word 'idea' connotes 'otherness' and the determination of externality. The idea plays itself out as nature in space. This otherness or nature is not to be taken in a dualist sense but in the monistic outlook of idealism whereby nature is in itself considered as reason, idea and divine. According to J. McCarney (2000: 11), the 'concept' stands for the mirror or expression of reality. On the relation between idea and concept, Hegel says the idea is the unity of concept and reality or the unity of concept and objectivity. Here the impression about 'concept' in Hegelian understanding is one bereft of reality while idea is to be located in objectivity. This however shows the fluidity of Hegel's use of the terms, a distinctive mark of his idealism. Hegel would have us believe that for any existing object there must be some measure of agreement, an identity with its concept without which nothing could possibly exist. J. McCarney presents a long characterization of the Hegelian idea and concept:

> If it is the unrealized idea, it is natural to think of it as inherently restless and dynamic, ever striving to fulfill itself in reality. This primal tension of idea and concept is what essentially sets Hegel apart from that of his predecessors from Anaxagoras to Spinoza. It introduces the element of inner-directed-self-movement into a static universe. *The metaphysical vision of idealism is then one of a cosmic process of becoming*. So powerful is its grip on Hegel that the characteristic imagery of self-movement and self-making may be said to pervade his dealings with his basic ontological categories in general . . . It may then be said to represent the subjectivity of the idea in two related senses. It is the idea as subjective, lacking in objective embodiment, and moreover, it bears the main responsibility for sustaining our sense of the idea as subject. To avoid any paradoxes in the latter role of seeming to be both creator and created, it may be thought of in terms of the emergence of successively higher stages of the subject's development. This notion of step-like progress opens up a space within which there should be enough differentiation of levels to justify talk of creation. On the other hand, it ensures enough continuity across the phases for the assumption of an enduring subject to get a purchase. Viewed in the largest perspective, the drive of the concept to become Idea is the cosmic mainspring of the movement. (2000: 53).

The point that the spirit actualizes self in its historical process re-echoes in this passage as well. McCarney employs rather the terms of 'dynamism' and 'restlessness 'to make the same point. It is the expression that 'the metaphysical vision of idealism is one of a cosmic process of becoming' that underlies Hegel's unique sense of idealism; and which distinguishes him from his predecessors. There is certain relatedness between idea and concept, and reason.

d) Reason

Hegel is credited with the saying: ''What is rational is actual, and what is actual, is rational.'' Any literal interpretation of this expression is hereby ruled out. Reason (Vernunft) in Hegel is synonymous with 'idea' or 'idee'. The idea is a two-sided concept. On the one hand it means the abstract concept of thought, and on the other it is a concrete content in which reason, implicit in thought, is embodied in reality. This associates reason with the critical self-consciousness. So when reason is examined, it is found to be an embodiment of reality. John Stewart (2010: 14) compares this way of looking at reason as mirroring the Socratic rationality, which applies the dialectical criticism to all institutions and beliefs to see if they rest on rational basis. On this interpretation opinions are, however, divided between old and young Hegelians.

German Idealism

German idealism is a philosophical movement that emerged in Germany in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. It was a reaction from Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and was closely linked to Romanticism and the revolutionary politics of the Enlightenment. The most famous representatives of this movement are Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Our interest is to identify what is distinctly unique about the German idealism and how Hegel differs from it. We start with what German idealism is not. It should be understood neither in the Platonist sense of intellectualism nor in the Berkeleyan sense of mind-dependent. On the one hand Fichte, Schelling and Hegel reject the distinctions between material and formal, real and ideal, and between being and thinking. On the other hand Kant is somewhat moderate in his idealism. Kant's idealism is known as the transcendental idealism. This way of idealizing by Kant would emphasize how things appear to us rather than how things are in themselves. Kant concerned himself with the possibility of making *apriori* knowledge synthetic, as when he asked, 'How is Synthetic Apriori Knowledge possible?' This ushers in Kant's Copernican Revolution. Prior to the revolution, the concepts employed by the mind in knowledge acquisition must conform to the objects external to it. The Copernican revolution means that the objects of knowledge must conform to the concepts in the mind. Thus the emphasis shifted to the individual, the knowing subject.

Even though this way of coming to know does not make the object mind-dependent, at least it casts skeptical doubts as to the reliability of the concepts in determining what constitutes knowledge in each individual's case or of our faculties in fulfilling the conditions of such knowledge. Kant's idealism makes him dualize reality as when he designates certain realities as unknowable ('noumenal entities' or 'thing- in- itself'), i.e., objects in their transcendental and ideal form and others as phenomena (appearance), i.e., how the objects appear to us. However, Kant believes that we are capable of valid cognitive judgments in regard of our sensations by applying the pure forms of intuition, space and time. It becomes obvious that

Hegel will be ill disposed towards this manner of dualistic thinking by Kant. Hegel's dialectics is famous for reconciling every form of dualism.

Fichte's radicalism rejects Kant's 'thing in itself.' In the work *Early philosophical Writings* edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale (1988: 68), Fichte states that a 'thing in itself' amounts to nothing if it means nothing for us. Further he says that the 'thing- in- itself' can only be a product of our own conscious thought. He, therefore, sees the Kantian 'thing in itself' to be 'another object' for us. Thus he concludes that 'everything which occurs in our mind can be completely explained and comprehended on the basis of the mind itself.' Commenting on German idealism Colin McQuillan in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* refers to Fichte as maintaining that "consciousness is a circle in which the I posits itself and determines what belongs to the 'I' and what belongs to the 'not-I'." This circularity is necessary and unavoidable, Fichte maintains, but holds philosophy is a reflective activity in which the spontaneous positing activity of the "'I' and the determinations of the 'I and not-I' are comprehended."

Schelling defends Fichte's idealism by maintaining that the 'I' should be the Principle of Philosophy; i.e., the unconditioned condition of both being and thinking. The understanding is that the 'I' precedes all thinking (I must exist in order to think). And that a thing is nothing other than the object of thought - thinking determines all being. Schelling's subsequent efforts were designed at establishing a union of being and thinking, nature and spirit. German idealism, therefore, revolves around the 'dualism-controversy' in the acquisition of knowledge. It is within this context that Hegel emerged with his unique sort of speculative reasoning and idealism. But the problem is: how to identify Hegel's unique idealism.

Hegelian Idealism

The problem of assigning Hegel with any given idealist standpoint has become a matter of philosophical debate. It sparked off a considerable amount of research with a view to seeing where to fix Hegel as an idealist worth the name. Some have tried either to identify Hegel as a Kantian idealist or as a mentalist idealist. But such claims are usually made according to Robert Stern (2008: 139), by placing Hegel's idealism against the Kantian background; the arguments are usually based on how much Hegel shared in the Kantian critique of traditional Metaphysics. He, therefore, holds that any claim that puts Hegel within the Kantian idealistic framework fails to realize how different Kant's categories of understanding are vis-à-vis Hegel's employment of concepts in his logic. (2008: 142).

The bottom line, as claimed by Robert Stern, is that, "Hegel's texts suggest he did not feel compelled by Kant's arguments to take up antirealist turn in metaphysics, and the arguments that the Kantian might give to make this seem necessary can be reasonably resisted.'' (2008: 146). In addition we have equally seen from our treatment of the German idealism that Kant's standpoint is lucidly dualistic, a position that Hegel vehemently opposed. We shall now consider a more favorable position represented again by Robert Stern where he describes Hegel's idealism as a conceptual realism. (2008: 161). This position, I think, is plausibly defensible.

What gives credence to this standpoint is the understanding of Hegel's (2013: 24) *Vorrede* to the philosophy of right where he says, *Was vernunftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernunftig* (lit. meaning 'what is rational is real, and what is real is rational'). Hegel as a conceptual realist believes that the idea is not out there as in the Kantian 'thing -in -itself' but is part and parcel of reality. Our readers could refer to our treatment of 'Idea and concept' under which the clarification of basic Hegelian concepts is done. Hegel's form of idealism is interested in discovering the rational elements of our world. This suggests that Hegel is also aware of the irrational aspects of our temporal realities. In this idealism all dualistic tendencies are reconciled. Hegel did address Kantian skeptical doubts occasioned by latter's conceptual dualistic thinking.

In the second part we shall discuss Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit, philosophy of the spirit and the species of the Hegelian spirit. First we turn to the phenomenology of the spirit.

Phenomenology of the spirit

The main focus here is to understand the spirit's overall project in Hegel's philosophy as well as its contribution to society. Literally phenomenology means the appearance of consciousness. The spirit's level is the self-conscious level. One can say it is the spirit that unifies opposites into a harmonious whole. Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit is a giant project in its own right. In recent times it has enjoyed a scholarly interest and reflection. In its variegated rich spectrum of insight and content, Hegel presents a full project of reality depicting human characteristics and historical events – as a systematic construction of grand ambition - leading even to what Hegel calls ''absolute knowledge.'' At the heart of the Phenomenology lies its interest in history and in humanity. In his online contribution on ''Appreciating Hegel,'' Siep Ludwig (2014) brings out the societal relevance of the spirit in Hegel. He depicts Hegel as a practical philosopher, who ''shows that philosophy is not limited to abstract concepts or justification of methods of science. Hegel's ''philosophical novel:'' the basic human relations of love and struggle, domination and liberation are discussed in their phenomenal ''richness'' as well as in a surprisingly but deep philosophical interpretation.'' Similarly Hegel's discussion of 'recognition' within the political community as the objectification of the spirit captures a lot of interest. In this project of recognition, Hegel tries again to protect the cohesion of the political community from possible disintegration. Thus recognition is one based on relations of reciprocal recognition of the other in respect of acting in conformity with the laws governing a given state or institution. It is within this setting that a common end or goal for the people is to be realized, protected, and where the individual is absolutely related to the other, forming a unified whole. The spirit attains its utmost appearance when it incarnates itself within the fabric of the society where all are bonded to one another under the law and in recognition of their common end realizable only within the state or institution. Within this framework is the freedom realized, not in the individual person but in the objective spirit seen as objectified in the society as a substance or person.

Hegel's was a beautiful blending of history with art, religion and politics. By situating his philosophy within the Greek tragic wars, Hegel not only shows how deficient the Greeks were in their understanding of the functioning of the society but also how the individual (conscience) can be a danger to societal harmony. For this reason Hegel presents Socrates as the most reckless individual with his ''diamon.'' The recklessness of Socrates lay in this, that

the individual transcends the ethical life of the people. Hegel also propagates the philosophy of holism in the phenomenology of the spirit. The idea behind this is that there is a basic spiritual unity between human cognition and nature, concept and reality. This point is relevant to our understanding of the spirit in Hegel's project. Siep Ludwig notes that spirit in Hegel's strange formulation is ''being with oneself in absolute otherness. He states further ''. . . that this is what freedom is about: to be able neither to lose oneself nor to dominate the other (and yet feel accepted and at home with the other person, culture or even with nature.'' The Phenomenology of spirit embodies the development of the concept of the ''history of consciousness.'' Siep Ludwig explains:

> This means that humanity is able to learn from the crises and revolutions of every epoch and society. It can conceive of new institutions, laws and virtues overcoming these crises and solve the social problems. For Hegel, this even leads to a rational social order able to solve at least the principle social problems and overcome the basic conflicts. (2014).

That Hegel's phenomenology has serious practical relevance is undeniable. Part of its relevance is that it used crises and revolutions as stepping-stones to wade into societal problems. Thus, Hegel's spirit bears a striking relationship to the world.

Hegel's philosophy of spirit

One interesting aspect of the Hegelian spirit is its dynamic character. This Robert Stern captures here and shows the spirit's involvement with the world:

> Hegel calls the spirit the subject that embodies this relation of identity-in-difference to the world, by finding itself in its other, so that while it is not cut off from the world (radical dualism), it is not indistinguishable from it either (monism): The spiritual alone is the actual; it is essence, or that which is in itself, it is that which relates itself to itself, and is determinate, it is other being and being-for-itself, and in this determinateness, or in its externality, abides within itself; in other words, it is in and for itself. (2006: 34).

The spirit's relation to the world is one of identity in difference. That is to say it does not lose its identity by reason of this identification. This is why dualism does not come into the picture of Hegel's project. It contrasts to monism, since it is not a monad of a completely different nature from what it produces. The dynamism of the spirit is what Hegel tries to demonstrate in its architectonic manifestations. Hegel establishes a crucial relation between nature and spirit. The relation is that the spirit presupposes nature. This is contained in his treatment of the subjective spirit, which falls under anthropology and psychology. As Angelica Nuzzo noted, 'to be spirit is to be a soul in a body.' (2013). Here the spirit is in communion with the rest of the body (in Gemeinschaft). The soul is conceived as embodied and as the *teleos* of the body and at the same time it is nothing without the body. The spirit in Hegel transcends the subjectivity of consciousness. But this alone has attracted the criticism of an existentialist philosopher, Kierkegaard, who says Hegel did not spare any significant space for the human subject. According to him, Hegel allowed that das Äussere, die Entäusserung, the outer, the externalization be deemed higher than *das Innere* (the inner). And this often exemplified using

a child that stands for the inner, which is determined by the man as das Äussere. (1985: 96-7). The speculative science of spirit traces the path of spirit's liberation from nature. It is for this reason that the division of the philosophy of spirit follows along Anthropology, Phenomenology and Psychology. Hegel's philosophy of spirit should be understood against his preferred method of speculation over reflection and understanding. The dialectical process of Hegel's spirit shines out clearly in no other way than in the different phases of the spirit's manifestation.

Species of the 'Hegelian spirit'

What we are going to do in this section is to look at the various phases through which the spirit manifests itself. The exposition will also capture the sense of what the spirit does as it makes this transition. This will broaden our horizon of understanding of Hegel's quest for a healthy human society whereby all are bound by a common purpose as in a harmonious whole. The Encyclopedia treats of the Philosophy of Nature and is followed by the Philosophy of Spirit (Geist). Hegel's triadic pattern when applied here results in sections devoted to the philosophies of subjective spirit, objective spirit, and absolute spirit. We shall now briefly examine each of them.

a) Subjective Spirit: The subjective spirit deals with the psychology of the individual, including all those aspects of ourselves, which are unconscious or preconscious. Hegel claims that the spirit manifests itself in the modes of anthropology, phenomenology and psychology. The anthropology treats of animal organism. The terms such as the *seele* or soul corresponds to the Greek term psyche. And we are confronted with the body mind-relation. Hegel contends that the opposition between the soul and body makes any real community impossible. It must be clearly stated that the *seele* of anthropology contrasts sharply with the subjective conception of the mind exemplified by Descartes. Aristotle conceives, for instance, the soul as the form of the body and not as a substance separate from the body; he even attributes lesser souls to animals and even to plants. Under anthropology, Hegel, according to Michael Inwood (2010: xii-xvi) describes the spirit as sentient or phenomenal consciousness alone – the feeling soul. This means that the mind of anthropology does not know how the spirit captures the relation of subject and object as "identity-in-difference". Elaborating on the distinction between psychology and anthropology, Redding Paul writes:

> What in fact distinguishes the mind of Psychology from that of Anthropology is its rational capacities, considered in terms that would now be described as normative rather than simply naturalistic, and this for Hegel clearly signals a difference in the way in which an actual psychological subject relates to his or her own body. The type of abstractive thinking found in Psychology does not, of course, as in mythical images of metempsychosis – a favorite trope of Platonists – involve the mind leaving the body. This would count for Hegel as a piece of mythical picture thinking – Vorstellung. Rather, it involves a certain capacity of the psychological subject to suspend unreflected-upon endorsement of the claims made on behalf of his or her body, for example, to subject the evidence given by the senses to rational scrutiny. (2015).

To be able to go beyond individuality, a transition from psychology to objective spirit is a desideratum.

b) Objective Spirit: The objective spirit deals with the social and public life of the people, mirroring the people's customs, laws and institutions. The spirit manifests itself as the object of the people's cult. Redding Paul is again on the distinctive character of objective spirit:

> . . . the philosophy of objective spirit concerns those patterns of social interaction and cultural institutions within which spirit is objectified in patterns of human life we have seen at work in Phenomenology of Spirit . . . Thus, even a contractual exchange (the minimal social interaction for contract theorists) is not to be thought simply as an occurrence consequent upon the existence of two beings with natural wants and some natural calculative rationality, as in Hobbes, say; rather, the system of interaction within which individual exchanges take place (the economy) will be treated holistically as a culturally-shaped form of social life within which the actual wants of individuals as well as their reasoning powers are given determinate forms. Hegel is well aware of the distinctive modernity of this form of social-life. (2015).

In his *The Historical Dictionary of Hegelian Philosophy*, J. W. Burbige (2001: 114-5) has said at which point the subjective spirit transits to objective spirit. Says he, 'It happens especially when people will, or act; which means they translate their subjective world into an objective realm by overreaching and appropriating things around them. The result of which is the organization and strengthening of their institutional structures (*legal formulations and norms)* – through contracts and moral commitments, and which range from the intimacy of the family to international and world history. It is the philosophy of objective spirit that informs Hegel's discussion of natural law and political science.'

c) Absolute Spirit

It should be assumed that the absolute spirit is the transition both of the subjective and objective spirit to the absolute spirit. But this may be difficult to say concerning Hegel. The manifestation of the Spirit (Absolute) that is implicit in nature attains its full realization in the absolute spirit. The absolute spirit reflects the three levels of consciousness in their architectonic gradations, namely art, religion and philosophy. Hegel's conviction is that the 'true' cannot be found either in art or religion but in philosophy. The reason is not farfetched; while art follows the way of intuition (Anschauug), religion is more of mere representation (Vorstellung) and emotion-laden. Thus H. F. Fulda (2003: 242-255) holds that the preponderance of philosophy lies in the employment of the faculty of thought to bear on a universal object of thought. This shows that a philosopher can truly think and the object of his thought considered universal.

A clarification of the difference between objective spirit and absolute spirit is here called forth. Hegel treats of art, religion and philosophy in the introduction in terms of the absolute spirit in the Encyclopedia. Again, he identifies in his discussion on world history with the objective

spirit. The question now is, does it mean that any discussion of world history is outside the realm of the absolute spirit? However, J. MarCarney obviates this difficulty thus:

> It should be remarked, however, that to have recourse to the absolute spirit is by no means to leave the historical behind. This is most obviously shown by the fact that early in the introduction Hegel recognizes the legitimacy of histories of art, religion as providing a 'transition to philosophical world history' . . . Nor is he content with giving them his blessing as theoretically viable undertakings. His courses of lectures on aesthetics and philosophy of religion provide, among other things, outline surveys of just such histories. Where the history of philosophy is concerned, Hegel's achievement is of a quite different order. He is himself one of the greatest practitioners of the subject, the first major thinker to take it with utmost seriousness an integrally bound up with the practice of philosophy. (2000: 63).

Hegel as we know is a holistic thinker. In the first manifestation of the spirit's consciousness is the unity of the subject and object. Further consciousness establishes that this 'Geist' is, 'this absolute ethical substance which in perfect freedom and independence of its opposites – namely different independently existing self-consciousness – is the unity of such opposites: the I that is We and the We that is I.' (Holfmeister, 142-3). The spirit in Hegel is a unifying one. Evidently Hegel witnessed a world turning upside down in the events of Napoleon revolution. He experienced the same happening among philosophers and intellectuals as they engaged in conceptual conflict. Hegel's response is one of reconciliation, unification and freedom.

Conclusion

The *Geist*/*Spirit* remains the fulcrum of Hegelian philosophy. Hegel's emphasis on the Geist is designed to abrogate the chasm separating individuality and universality, finitude and infinitude through self-consciousness. In Hegel's system, the individual is distinct from the world and yet retains his subjectivity in it. This is the meaning of his philosophical position: 'identity in-difference.' But this is not easy to grasp. Many are the commentators who say no to the contemporary relevance of Hegelian concepts. While commenting on the Hegelian spirit or self-consciousness, R. D. Winfield (1987: 21-22) identifies it with the modern inter-subjectivity. He argues that inter-subjectivity is an epistemological foundation on which subjectivity is founded. He opines that the justification of inter-subjectivity as an epistemological model structure cannot draw its inspiration from Hegel's phenomenology of spirit, but that Hegel's intention is to show that all such attempts are doomed to failure. 'Hegel's Phenomenology, according to Wood, if it must be considered to be alive, must be divorced completely from the Encyclopedia. A. W. Wood (1990: 1-6) concedes that Hegel deduces being from essence, the world from thought; and that his dialectical method runs contrary to the principles of non-contradiction.'' According to R. Stern (2006: 24), Hegel's phenomenology of which the Philosophy of the spirit is a part must wrestle with both motivational and pedagogic problems. 'The motivational problem lay in this, to encourage ordinary consciousness to undertake the arduous intellectual enquiry of having to do away with its familiar assumptions, the foundations on which it rests secure so to speak. The

pedagogic problem will have the task of ensuring that the apparently obvious distinctions of understanding are not to be taken for granted by ordinary consciousness.'

Hegel demonstrated clearly his dissatisfaction with the philosophies that he inherited – even though he used them as a stepping-stone in a revolutionary way. This is evident in the concepts he employed to market his idealism. The Hegelian spirit (absolute) remains problematic. Hegel was influenced by many a philosopher. The concept *Streb*en (desire) employed by Fichte means that human beings are forced out of themselves and then onto the world. Hegel takes over this concept and applies it to self-consciousness to mean that the unity of subject and object is not an actuality, but an expression of desire in general. And T. Rockmore (1997: 59ff) understands this to mean that 'self-consciousness' is confronted with two types of object: the external thing it desires to know and itself. And that the movement of self-consciousness reaches its satisfaction when it overcomes the difference between what is and what it desires in the unity of subject and object. Hegel's conception of world history through the spirit's movement that begins with the subjective spirit through the objective spirit to the absolute spirit is equally enigmatic. Hegel's clearest position is that the highest manifestation of the spirit is in the community. This means that the spiritual (substance) is now identified with the subject, in which case the human being has become the center of all; since through it the spirit understands and identifies itself as the community. The Hegelian spirit is a unifier. Hegel evidently witnessed a world turning upside down in the events of Napoleon's revolution. He saw the same turbulence in the intellectual sphere among philosophers and intellectuals alike. Thus Hegel's concept of the spirit is synonymous with reconciliation, unity and freedom. The Hegelian spirit, if properly understood, would achieve some common ends of cementing the human family in the light of the Trinitarian God of Christians.

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