

## Week 12—Handout

**Absolute Knowing**

[798] **the Notion [Begriff], has become the element of existence, or has become the form of objectivity for consciousness.**

[799] **The content is...**the very **movement** just spoken of; for **the content is Spirit that traverses its own self** and does so *for itself* as Spirit by the fact that it has the 'shape' of the Notion in its objectivity.

[802] For *experience* is just this, that the **content—which is Spirit—is in itself substance**, and therefore an *object of consciousness*. But this substance which is Spirit is the **process** in which Spirit becomes what it is in itself; and it is only as this process of reflecting itself into itself that it is in itself truly Spirit. It is in itself the **movement** which is cognition—the **transforming of that in-itself into that which is for itself**, of **Substance into Subject, of the object of consciousness into an object of self-consciousness**, i.e. into an object that is just as much superseded, or into **the Notion**.

[804] Spirit, however, has shown itself to us to be neither merely the *withdrawal* of self-consciousness into its pure inwardness, nor the mere *submergence* of self-consciousness into substance...but Spirit is this **movement** of the Self which empties itself of itself and sinks itself into its substance, and also, as Subject, has gone out of that substance into itself, **making the substance into an object and a content at the same time as it cancels this difference between objectivity and content.**

[804] The 'I' [does not have] to cling to itself in the form of self-consciousness as **against the form of substantiality and objectivity**, as if it were afraid of the externalization of itself: **the power of Spirit lies rather in remaining the selfsame Spirit in its externalization** and, as that which is both in itself and for itself, in making its being-for-self no less merely a moment than its in-itself.

[805] In this knowing, then, Spirit has concluded the movement in which it has shaped itself, in so far as this shaping was burdened with **the difference of consciousness** [i.e. of the latter from its object], a difference now overcome. The **content**, in accordance with the **freedom** of its being, **is the self-alienating Self**, or the immediate unity of self-knowledge. **The pure movement of this alienation, considered in connection with the content, constitutes the necessity of the content. The distinct content, as determinate, is in relation, is not 'in itself'; it is its own restless process of superseding itself, or negativity; therefore, negativity or diversity, like free being, is also the Self; and in this self-like form in which existence is immediately thought, the content is the Notion.**

[805] **the form of the Notion...unites the objective form of Truth and of the knowing Self in an immediate unity. ...[T]he pure Notion and its onward movement, depends solely on its pure determinateness.**

[807] Yet this externalization is still incomplete; it expresses the connection of its self-certainty with the object which, just because it is thus connected, has not yet won its complete freedom. The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit: **to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself.** This **sacrifice** is the externalization in which **Spirit displays the process of its becoming**

**Spirit in the form of free contingent happening**, intuiting its pure Self as Time outside of it, and equally its Being as Space. This last becoming of Spirit, Nature, is its living immediate Becoming; **Nature, the externalized Spirit**, is in its existence nothing but this eternal externalization of its continuing existence and **the movement which reinstates the Subject**.

[808] **History, is a conscious, self-mediating process—Spirit emptied out into Time. its fulfilment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection.**

*the new existence, a new world and a new shape of Spirit...*

**[R]ecollection, the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of the substance.**

**The goal, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits** as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. **Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History**; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the **Science** of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, **comprehended History**, form alike the inwardizing and the Calvary of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone.

## **Preface**

**...everything turns on grasping and expressing the True not only as Substance, but equally as Subject. At the same time it is to be observed that substantiality embraces the universal, or the immediacy of knowledge itself, as well as that which is being or immediacy for knowledge.** [17] [BB: Cf. [18], [25], [32], [37], [39], [54], and [65].]

Further, **the living Substance is being which is in truth Subject**, or what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the **movement** of positing itself, or is **the mediation of its self-othering** with itself. **This Substance is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity**, and is for this very reason **the bifurcation of the simple**; it is the doubling which sets up opposition

Only **this self-restoring sameness**, or this **reflection in otherness within itself**—not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such—is the True. **It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.** [18]

**The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development...**

**For mediation is nothing beyond self-moving selfsameness, or is reflection into self, the moment of the 'I' which is for itself pure negativity or, when reduced to its pure abstraction, simple becoming. The 'I', or becoming in general, this mediation, on account of its simple nature, is just immediacy in the process of becoming, and is the immediate itself.** [21]

Already something thought, the **content** is the property of **substance**; existence [Dasein] has no more to be changed into the form of what is in-itself and implicit [Ansichseins], but **only the implicit**—no longer merely something primitive, nor lying hidden

**within existence, but already present as a recollection—into the form of what is explicit, of what is objective to self** [Fursichseins]. [29]

But the Life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. **It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.**

It is this power, not as something positive...On the contrary, **Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it.** This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it [the negative] into being. This power is identical with what we earlier called **the Subject, which by giving determinateness an existence in its own element supersedes abstract immediacy**, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is **authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose mediation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself.** [32]

**Determinate thoughts have the 'I', the power of the negative, or pure actuality, for the substance and element of their existence**, whereas sensuous determinations have only powerless, abstract immediacy, or being as such. Thoughts become fluid when pure thinking, this inner *immediacy*, recognizes itself as a moment...**by giving up** not only the fixity of the pure concrete, which the 'I' itself is, in contrast with differentiated content, but also **the fixity of the differentiated moments which, posited in the element of pure thinking, share the unconditioned nature of the 'I'.** **Through this movement the pure thoughts become *Notions***, and are only now what they are in truth, self-movements, circles, spiritual essences, which is what their **substance** is. [33]

**...experience is the name we give to just this movement**, in which the immediate, the unexperienced, i.e. the abstract, whether it be of sensuous [but still unsensed] being, or only thought of as simple, becomes alienated from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in its actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also. [36]

The disparity which exists in consciousness between the 'I' and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the *negative* in general.

**...Now although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the 'I' and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject.**

**Being is then absolutely mediated; it is a substantial content which is just as immediately the property of the 'I', it is self-like or the Notion.**

With this the Phenomenology of Spirit is concluded. [37]

To know something falsely means that there is a disparity between knowledge and its Substance. But **this very disparity is the process of distinguishing in general, which is an essential moment [in knowing]. Out of this distinguishing...comes their identity, and this resultant identity is the truth...Disparity, rather, as the negative, the self, is itself still directly present in the True as such.** [39]

This truth therefore includes the negative also, what would be called the false, if it could be regarded as something from which one might abstract. **The evanescent itself must, on the contrary, be regarded as essential, not as something fixed, cut off from the True...**

**Appearance is the arising and passing away that does not itself arise and pass away, but is in itself, and constitutes actuality and the movement of the life of truth.**

**The True is thus a vast Bacchanalian revel, with not a one sober; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose.** Judged in the court of this movement, the single shapes of Spirit do not persist **any more than determinate thoughts do**, but they are as much positive and necessary moments, as they are negative and evanescent.

**In the whole of the movement, seen as a state of repose, what distinguishes itself therein, and gives itself particular existence, is preserved as something that *recollects* itself**, whose existence is self-knowledge, and whose self-knowledge is just as immediately existence. [47]

Science dare only organize itself by the life of the Notion itself. The **determinateness**, which is taken from the schema and externally attached to an existent thing, **is**, in Science, **the self-moving soul of the realized content**. The **movement** of a being that **immediately** is, consists partly in **becoming** an **other** than itself, and thus becoming its own immanent **content**; partly in **taking back into itself this unfolding** [of its **content**] or this existence of it, i.e. in making *itself* into a moment, and **simplifying** itself into something **determinate**. In the former movement, **negativity** is the **differentiating** and positing of *existence*; in this **return** into self, it is the becoming of the **determinate simplicity**.

It is in this way that the **content** shows that its **determinateness** is not received from something else, nor externally attached to it, but that it determines itself, and ranges itself as a moment having its own place in the whole. [53]

**The determinateness seems at first to be due entirely to the fact that it is related to an other, and its movement seems imposed on it by an alien power; but having its otherness within itself, and being self-moving, is just what is involved in the simplicity of thinking itself; for this simple thinking is the self-moving and self-differentiating thought.** It is its own inwardness, it is the pure Notion. Thus common thought [Verständigkeit] too is a becoming, and, as this becoming, it is *reasonableness* [Vernünftigkeit]. [55]

...in speculative [begreifenden] thinking, as we have already shown, **the negative belongs to the content itself**, and is the *positive*, both as the *immanent* **movement** and determination of the **content**, and as the whole of this **process**.

Looked at as a result, **what emerges from this process is the determinate negative** which is consequently a positive content as well. [59]

Speculative [begreifendes] thinking behaves in a different way. Since **the Notion is the object's own self, which presents itself as the coming-to-be of the object**, it is not a passive Subject inertly supporting the Accidents; it is, on the contrary, **the self-moving Notion which takes its determinations back into itself**. In this movement the passive Subject itself perishes; **it enters into the differences and the content, and constitutes the determinateness, i.e. the differentiated content and its movement, instead of remaining inertly over against it**. The solid ground which argumentation has in the passive Subject is therefore shaken, and **only this movement itself becomes the object**. [60]