

Laval théologique et philosophique



Parallel Structures in Hegel's *Phänomenologie* and *Enzyklopädie*

Robert Grant McRae

Volume 38, numéro 3, 1982

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/705947ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/705947ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculté de philosophie, Université Laval

ISSN

0023-9054 (imprimé)

1703-8804 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Grant McRae, R. (1982). Parallel Structures in Hegel's *Phänomenologie* and *Enzyklopädie*. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 38(3), 245–251.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/705947ar>

PARALLEL STRUCTURES IN HEGEL'S *PHÄNOMENOLOGIE* AND *ENZYKLOPÄDIE*

Robert Grant McRAE

THERE is reason to believe that Hegel would consider our concern with presentation a form of contemporary "misology", — the retreat of thought from the substantial contradictions of its own making to a mere interest in the vagaries of the immediate. But this concern, endemic to much current philosophic thought, represents a mediation of the present with the past in a truly speculative sense, for it is with the self-consciousness of the current standpoint that antecedent configurations progressively reveal their absolute depth. Let it be added that the necessities of presentation are particularly integral to the realization of Hegelian science, and it is our position that the link between absolute knowing and the system proper cannot be understood aside from the *act* of presentation itself.

Presentation has this significance because it is both an externalization by a universal self *and* a recollection of absolute content, thereby closing off the self-alienation of the absolute as spirit in time. Indeed, the tension between absolute substance and its self-knowing that is indicative of this alienation, remains a part of speculative presentation itself, making presentation a peculiarly spiritual phenomenon. Naturally we hope that some of these suggestions will cease to have their assertive quality and become self-evident in the analysis to follow.

Generally speaking, according to Hegel, the absolute is already close to us through its self-presentation under three aspects. Absolute substance has been externalized in its fortuitous happening as real history, coming on the scene through the onesided determination of a "regional" natural consciousness. Once this externalization of the substance in history is complete, there arises the possibility and the need to present the *entirety* of this content according to its concept, but first as this content appears for natural consciousness. This second presentation enables natural consciousness to understand the absolute determination of its universal self, and ends with the instigation to present that determination as it exists in-and-for-itself.¹

1. Heidegger concludes that we can know the absolute at all only because the absolute "lets itself" be presented. "In keeping with its absoluteness, the Absolute is with us of its own accord. In its will to be with us, the Absolute is being present. In itself, thus bringing itself forward, the Absolute is for itself.

Although the absolute content of each presentation remains essentially the same, this content appears under different aspects according to the fullness of its self-conscious appropriation. This differentiation has two immediate consequences: the second and third presentations merely "look back" on the original appearance of the absolute in history; and more precisely, these two presentations (i.e., the *Phänomenologie* and the system) fully present an identical content, but from different standpoints. Through speculative science, the absolute idea is present at hand and absolutely present as presentation, — the in-and-for-itself self-knowing essential structure of the actual.

Consequently our analysis of speculative science must go beyond textual exegesis to an understanding of Hegel's justification of the 'word' as the true element in which the absolute is present to us and to itself. This involves the concomitant delineation of the manner in which the labour of presentation supersedes the existence of the *particular* individual as speculative scientist, to become a presentation of a *universal* self for contemporary natural consciousness. As long as this consciousness is characterized by its intuitive time-viewing, the presentation of the absolute as text raises the question of the relation between its timeless actuality and spirit in its temporal mode.²

The beginning of speculative science, then, is that thinking which witnesses and merges with the will of the absolute to be present to itself. This beginning is « the free act of thinking which places itself at the standpoint where it is for-itself, and where it generates its object and presents it to itself. »³ However the full self-presentation of the absolute in the form of speculative philosophy is both the result of scientific witness and its immediate presupposition, a presupposition which determines presentation as the specifically philosophic comprehension of the non-philosophic life of the absolute content in history. This means that we must examine the extent to which a strictly philosophic presentation can offer itself as an exoteric truth to an initially non-philosophic natural consciousness.

That speculative science is intended as an exoteric knowledge for contemporary natural consciousness is evident from its differentiation into its appearing for natural consciousness and its actuality in-and-for-itself. In speaking of the path of phenomenal knowing as an introduction or a first part of speculative science we are simply designating the chronological succession of texts as they arrive on the scene for consciousness: looked at from the absolute standpoint, the *Phänomenologie* is an appearance of the entire content of the system. The transition from the one to the other is guaranteed less through the necessity of their succession "for" consciousness than through their original identity in the act of presenting a common absolute content. In other words, the transition is guaranteed through the differentiation of

For the sake of the will of the *parousia* alone, the presentation of knowledge as a phenomenon is necessary." *Hegel's Concept of Experience*, ed. J. Gray, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1970. p. 48.

2. These are issues not foreign to biblical exegesis, and as we shall see, the relation of belief by a knowing subject to a text presented "for" it poses similar problems.

3. *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)*, ed., F. Nicolai and O. Pöggeler, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1969, Ein. #17, p. 50.

the mode of presentation, a differentiation ultimately determined by the exigencies of the absolute idea itself.

It is because of the systematic structure that lies "beneath" the exoteric path of phenomenal knowing, and hence is only yet an appearing, that this path has its salutary role as a ladder to the scientific standpoint. In the Introduction to the *Phänomenologie* Hegel states that, "The experience of itself which consciousness goes through can, in accordance with its concept, comprehend nothing less than the entire system of consciousness, or the entire realm of the truth of spirit. For this reason, the moments of this truth are presented in their own proper determinateness, viz. as being not abstract moments, but as they are for consciousness, or as consciousness itself stands forth in its relation to them."⁴ The presentation of phenomenal knowing is a "whole" in itself because it comprehends the full range of the determinations of the concept as they first appear in consciousness, but the mode of appearance itself is related to the question of presentation.

The works posterior to the *Phänomenologie* regard the latter as an appearing of speculative science and as the appearing of speculative science's absolute content. In the *Wiss. der Logik* Hegel says that "the concept of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* is nothing other than the deduction of it", and again that "pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness."⁵ However, in spite of these statements as to the necessary presupposition of the *Phänomenologie*, the closed circle of the system itself seems to rule out an introduction to speculative science which is also somehow a part of that system. The only solution to this dilemma is the conception of the *Phänomenologie* as an appearing of science, — an appearing which leaves the dialectical integrity of the system intact while at the same time presenting its truth *for* consciousness.

In addition to this "necessary" first appearance of speculative science for consciousness as described in the *Logik*, we find in the *Enzyklopädie* the suggestion that the determinations of the system, too, have their presentation first as they exist for consciousness in the *Phänomenologie*. Hegel says, "In my *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, which on that account was at its publication described as the first part of the system of science, the course taken was to begin with the first, simplest appearance (*Erscheinung*) of spirit, with *immediate consciousness*, and to sketch the dialectic of this consciousness developing toward the stand-point of philosophical science, the necessity of this latter being shown through the process." This appearing science, like the system itself, looks back on the fortuitous manifestation of the absolute in history and re-presents that content according to its concept.

Again we must emphasize that the difference between the two is that the *Phänomenologie* presents the determinations of the system as they first appear to

4. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed., J. Hoffmeister, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1952, Ein., p. 74. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans., A.V. Miller, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, (56). The page numbers of the English translations will be placed in parentheses following the German citation.

5. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. I, ed., G. Lasson, Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1932, p. 30. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans., A.V. Miller, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1969, (49).

natural consciousness. Hegel continues: "The development of the *shapes*, the specific object of philosophical science, thus is just as much a part of what at first only appears in the limited form of the development of consciousness; this development must, so to speak, go on behind the back of this consciousness, in so far as its content is retained as the *in-itself* of consciousness."⁶ This absolute content, and its development in shapes, only becomes explicitly for-itself in the self-conscious presentation of the system, where consciousness understands that content as its own.

Well, what evidence is there to suggest that the main determinations of the system appear first along the path of phenomenal knowing prior to their recollection in absolute knowing? The section of the *Enzyklopädie* devoted to phenomenology offers some interesting indications in this regard, particularly paragraph #437.⁷ Hegel says, "Reason as the *Idea* (#213) appears here in the determination of the opposition between the concept and reality in general, of which it is the unity, and has here the more precise form of the for-itself existing concept, of consciousness and the concept over against external objects present at hand."⁸ The significance of this remark is that Hegel seems to identify the conclusion of the *Logik* with its concrete determination in consciousness as "Reason", and the *Zusatz* attached to this paragraph merely confirms this impression.⁹

In the *Phänomenologie* this formal unity of concept and objectivity in reason then goes on to realize itself in the observation of nature and as spirit until it achieves in absolute knowing the philosophic comprehension of the totality of its determinations through looking back on its content, — a realization that follows the broad outlines of the system itself. This equally implies that the configurations prior to that of reason, i.e., those that make up consciousness and self-consciousness in the *Phänomenologie*, roughly correspond to the moments of objective logic and subjective logic in the system. The extensive chapter on reason itself presents "for" consciousness the observation of nature and of subjective spirit (the logical and psychological laws, physiognomy and phrenology).¹⁰

But it is essential to keep in mind that the determinations of the logic, the philosophy of nature, and the philosophy of spirit are presented as they first appear

6. *Enz.* Vorbegriff. #25 R., p. 59.

7. The following interpretation seeks to reconcile O. Pöggeler's argument in "Qu'est-ce que la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit?" *Archives de Philosophie*, avril-juin 1966, p. 226 f., that the *Phän.* is an appearing of the system and W. Marx's argument in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. P. Heath, Harper & Roy, N.Y., 1975, p. 87, that it is an appearing of the absolute, through an understanding of the relation between absolute knowing and presentation.

8. *Enz.* #437 R., p. 354. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans., W. Wallace, *Zusätze* trans. by A.V. Miller, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, (177).

9. *Enz.* #437 *Zusatz.* (177). "What we have called in the previous paragraph universal self-consciousness, that is in its truth the concept of Reason, the concept as it exists not merely as the logical Idea, but as the Idea has developed into self-consciousness. For, as we know from logic, the Idea consists in the unity of subjectivity or the concept, and objectivity."

10. For a sketch of the correspondance of sections see the Appendix to this article. In his reference to this Appendix, P.-J. Labarrière rightly points out that a more detailed parallel would be impossible due to the different *modes* of presentation. Cf. *Introduction à une lecture de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, Aubier-Montaigne, Paris, 1979, p. 282 f.

from the standpoint of natural consciousness, and thus contain much inferential, historical material. For example the science of subjective spirit appears first to the understanding under the crude aspect of phrenology, because true science is possible only once this consciousness has traversed all the configurations in their immediate appearing and recollected them at the level of absolute knowing. Similarly, the moments of the logic are not presented in the *Phänomenologie* as they exist in-and-for-themselves, but as they initially are manifest in the configurations of consciousness.

The corollary of this suggestion that the broad determinations of the system first appear as the path of phenomenal knowing presented for natural consciousness is that the *Phänomenologie* constitutes a thematic whole. In other words, the theories which assert that the *Phänomenologie* "should" have terminated after the chapter on Reason,¹¹ as does the phenomenology in the system, cannot account for the necessity that the *Phänomenologie* must repeat all the determinations of the system if it is equally to "look back" on the totality of those determinations as they first appear in history. And if the "ideal" determinations of consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason did not make up a part of subjective spirit in its timeless actuality, then the system would be unable to supersede either the standpoint of the *Phänomenologie* or that natural consciousness.

The necessity that the *entire* system appear as phenomenal knowing, thereby giving that knowing a systematic unity, derives largely from the exigencies of the speculative presentation of the absolute idea.¹² The absolute is already present at hand for contemporary natural consciousness of its own volition, so that it is for speculative science to simply witness this presence "when at the close it lays hold of its own concept, i.e., only *looks back* on its knowledge."¹³ Thus philosophic presentation itself demands that the path of phenomenal knowing merely look back on the whole, without truncating that path in order to provide a partial and consequently external "introduction" to speculative science. The *Phänomenologie* is justly more than such an introduction because it is an appearance of the system of

11. Notably the theory of Th. Hearing and his "disciples" Hoffmeister and Hyppolite. However Hyppolite admits that, "C'est comme une exigence interne qui pousse la raison individuelle à devenir un monde pour soi-même comme esprit, et l'esprit à se découvrir comme esprit pour soi dans la religion. La méthode de la *prise de conscience* qui a dominé tout le développement de la conscience s'étend à tous les phénomènes de l'esprit, et la *Phénoménologie de la conscience individuelle* devient nécessairement la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit en général*." *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*, Aubier, éd. Montaigne, Paris, 1946, p. 58.

12. Because Hyppolite does not understand the importance of the initial presentation of the absolute content "for" consciousness, he claims, "Que Hegel ait pu présenter tout son système sous la forme d'une *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* — traitant aussi bien du développement de la conscience individuelle, que du savoir de la nature, du développement de l'esprit objectif aussi bien que de la religion — avant d'atteindre le savoir absolu, cela paraît bien indiquer qu'il y a une certaine ambiguïté dans l'interprétation de l'hégélianisme." *Ibid.*, p. 59. Labarrière, on the other hand, correctly points out that, "Il ne faudra pas oublier cette signification essentielle du terme de 'Système' ou de 'Science', qui s'applique déjà au mouvement de la *Phénoménologie* comme telle, en essayant d'éclairer les relations qu'elle entretient avec les œuvres postérieures: il n'y a en vérité qu'un seul déploiement de l'Esprit, même s'il se donne à connaître, ici et là, sous les modalités différentes." *Structures et Mouvement Dialectique dans la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*, Aubier, éd. Montaigne, Paris, 1968, p. 248.

13. *Enz.* #573, p. 451 (302).

absolute determinations: the absolute is close to us only through its self-presentation, and not through any arbitrary propaedeutic.¹⁴

The absolute appears in the *Phänomenologie* not merely as presentation but as a specifically philosophic presentation. The efficacious effect of philosophic presentation as the pure element of absolute presence in which that presence achieves perfect self-certainty is the result — and most importantly — the presupposition of the system of science. This raises the question as to whether philosophic recollection and presentation can sympathetically look back on non-philosophic life and repeat that life according to the concept without inadvertently altering its particular essence. And if the answer is no, then we must wonder whether the path of phenomenal knowing can truly act as a ladder from non-philosophic natural consciousness to the standpoint of philosophic science, or whether that path is not simply the philosophic comprehension of non-philosophic life, — and thus the esoteric possession of a few individuals.

These questions turn on the ability of Hegel to demonstrate that the truth of philosophic presentation is somehow already implicit in the determinations of spiritual life. And if this demonstration is to be convincing “for us”, then it must be clearly evident that contemporary non-philosophic life *needs* this presentation at the present moment if it is to supersede the spiritual divisions of its own making. In summary, an investigation into the mode of presentation as the “final” moment of spirit’s self-externalization takes us into the heart of the problems that plague natural consciousness at this stage of its educational history.

14. O. Pöggeler lays to rest once and for all the theories of Haering in his “Qu’est-ce que...” *op. cit.*, p. 206 ff., but introduces a new theory which emphasizes a shift in focus and plan (from that of a science of experience to a phenomenology of spirit) while Hegel was writing. Pöggeler centres on the chapter on Reason as the turning point in this shift: “Dans la science de l’expérience, un chapitre sur la réalisation de la raison a-t-il été prévu dès le début, cela demeure douteux. Cependant ce chapitre est au fond exigé par ce plan tel que Hegel l’expose dans l’Introduction.” *Op. cit.*, p. 226. However W. Marx’ remarkable “immanent analysis” of the Introduction and the Preface in his *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, *op. cit.*, has recently provided the most convincing account of the thematic unity of the *Phänomenologie*.

APPENDIX

<i>appearing science</i>	<i>system</i>
I-III. consciousness	objective logic
IV. self-consciousness	subjective logic
V. reason	
— the certainty and truth of reason	the idea
— observation of nature	philosophy of nature
— observation of self-consciousness	subjective spirit
VI. spirit	objective spirit
VII. religion	} absolute spirit
VIII. absolute knowing	