

My book, *The Critique Of Pure Modernity*, aims to show the inadequacy of "modern" individual and social self-conceptions. Both Hegel and Heidegger attempt to weaken the form/content distinction at the heart of modernity by locating it within a larger context that cannot be described in standard modern terms. They do this in opposed ways. In this excerpt I make each of them to speak to the other, and use their dialogue to clear a space for our thinking.

## **Chapter 10. Hegel Versus Heidegger**

We have been exploring approaches to modernity that go beyond the standard ways for describing our situation. Although we have been looking at Hegel and Heidegger separately, we have already made some comparisons. It is time to bring them into explicit confrontation so that we can learn from their differences. I will first outline general parallels and differences between the two thinkers, and then focus on the most important issues. Next I will try to let the two thinkers speak about each other, and I will explore the reasons why each would find the other inadequate. After that it should be apparent which questions need our own further thought.

### Similarities and Differences

Both our thinkers resist being treated by the usual method of collecting points of similarity and difference. They do not share the standard conception of philosophy as a collection of theses supported by arguments, with face-to-face confrontations and metaphors of combat. Both of them view philosophy in a more encompassing manner, and both try to get behind possible critics rather than confronting them thesis to thesis. They attempt to arrange discussion so that the critics are forestalled before they speak, because they will speak from within a mode of thought that the comprehensive thinker has already considered, located, and found wanting.

But it is just these inclusive moves, Hegel's dialectic and Heidegger's step back, that must be brought into explicit consideration if we are to come to some resolution about the way the two Germans try to get behind standard descriptions of modernity. So far I have stressed how they

try to get behind and beyond the basic modern position typified by Weber. Now we will see how Hegel and Heidegger try to outflank each other. The results should nourish our own thinking.

We have already seen that even though Hegel and Heidegger are separated by a century of wrenching changes, the first descriptions they give of the modern age are similar enough to warrant comparison. For both thinkers "modernity" names the time since the Reformation, an age that reaches a culmination in their own days. The nature of that culmination is envisaged differently. Hegel's picture of modernity is probably closer to what the average person today thinks of as typically modern: increasing rationality in life, the individual freedoms of bourgeois liberalism, new economic systems, progress toward a government that is in principle rational, new developments in science and better standards of living. Heidegger's bleaker picture also includes these features, but he interprets them in terms of universal imposition ["universal imposition" is my translation of Heidegger's *Gestell*] and the technological mode of living in a way than would be unfamiliar to the ordinary person. It is true, however, that some aspects of Hegel's description of modernity are also outside the common person's idea of our age, such as the "end" of art, the inevitability of war, and the important role assigned to philosophy.

Both Germans agree that the modern age is a unified occurrence, not just a collection of diverse trends in economics, politics, art, and other areas. There is a similarity of tone and structure that allows us to call many different developments modern and mean more than that they are happening together. Hegel speaks of the unified shape of spirit, Heidegger of the one understanding of the being of man and things that makes possible the different aspects of modernity.

The two thinkers also agree that in the modern age we live in a way that fulfills many hopes expressed in the Western tradition. But even in this fulfillment we are not yet living as close as we can to the most fundamental conditions of our existence. For Hegel this was true of the one-sided penultimate form of modernity, much of which endured around him as he wrote, but it would be overcome in the final stage, which in principle had already been accomplished. That final stage would keep the achievements of modern freedom while incorporating some aspects of traditional society that the typically modern consciousness still believed it had left behind. For Heidegger modernity in all its stages continues the Western forgetfulness of man's fundamental involvement with the propriative event ["propriative event" is my translation of Heidegger's

*Ereignis*.] It is true that the last stage of modernity, universal imposition, even as it seems to extend indefinitely, can open a way to the propriative event, but this neither provides a completion of modernity, brings back what modernity has undermined, nor inaugurates a new world.

Hegel and Heidegger would agree that the most obvious phenomenon distinguishing modernity is empty subjectivity. The self affirms itself over against the content of its life, confirming its freedom by transcending any given objects or ways of life. Content is fixed, represented, manipulated, and dominated for whatever goals the subject has chosen. Both thinkers would agree that this search for self-certitude through distance and manipulation ignores the basic conditions that make modern subjectivity possible at all.

Hegel and Heidegger disagree on the extent to which individualism is essential to modern subjectivity. For Hegel history has been moving toward individual freedom. Individualism is essential to modernity, and although it will be tempered in the rational state, it will not be denied, since it is a necessary moment in the mediation of universal, particular, and individual within the motion of spirit. Heidegger, on the other hand, sees bourgeois individualism as only one of the possibilities opened up by the essence of the modern age.

Heidegger would also emphasize more than Hegel the domineering aspects of modernity, the will to power and the leveling of all modes of being to the one realm of presentable objects and standing reserve. There are somewhat similar descriptions in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but when he spoke of the attitudes of modern individuals, Hegel either talked about modern citizenship and freedom or about the inward-turning aspects of modern consciousness such as irony and narcissism. He spoke less about technology and the will to power. Heidegger would say that Hegel fails to understand the importance of will in the modern age because Hegel's own solution for the problems of modernity itself is a hidden form of subjectivity as will.

Nonetheless, it is true that for both thinkers one sign of modern subjectivity is the appetite for *always more*. In opposition to this both Hegel and Heidegger emphasize that man must give up the dream of endless linear progress and enter a circle. He must recognize the circle within which he already exists, a circle that is qualitatively limited in its possibilities. The two thinkers diverge sharply over the nature of that circle, but they stand together in condemning the

conception of the self as existing in a space that is an open neutral background of indefinite possibility.

Neither Heidegger nor Hegel would say that modern subjectivity with its achievements and its agonies is our own accomplishment, or our own fault. It is made possible by something not itself subjective: the development and mediations within spirit, or the propiative event that brings man and things together in a particular way. Heidegger would object that the parallel between a Hegelian shape of spirit and an epoch in his own history of being is only superficial.

Hegel and Heidegger both believe that the modern age fulfills something that started with the Greeks, dividing Greek history in two. For Hegel what started was the movement from substantial community toward the full mediation of all social content through the individual. He sees in the Greek tragedians and in the Sophists the signs of this movement from the substantial life of the Homeric age to the troubled time of Socrates and Plato. This begins a new mediation that has its fulfillment in modern times.

Heidegger would claim that what he has seen happening with the Greeks is deeper than what Hegel has seen. The understanding of being in terms of presence and the consequent search for grounds and foundations begins in Greece. This accounts for the changes in individuality that Hegel investigates. For Heidegger, Hegel's description of Greek life characteristically avoids looking at the deepest changes in the way beings stand revealed.

According to Heidegger's essay "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," there was a change from truth as revelation or unconcealment to truth as correctness or correspondence. This is a change in the understanding of what it means for something to be. Thinking and reality are both encountered as entities whose mode of being is constant presence, and truth is their correspondence. What is lost is the awareness of the movement from the dark and the shadow, the process of unconcealment as a finite mortal opening. The pre-Socratic thinkers had named this process in the word *aletheia*. In Greek this word can be taken apart to mean "non-concealment," or the coming forth from concealment. It came to mean only "correspondence." This loss of the deep experience of truth, and its replacement by truth as a relation between entities encountered as simply present, can be found in Plato's belief that the essential reality of things is something constantly available for intellectual sight.

Later, Heidegger admitted that the earliest Greek documents in fact show that the meaning of *aletheia* had not changed during the history of Greece. He abandoned the contention that the pre-Socratic thinkers had used "truth" in his sense, but he still claimed they had named the dark side of the process of unconcealment in such words as *physis* and *logos*, although they had not investigated it explicitly.<sup>1</sup>

With this change in his interpretation of the Greeks, Heidegger gives up the claim of being able to locate the beginning of the Western forgetfulness of the self-withdrawal of the propriative event. He still suggests that a mode of living more aware of this withdrawal and darkness was followed by a mode of living dominated by clarity and presence. But he offers no dividing line within the Greek world, though he continues to insist that the Greeks received a destiny that the West still lives within.

This change in Heidegger's interpretation of the Greeks decreases the parallel with Hegel's ideas about a change in Greek history. In another way Heidegger's later interpretation of the Greeks comes closer to Hegel. For Hegel the change in Greek life was not a peculiar destiny of the Greeks; it reflects a human tension and duality present in human history elsewhere but not explicitly posited as such. In Heidegger's later interpretation of the Greeks, the experience of the finite arising of presence from darkness, and the forgetfulness of that event, are contemporaneous. This reflects the trait of all human situations called in *Being and Time* "fallenness." It is part of our finitude that there is no secure possession, no steady apprehension even of our finitude. We get lost amid the beings that surround us, and we forget our appropriation to the event of clearing. This is true everywhere, not just in the West. While the specific destiny of the West remains for Heidegger an event "without a why," after he changes his interpretation of Plato, that destiny seems to have more continuity with the general human situation.

Hegel sees the West remaining faithful to the development that began with the Greeks. Modernity fulfills the Greek legacy in a one-sided but crucial way. Balance will be obtained by incorporating something like the substantial community of the early Greeks with a fully developed version of the individuality of the later Greeks. Heidegger too sees in modernity the culmination of what started with the Greeks. In universal imposition, however, imposition what was still present in earlier Greek life is not retrieved but all the more thoroughly forgotten. Nor

can modernity be overcome in some synthesis of the different aspects of Greek life. At best we could live a deconstructive relation between them.<sup>2</sup>

Hegel and Heidegger agree that we need to get beyond the modern contentless self. There is something wrong with the basic modern dichotomy that says our values, customs, and other content for our life are either brutally given or arbitrarily chosen. Hegel seeks content in customs and ways of life that can be teased out of the structure of freedom itself and so are not opposed to freedom as object to subject. For Heidegger also the modern dichotomy must be undermined. "The freedom of the open space *der Freiheit des Freien* consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws" (The Question Concerning Technology 25/25). We find ourselves called, already in motion on paths that are not values for us to judge but possibilities that are us. We can retrieve and renew those possibilities, but they are not facts placed before our judging subjectivity.

The self-sufficiency of the modern individual is illusory. Modern subjects exist only by inhabiting something deeper than the subject-object relation presupposed in most of modernity's accounts of itself. That something deeper is the process by which things have their being in the gathering of spirit to itself, as Hegel would say, or the process by which things are revealed, as Heidegger would say.

Man is needed in the process by which things stand in their being; for Hegel it is man who provides an essential moment of individuality and self-consciousness in the coming of spirit to itself, while for Heidegger man provides the receptive abode for the propriative event and lets what is revealed come to language. But the two thinkers describe differently that *logos*, the gathering together that is the happening of a meaningful world. Although both believe that man's deeper involvement is marked by difference and negativity, they disagree on what this implies. Heidegger argues that Hegel still thinks about the gathering of man and world in a way marked by the Greek emphasis on presence and availability. For Hegel it is absolutely crucial that the gathering of man and world be rendered self-transparent, while for Heidegger it is equally crucial that no such transparency be possible. On this point each thinker would regard the other as caught within the basic problems of modernity.

For both Hegel and Heidegger, when we discover how man participates in his full context we can undo the hold of the dichotomies by which modernity structures itself. The division of

formal process from content and the subject-object relation in all its permutations are not the last word on our situation. This in turn affects other basic modern dualities such as individual and society or freedom and order.

For Hegel when the absolute form of the whole appears, we find a content for living that is not arbitrary (the content is the structured motion of spirit itself). Nor is it merely given to us as facts for our judgment (we are the motion of that structure and content made self-conscious, an event that is part of that motion). The modern distanced and formal subject is replaced by a concrete totality; any assertion of distance or formality is a one-sided abstraction. The seemingly infinite power of modern individuality to negate objects and create distance and demand always more turns out to be rooted in the concretely infinite totality and the limited but transparently guaranteed contours of its openness.

For Heidegger we know ourselves as called, as thrown projects already put in motion in a world of possibilities that is not a limitation on some larger field presented to a distanced subjectivity. While there is no unique or guaranteed content as in Hegel, there is a realm of possibilities that is neither our construction nor some obstacle we have to surmount. Our freedom is maintained as a receptive retrieval and letting-be of the possibilities granted to us. We come to presence within them, not the reverse. Modern subjectivity is replaced by the finite togetherness of man and things appropriated together. Any assertion of distance or formality can only be a derived mode of existing that denies this more basic inhabitation. The seemingly infinite power of modern subjectivity to deny, transcend, and assert its self-certainty turns out to be located within the finite granting of unconcealment.

Thus both thinkers see the awareness of man's full situation undoing modern dichotomies. In Hegel a reconciliation trims the absoluteness of modern divisions while preserving their importance. In Heidegger there is no reconciliation, only a call back to a root situation that cannot be described in the divisions characteristic of modernity, though it has its own divisions and negations of another kind.

For both thinkers there is the possibility of a new kind of life in which the involvement of man in the gathering of the world will not be hidden in the way it was before, though the two disagree on what kind of presence will be involved. Modernity will not disappear. For Hegel it is a necessary stage whose accomplishments will be preserved while its one-sidedness is overcome in

a fully achieved union of the modern and the classical worlds. Overcoming abstract subjectivity is the final act that ushers in a completed humanity that can now live in a rational, illuminated way, though not without pain and negation. For Heidegger the rule of technology and universal imposition will be "*aufgehoben* in the Hegelian sense" (*Spiegel* 217/62). The claims of modernity will lose their ultimacy; we will be able to live in this world as a destiny we have received. Beyond this we cannot see; we can only hope that a new nonmetaphysical world might be opened. Modernity and the long process of its ending fulfill the long history of the West, but that history is only one turn in the directionless play of man and the propriative event.

Finally, in both Hegel and Heidegger the thinker has a special role to play in the overcoming of modernity. The thinker can comprehend what is going on in his age in a way most others cannot. For Hegel that comprehension puts the thinker in touch with and completes the central movement of his age. For Heidegger the thinker remains at the margin. His insight into our finitude removes him from the kind of role a Plato or a Hegel can enjoy. Nor is it clear that Heidegger would prefer such a role. Hegel accepted the call to teach in Berlin in part because he wanted to have more influence in shaping policy and events. Heidegger declined a call to teach in Berlin and chose to remain "in the provinces." The price of immersion in events was too high; it would hinder the step back, which is the essence of thinking. Marginality provides in its way a deeper location than that of a great legislative thinker like Hegel or Plato. Heidegger affirms the loss of a center as the central happening in our age, a happening that the thinker, much in Hegel's fashion, can discern.

As part of his involvement in the overcoming of modernity, the thinker names things for what they are. For Hegel, the philosopher does not begin the completion of the self-grasp of spirit, but he does participate in its final movement by letting it come to self-conscious conceptual form. In so doing he may judge and name holdovers from earlier shapes of spirit. He uses no external standards, only the structure provided by the movement of the logical sequence itself. This act, like all thinking, is strong enough to contain great tensions yet hold them within the movement of reconciliation. For Heidegger the thinker lets come to language what is revealed, and he speaks our involvement in the self-withdrawing propriative event. In so doing he may name denials of man's true dwelling and covert reassertions of modernity's will to power. He uses no



external standards but retrieves the genuine possibilities granted to us. This act, like all thinking, proceeds in the questioning openness of risk and finitude.

### Crucial Issues

Our two thinkers do not presuppose the standard dichotomies and the standard options found in Weber and in many other discussions about modernity. They try to locate modernity within a context that cannot be described using the standard descriptions, and they see the possibility of a way of life is more attuned to our inhabitation of that fuller context.

Our deepest involvement is not with a way of presenting objects to subjects, whether the subjects be conceived as judging individuals or convention-creating communities. We do not find ourselves within an empty structure or a neutral space that receives whatever content is provided and allows indefinite extension of possibilities. We are within a finite and definite opening of possibilities in which we are involved as their gathering abode and way of motion rather than as their distanced judge and planner.

Heidegger's thought moves from the ordinary level of daily living to the world, the pervasive clearing that makes ordinary life possible. This is the space in which we find ourselves as thrown projects. It is the always presupposed context. Then Heidegger moves to consider the happening of that context, its stretching out, our appropriation within it, which is not a brute fact but the mutual belonging together in some definite way of man and things amid meaningful possibilities. Finally, considering the negation and difference inherent in that event, Heidegger recognizes the withdrawing and hiddenness "from which" the event happens.

Hegel too locates ordinary language and action within shapes or fields that structure our historical existence and are always presupposed. He also considers the happening of these shapes of spirit, the belonging together of man and things within the movement of spirit. That movement is infinite in Hegel's special sense and includes negation and circular mutual belonging. But for Hegel there is no withdrawal. The shapes of spirit are available in a pure form in the systematic logic whose final move is the self-comprehension of the absolute form of spirit's motion.

For neither thinker can the context of modernity be made a focal object within a horizon of interpretation. For neither can it be understood by the usual methods of analysis and derivation.

But for Hegel there is a self-giving in the transparency of the motion of spirit. That motion has something to give: itself. The self-giving of spirit to itself is not a different process from the revelation of things; that is why we can use the absolute form of spirit's motion to understand states and economies. For Heidegger there is no such self-giving; the propriative event has nothing of its own, no structure or principle or form to give.

The crucial question, then, is whether what makes modernity possible, the *Sache* for thinking, gives itself or withdraws itself. More precisely, does it give itself as withdrawing and lack of totality or as presence, availability, and self-closure? For Hegel it is the coming to presence of spirit that allows things to be revealed; for Heidegger it is the withdrawal of the propriative event. Without closure and self-presence, Hegel would argue, we cannot overcome the dichotomies we face. With that closure and self-presence, Heidegger would argue, we remain caught within the understanding of the being of things that gave rise to the modern dichotomies.

We need then to think about the context within which modernity happens, the conditions that make it possible but cannot be described in its terms. What needs to be recognized is not a set of ultimate facts or principles but the happening that makes possible facts and principles.<sup>3</sup>

It sounds as if we have to think about some ultimate happening that grounds all the rest. There are many models in the philosophical tradition for thinking about ultimate metaphysical or epistemological happenings. But our two thinkers are not using any of these standard models. What they are trying to think is not the creation of order by an act of will on the part of a divine or human agent. Nor is it an imposition of form on some neutral or chaotic stuff, be that cosmological chaos or epistemological sense-data. Nor is it a limitation of some larger field of ontological or cognitive possibility. Nor, finally, are they referring to a derivation from some first principle of cosmological, personal, or epistemological unity. There is no point source for the happening of the world.

What is happening is the extending, the spacing out, the opening up, the being there of a field of possibilities--not as a fact or as given data but as always already being spread out. We must recognize the belonging together of man and beings, world and man, beings and being, absolute and finite, and the other pairs that the two thinkers use. All these pairs are deployments or extendings that are not the exclusive action of either side of the pair. The pairs depend on and are implicated in each other, so that neither side can be thought of as acting alone. Each needs

the other in order to be what it is. In the circle formed by the belonging together of these pairs, there is no third thing behind that is being deployed into the circle. Hegel and Heidegger disagree, however, whether the circle itself should be thought of as constituting a third thing, a new unity.

This happening cannot be thought of as a case of fitting together or mutual dependence in the usual senses. It is not like a jigsaw puzzle, where pieces are complete in themselves but interact passively to make a larger whole. Nor is it an active interaction like ecological dependency in which several species depend on one another in order to exist. For both our thinkers the mutual happening is marked by difference and negation in a deeper sense than the ordinary images suggest.

Hegel and Heidegger agree that there is a difference and negation deeper than anything we can reflectively distinguish by separating out aspects or relations of some unitary entity or group of entities (what Hegel calls "external reflection": distinguishing the table as flat, as brown, as high). The deep negativity does not reduce to that otherness whereby two entities, positive in themselves, are different from each other. Both thinkers affirm that there is a level on which things are what they are because the process that lets them stand revealed in their being contains difference and negation.

In Hegel, as we have seen, there is nothing immediate. Things are revealed for what they are because the movement of spirit has opened them up and gone beyond them. In its movement to self-closure, spirit "overreaches" the finite things it constitutes. Finite things perish because they cannot contain the full negativity and differentiation of that movement; only spirit can contain this negation, and spirit is not a thing. This is true of the self as well. We exist by being involved in the motion of spirit, which is not something we create or will or do on our own. To be a self is to be something overreached within that motion in a particular way yet coming back to oneself out of negation and difference. The self does not "do" negation and difference as if these were products of its action. The self exists by means of difference and negation; this motion and its absolute form constitute the field of possibilities that is the openness of the self to things. There are limits to the possibilities open to us, limits established by the logic of the movement by which spirit overreaches its prior shapes toward its union with itself.

For Heidegger we are involved in negation and difference that we do not make. In the propriative event a togetherness of man and world occurs in which each goes beyond the other. They do not just fit together; each is what it is by transcending the other. The world surrounds and goes beyond what I focally encounter; it is this going beyond that characterizes the world as world. My projects are solicited by a world that goes beyond them yet needs man's projects to be a meaningful world at all. I reveal the world as such by my openness to the no-thing beyond which is the event of its happening. I and the world both "exist" by being stretched out in this difference and mutual transcendence that neither creates. Neither side has inner solidity, and, unlike as in Hegel, their mutual transcendence does not make a whole that comes together. There is a limit to the possibilities open to us, because they occur in the event of mutual belonging, but there is no logic to that limitation.<sup>4</sup>

For both thinkers there is no point outside the negation and difference we are involved within. There could be no platform from which we could view from the outside the process by which things are made available. We must use methods descended from those Kant devised for describing the motion and context of thinking from the inside. Although there is no place from which a distanced modern self could wield analytical tools on the context of modernity, there are ways in which we can make it present to ourselves in the appropriate manner. But Hegel and Heidegger do not agree at all on what manner of presence is possible and appropriate.

### Heidegger's Criticisms of Hegel

The similarities we have discerned between the Hegel and Heidegger are encouraging for our exploration of the general strategy toward modernity they share. But the differences between the two thinkers are not incidental; they go to the heart of their thoughts and need to be examined more carefully if we are to find new ways for our own thinking.

Heidegger and Hegel would each say that the other reinforces the principle of modernity while trying to overcome it. In the following two sections I will construct a three-cornered discussion among Hegel, Heidegger, and myself as a not so disinterested referee judging the adequacy of their mutual criticism. Although it is true that each of them possesses insights that the other misses, there is no way to bring their views together to form a harmonious whole. We cannot

expect any Hegelian reconciliation of these differences. We can hope the confrontation will raise questions and show us positive clues while indicating some of the pitfalls to avoid.

We will deal first with what Heidegger has to say about Hegel, at least as it affects the issues we are concerned with. We could imagine Heidegger summarizing his opinions about Hegel's dealings with modernity:

"Though Hegel describes many of the symptoms of the root situation of modernity, he fails to penetrate to the essence of modernity. He lived in and helped bring to a climax that aspect of modernity emphasizing subjectivity, but though he shows many signs of the universal imposition that reigns today, he has no name for that essence of technology and modernity.

"Hegel's efforts to think through our situation stem from the demands of the traditional metaphysical understanding of being. He must satisfy the demands of reason by making explicit and unified all that has been thought, all that has happened. He must find an insight that shows the wholeness of history and thought and traces it to its ground. My own attempts to think about our situation stem rather from the need to think what has been unthought, what has been unexpressed in what has been said. I do not mean to find some hidden first principle from which everything flows in grounded unity. What has been unthought is the happening of the world, the finite openness of the clearing in which we move. This breaks the claim to wholeness, grounding, and completion.

"Hegel cannot discern the true enigma of modernity because he remains caught within the destiny of metaphysics. He thinks within the understanding of truth as correspondence and of being as constant available presence. He cannot experience the propriative event and its enabling withdrawal as such. He cannot find the deeper finitude that underlies even the infinity of spirit's return to itself.

"Hegel thinks out of what was granted him to speak, and that is still the traditional understanding of being in its modern form as self-certain subjectivity. Because he was not granted to recognize our deeper finitude as such, his efforts provide only a metaphysical cure for a metaphysical condition. He works for foundations and closure; he seeks to mediate the dichotomies of modernity within the self-certainty of the absolute self. He makes many of the appropriate beginnings, but he makes them as if the process by which things were revealed were itself the grounding activity of some highest entity.

"Hegel fails to overcome modernity because he, like the metaphysical tradition as a whole, is destined to forget our real finitude. He still aspires to a life reconciled in the full presence of rationality. Noble as that goal sounds, it is only another version of the attempt to make things and their coming to presence itself totally present without the core of concealment, withdrawal, and finitude that marks our situation. In trying to overcome the excess subjectivity of modernity as he understands it, Hegel actually exhibits and brings to new heights the very drive for self-coincidence, self-certainty, and total presence that lies at the root of modern subjectivity and its will to power. It is not surprising that the world he describes should now seem to us a direct ancestor of the present reign of technology."

We turn now to Heidegger's criticisms in more detail. These are found in many places throughout his writings. In section 82 of *Being and Time* he accuses Hegel of remaining within the traditional understanding of time rather than penetrating to the dispersed temporality that he describes (see Emad 1983). In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* he often contrasts the intellectualized forgetfulness of our finite roots he finds in German Idealism with the emphasis on imagination and temporality he sees in Kant's first *Critique*. He also criticizes Hegel's notion of dialectical overcoming (*Aufhebung*) as based too thoroughly on the goal of self-coincidence, a criticism he repeats elsewhere. In his 1930-31 lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in his essay "Hegel's Concept of Experience," Heidegger sees Hegel as the culmination of the Cartesian phase of metaphysics because Hegel holds that all beings are founded in the self-certainty of an absolute self. In the essays in *Identity and Difference* Heidegger locates Hegel within the tradition that thinks metaphysically in terms of self-identity and the grounding presence of a highest being rather than recognizing our deepest finitude as such. In "Hegel and the Greeks" he repeats the picture of Hegel as a super-Cartesian and claims Hegel remained within the Platonic and Aristotelian definitions of truth and being that forget man's true context. These issues are discussed again in the Heraclitus Seminar with Eugen Fink.

I will concentrate on the claims that Hegel remains within the traditions of Cartesian subjectivity and Western metaphysics. The criticisms about time that Heidegger advances in *Being and Time* are not convincingly developed, and the contrasts he makes in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* are based on a questionable interpretation of Kant, though they have value as anticipations of what Heidegger will say more fully later.<sup>5</sup>

I will argue that the claim that Hegel is a super-Cartesian is mistaken. The contention that Hegel remains within the metaphysical tradition I will for the most part accept. This latter is the more encompassing criticism.

Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel as a thinker of subjectivity is set within the larger claim that Hegel keeps the basic metaphysical orientation to grounds, unities, and constant presence. Hegel thinks of the ground of all beings as an absolute self that achieves total self-presence and self-coincidence in the presentation of itself to itself. All other modes of being are reduced to that of objects proposed within the return-to-self of the absolute ego.

Hegel's thinking speaks first of all in the fundamental scheme of the subject object relationship. . . . The absolute idea of Hegel is then the complete self-knowledge of the absolute subject. (*Heraclitus Seminar* 184, 127/115, 124)

The truly actual infinite . . . is the subject, . . . the absolute subject as spirit. The subject, the ego, is primarily grasped as "I think." . . . Hegel and German Idealism in general . . . grasp the totality of what is in its being in terms of ego-ness as infinity. (*Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* 111)

Spirit is knowing, *logos*; spirit is I, *ego*; spirit is God, *theos*; spirit is actuality, what absolutely is, *on*. (*Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* 183)

Heidegger details this criticism in his essay "Hegel's Concept of Experience," which concerns the Introduction to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Through a careful analysis of key sentences Heidegger tries to show how for Hegel everything is grounded in the absolute being's will to total presence and how this functions as the basic measure for the varying shapes of consciousness Hegel treats in his book.

The reading of Hegel's text is subtle and complex, but it is ultimately misleading. It neglects the role Hegel gives to determinate negation and to the series of shapes of consciousness. For this series with its complex echoes and gradual movements, Heidegger substitutes the single repeated movement from natural consciousness to the awareness of the background conditions for that natural consciousness in the fluidity of the absolute's self-presencing. Each transition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is interpreted as one more attempt to perform the same step back.

As a result of his emphasis on one repeated step, Heidegger overvalues the transition to the chapter on self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as if that were the basic movement

of the book. Yet one of the purposes of the latter two-thirds of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (which Heidegger ignores in all his discussions of the book) is to show that infinity, grounding, self-coincidence, and all the other metaphysical goals Heidegger rightly sees Hegel as seeking are precisely *not* achievable so long as one talks in terms of ego and subjectivity. It is necessary to move from any structure involving egos to the structure of spirit, the logical and intersubjective movement of which the ego is only one moment. It is necessary to include the social mediations and structures of mutual recognition that cannot be interpreted as properties of a single ego, be it human or absolute.

There are no immediately given egos in Hegel, as the early sections of the "Philosophy of Spirit" in the *Encyclopedia* make clear. Subjectivity is an achievement within a larger motion. Nor is the final stage of the system properly described as the achievement of an absolute subjectivity. The logical sequence posits and overcomes the opposition between subject and object in its third section. Hegel conceives of subjectivity and ego through the logical categories, not the reverse (despite what Heidegger claims in "Hegel and the Greeks"). Hegel's logic is not a discussion of categories functioning within or pro-posed before some subjectivity, nor a study of the self-coincidence of some ego, human or divine.<sup>6</sup>

It could be objected that I seem to be ignoring the distinction Heidegger draws in "Zur Seinsfrage" between *Subjektivität* and *Subjektivität*. Heidegger realizes that Hegel's spirit is not an ego in the usual sense, and he provides a more general conception of subjectivity that Hegel does not escape from. My reply is that Heidegger, as the above quotes show, does want to interpret Hegel in terms of *Subjektivität*. The more general and basic term, *Subjektivität*, can involve the notion of a substratum, which does not apply to Hegel, or the general demand for grounding and self-coincidence, which does apply. This reduces the subjectivity criticism to the other criticism of Hegel, for remaining within metaphysics, which I have already accepted.

It is worth asking why Heidegger is so sure Hegel is a Cartesian. In part this is due to Heidegger's method of reading, which is to take a short bit of text and use it as a nodal point for interpreting a thinker's overall direction and the unsaid understanding of being within which the thinker moves. While this method works well with some authors, it fails with Hegel (as it does with Plato), because Hegel's text tends to analogical and multi-leveled reuse of terms, so that one passage may mislead about other passages that sound similar. An example of this is the



emphasis Heidegger puts on Hegel's comment that with Descartes philosophy "sights land." Heidegger claims that this shows how Hegel wants philosophy to attain the firm ground of subjectivity. But Hegel uses this metaphor elsewhere in his history of philosophy, for instance with Heraclitus, where it cannot be cited in favor of subjectivity. Heidegger is caught out by Hegel's habit of taking any closing moment of a particular dialectical transition as a foreshadowing of his ultimate goal. Hegel will praise the current achievement, for example, self-consciousness, as virtually complete, just about all we need, only to turn on it at the beginning of the next chapter and condemn it as poverty stricken, immediate, and far from the goal.

On a deeper level, Heidegger reads Hegel as a Cartesian because he presupposes, in line with his own philosophy, that any thinker must work within one unified interpretation of what it means to be. This is the reason Heidegger feels he can discern the whole basic horizon of interpretation within which a thinker moves by examining only short bits of text. We will have occasion to question this presupposition later; the issue has arisen several times already: the simple priority of the propriative event.<sup>7</sup>

Although Heidegger's reading of Hegel as a Cartesian is mistaken, his general reading of Hegel as within the metaphysical tradition is correct. Hegel strives for self-coincidence, self-transparency, and reconciled presence. Yet he does not perfectly match Heidegger's standard picture of a metaphysician. He does not appeal to the self-coincidence of some large entity as the cornerstone of the world. He tries in the *Science of Logic* to finesse many of the standard metaphysical questions about grounds. There is a coming together into presence, yes, but it cannot be thought of as the career of one grounding entity so much as as the motion within which all entities appear.

While it seems clear that Hegel adheres to the general goals Heidegger attributes to the metaphysical tradition since the Greeks, it is not so clear that Hegel works within an interpretation of the meaning of being in terms of simple constant presence. We touch here on the vexing question of how far negation and otherness are overcome in Hegel's system. Certainly they are not rendered nonexistent. Nor are they treated as simple privations along the line of the Scholastic treatment of evil. The reconciliation Hegel attempts does not do away with the negative to achieve some constant unity. We have already seen how the negative endures in society in terms of poverty, class divisions, and war. Hegel offers no magic harmony.

For Hegel there is no static intuitive presence at the goal of his system. Though he owes much to the neoplatonic tradition, Hegel does not end his system with an intuition of final unity after the manner of Schelling. Spirit's self-coincidence is something achieved in a motion. Time is not raised to eternity; it is made self-transparent in its movement. Man's awareness of the rationality of the real is achieved by an awareness of a motion man finds himself within, an awareness that is known to be a manifestation of the pattern, itself moving, which that motion follows.

Nevertheless, for all this evidence that Hegel should not be read in terms of simple presence, it remains true that the emphasis is on *unity-in-difference*. As Jacques Taminiaux concludes:

Hegel's philosophy is centered on the question of negation and difference, but it is not a matter of indifference that this structure, these themes, these motifs are envisaged by the word *absolute*. . . . The absolute is by definition that which absolves itself from all reference, that which, in the difference and the game of references which it carries, becomes equal to itself, coincides with itself. The result is that at the very moment when it is recognized as radical, the difference is no more radical but derived or, what comes to the same thing, uprooted. It follows that at the very moment when it seemed to be discredited, the scheme of coincidence is only dilated, and words such as concordance, adequation, equality, invade the whole Hegelian text. (Taminiaux 1977, 141)<sup>8</sup>

There remains the question why Hegel's belonging to the metaphysical tradition is a matter for criticism rather than classification. Heidegger is not in fact criticizing Hegel so much as locating him. But if Heidegger is correct in locating himself and us as at the end of the metaphysical tradition, then locating Hegel firmly within it is a way of saying that we cannot take Hegel's philosophy (or those of his descendants who keep the crucial features) as live options for dealing with modernity today. Heidegger is also saying that there is something more to the human situation than Hegel knows, and this is a damaging criticism of a philosophy that aspires to totality as Hegel does.

That something more is the radical finitude of the propriative event and man's appropriation within it. Heidegger wants to find a condition for the possibility of Hegel's system, a condition that Hegel cannot recognize within that system. In this sense Heidegger's basic objection to Hegel is a sophisticated descendant of Kierkegaard's invocation of "existence" as the condition

of possibility for Hegel's system that cannot be caught within the toils of the system. But Heidegger does not much respect Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel, which he thinks remains within the orbit of the philosophy of subjectivity.<sup>9</sup>

The condition that Hegel cannot grasp is the finite granting of the meaning of being, truth, and time that Hegel presupposes and works within. Another way of putting the same point, used by Heidegger in *Identity and Difference*, is that Hegel's key words (*identity, difference, dialectic*, and so on) have more resonances than Hegel can hear. Some of them can lead in a direction away from or behind the closure of Hegel's system.<sup>10</sup>

Although the claim that Hegel thinks about infinity and closure in terms of selfhood and ego is mistaken, the larger claim about the metaphysical nature of Hegel's thought remains correct. Earlier I pointed out that Hegel depends crucially upon the architectonic expressed in the three large sections of the logical sequence. It is present at the beginning in Hegel's injunctions to heed "the demands of reason" or seek "the satisfaction of thought." It provides the only possible criterion for judging among detailed versions of the logical sequence. It might be said to provide Hegel's understanding of what it means to be, and this involves self-coincidence through negation and otherness. Heidegger is right that we can see in all this Hegel's rootedness within the tradition that makes grounding and self-coincidence central to thought, although Heidegger is mistaken when he takes Hegel as positing an absolute ego as a "first" that serves as a ground. The circular movement is stronger than any "first."

If the metaphysical tradition is viewed as itself a limited epoch rather than the permanent nature of thought, then the purity and necessity of Hegel's logical sequence suddenly seems not pure enough, still determined by some historical background and context. More profoundly, that very purity is itself seen to be a particular historical project. It is because Heidegger criticizes Hegel in this way that Heidegger pays no attention to the question of whether Hegel's enterprise succeeds in its own terms. Even if it does, it will succeed only within the space granted by a historical fate the system neither examines nor includes.

Is it then true that Hegel thinks within one unified understanding of what it means to be, as Heidegger believes he must? It is certainly the case that Hegel works under the sign of closure and self-transparency. But Heidegger's descriptions miss something important to Hegel's thought. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic* Hegel seems to work within a

shifting multiplicity of ways of understanding knowledge and being. Heidegger would argue that these are all variations of the metaphysical understanding. They may be as different from one another as the various epochs Heidegger traces within the history of the West, but like those epochs they stay within the metaphysical tradition. Heidegger's step back is to provide an understanding of the arising of such ways of understanding that is different from Hegel's metaphysical account of the same.

Hegel, according to Heidegger, maintains one overall horizon within which the many smaller unities treated in the dialectic appear. That overall horizon is the understanding of what it means to be in terms of absolute selfhood and its infinity, which includes negation. I have argued that there is no positing of an absolute ego as the first entity for Hegel, but I have agreed with Heidegger that there is a presupposed understanding in terms of grounding and self-coincidence.

Should we then, with Heidegger, think of Hegel's overall understanding as one horizon within which the dialectical moments do their tricks? Or is this to read Hegel too much in terms of Husserl's metaphor of things within perceptual horizons? If Hegel's basic understanding can be found in the architectonic of the large sections of the logical sequence, perhaps it should be thought of as a motion within which things appear. Perhaps there is not one unified horizon of interpretation but many, each treated in the dialectic that is the motion of its appearance. The space for our encounter with things would then be structured by the current horizon and, ultimately, by the motion of having horizons of interpretation at all, which is the motion described in the logical sequence--not itself a final horizon of interpretation so much as the thinking of the event of having interpretations.

I am pressing the analogy between Hegel's absolute idea and Heidegger's propriative event. Heidegger would rather say that Hegel's absolute idea is just one more metaphysical and, in this sense, naive horizon of interpretation for the phenomenologist to step back from. I am saying that Hegel too makes a step back. The self-grasp of the absolute idea is not just another world but the self-grasp of the event of our being appropriated into any world.

It is true that Hegel thinks of that event metaphysically in terms of unity, self-coincidence, and grounding. Heidegger is right when he suggests in *Identity and Difference* that there is a kind of difference and belonging together in the propriative event that is not included in Hegel's system, though it makes the system possible. On the other hand, we encounter here again the question of

the relative priority of dialectic and phenomenology. Could we make sense of a multiplicity of understandings of what it means to be that happen by interacting and being together and so hold open the space for the appearance of the world rather than themselves emerging against the background of one unified horizon in one dominant event? I will later urge this direction for our own thought, taking clues from both Heidegger and Hegel.

If we accept the general thrust of Heidegger's criticism of Hegel, we will be wary of attempting to overcome modernity's problems by enfolding the modern world within a larger context that is itself a totality we can become aware of. The difficulties pointed out earlier with the machinery of the Hegelian state are symptoms of a deeper problem: Hegel's need to have all the moments of universal, particular, and individual come together in a smoothly mediated and self-coincident whole. This demands that the dispersed individualism of civil society be brought together into a structure that is at the same time self-coincident and fully articulated. If Heidegger is right that a deeper finitude and obscurity underlie Hegel's self-transparent infinity, there can be no such overcoming of civil society and the problems of modernity within a self-complete structure of mediations. There is no implicit deep rationality waiting to be brought to completion. Are we then modern subjects facing, as Weber would have it, a contingent neutral mass of data waiting for our interpretation and judgment? No, for Heidegger is correct that we find ourselves always already appropriated within the finite event of there being a meaningful world. I am suggesting, however, that something like Hegel's notion of an internally divided motion may be helpful in conceiving of that event in a way that overcomes the standard modern self-definition and its problems while avoiding the difficulties in Heidegger's thought to which we now turn.

### Hegel's Criticisms of Heidegger

We come now to what Hegel might say about how well Heidegger meets the challenge of modernity. Naturally, there is a problem of voice here: despite his encyclopedic approach, Hegel did not have a chance to discuss Heidegger at any length in his writings. So who will be now speaking, Hegel or I? In what follows I try first to speak from what I take would have been Hegel's position on Heidegger, with which I only partly agree. Then I will add my own comments and judgments to what "Hegel" has said. So here is "Hegel" speaking:

"Heidegger often treats other thinkers as the Husserlian phenomenologist treats 'natural consciousness.' He assumes the position of someone who can see beyond the naive activities of other thinkers to the conditions that make them possible, conditions that the other thinkers could see for themselves if only they were granted to look at what is nearest to their own thought. Heidegger sees his own thought as inquiring behind the naive consciousness to the horizon presupposed in that consciousness, to the unifying meaning of that horizon, to the event of having horizons at all. But I too inquire into the event of our having a meaningful world at all, and I do not discuss it in terms of beings within that world. I would say that he does not stand to me, as he imagines, as phenomenologist to object of study, but we stand together as two thinkers with rival accounts of what it means to be present to and in the world. We differ on the kind of inner dispersal or inner unity involved in that event of things being revealed within a meaningful world.

"My own phenomenological investigations lead to a joining of the investigating consciousness with that investigated. Heidegger only issues exhortations; there is no path leading from natural consciousness to the goal. His step back may be open to us, but no dialectic brings us out from where we are. My system may seem to him too enclosed, but it provides a real pathway instead of just one step.

"If I were to summarize my disagreements with Heidegger I might say that despite his claims to the contrary, I do *not* disagree with his talk about finitude. But I object to his emphasis on unity and immediacy.

"We agree that the pretensions of extreme modern subjectivity must be curbed. Those pretensions appeal to what I have called 'the bad infinite' and the desire for always more. I have stressed finitude, acceptance of where we are, entering the circle of spirit's motion, as a cure for modern emptiness. We must move away from the feeling of infinite indefinite possibility and accept the finite possibilities granted by *die Sache selbst*, the matter for thought, the movement of spirit. This is the mark of mature thought and action; it allows escape from the infinite pretensions of ironic and romantic subjectivity. It allows us to see the one guaranteed set of overall possibilities for the organization of life that derives from the rational structure of the motion of the logical sequence. The 'good infinite' I describe in my logic contains finitude within it.<sup>11</sup>

"What my theory of finitude and infinity does not contain is immediacy. Nothing is immediate and first, neither the finite nor the infinite. Heidegger, however, thinks that finitude must be immediate. His thought involves too much that is simply given or immediately granted. True, the granting, what he (in a pun I wish I had thought of) calls *das Ereignis*, the propriative event, is shot through with a kind of difference and negativity. But what is granted by that event is immediate and must be just accepted. Heidegger's talk of conflict, withdrawal, difference concerns the granting and our appropriation within it, not the content of what is granted. This empowers us, sets us in motion. There is no tension and dialectic within the content that shapes a given epoch of the history Heidegger tells. There cannot be, for if there were, Heidegger would demand a yet further unified horizon within which the tension or dialectic could play itself out.

"In my thought, both the granting and what is granted are dialectically tense, and no further horizon is needed. The space in which we move is constituted by the interplay of the oppositions within the content and by the further dialectical oppositions between that content and the overall movement described in the logical sequence. In order for this to be possible there has to be some identity between the content and the overall form of the movement, as I show in my logic.

"Heidegger finds this identity too 'metaphysical.' I admit that my thought belongs within the metaphysical tradition, that I strive for grounds and unities, though not of any simple kind. Heidegger sometimes reads me as I were expressing opinions like those found in the early writings of Schelling, with an Absolute just sitting there in constant comparison with finite things. My way of achieving the metaphysical goals is more complex than that.

"I would urge Heidegger to look at the price he pays for avoiding metaphysics. Heidegger's immediate grantings lead to an implausible retelling of history. It is implausible because the beginning stands so dominant over what comes later, and each age is too unified in itself. Notice that for me the Greek beginning, and each subsequent age, has within itself tensions and problems that lead to later developments and changes. For Heidegger we live within the Western granting of possibilities, and though we have a receptive co-responsibility with it, there are no oppositions and dualities leading to dialectical progress either within it or in our relation to it. We move only within the space it grants, and we wait for new spaces to be opened. While there is, for Heidegger, some mysterious connection that rules the succession of the epochs within the

West, it has to do with the wanderings of errance *Irre*; we play no part in the deep changes. We can only retrieve and renew what we have been given or take a nondialectical step back from it. There is none of the negation and otherness I find built into the shape of any age in history.

"This immediacy and unity causes another problem. The particular quality of each different epoch, for instance, the medieval as distinct from the modern, receives no explanation. It is just to be accepted as a destiny. Outside of the West there may be even less connection in the aimless play of the propriative event. Heidegger understandably does not want to 'explain' the various epochs in any ordinary way; but does he not owe us some account of their differences?

"This problem arises because the propriative event is the same in all cases, or at least Heidegger talks about it that way. How does it relate to the different contents? Does it bring them out of itself? Then it would sound neoplatonic or Hegelian. Does it receive them from outside? Then it would sound Aristotelian and, in any case, metaphysical. Heidegger does not want it to sound metaphysical, so he gives no account of the arising of the differences of content in the eras and epochs. He denies that the propriative event can be reified into an 'it' at all. But then by what right does he talk about it in connection with all the various epochs and eras within and outside of the West?

"Heidegger might object that he does not talk in this way. The propriative event can only be 'experienced in the revealing done by language as that which allows it' (*The Way to Language* 258/127). It cannot be experienced separately. True enough, according to his theory. Yet he does talk about it in connection with the many different epochs of the West, and he speaks of an awareness possessed in pre-Socratic times. In his dialogue with a Japanese he even speaks of what Japanese aesthetics may show of that event that Western aesthetics covers up. Evidently there is some sense in which all of these relate to 'the same' while they contrast with it and with one another. Certainly it is not some one entity behind the various epochs, but rather the being appropriated to each another of world and man. But it can still be spoken of as the happening *described more or less formally*, of the various epoch and eras.

"Now it may seem that I am making of the propriative event something like a universal structure available in a formal description and instantiated in various ways. Heidegger would claim that his basic concepts are not like this, that they are available only in one or another historical coinage *geschichtliche Prägung*. This is certainly his intent, though I doubt whether he



successfully keeps to it. In any case it is an important difference from my own thought, for I can write a *Science of Logic*, and Heidegger will not. But is it as different as he thinks? It is true that in the logical sequence the conditions that make our being in a world possible can be grasped purely. Yet no form exists without content. The forms I find exist only through their necessarily historical and contingent coinages; that is demanded by their own internal motion. I avoid the separation of form and content by other means than by denying the pure availability of the form of the concept. The question is whether Heidegger really avoids that separation.

"The fact is that for all his careful attempts he still has too much distinction of form from content. The propriative event is thinkable only in conjunction with different epochs, yet it retains the same general structure. In order to tell the history of understandings of being, in order to make the claims he does about metaphysics, in order to talk about the non-Western world the way he does, Heidegger must collect and differentiate the various eras and epochs in terms of their conditions of possibility. The way in which he does this creates a distinction of form from content. He is giving us 'the nonhistorical a priori of the historical a prioris of the various epochs'.<sup>12</sup>

"In my own thought there is a similar distinction of form from content in talking about history. But I then go on to overcome that distinction by talking about the absolute idea which has itself for content. Heidegger would say this is a metaphysical solution, and so it is. But what does he offer? His step back does not do away with the distinction.

"The given content is immediate; we must just accept the space opened for us in our epoch. We know there could be and have been and may in the future be other such spaces. Our situation is not unlike that I described in the section of my *Phenomenology of Spirit* devoted to 'the Stoic.' The Stoic lives in a world he knows is enveloped in a greater 'beyond,' but that 'beyond' is only the assured granting of the precise content of the world in which he lives. He cannot escape his world, for the 'beyond' sends him back to do his duty in the world granted to him. Or if he escapes, he arrives only at a vapid indetermination. Though Heidegger's propriative event is not a 'beyond' or ground of the world, it functions in our lives in a similar way. All the discussions lead to the same step back, just as Heidegger makes the same gestures in front of all texts. But we cannot rest in this formal place. It serves to send us back resolutely to what we have been granted. We can only accept the content of the epoch and move within its space; there are no

dialectical tensions or dynamisms we might cooperate with in our action. All our actions remain caught within the granted circle; only a god can save us.

"The immediacy of the grantings give history a strange look. Because of the careful separation of the propriative event from ordinary historiography, there is no place to discuss the events in ordinary history except as clues to what enables them. Cultural, scientific, and environmental influences can have no effect on the space granted to us and can on their own bring about no new beginnings in thought. This is most implausible history; it makes inexplicable why the sensibility of one age is followed by the particular sensibility of the next, as if the sequence had no explanation. I too speak of an inner history that is the condition of ordinary historical events. But I also try to show how particular transitions in outer history can be seen as rational. One sometimes has the suspicion that in Heidegger's history all the real work is being done by the 'ontic' outer history, which is, however, carefully excluded from the discussion in favor of formal talk about its conditions<sup>13</sup>

"Heidegger should either absorb everything into the transcendental conditions, as he rightly sees I do, or he should almost completely dispense with the transcendental move, as the misguided author of this present work suggests. His own position is an uncomfortable halfway house that gets caught on the distinction of formal process from particular content despite his efforts to avoid it.

"Perhaps his finite openness and my infinite closure are not so far apart. Heidegger says he wants to think of our living in the world in terms of a finitude that does not mean limitation but belonging. I also try to think about our life without thinking of it as a limitation on some indefinite sphere of possibility or a drive for the 'bad infinite.' I think of the universal and the good infinite, finally summed up in the absolute idea, and I appeal to closure, transparency, self-coincidence. Although I do not use these in quite the way Heidegger accuses me of doing, he is quite correct that I aim for these metaphysical goals. I achieve them in a way that keeps dualities active while holding them in check.

"I am saying that metaphysics in Heidegger's sense is necessary if we are to avoid the separation of form from content. He pays a price for giving up self-coincidence, closure, and metaphysics generally. He cannot successfully avoid the separations that make modernity what it is. Many of his followers either live the pious life in a formal or nostalgic refuge or live the

ironic distances within the dance of the signifiers. The Stoic becomes the Sceptic, as I said. Some of his followers even advance to the Unhappy Consciousness. These tendencies are all present in Heidegger himself.

"Heidegger fails to overcome modernity because he remains caught on its principle, the separation of formal process from content. Despite his intentions he ends by either locking us into a premodern world or reaffirming the ironic and distanced side of modernity. He does avoid modernity's overly manipulative side, but at the cost of denying our efficacy in history. He thinks he has avoided the dichotomy between substantive tradition and formal rootless subjectivity, when in fact he only oscillates rapidly between the two."

So far I have tried to reconstruct what Hegel would have said about Heidegger's thought, though my "Hegel" speaks more politely than Hegel was wont to do in controversy. Now we need to examine the criticisms that have been expressed.

One basic qualification to be made at the outset is that for Heidegger as well as for Hegel there is no ultimate distinction of formal process from particular content that can be posited as such in our lives. For both thinkers such a distinction can be made in a temporary or provisional fashion, but it cannot be posited as final. Our lives may include a distinction of form and content as part of their motion, but that distinction cannot be used for an overall description of our situation as is possible with the standard descriptions of modern subjectivity. In Hegel, positing such a distinction does not raise us above the motion of absolute form but only puts us back at an earlier stage within that motion. In Heidegger, if we try to posit such a distinction, we find we are still moving within the space of universal imposition; we have not achieved a point of view above it but only made one of its standard moves. Heidegger intends no meta-position from which we can survey the propriative event from the outside or from a comprehensive self-grasp. Any position we might take is enabled by that event; the event itself is present as withdrawing; it does not offer a form Heidegger could make present.

Some readings of Heidegger try to make of the propriative event a refuge from our sad world. We must learn to dwell in our relation to the propriative event, and escape the current painful reality. If Heidegger were saying this, he would be reifying the propriative event into a source beyond the world, and our situation would be exactly that of the Stoic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

This is not quite Heidegger's thought. We have no project of a pure relation to the propriative event. We are thrown projects, which is not the same thing as a project of receiving whatever is thrown to us. Relating to the propriative event is not something we do or a task we carry out. Being appropriated with things in that event is a condition for whatever projects we find ourselves involved in, not itself one of our projects.

Indeed, to the extent that Heidegger does make a separation of formal process from particular content, this has a positive function in his thought. It enables us to experience the groundlessness of the whole network of grounding and grounded relations within which we live. This provides no larger network, but it helps deconstruct the naturalness that attaches to the current relations of grounding and domination. I discussed earlier the ambiguous effects of Heidegger's overcoming of modernity in our everyday life, urging a reading that led to a deconstructive relation to current principles and practices. Heidegger's thought offers no new world, but it includes the hope of a less forgetful relation to the happening of realms of meaning. Both this hope and the deconstructive attitude are made possible by the distinction of form and content. The crucial feature, as with Hegel, is that this distinction cannot be posited as ultimate. The crucial feature, as with Hegel, is that this distinction cannot

In constructing the remarks from "Hegel" above I presumed he would try to surpass Heidegger by locating him somewhere within the sequences of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (as a Stoic) and the *Science of Logic* (as failing to overcome the distinction of form from content). What I have said in the last few paragraphs shows that Heidegger does not quite fit into either position. But there remains something correct in the complaints "Hegel" makes. Although Heidegger does not make an ultimate form-content distinction as such, the distinctions he does make have roughly the same effect as far as overcoming modernity is concerned.

The problems arise because of the immediacy and the unity of what is granted in the propriative event. Both are necessary for Heidegger. The propriative event itself is described, especially when he talks about the fourfold, in terms full of mutual dependence and what could be called mediation, though not of a Hegelian sort. Yet what is granted or opened in the propriative event is not so full of inner mirroring and mediation. If the particular unconcealment of beings ruling our age (or that of any other age within the history of the West) were not

immediate and prior, it would begin to have features that could be discussed like those of ordinary beings. It would become involved in inner relation, grounding, and explanation and would lose its primacy. Similarly, if the clearing that makes our age possible were not in some sense unified, a call to men and to all beings to be unconcealed and encounter one another within a particular space, then there would have to be some further more-unified horizon opened up within which the multiplicity would itself be made unconcealed.<sup>14</sup>

Heidegger is caught in the middle. He wants to find conditions for the possibility of the ordinary presence or absence of things, conditions that also speak to the situation in our modern age. He wants those conditions to be prior, not to be entities or processes within the world. But he does not want the conditions to be metaphysical "firsts" or grounds. This demands that the conditions have no content that might serve as a first principle. Yet if they were purely formal, the conditions would again be metaphysical, a grounding structure that can be made simply present by a formal analysis of our situation. Also, as formal they would not have much to add to the discussion of any one particular age as opposed to another and so would not especially illuminate our modern situation.

These demands result in the delicate balance of form and content we find in Heidegger's thought. The understanding of the being of things within any given epoch is not a metaphysical first; it cannot serve as a first principle or ground of what is unconcealed. But neither is it purely formal. Nor is it something amenable to sociology or ordinary history. It is beyond the reach of our ordinary actions in the way a transcendental condition is beyond what it conditions.

As the condition for the multiple happenings in any epoch, what we are granted is unified, not something that can be caught up in a dialectic that exploits inner tensions or inner multiplicity. This unity goes hand in hand with Heidegger's transcendental move. Without the unified content of an age the transcendental move would become formal and metaphysical. Without its transcendental priority the description of the unified understanding of being in an age would become another hypothesis for history and the social sciences.

#### Relations Between the West and the East

The difficulties caused by this immediacy and unity can be seen more clearly if we consider our granted world in its relations to another world that is not historically distant like that of the Greeks but geographically distant and constituted within another tradition. Heidegger's

"Dialogue on Language" indicates that he is willing to think about relations and contrasts between the West and other large traditions. He cautions his Japanese visitor against too much enthusiasm for Western categories of thought, and he urges the Japanese people to retrieve the deeper possibilities in what has been granted to them within their own world. The subjectivist, metaphysical way of thinking about experience is a dangerous Western export. It can distort and pervert what may be a fuller and deeper mode of living near the self-withdrawing propriative event.

Yet Heidegger remarks in the *Spiegel* interview that if the West is to overcome technology, this must happen from within and not by an alien implant such as Zen Buddhism (*Spiegel* 214/62). Apparently the West may endanger the East, but the relation is not reciprocal: the West can pervert Japan but Japan cannot save the West. Why this curious asymmetrical relation?

Indeed, how can Heidegger say that these two worlds can have any relation at all? There is not in Heidegger's account of the propriative event any obvious way for two different grantings of presence to come into conflict within an individual or within the spirit of a nation. There seems no way for either salvation or perversion to come from outside. Heidegger usually compares different epochs separated historically with no possibility of mutual influence. When we turn to a geographical separation, the discontinuity so important to his thought about the different grantings of presence seems much more questionable. Yet the account of the propriative event demands that deeply divergent traditions can coexist, each dominated by a different meaning of being. (Or perhaps one is metaphysical and the another is not so centered in a ruling meaning of being.) The idea of coexisting traditions highlights the discontinuity implicit in the primacy of the propriative event. But if we question that discontinuity, we also question the unity of what is granted in the propriative event and the transcendental move as Heidegger makes it.

Heidegger cannot allow two different traditions to influence each other in any deep way. If they can, then perhaps the unconcealment of the being of things that opens the two worlds is not so discontinuous. But if there is really only one granting of unconcealment for everyone, Heidegger's thought of our finitude becomes dangerously formal, and the account of the different epochs within the history of the West becomes a matter for "ontic" or outer history and not for the history of being.

Another way to allow influence would be to claim that the unconcealment of the being of things in each of the traditions is really different from that in the other but there is an inner multiplicity in what is opened up within each tradition. This would allow aspects of one to influence aspects of the other. But this begins to sound like the usual modes of influence cited by anthropologists and not the simple priority of the propriative event Heidegger is concerned to defend. Or perhaps, if deep influence is possible, it is because individuals can escape the space granted to them, enter another, and then return home bearing gifts, or poisons. But this would undo the priority of our appropriation into what has been granted us, and it sounds too much like modern subjectivity. So Heidegger cannot consistently maintain that traditions such as the Western and the Asian can influence each other so deeply as might bring salvation from the East.

Yet Heidegger does say that the West can endanger the tradition of the East. How can this be? Perhaps we can explain in the following way how for Heidegger the West can threaten the East even though the West cannot be helped by the East. We saw earlier that Heidegger's later interpretation of the Greeks, after he had given up talking of a locatable change in the notion of truth, suggests that "metaphysics" and "technology" should be thought of as possibilities inherent in the human situation as such rather than specifically Western possibilities with their own special history.

This interpretation of the Greeks suggests that while technology and metaphysics are a specific Western destiny, they are also the way the West has lived the "fallenness among beings" that Heidegger refers to in *Being and Time* and in the quotation from the *Spiegel* interview cited in the last chapter. Every world is liable to the fallenness amid beings that levels out what has been granted and forgets the propriative event and its withdrawal. In the West that forgetfulness has received a special emphasis through the dominance of the metaphysical understanding of time and of being with its emphasis on presence and foundations. But fallenness remains a more basic characterization than metaphysics. From Heidegger's "Dialogue on Language" he seems to believe that the metaphysical and subjectivist mode of fallenness may not have been the destiny of Asia, but that does not mean the Asians are exempt from fallenness amid beings.

If this is the case, it suggests how Heidegger might be thinking that the West's granting of presence could threaten the East without there being any influence for good in the other direction. If the West's granting of presence embodied in a special way the fallenness that all

worlds are liable to, it could engage those ever-present tendencies in the Asian world. But that Asian world could have nothing positive to give the West, since the authentic possibilities opened up were different in the two cases. For healing and growth each culture would have to look to its own deeper possibilities.

Thus traditions could influence each other if their fallen modes were similar. For example, the way man and nature stand together differs immensely in paintings by French and Chinese artists, or in Italian and Japanese gardens. But both Europeans and Asians often debase a nature that is encountered as a source of materials to be exploited. The effects of this in Europe and in Japan are not so different. The two traditions could be different in their deep authentic possibilities but similar enough in their fallen debased modes.

Such could be the case whether the Asian world was thought of as dominated by one ruling understanding of being or as more like the postmetaphysical age we in the West might hope for. But in the latter case, which fits better with some of Heidegger's remarks, it is not as clear why Asia cannot be of help to us at least in the general way of helping us take the step back to the propriative event.

Although in the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger states that the West cannot be saved from outside, it has been rumored that he was quite impressed with the writings on Zen by D. T. Suzuki (see Chang 1977). I imagine that when expressing such opinions Heidegger was finding in the Japanese writer something similar to the step back he was trying to expound in a nonmetaphysical way. Notice, though, that this is not strictly an influence opening the West to new possibilities but an encouragement to live our tradition in the way in which all grantings of unconcealment should be lived.

These explanations of the asymmetrical relation between West and East seem plausible, though they are not found in Heidegger's text. Notice that they demand a strong unity within the granting of unconcealment in each tradition. If there were inner multiplicity and division within the granting that empowers each tradition, there would be an easier possibility of mutual influence than Heidegger seems to allow. Inner multiplicity within the two worlds would furnish many occasions for contact, since it is not clear what it would mean to claim that every aspect of traditions with inner multiplicity was completely different. Only a strict unity of what is granted within each tradition can make sense of Heidegger's views about how the traditions relate. Each



world retrieves its own possibilities. Heidegger would like to see each tradition keep to itself and cultivate the possibilities granted within its own garden, while everyone shares in the overarching awareness of the finitude of the propriative event. Indeed, given the priority and unity of the propriative event, that is all we can ever do.<sup>15</sup>

I may seem to be laboriously overinterpreting a few scattered remarks on topics Heidegger admitted he knew little about. But my point is not to question his knowledge of Asia. It is rather to show how, in a case where his formidable historical knowledge does not come into play, his basic presuppositions become very clear. It becomes obvious that there is some unitary granting of presence and that it is simply prior to anything that happens in ordinary history or the ordinary encounters of two cultures. It also becomes apparent that there is something inadequate and unrealistic in this approach.

What has happened to the diversity of peoples and the influences and borrowings that happen continuously in history? They have been subordinated to the history of being. Ordinary talk about assimilation and influence is not at the right level of discourse. Besides being "without a why," the propriative event is also "without a how." The division between the deep history of being and the surface history of ordinary events seems unbridgeable, and so it must remain if Heidegger is to be able to perform his step back.

Yet it seems improbable. For example, the Japanese today live in a difficult multiple world where traditional and Western ways of life conflict and interpenetrate. This conflict is laid upon them as something they find themselves within and cannot choose not to face. This did not happen because of some possibility wholly within the Japanese tradition; it was in large measure due to developments in the West, which thrust itself upon Japan. There is a rhythm of openness and closure in Japanese history that makes it easier to take in Western ways, but these ways can also be forced into the lived world of peoples who do not have that openness, such as the Chinese. It seems improbable to demand that in all cases when traditions encounter each other there is a destiny in each for the encounter.

For both Hegel and Heidegger the history of the West assumes great importance for understanding its culmination in modernity. Both insist that history is not an affair of blind chance; both distinguish an outer from an inner history, though Hegel connects the two in a way Heidegger does not. Both see thought as retrospective, opening a path for the future by gathering

from the past. They agree that the gathering together occurring in history is not something we do as individuals, that we are gathered up whether we will or not.

In that gathering the Greek beginning plays a determining role, especially for Heidegger. That beginning opens the possibilities we follow. The immediacy and unity of that appropriation cannot be overcome. For Hegel the Greek beginning is only part of a larger development that makes the West's history continuous with the rest of the world. If the unity of his worldwide teleology seems difficult to accept today, perhaps we should say the same about the opposed kind of unity we find in Heidegger. Heidegger opts for discontinuity between unified destinies, but then he has no way to talk about the interactions that occur. It may be that both thinkers insist too much on unity.<sup>16</sup>

Heidegger would insist that the immediate and unified granting that we experience is not to be thought of as if it were some constantly present entity. Nor is the act of retrieving possibilities some blank acceptance. Certainly the world opened to us is within all the difference and negation of the propriative event so well described in *Identity and Difference* and in the passages about the fourfold. But for all this the world that is opened retains its overall unity and immediate givenness. Heidegger makes and remakes his step back, showing how even in texts from the height of the metaphysical tradition the process of unconcealment and its self-concealing can be found alluded to as the unspoken and the unthought. His readings stay within the opposition between the unified meaning of the world that is opened and the self-concealing opening of that world.

"Hegel" was right that there is something amiss in Heidegger's juxtaposition of a formal description of the opening with the immediate and unified call or meaning found in each epoch or era.

Heidegger does not mean the step back to be a meta-position above the world. It is supposed to bring us closer to the happening of the world around us, open us to the sky and the earth, and let us experience ourselves in our deepest calling. But the immediacy and unity of what is granted, which are crucial to the step back as Heidegger performs it, have the effect of stopping us halfway and making the step back a move to a vantage point from which the naive ones like scientists and politicians can be told what they are really doing. Heidegger's quietism and the self-indulgent sound of his proclamations of our powerlessness can be traced to this unity and

primacy of what is granted. They allow him to behave as an a priori philosopher, assured ahead of time that any phenomenon of modernity brought to his attention is fully under the call of universal imposition.

So it would seem that Heidegger's overcoming of modernity does not succeed even on its own terms. We do not attain the promise of deconstructive living, and we do not escape the modern oscillation between what we must simply accept and a version of the distanced transcendental self. Perhaps there is more to be thought about our situation, other ways to take advantage of the strategy that we have seen in Hegel and Heidegger and have pursued through their mutual criticism.

Could we find a way to avoid the standard self-description of modernity and avoid the Hegelian totality but not end up with Heidegger's emphasis on unity and the protective insulation Heidegger's transcendental method places between his conditions and ordinary events and tales?

## Notes

### 10. Hegel Versus Heidegger

1. See "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" (77-78/390). For an illuminating discussion of the issues involved, which shows that this change was not as radical as it might seem, see the early pages of Vitiello's essay "Aletheia: L'esperienza della verità in Heidegger" (Vitiello 1979, 151ff).
2. "Heidegger's purpose was not to restore ancient Greece but to explicate what it left implicit and to articulate what it left unsaid, i.e., *lethe* "forgetfulness," the darkness from which unconcealment rises in its finitude and man's transcendence" (Sheehan 1983, 311).
3. On this "happening," see Pöggeler (1970a, 375).
4. For discussions of the complex differences in the senses of negation and difference in the two thinkers, see Vitiello (1978, chap. 1 and 2) and Taminioux (1977, chap. 6 and 7).
5. On Heidegger and the problem of time in Hegel, see Vitiello (1978, chap. 1).

6. For analyses of Hegel as a subjectivist, see Van der Meulen (1953), Smith (1968), and Bröcker (1965). For critical treatments of Heidegger's analysis in "Hegel's Concept of Experience" and the claim that Hegel is a super-Cartesian, see Pöggeler (1982), Ricci-Garotti's "Leggendo Heidegger che legge Hegel" and "Heidegger contra Hegel?" (1968), Gadamer (1976, 11-12, 35-36, 77-79, 107), Dove (1970), Kolb (1982). Derrida (1982, 313f) expounds a subtle sense in which subjectivity remains in its being-transcended, though this chiefly results in the reaffirmation of Hegel's categories as ontotheological.
7. There is also a historical reason for Heidegger's reading of Hegel as a Cartesian. In his early years one of Hegel's preoccupations was to integrate persons into an ontology involving an absolute conceived in a way reminiscent of Spinoza and Neoplatonism. At that time this program provided Hegel and his friends with weapons to overcome what they took as weaknesses in Kant's philosophy. When Hegel found a way to conceive the absolute in terms of life that returns to itself through otherness, his language often made it sound as if this was intended as an absolute ego, and in the early Jena years it may have been so. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* itself shows strains of Hegel's changing conceptions of the absolute, which is one reason I have preferred the later writings, which are clearer on the place they assign to subjectivity and ego.
8. Taminaux's chapters 7 and 8 (1977) are devoted to careful discussion of Hegel and Heidegger. Cf. also Vitiello (1978, chap. 1 and 2) and the similar conclusion he draws (42). There are more "open" readings of Hegel in which his foundationalist goals are subdued. In my opinion such interpretations read more recent ideas into Hegel. I have tried to support this opinion by my reading of Hegel's logic on the importance of overarching unity and self-coincidence. If I am correct, when "open Hegelianism" moves away from his emphasis on closure, it follows the right direction for our thought, but does not give an accurate reading of Hegel himself. Our problem is to keep something like Hegel's motion and mutual relation while forgoing his closure and self-transparency. He worked hard, however, to make these inseparable, and we cannot just accept part of his system. Its basic ideas have to be rethought.
9. On Heidegger and Kierkegaard in relation to Hegel, see Heidegger's remarks in *Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes* (197). See also Vattimo (1980, 59-60) and Schmitt (1977, 88).

10. In the lectures that make up *Identity and Difference* Heidegger attempts to turn many of Hegel's key words against Hegel's own text. We can see what will later be called a deconstructive analysis at work. For a different attempt to show that Hegel's language leads beyond him, see Gadamer (1976, 101, 113).
11. On the question of finitude in Hegel's absolute knowledge, see Vitiello (1978, 95-101) and Pöggeler (1982, 44).
12. The phrase is from Vitiello (1978, 61).
13. A similar difficulty in relating the two histories is discussed by Gillespie (1984, 171ff).
14. Throughout this study I have avoided the term *ontological difference*, preferring other terms from the later Heidegger. We could rephrase the current questions in terms of that difference: to what degree does the ontological difference involve a distinction of form from content, and to what degree must it involve immediacy and unity in the meaning of being granted to us? These questions become interesting when one goes beyond the reflex response that Heidegger must be avoiding all such metaphysics and looks instead at Heidegger's actual practice. We can see that there is room for less unity within our world than Heidegger urges upon us.
15. J. L. Mehta discusses various suggestions in Heidegger's thought for dialogue between East and West (1971, 246ff; slightly expanded in 1976, 464ff). Mehta argues that Heidegger discusses structures of human existence overall and not structures of the local Western tradition, though the West has carried fallenness amid beings to an extreme degree. (Along with Heidegger he has no explanation for this Western extremity except the special dispensation granted to the West; ordinary historical explanations cannot help him in this matter.) Mehta reads in Heidegger the injunction for each tradition to go back to its own roots to recover the impetus and possibilities in its primal words while confronting and going beyond the forced Europeanization of the world. However, the problems I indicated reappear in Mehta's discussion. According to Heidegger, the shared relation of various traditions to the propriative event has no shared content. The space opened to each tradition is too different to allow straightforward mutual assistance. What is shared is the possibility of each making the move from its own granted space to the propriative event itself. Mehta sees this move prefigured in the non-Western traditions' various indigenous critiques of representative thought. Yet the move to the propriative event is deconstructive; it will not bring the spaces of the various traditions into

alignment, nor will it allow the unification that Mehta claims is Heidegger's goal: the "planetary construction" of a "universal basic language of Truth from which the languages of the different philosophical and religious traditions can be derived." There is in Heidegger's move no basis for a new shared tradition, only the shared awareness of finitude. Mehta's remarks make even more puzzling why Heidegger says the West cannot be helped by the East. After all, in Mehta's version the West (in the person of Heidegger) is helping the East move to the propriative event within its own traditions. Why does this relation remain asymmetrical? Mehta's discussion provides no answer.

16. On the peculiar dominance of beginnings in Heidegger's historical thought, see Haar (1980).