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## Hegel and Self-Actualization

Early in 1979 I was asked to review a book by Peter Koestenbaum which was about putting psychotherapy on a better philosophical basis. The book was interesting, but there were things about it which bothered me. It seemed that if I were to do justice to it, I would have to think more about my own philosophical position. So I went to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, which I had glanced at before, but never read properly, and also to an exposition of it by Murray Greene (*Hegel on the Soul*, Martinus Nijhoff 1972). I have loved Hegel since 1950, when I was introduced to his work by Harold Walsby, and have related his work to personal growth before, running workshops on *Dialectics as a felt experience*.

And what happened was that I found Hegel extraordinarily illuminating much more powerful than the vague notions of "energy" that are floating around at the moment, or the various ideas put together according to the whim of each individual practitioner - a touch of existentialism, a drop of Taoism, a smidgin of Seth, a dash of feminism, a pennyweight of Jung, a string of Perls. . .

Hegel says there are three levels of mind - the Primary Level, the Social Level and the Realised Level.\* Self development consists in moving up the levels from the Primary Level, through the Social Level, to the Realised Level. And each one *contradicts* the previous one, so that we have to *reject* one to go on to the next. The Primary Level is most to do with one-sided subjectivity, the Social Level is most to do with one-sided objectivity, and the Realised level is subjectivity on a higher level - a new kind of subjectivity which includes but surpasses one-sided objectivity - an objective subjectivity, in fact. Rationality + runs through all of the levels.

This is a rough outline, which is very abstract and unrevealing. Let us now try to put some flesh on the bones.

Running through the whole thing is an enormous respect for Mind, which can also be translated as Spirit, or rational Spirit. This Mind or Spirit runs through the whole thing - all the levels - and is at the base of them all. At the very centre and origin of the Primary Level, as it were, informing it and perpetually creating it, is Spirit, which Hegel says is "absolutely restless being, pure activity". Some people might want to call it Energy, but we can come back to that issue later.

## Primary Level

The Primary level is by no means simple - it is extraordinarily rich. In the first place, it has the whole of heredity going into it. We are individuals within a family, within a nation, within a race, within a continent, within a climatic zone, and all these have had their effect over many generations in playing up some characteristics (physical and behavioural) and playing down others. Right from the start, all this is within us. (It is tempting for us to go back further into an evolutionary perspective, but Hegel's way of doing this is rather different.)

Also we have developmental processes all going on within us in a programmed way. The process of maturation builds on the hereditary constitution, uses it and unifies it within a particular womb at a particular time and place. This is just a little more like us than the totally external and pre-existing hereditary matters previously mentioned, but the main emphasis is still on the external, the programmed, the unchosen.

And again we have our senses developing from a very early stage. This again is something physical, and to an extent programmed - we cannot decide, in the womb, not to have a sense of touch, a sense of hearing and so forth - but as soon as information starts coming through the senses, it starts to have meaning and to arouse emotion.

So at the very base of the Primary Level, as it were, there are all these physical and rather programmed things going on. All these take their effect in the womb, long before we are born. They have to do with our very existence, our survival.

It is as if the right to exist came logically before every other right, and the need to exist came before every other need.

But we now go on to a second phase within the Primary level. Hegel says that there is a very important *feeling* phase here too. And this feeling phase is all about experiencing things *directly*, without any kind of mediation or interpretation. This we do in relation to our interior states. My own feeling of pain, rage or fear is not something I have to infer or judge, and my bodily reactions of screaming or pounding or shaking are not events which I have to construct or interpret. And Hegel actually calls this a *magical* relationship - "the magic which is devoid of any mediation whatever is that which the individual mind exercises over its *own* bodily nature. . ." We don't have to work out how to lift our arm - we just do it. And this direct knowledge is not only magical in this sense - it is also extremely accurate. A baby is in no doubt as to whether it is miserable or not, and in no doubt about how to scream if it does. And it is *right* about these things.

Hegel goes on to say that this kind of direct perception without any need for mediation (by fallible interpretation, attribution of meanings, judgement about what things are, etc.) is a kind of clairvoyance - an openness to the

internal world which is particularly sensitive. It can lead to a very interesting phenomenon in the adult, which is remarked on in the following way:

*. . .in that state noble natures experience a wealth of noble feelings, their true self, their better spiritual side, which often appears to them as a special guardian angel.*

Now this is fascinating and challenging, because what Hegel is obviously talking about here is the Transpersonal Self. He is, then, denying that such perceptions belong to the Realised Level, which is, I believe, where transpersonal psychology would like to locate them. Many things, in fact, which Assagioli or Jung would say belong to the higher levels of our nature are firmly placed by Hegel in this Primary Level.

One of the most crucial is the whole question of our knowledge of the world and of other people. We are often told today that we have amazing powers of intuition, clairvoyance, telepathy, telekinesis, etc., if we would only cultivate them. (Judith Skutch in America even organises a Course in Miracles.) Hegel says firmly that this kind of magical knowledge only exists in relation to our own interior states; to think that we can know other people or the outside world in this same direct way is just an illusion. We have to go through all the pain and error of getting to know things and people in all the usual ways of coming-to-know which are very ordinary and basic.

There is one exception to this which is very interesting. Hegel says that we can sometimes get into someone else's mind. But this only happens when one person takes over another person's mind, and imposes their own mind upon the other person's mind. This happens in three main types of situation: firstly in the womb, where Hegel says that the mother's psyche can invade that of the foetus, virtually taking it over. The foetus has so little sense of self that it finds it hard or impossible to tell which are its own thoughts, feelings, reactions, etc., and which are those of its mother. (This is fascinating reading to those of us who have been following Frank Lake's very recent thoughts about how the foetus is virtually "marinated" in the mother's feelings.); secondly this can happen in the case of certain very sensitive women friends, certain husbands and wives, certain brothers and sisters, etc. There can be a sense of what Hegel call an "undivided psychic unity" between such couples. (Many of us have had such experiences at times, or know of people to whom this has happened, and there are even some scientifically attested cases now of this happening under laboratory conditions.); and thirdly in the case of hypnosis, which has of course been studied and substantiated far more today than it was in Hegel's day.

All this ties in very much with the views of people like Ehrenzweig about telepathy. He points out that the problem with telepathy is that you get spatial, temporal and symbolic scatter. That is, for example, you get a strong impression of a tiger. But you can't know if it's a tiger a thousand miles away or a few yards; a tiger today or a month ago - or a month hence; a real tiger, or a symbol for your father. That is exactly what would be the case if telepathy

were to do with the Primary Level, rather than to do with some more highly developed level of consciousness.

So the second phase of the Primary Level is very much to do with this kind of immediate apprehension, very accurate in relation to our own internal states, but very inaccurate in relation to the outside world. (The trouble is that it gives itself credit for being very highly accurate in relation to the outside world. It jumps to conclusions, as we shall see in more detail later, and takes them for facts.) But it also has to do with neurosis and psychosis.

Hegel's ideas about mental distress, formed at a time when today's knowledge of psychiatric diagnosis was hardly in its infancy, make a surprising amount of sense. Firstly he says that the Primary Level of mind is a highly complex world - "a totality of infinitely many distinct determinatenesses" which come together in unity. "We have within us a countless host of relationships and connections which are always with us" and these perpetually differentiate themselves and become distinct entities. In other words, he is saying something which is highly compatible with today's up-to-date notions of subpersonalities, internal objects, complexes, ego states and so forth. And his idea of mental distress is that one of these takes over, separates itself from the rest, become flat and one-dimensional and highly predictable. And this one-sided self then pretends to be the whole person, "thereby becoming a purely formal, empty, abstract subjectivity."

On this reasoning, therapy would be mainly about overcoming this one-sidedness, and restoring the connections with the other parts of the person. And in doing this, Hegel says, we can always appeal to the patient's rationality, because Spirit is always there and always rational, underlying everything else. Good therapy, says Hegel, "presupposes the patient's rationality, and in that assumption has the sound basis for dealing with him on this side - just as in the case of bodily disease and the physician bases his treatment on the vitality which as such still contains health."

This suggests what we have already hinted at, that Hegel sees the connection between mind and body to be a very intimate one, particularly at this Primary Level of mind.

*Spirit is not. . . a soul-thing only externally connected with the body, but is inwardly bound to the latter by the unity of the Notion.*

It does not surprise us, then, when he says that "The point is that insanity must be grasped essentially as an illness at once mental and physical." Again he is very up-to-date, because this is a point that is now agreed both by the most orthodox and by the most unorthodox.

Where it is not agreed, of course, is by the existentialists, who insist that neurosis/psychosis is a free choice, and that it must be left to the patient

to move out of it. Hegel is much more with the Alan Watts of *Psychotherapy East and West*, where he talks about the *upaya* of the *guru* - the ways in which the student is *tricked* into insights.

*It is true that the insane are extremely distrustful when they notice that attempts are being made to wear them away from their fixed idea. Yet at the same time they are stupid and easily taken by surprise. They can therefore not infrequently be cured by someone pretending to enter into their delusion and then suddenly doing something in which the patient catches a glimpse of liberation from his imagined complaint.*

It is obvious from his language here that Hegel is no therapist, but rather a philosopher looking at things from the standpoint of an outside spectator, but in spite of the offensiveness of his remarks, the basic point he is making does run through most of the psychotherapy which works. We *do* go along with the patient or client; we *do* then suggest role-reversal, or contradiction of a statement made, or linking the present feeling with some other situation, or whatever. We *do* trick the client into insight, or into catharsis, or into some new sensation, if we are using any of the techniques at our disposal.

This issue of Hegel's language is worth a note in passing. He does seem to "look down on" the patient or client in a way that would seem unacceptable to us today, and yet what he says does often seem very accurate. For example, he says:

*The passion of vanity and pride is the chief cause of this psychical self-imprisonment.*

This sounds awfully punitive, and is certainly not the kind of thing one would want to say to the person involved. And yet it is awfully similar to the kind of thing which Horney and Mowrer have both emphasised (and others, too, of course) in pointing to the actual dynamics involved. And I personally find it quite refreshing to have it spoken out so boldly. It doesn't tell us how to do therapy, but it does tell us how to clear our minds.

And what is also of great interest here is the way in which Hegel makes it clear that we have to go down into the Primary Level, this level of immediate feeling and existence, in order to do effective and fundamental therapy. Not only is he supporting the basic idea that regression is necessary for effective therapy, but also he is asserting that transpersonal therapeutic work, too, takes place at this level.

And he is even up-to-date in his ideas about the therapeutic relationship. Richard Schuster, in the Winter 1979 issue of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, talks about the best empathy being based on the kind of mindfulness which can be attained through meditation. In this state, he says, "it seems to rely heavily on direct-intuitive modes of perception. In addition the therapist must try to allow himself or herself to 'unite' with the client yet remain separate. The therapist must be alert and aware of all nuances that arise within or

around him or her, yet must still be in experiential contact with the client." And Hegel talks about rapport as a phenomenon in which the person "knows, sees and feels, not merely *about* someone else but *in* someone else and, without directly turning his attention to the individual, *immediately shares* his feelings, contains the other individual's feelings as his *own*." But what Hegel makes clear, and Schuster does not, is that this kind of empathy and rapport is very much open to illusion. It needs to be checked out and tested, because it can be wrong - just as the dream often has greater clarity than waking life, but is no more trustworthy for that reason.

Pressing on now, Hegel also says that in the Primary Level we find all the habits and skills of a person - all those things which we have relegated to "automatic pilot".

These habits, he says, have great advantages and disadvantages at the same time. On the one hand they put an end to the dividedness of the self, and bring one to a state of being-at-home-with-oneself; but on the other, habit makes a man its slave. But habits are important to understand, because very often they express very well the intimate unity of body and mind which Hegel emphasises again and again. "I must give my body its due, must take care of it, keep it healthy and strong, and must not therefore despise it or treat it as an enemy." But further than this, I have to *train* my body if I want to realise my aims through it - I have to learn to write, or drive a car, or speak or sing in public. And every time I do this, I gain freedom in one way, and lose it in another. At the moment when my mind *pervades* the activity most thoroughly, it also *deserts* it.

Also, of course, our bodily habits - the way we walk and talk, our expressive gestures, the way we hold our face, our general posture and attitude - are formed by the earlier self-divisions we have discussed. Hegel would agree very much with people like Reich and Rolf and Feldenkrais that just by looking at someone standing, walking and talking it is possible to say a great deal about them. But he also says that you can't make a science out of this, because the relation between mind and body is always complex and variable, by no means simple and fixed. Our conclusions should be treated as intuitions, and checked out carefully.

So all the way through this discussion of the Primary Level, Hegel is saying that our knowledge at this stage is subjective rather than objective. We continually make the mistake of thinking it is more objective than it really is. And because all the time we are talking about the mind, and because mind is essentially rational, we think we are being rational in our subjectivity. This leads to the phenomenon which Berne called "the little professor", where we leap to conclusions and then proceed to justify them. Making up theories on the basis of thoroughly inadequate evidence, and then coming to decisions on the basis of these theories - that is exactly what subjective mind does. And this is, of course, exactly what babies do, according to Klein, Laing, Lake, Janov, Grof and numerous and sundry other people. As Berne says, the little professor can be extremely intuitive, can "pick up" a great deal

- but it can be right or wrong. And because the little professor is more intent on having a theory than checking it, s/he never finds out whether s/he is right or wrong. S/he just assumes s/he is right.

### **Social Level**

What rescues us from this state is our entry into the Social Level, and our invention of a social ego. This appears at first as a cataclysm.

Remember the whole thrust of the dialectical position, which stands behind everything Hegel says, that development takes place through contradiction. Because the Social Level *contradicts* the primary level, entry into it is painful. It costs something.

We are leaving behind a realm where all the emphasis is on subjectivity, and entering into one where all the emphasis is on objectivity. Things are *not* what we thought they were. They have their own nature, which may be nothing to do with us - but at first this feels like "*opposed to us*".

We first enter this level by finding something which *resists* us. But resistance implies freedom (as Walsby has pointed out and elaborated very fruitfully). And Hegel makes it clear that he sees freedom as basic to human nature. The substance of mind is freedom, as he says. At the Primary Level, this is often lost sight of, because there may be nothing to contrast it with. But as soon as it is contradicted, we become aware of our strong and fundamental need to assert our freedom.

*Whereas the animal is silent or expresses its pain only by groaning, the child makes known its wants by screaming. By this ideal activity, the child shows that it is straightway imbued with the certainty that it has a right to demand from the outer world the satisfaction of its needs.*

So the act of saying "No" (as Reich and Lowen have urged) is crucial to entry into this new level of consciousness. By saying "No" to the world, we become aware of our own need for freedom; and when the world says "No" to us, we are forced to recognise its independent reality.

But once we accept its independent reality, we can start to control it. And this is a new kind of control, which we do not have at the primary level. It is control by assuming that things are fixed, firm, constant and predictable. Piaget, Mahler and others have now traced the way in which this happens in the child's development. But because they are looking from the outside, they miss the traumatic nature of the discovery that objects exist, that objects resist us, and that we are an object like other objects.

Because it is now that we discover that we are not just an "I" - we are also a "me". (This is the bit that Mead gets importantly wrong.) This may come about, as Duval and Wicklund suggest, at the first moment when we are first

convinced that we have done something wrong. At this moment two ideas which are there already, but separate, come suddenly together - the ideas of "what I want" and the ideas of "bad" (or not OK). At that moment I become an object to myself. And ever after this, I am able to say "No" to me.

This Social Level type of approach now becomes our way of relating to the world more and more. It stands in front of the Primary Level, as it were, and more and more eclipses it.

This may well link with Winnicott's idea (for which there are parallels in many other investigators into this area) that what happens is that the subjective self gets pushed down into a safe but impotent place, and the social self gets pushed forward as a role-playing mask, ready to perform as required.

These possible parallels in therapy and psychology do sometimes give the impression that the painfulness of this process is something culpable - something done by the parents to the poor unsuspecting baby. Now it may be true that the baby blames the parents - and this could certainly have implications for later life - but from our standpoint as philosophers this would be wrong. Hegel says very clearly:

*The substance of mind is freedom. . . But the Other, the negative, contradiction, disunity, also belongs to the nature of mind. In this disunity lies the possibility of pain.*

So Hegel, like Klein (but for different reasons) is saying that there is no way of avoiding the pain of having to create a social ego, distinct and split off from our primary ego. In fact, it is only the act of creating the social ego which also brings into being the primary ego. (Before that it was more like what Hegel calls a "world-soul".)

And so we get the paradox that the very moment when we first get a real sense of being an "I" we also get the sense that this "I" is not OK, and that we have to produce a "me" which will be OK, or at least "OK" in the sense of being acceptable. We discover the "I" only to have to put it aside.

But in putting it aside we change it. It becomes open to argument; and this changes it radically. As Hegel says:

*The "I" is the lightning which pierces through the natural soul (the Primary Level, as we have renamed it) and consumes its natural being.*

So this loss of innocence (of Eden) is nothing to be sad about - it is part of a process of development which is dialectical, and therefore never really loses anything, but takes it up, at a later stage, into a higher level where it becomes in reality what it only wished to be in the first place. As Hegel says very well:



*In its immediacy (that is, at Primal Level) mind is free only implicitly, in principle or potentially, not yet in actuality; actual freedom. . . has to be brought into being by mind's own activity.*

It is important, too, not to idealise the Primary Level and to regard it as some kind of repository for all that is good or natural. It is very basic and very well worth understanding and coming to terms with, as we shall see later, but it is also very lacking in various ways:

*Since the "I" (the ego at the social level) enters into conflict with external objects, it is superior to the impotent natural soul (the ego at Primary Level) which is entrapped, so to speak, in a childlike unity with the world, to the soul in which, just because it is impotent, fall the states of mental disease we have previously considered.*

What we have reached now is a state of consciousness to which objectivity is extremely important. "A thing is what it is, and not another thing." And this is, of course, the type of consciousness which is pushed by our educational system. We are encouraged to be more and more objective, and to mistrust and push under our subjective nature.

We are taught not merely to recognise the existence of external objects and other people, but also that the right way to approach all these things is in a scientific way. Science becomes the essence, the exemplar of objectivity. "If you want to know what *real* objectivity is like", we are told, "look at science". And of course the highest kind of science, as we are also told, is that which is most mathematical. And so we are introduced to the idea of proof. We can not only recognise things as independent of us; we can also prove that they *must* be as they are.

And we then proceed to adopt the same approach to the relations between things - thus arriving at the idea of a scientific law.

We have gone rather fast over this, but in fact, of course, it requires a real obsession with the natural world - as Walsby has urged most strongly - to arrive at this point. We learn a tremendous amount by adopting this approach. We are genuinely engaged with this effort at overcoming our ignorance. It is an effort at getting back the freedom - the mastery - which we felt we had at the start. But because of the way in which we have excluded our subjectivity from the process, there is something lifeless about the result:

*The merely abstractive, intellectual consciousness (at the Social Level) does not as yet. . . succeed in developing dialectically from one of these determinations its opposite; this unity still remains for this consciousness something dead.*

It is here that we find formal logic, and particularly mathematical logic, seeming to be the answer to everything. In fact, this is taken to be the essence

of rationality at this stage. At the heart of science is mathematics, and at the heart of mathematics is symbolic logic. If only everything could be reduced to symbolic logic, we think at this stage, there would be world peace, because everybody would be able to understand everything clearly!

So at this Social Level, rationality is seen as being the answer to everything, and rationality is identified ultimately with some version of formal logic.

So far, we have only been concerned with the outside world, as it is understood at this social level; but also and equally important, says Hegel, is our understanding of ourselves at this level. Let us go back, then, to the beginning of this level again, and remember the nature of the confrontation which takes place then. We are met by objects which resist us, and deny our freedom.

The first way in which we find we can overcome this opposition is by *using* it. In that way we can make it *ours*. We can take off the curse, as it were, by turning what was resisting us into something which works for us. And the classical way of doing this is by eating or drinking it. In this way we turn people into sources.

Some American philosopher asked the question: "How does the food Miss Mary eats become part of Miss Mary?" Hegel actually answers this question, but the answer is too long to quote here, and would only distract us from our main purpose.

But it is interesting that Hegel, like Perls, lays so much emphasis on appetite as aggressive, and as necessarily so: "Thus appetite in its satisfaction is always destructive, and in its content selfish." And, again like Perls, he teaches us that this action gives us satisfaction - it is a way of giving ourselves pleasure, of loving ourselves. And it is the other side of the same process which split us in what seemed a bad way: there we had to suppress our subjectivity in its separation; but now we are satisfying our subjectivity in its separation. (Here we are laying stress on the Jungian faculty of Sensation, just as before in this level we were laying stress on the Thinking faculty; Sensation and Thinking go together at this level.) There is still a split, but now we are using the split in a positive way. We can look on our own self as an other and say - "I know what will satisfy me." And this is the beginning of our self-knowledge.

But how about when we meet another person? How do we relate to another person at this stage? Hegel says - by recognition. (Remember Berne's definition of a stroke as a sign of recognition.) Having first seen people as sources (of food, touch, comfort, etc.) we now go on to see them as recognisably like ourselves. This is someone like me, capable of benefiting or harming me. And Hegel sees this very much as a relation of contradiction - I am opposed to the other. And in a striking passage he contrasts this with the kind of relationships we had at the subjective stage, when we were open and vulnerable:

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*We face here the tremendous contradiction that, on the one hand, the 'I' is wholly universal, absolutely pervasive, and interrupted by no limit, is the universal essence common to all men, the two mutually related selves therefore constituting one identity, constituting, so to speak, one light; and yet, on the other hand, they are also two selves rigidly and unyieldingly confronting each other, each existing as a reflection-into-self, as absolutely distinct from and impenetrable by the other.*

This puts the "Gestalt prayer" and Ed Elkin's revision of it, the "transpersonal Gestalt prayer" into the proper context; they are both true, both accurate. But they are talking about different levels of consciousness.

What can happen, of course, in this opposition of one person to another, is that one dominates the other. And the archetypal expression of this relation of dominance and submission, according to Hegel, is the relation of master and slave. And here he makes another paradoxical point - because the slave is made to care about human being, the slave learns an important lesson that the master can avoid. The slave learns self-control, learns how not to be selfish, learns how to serve others. And if we want to arrive at what Hegel calls "universal self-consciousness" we have to go through this painful experience, of dependence upon another. But obedience to the will of another person is only the beginning of wisdom, says Hegel, because ultimately what we have to learn is obedience to what is universally rational - what Mary Parker Follett calls the law of the situation. And the master ultimately has to learn this just as much as the slave.

Once having learned these lessons, we can at last perceive the truth which Hegel offers in language which is crystal clear: "I am only truly free when the other is also free and is recognised by me as free." But he does not offer any easy way to this kind of freedom. Because of the contradiction between us and others (which at times reminds us of Sartre's emphasis on the isolation of each person) and because relations of domination and submission are in practice so common (in his day as in ours) we may have to fight for our freedom.

*Only through struggle, therefore, can freedom (at this Social Level) be won; the assertion that one is free does not suffice to make one so; at this stage, humanity demonstrates the capacity for freedom only by risking everything, even life itself.*

Here he is talking about the struggle for individuality, for recognition as a person, as a group, as a nation or whatever. It applies to adolescents, to women, to blacks, to gays and to many liberation groups of all kinds. But it is important to see that this is a *liberal* kind of individuality and freedom. It does not have the developmental awareness of socialism or communism. It is the kind of approach to freedom which emphasises Free Trade, Free Speech, Freedom of Assembly and so forth. It asserts the freedom of each

person to assert his own interests, except only insofar as they infringe the interests of others. In other words, just as *things* are seen as fully determined and as conforming to the laws of logic, etc., so in a similar way *people* are seen as social atoms, and also ultimately understandable in a scientific way, (using a notion of science which takes over entirely from natural science).

And so Hegel says that even at the highest reach of the Social Level, our understanding of things and people is still "abstract and formal", It is still dead. This does not matter so much with things, because most of them are dead too. But it does matter with human beings, because they are living, growing and developing, and this kind of thinking cannot handle such matters. It is a one-sided objectivity which can only establish a formal correctness, not a fully-rounded truth.

Nevertheless, going through this whole level is necessary. Without this detailed obsession with things, without this building up of what Freud called a strong ego, without these painful struggles with people, we just do not know enough to go on to anything better.

### **Realized Level**

So what is it we go on to? It is what we have called the Realized Level. Just as the Social Level contradicts the Primary Level, so the Realised Level contradicts the Social Level. If we wish to use such terms (which Hegel actually does not) so we can say that the Primary Level is the thesis, the Social Level is the antithesis, and the Realized Level is the synthesis. The Realized Level is thus Primary Level raised to a new level of consciousness. The way in which it emerges is by going back to the Primary Level, rescuing what is found there, and raising it to a new kind of awareness. In other words, what we have here is a new kind of subjectivity - but a subjectivity which has *been through* the Social Level, and is therefore much better informed and educated, much stronger and less vulnerable.

The example he gives at greatest length is the question of feeling. Feeling at the Primary Level, he says, is merely subjective - something which happens, which sweeps over us, which takes us unawares. Feeling at the Social Level is merely objective, and has to do with basic sensations of the outside world - contact with what is out there. But feeling at the Realized Level is more appropriately called intuition, or intelligent perception. It is both objective and subjective. Here is what Hegel says about intuition:

*Mindful, true intuition. . . apprehends the genuine substance of the object. A talented historian, for example, has before him a vivid intuition of the circumstances and events he is to describe; on the other hand, one who has no talent for writing history confines himself to details and overlooks what is essential. . . Only thinking that is firmly based on an intuitive grasp of the substance of the subject-matter can, without deserting the truth, go on to treat of the details.*

What we are doing, therefore, in moving to the Realized Level, is opening up the Primary Level in a new way. It is as if all our attempts to learn in the Social Level had the effect of pushing down and compressing the Primary Level, so that it took up less and less room, so to speak. We could almost forget it were there, so to speak, were it not for dreams and mistakes to remind us. But now we are releasing material from the Primary Level and bringing it to light on the other side of the Social Level. As Freud put it, we are making the unconscious conscious. The Social Level negated the Primary Level, and now we are negating that negation.

We are now able deliberately to use images and symbols instead of being at the mercy of them, as we are with the dreams and daydreams of the Primary Level. And what Hegel says about this is highly compatible with the idea of using guided fantasy (as in psychosynthesis) to rescue material from the Primary Level on purpose, and raise it to consciousness in such a way that it can be used for our further education on this new level.

Similarly, instead of just having memories pop up in no particular order, we can start deliberately to search for those memories which will be most useful to us -recovering all those events which we pushed down or thrust aside at some point in our past, and which are still significant for us (Janov's ideas about trauma are highly relevant to this). But in speaking of memory, Hegel attaches particular importance to words. Because words express the full power of mind better than pictorial (or other sensory ) images, memories which involve words in some way are more important for this Realized Level than those which are merely about images. This fits very well with all those forms of therapy which emphasise the *decisions* which the child or baby made, and seeks to enable new and better decisions to be made, using our new level of consciousness.

Having been through these understandings, we are now able to think in a new way:

*We only know our thoughts, only have definite, actual thoughts, when we give them the form of objectivity, of a being distinct from our inwardness, and therefore the shape of externality, and of an externality, too, that at the same time bears the stamp of the highest inwardness. The articulated sound, the word, is alone such an inward externality.*

This sounds very close to some of the things which Lacan, in France, has been urging recently, but I think the context is very different. Hegel is talking here very much about adult thinking, not about the infant. "*Knowing* now constitutes the *subjectivity* of Reason, and *objective* Reason is posited as a *Knowing*." In other words, theoretical thinking at this stage is now fully made a part of me. It is me, and I own it and take responsibility for it. It is not just *the* truth, out there somewhere; it is *my* truth, and I am committed to it. But in that case, it approaches very close to *will*. If I am choosing to think what I think, on the basis of my whole understanding, and all that

I have experienced, then this is *practical* as much as it is theoretical. And this gives us a whole new view of what science is, and how it works, and how to evaluate it.

Now Hegel says that the will, when it first comes to fruition at the Realized Level, is still very one-sided. We start to feel our own nature - material rescued out from under the Social Level ("up from under", as the feminists say) - and at first we tend to throw it around as if we were alone important in the world. Self-expression is all. At last we feel what it is like really to act *for us*; not to fit in with some social norm, but to do justice to what we have discovered inside ourselves.

What happens is that, rather than exercising our fully developed will, what we are exercising are our passions. "The special note in *passion* is its restriction to one special mode of volition, in which the whole subjectivity of the individual is merged, be the value of that mode what it may." Hegel is not condemning the passions, but merely seeing that they are not the whole to which we are ultimately moving. They may at times be most necessary:

*Passion is neither good nor bad; the title only states that a subject has thrown his whole soul - his interests of intellect, talent, character, enjoyment - on one aim and object. Nothing great has been and nothing great can be accomplished without passion.*

The milder form which the will takes is that of *interest*, which Hegel carefully distinguishes from selfishness. It is really important to know and pursue my own interests - this is one of the best ways in which I can contribute to universal rationality, as Mary Parker Follett has shown in great detail.

And this leads, as Hegel insists, to happiness - to a will which, because it includes *all* that is relevant, is genuinely free. This is very close, I think, to what Rogers calls "the fully-functioning person". The Gestalt people, too, have been very clear that free choice feels good - as John Enright once said - "If you're not experiencing joy, you're being irresponsible."

We have now reached a conception of a higher kind of rationality from that known at the Social Level. Because we have now incorporated all of the Primary Level into the Realized Level, bringing it to conscious awareness, we do not have any mysterious currents dragging us down. We can see clearly through our own eyes, instead of seeing everything as externally true or false, right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant. And so we are taking more into account than was possible at the Social Level - we are doing greater justice to the whole - hence we are being more rational. Being rational, we see at this stage, is doing justice to the whole - to all that is there, out in the world and inside ourselves. And this Hegel calls Free Mind or Free Spirit - a spirit which has genuinely won for itself the freedom which it could only partially sense at first.

## **Practical Implications**

Well, that is the general story - the philosophical theory which I think makes a lot of sense. I find this extremely inspiring and useful. And at the same time as it clarifies my mind, it contradicts a number of things which I and other people in the growth movement have said or written in the past. Let us look briefly at some of them, remembering that each one could be expanded to make a whole chapter.

*The real self* I now feel that the ecstasy which comes when one "contacts the real self" is the ecstasy of making the unconscious conscious. One has reclaimed another part of one's world, and made it possible to understand it and own it. But it is still only a *part* of one's inner world, which is why there is more than one breakthrough in therapy, for any given individual. What one has really done is to take some material from the Primary Level and move it straight into the Realized Level. This is a dizzying act, and can only be done if the Social Level is well-developed enough to permit it.

*Therapy* All forms of therapy go into the Primary Level, but they explain it differently. Some only aim at improving performance at the Social Level, and do not recognise the Realized Level at all. If this is a temporary measure, aimed at strengthening the social ego until it can cope with the Realized Level's emergence, it may be justifiable, but otherwise it does dirt on a person's self-development.

*Spirituality* Sometimes it seems that spirituality thinks it can go beyond rationality, but it can't. It can only do *occasional* magic, because it is really working at the primary level. In reality, spirituality runs through the whole process (all the levels) and is rational throughout, in whatever way it can be. When it gets to the Realized Level, it is not chancy, not temporary and not surprising. This makes a huge difference to transpersonal work.

*The persona* The main social ego is not a subpersonality. It is all too solid. Unless it is, we get real dissociation (Miss Beauchamp, Eve, Sybil) instead of just subpersonalities. So subpersonalities are all within the Primary Level. The superego is just one of the subpersonalities. But what I used to call the "inner self" I would now call the emergence of the Realized Level. This was something else I got significantly wrong before.

*Feminism* The Primary Level is not feminine any more than it is masculine, and it is an insult to women to say that one-sided subjectivity is female. The truth is that a male-dominated society has tried to keep women in an immature and undeveloped state, so that they will be attractively childlike rather than adult and possibly competitive. The idea of men "cultivating their female side" is highly suspect for the same reason. The Primary Level is not female, but it is what men need to explore, and women too. All the stuff about male/female polarities has to be closely re-examined in the light of Hegel's insights. The task for women is the same as for men - to develop in the Social Level until they have enough knowledge and skills (male-biased

knowledge and male-distorted skills as they may be) and then go on into the Realized Level by recovering material which has been suppressed, repressed and denied and split off down in the Primary Level.

*Social science* The third-person approach of the old paradigm is transformed into a first-person approach, but instead of sinking into the mere subjectivity of the Primary Level, we go on into the new and rigorous subjectivity of the Realized Level. Research can never be neutral. The new paradigm is dialectical.

These are just a few of the first implications which come to mind. Others will emerge very fast, as the Hegelian insights become better known and more widely accepted. I hope this essay does something to help that happen.

*\*He actually talks about the Soul, the Consciousness and the Mind, but what I am trying to do here is to revise and update Hegel to be as relevant as possible. If you like, you can say this is my philosophy, leaning heavily on Hegel, rather than an academic exegesis of his work in itself.*

*+Rationality is redefined by Hegel in an important way in which we shall see later.*