INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER VII [THE RELIGION CHAPTER OF HEGEL’S PHENOMENOLOGY OF SPIRIT]\(^1\)

Alexandre Kojève, translated by Ian Alexander Moore

TRANSLATOR’S INTRODUCTION

What follows is the first English translation of the fourth and fifth lectures of Alexandre Kojève’s 1937-1938 course on Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. These lectures, devoted to a close reading and interpretation of Hegel’s introduction to the religion chapter of the Phenomenology, were not included in Allan Bloom’s English edition of Kojève’s famous, and famously attended,\(^2\) lectures and essays on the Phenomenology, which the novelist and poet Raymond Queneau assembled from notes and transcriptions\(^3\) under the title Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l’Esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l’École des Hautes Études.\(^4\) Although mostly known as “Introduction to the Reading of Hegel,” Kojève’s courses on the Phenomenology were actually delivered under the title “La Philosophie religieuse de Hegel d’après ‘La Phénoménologie de l’Esprit’” (The Religious Philosophy of Hegel according to The Phenomenology of Spirit).\(^5\) The two lectures translated here help to explain the significance of religion in Kojève’s reading of Hegel.

Moreover, in these two lectures, Kojève works out his anthropological/atheistic reading of Hegel by means of an analysis that is at once a close reading of less than ten pages of the Phenomenology and an interpretation of the entirety of Hegel’s work. Kojève explains what Hegel means by religion, (pre-Hegelian) science, and philosophy, and how Hegel’s system comes to replace all of them as absolute knowing. Additionally, he offers an explanation of why not only religion, but also art, will be impossible in Hegel’s post-revolutionary state.

This importance of these lectures can be gleaned from Kojève’s correspondence with Carl Schmitt. In 1955, Schmitt wrote to Kojève that

> Everything crucial appears on page 215 of your Introduction à la lecture de Hegel. ... Many have portrayed Hegel as “atheist,” and we certainly all know Bruno Bauer’s amusing “Trumpet of the last
INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER VII

"Judgment." But this point of yours on page 215 would have to change all present philosophy, if the philosophers who, in the course of the academic division of labor, administer the legal right to the firm “Philosophy” were really to interrogate you.

To which Kojève replied:

You are, of course, completely correct: everything essential appears on my page 215, as you cited. In my course I spoke of Hegel’s anthropo-theism, but I also emphasized that it has to do not only with a mortal but really with a dying (and perhaps already dead) God.

But how few understood that!

KOJÈVE’S LECTURES  [196]

INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER VII

Complete Text of the Fourth and Fifth Lectures of the Course from the 1937-1938 Academic Year

After having read the first six chapters of the Phenomenology, one is surprised to find in it a seventh entitled “Religion.” After all, on the one hand, Hegel has spoken about religion on several occasions. On the other hand, the development of Chapter VI brings us to the end of the historical process, to Napoleon and to Hegel himself, more exactly, to his Phenomenology. What, then, does this chapter devoted to Religion mean? Hegel anticipates this question and answers it in the introduction to Chapter VII.

Hegel will tell us in the third section of Chapter VII that the succession of the chapters of the Phenomenology is not a temporal succession. That is, at any rate, evident. Chapter VI began with an analysis of ancient Greece and brought us to 1806. Chapter VII treats first of primitive religions, then of Greek religion, and finally of Christianity. Chapters VI and VII are therefore parallel: they complement one another. In Chapter VI, Hegel analyses the historical evolution in the proper sense of the term. In Chapter VII, he studies the Religions that were constituted in the course of this evolution. There is a gap, however.

The first section of Chapter VI treats of the Greco-Roman World; the second treats of the Christian World, from its origin to the French Revolution; the third treats of the post-revolutionary World, where German Philosophy develops. In contrast, the first section of Chapter VII is devoted to Natürliche Religion, that is to say, to the “primitive” Religions that “preceded” – at least logically – the Greco-Roman Religion. The latter is the subject of the second section. Finally, the third section treats of Christianity, and the end of the chapter is marked by the definitive elaboration of Protestant theology. The reason for this gap can be easily explained.

In Chapter VI, Hegel wanted to study the social, political side of human existence, the problem of the relation between the Particular and the State. That is why he begins his study with Greece, where, in his opinion, the first State properly [197] speaking, the first human Society in the strict sense of the term, was constituted. Yet in Religion, not only is the relation of Man with the State, with the social World, reflected, but also his relations with the natural World, with Nature, that is to say, with the environment in which Man lived before the construction of the State properly speaking. It is the Religion of this so to speak pre-state period that Hegel studies under the name Natürliche Religion in the first section of Chapter VII. This section therefore does not have an equivalent in Chapter VI. Regarding Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter VII, they correspond, roughly, to Sections 1 and 2 of Chapter VI. In contrast, Section 3 of this chapter does not have an equivalent in Chapter VII. This is explained by the fact that the post-revolutionary period, being post-Christian, is also, in general, post-religious. It is (German) Philosophy that takes the place of Religion there; and the Science of Hegel, to which this Philosophy leads, is called on to replace, once and for all, every sort of Religion in human existence.

We still need to answer the other question: why does Hegel devote a special chapter to Religion, given that he has already spoken about it previously? It is to this question that the first part of the introduction to Chapter VII responds.
The general answer is given in the first sentence. There, Hegel says the following (p. 473, l. 3-10):

> It is true that Religion, (understood) as (external-)Consciousness of the absolute essential-Reality as such [überhaupt], also appeared in the concrete-formations [Gestaltungen] (that we have considered) up to now and that—in a general-manner—are distinguished (from one another) as (external-)Consciousness (Ch. I-III), Self-Consciousness (Ch. IV), Reason (Ch. V), and Spirit (Ch. VI). Only, (Religion appeared there) from the point of view of (external-)Consciousness, which becomes conscious of the absolute essential-Reality. It is therefore not the absolute essential-Reality in and for itself, it is not the Self-Consciousness of Spirit, that appeared in these concrete-formations.*

This passage is intentionally ambiguous. It is one of those passages that the “Right” Hegelians have been able to cite in support of their theistic interpretation of Hegel’s thought.

Let us first look at the theistic—and at any rate, “heretical”—interpretation of the passage. Let us suppose that “absolutes Wesen” and “Geist” here signify God. This passage then means the following: up to now, we have spoken about the attitude that man takes with respect to God, the way in which man becomes conscious of the divine. But it was not yet a question of God himself, of the [198] manner in which God becomes conscious of himself in and through Religion, independently of his revelation to men. This passage would then imply the idea that there is a God, a Spirit that is other than the human spirit, a Spirit that reveals itself to itself in and through the different Religions that it engenders in human consciousness throughout the course of history. And it would be a matter of interpreting in Chapter VII these self-revelations of God.

But this theistic interpretation is absolutely impossible. If the Phenomenology has a point [sens], the Geist in question is nothing other than the human Spirit: there is no Spirit outside of the World, and the Spirit in the World—is Man, humanity, universal History.

Having said that, it is therefore necessary to give another interpretation of the passage in question.

What is the absolute essential-Reality (absolutes Wesen) for the author of the Phenomenology?

That which is truly real is not Nature, the natural World that is other than Man. For in fact, the real World involves [implique] Man. Inversely, Man outside of the World is but an abstraction. Reality is therefore the World that involves Man, Man that lives in the World. Now, what is the essential-Reality of this Real, its Wesen, its “essence,” its “entelechy,” its “idea”? It is Man insofar as he is something other than the World, while only being able to exist in the World. Man is the essential-Reality of the existing Real; for Hegel, as for every Judeo-Christian thinker, this is an axiom that one must accept without discussion: “Der Geist ist höher als die Natur,” he says somewhere. But the absolute essential-Reality is not the human individual (the “Particular”). For isolated Man exists in reality just as little as Man-outside-the-World or the World-without-Man. The essential-Reality of the Real—this is humanity taken in its spatio-temporal whole. It is what Hegel calls “objektiver Geist,” “Weltgeist,” “Volksgest,” but also “Geschichte” (History) or—in a more concrete manner—“Staat,” the State taken as State, Society taken as such.

And Hegel says that this essential-Reality was considered up to now “vom Standpunkt des Bewusstseins aus.” Now, Bewusstsein is the Consciousness-of-external-reality, of the non-I opposed to the I, of the object known opposed to the knowing subject. It therefore had to do with the attitude that the human individual (the Particular) took with respect to Man as such, taken as the essential-Reality of the Real in general, this essential-Reality being—for this Man—something external, autonomous, opposed to him. In fact, this absolute essential-Reality,

---

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 410 (§ 672): “In the structured forms hitherto considered which are distinguished in general as Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, religion, too, as consciousness of absolute Being as such, has indeed made its appearance, although only from the standpoint of the consciousness that is conscious of absolute Being; but absolute Being in and for itself, the self-consciousness of Spirit, has not appeared in those ‘shapes.’”
that is to say, the “entelechy” of the whole of the Real, is also the “entelechy” \( [199] \) of each human individual. Thus the State is only an integration of Citizens, and each Citizen is only what he is by participating in the State. But insofar as Man does not take this into account, insofar as the reality of the State, of political life, does not reveal this fact explicitly, Man opposes himself to the State and sees in the State an independent, autonomous entity. He is thus in the attitude of Bewusstsein. One can therefore say: up to now it was a question of the diverse attitudes that the individual who opposes himself to humanity, to the totality, to the State, takes with respect to them.

But from the point of view of the Man-of-Bewusstsein, the essential-Reality is not only the State. This Man also opposes the World to the I: there he sees an autonomous entity. For him, the essential-Reality of this World will therefore itself be an autonomous reality opposed to him. And thus it is for him a divine essential-Reality. For him, the absolutes Wesen is God, or—in a more general manner—the Divine.

Consequently, in speaking about the essential-Reality from the point of view of Bewusstsein (as he does in Chapters III and IV), Hegel had to speak about the attitude that Man takes with respect to his God: he had to speak about Religion. In other words, he spoke about the attitude that Man who opposes himself to God, who distinguishes himself from God, takes with respect to him. He therefore spoke about Religion in the broadest sense of the word.

The first part of the theistic interpretation was therefore correct. However, it is necessary to take the words “Religion” and “absolutes Wesen” in the sense that an atheist gives to them. And it is in this same atheistic sense that it is necessary to interpret the second part of the sentence.

There, it is a question of the “absolute essential-Reality” taken “in and for itself.” That is to say, there, it is a question of Man as such, of collective man living in the World, of the Weltgeist, of the Volksgeist, in the final analysis, of the State. But no longer from the point of view of Bewusstsein, of the individual who opposes himself to the State, and sees it from the outside. There, it is a question of the Selbstbewusstsein des Geistes. That is to say, in Chapter VII, it is a matter of showing and understanding how Spirit understands itself as such, and not only in and though the attitudes of individuals with respect to it. Yet, according to Hegel, this self-comprehension of Sprit—or of the Volksgeist—is brought about in and through Religion (in the broadest sense of the term). In Chapter VII, it will therefore be a question of the content of religious knowledge, that is to say, of Theology.

According to Hegel, Man understands himself as an isolated individual in and through Philosophy. And every pre-Hegelian philosophy was in this sense a philosophy of Bewusstsein, one that studied and revealed, on the one hand, the subject opposed to the object, the human individual opposed to the natural World, and, on the other hand, the autonomous object \( [200] \) that is external to the subject. As for man who sides [fait bloc] with the World, that is to say, real, collective, historical man, or, if you will, the State, he is revealed to himself in and through Religion. And that is why the (pre-Hegelian) Philosophy of Bewusstsein must necessarily be completed by a Religion. Inversely, every Religion engenders its philosophical complement. For in Religion, the Wesen is interpreted as non-Man, as being external to Man. The religious Man who wants to understand himself must therefore understand himself as opposed to the Wesen, that is to say, as Bewusstsein: he must consequently understand himself in and through a (pre-Hegelian) Philosophy.

It is only from the moment in which the State comes to be in such a way that the opposition between the Particular and the Universal is thereby “overcome [supprimée],” that the opposition between Philosophy and Religion can disappear. At the moment in which the State is a “Tun Aller und Jeder,” a universal integration of particular actions, in which the action of each is that of all and vice versa, Man will see that the absolute essential-Reality is also his own. As a result, it will cease to be opposed to him; it will cease to be divine. He will know it not in a Theology, but though an Anthropology. And this same Anthropology will also reveal to him his own essential-Reality: it will replace not only Religion, but also Philosophy. And this synthesis of Philosophy and Religion, made possible by the reality of the “absolute” State, is nothing other than the Science of Hegel.
ALEXANDRE KOJÈVE

that is to say as well and in particular, his Phenomenology. And it is this Phenomenology that is the “Selbstbewusstsein des Geistes” in the proper sense of the term, which is at issue in the sentence under consideration.

This Selbstbewusstsein is the absolute Knowing described in Chapter VIII. And the evolution described in Chapter VII explains the genesis of this Knowledge, which, being the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal, is born just as much from the former Philosophies of which it was a question in the first six chapters, as from the Religions described in Chapter VII.

That is the atheistic interpretation of the passage that is the only one compatible with the whole of the Phenomenology. But it suffices to read Chapter VII itself in order to see that it is necessary to reject the theistic interpretation.

Hegel speaks about Religion there; it is the theme of the chapter. But he takes this word in truly a very broad sense. Thus, in speaking about Greco-Roman “Religion,” he speaks much less about pagan theology than about ancient art: about sculpture, about the epic, about tragedy, and even about comedy. Now, to maintain that one speaks about God when one speaks about Aristophanes, to say that it is God who reveals himself to himself and becomes conscious-of-himself in revealing himself to the Greeks through Lysistrata, for example–this is above all to shock through too much common sense.

[201] In contrast, the content of Chapter VII fits extremely well with the atheistic interpretation. It has to do with the completely general process of the evolution of unconscious, symbolic, mythic anthropology: there, one sees Man speak about himself while believing that he speaks about something else. It has to do with myth in the proper sense of the word, and this myth is, in our terminology, just as much art as theology. It is therefore Religion and (primitive and ancient) Art that revealed to Man his (social, political,) universal reality, while the (“private,”) particular reality of the individual was revealed to him in and through Philosophy in the narrow sense of the word. (According to Hegel, in the post-revolutionary State, it will therefore be just as impossible to write a tragedy or construct a beautiful building, as it will be to create a Religion or devise [faire] a Philosophy of Bewusstsein.)

In order to remove any sort of doubt concerning this subject, I will cite a text that is just about contemporary with the Phenomenology, a text in which Hegel expresses himself in a much clearer manner.

In the (1803-1804) Jena Lectures, one finds the following passage (Vol. XIX, p. 232f.):

The absolute Spirit of a people is the absolute, universal element ...that absorbs all particular Consciousnesses into itself. {It is} the absolute, simple-or-undivided substance, living {and} unique. {And} this {substance} must also be the acting substance, and {it must} oppose itself to itself {taken} as {external-}Consciousness.... This act-of-becoming-other than itself consists in [est] {the fact} that Spirit, as a passive-entity, relates itself to itself {taken} as an active-entity, that {Spirit}, as an acting People–{that is to say, as} a consciously-existing-entity–passes into the product {of action}, {that is to say,} into the entity-equal-to-itself. And to-the-extent-to-which this work common to all is the work {that they produce} as {external-}Consciousness{es}, they are constituted for themselves in-this-work as an external-entity. But this external-entity is their action: it is only what they have done with it; it is they themselves as acting ...who are {this external-entity}. And in this externality of themselves ...they contemplate themselves as a People. And this work {that is} theirs is in this very way their own Spirit itself. They produce [erzeugen] this Spirit; but they venerate [verehren] it as an entity-that-exists-as-a-given-being [Seiendes] for itself. And this Spirit is {indeed} for itself: for their activity through which they produce it is the dialectical-overcoming {suppression-dialectique} [Aufheben] of themselves; and this dialectical-overcoming of themselves towards which they tend, is the universal Spirit existing-for-itself.”

* Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, System of Ethical Life (1802/3) and First Philosophy of Spirit (Part III of the System of Speculative
The meaning is clear. –The People act, and in and through this [202] collective action, they establish themselves as a State or People that is organized, that is to say, real as a People. But the product of the action is detached from the action and from the agent. For the agent, this product becomes an autonomous, external reality that is a part of the real World, in which the agent or the agents live and act. Additionally, when the agent ceases to act and attempts to understand which that he has done, he necessarily becomes Bewusstsein, conscious of an external entity. (Necessarily, because it is only action that is the hyphen [trait d’union] between the I and the Non-I; in contemplation, Being is always an autonomous, given non-I.) It is in this way that the man who contemplates the State, the People, understands them as autonomous entities. And, Hegel says, “they venerate it as a given-static-Being {existing} for itself.” And it is this understanding of the People as People that is carried out in mythical form and is translated by Art or by Theology.

Hegel himself puts it very clearly in another text, which is found in the System der Sittlichkeit (from 1802?[1]), in which one can read the following (Vol. VII, p. 462-63[2]):

"The Universality that has in-an-absolute-smanner united Particularity [Besonderheit {here used for Einzelheit}] with itself is the divinity of the People [Göttlichkeit des Volkes]. And this (same) Universality, contemplated in the ideal form of Particularity, is the God of the People [Gott des Volkes]: this God is the ideal manner of contemplating the People."

After having pointed out in the first sentence the theme of Chapter VII, Hegel rapidly reviews the religious themes of the six preceding chapters. We have just seen that, in a general manner, it was a question of the attitude that the human individual takes with respect to the absolute essential-Reality that he considers as being something other than himself.

This notion of the Wesen appeared for the first time in Chapter III, Kraft und Verstand, where it was a question of the Understanding and of “vulgar” Science, notably of Newtonian Physics. Here is how Hegel summarizes what he had said there (p. 473, 1. 11-16):

"Already, {external-}Consciousness, to the extent to which it is Understanding, becomes {external-}consciousness of the Supersensible, that is to say, of the Internal-or-inside of the objective-or-thingly empirical-existence. But the Supersensible, the Eternal—the name that one gives to it is of little importance—is deprived-of-the-personal-I [selbstlos]. It is only the universal-entity that is still very far from being the Spirit that knows itself as Spirit."
Through his Work, the Slave is elevated to Verstand, to the creative Understanding of abstract notions. In that he himself transforms the World according to an idea, he is brought to believe that this World, and he as well, is driven by a moving, supersensible ideal. Behind the sensible phenomenon, Man-of-Verstand sees the Wesen, the super-sensible essential-Reality. It is the “idea” or the “essence” of the thing that is its “entelechy,” its Inneres. But the slave who works according to the will of the Master, the slave who executes the orders of the Master, lives in a World that is not yet seine. And that is why he does not come to the idea that it is he who is the “entelechy” of the World, the supersensible Wesen that maintains itself in sensible reality. The Wesen of the World that he discovers appears to him to be just as transcendent, just as autonomous and independent of him, as the World itself, the World dominated by the Master. The Wesen is not only above the sensible World: it is also supra-human.

The Slave arrives at a transcendentalist conception of the Wesen because this Wesen is, for him, the Wesen of a World belonging to someone other than him, to the Master. And this origin of the notion is reflected in the determination of its content.

In a word, the Wesen is a sort of omnipotent Master: it is a God that creates, or, at the very least, dominates the World. It is thus that the Newtonian Physics of forces and laws has for a necessary complement a transcendentalist Theology, just as, inversely, this Theology engenders a “mechanistic” interpretation of the World. (It is therefore not by accident that Newton was also a theologian.)

However, the Understanding on its own does not come to be a Theology properly speaking. It constitutes only the conceptual frameworks in which the properly theological content will situate itself. But this content must come from elsewhere, since, for the Understanding, the Wesen is the Wesen of the natural World, of the non-I. This Wesen will therefore also be a non-I; it will not be a supersensible I, an essential-Reality conscious of itself; it will not be a Geist.

But all that is said about Geist in Theology, all that is said about the transcendent, divine Spirit in relation to man, the Spirit which is—with respect to the latter—an irresistible force and an implacable law—all this will come to be placed within the still empty frameworks formed by the notion of the transcendent Supersensible that has been elaborated by the Understanding of the Slave. In other words, in Chapter III, Hegel described the type of attitude that the human individual takes with respect to the Wesen that he opposes to himself, insofar as this attitude is purely cognitive, contemplative. He described the frameworks of any theology understood as knowledge.

But in order to fill these frameworks with a theological content, in order to transform the abstract Wesen into divine Spirit that is conscious of itself, one must have recourse to something still other than the Understanding and the contemplative or cognitive attitude in general. In order to understand the origin of Theology, one must analyze not only thought, the notion, but also the feeling of transcendence. The analysis of the cognitive attitude that the particular adopts with respect to the Wesen must be completed by an analysis of his emotional attitude. One must discover not only the frameworks of all theological thought, but also those of all religious psychology.

This is what Hegel did in Chapter IV. Here is the summary of it (p. 473, 1. 16-22):

Then, Self-Consciousness, which had its perfection-and-its-culmination in the concrete-form [Ge-stalt] of the unhappy Consciousness, was only the pain of Spirit that again makes-efforts-in-order-to-arrive at thingly-objectivity, but does not attain it. Consequently, the union of the particular Self-Consciousness and its immutable essential-Reality, towards which this Self-Consciousness conveys itself, remains a Beyond for this Self-Consciousness.”

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 410 (§ 673): “Then there was the self-consciousness that reached its final ‘shape’ in the Un-happy Consciousness, that was only the pain of the Spirit that wrestled, but without success, to reach out into objectivity.
The unhappy Consciousness is Christian consciousness; it is the psychology of the Christian who is, for Hegel, the most perfect type of the Religious man. What does the Christian want? Like every man, he wants to objectify himself, to realize his ideal, which—insofar as it is not realized—reveals itself to him in the feeling of insufficiency, of Schmerz, of pain. But insofar as he remains a Religious man, he does not succeed. Or—if one prefers—he remains a Religious man insofar as he does not succeed. Indeed, what is it to realize, to objectify, one’s ideal, if not to have it be recognized by others, by all others? In other words, it is to realize Individuality, the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal. And it is precisely this Individuality that the Christian seeks in his religious feeling. If he imagines a Divinity and relates himself to a God, to an absolute external-reality, it is because he wants to be recognized by it, to be recognized by the Universal in his most particular Particularity. Only, he does not succeed.

Man imagines God because he wants to objectify himself. And he imagines a transcendent God because he does not succeed in objectifying himself in the World. But to want to realize Individuality by uniting with a transcendent God is to realize it in the transcendent, in the Jenseits, in what is beyond the World and oneself taken as Consciousness, as living in the World. It is therefore to renounce the realization of the ideal in the here-below. It is, consequently, to be and to know oneself as unhappy in this World.

[205] In other words, on the one hand, the religious, emotional attitude is born from the feeling of pain caused by the experience of the impossibility of realizing oneself in the World; on the other hand, it engenders and nourishes this feeling. And it is this nostalgia that is projected into the Beyond, that fills with a theological content the frameworks of the transcendence of the Verstand, situating the image of a personal God there, of a reality conscious of itself, of a Geist that—in fact—is only the projection of the unhappiness of the religious Consciousness into the Beyond.

Therefore, to nourish, to cultivate, nostalgia, the painful feeling of the insufficiency of the reality that one lives, is to find oneself in the religious, indeed Christian, attitude. Inversely, to place oneself in this attitude is to nourish and cultivate unhappiness and nostalgia.

To escape from religious psychology is therefore to overcome the unhappiness of Consciousness, the feeling of insufficiency. And one can do this either by realizing a real World, in which Man would be truly “satisfied,” or by overcoming transcendence through an abstract act and reconciling the ideal to reality. The first solution is the one brought about in and through the French Revolution, which made possible the absolute, atheistic science of Hegel. The second solution is that of the bourgeois Intellectual, about whom Hegel has spoken in Chapter V.

Here is what Hegel says about him (p. 473, 1. 23-27):

The immediate empirical-existence of Reason that, for us, has arisen from that pain (of the unhappy Consciousness), and the concrete-forms [Gestalten] that belong to it, do not have Religion, because their Self-Consciousness knows itself (to be), or seeks itself in, the immediate real-presence.

“The immediate existence of Reason”—is the Intellectual of Chapter V. His existence is “immediate” because it is not “mediated” by the effort of Work and Struggle, which alone can really transform the World. The Intellectual finds himself, or more exactly, seeks himself, in the “immediate” present: it is not after his death, it is not in the beyond that he wants to be “satisfied”; he wants to be satisfied hic et nunc. He is therefore not religious: the thought and feeling of transcendence are lacking in him, just as the feeling of unhappiness is.

The unity of the individual self-consciousness and its changeless essence to which the former attains, remains, therefore, a beyond for self-consciousness.

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 410 (¶ 673): “The immediate existence of Reason which, for us, issued from that pain, and its peculiar shapes, have no religion, because the self-consciousness of them knows or seeks itself in the immediate present.”
Nevertheless, he is not truly “satisfied.” And this is so precisely because of the “immediacy” of his attitude. He leaves the world as it is, and contents himself with enjoying [jouir] it, the same World in which the Religious man moped. Now if the depreciation of the given real characterizes the religious attitude, the positive appreciation of the given is typical for the artistic attitude. The given World, in ceasing to be considered as Evil, can be considered only as the [206] Beautiful. The Intellectual can therefore at the very most arrive at Freude, at the pure joy of the inactive and peaceful artist, which is something completely different from Befriedigung, the veritable satisfaction of the revolutionary who has succeeded. Moreover, Man who delights in the joy of pure knowledge or of artistic contemplation, can eternally remain an Intellectual or an Artist, just as Man who delights in unhappiness can eternally remain a Religious man or a Christian.

I do not insist on these questions. Being essentially a-religious, even atheistic, the Intellectual no longer comes up in Chapter VII. It is enough to mention that beside the subjective, theological, and religious attitude, there is still an a-religious and aesthetic, pre-revolutionary attitude that has nothing to do with the post-revolutionary atheism of Hegel.

In the three paragraphs that follow (pp. 473-474), Hegel summarizes the three sections of Chapter VI.

In Chapters III and IV, it was a question of the attitude—the cognitive and emotional attitude—that isolated Man, the Particular, adopted with respect to the Universal conceived as a transcendent God. In Chapter VI, it is a question of the role that this conception, Religion properly speaking, plays in the historical evolution of humanity. There again, it thus has to do not with the content of the theological doctrines themselves (as in Ch. VII), but with the relations between these doctrines and the Particulars, insofar as these relations determine the course of the global, historical evolution that integrates the actions of these Particulars.

Having already given a summary of Chapter VI, I will not comment on the summary that Hegel gives of it here. The text, condensed to the extreme, is almost incomprehensible. In order to explain it, it would be necessary to give again the summary that I already gave. I therefore content myself with translating it.

First of all, here is the summary of Section A of Chapter VI, dedicated to the analysis of the pagan World (p. 473, 1. 28, to p. 474, 1. 15):

In contrast, in the World of customary-morals, we have seen a Religion. Namely, the Religion of the subterranean-Realm. This Religion is the faith in the terrifying, unfamiliar night of Destiny, and in the Eumenides of the separated-or-deceased Spirit. This night, (being) pure Negativity in the form of Universality, [and] the Eumenides—this same {Negativity} in the form of Particularity. In this latter form, the absolute, essential-Reality is therefore, to be sure, a personal-I [Selbst] and {it is} really-present, given that the personal-I does not exist otherwise {than as really present}. However, the particular personal-I is {here} that particular phantom {the dead ancestor} which has Universal-ity, which is Destiny, {as} separated from itself. This phantom is, to be sure, a phantom, {that is to say,} a dialectically-overcome This, [207] and, consequently, {it is a} universal personal-I. But the negative-or-negating meaning-or-value {of the phantom} has not yet mutated [umgeschlagen] into this positive {meaning or value of the universal personal-I}. And it is because the dialectically-overcome personal-I still means at the same time, in an immediate-manner, a This and {a This} devoid-of-essential-reality, As for Destiny, it remains—{being} without the personal-I—the unconscious night that arrives neither at distinction-or-differentiation nor at the clarity of self-consciousness. *

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 410-411 (¶ 674): “On the other hand, in the ethical world we did see a religion of the underworld. It is the belief in the terrible, unknown night of Fate and in the Eumenides of the departed spirit: the former is pure negativity in the form of universality, the latter the same negativity in the form of individuality. Absolute Being is, in the latter form, indeed the self and present, since other than present the self cannot be. But the individual self is this individual shade which has separated from itself the universality which Fate is. True, it is a shade, a superseded particular self, and thus a universal self; but the negative significance of the shade has still not changed round into the positive significance of the
The Schicksal, the Destiny of Paganism, is Christianity. And it is about Christianity, about the Religion of the bourgeois, Christian World, that Hegel speaks in the following paragraph.

There, he says the following (p. 473, 1. 16-28):

This faith in the nothingness of necessity (of Destiny) and in the subterranean-Realm becomes faith in Heaven, because the separated-or-deceased personal-I must be united with its Universality, must develop-and-spread-out in it that which the separated-or-deceased personal-I contains, and must therefore become clear to itself. But we have seen that this Realm of faith developed its content only in the element of thought—without the concept [Begriff]; and it is because {we have seen it} sink into its Destiny—namely, into the Religion of the Age-of-Enlightenment. In this Religion {of the Aufklärung}, the supersensible beyond of the Understanding is constituted again, but in such a way that Self-Consciousness, {being} satisfied, maintains itself in-the-here-below, and sees in the supersensible beyond, {now} empty {and} what one can {therefore} just as little know as fear, neither a personal-I nor a Power [#Macht].

The Schicksal, the Destiny of Christianity, is atheism or Hegelian anthropo-theism. There, one passes through the Religion of the Aufklärung, of the Age of Enlightenment, that is to say, through Deism. The frameworks of transcendentalist theology, elaborated by the Verstand and filled with a positive content by the unhappy Consciousness, are again emptied by the critique of the 18th century. And at the moment in which the ideology of the Aufklärung is brought about by the French Revolution, these already empty frameworks themselves, that is to say, the very notion of transcendence, are overcome. Man is now an atheist, he knows that it is he and not God who is the essential-Reality of the World.

Only, in the beginning, post-revolutionary Man does not take account of his atheism. He still continues (with Kant, with Fichte, etc.) to speak about God. But, in fact, he is no longer interested in anything but himself, and his “Theology” is thus essentially contradictory and impossible. And it is about this Religion or pseudo-Religion of Moralität, that is to say, about post-revolutionary, German Philosophy, that Hegel speaks in the paragraph that follows.

[208] There, he says the following (p. 474, 1. 29-38):

Finally, in the Religion of reflected-Morals, one has reestablished the situation in which the absolute essential-Reality is a positive content. But this [positive] content is united with the Negativity of the Age-of-Enlightenment. This content is a Given-Being [Être-donné] [Sein] that is just as much taken back into the personal-I and {that} remains enclosed therein; and it is a distinguished-or-differentiated content, the parts of which are negated in-a-manner just as immediately as they are posited. As for the Destiny into which this contradictory-and-contradicting dialectical-movement sinks—it is the personal-I that has become conscious of itself as of {that which the} Destiny of the essential-Reality [Wesenheit] and of the objective-Reality {are}.$

universal self, and therefore the superseded self still has, at the same time, the immediate significance of this particular and essenceless being. But Fate devoid of self remains the unconscious night which does not attain to an immanent differentiation, nor to the clarity of self-knowledge.”

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 411 (§ 675): “This belief in the nothingness of necessity and in the underworld becomes belief in Heaven, because the departed self must unite with its universality, must explicate in this universality what it contains and thus become clear to itself. This kingdom of faith, however, we saw unfold its content only in the element of thought without the [concrete] Notion, and for that reason perish in its fate, viz. in the religion of the Enlightenment. In this religion, the supersensible beyond of the Understanding is reinstated, but in such a way that self-consciousness remains satisfied in this world; and the supersensible, empty beyond which is neither to be known nor feared it knows neither as a self nor as a power.”

† Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 411 (§ 676): “In the religion of morality, the fact that absolute Being is a positive content is at last again recognized; but the content is bound up with the negativity of the Enlightenment. It is a being that is at the same time taken back into the self, in which it remains shut up, and a differentiated content whose parts are just as immediately
In fact, in the post-revolutionary, German philosophies, Man is already put in the place of God. But this new atheistic conception of Man is still introduced in theistic, Christian frameworks. Whence a perpetual contradiction, the negation of that which one has posited, the positing of that which one has negated. And the Destiny, the Schicksal, of this unconscious atheism, is the radical and conscious atheism of Hegel. Or, more exactly, his anthropo-theism, his deification of Man, who, after the French Revolution, thanks to Napoleon, can finally with good reason say of himself all that which he attributed—wrongly—to diverse non-existent Gods, or diverse Gods existing only in the semi-conscious thought of men who created History through their action. The Destiny of the pseudo-Religion of the post-revolutionary, German philosophers, like the Destiny of all Religions in general, is the Selbst, the human personal-I, which knows itself to be—and which is—“das Schicksal der Wesenheit und Wirklichkeit,” the Destiny of the essential-Reality and of the objective-Reality.

It is this atheism that will be proclaimed in Chapter VIII, in the Conclusion of the Phenomenology. And in Chapter VII, Hegel will review all the theological ideas that are integrated in his anthropology.

This summary of the religious (theological) parts of the first six chapters constitutes the first part of the introduction to Chapter VII (pp. 473-474). In the second and third parts of this introduction, Hegel brings up the essential characteristics of the Theologies that he is going to analyze in Chapter VII.

It is the atheistic Science of Hegel that is the “sich selbst wissende Geist” in the proper and strict sense of the term: in and through this Science, Spirit—read: the human Spirit, since there is no other, as this same philosophical Science shows—Spirit understands itself. But, in a broader sense, Religion, Theology, is also a self-knowledge, since—in fact—in believing that he speaks about God, Man [209] speaks only about himself. One can therefore say that the Spirit which manifests itself in Religions, the Spirit of which it is a question in Theologies, is also a Spirit which knows itself; one can say that Theology is a Selbstbewusstsein, a Self-Consciousness of Spirit.

And this is what Hegel says in the first sentence of the second part of the introduction, a part in which he indicates the essential characteristics of the phenomenon that it is a matter of studying in Chapter VII, that is to say, of Religion, or more exactly, of Theology.

He says the following (p. 474, 1. 39-40):

In Religion, Spirit that knows itself is in-an-immediate-manner its own pure Self-Consciousness. *

Therefore, in and through Theology—or: theologies—Spirit (read: human Spirit) becomes conscious of itself. And yet Theology is not a Philosophy—even less Hegel’s Science. The auto-consciousness that is brought to light in the Theologies is still insufficient. And it is this insufficiency that Hegel indicates by the sacramental word “unmittelbar”: in Theology, Spirit is already a Self-Consciousness, but it is still this only in an “immediate” manner.

In place of “unmittelbar,” one can also say “an sich,” in opposition to “für sich” or to “an und für sich.” In Theology, Spirit is self-conscious “an sich” (in itself), and not “für sich” (for itself). That is to say, it is only in fact that it becomes conscious of itself, because in fact, there is no Spirit other than the human Spirit. And “an sich” means also “für uns”: it is we, Hegel and his readers, who know that every Theology is in fact only an anthropology.

negated as they are produced. The Fate, however, which engulfs this contradictory movement is the self which is conscious of itself as the Fate of what is essential and actual.”

The Man himself who does Theology does not know what he is doing: he believes that he speaks about God, about a Spirit other than the human Spirit. His self-consciousness is therefore not “for itself,” “für sich”—self-consciousness; for him, it is only Bewusstsein, conscious of an entity external to Man, of a Beyond, of a transcendent, extra-worldly, supra-human divinity.

And this is what characterizes every Theology whatever it may be: “an sich” and “für uns;” it is always a matter of the Man-in-the-World who becomes conscious of himself, but “für sich,” for this Man himself, it is a question of something other than Man and the World in which Man lives.

And this is what Hegel says in the following sentence (p. 474, 1. 40–p. 475, 1. 4):

The concrete-forms [Gestalten] of Spirit that have been considered (in Chapter VI, that is): true-or-veritable [210] wahre Spirit, {Spirit} that is alienated-or-has-become-foreign to itself [sich entfremdete], and Spirit that is subjectively-certain of itself [seiner selbst gewisse]—constitute as-a-whole Spirit in {external-}Consciousness, that Consciousness which, in opposing itself to its World, does not recognize itself in it.‘

Der wahre Geist—is Paganism; der sich entfremdete Geist—is Christianity; der seiner selbst gewisse Geist—is the pseudo-Religion of post-revolutionary, German, protestant Theology and Philosophy: of Kant, of Fichte, of Jacobi, of the Romantics, etc. (and also of Schleiermacher). Therefore, everywhere there is a Theology, there is a miscomprehension, a misunderstanding on the part of Man; in believing that he becomes conscious of an extra-worldly and supra-human, spiritual being, Man-who-lives-in-the-World becomes self-conscious in a sort of unconscious way. And it is the whole of all the Theologies imagined by Man throughout the course of History that constitutes Spirit in its Bewusstsein, that is to say, Spirit that—in fact—becomes Self-Conscious in believing that it becomes conscious of something other than itself. This Spirit opposes itself to the real World and to the Spirit that is in this World, that is to say, to Man, and it does not recognize itself there. And it is of this Spirit that it will be a question in Chapter VII. It will be a question of the anthropology that presents itself in the form of a Theology.

However, in Moralität, that is to say, in the still theological Philosophy and in the already philosophical Theology of the post-revolutionary, German thinkers, of the immediate precursors of Hegel, the transformation of Theology into Anthropology is already announced. And the conscious, atheistic anthropology of Hegel is only the necessary result of the dialectical evolution of this third important historical period. Thus, in Chapter VII, Hegel no longer speaks about this German, pseudo-Religion. He does say a few words about it in the introduction, though.

Here is the text that refers to it (p. 475, 1. 5-20):

But in moral-Consciousness [Gewissen], Spirit submits to itself just as much its objective-or-thingly World as its re-presentation [Vorstellung] and determinate concepts, and {it} is now Self-Consciousness existing in itself [bei sich]. In this Self-Consciousness, Spirit, re-presented as object-or-thing, has for itself the meaning-or-value of being universal Spirit, which contains in itself all essential-Reality and all objective-Reality. But this Spirit is not in the form of free-or-autonomous objective-Reality, that is to say, {it is not in the form} of Nature appearing independently {of Spirit}. To be sure, insofar as Spirit is a thingly-object of its {external-}Consciousness, it has (a) concrete-form [Gestalt], that is to say, the form of Given-Being [Sein]. But since in Religion, {external-}Consciousness is posited in the essential determination of being Self-Consciousness, the concrete-form of Spirit is perfectly transparent for itself. And the objective-Reality that contains this Spirit is enclosed in it,

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 411 (¶ 677): “Those forms of it which have been considered, viz. the true Spirit, the self-aliendated Spirit, and the Spirit that is certain of itself, together constitute Spirit in its consciousness which, confronting its world, does not recognize itself therein.”
that is to say, dialectically-overcome in it precisely in the manner (in which this takes place) when we say: all objective-Reality; this objective-Reality is (therefore) universal objective-Reality that has been thought."

The romantic poets, Schelling, Jacobi, Kant himself, in fact deified man. For them, he is the supreme value, he is absolutely autonomous, etc.: they are therefore, in fact, atheists. Just as the Protestant theology of a Schleiermacher is also already one of atheism: God (for the latter) has meaning and reality only insofar as he is revealed in and through man; religion is reduced to religious psychology; etc. One is therefore quite close to Hegelian atheism or anthropo-theism. And yet all these thinkers continue to speak about God. Why? Well, Hegel just said: because they did not manage to identify the Man-about-which-they-speak with real, conscious Man, who lives in the World. They spoke about the “soul,” about “Spirit,” about the “knowing subject,” etc., and not about living, real, tangible Man. They opposed—as do all the bourgeois Intellectuals—“ideal” Man, who lives in and through his reasoning, to real Man, who lives in and through his action in the World. They are therefore still Christians; they split Man in two and flee from the real one. And this idealistic dualism assumes necessarily a theistic form: the soul opposed to the body; empirical World in opposition to a “pure,” supersensible Spirit—to a God.

Man attributes to himself a supreme value. But he does not yet dare to attribute it to himself as living, that is to say, acting, in the concrete World: he does not dare to accept this World as an ideal. He attributes a value to that which is extra-worldly, that which is purely mental in him. He flees the World, he flees himself as “worldly”—and, in this flight, he finds necessarily a supra-human God, and he attributes to it the values that he wanted—in fact—to attribute to himself.

In the final analysis, it is therefore the refusal—of servile origin—to accept the real World, the desire to flee into the extra-worldly ideal, which is the basis of all Religion, of all Theology. It is the dualism between the ideal, the ideal image that I make of myself, and the reality that I am, which is at the basis of the dualism between the World and Man-in-the-World on the one hand, and God and the Beyond on the other.

[212] It is the objectivization of this dualism in and through theological thought that Hegel will study in Chapter VII. And he tries to show how the evolution of Religions eliminates, little by little, this dualism, and results in post-revolutionary atheism, which, in realizing the ideal in the world, finally puts an equals sign between the human ideal and human reality. And it is in this way that Spirit-in-the-World, that is to say, human Spirit, becomes Spirit tout court; it is in this way that God ceases to be a supra-human being, that Man himself becomes God: in and through Hegel’s Science.

This is what Hegel says in the following passage (p. 475, 1. 21-36): 

Since in Religion the determination of the proper-or-veritable (external-)Consciousness of Spirit does not have the form of free-or-autonomous Being-other, the empirical-existence [Dasein] of Spirit is distinguished (there) from its Self-Consciousness, and its proper-or-veritable objective-reality is placed outside of Religion. There is, it is true, (only) one Spirit of both; but the (external-)Consciousness of this Spirit does not embrace both at the same time, and Religion appears (only) as a part of (the) empirical-existence and active-life [Tuns und Treibens] (of Spirit), the other part of which is life in the objectively-real World. [Now, given that we now know (that is to say, after the

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 411-12 (§ 677): “But in conscience it brings itself, as well as its objective world in general, into subjection, as also its picture-thinking and its specific Notions, and is now a self-consciousness that communes with its own self. In this, Spirit conceived as object, has for itself the significance of being the universal Spirit that contains within itself all essence and all actuality; yet it is not in the form of free actuality or the apparent independence of Nature. True, it has ‘shape’ or the form of being, in that it is the object of its consciousness; but because in religion consciousness is posited essentially in the determination of self-consciousness, the shape is perfectly transparent to itself; and the reality it contains is shut up in it and superseded in it in just the same way as when we speak of ‘all reality’; it is universal reality as thought.”
analyses of Chapter VI}) that Spirit in its World and Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit—that is to say, Spirit in Religion—are one-and-the-same-thing, (one can say that) the perfection-and-culmination \([\text{Vollendung}]\) of Religion consists \(\{\text{in the fact} \}\) that both \(\{\text{things} \}\) become equal to one another; not only that the objective-reality of Spirit is embraced \([\text{befasst}]\) by Religion, but on the contrary that Spirit as Spirit conscious of itself becomes for itself objectively-real and the \text{thingly-object of its \{external-\}}-Consciousness.\footnote{Cf. Hegel, \textit{Phenomenology}, 412 (¶ 678): \textquote{\textit{Since, then, in religion the determination of the consciousness proper of Spirit does not have the form of free \textit{otherness}, Spirit’s \textit{existence} is distinct from its \textit{self-consciousness}, and its reality proper falls outside of religion. There is indeed one Spirit of both, but its consciousness does not embrace both together, and religion appears as a part of existence, of conduct and activity, whose other part is the life lived in its real world. As we now know that Spirit in its own world and Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit, or Spirit in religion, are the same, the perfection of religion consists in the two becoming identical with each other: not only that religion concerns itself with Spirit’s reality but, conversely, that Spirit, as self-conscious Spirit, becomes actual to itself and \textit{object of its consciousness}.}}

Religion is born from the dualism, from the gap, between the ideal and reality, between the idea that man makes of himself—his \text{Selbst}—and his conscious life in the empirical World—his \text{Dasein}. As long as this gap subsists, there will always be a tendency to project the ideal \text{outside} of the World; that is to say, there will always be Religion, Theism, Theology. Inversely, in every Religion, there is a reflection of this dualism. On the one hand, within religious \text{thought}, within Theology, which—always—\text{opposes} the Divine to the worldly and human. On the other hand, there is a duality within religious \text{reality} itself. Religion never encompasses the \text{totality} of human existence: there is never a veritable \text{theo-cracy}. Religious existence unfolds \text{alongside} of \text{Dasein}, of life within the concrete World, and the Religious man is \text{always} more or less a monk, detached \text{“from the world,” “from the age.”}

Yet, Hegel says, given that the dualism (that is at the basis of [213] Religion and is engendered by Religion) is, in the final analysis, \text{illusory} (since the non-realized ideal and, consequently, its transposition into God do not exist), the dualism cannot be maintained \text{eternally} (for in that case it would be \text{real}); Religion is therefore a passing phenomenon. At the moment in which the ideal is \text{realized}, the dualism, and with it Religion and Theism, disappears. Now, the ideal is realized in and through negating, revolutionary Action. Thus every veritable, that is to say, fully successful, revolution necessarily leads to atheism. Inversely, it is only from the moment in which Man ceases to project the ideal into the Beyond that he could want to realize it through action in the World, that is to say, make a revolution. Thus a conscious atheism results necessarily in Revolution. Theism and Revolution are therefore mutually \text{exclusive}, and every attempt to synthesize them can lead only to a misunderstanding, a misunderstanding that would reveal itself as such as soon as one passed over into action properly speaking. However, one should not forget that Revolution realizes that \text{same} ideal which Religion projects into the Beyond. Revolution therefore \text{realizes} Religion in the World, but it does this by "\text{overcoming} \{\text{supprimant}\}" Religion as Religion. And Religion that is "\text{overcome}” as Religion or Theology through its realization in the World, is absolute Science. For Hegel, it has to do with Christian Religion, with its realization by the French Revolution, and with its “\text{sublimation}” in Hegelian Science. This Revolution is preceded by the atheism of the 18th century, where the nothingness of God was revealed to Man through the emptiness of Theology or “\text{deistic}” pseudo-Theology. It is therefore an atheistic Man who triggers revolutionary \text{action}. But this action realizes the \text{Christian} ideal. This realization transforms the ideal into \text{Wahrheit}, into truth, that is to say, into the revelation of a \text{reality}, that is to say, into absolute Science. Hegel’s Science therefore reveals nothing other than the complete reality of the Christian idea. But this idea, once realized in the \text{World}, \text{ceases} to be Christian, theistic, religious. For divine Spirit that \text{is realized} in the World is no longer \text{divine}, but human. And that is the very ground for Hegel’s absolute Science.

This is what Hegel says in the last three lines of the quoted passage. The aim of religious evolution is the complete \text{realization of Religion} (read: Christianity): Man must be “\text{befasst}” (embraced) by Religion in his \text{“Wirklichkeit,”} in his objective-reality, that is to say, as humanity living in the World, as a universal State. But, Hegel adds, this means atheism. For at that same moment, Man will be, and will understand himself as, objec-
tive and real Geist: he will say of himself that which he said previously of his God. In short—the “Vollendung” of Religion (its culmination) is its “Aufhebung” (its “overcoming [suppression!”) as Religion in and through Hegel’s anthropological Science. [214] (Let us remark that this passage is no longer ambiguous: “der Geist in der Religion,” that is to say, God, and “der Geist in seiner Welt,” that is to say, either Man or humanity, are “dasselbe.”)

These ideas are again developed in the passage that follows and that ends the second part of the introduction (p. 475, 1. 36–p. 476, 1. 13):

Insofar as, in Religion, Spirit re-pre-sents itself to itself, it is, to be sure, {external-}Consciousness; but the objective-reality contained in Religion is the concrete-form and the clothing [Kleid] of the re-pre-sentation of Spirit. But in this re-pre-sentation, objective-reality does not obtain the fullness of its right, namely, {of the right} to be not only clothing, but {on the contrary} free, autonomous, empirical-existence. Inversely, {precisely} because it lacks the perfection-or-culmination in itself, this objective-reality is a determine, concrete-form that does not attain what it should represent, namely, Spirit conscious of itself. In order for the concrete-form of Spirit to express it on its own, it should also be nothing other than this Spirit, and this Spirit should appear to itself, that is to say, to be objectively-real, such as it is in its essential-reality. It is only in this way that what can seem to be a requirement of the opposite, namely, {the requirement} that the thingly-object of {external-}Consciousness of Spirit have at the same time the form of a free-or-autonomous objective-reality, would be likewise attained. But {there is no contradiction here. For} it is only Being that is for-itself a thingly-object as absolute Spirit, that for itself is just as must a free-or-autonomous objective-reality as it remains conscious of itself in this-objective-reality.*

As long as Man becomes conscious of himself, so to speak, unconsciously, that is to say, as long as he does anthropology in the guise of a theology, as long as he speaks about himself while he believes that he speaks about God, he will never understand himself fully and completely, he will never know what Geist is in reality. On the one hand, because, in Theology, he does not understand his own real existence in the World; if he assimilates himself to God, he will have to conceive of himself as being able and having to live outside of the World. On the other hand, and even on account of that, Spirit appears to him in a material, obsolete, imperfect form. Spirit that one opposes—in conceiving of it as a transcendent God—to the World and to concrete Man, is not total. It is a reality opposed to another reality, It is therefore a particular reality, a being alongside of other beings. The God of Theology is always an “ideal,” that is to say, a more or less complete “abstraction.” In order to give to divine Spirit the fullness of being, it is necessary to situate divine Spirit within the World, to conceive of it as the “entelechy” of the World. Now, to conceive of it [215] in this way is to conceive of it as worldly, that is to say, human Spirit, and no longer as God. In short, Man who seeks to understand himself fully and completely as Spirit, can be satisfied only by an atheistic anthropology. And this is why the Schicksal, the Destiny of every Theology, of every Religion, is, in the final analysis, atheism.

This passage contains the technical term of which Hegel avails himself when he speaks about Theology: this term is “Vor-stellung,” “re-pre-sentation.” In theism, Man becomes conscious of himself, But he does so in the mode of Vor-stellung. That is to say, he projects himself outside of himself, “stellt sich vor,” and no longer recognizes himself in this projection; he believes that he is in the presence of a transcendent God. And it is in

* Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology,* 412 (§ 678): “So far as Spirit in religion pictures itself to itself, it is indeed consciousness, and the reality enclosed within religion is the shape and the guise of its picture-thinking. But, in this picture-thinking, reality does not receive its perfect due, viz. to be not merely a guise but an independent free existence; and, conversely, because it lacks perfection within itself it is a specific shape which does not attain to what it ought to show forth, viz. Spirit that is conscious of itself. If its shape is to express Spirit itself, it must be nothing else than Spirit, and Spirit must appear to itself, or be in actuality, what it is in its essence. Only by so doing would that also be obtained which may seem to be the demand for the opposite, viz. that the object of its consciousness have at the same time the form of free actuality; but only Spirit that is object to itself as absolute Spirit is conscious of itself as a free actuality to the extent that it is and remains conscious of itself therein.”
this way that Hegel will be able to say that the only difference between his Science and Christian Theology consists in the fact that the latter is a Vorstellung, while his Science is a Begriff, a developed concept. Indeed, it is enough to overcome the Vorstellung, it is enough to be-greifen, to know or understand that which one has projected, it is enough to say about Man everything that the Christian says about his God, in order to have the atheistic anthropology that is at the basis of Hegel’s Science.

After having pointed out the essential characteristics of the phenomenon that it is a matter of describing in Chapter VII, that is to say, of Theology, and after having marked the outcome of the dialectical evolution of this phenomenon, that is to say, of the history of religious doctrines, Hegel moves onto the third and final part of the introduction.

It is now a matter of situating Chapter VII within the whole of the Phenomenology, and of pointing out its interior structure.

First of all, Hegel says the following (p. 476, 1. 14–p. 477, 1. 13):

Given that one initially distinguishes Self-Consciousness from {external-}Consciousness properly speaking, {or, in other words, that one distinguishes} Religion from Spirit in its World, that is to say, from the empirical-existence [Dasein] of Spirit, {it is necessary to say that} this {empirical-existence} consists in the whole-or-entirety of Spirit, insofar as the constitutive-elements [Momente] {of this whole} are represented as-separating-themselves-from-one-another and as each {presenting itself} for itself. Now, the constitutive-elements {in question} are: {external-}Consciousness {Ch. I-III}, Self-Consciousness {Ch. IV}, Reason {Ch. V}, and Spirit {Ch. VI}, namely, Spirit as immediate Spirit, which is not yet Consciousness [Bewusstsein] of Spirit. The integrated totality of these {four} constitutive-elements constitutes Spirit in its worldly empirical-existence as such. Spirit as Spirit contains the concrete-formations [Gestaltungen] {considered} up to now in their general, specific-determinations [Bestimmungen], {that is to say,} in these {same four} constitutive-elements that have just been mentioned. Religion presupposes the complete passage {of the succession} of these {four} constitutive-elements; {it} is their simple-or-undivided totality, that is to say, their absolute, personal I. – Moreover, in relation to Religion, one must not represent the course-or-process of these {four constitutive-elements as being carried out} in Time. Only Spirit that is entire-or-taken-as-a-whole is in time, and {only} the concrete-forms [Gestalten] that are concrete-forms of the entire-or-total Spirit {taken} as total, are represented in a consecutive-series. For it is only the whole-or-entirety that has an objective-reality properly speaking, and, consequently, the form of pure freedom regarding That-which-is-other, which form expresses itself as time. As for the constitutive-elements of Spirit, {which are external-}Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, {taken} as separated from one another, they do not have empirical existence, {precisely} because they are {only} constitutive-elements. Just as Spirit has been distinguished from its {four} constitutive-elements, it is necessary, thirdly, to distinguish from these constitutive-elements themselves their particular-or-isolated specific-determination. Indeed, we have seen {that} each of these {four} constitutive elements again distinguishes-or-differentiates itself in a course-or-process and forms-or-concretizes itself [gestaltet] differently therein: it is in this way that in {external-}Consciousness, for example, sensible subjective-Certainty {Ch. I} was distinguished from Perception {Ch. II}. These latter aspects separate themselves from one another in Time, and {they} belong to a specific [besonders] whole-or-entirety. – For Spirit descends from its Universality [Allgemeinheit] towards Particularity [Einzelnheit] {in passing} through the specific-determination [Bestimmung]. The specific-determination, that is to say, the Middle-term, is {external-}Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, etc. Particularly, in contrast, is constituted by the concrete-forms of these constitutive-elements. Consequently, these concrete-forms represent Spirit in its Particularity, that is to say, in its
objective-reality, and {they} are distinguished in Time. But {they are distinguished there} in such a way that the concrete-form that follows retains-or-conserves within it those that precede it.*

This text first of all teaches us something that is, so to speak, self-evident. The succession of the sections, Bewusstsein (Ch. I-III), Selbstbewusstsein (Ch. IV), Vernunft (Ch. V), and Geist (Ch. VI), is not temporal. The succession of phenomena studied within each of these sections does, on the contrary, unfold in time. That is to say, Sensation (Ch. I) precedes Perception (Ch. II), which precedes Understanding (Ch. III). But this Understanding—vulgar science, etc.—is posterior to the Struggle and Work described in Chapter IV. Likewise, the Intellectual, as he is described in Chapter V, is found only [217] in the Christian World, which is analyzed in Section B of Chapter VI; he is therefore posterior to the pagan World described in Section A. But the succession of Sections A, B, and C of Chapter VI corresponds to the course of historical evolution: Greek City, Roman Empire, Feudalism, Absolutism, Revolution, Napoleon, German Philosophy, Hegel. (The temporal succession, Sensation, Perception, and Understanding, corresponds, moreover, not only to the development of the isolated individual, but also to the evolution of humanity, which is analyzed in Chapter VI.)

Religion presupposes—but in a logical, and not temporal, sense—the whole of the “constitutive elements” [Momente] described in the six preceding Chapters. That can only mean the following: it is real, concrete Man who is religious and who does theology; it is neither a “pure” Consciousness, nor a “pure” Desire, nor a “pure” Action, etc.; it is Man-conscious-of-himself-in-his-active-life-in-the-World. And Hegel says that Religion presupposes, logically, the whole of this life in the World, that is to say, History. That means: Religion is always an ideology, an ideal “super-structure,” founded on the “infra-structure” of real, active History, History realizing itself as Struggle and Work. Religion is only “das absolute Selbst” of this reality. That is to say, as I have said previously, in and through Theology, Man becomes conscious of real humanity, that is to say, of the People, of the State, of social, political, historical reality. It is necessary that a People first of all constitute itself through Action, in order that it can then contemplate itself—unconsciously—in a Religion, in its God.

But on the other hand, it is only in becoming conscious of itself that the People is truly a People, and not an animal “society.” Yet it becomes conscious of itself in Religion. It is therefore only in and through Religion that the people constitutes itself as human individuality. (At least insofar as religion is not replaced by Hegelian Science.) And this is what Hegel says in the passage that follows (p. 477, 1. 14–p. 478, 1. 9).

On the one hand, Religion is, consequently, the culmination-or-perfection of Spirit; {the culmination} to which the particular-and-isolated [einzellen] constitutive-elements of Spirit, {which are} (external-)Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, return or have returned as to

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 412-13 (§ 679): “When self-consciousness and consciousness proper, religion and Spirit in its world, or Spirit’s existence, are in the first instance distinguished from each other, the latter consists in the totality of Spirit so far as its moments exhibit themselves in separation, each on its own account. But the moments are consciousness, self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit—Spirit, that is, as intermediate Spirit, which is not yet consciousness of Spirit. Their totality, taken together, constitutes Spirit in its mundane existence generally; Spirit as such contains the previous structured shapes in universal determinations, in the moments just named. Religion presupposes that these have run their full course and is their simple totality or absolute self. The course traversed by these moments is, moreover, in relation to religion, not to be represented as occurring in Time. Only the totality of Spirit is in Time, and the ‘shapes,’ which are ‘shapes’ of the totality of Spirit, display themselves in a temporal succession; for only the whole has true actuality and therefore the form of pure freedom in the face of an ‘other,’ a form which expresses itself as Time. But the moments of the whole, consciousness, self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, just because they are moments, have no existence in separation from one another. Just as Spirit was distinguished from its moments, so we have further, in the third place, to distinguish from these moments themselves their individual determination. We saw that each of those moments was differentiated again in its own self into a process of its own, and assumed different ‘shapes’; as, e.g., in consciousness, sense-certain and perception were distinct from each other. These latter shapes fall apart in Time and belong to a particular totality. For Spirit descends from its universality to individuality through determination. The determination, or middle term, is consciousness, self-consciousness, and so on. But individuality is constituted by the shapes assumed by these moments. These, therefore, exhibit Spirit in its individuality or actuality, and are distinguished from one another in Time, though in such a way that the later moment retains within it the preceding one.”
their ground-or-basis. On the other hand, these constitutive-elements constitute as a whole the empirically-existing objective-reality of the entire-or-complete Spirit, which exists only as (dialectical-) movement—movement that distinguishes-or-differentiates the aspects of Spirit and returns to itself from its own aspects. The becoming of [218] Religion as such is implied in the (dialectical-) movement of the universal constitutive-elements. But insofar as each of these attributes has been represented not only as it determines-or-specifies itself in general, but also as it exists in and for itself, that is to say, as it unfolds [verläuft] within itself as a Whole, the aforementioned complete courses-or-processes of the particular-and-isolated aspects of Spirit entail at the same time the specific-determinations of Religion itself. Entire-or-complete Spirit, (that is to say,) Spirit in Religion is for its part the (dialectical-) movement of Spirit by which the latter, in leaving its immediacy, arrives at knowing-or-at-the-knowledge-of [au savoir-ou-à-la-connaissance] what it is in itself, that is to say, (of what it is) in an immediate-manner; or again, the Spirit of Religion is the dialectical-movement by which Spirit arrives at (the situation) in which the concrete-form in which it appears-or-reveals-itself to its (external-) Consciousness, identifies itself [gleiche] perfectly with its essential-reality, and (in which) it contemplates itself as it (actually) is. – In this becoming, Spirit is therefore itself situated in the specific-or-determinate concrete-forms that constitute the distinctions-or-differences of this (dialectical-) movement. At the same time and thereby, determine-or-specific Religion also possesses an objectively-real, determinate-or-specific Spirit. If, therefore, (external-) Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, and Spirit belong exclusively to Spirit as it knows-or-has-knowledge-of itself [se sais-ou-se connaît lui-même], the determinate-or-specific concrete-forms that develop themselves within (external-) Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, belong, (by forming) each time (a) special {development}, exclusively to the determinate-or-specific concrete-forms of Spirit that knows-or-has-knowledge-of itself. The determinate-or-specific concrete-form of Religion chooses for its objectively-real Spirit among the concrete-forms of each of the constitutive-elements of this Spirit, that which corresponds to it (to the given Religion). The one-or-unique specific-determination of Religion penetrates into all the aspects of its objectively-real empirical-existence, and (it) stamps them with their common seal.*

Religious evolution is only a “constitutive-element” (Moment) of historical, real, active evolution. And it is this real process, the infra-structure, that determines the particular forms of different Religions. The aim of religious evolution is atheistic philosophy, in and through which Spirit contemplates itself as it is in reality: “er sich anschaut wie er ist.” The stages of the becoming of this perfect self-comprehension are represented by the different Religions, each of which corresponds to a Society, to a determinate Spirit: “einen bestimmten Geist.” A given Religion or Theology reflects the specific characteristics of real Spirit, that is to say, of the Volksgeist. It is [219] therefore indeed a projection into the beyond of the character of social reality that has already been formed. But, on the other hand, the People constitutes itself as a homogenous unity only by having worked out

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 413-14 (¶ 680): “If, therefore, religion is the perfection of Spirit into which its individual moments—consciousness, self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit—return and have returned as into their ground, they together constitute the existent actuality of the totality of Spirit, which is only as the differentiating and self-returning movement of these its aspects. The genesis of religion in general is contained in the movement of the universal moments. But since each of these attributes was exhibited, not merely as it determines itself in general, but as it is in and for itself, i.e. as it runs its course as a totality within itself, therefore, what has come to be is not merely the genesis of religion in general: those complete processes of the individual aspects at the same time contain the specific forms of religion itself. The totality of Spirit, the Spirit of religion, is again the movement away from its immediacy towards the attainment of the knowledge of what it is in itself or immediately, the movement in which, finally, the ‘shape’ in which it appears for its consciousness will be perfectly identical with its essence, and it will behold itself as it is. In this genesis of religion, Spirit itself therefore assumes specific ‘shapes’ which constitute the different moments of this movement; at the same time, the specific religion has likewise a specific actual Spirit. Thus, if consciousness, self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, belong to self-knowing Spirit in general, similarly the specific ‘shapes’ which were specially developed within consciousness, self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, belong to specific ‘shapes’ of self-knowing Spirit. From the ‘shapes’ belonging to each of its moments, the specific ‘shape’ of religion picks out the one appropriate to it for its actual Spirit. The one distinctive feature which characterizes the religion penetrates every aspect of its actual existence and stamps them with this common character.”
According to what Hegel just said, the analysis of the religious evolution given in Chapter VII should pass through the same stages that the analysis of the real evolution in Chapter VI did. However, the parallelism is in fact not maintained. And this is what Hegel is now going to explain.

He says the following (p. 478, 1. 10–p. 479, 1. 9):

In this way, the concrete-forms that have been presented (to us) up to now (in Chapters I-VI), are now ordered (in Chapter VII) in a different way than (they were ordered when) they appeared in their consecutive-series [Reihe]. Before (going further,) it is necessary to make some brief, essential remarks about this subject. – In the consecutive-series considered (in Chapters I-VI), each constitutive-element, in going deeper into itself, was elaborated (in order to become) a Whole in its original [eigentümlichen] principle. And the act-of-knowing was the Depth or Spirit, in which these constitutive-elements, which have no permanent-maintenance in themselves, had their substance. Yet now (in Chapter VII), this substance has risen-to-the-surface; it is the depth of Spirit subjectively-certain of itself, (the depth) that does not permit the particular-and-isolated principle to (actually) isolate itself and to constitute itself into a Whole within itself. On the contrary, in collecting in it all these constitutive-elements, in holding them together, this substance progresses into that total richness of its objectively-real Spirit, and all the determinate-or-specific constitutive-elements of this Spirit take and receive, in common, into themselves the same [gleiche] specific-determination, (which is that) of the Whole. – This Spirit that is subjectively-certain of itself, like its {dialectical-}movement, is the true-or-veritable objective-reality and the Being-in and for-itself of these constitutive-elements, (the Being in and for itself) that falls to each particular-and-isolated-entity. In its process, the one-and-only consecutive-series (that we have considered) up to now therefore designated through knots the regressions (that were carried out) in it; but starting from these knots, it was prolonged again in a single line [Länge]. In contrast, now (in Chapter VII) this consecutive-series is, so to speak, broken into these knots, (that is to say,) into these universal constitutive-elements, and (it is) decomposed into many lines that, (being) [220] assembled in a single bundle, at the same time unite themselves in a symmetrical manner so that the analogous distinctions-or-differences, in which each specific [besondere] line took-concrete-form [gestaltete] within itself, come to coincide. – Moreover, the manner in which the co-ordination of the general directions must be understood, (the manner) that has been represented here, arises of its own accord from the whole of (our) exposition. It is therefore superfluous to remark that these distinctions-or-differences must essentially be understood only as constitutive-elements of becoming, (and) not as parts (of a static Whole). In objectively-real Spirit, they are attributes of its substance; but in Religion, they are on the contrary only predicates of the subject. – Likewise, in itself or for us, all the forms are as such in Spirit, and (they are such) in each Spirit. But the only thing that matters in every case [überhaupt] in the objective-reality of Spirit–is (the choice) of the specific-determination that exists for itself (for this Spirit) in its {own external-}Consciousness, (of the determination) with respect to which it knows-or-has-knowledge that it is within it that its personal-I is expressed, that is to say, (the choice) of the concrete-form with respect to which it knows-or-has-knowledge that it is within it that its essential-reality is.

* Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 414-15 (¶ 681): “In this way, the arrangement of the ‘shapes’ which have hitherto appeared differs from the way they appeared in their own order. On this point we shall observe briefly at the start what is necessary. In the series we considered, each moment, exploring its own depths, formed itself into a totality within its own peculiar principle; and cognition was the depth, or the Spirit, wherein the moments which have no other subsistence of their own possessed their substance. But this substance is now manifest; it is the depth of Spirit that is certain of itself, which does not allow the principle of each individual moment to become isolated and to make itself a totality within itself; on the contrary, gathering and
INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER VII

In the preceding Chapters, Hegel analyzed, one after the other, the constitutive elements of the human being: Sensation, Perception, Understanding, Desire, etc., etc.... But all these elements are real only in concrete Man, and concrete Man exists only in the heart of Society, of the Volk, of the State. Now the People becomes—unconsciously—conscious of itself in its Religion. It is therefore Theology that reflects human reality, and not sensible experience, physics, psychology, etc.... Each Theology gives a global vision of human reality, in which the “attributes of substance,” this substance being Society as such (People, State), appear in the guise of “predicates” that one attributes to the “subject,” that is to say, to God. Thus the different Religions are stages of the becoming of the Self-Consciousness of humanity, and not fragments of this Consciousness, which would have been added in order to form the whole. Each Religion is a total vision of human reality, and there is a becoming of Religion only because there is a becoming of this reality.

However, if “in itself or for us,” each Religion reflects the totality, this is not the case for those who profess it. Each given Religion accentuates a “constitutive-element” more than the others, that which presupposes and conditions the real predominance of this element in the historic life of the People that has this Religion. Consequently, the current [actuelle] totality is an integration of the “constitutive-elements” that have been partially actualized in the different Religions. One can therefore nevertheless say that complete Self-Consciousness [221] is a summation or integration of those things that have partially come to consciousness in and through Religions.

Moreover, we know that perfect Self-Consciousness is a religious, atheistic: Man knows, then, that it is of himself that he becomes conscious, and not of God. As for those things that have come to consciousness partially, they are theological: in imagining a particular form of divinity, Man becomes partially conscious of his human reality.

Hegel has already insisted on this difference. But he returns to it again in the passage that follows.

First of all, he says the following (p. 479, 1. 10-15):

The difference-or-distinction that has been established between objectively-real Spirit and {this same} Spirit that knows-or-has-knowledge-of itself [se sait-ou-se-connaît] as Spirit, that is to say, {the distinction} between itself {taken} as {external-}Consciousness and {itself taken} as Self-Consciousness, {this difference-or-distinction} is dialectically-overcome in Spirit that knows-or-has-knowledge-of itself according to its {objective} truth: the {external-}Consciousness and the Self-Consciousness of this Spirit are made equal.*

holding together all these moments within itself, it advances within this total wealth of its actual Spirit, and all its particular moments take and receive in common into themselves the like determinateness of the whole. This self-certain Spirit and its movement is their true actuality and the being-in-and-for-self which belongs to each moment. Thus while the previous single series in its advance marked the retrogressive steps in it by nodes, but continued itself again from them in a single line, it is now, as it were, broken at these nodes, at these universal moments, and falls apart into many lines which, gathered up into a single bundle, at the same time combine symmetrically so that the similar differences in which each particular moment took shape within itself meet together.

However, it is self-evident from the whole exposition how this co-ordination of the general directions here represented is to be understood; so that it is superfluous to remark that these differences are to be grasped essentially only as moments of the development, not as parts. In actual Spirit, they are attributes of its substance, but in religion, on the other hand, they are only predicates of the Subject. Similarly, all forms in general are certainly in themselves or for us contained in Spirit and in each Spirit, but as regards Spirit’s actuality, the main point is solely which determinateness is explicit for it in its consciousness, in which determinateness it has expressed its self, or in which ‘shape’ it knows its essence.

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 415 (¶ 682): “The distinction which was made between actual Spirit and Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, or between itself, qua consciousness, and qua self-consciousness, is superseded in the Spirit that knows itself in its truth; its consciousness and its self-consciousness are on the same level.”
“Spirit that has knowledge of itself [se connaît] in its truth” (or reality—that has been revealed), is the Hegelian Spirit of absolute Knowing [Savoir], of which it will be a question in Chapter VIII. In Chapter VII, it is a question of Spirit that has knowledge of itself in and through Religion. And here is how Hegel opposes this religious or theological knowledge [connaissance] to the arreligious and atheistic knowledge of absolute Knowing [Savoir] (p. 479, l. 15–p. 480, 1. 9):

But given that here (that is to say, as it is considered in Chapter VII,) Religion still exists only in-an-immediate-manner, the difference-or-distinction {in question} has not yet been re-absorbed into Spirit. It is only the abstract-notion [nur der Begriff] of Religion that is posited. In this {abstract-notion,} essential-reality is Self-Consciousness, which is for itself all {objective-}truth, and which within this {truth} entails all objective-reality. This Self-Consciousness, {insofar as it is religious, that is to say, insofar as it is taken} as {external-}Consciousness, has itself for its thingly-object. Therefore: Spirit that still knows-or-has-knowledge of itself only in-an-immediate-manner is for itself Spirit in the form of immediacy, and the specific-determination of the concrete-form in which it appears-or-reveals-itself to itself, is that of static-Being (=God). To be sure, this static-Being is filled-or-accomplished [erfüllt] neither by sensation nor by multiform [mannigfaltigen] material, nor by other [sonstigen] constitutive-elements, aims and unilateral specifying-determinations; on the contrary, (it is filled) by Spirit, and (it) is of itself known [su-ou-connu] as [222] (being) all {objective-}truth and {all} objective-reality. (But brought about) in this way, this filling-or-accomplishing is not equal to its concrete-form; Spirit {taken} as essential-reality {is not equal} to its {external} Consciousness. Spirit is objectively-real only {at the moment in which it exists} as absolute Spirit, {that is to say,} insofar as it, as it is in the subjective-certainty of itself, also exists for itself in its {objective-}truth; or {in other words, insofar as} the extreme terms, in which it divides itself {when it is taken} as {external-}Consciousness, exist for one-another in the concrete-form-of-Spirit. The concrete-formation that Spirit (taken) as the thingly-object of its {external} Consciousness assumes, remains filled-or-accomplished by the subjective-certainty of Spirit, as by a substance; {and} thanks to this content, there disappears {the danger} that the thingly-object would lower {itself} down [herabsänken] into pure-or-abstract [reinen] thingly-objectivity, {that is to say,} into the form of the negating-negativity of Self-Consciousness. The immediate union of Spirit with itself is the basis or the pure-or-abstract (external-)Consciousness, within which (external-)Consciousness separates itself {into knowing subject and object known}. Being thus contained within its pure-or-abstract Self-Consciousness, Spirit does not exist in Religion as the creator of a Nature as such. That which it produces in this {religious, dialectical-}movement are its {own} concrete-forms (known) as {divine} Spirits, which as a whole form the integrity [Vollständigkeit] of its appearance-or-revelation. And this {dialectical-}movement itself is the becoming of the perfect objective-reality of Spirit through the particular-and-isolated aspects of this {perfect objective-reality}, that is to say, (through) the imperfect objective-realities of Spirit.

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 415-16 (¶ 682): “But, as religion here is, to begin with, immediate, this distinction has not yet returned into Spirit. What is posited is only the Notion of religion; in this the essence is self-consciousness, which is conscious of being all truth and contains all reality within that truth. This self-consciousness has, as consciousness, itself for object. Spirit which, to begin with, has an immediate knowledge of itself is thus to itself Spirit in the form of immediacy, and the determinateness of the form in which it appears to itself is that of [mere] being. This being, it is true, is filled neither with sensation nor a manifold material, nor with any other kind of one-sided moments, purposes, and determinations: it is filled with Spirit and is known by itself to be all truth and reality. Such filling is not identical with its shape, Spirit qui esse-ence is not identical with its consciousness. Spirit is actual as absolute Spirit only when it is also for itself in its truth as it is certainty of itself, or when the extremes into which, as consciousness, it parts itself are explicitly for each other in the shape of Spirit. The shape which Spirit assumes as object of its consciousness remains filled by the certainty of Spirit as by its substance; through this content, the object is saved from being degraded to pure objectivity, to the form of negativity of self-consciousness. Spirit’s immediate unity with itself is the basis, or pure consciousness, within which consciousness parts asunder [into the duality of subject and object]. In this way Spirit, shut up within its pure self-consciousness, does not exist in religion as the creator of a Nature in general; what is does create in this movement are its shapes qui Spirits, which together constitute the completeness of its manifestation. And this movement itself is the genesis of its complete reality through its
INTERPRETATION OF THE GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER VII

Religion is “unmittelbar” in Chapter VII: that is to say, it has to with Religion in the proper sense of the word, with Theology. This Theology is the “immediate” form of “Science,” it is anthropology that is not mediated by the negation of God (which presupposes mediation by the nothingness of death, realized in and through the Terror of Robespierre). “Science” that is not mediated by Negation is non-dialectical, pre-Hegelian philosophy. It is “positive” in the sense that it substantializes Spirit, understanding it as a Sein, as a Given-Being, a Being that is, in fact, natural, non-human, but one that is conceived here as a divine, all-powerful, eternal Being that is identical to itself. Spirit conceived as such a Sein—is God. “Immediate” philosophy is therefore indeed theology and not anthropo-logy.

God is therefore a Sein, but a spiritual Sein: he is Spirit materialized. And this Spirit, Hegel says, creates not Nature, the sensible World, but spiritual concrete-forms, Gestalten als Geister, that is to say, Gods. In other words: as a religious being, Man, or (human) Spirit, creates not [223] forms and natural laws, not real, empirical Worlds, but Theologies, myths with anthropo-logical content and theo-logical form.

It is the becoming of this Spirit that creates Gods, it is the evolution of religious thought, it is the logico-temporal succession of diverse Theologies elaborated throughout the course of history that Hegel is going to describe in Chapter VII. And, in the passage that concludes the introduction, he lays out the general structure of this chapter.

He says that in the first section (A), it will be a question of primitive, pre-historical Religion, which he calls “natürliche Religion.” In the second section (B), he will speak about “Kunst-Religion,” that is to say, about Greco-Roman Religion. Finally, a third and final section (C) will be devoted to studying “absolute Religion,” that is to say, Christianity.

Here is how he determines the essential features of these three important stages of the religious evolution of humanity (p. 480, 1. 10-35):

The first objective-reality of Spirit (in Religion) is the abstract-notion {Begriff in the sense of: nur Begriff} of Religion itself, that is to say, Religion {taken} as {an} immediate and, consequently, natural Religion. In this {natural Religion,} Spirit knows-or-has-knowledge-of itself as it knows its thingly-object, in a natural, that is to say, immediate, concrete-form. As for the second {objective-reality of Spirit in Religion}, it is necessarily that {in which Spirit comes} to knowor-have-knowledge-of itself in the concrete-form of the dialectically-overcome natural-state [Natürlichkeit], that is to say, {in the concrete-form} of the personal-I. This {second objective-reality} is, consequently, artificial-or-artistic Religion. For the concrete-form is elevated to the form of the personal-I through the creative production [Hervorbringen] of (external-)Consciousness, a result of which the latter contemplates its Action, that is to say {precisely} the personal-I, in its thingly-object. Finally, the third {objective-reality of Spirit in Religion} dialectically-overcomes the unilateral character of the first two: {there,} the personal-I is just as much an immediate {personal-I} as the immediacy is personal-I. If in the first {religious objective-reality,} Spirit as such is in the form of {external-}Consciousness, {and,} in the second, it is {in the form} of Self-Consciousness, it is in the third {objective reality} in the form of the union of both, {that is to say, of external-Consciousness and of Self-Consciousness,}. {There,} it has the concrete-form of Being-in and for-itself. And insofar as Spirit is re-presented-and-externalized [vorgestellt] {there} as it is in and for itself—it is revealed-or-manifest Religion. However, although it is true that in this {revealed Religion,} Spirit has attained its true-or-veritable concrete-form, this concrete-form itself and the externalizing-re-presentation are still precisely the non-overcome aspect though which Spirit must pass into the concept in order completely to dissolve within the concept the form of thingly-objectivity—the concept that contains within itself just as much its opposite {which is the thingly-object}. In this moment{—and this is the absolute Knowing of Chapter VIII—}Spirit has {itself} grasped the Concept of itself {in the same manner}
in which we {that is to say, Hegel and his reader} have just seen it done; and the concrete-form of this Spirit, that is to say, the element of its empirical-existence, insofar as it {the concrete-form} is Concept, is this Spirit itself."

Now, this last “concrete-form” of Spirit, which itself is Spirit— is the Sage in his empirical existence, is Hegel.

* Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology, 416 (§ 683): “The first reality of Spirit is the Notion of religion itself, or religion as immediate, and therefore Natural Religion. In this, Spirit knows itself as its object in a natural or immediate shape. The second reality, however, is necessarily that in which Spirit knows itself in the shape of a superseded natural existence, or of the self. This, therefore, is the Religion of Art; for the shape raises itself to the form of the self through the creative activity of consciousness whereby this beholds in its object its act or the self. Finally, the third reality overcomes the one-sidedness of the first two; the self is just as much an immediacy, as the immediacy is the self. If, in the first reality, Spirit in general is in the form of consciousness, and in the second, in that of self-consciousness, in the third it is in the form of the unity of both. It has the shape of being-in-and-for-itself; and when it is thus conceived as it is in and for itself, this is Revealed Religion. But although in this, Spirit has indeed attained its true shape, yet the shape itself and the picture-thought are still the unvanquished aspect from which Spirit must pass over into the Notion, in order wholly to resolve therein the form of objectivity, in the Notion which equally embraces within itself its own opposite. It is then that Spirit has grasped the Notion of itself, just as we now have first grasped it; and its shape or the element of its existence, being the Notion, is Spirit itself.”
NOTES

1. The translator would like to thank Professor Elizabeth Rottenberg of DePaul University, as well as the participants of the Spring 2011 DePaul Hegel Translation Group–Érik Beranek, Tristan Fischl, Owen Glyn-Williams, Anna Johnson, and Daniel Rosiak—for their support and helpful comments on an earlier draft of this translation.


3. Stefanos Geroulanos notes that “Queneau supplant[ed] Kojève’s scripted lectures with his own summaries (which are not always dependable), thus obliterating the bulk of Kojève’s elaborate interpretation,” an interpretation which can be found in part in the “770 folios of scripted lectures from the Hegel courses” in the Kojève archive. See Stefanos Geroulanos, An Atheism That Is Not Humanist Emerges in French Thought (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 135; cf. 354n14. The present translation, however, is based on a stenographic version made available to Queneau while he was editing Kojève’s text. Geroulanos discusses some of the unpublished material from the 1937-1938 course in ibid., Ch. 3 (pp. 130-72).

4. Introduction à la lecture de Hegel was first published in Gallimard’s Classiques de la Philosophie series in 1947, with a second edition appearing in 1962. It was then reprinted by Gallimard in 1968 as a part of the Bibliothèque des Idées series, and again by Gallimard in 1979 as a part of Collection Tel. The present translation derives from the 1979 reprint, pp. 196-224. The translator and Parrhesia would like to express their gratitude to Gallimard and in particular to Alexandre Lemasson for generously granting us the right to publish the translation.


In addition to Nichols’ partial translation of Introduction à la lecture de Hegel, recent English translations of other works by Kojève include The Concept, Time, and Discourse, trans. Robert B. Williamson (South Bend, IN: Saint Augustine’s, forthcoming), The Notion of Authority: (A Brief Presentation), trans. Hager Weslai (London: Verso, 2014); and Outline of a Phenomenology of Right, ed. Bryan-Paul Frost, trans. Bryan-Paul Frost and Robert Howse (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007). A new edition of Leo Strauss’ On Tyranny, which includes a review essay by Kojève and their correspondence, appeared with the University of Chicago Press in 2013, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth. Finally, several articles and letters by Kojève have been translated into English over the years in Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy.


5. Kojève did not initially choose the topic “Hegel’s Religious Philosophy.” Alexandre Koyré had been lecturing on Hegel’s religious philosophy, and Kojève had been one of the attendees. When Koyré left to lecture at Cairo University, Kojève took over the continuation of the course, the topic of which he nevertheless retained in his title for the next six years. See Schmittiana, vol. VI, pp. 78 and 79n14; as well as Roth, Knowing and History, 95.


7. In what follows, interpolations of German words are Kojève’s and have been put in brackets; interpolations of French
words are the translator’s and have also been put in brackets; interpolated English phrases are translations of Kojève’s French interpolations and have been put in curly brackets. Kojève’s unitalicized German citations have been italicized, and his italicized German citations have been underlined as well. The pagination of the French edition has been interpolated in brackets and boldfaced. All footnotes and endnotes are the translator’s.


11. Hegel’s text is from 1802-1803.

12. Kojève’s French original has 467, which does not contain the following passage. It has been changed accordingly. Other such typos, of which there are many, will be changed without further comment.

13. The French has *sine*, which appears to be a typo for the German feminine nominative possessive adjective *seine*, i.e., ‘his (world).’ The text has been changed accordingly.