

The difference between Fichte's and Schelling's system of philosophy/ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel; Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY), 1977. (85-98 p.)

Various Forms Occurring in Contemporary Philosophy

HISTORICAL VIEW OF PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

An age which has so many philosophical systems lying behind it in its past must apparently arrive at the same indifference which life acquires after it has tried all forms. The urge toward totality continues to express itself, but only as an urge toward completeness of information. Individuality becomes fossilized and no longer ventures out into life. Through the variety of what he has, the individual tries to procure the illusion of being what he is not. He refuses the living participation demanded by science,¹ transforming it into mere information, keeping it at a distance and in purely objective shape. Deaf to all demands that he should raise himself to universality, he maintains himself imperturbably in his self-willed particularity. If indifference of this sort escalates into curiosity, it may believe nothing to be more vital than giving a name to a newly developed philosophy, expressing dominion over it by finding a name for it, just as Adam showed his dominance over the animals by giving names to them.² In this way philosophy is transposed to the plane of information. Information is concerned with alien objects. In the philosophical knowledge that is only erudition, the inward totality does not bestir itself, and neutrality retains its perfect freedom [from commitment].

No philosophical system can escape the possibility of this sort of reception; every philosophical system can be treated historically. As every living form belongs at the same time to the realm of appearance, so too does philosophy. As appearance, philosophy surrenders

1. *Wissenschaft*. It is characteristic of Schelling and Hegel (largely as a result of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*) that they do not merely regard speculative philosophy as a "Science," but as the *only* "Science" worthy of the name. Hence "Science" and "philosophy" become synonymous.

2. In his first "Philosophy of Spirit" (Winter 1803) Hegel makes the following remark about this: "The first act by which Adam constituted his dominion over the animals is that he gave them names, i.e., he nullified them as beings and made them into essentially ideal things (*für sich Ideellen*)" (*N.K.A.*, VI, 289). Similarly then, the historian turns the living spirit of a philosophy into a definite "idea" in his own mind.

to the power capable of transforming it into dead opinion and into something that belonged to the past from the very beginning. The living spirit that dwells in a philosophy demands to be born of a kindred spirit if it is to unveil itself. It brushes past the historical concern which is moved by some interest, to [collect] information about opinions. For this concern it is an alien phenomenon and does not reveal its own inwardness. It matters little to the spirit that it is forced to augment the extant collection of mummies and the general heap of contingent oddities; for the spirit itself slipped away between the fingers of the curious collector of information. The collector stands firm in his [10] neutral attitude towards truth; he preserves his independence whether he accepts opinions, rejects them, or abstains from decision. He can give philosophical systems only one relation to himself: they are opinions—and such incidental things as opinions can do him no harm. He has not learned that there is truth to be had.³

The history of philosophy [seems to] acquire a more useful aspect, however, when the impulse to enlarge science takes hold of it, for according to Reinhold, the history of philosophy should serve as a means "to penetrate more profoundly than ever into the spirit of philosophy, and to develop the idiosyncratic views of one's predecessors about the grounding of the reality of human cognition further in new views of one's own."⁴ Only if this sort of information concerning previous attempts to solve the problem of philosophy were available could the attempt actually succeed in the end—if mankind is fated to succeed in it at all.

As can be seen, the project of such an investigation presupposes an image of philosophy as a kind of handicraft, something that can be improved by newly invented turns of skill. Each new invention presupposes acquaintance with the turns already in use and with the purposes they serve; but after all the improvements made so far, the principal task remains. Reinhold evidently seems to think of this task as the finding of a universally valid and ultimate turn of skill such that the work completes itself automatically for anyone who can get acquainted with it. If the aim were such an invention, and if science were a lifeless product of alien ingenuity, science would indeed have

3. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (first given in 1805) Hegel criticized Dietrich Tiedmann as a collector of this kind. See Haldane and Simson, I, 112-3; or Gray, pp. 314-5.

4. *Beiträge* I, 5-6.

the perfectibility of which mechanical arts are capable. The preceding philosophical systems would at all times be nothing but practice studies for the big brains. But if the Absolute, like Reason which is its appearance, is eternally one and the same—as indeed it is—then every Reason that is directed toward itself and comes to recognize itself, produces a true philosophy and solves for itself the problem which, like its solution, is at all times the same. In philosophy, Reason comes to know itself and deals only with itself so that its whole work and activity are grounded in itself, and with respect to the inner essence of philosophy there are neither predecessors nor successors.

Nor is it any more correct to speak of *personal views* entertained in philosophy than of its steady improvement. How could the rational be a personal idiosyncrasy? Whatever is thus peculiar in a philosophy must *ipso facto* belong to the form of the system and not to the essence of the philosophy. If something idiosyncratic actually constituted the essence of a philosophy, it would not be a philosophy, though even where the system itself [11] declared its essence to be something idiosyncratic it could nevertheless have sprung from authentic speculation which suffered shipwreck when it tried to express itself in the form of science. One who is caught up in his own idiosyncrasy can see in others only their idiosyncrasies. If one allows personal views to have a place in essential philosophy, and if Reinhold regards what he has recently turned to as a philosophy peculiar to himself, then it is indeed possible generally to regard all preceding ways of presenting and solving the problem of philosophy as merely personal idiosyncrasies and mental exercises. But the exercises are still supposed to prepare the way for the attempt that finally succeeds—for though we see that the shores of those philosophical Islands of the Blest that we yearn for are only littered with the hulks of wrecked ships, and there is no vessel safe at anchor in their bays, yet we must not let go of the teleological perspective.

Fichte dared to assert that Spinoza could not possibly have believed in his philosophy, that he could not possibly have had a full inner living conviction; and he said of the ancients that it is even doubtful that they had a clear conception of the task of philosophy.⁵ This, too, must be explained in terms of the idiosyncratic form in which his philosophy expressed itself.

5. See the "Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge" (Fichte, *Werke* I, 513; Heath and Lachs, pp. 81-2).

In Fichte, the peculiar form of his own system, the vigor that characterizes⁶ it as a whole produces utterances of this sort. The peculiarity of Reinhold's philosophy, on the other hand, consists in its founding and grounding concern with different philosophical views, making a great to-do about the historical investigation of their idiosyncrasies. His love of, and faith in, truth have risen to an elevation so pure and so sickening that in order to found and ground the step into the temple properly, Reinhold has built a spacious vestibule in which philosophy keeps itself so busy with analysis, with methodology and with storytelling, that it saves itself from taking the step altogether; and in the end, as a consolation for his incapacity to do philosophy, Reinhold persuades himself that the bold steps others have taken had been nothing but preparatory exercises or mental confusions.

The essence of philosophy, on the contrary, is a bottomless abyss for personal idiosyncrasy. In order to reach philosophy it is necessary to throw oneself into it *à corps perdu*—meaning by 'body' here, the sum of one's idiosyncrasies. For Reason, finding consciousness caught in particularities, only becomes philosophical speculation by raising itself to itself, putting its trust only in itself and the Absolute which at that moment becomes its object. In this process Reason stakes nothing but finitudes of consciousness. In order to overcome these finitudes and construct the Absolute in consciousness, Reason lifts itself into speculation, and in [12] the groundlessness of the limitations and personal peculiarities it grasps its own grounding within itself. Speculation is the activity of the one universal Reason directed upon itself. Reason, therefore, does not view the philosophical systems of different epochs and different heads merely as different modes [of doing philosophy] and purely idiosyncratic views. Once it has liberated its own view from contingencies and limitations, Reason necessarily finds itself throughout all the particular forms—or else a mere manifold of the concepts and opinions of the intellect; and such a manifold is no philosophy. The true peculiarity of a philosophy lies in the interesting individuality which is the organic shape that Reason has built for itself out of the material of a particular age. The particular speculative Reason [of a later time] finds in it spirit of its spirit, flesh of its flesh, it intuitively itself in it as one and the same and yet as another living

6. *Sthenische Beschaffenheit*: the term is borrowed from the physiological theory of Dr. John Brown (1735–88), which influenced Schelling and Hegel greatly in this early period. Reinhold is, by contrast, an "asthenic" philosopher, but Hegel leaves it to us to supply this Brownian complement.

being. Every philosophy is complete in itself, and like an authentic work of art, carries the totality within itself. Just as the works of Apelles or Sophocles would not have appeared to Raphael and Shakespeare—had they known them—as mere preparatory studies, but as a kindred force of the spirit, so Reason cannot regard its former shapes as merely useful preludes to itself. Virgil, to be sure, regarded Homer to be such a prelude to himself and his refined era, and for this reason Virgil's work remains a mere postlude.

THE NEED OF PHILOSOPHY⁷

If we look more closely at the particular form worn by a philosophy we see that it arises, on the one hand, from the living originality of the spirit whose work and spontaneity have reestablished and shaped the harmony that has been rent; and on the other hand, from the particular form of the dichotomy from which the system emerges. Dichotomy is the source of *the need of philosophy*; and as the culture of the era, it is the unfree and given aspect of the whole configuration. In [any] culture, the appearance of the Absolute has become isolated from the Absolute and fixated into independence. But at the same time the appearance cannot disown its origin, and must aim to constitute the manifold of its limitations into one whole. The intellect, as the capacity to set limits, erects a building and places it between man and the Absolute, linking everything that [13] man thinks worthy and holy to this building, fortifying it through all the powers of nature and talent and expanding it *ad infinitum*. The entire totality of limitations is to be found in it, but not the Absolute itself. [The Absolute is] lost in the parts, where it drives the intellect in its ceaseless development of manifoldness. But in its striving to enlarge itself into the Absolute, the intellect only reproduces itself *ad infinitum* and so mocks itself.⁸ Reason reaches the Absolute only in stepping out of

7. As is often the case in Hegel, the genitive here fulfills more than one function. "The need of philosophy" means both the need (at this time) for philosophy, and what philosophy needs (at this time).

8. There is perhaps an echo here of Goethe's *Faust: Ein Fragment* (1790), lines 415–20. These lines of Mephistopheles were reproduced without change in *Faust Part I* (1808). Walter Kaufmann's translation is as follows: "Who would study and describe the living starts / By driving the spirit out of its parts: / In the palm of his hands he holds all the sections, / Lacks nothing except the spirit's

this manifold of parts. The more stable and splendid the edifice of the intellect is, the more restless becomes the striving of the life that is caught up in it as a part to get out of it, and raise itself to freedom. When life as Reason steps away into the distance, the totality of limitations is at the same time nullified, and connected with the Absolute in this nullification, and hence conceived and posited as mere appearance. The split between the Absolute and the totality of limitations vanishes.

The intellect copies Reason's absolute positing and through the form [of absolute positing] it gives itself the semblance of Reason even though the posits are in themselves opposites, and hence finite. The semblance grows that much stronger when intellect transforms and fixes Reason's negating activity [as distinct from its positing activity] into a product. The infinite, insofar as it gets opposed to the finite, is a thing of this kind, i.e., it is something rational as posited by the intellect. Taken by itself, as something rational, it merely expresses the negating of the finite. By fixing it, the intellect sets it up in absolute opposition to the finite; and reflection which had risen to the plane of Reason when it suspended the finite, now lowers itself again to being intellect because it has fixed Reason's activity into [an activity of] opposition. Moreover, reflection still pretends to be rational even in its relapse.

The cultures of various times have established opposites of this kind, which were supposed to be products of Reason and absolutes, in various ways, and the intellect has labored over them as such. Antitheses such as spirit and matter, soul and body, faith and intellect, freedom and necessity, etc. used to be important; and in more limited spheres they appeared in a variety of other guises. The whole weight of human interests hung upon them. With the progress of culture they have passed over into such forms as the antithesis of Reason and sensibility, intelligence and nature and, with respect to the universal concept, of absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity.

The sole interest of Reason is to suspend such rigid antitheses. But this does not mean that Reason is altogether opposed to opposition

connections, / *Encheiresis naturae* the chemists baptize it / Mock themselves and don't realize it" (*Goethe's "Faust"* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1961], p. 199, lines 1936-41). (We know that this passage impressed Hegel, and stuck in his mind. For he quoted it, from memory, in his Berlin lectures on *Logic* and again in his course on the *Philosophy of Nature*. See *Encyclopaedia*, Sections 38 Addn. and 246 Addn.)

and limitation. For the necessary dichotomy is One factor in life.⁹ Life eternally forms itself by setting up oppositions, and totality at the highest pitch of living energy (*in der höchsten Lebendigkeit*) is only possible through its own re-establishment out of the deepest fission. [14] What Reason opposes, rather, is just the absolute fixity which the intellect gives to the dichotomy; and it does so all the more if the absolute opposites themselves originated in Reason.

When the might of union vanishes from the life of men and the antitheses lose their living connection and reciprocity and gain independence, the need of philosophy arises. From this point of view the need is contingent. But with respect to the given dichotomy the need is the necessary attempt to suspend the rigidified opposition between subjectivity and objectivity; to comprehend the achieved existence (*das Gewordensein*) of the intellectual and real world as a becoming. Its being as a product must be comprehended as a producing. In the infinite activity of becoming and producing, Reason has united what was sundered and it has reduced the absolute dichotomy to a relative one, one that is conditioned by the original identity. When, where and in what forms such self-reproductions of Reason occur as philosophies is contingent. This contingency must be comprehended on the basis of the Absolute positing itself as an objective totality. The contingency is temporal insofar as the objectivity of the Absolute is intuited as a going forth in time. But insofar as it makes its appearance as spatial compresence, the dichotomy is a matter of regional climate. In the form of fixed reflection, as a world of thinking and thought essence in antithesis to a world of actuality, this dichotomy falls into the Northwest.¹⁰

9. Hegel capitalized *Ein*. The "Other" factor is "union" or "identity" (with the Absolute).

10. *Als eine Welt von denkendem und gedachtem Wesen, in Gegensatz gegen eine Welt von Wirklichkeit fällt diese Entzweiung in den westlichen Norden.* The reference here is to Descartes. This is not quite as plain as the French translator, Méry, thinks (p. 175, note F), but it is rendered certain by what Hegel says about the Cartesian philosophy in the "Introduction" to the *Critical Journal* (which he drafted only a few months later): "Against the Cartesian philosophy, which has expressed in philosophical form the all-encompassing dualism in the culture of the modern period in our northwestern world . . . philosophy, like every aspect of living nature must seek means of salvation . . ." (N.K.A. IV, 126). From the context of this latter passage it emerges clearly that Hegel regarded the Reformation as the religious expression, and the French Revolution as the political expression, of the dualism to which Descartes gave philosophical form. The "old life" of which these revolutions, together with the Cartesian philosophy were the

As culture grows and spreads, and the development of those outward expressions of life into which dichotomy can entwine itself becomes more manifold, the power of dichotomy becomes greater, its regional sanctity is more firmly established and the strivings of life to give birth once more to its harmony become more meaningless, more alien to the cultural whole. Such few attempts as there have been on behalf of the cultural whole against more recent culture, like the more significant beautiful embodiments of far away or long ago, have only been able to arouse that modicum of attention which remains possible when the more profound, serious connection of living art [to culture as a living whole] can no longer be understood. The entire system of relations constituting life has become detached from art, and thus the concept of art's all-embracing coherence has been lost, and transformed into the concept either of superstition or of entertainment. The highest aesthetic perfection, as it evolves in a determinate religion in which man lifts himself above all dichotomy and sees both the freedom of the subject and the necessity of the object vanish in the kingdom of grace, could only be energized up to a certain stage of culture, and within general or mob barbarism. As it [15] progressed, civilization has split away from it [i.e., this aesthetic religious perfection], and juxtaposed it to itself or vice-versa. Because the intellect has grown sure of itself, both [intellect and the aesthetic religious perfection] have come to enjoy a measure of mutual peace by separating into realms that are completely set apart from one another. What happens in one has no significance in the other.

However, the intellect can also be directly attacked by Reason in its own realm. These attempts to nullify the dichotomy, and hence the absoluteness of intellect, through reflection itself are easier to understand. Dichotomy felt itself attacked, and so turned with hate and fury against Reason, until the realm of the intellect rose to such power that it could regard itself as secure from Reason. —But just as we often say of virtue that the greatest witness for its reality is the semblance that hypocrisy borrows from it, so intellect cannot keep Reason off. It seeks to protect itself against the feeling of its inner empti-

downfall, was that of Roman Catholic feudalism. But Christian culture was infected with this dualism from the beginning. The new life of which the "saved" philosophy (of Identity) will be the scientific expression must unite the North Western pole of dualism with the South-Eastern pole of "Union" found in classical Greece "far away and long ago." Hegel and Schelling presumably regarded their native Swabia as the geographical "point of indifference" on this axis.

ness, and from the secret fear that plagues anything limited, by whitewashing its particularities with a semblance of Reason. The contempt for Reason shows itself most strongly, not in Reason's being freely scorned and abused, but by the boasting of the limited that it has mastered philosophy and lives in amity with it. Philosophy must refuse friendship with these false attempts that boast insincerely of having nullified the particularities, but which issue from limitation, and use philosophy as a means to save and secure these limitations.

In the struggle of the intellect with Reason the intellect has strength only to the degree that Reason forsakes itself. Its success in the struggle therefore depends upon Reason itself, and upon the authenticity of the need for the reconstitution of totality, the need from which Reason emerges.

The need of philosophy can be called the *presupposition* of philosophy if philosophy, which begins with itself, has to be furnished with some sort of vestibule; and there has been much talk nowadays about an absolute presupposition.¹¹ What is called the presupposition of philosophy is nothing else but the need that has come to utterance. Once uttered, the need is posited for reflection, so that [because of the very nature of reflection] there must be two presuppositions.

One is the Absolute itself. It is the goal that is being sought; but it is already present, or how otherwise could it be sought?¹² Reason produces it, merely by freeing consciousness from its limitations. This suspension of the limitations is conditioned by the presupposed unlimitedness.

The other presupposition may be taken to be that consciousness has stepped out of the totality, that is, it may be taken to be the split into being and not-being, concept and being, finitude and infinity. From the standpoint of the dichotomy, the absolute synthesis is a beyond, it is the undetermined and the shapeless as opposed [16] to the determinacies of the dichotomy. The Absolute is the night, and the light is younger than it; and the distinction between them, like the emergence of the light out of the night, is an absolute difference—the nothing is the first out of which all being, all the manifoldness of the finite has emerged. But the task of philosophy consists in uniting these presuppositions: to posit being in non-being, as becoming; to

11. Hegel is principally thinking of Reinhold with his "founding and grounding" and his "arch-truth" (compare pp. 179–86 below).

12. There may perhaps be an echo of Pascal here: "Tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne m'avais trouvé" (*Pensées*, VII, 553).

posit dichotomy in the Absolute, as its appearance; to posit the finite in the infinite, as life.

Still, it is clumsy to express the need of philosophy as a presupposition of philosophy, for the need acquires in this way a reflective form. This reflective form appears as contradictory propositions, which we shall discuss below.¹³ One may require of propositions that they be justified. But the justification of these propositions as presuppositions is still not supposed to be philosophy itself, so that the founding and grounding gets going before, and outside of, philosophy.

REFLECTION AS INSTRUMENT OF PHILOSOPHIZING

The form that the need of philosophy would assume, if it were to be expressed as a presupposition, allows for a transition from the need of philosophy to the *instrument of philosophizing*, to *reflection as Reason*. The task of philosophy is to construct the Absolute for consciousness. But since the productive activity of reflection is, like its products, mere limitation, this task involves a contradiction. The Absolute is to be posited in reflection. But then it is not posited, but cancelled; for in having been posited it was limited [by its opposite]. Philosophical reflection is the mediation of this contradiction. What must be shown above all is how far reflection is capable of grasping the Absolute, and how far in its speculative activity it carries with it the necessity and possibility of being synthesized with absolute intuition. To what extent can reflection be as complete for itself, subjectively, as its product must be, which is constructed in consciousness as the Absolute that is both conscious and non-conscious at the same time?

Reflection in isolation is the positing of opposites, and this would be a suspension of the Absolute, reflection being the faculty of being and limitation. But reflection [17] as Reason has connection with the Absolute, and it is Reason only because of this connection. In this respect, reflection nullifies itself and all being and everything limited, because it connects them with the Absolute. But at the same time the limited gains standing precisely on account of its connection with the Absolute.

Reason presents itself as the force of the negative Absolute, and

13. See pp. 103–9.

hence as a negating that is absolute; and at the same time, it presents itself as the force that posits the opposed objective and subjective totality. Reason raises the intellect above itself, driving it toward a whole of the intellect's own kind.¹⁴ Reason seduces the intellect into producing an objective totality. Every being, because it is posited, is an opposite, it is conditioned and conditioning. The intellect completes these its limitations by positing the opposite limitations as conditions. These need to be completed in the same way, so the intellect's task expands *ad infinitum*. In all this, reflection appears to be merely intellect, but this guidance toward the totality of necessity is the contribution and secret efficacy of Reason. Reason makes the intellect boundless, and in this infinite wealth the intellect and its objective world meet their downfall. For every being that the intellect produces is something determinate, and the determinate has an indeterminate before it and after it. The manifoldness of being lies between two nights, without support. It rests on nothing—for the indeterminate is nothing to the intellect—and it ends in nothing. The determinate and the indeterminate, finitude and the infinite that is to be given up for lost,¹⁵ are not united. The intellect stubbornly allows them to subsist side by side in their opposition. And stubbornly it holds fast to being as against not-being; yet being and not-being are equally necessary to it. The intellect essentially aims at thoroughgoing determination. But what is determinate for it is at once bounded by an indeterminate. Thus its positings and determinings never accomplish the task; in the very positing and determining that have occurred there lies a non-positing and something indeterminate, and hence the task of positing and determining recurs perpetually.

If the intellect fixes these opposites, the finite and the infinite, so that both are supposed to subsist together as opposed to each other, then it destroys itself. For the opposition of finite and infinite means that to posit the one is to cancel the other. When Reason recognizes this, it has suspended the intellect itself. Its positing then appears to

14. We have omitted the *einmal* at the beginning of this sentence, because Hegel seems to have forgotten it himself. But it should be noticed that in the present paragraph Hegel seeks to show that "Reason makes the intellect boundless," and in the next that "Reason suspends itself."

15. *Aufgegeben* may mean either "given up" or "set as task." It is likely that Hegel is employing it in both meanings here. To the intellect, totality is something that is only present as infinite regress (or progress). Hence the totality is for it a task that is for ever set anew. But this "bad" concept of the infinite is the same as "giving it up" altogether.

Reason to be non-positing, its products to be negations. If Reason is placed in opposition to the objective infinite, this nullification of the intellect or Reason's pure positing without opposing is subjective infinity: the realm of freedom as opposed to the objective world. But in this form, the realm of freedom is itself something opposite and conditioned. In order to suspend opposition absolutely, Reason must also [18] nullify the independence of this realm. It nullifies both of the opposed realms by uniting them; for they only are in virtue of their not being united. Within the union, however, they subsist together; for what is opposite and therefore limited is, in this union, connected with the Absolute. But it does not have standing on its own account, but only insofar as it is posited in the Absolute, that is, as identity. The limited is either necessary or free, according to whether it belongs to one or the other of the mutually opposed and therefore relative totalities. Insofar as the limited belongs to the synthesis of both totalities, its limitation ceases: it is free and necessary at the same time, conscious and nonconscious. This conscious identity of the finite and infinite, the union of both worlds, the sensuous and the intelligible, the necessary and the free, in consciousness, is *knowledge*. Reflection, the faculty of the finite, and the infinite opposed to it are synthesized in Reason whose infinity embraces the finite within it.

So far as reflection makes itself its own object, its supreme law, given to it by Reason and moving it to become Reason, is to nullify itself. Like everything else, reflection has standing only in the Absolute; but as reflection it stands in opposition to it. In order to gain standing, therefore, reflection must give itself the law of self-destruction. The immanent law, the law through which reflection by its own power would constitute itself as absolute, would be the law of contradiction: namely that, being posited, reflection shall be and remain posited. Reflection would thus fix its products as absolutely opposed to the Absolute. It would have as its eternal law to remain intellect and not to become Reason and to hold fast to its own work, which, as limited, is opposed to the Absolute and as opposed to the Absolute, is nothing.

When placed in an opposition, Reason operates as intellect and its infinity becomes subjective. Similarly, the form which expresses the activity of reflecting as an activity of thinking, is capable of this very same ambiguity and misuse. Thinking is the absolute activity of Reason itself and there simply cannot be anything opposite to it. But if it is not so posited, if it is taken to be nothing but reflection of a purer kind, that is, a reflection in which one merely abstracts from the op-

position, then thinking of this abstracting kind cannot advance beyond the intellect, not even to a Logic supposed capable of comprehending Reason within itself, still less to philosophy. Reinhold sets up identity as "the essence or inward character of thinking as such": "the infinite repeatability of one and the same as one and the same, in and through one and the same."¹⁶ One might be tempted by this semblance of identity into regarding this thinking as Reason. But because this thinking has its antithesis (a) in an application of thinking and (b) in absolute materiality (*Stoffheit*),¹⁷ it is clear that this is not the absolute identity, the identity of subject and object which suspends both in their opposition and grasps them within itself, but a *pure* identity, that is, an identity [19] originating through abstraction and conditioned by opposition, the abstract intellectual concept of unity, one of a pair of fixed opposites.

Reinhold sees the fault of all past philosophy in "the habit, so deeply rooted and widespread among contemporary philosophers, of regarding thinking both in general and in its application as something merely subjective."¹⁸ If Reinhold were truly serious about the identity and non-subjectivity of this thinking, he could not make any distinction between thinking and its application. If thinking is true identity, and not something subjective, where could this application that is so distinct from it come from, let alone the stuff that is postulated for the sake of the application? To the analytic method an activity must appear to be synthetic precisely because it is to be analysed. The elements that originate in the analysis are unity and a manifold opposed to it. What analysis presents as unity is called subjective; and thinking is characterized as a unity of this sort opposed to the manifold, that is, it is an abstract identity. In this way thinking has become something purely limited, and its activity is an application [of the identity] to some independently extant material, an application which conforms to a law and is directed by a rule, but which cannot pierce through to knowledge.

Only so far as reflection has connection with the Absolute is it Reason and its deed a knowing. Through this connection with the Absolute, however, reflection's work passes away; only the connection persists, and it is the sole reality of the cognition. There is therefore no truth in isolated reflection, in pure thinking, save the truth of

16. *Beyträge* 1, 106.

17. Compare *ibid.*, pp. 108-12.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 96.