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Overturning Hegel's experience of alienation through five-fold humanities lenses

Article by **Lucian Green**

Hegel's claim that the social world is included in consciousness is exposed through five-fold humanities lenses.

G.W.F. Hegel was an objective idealist who argued against Descartes (who, like Plato was an idealist) during the European Enlightenment of the 18th century, by claiming the social world is included in consciousness in a certain way. In the chapter "The world of self-alienated Spirit" in Hegel's book "The Phenomenology of Spirit", he claims that this world undergoes a process of self-alienation during Constantine's conversion and the French revolution. I will argue that there is a sense of alienation discussed by Hegel. I will first examine and then discuss this claim.

Hegel (1977:294) writes that "The ethical substance (spirit, in other words both the self and the other) kept the antithesis (thoughts about others) confined within its simply unitary consciousness (having a single mind) and preserved this consciousness in an immediate unity with its essence". He writes that consciousness, the individual, is radically different from self-consciousness, those around him or her. He also writes, "This world is a spiritual entity, it is in itself the interfusion of being and individuality; this its existence is the *work* of self-consciousness, but it is also an alien reality already present and given, a reality which has a being of its own and in which it does not recognize itself." So, Hegel means self-consciousness, like other people and an alien, pre-existent landscape constitute the world. He writes this real world, which he calls an external essence is created by a lord, not in a positive but a negative sense, and the negative term giving away the reason for the negative term "alien" in the chapter title. Self-alienated spirit divides into the real world and the self (Hegel 1977:296). The self contains a vessel containing a medium called religion, which perhaps solves the alienation because of the real world. There is also a sense that the real world was accepted earlier than this, by the culture (the result of the union between the self and the other). The spirit is an essence (it's self) that will become confrontational to itself perhaps if the self is disconnected from a memory and seeing the image does not confirm the memory (Hegel 1977:297). The individual's substance and nature is the spirit of the alienation of him. This shows a change from the world to the body of the self as the cause of alienation (Hegel 1977:298). The individual's culture (people around him or her) are the … substance (spirit) (Hegel 1977:298). He writes "The self knows itself only as a *transcended* self." "Transcended" means the self is different from the others. He seems to think the object (meaning others) is negative (they are different) (Hegel 1977:299).

To examine the process of alienation more closely, Hegel looks at substance as it is in an obscure argument, "simple Substance itself, considered in the immediate organization of its existent, still unspiritualized moments [noch unbegeisteten Momente]" (Hegel 1977:300). The distinction between the levels of faith and reality help distinguish between thoughts on the level of pure consciousness "as having only an implicit being" and as [material] essences in real consciousness that have (Hegel 1977:300) "an objective existence". The thoughts of good and bad are "actual and present in actual consciousness" in "state power [Staatsmacht]," a form of central control that precedes government (Regierung) that is not yet a real state power; this is "the absolute situation [Sache] itself, in which for individuals their essence is expressed and their individuality is only consciousness of their universality" (Hegel 1977:301).

When Hegel refers to state power and wealth, he refers to the political and economic aspects that are central to social life (Hegel 1977:302). Hegel states that state power is the basis of everything that people do. Both state power and wealth are produced by everyone's work and activity. Like Adam Smith, he writes that when each individual works for himself, he also works for everyone. Writing about state power and wealth, he says that we see in the former what we are "implicitly" and in the latter what we are "explicitly".

Our judgments of observations about the political and economic dimensions of reality are subjective, or only what we would think, based on how we relate to them (Hegel 1977:302-3). Similarly to Rousseau's idea of the general will of all, Hegel writes that a person's goals are reflected in political power. An individual "holds that object to be good, and to possess intrinsic being, in which it finds itself" (Hegel 1977:302) and conversely, in state power, the individual finds simple existence, but not individuality, or "its intrinsic being, but not what it explicitly is for itself" (Hegel 1977:303). Could this mean a multividual containing oneself has a consciousness of power? He says wealth, an activator of consciousness in others and possible him or herself, is "the Good".

These judgments express how state power and wealth are observed by the individual, "in the relation of itself to the actual" (Hegel 1977:304), not how they are in themselves, so could they also be the same? The noble individual, "which finds them of like nature to itself" (Hegel 1977:305), relates positively to state power in types of individual sacrifice, so could contain types of individual conclusions such as heroic service and virtue. As previously mentioned, these judgments are only subjective. They reflect "what these two essential realities [politics and economics] are as objects for consciousness, not as yet what they are in and for themselves" (Hegel 1977:305).

Hegel writes, as concerns state power, noble individuals perform self-abnegation by sacrificing themselves, in a relation mediated through language, for the abstract universal known as the general good (Hegel 1977:309). Still lacking here is a more than external relation between the individual and state power, such as "the actual transference . . . of state power" to the individual, or, with respect to state power, "that it should be obeyed, not merely as the so-called 'general good', but as will". This obeyed will can be positive.

Hegel states that the social tension resulting from the industrial revolution leads to anger, which is expressed in language (Hegel 1977:315). The language that is typical in dealing with wealth is one-sided. The opposite is true of the language of those, who have a "language of disruption [Sprache der Zerrissenheit] is, however, the perfected language and the truly existent Spirit of this entire cultural world" Earlier, he stated that alienation occurs in language. Now he states that

we return to ourselves out of alienation on the level of language. For, through language, we take back the social world we have ourselves produced. "Here, then, we have available the Spirit of this real [realen] cultural world in its truth and aware of its concept".

(Hegel 1977:323) We are concerned with religion as understood in opposition to the social context, "in the form in which it occurs in the social world" (Hegel 1977:322) as mere belief, but not yet as taken for itself. In opposition to actuality, religion is merely faith, or "the pure consciousness of essence (like spiritual regeneratedness)". Faith, which is defined through the rejection of actuality, relates to pure insight in roughly the same way as the inverted world relates to the world, i.e. unifies people. As a flight from the real world, pure consciousness preserves that world within it, making the world perfect.

(Harris 1997:250) Hegel writes, "The new order is thus spiritual, but alienated into two worlds. The world of actual consciousness is an alienation of finite spirit into the natural order of things; through the struggle both of the finite sides are sublated in its pure consciousness, the perspective of God in Heaven. These alienated sides still logically involve each other".

The move that the world-spirit makes here is through religion. Hegel already explained this from the standpoint of the natural (singular) self-consciousness; and he mentioned then that God's act appears in his own independent world as what happens (paragraphs 211-212). The existence of another world, the Beyond that can only be entered in thought, is shown to us. So Hegel can only tell us the self of our present life should regain substantiality by alienating itself, by emptying itself into a world where the spiritual powers order themselves in a self-preserving way.

The definition of Spirit as "pure self-recognition in absolute otherness" was realized in the "ethical order", because *Dike* appeared as the "absolute other" with which the self identified. Where spirit is substance, Antigone's Zeus is unsuccessful in being he absolute Spirit of he Ethical Substance, but yields to the absolute otherness" of Destiny. In fact, it is "Destiny" that becomes a *self* for Unhappy Consciousness. The whole actual world, including both the finite self-consciousness and its world of work, is changed into the minor status of a single moment in the divine plan for humanity. This 'divine plan' is a construction in thought, and the thinking is only ours. We do this because we have a vocation to bring "this side" back to God on the other side, and the way to be united with Him, by bring "this side" back to Him, is *obedience*. This logical analysis supplies Hegel's final answer to the problem that troubled him from his former schooldays: "Why did Christianity triumph over paganism?" He concluded that rational freedom cannot be stably achieved in a society of "natural Reason". A rational divine will in the eternal world of thought is necessary in the emergence and evolution of the "identity" evolved in the Beyond. Although Universal Christianity unjustifiably follows arbitrary authority, without the projection of Reason into the Beyond, humanity could never become a free spiritual community that makes itself. This part has discussed whether a sense of alienation exists.

This part will evaluate whether a sense of alienation exists. A sense of alienation exists because of the solution-formingness of nature, which is correct because people check where they are walking to avoid walking into objects. Harris (1997:251) writes, it is 'Substance' that is now fully identified as spirit. However, if people treated physical objects as if they were not there, then they shouldn't trip over them. People should check where they're going in the same way that Hegel's dialectic makes the transition from step to step. Harris (1997:250) also writes that Hegel has already explained the Religious transition that the world-spirit makes from the standpoint of the natural (singular) self-consciousness. For example, where the transition is a step in the dialectic (in which a master trusts a slave who gets "dirty", which is like something that will take time to clean, like explaining that something is in the way of him understanding something, so he can be helped by the master), the slave (where the slave is lower than the master, so he should be like an other coming to the self, where the other is consciousness and the self is self-consciousness and the world is the other because it is the others in the world) can't reach the candle to put it out, so the master will help him by giving him a chair to stand on. As the master's workload is done in terms of the slave's abilities, the culture is in terms of the patterns and stories of the people. Besides this, Harris (1997:250) writes, the ethical order contains the absolute other with which the self is identified, contained in the Spirit. For example, because social life is ordered by customs, the lives of our social partners can be thought of in terms of the patterns of those customs themselves, which they accrued by "acculturation". The culture in the world of self-alienated spirit, for example, a diorama is created in order that reflects one's life patterns, giving an objective view-point that is bound up with the attitude dealing with life's alienations. God yields to destiny by revealing to the spirit that it is in "absolute" Heaven. On top of this, Harris (1997:250) writes, Hegel's spirit/substance refers to the doubling of the world. For example, spirit recognizes itself as being in "absolute" Heaven. The spirit recognises that it is in "absolute" Heaven because it meets the world, which has made the transition from Earth to Heaven. Additionally, Harris (1997:250) writes, "The new order is thus spiritual, but alienated into two worlds". For example, the world transitions from Earth to Heaven. The world transitions from Earth to Heaven because it contains us, who are vocationally trained. As well as this, Harris (1997:251) writes, our vocation is to bring ourselves back to God. For example, to be united with God is *obedience*. Another reason that God yields to destiny is shown by Hegel allowing the Understanding to have two worlds. Together with this, Harris (1997:253) writes, the Beyond is recognized as this world's training aspect. For example, Hegel allows the Understanding to have two worlds. The Understanding has two worlds, which are connected because the world is a training ground for Heaven. Moreover, Harris (1997:252) writes, Ausbilden means "to educate, to train." For example, the world is a training ground for Heaven. The world is a training ground for Heaven because this allows us the true being of everything. Together with this Harris (1997:253) writes, "'Substance is spirit' means everyone's consciousness is in the Beyond". For example, God gives us the true being of everything, its *Wesen*. Another reason that the world is a training ground for Heaven is that this allows faith to become reason. As well as this, Harris (1997:253-4) writes, "the Beyond of Faith is reborn the Beyond of Reason". For example, estrangement finishes when Faith becomes Reason. Also, the understanding of the world allows it to attain the highest aspects of this world. Further, Harris (1997:253) writes, "We turn culture into straight talk with logical adjustments". For example, spirit is the highest aspect of this world. Also, people should take time to check where to walk in the same way that they check two ideas in the time it takes to do this. Harris (1997:251) continues, "The world's self and work is judged in a moment." However, one cannot check two ideas in the time needed to check one idea. One should claim that people checking where they walk is correct, which shows that a sense of alienation exists.

Also, a sense of alienation exists because of the statemanisation of nature, which is correct because voters support those overcoming problems who enter government office. Taylor (1975:178) writes, alienation consists in men not feeling at home. For example, men should eliminate alienation come closer to the essential substance of their lives in serving a wider cause, such as the state. Men serve the state by being supported by society. Taylor (1975:178) contends, this alienation is necessary for the realisation of spirit. For example, men have to depend on a spirit, which is that of society. Men are supported by society because they are shaped to do it. Taylor (1975:179) writes that at this stage men are not ready; they have not reach the universal consciousness, which fully reflects their unity with *Geist*. For example, the function of alienation is to prompt and shape the men in order for them to overcome it. Men also serve the state because they master the play of forces in industry. Taylor (1975:179) writes that the phase of unhappy consciousness is part of the consciousness of alienation. For example, Harris describes unhappy consciousness as being like freedom in the freedom-determinism (self-other or play of forces) pair in Stoicism, and must be solved by joining with the essence (determinism/other), unifying it with the eternal truth. One should claim that people learning from voters supporting those who overcome problems entering government office is correct, which shows that a sense of alienation exists.

In addition, a sense of alienation exists because of the universalisation of nature, which is correct because alienation should be overcome to become world-class. Hyppolite (1974:386) claims, in the pedagogy of the Enlightenment, the individual rises to reason by ongoing progress, following a linear path upward and in humanist pedagogy there is a spontaneous and harmonious development of all the forces in nature. By contrast according to Hegel, one feels alienated when one negates oneself to gain universality. One should gain universality because one should deal with alienation in the world. Hyppolite (1974:384) writes, the spiritual world is the world of culture (*Bildung*) and of alienation (*Entäusserung*), two terms that we have already encountered. For example, substance/spirit in the world is made up of the self and essence/other, the union of which through the creation of culture with the attitude dealing with life's alienations removes alienation. One should deal with alienation in the world in order for the state of law to recognise this. Hyppolite (1974:385) writes, culture is the result of an alienation of natural being. For example, the individual gives up his natural right, which was recognised only as such in the state of law. The state of law should give power to individuals with a certain amount of culture. Hyppolite (1974:386-7) writes, the education of the *gentleman* through culture estranges his nature. For example,

this is remedied by the knowledge that when the culture of an individual is greater, so is his actuality and power. Also, the state of law should instate politicians with the will to conquer substance. Hyppolite (1974:387-8) writes, political and social organisation is the product of the alienation of the self. For example, the will to power, which manifests the self's effort to conquer substance. Also, one should deal with alienation in the world by returning to his community. Hyppolite (1974:388) claims, the political thinker Rousseau has already used the term "alienation". For example, Rousseau defined the social contract as "the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community". One should gain universality by achieving more after the natural self stops becoming alien to itself. Hyppolite (1974:387) writes, the formation of the self is the alienation of its natural self. For example, when the natural self becomes alien to itself, it no longer discovers itself within itself. The natural self stops becoming alien to itself by texts about natural elements being recognised. Hyppolite (1974:388) writes, the moments of substance, which are graspable in the abstract, are being in itself, which results in being for some other and the return to being for itself. For example, this dialectic can be seen in the natural elements, air and water (which negate), and fire and earth (which negate negation and are thus a return to the in-itself). One should claim that alienation should be overcome to become world-class, which is correct, which shows that a sense of alienation exists.

Moreover, a sense of alienation exists because of the inspiration of nature, which is correct because spirit should be taken up in a different way. Flay (1984:185) writes that there is a presupposed alienation and satisfactory conditions for the completion of the self. For example, through one's education and enculturation one acquires the ways of realising oneself, but this involves giving oneself's whole to the political and social sphere. Working devotedly in politics influences Christianity to take up life's spirit in a different way. Flay (1984:183) says, "The new form of spirit, ushered in with the rise of Christianity and the decline of Rome, is a form in which spirit is self-alienated". For example, the differences arising from our actions and the certainty we seek are taken up in a different way. Also, working devotedly in politics influences one to have faith in the removal of alienation. Flay (1984:183) writes that in this new form of spirit, the world was constituted by two opposing structures: culture and faith (this world and the next). For example, alienation and uncertainty both pave the ground for a journey to certainty elsewhere, during which the certainty, which comes from faith is the removal of that alienation and certainty. One has faith in the removal of alienation by cultural knowledge preventing infeasibility of society. Flay (1984:184) writes, the major institution, which makes up the objectivity of spirit, is culture itself (*Bildung*). For example, culture contains the presuppositions that should be in force for the individual and the reality that confronts him if he is to have reality in the world, if he is to realise himself, if the society as a whole is to remain feasible and if certainty is to be achieved, in reality. Cultural knowledge should prevent infeasibility of society because one should volunteer one's labour to prevent alienation. Flay (1984:183-4) writes, alienation (*Entfremdung*) of self-consciousness from itself, the objectification of oneself in one's actions, is the hallmark of the world. For example, one should volunteer one's personality, being and labour to the world, to take hold of the reality with which one is confronted. Also, cultural knowledge should prevent infeasibility of society because institutions should influence knowledge . Flay (1984:184) writes, we understand the way things work for enjoyable participation in socio-political life are understood and held in the individual and underlie his thoughts and actions intercourse in society. For example, the institutions and individuals that influence this knowledge determine those the worlds on which choices can be made. One should claim that spirit should be taken up in a different way, which is correct, which shows that a sense of alienation exists.

Finally, a sense of alienation exists because of the researchisation of nature, which is correct because one should research the essence/other. Yovel (2005:101) maintains, self-alienation is an abstract universality that overlooks the essential nature of this God's life to be for itself, and therefore forgets the movement of the essence/other. For example, knowledge cannot be satisfied with the essence/other because of the abstract universality. Knowledge can be satisfied with the essence/other because of an alienation-solving universality because the alien nature of the world is solved. Yovel (2005:135) writes, experience is spirit becoming object or abstract alienating itself, and then returning to itself from this alienation, at which point it is manifest in truth and consciousness. For example, Hegel means Kant's thing-in-self by the "that which is not experienced, the abstract," which takes two forms: (a) sensation presupposes some indefinite ("abstract") element existing in itself beyond experience, and (b) the understanding presupposes an "abstract" element both as a primary truth, and as a separate, noumenal world, about which Hegel leaves no space for a "thing-in-itself," which remains alien. The alien nature of the world is solved because the political leader is freed from alienation. Yovel (2005:24) writes, the self-actualisation of spirit is a process of liberation that gives the awareness that her political rights and standing is not an alien substance but an active expression of her external self. For example, political freedom from alienation allows substance to become a subject. The political leader is freed from alienation because religion is transcended to overcome alienation. Yovel (2005:6-7) writes, the problem of alienation is not unique to the social domain in Hegel, however other parts of his system provide an answer of absolute Knowing to the meaning of life free of the dialectic, in which this response is "absolute" or self-sustaining. For example, speculative philosophy, which is based on religion but transcends it to a secular wisdom is expected to overcome this theoretical and existential alienation. Also, the political leader is freed from alienation because he makes himself ontologically distinct from being alienated. Yovel (2005:101) reasons, self-alienation (*Entfremdung*) is a radical form of becoming other and occurs when existence takes a form that opposes its essence (as a particular opposes the universal) but obstructs and negates that essence (as in self-servitude and liberation). For example, alienation that opposes the universal is ontologically distinct from otherness. One should claim that one should research the essence/other, which is correct, which shows that a sense of alienation exists.

In conclusion, I have argued that a sense of alienation exists because people learn from Antigone's plight. Also, a sense of alienation exists because voters support those overcoming problems who enter government office. As well as this, a sense of alienation exists because alienation should be overcome to become world-class. In addition, a sense of alienation exists because spirit should be taken up in a different way. Along with this, a sense of alienation exists because one should research the essence/other. I have argued that a sense of alienation exists. This conclusion allows us to avoid alienation of spirit by realising the knowledge about the other.

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