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ELEMENTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF G. W. F. HEGEL IN THE
TRANSZENDENTAL METHOD OF KARL RAHNER

by

Winfried Corduan

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

It is an undeniable fact that no theology can be written in a cultural vacuum. Inevitably, the theologian is influenced by his own particular heritage when he seeks to express the content of revelation and formulate a systematic theology. The concepts he chooses, the terms in which he expresses them, and the priorities and dependencies he discovers among them, are all going to be governed by his philosophical environment and background. Thus, to understand any theology properly, it is necessary to be familiar with the philosophical assumptions underlying the reasoning of the theologian who wrote it. The analysis of the philosophical underpinning of a theology can be called "philosophical hermeneutics."

This dissertation is intended to be a study in the philosophical hermeneutics of Karl Rahner. The goal is an increased understanding of Rahner's theology; the means to attain this goal is an examination of some facets of his philosophy and how they are brought out in his theology.

We will focus on one particular aspect of Rahner's philosophical hermeneutic: his relationship to the thought of German Idealism in general, and to G. W. F. Hegel in particular. However, this study is intended to be primarily conceptual, and not historical. An actual
historical evaluation as to how much Hegel has in fact influenced Rahner would of necessity be at best a very tenuous undertaking. Conceptual resemblances are not always the product of one thinker's influence over another; the denial of this assumption runs the risk of the post hoc fallacy. We do not have access to Rahner's mind to ascertain exactly which of his thoughts are the product of his study of Hegel. But we can depict the similarities in concepts and philosophical methodology with a good amount of implicit certainty that these resemblances are not due to chance but due to the fact that both thinkers worked in a similar philosophical environment which was colored heavily by Kant, and in particular, that there can be no doubt that Rahner did write in the shadow of German Idealism.

Though this historical question is intended to be only incidental to the conceptual one, it may receive some more elucidation at this very early point in order to forestall the historical issue from continually detracting from the conceptual one later on in the body of this study. We can make three points with regard to Rahner's historical relationship to Hegel:

(1) Rahner himself clearly acknowledges that his philosophy is not a mere rewrite of medieval ideas, but an attempt to have these ideas speak within the context of and to his own current philosophical situation. And this
situation was one which was still dominated by many problems and considerations stemming directly from German Idealism.

(2) It would be far more surprising if Rahner had not been familiar with Hegel than that he is. But to be on the safe side it is possible for us to point to passages where Rahner shows that he knows Hegel, and where he relates himself to Hegel. These will become key passages for this project and will be discussed in detail later on.

(3) Much has been made of the influence of Martin Heidegger on Rahner. There can be no doubt that at times Rahner has consciously chosen Heideggerian conceptualizations or, at least, terminology which is borrowed from Heidegger. On the other hand, it is very easy to put too much stress on this influence. Rahner himself wants to de-emphasize it. Some of Rahner's ideas, e.g., the luminescence (Gelichtetheit) of being, appear to be very Heideggerian. However, in this study we will show that this idea seems to have a direct counterpart in Hegel's doctrines on the knowability of being, whence Heidegger may have received his inspiration. Nonetheless, there is no point in engaging in a historical tug-of-war of concepts, attempting to show that Rahner picked up this or some other idea from Hegel rather than Heidegger, or vice versa, and this study is not meant to do so. The backbone of this study is the remarkable conceptual resemblance between Rahner
and Hegel, and whether some of this resemblance is mediated via Heidegger is neither knowable nor entirely germaine. Passages where Rahner makes direct reference to Hegel of course contribute to an understanding of an unmediated influence, but, as we have pointed out, to argue for such an influence is not the point of this study either. This is not to devalue the influence of Heidegger on Rahner, but it is to bracket that whole question of Heidegger's influence as well as the question of Hegel's influence from a historical perspective (to whatever extent such is feasible).

Thus, we want to do a study of the philosophical hermeneutics of the thought of Karl Rahner. Now, Rahner's writings lend themselves uniquely to such an analysis. Some theologians claim independence of philosophy, though it can be shown that they are in fact mistaken about this supposed independence. Such is the case, for instance, with the theology of Karl Barth. But with Rahner the situation is far clearer. This is true, partly due to a historical accident. Rahner had intended to receive his doctorate in philosophy in 1936, but his dissertation was rejected by his professor in Freiburg, Martin Honecker. Thereupon, Rahner transferred to the university at Innsbruck and that same year wrote a dissertation in theology. This shift in his major field had the effect that we have works by Rahner in both theology and
philosophy. The aborted dissertation was published in 1939 as *Geist in Welt*, which has become the classic introduction to Rahner's philosophical thought. The transcendental Thomism developed in this work became the philosophical framework around which all of Rahner's subsequent thought was built. Thus, we can see a direct application of philosophical concepts to theological formulations in Rahner.

This analysis provides the basic structure of this study. The goal is to depict the conceptual similarities between Rahner and Hegel. These similarities begin on the level of the thinkers' philosophies. But as the philosophical concepts are carried over into the field of theology, so must the similarities. This is indeed the case, and has several times been pointed out very sketchily in the scholarly literature, especially with respect to the Christological ideas of Rahner and Hegel. But an important step is missing if we leap from philosophy directly to Christology. The transcendental systems of thought of both Hegel and Rahner are characterized by their anthropologies which see man essentially as standing in an openness to God of which Christ is only the supreme instance. Thus, a proper sequence of tracing the philosophical similarities will begin with the philosophies proper, then show how these ideas are carried over into anthropology, and finally how
they come to light in the crucial facets of Christology. That is the plan for this study.

In order to pave the way to analyzing the similarities, it is necessary to describe the respective philosophies of Rahner and Hegel by themselves. This will be done by showing how both men made use of the transcendental method in their own way. For further clarity, the first chapter will depict the nature of the transcendental method, its origin in Kant, and its relationship to Thomism. This preliminary analysis of the transcendental method will then allow us to appreciate its function and significance in Rahner.

To summarize, the plan for this study will then be as follows:

1. The transcendental method and Thomism.
2. The transcendental method in Rahner.
3. The transcendental method in Hegel.
4. Philosophical resemblances of Rahner and Hegel.
5. Anthropological resemblances of Rahner and Hegel.
6. Christological resemblances of Rahner and Hegel.

Any previous analyses of parallels between Rahner and Hegel have been rather sketchy and inadequate to do justice to the topic. K. Baker and T. Sheehan have pointed
out a general conceptual alignment between the two thinkers without going into specifics. W. Pannenberg and H. Küng have demonstrated some similarities in the area of Christology, but without becoming too detailed and without going back to the essential matter of prior philosophical similarities. A more complete study is made by K. Fischer. It spans several pages of his book on Rahner, but it does nothing to establish the link between philosophical and theological similarities. Finally, T. Pearl begins his article on Christological similarities with an introduction to Rahner's and Hegel's philosophies, but does not adequately show how they are related. In any case, that article is severely marred by serious misconceptions about both Rahner and Hegel. In short, if it is believed that this analysis of Rahner and Hegel is worth making, we can see with a glance at the existing literature, that it still needs to be made adequately, which is, of course, the whole point of this study.

Obviously, this study is premised on the belief that this analysis is worth making. We can point out three reasons why we do believe this to be a significant project:

1. As an aid towards clearer understanding of Rahner's theology via a dissection of his philosophical hermeneutic. Discerning Hegelian elements in his thought helps us to understand his philosophy better, which, in
turn, clarifies his theology.

(2) As an example of philosophical hermeneutics for a modern theologian. We attempt to show that Rahner can be understood better through recognizing the background of his philosophical groundwork. If this study upholds that thesis, it may serve as a paradigm of what may be done with other theologians as well.

(3) As a springboard for a clearer understanding of the transcendental method, the forms it may take, the concepts it may employ, and the similarities it may create in superficially very diverse systems of thought.

Anticipating our final conclusion, we will find that the similarities between Rahner and Hegel are not merely accidental, but that they arise out of a common concern to apply the transcendental method consistently.
NOTES TO INTRODUCTION


5 Klaus P. Fischer, Der Mensch als Geheimnis (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), pp. 345-355.

CHAPTER I

THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD AND THOMISM
CHAPTER I

THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD AND THOMISM

The Nature of the Transcendental Method

Karl Rahner's Thomism is characterized by his use of the transcendental method. This means that Rahner's philosophy synthesizes some aspects of the philosophies of St. Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant. This chapter will take a detailed look at the possibility of this synthesis and how it was first attempted by Joseph Maréchal, from whose writings Rahner learned it as a basis for his own innovations. First, however, we must come to a general definition of the transcendental method and some of the features it will take on in Rahner.

Immanuel Kant is commonly credited with the innovation of the transcendental method by the introduction of his transcendental aesthetic and analytic.\(^1\) Of the purpose of this project, he stated that it "...is the exposition of the pure concepts of the understanding, and therewith of all theoretical \textit{a priori} knowledge, as principles of the possibility of experience."\(^2\) Kant's philosophical inquiry, then, was for the possibility of knowledge, and the answer was given in the form of the transcendental deduction for the pure concepts of the understanding.
Taking our cue from this observation, we can generalize that the transcendental method is the response to the question, "How is it possible for man to know (anything)?" This question is not directed toward the simple "mechanics" of epistemology, viz., it wants to do more than merely explore the processes which the human mind undergoes in order to know an object. It intends to transcend the simple analysis of the reception of sense impressions by a subject from an external object. The goal of the question is to examine the possibilities within the subject himself to receive information (viz., to know the object) intelligibly. Thus, it aims at the knowing subject, seeking to uncover the conditions necessary for his knowledge, and for the being of objects.

Klaus Hartmann defines the transcendental philosophy as "a philosophy which insists on justification of knowledge." But how can knowledge be justified without invoking circular reasoning? Obviously, the conditions for the possibility of knowledge must be something different than just another piece of knowledge. Since the quest is for the justification of knowledge in general, individually known items are always only instantiations, but never justifications.

This is so unless there is a kind of knowledge which is immune from the need for justification. That would be knowledge of principles whose justification lies
in their self-evidence. These would be a priori principles because they precede the inquiry into the conditions of knowledge as the answer to the question of justification. They are the most fundamental constituents of knowledge. Thus, with Joseph de Vries we may define transcendental method as the philosophical method used in solving a philosophical problem "by reflection upon these a priori conditions."4

Hartmann shows that such a priori conditions of knowledge can be seen on three levels.5 The first level is that of formal logic: this is a priori to all knowledge. Second, insofar as principles of mathematics and geometry are applicable to objects of experience, these can be seen as a priori conditions of sense knowledge. But neither of these two are chiefly characteristic of the transcendental method. The third kind of a priori is the most important for this method. It includes all the concepts or "basic determinations" of objects which can be expressed as the "categories."6 They are then the a priori principles not only of specialized kinds of knowledge, e.g., knowledge by reasoning, but also of knowledge at all. Thus, the transcendental method is the philosophical method which focuses on those principles which are the a priori conditions for the possibility of all knowledge, and which underlie all knowledge.

The use of the transcendental method carries with
it an immediate corollary which will become very important for Rahner. If all knowledge is rendered possible by the a priori conditions of the subject, then it is no longer possible to make reference to an item of knowledge without making tacit reference to the subject of knowledge. For the object is known to the subject only to the degree that such is permitted by the subject's a priori conditions. Therefore, the distinction between subject and object becomes at least blurred, if not insignificant, since there is no way to have knowledge of the object that is not mediated to the subject via his own categories. The transcendental method can then be characterized by its transcendence of objectivity in a priori subjectivity. 7

In very general terms, this is the philosophical method adopted by Karl Rahner. The basic emphases on the subject and the a priori conditions of knowledge are found in his writing. But one must not be too hasty in drawing up the parallels between Kant and Rahner. For Rahner, following Maréchal, is ultimately even less concerned with epistemology than Kant was, but with the metaphysical background of epistemology. This alteration gives Rahner's transcendental method a very different complexion as well as a very different mode of derivation. In Rahner's thought, as will be seen in detail in the next chapter, the turn to the subject becomes not only the origin of epistemology but also the central point of
reference for all of metaphysics. Thus, he himself is very careful to point out that what Kant carried out was an Erkenntniskritik, a critique of knowledge, whereas he is developing an Erkenntnismetaphysik, a metaphysics of knowledge.7

As we shall see, such over-generalizations may not do justice to Kant, since he was concerned with the grounding of metaphysics. Nonetheless, Rahner is correctly concerned, inasmuch as Kant's critique would do away with the kind of metaphysics Rahner wants to hold to. Rahner seeks to avoid Kantian metaphysical skepticism and to establish what he calls a "noetic hylemorphism" which corresponds to an "ontological hylemorphism," viz., that there is positive knowledge of correspondence between the realm of thought and the world.8

This is surely a conclusion in direct opposition to Kant's own philosophy. Yet, Rahner still lays claim to following the transcendental methodology. The remainder of this chapter will seek to investigate how the Thomistic hybrid of the transcendental method arose. First, Kant's transcendental analytic will be described. Then the all-important question for transcendental Thomism will be raised: To what extent is Kant's methodology either found or foreshadowed in Aquinas. Finally, Maréchal's Thomistic synthesis between Kant and Aquinas will be presented. At that point we will then have laid the foundation for a
more detailed look at Rahner's use of the transcendental method which will follow in the next chapter.

The Transcendental Method in Kant

Immanuel Kant devised his transcendental philosophy when it became apparent to him that traditional "dogmatic" epistemologies led to apparently insoluble difficulties. Himself coming from the Rationalist tradition of Leibniz and Wolff, Kant was convinced that metaphysics is an inescapable occupation of the human mind. Still, he saw that not only had there been no progress made in the history of metaphysics, but a close scrutiny of metaphysical doctrine showed it to be inherently self-contradictory. It was David Hume, as Kant frequently recounts, who, awaking Kant from his celebrated "dogmatic slumber," finally convinced Kant that the traditional understanding of empirically-derived knowledge would not stand up. Hume had shown definitively for Kant that causality (and Kant added eleven more categories) could not be derived from observation of the external world. To put it in terms most congenial to this study, Kant began to realize that the conception of a subject deriving his knowledge from the object opposed to him left many kinds of knowledge epistemologically unaccountable. Unlike Hume, Kant was not satisfied with the lot of skepticism and proceeded to develop his transcendental philosophy which was meant
to account for knowledge beyond empirical impressions.

Such is not to say that Kant left behind all forms of empiricism. To the contrary, he is so bold as to state, "There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience." Kant is not a Platonist, and it is crucial to keep in mind that regardless of what a priori knowledge he may introduce subsequently, this knowledge could never function apart from a sensible intuition. Nonetheless, the Kantian qualification must now be made: "But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience." This statement may appear contradictory at first sight, but Kant is careful to show that this is not the case. He makes a strong distinction between a knowledge coming with (mit) as over against out of (aus) experience. He goes on to explain, "For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving only as the occasion) supplies from itself." In other words, although we have no piece of knowledge apart from sense experience, all knowledge is composed of sensory knowledge and a priori knowledge, the latter having its origin in pure thought. Thus, Kant is looking for the non-experiential component of experiential knowledge. "We shall understand...by a priori knowledge not knowledge independent of this or that
experience, but knowledge absolutely independent of all experience.\textsuperscript{19}

Kant wants to search for a \textit{a priori} knowledge, which he describes as that kind of knowledge which persists without benefit of empirical origin. To cite one of his examples,

\ldots{} if we remove from our empirical concept of any object, corporeal or incorporeal, all properties which experience has taught us, we yet cannot take away that property through which the object is thought as substance or as inhering in a substance.\textsuperscript{20}

By means of a \textit{a priori} knowledge, Kant will attempt to solve his epistemological problem.

But it is good to remind ourselves here that epistemology is only the means to an end here. The purpose for Kant's project remains metaphysical: He wants to place the questions of God, freedom, and immortality\textsuperscript{21} on their proper footing so as to make them more secure. The goal is a scientific metaphysics.\textsuperscript{22} Kant's motives are not for the destruction of metaphysics, but for the restriction of metaphysical reasoning to its fitting realm and thereby to also guard it against the skeptic onslaught.\textsuperscript{23}

The introduction of a \textit{a priori} knowledge then becomes the device whereby Kant introduces the "Copernican revolution" into metaphysics.\textsuperscript{24} He remembers that previously both mathematics and empirical science have been revolutionized when it was realized that mere observation
is not sufficient for scientific knowledge. True, science began when the scientist saw that he would learn from his observation only if he brought the empirical data in line with the laws given by reason. 25 Similarly, in mathematics progress was begun only when the early geometer learned that

... if he is to know anything with a priori certainty he must not ascribe to the figure anything save what necessarily follows from what he has himself set into it in accordance with his concept. 26

Kant believes that in order to rescue metaphysics from the inordinate confusion it is in and to give it the status of science, it must also undergo this inversion.

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects conform to our knowledge. 27

This knowledge which objects must conform to is obviously of the a priori type since if it were a posteriori, it would still have to be derived somehow from the objects themselves.

A priori concepts are found on two levels for Kant. Pure sensibility is mediated by the synthetic a priori forms of time and space. When, as in all true knowledge, judgment is added to the sensible intuition, judgment occurs by means of the synthetic a priori concepts of the
understanding, also called the categories. Both of these
\emph{a priori} notions, originating with the knowing subject,
enable the subject to know an object.

Time and space are demonstrated as \emph{a priori} by
Kant in his transcendental aesthetic.\textsuperscript{28} They are the forms
which are taken by sensible intuition, arrived at by
abstracting all conceptual and empirical elements from
sensible knowledge.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, they are prior to knowledge
and are evidenced as pure intuitions as components of
knowledge. The rational manipulation of these pure con-
cepts yields mathematics and geometry.\textsuperscript{30}

There are two forms of knowledge for Kant: outer,
empirical awareness and inner awareness of the soul
turned toward itself.\textsuperscript{31} Space and time are the forms for
outer and inner knowledge, respectively. They are both
argued for as \emph{a priori} according to the same basic
pattern: Kant shows that they are necessary presuppositions
for all knowledge.

Thus, Kant argues that it is not possible to have
conceptions of any object that do not involve spatial
relations, and thereby the intuition of space itself. He
states,

\begin{quote}
Space is a necessary \emph{a priori} representation,
which underlies all outer intuitions. We
can never represent to ourselves the absence
of space, though we can quite well think it
as empty of objects.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

Similarly, Kant argues for time as the \emph{sine qua non} of all
knowledge.

Time is a necessary representation that underlies all intuitions. We cannot, in respect of appearance in general, remove time itself, though we can quite well think time as void of appearances. Time is, therefore, given a priori.33

Although there are some kinds of knowledge (namely inner) which are not subject to the form of space, "time is the formal a priori condition of all appearances whatsoever."34

Space and time then are the media for all human knowledge. All things and states of affairs known to us are known only insofar as they are channelled through the synthetic a priori forms of space and time. "What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us."35

But now we must proceed to the second level of Kant's argument: the role of judgment in knowledge. For knowledge consists not only of the sensible intuition (a priori forms and a posteriori impressions) but also of thought imposing the categories of the understanding.36

Because of this composite nature of Kant's theory of knowledge, Hartmann37 refers to it as a "mixed transcendental theory" and labels the possibility of intuition of sensible impressions apart from the understanding a fiction. If there is true knowledge at all, it will exhibit both components. We will here briefly describe Kant's argument on this point as he gives it in the second
edition of the Critique of Pure Reason.

Kant's first step, the "metaphysical deduction," consists in deriving the categories from logical judgments. He is here merely concerned with what the categories are, not yet with their application. For every one of the twelve judgments possible in the logic of his day, Kant came up with a corresponding category. He arranged these twelve categories in triads, with the third category arising out of the combination of the first two. Thus, to give just one example of the four triads, one such triad is formed by the categories of quantity: unity and plurality combined yield totality (which could be understood as plurality viewed as unity).

Now it becomes Kant's task to show why indeed it should be possible to see such categories as the pure a priori concepts of the understanding. This is carried out in his "transcendental deduction." The word "deduction" here means, as Kant himself explains, an argument justifying their use by showing them to be necessary to knowledge of objects. Kant summarizes his own argument by once again referring to what we have called the essence of the transcendental method:

The objective validity of the categories as a priori concepts rests, therefore, on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible.

The starting point of this deduction is the unity
of the sense manifold. Individual objects of perception are not received in utter disarray, but in a unity which is based on their being connected with each other. This connection is performed by the "I think," the faculty of the mind which establishes a bridge between the sense intuition (perception) and the understanding. Kant calls this link of the sense manifold with the "I think" the pure apperception.\footnote{42}

Then, thanks to the pure apperception, the sensible object can be submitted to the judgment of the understanding. Now it becomes necessary to keep the pure apperception from becoming merely subjective introspection in order for it to become true knowledge. What is needed is an a priori ground of objectivity.\footnote{43} By "objectivity," Kant means that something is the case beyond the impressions of any one particular subject, viz., it is true for all subjects. Objectivity is attained by the fact that a judgment is held to be true not simply as the introspective sensation of the particular subject, but of the object of perception itself. To cite his own example,

Thus to say 'The body is heavy' is not merely to state that the two apperceptions [i.e., corporeality and weight] have always been conjoined in my perception, however often that perception be repeated; what we are asserting is that they are combined in the object, no matter what the state of the subject may be.\footnote{44}

In short, in order for true knowledge to take place, a judgment concerning the object of apperception must be
made. (It may be noted here that Kant's metaphysical agnosticism is thus not that no judgments can be made about the object, but that nothing can be known about the object apart from its apperception and attendant judgment.)

Kant's argument is almost finished. Kant has already shown (in the metaphysical deduction) that these judgments are made by way of the categories. The categories permit the judgments which allow for objectivity of the understanding. The result allows, in turn, for the unity of the apperception which synthesizes the intuition of the sense manifold. As Kant put it, "Now the categories are just these functions of judgment, insofar as they are employed in the determination of the manifold of a given intuition." 45 In this manner, Kant has accounted for the pure concepts of the understanding as the a priori concepts which make all true human knowledge possible. Thus, of course, he has now carried out his "Copernican revolution." Since knowledge is formed by the a priori concepts of the subject, all external knowledge will from now on be determined by the subject himself; and Kant can now proceed to show by what methods the minds impose the categories on the external world by combining them, "and so, as it were, of prescribing laws to nature, and even of making nature possible." 46

We have sketched the arguments that Kant uses to
turn the traditional theories of knowledge inside out.
First, by arguing for space and time as synthetic a priori forms of sensible intuition, and then by arguing for the categories as synthetic a priori concepts of the understanding, he has shown how all true knowledge of objects (though not the object itself as in Idealism) originates alongside a sensible intuition with the mind as the subject. Insofar as the categories apply only to sensible knowledge (not pure reasoning), Kant has set the new limits of metaphysics, namely as not within the compass of pure reason. Thus, from a purely rational point of view, we are confronted with metaphysical skepticism—the mind cannot reach beyond phenomena (the objects as given in the apperception and judgment) to noumena (the object itself).

We have seen the foundation of the transcendental method as proposed by Kant. Now we will investigate to what extent this transcendental turn was already present in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The Transcendental Method in Aquinas?

This section will explore the question whether any theory of a priori concepts akin to Kant's was somehow foreshadowed or present in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Of course, Rahner's philosophical writings are devoted to this task, and this section is not meant to
pass judgment on Rahner's success with his project. At issue at this point is the thought of Aquinas itself. Can we find a precursor of Kant's transcendental method in Aquinas apart from the mediating arguments proposed by Maréchal? The use of secondary sources in this section in addition to the texts from Aquinas is intended only to clarify the position of St. Thomas.

There are some interpreters of Aquinas who do not see a large difference between his methodology and that of Kant. J. B. Metz, Karl Rahner's student and editor, in fact wants to see the "Copernican revolution" of philosophy as having taken place with Aquinas rather than with Kant.\textsuperscript{48} Metz uses a text from the \textit{Summa contra Gentiles}\textsuperscript{49} to show that Aquinas' fundamental conception of being is grounded in human subjectivity and self-consciousness of being. More specifically, the passage indicates that the degree of being and of self-understanding are correlated; and although God is cited as the one instance where pure being and self-illumination are present in equal measure, it still stands to reason that this view of being is first and foremost derived from an inspection of the nature of human existence and being.

In fact, Metz goes so far as to lament the fact that no one has up to now been able to come up with a transcendental deduction based on Aquinas' principles of being.\textsuperscript{50} In St. Thomas himself such an understanding,
Metz claims, is given only implicitly—enough to become the formal principle of his thinking, but not sufficient for an explicit expression in details, as given later by Kant. Metz sees the transcendental method applied by Aquinas primarily as determinative background to his more specific metaphysical and theological doctrines, viz., to substitute an anthropocentric world view for the until-then-prevalent primarily cosmocentric view of Greek metaphysics.

Other interpreters argue for a specifically transcendental epistemology in Aquinas. Joseph Dorceel is among those who argue for a definite theory of a priori knowledge in Aquinas. We shall now examine the arguments brought forth to support this point of view in detail.

As opposed to modern pre-critical theories of knowledge, in Aquinas the mind receives information from the outside—not by an image like a camera receives, but by actively becoming one with the known object. Thus, for instance, Aquinas affirms his concurrence with Aristotle "who asserts that understanding occurs as the result of the thing actually understood being one with the intellect actually understanding." And, again, St. Thomas contends that

... for knowledge it is not enough that contact take place between the knower and the known. It is necessary, rather, that the intelligible be united to the knower like a form, either by means of its own
essence or by means of a likeness.\textsuperscript{55} This unity is brought about by the agent intellect which recognizes and abstracts the form of the object and renders it intelligible by means of the principles of the intellect.\textsuperscript{56}

Thus, it can be seen that in St. Thomas knowledge is obtained also from two sources: the empirical impressions and the actions of the agent intellect. This is not to say that there are two steps in the process of knowing (first the passive reception, then the action of the agent intellect), for the passive intellect does not receive any information not conferred on it by the agent intellect.\textsuperscript{57} Therefore, by the time the actual recognition takes place, both contributory sources have long been united.

It would seem that this makes the conclusion rather handy that there is indeed a priori knowledge in Aquinas, namely those principles of judgment and abstraction which the agent intellect adduces. And Aquinas does say,

\begin{quote}
In this way all knowledge is in a certain sense imprinted in us from the beginning ... through the medium of universal conceptions which are immediately known by the light of the agent intellect.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

It follows that Donceel may be quite correct in arguing for both a priori and a posteriori knowledge in Aquinas.\textsuperscript{59} But similarity to Kant or a transcendental method
is not yet established. For now the important question arises as to the nature of these a priori forms of knowledge in Aquinas. Certainly, they are prior to common knowledge of external objects. But we saw in Kant that for him the categories themselves were of purely a priori origin. Are for St. Thomas the principles of the agent intellect also pure a priori concepts of the understanding? Or, do they originate externally to the knowing subject? This question is the chief issue which divides "transcendental" from "objective" interpreters of St. Thomas. 60

The distinction to be drawn here is a very fine one. No one believes the principles of the agent intellect to be purely innate. 61 The dispute is with respect to the relationship of these principles to empirical perception. Before proceeding to what Aquinas himself says, we will attempt to clarify the issue through representatives of both sides. On the one hand, Vernon J. Bourke, 62 standing in the "objective" tradition, attributes to Aquinas the theory that from a manifold of sense experience

"... by a sort of induction there arises within human awareness a beginning (principium) of understanding. Such first principles are not demonstrated (they naturally emerge from sense cognition), but they become the roots for consequent reasoning." 63

In Bourke's interpretation of Aquinas these principles
arise from sense experience. On the other hand, Donceel only sees them as originating concomitantly with sense experience:

[A priori knowledge] is not actually in-born in [the knower], since he is only a spirit in matter, but it is virtually present, requiring sense experience, not merely as an occasion, but somewhat by way of material cause . . . , becoming visible only in sense experience, but not proceeding from sense experience.64

For Bourke, these principles have their origin a posteriori; Donceel never allows them to lose their a priori character. For him, they are not abstracted or induced from sense experience as they are for Bourke. So, whereas Bourke's interpretation is quite incompatible with Kant's theory, the same may not be true for Donceel.

Turning now to the actual passages in St. Thomas, we find first of all that we are concerned with a very special set of principles, namely those whose truth is self-evident. Some of the principles used by the agent intellect are in fact a posteriori, but these latter principles can be traced back to some which are first in that they carry their own justification within them.

For the first principles become known through the natural light of the agent intellect, and they are not acquired by any process of reasoning but [solely] by having their terms become known.65

These are the principia per se nota; their truth is self-evident once their meaning is understood. Thus, they might be called analytical truths, though it must be
pointed out immediately that this analyticity, in contrast to Kant's understanding, does not preclude their having an ampliative function with regard to reality, viz., that they would be analytic and yet report content about the world.

Staying with the passage just cited, we may notice another feature of these first principles, namely, that Aquinas ascribes their origin to the natural light of the agent intellect. There is no mention here of a divine source, though shortly we must encounter a natural-divine interaction in the derivation of the principles.

Similarly to Kant, we find the first principles in Aquinas having their function in judging. For Aquinas, too, knowledge is composed of the sensible element and the judgment upon it. As he asserts,

So in so far as any mind knows anything whatever with certitude, the object is intuited in these principles, by means of which judgment is made concerning all things.  

Thus, it is possible to call the sensory input the material cause, and the principles the formal cause of knowledge.

This distinction between material cause and formal cause can be most productive in our further understanding of first principles. Just as a form and matter are conjoined in the empirical world, so a formal cause and a material cause must be found together; and thus sense
reception and first principles are never found apart from each other. Then the issue before us can become greatly refined; namely, it is now becoming apparent that the first principles can precede the empirical only in the logical order. In the act of knowledge the two must be conjoined. The further conclusion can be drawn that it is impossible for the first principles to have a derivation independently of all sense perception, though we should not at this point jump to the conclusion to say that they come from sense perception.

But Aquinas does say as much in another place. In De Anima he argues that "we know these indemonstrable principles through abstraction from the singular." The fact that he calls them "indemonstrable" once again shows that he is not referring to inference from the empirical realm (for that would be a form of demonstration). But they are abstracted from the singular, viz., from the individual object of perception by the action of the agent intellect. Thus, it appears that the empirical order precedes the realm of the intellect. Simultaneously with sensible perception, the principle is abstracted; but logically the point of origin is in the empirical realm. The agent intellect abstracts the first principles and uses them in the second act of the intellect, the judgment. Thus, we may see the agent intellect as the cause of the first principles (originating alongside empirical reality),
which principles, in turn, are the formal cause of knowledge.\textsuperscript{70}

But it is still too early to draw the conclusion that first principles are \textit{a posteriori} for Aquinas. There are other passages which seem to argue for another origin, namely, for divine causality.\textsuperscript{71} In \textit{De Veritate}, Aquinas asserts that

\begin{quote}
\ldots the truth of the first principles by which we judge everything \{does\} proceed from the truth of the divine intellect as from its exemplary cause.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

In the \textit{Summa contra Gentiles}, he also states, "Now the knowledge of the principles that are known to us naturally has been implanted in us by God; for God is the Author of our nature."\textsuperscript{73} Here, again, God is clearly identified as the origin of first principles.

But a misunderstanding will arise only if an interpreter chooses one or the other of these two theories as the primary one for Aquinas. To choose either the "natural" one or the "divine" one is to miss an important facet of St. Thomas' metaphysics, namely, the interplay between divine and natural causality.

The phrases, "known naturally," and "for God is the Author of our nature," in the preceding quotation can serve as clue. God is not identified as immediate, efficient cause of the first principles, but as the One Who created the agent intellect which then brings about knowledge by and of the first principles. This is one instance of a
recurring theme in Aquinas: the remote causality of God does not take away from the reality and efficacy of proximate causes. Thus, one must hold both conceptions. God is the remote cause of first principles by virtue of having created the agent intellect; and the agent intellect, through its activity of abstraction, is their proximate efficient cause.

This conclusion is not detracted from, but rather is bolstered by, the earlier quotation taking God as the exemplary cause. In the context of that quotation a comparison is drawn to angels' knowledge of intelligible species, which are said to "flow into the angelic intellects," and to the truth of the first principles, which do indeed also proceed from the divine intellect, but which are not said to "flow" as with the angels; they are said to proceed by way of exemplary causality. An exemplary cause is a model according to which something is constructed; its action is teleological rather than efficient. Hence, once again, any idea of immediate divine implantation of the first principles is precluded. Rather, what divine implantation there may be, occurs only by way of exemplary causality.

To sum up this rather complicated picture, in Aquinas first principles are not strictly parallel to Kant's synthetic a priori categories. For Aquinas, first principles, though functionally very similar to Kant's
categories (viz., judging sensory input), are themselves derived from known reality by the action of the agent intellect, which, of course, is guided by the exemplary causality of God. Through this spontaneous act of abstraction by the agent intellect, the truth of first principles becomes self-evident. In Kant, it may be remembered, it was not permissible to assert the applicability of the categories to reality in itself, but in Aquinas this is an important feature of his theory. For the first principles are in fact first in reality, and only then become known by the intellect. Thus, the difference between Kant and Aquinas can be crystallized by stating that Kant's categories are forms of thought, and Aquinas' first principles are forms of thought and of being.

Thus, it is clear that as they stand, the philosophies of Kant and Aquinas are not equivalent. But this is not to say that, therefore, the transcendental method is completely incompatible with Aquinas' philosophy. What is needed is for someone to demonstrate that the transcendental method can be applied in a way which leads further back than to either the categories or the first principles, namely, to being itself. This project was undertaken by Joseph Maréchal.
**Joseph Maréchal's Synthesis**

Joseph Maréchal attempted to unite Thomistic and Kantian principles into one system. His means of achieving this goal had two parts: criticism of Kant's use of his own method, and reconstruction of the transcendental method so as to yield a Thomistic realism. The result was a philosophy whose outward form and methodology had some resemblance to Kant, but whose content remained in the main true to traditional Thomist beliefs. Immediately with this analysis we perceive Kant's relative stature in Maréchal's philosophy, viz., subordinate to that of Aquinas. Although Maréchal could not be understood apart from Kant, it is true that he wants to use Kant to lead him to St. Thomas, not the other way around.

Maréchal finds it possible to take recourse to Kant's methodology because he feels that Kant himself had misunderstood the implications of his own method. It is Maréchal's contention that the hallmark of Kant's transcendental philosophy, the metaphysical skepticism, arises from Kant's own mis-analysis of his premises. Maréchal sees himself justified in stating, "...that the Kantian agnosticism not only is not irrefutable but can even be overcome by taking off from its own principles." Kant, Maréchal claims, if he had been consistent, should have
arrived at a realistic position rather than skepticism.

Kant made his mistake, according to Maréchal, in underestimating the dynamism of the intellect. True enough, Kant does see the mind as active in gathering knowledge, but this is an action of logical judgment. The categories are imposed on the world by the mind; still this does not go farther than applying logical regulative labels. Maréchal argues that the dynamism of the knowing subject cannot be curtailed at the point of categorical judgments. It must be allowed to proceed all the way to its final target, which is being. By means of final causality, the agent intellect transcends the phenomenal realm and reaches all the way into the noumenal. In fact, the grasp toward being culminates in the implicit recognition of Absolute Being by the agent intellect.

Maréchal found this contention of his on a re-evaluation of one of Kant's own principles, that of identity. For Kant, "a is identical to a," is an analytic principle. This principle is based on a pure concept of the understanding; and the question of whether identity applies to reality apart from its understanding is unanswerable to him. Thus, an element of skepticism can never be eliminated. But Maréchal wants to "tighten" this principle of identity, and at the same time take away from its analyticity. He recognizes that a tacit aspect of "a is identical to a" is the absolute necessity and
incontrovertibility of this relation. Thus, he notes that "a is identical to a (necessarily)." This means that this identity is more than one possible logical judgment; its necessity demands that it obtain not only in thought, but also in reality itself. The necessity of the principle of identity is made possible by the fact that it is true first of being itself. If this were not the case, i.e., if it were not a principle of being, it would not be necessary, but only heuristic.\textsuperscript{82} Thus, Maréchal can go along with Kant even all the way into his transcendental deduction; but once the principles based on the pure concepts of the understanding are derived, Maréchal insists that these are primarily principles of being.

Maréchal claims that it is imperative for a correct account of knowledge that the features of an object (thereby, of course, the features of experience) be seen as true features of being. To deny this means to abdicate the first principle of identity. As he argues,

In fact, such an 'object' would not be an object; at the utmost it would be a 'phenomenon.' Would it, at least, remain under the logical jurisdiction of the first principle? Of course not, for the first principle, as the necessary norm of thought, withdraws precisely the representation from its utter instability as a subjective phenomenon, puts it to some extent beyond the reach of time.\textsuperscript{83}

From the foregoing it becomes clear that an ontological affirmation is inevitable whenever any
affirmation at all is being made.

Since only being, and not mere non-being, can become a content of consciousness, it follows that the necessity of thought is identical with the necessity of affirming being.84

But the affirmation of being is only possible because of the simultaneous affirmation of Absolute Being.85

Thus, Maréchal, starting with Kant's transcendent method, has given it an ontological twist. In the search for the constitutive elements of knowledge which make any knowledge at all possible, he has tried to show that the first among the first principles, the principle of identity, demands that being be posited as the primary constituent of knowledge. The intellect, far more dynamic than Kant supposed, is drawn to being as its final cause. Whereas in Kant the transcendent method argued for the categories as forms for judgments, in Maréchal the method is expanded to allow for being as the ground of affirmation. Thus, a synthesis between Kant's transcendent philosophy and Aquinas' realistic philosophy was attempted.

At the outset of this chapter we defined the transcendent method as the philosophical quest for those constituent conditions of knowledge which make any knowledge at all possible. We saw in detail how this method was first formulated by Kant. In his transcendent
deduction, Kant derived the categories of pure thought as those elements of sensible knowledge which permit judgments about the content of knowledge, but which cannot be said to apply to the underlying reality apart from the judgments. This conclusion was contrasted with the philosophy of Aquinas, who is said by some to fore-shadow the transcendental method. We found indeed a strong resemblance to Kant in Aquinas' use of the first principles of the agent intellect. But it also became apparent that in Aquinas the first principles inhere in external reality from which the agent intellect abstracts them. Hence, we were left with a large gulf between Kant and Aquinas. This gulf was first attempted to be bridged by Maréchal, who, starting with a superficially Kantian methodology, found the knowledge of being as the direct outcome of the Kantian principles.

This Maréchalian synthesis was picked up by Rahner in his further extension of the transcendental method. We can now turn to Rahner's philosophy itself in the next chapter.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1st, ed. [hereafter referred to as "A"]; Königberg, 1781), pp. 64-130; (2nd ed. [hereafter referred to as "B"]; Königberg, 1787), pp. 91-169.

2 A is found in Kant's gesammelte Schriften, ed. by the Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: George Reimer, 1911), vol. IV, pp. 1-238. B is found in ibid., vol. III, passim.


6 Hartmann, op. cit., p. 225.

7 Ibid.

8 Cf. de Vries, op. cit., p. 154.


10 Ibid.

11 A viii.

12 A viii-x.

13 Thus we have the antinomies of pure reason. A 405-567; B 432-595. See also, Kant, Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (hereafter referred to as Prol.), in Kant's gesammelte Schriften, vol. IV, p. 338,
where Kant also credits the antinomies with waking philosophy from its dogmatic slumber.

Based on this fact, J. Hartnack in his work, *Immanuel Kant* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1974) draws up his interpretation of Kant as starting with the transcendental dialectic.

13 As e.g. in B 127-8 and *Prol.*, pp. 256-263.


16 B 1, NKS 41

17 And, of course, Kant's argument is designed to show that the contrary is true as well, viz., there is no sensible intuition apart from the *a priori* concepts.

The feature of dependence on a sensible intuition for all knowledge, it may be pointed out here, does remind one of Karl Rahner's *conversio ad phantasma*, following Aquinas; but actually in this case it shows that Kant stands at least to some degree in the Aristotelian tradition of epistemology (as opposed to the Platonic notion of the intuition of the intelligible species).

18 B 1, NKS 41.

19 B 1, NKS 41-2.

20 B 3, NKS 43.

21 A 2, B 6, NKS 45.

22 A 3, B 7, NKS 46.

23 B 22, NKS 57.


25 B x-xviii, NKS 19.

26 xiv, NKS 20-1.
27 B xi-xii, NKS 19.

28 B xvi, NKS 22.

29 A 19-49; B 33-73; NKS 65-91.

30 A 22, B 36, NKS 67.

31 A 38, B 57, NKS 80.

32 A 22-3, B 37, NKS 67.

33 A 24, B 38-9, NKS 68.

34 A 31, B 46, NKS 74-5.

35 A 34, B 50, NKS 77.

36 A 42, B 59, NKS 82.

37 This argument is found in the "transcendental analytic." A 65-130; B 91-169; NKS 102-75.

38 Hartmann, op. cit.; p. 229.

39 A 66-83; B 91-116; NKS 104-19.

41 A 84-5; B 116-7; NKS 120.

42 A 93, B 126, NKS 126.

43 B 132, NKS 153.

44 B 139-40; NKS 157-8.

45 B 142, NKS 159.

46 B 143, NKS 160.

47 B 159, NKS 170.

48 B 146-8, NKS 161-2.


50 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, IV, 11.

51 Metz, op. cit., p. 57.


54 This doctrine is accepted both by transcendental and by traditional Thomists. The difference lies in the question as to how this unity came about. If by intentionality, as in traditional Thomism, then the subject-object distinction obtained prior to the act of knowledge. In transcendental Thomism, however, as we shall see in Rahner, the unity of subject and object is given in knowledge.

55 "Et hoc quidem oportet verum esse, secundum sententiam Aristotelis qui posit quod intelligere contingit per hoc quod intellectum in actu fit unum cum


57But this is exactly the point of difficulty in this analysis, viz., the question is: To what extent are these principles inherent in the object, and to what extent are they inherent in the agent intellect. Cf. *Summa Theologica* (hereafter referred to as *S.T.*), I, 84, 6, corpus, where empirical impressions are described only as the material cause of intellectual knowledge.


61This is, for instance, the issue focused on by Leslie Dewart in "On Transcendental Thomism," *Continuum*, VI (1968), pp. 389-401.


64*Ibid*.


66"Ex ipso enim lumine naturali(s) intellectus agentis prima principia fiunt cognita, nec acquiruntur per ratiocinationes, sed solum per hoc quod eorum termini innotescunt." Aquinas, *In XII Libros Metaphysicorum*, IV, lect. 6.


67Aquinas makes the same point about the "analyticity" of first principles in *S.T.*, I, 17, 3, ad 2. F. C. Copleston commented that they may be called "analytic" if it is understood that they do apply to reality. Otherwise, with the same kind of caution, "synthetic a priori" may be a "convenient," though possibly misleading label. See his *Aquinas* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 28. Cf. the critical reaction to Copleston by Henry B. Veatch, "St. Thomas and the Question, 'How are Synthetic Judgments A Priori Possible?'", *Modern Schoolman*, 42 (1965), pp. 239-263.


69*Cf. S.T.*, I, 84, 6, c. Also, Donceel, "Transcendental Thomism," p. 165.


71*De Veritate*, X, 6, c.

72*Cf. Regis, op. cit.*


De Veritate, I, 4, and 5.

Joseph Maréchal, S.J., Le Point de Départ de la Metaphysique, cahier V, Le Thomisme devant la Philosophie critique (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949). This work begins with Kantian premises, but this is only natural for a deliberately historically-oriented study which seeks to relate ideas from very different historical eras.

Indications are that the never-written cahier VI might have been drawn up from a much less Kantian perspective. For a short history of the development of the cahiers, see A Maréchal Reader, trans. and ed. by Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. ix-xiii.


Cahier V, p. 373.

Ibid., p. 97.

Ibid., p. 92.

Cf. the assertion by deVries, op. cit., p. 160;
"It is not because we know that being excludes non-being that we know that it is. Rather, it is because we know that something is that we know that it is excluded from non-being."

84 Cahier V, p. 92. Trans. in Donceel, Reader, p. 93.

85 Cahier V, p. 97. Trans. in Donceel, Reader, p. 95.

86 Ibid.
CHAPTER II

THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD IN RAHNER
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THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD IN RAHNER

This chapter will describe how Karl Rahner made the transcendental method the basis for his philosophy. This topic can be approached with the question: "How is being disclosed to the human subject?" We shall find Rahner's answer arising out of an understanding of being as the transcendental condition of all knowledge.

The argument proceeds in two steps, dividing the present chapter into two divisions:

**Division I:** The first step is the explication of a pre-thematic knowledge of being and the immediate consequences of this pre-thematic knowledge. Here we shall see Rahner argue against an intellectual intuition of being and for the transcendental approach to being (sec. 1). This transcendental approach is based on the fact that whenever man questions his own existence, he implicitly affirms being--it is known pre-thematically (sec. 2). The basic knowability of being leads Rahner to posit the unity of being and knowing (sec. 3). This unity then also extends to a unity of the knower and the known (sec. 4).

**Division II:** The second step concerns the knowledge of
objects and poses the question: "If the knower and the known are unified, how can independent being be ascribed to an object of knowledge in the same sense as to the subject?" Our analysis of the various aspects of the intellect in Rahner's view leads to the conclusion that the agent intellect in its act of Vorgriff leads to an ascription of being to an object. This analysis begins with the observation that the whole of Rahner's epistemology can be summarized with the concept of conversio ad phantasma which relates the sensible intuition of an object to the object's intellectual understanding (sec. 1). Sensible knowledge (received under the transcendental conditions of space and time) allows the subject to see the object with which it is unified as an "other" (sec. 2). The judgment of the agent intellect finally recognizes independent being of the known object by becoming aware of its participation in, and yet differentiation from, common being (sec. 3).

DIVISION I: THE PRE-THEMATIC

KNOWLEDGE OF BEING

1. Why the Transcendental Method?

In one sense the need for the transcendental method is the topic of all of Rahner's Geist in Welt; it nonetheless needs to receive special treatment as a foundation for
Rahner's answer to the question of whether we can know being at all and, if so, how. At first sight, there seems to be no need for a transcendental method. After all, there seems to be enough evidence that Aquinas himself holds being to be known directly by an intellectual intuition. Rahner must refute that claim if he is to justify resorting to the transcendental method in this connection. He must show that being cannot be known directly, but must be inferred as the primordial condition underlying all knowledge. If those interpreters of Aquinas who see in him an intellectual intuition of being are right, then obviously there would be no need for a transcendental approach.

But does Aquinas establish the intuition of being? To be sure, he seems to assert it, the key text being:

"The first thing which falls into the intellect is being."¹

This text can be interpreted to mean that before anything else, e.g., form or essence, is known by the intellect, the intellect perceives the presence of being.

This interpretation is followed, for example, by Jacques Maritain.² Maritain argues that primary to all knowledge is the awareness that there is being.

It is not enough to encounter the word 'being', to say 'being': one must have the intuition, the intellectual perception of the inexhaustible and incomprehensible reality thus manifested as object.³

That is to say that there is positive, objective
knowledge of being and that this knowledge is immediate and prior to all other knowledge. If this interpretation is correct, the need for any method, much less a transcendental method, has been obviated.

Rahner rejects this solution to the problem of knowing being and refuses to attribute it to Aquinas. Rahner will not accept any purely metaphysical intuition and claims the same for Thomas. "For St. Thomas, as for Kant, there are no intuitions that are not sensitive." Of course, there are sensible intuitions, and they are taken by both thinkers to be the starting point of all knowledge. This topic will be expanded when we turn to sensibility in Rahner.

It is true for Rahner that ultimately being is the primary constituent of all knowledge. But it does not follow that there is direct objective knowledge of being. To put the whole problem into the scheme which Rahner advances,

Thus we can say in summary: alongside each judgment, and thereby in each abstraction, a general esse [being] is grasped in each Vorgriff [the intellect's power directed toward being].

The explication of these concepts is the subject matter of this chapter, particularly the second division. Right now we merely need to see that for Rahner being is not known immediately but through a complex action of the intellect.
This is not to discount the evidence from the text by Aquinas we had cited above. Two points can be made in explanation of that text. First, as we shall see later, being is (paradoxically) both the beginning and the end of knowledge. Secondly, it must be remembered that for Aquinas as well as for Rahner the complex action of the faculties of the intellect (e.g., the act of abstraction by the agent intellect) does not issue in knowledge itself. Knowledge is the final product when the passive intellect takes cognizance of that which has been conferred upon it by the agent intellect. Thus, it is entirely possible that being is the first thing known even when it is not the initial object of knowledge. What is precluded is an immediate non-complex apprehension of being.

The basis for Rahner's contention on this point is that there is no bare knowledge of being. Being cannot be an "object" of human cognition, for then it would merely be one fact alongside other facts. Rahner argues,

> As the a priori and necessary universal propositions show, the notion of being pre-exists, underlying every individual cognition.

But in that case, if one wants to engage in a metaphysics of being, being has to be approached through a reduction which strips away the particular essences and penetrates to being itself only secondarily.
This reduction is the basis of the transcendental method in Rahner. Rahner defines the transcendental method as the inquiry after the conditions which make knowledge of an object possible. Thus, the transcendental approach disallows knowledge of an object "head-on." Rather, it begins with the clarification of how the subject can have knowledge of any object at all. Thus, the subject

... does not try to get out of himself, so to speak, as though thereby to encounter this object, but turns back to reflect upon himself and examines in himself, as subject, which conditions permit him to make this object his own.

And as the most basic condition of knowledge we will see Rahner argue for being (in a manner quite different from Maréchal).

But now we have an interesting difficulty on our hands. The knowledge of being undergirds all other knowledge as a transcendental condition. We have seen Rahner's argument that being itself is not an object of knowledge. Yet, metaphysics as traditionally considered is the study of being. Then the question arises as to whether the transcendental method, as it was intended by Kant, does not prohibit the study of metaphysics in the traditional sense. Thus, we come to the central problem of Rahner's philosophy, the question of the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. We will find the answer to
this question in part in a more explicit understanding of how being is known, and in part in a revised conception of the scope and method of metaphysics.

2. Questioning as the Ground of the Knowledge of Being

Applying the transcendental method means analyzing our actual ways of knowing things, in order to identify the formal elements without which knowledge could never get started. As was shown in the preceding chapter, these elements must themselves be immune from the question of justification; therefore, they must be self-evident. Further, it was shown that they are not intuited nor known directly, but that they are known by starting with sensible knowledge and tracing its possibility back to its unquestionable conditions \textit{a priori}. Thus, it could be said that the transcendental method searches for an apodictic grounding of the possibility of knowledge.

Rahner is concerned with the possibility of the knowledge of being. We saw that being is neither intuited nor known as one object beside others. Being is never present devoid of a particular limiting essence if, therefore, being is to be known, this must take place by way of a transcendental reduction which exposes being as underlying all the various essences. Thus, the problem becomes one of finding a starting point which allows that
exposure of being. If it is remembered that being itself is a transcendental condition for Rahner, we might suppose that what we are doing is searching for another transcendental condition to justify being. That would be a mistake. What we are looking for is a kind of knowledge which allows us to make definitive claims for the transcendental nature of being. This kind of knowledge need not be transcendental, though it must share certain features of transcendental knowledge, especially indubitability.

Closely allied to this problem of the starting point is the problem of certitude. It is not enough for a starting point to direct us toward a possible knowledge of being—then metaphysics could only be a science dealing in probabilities: it could never be "first" in the sense of not being justified by another science. If knowledge of being is to be apodictic, the starting point must uncover its presence unfailingly.

It is on this point of origin that Rahner differs most markedly for Maréchal. Maréchal, as we saw, argued for the knowledge of being as underlying the principle of identity which had been accepted on Kantian grounds. By means of this principle, the dynamism of the intellect allows the subject to extend itself towards being and to "grasp" it, as it were. In this way Maréchal argued for the necessity of an ontological affirmation.
For Rahner, such a deduction is not possible, given the fact that being is always present under its material essences. Although man has knowledge of indicia which point him to being,\(^{11}\) he has no explicit knowledge of it.

Therefore, a neat, concise, absolute starting point may not be possible at all. No matter where we begin, our starting point can always be questioned

But in this very act of questioning, we may now have actually found a starting point after all. The human mind can always question. No matter what we consider to be absolute, it is always possible to ask for its justification. "Man asks. This is something final and irreducible."\(^{12}\) Even this statement can be questioned of course. But to question man's questioning is merely to raise another question and, therefore, as a criticism, is self-defeating.\(^{13}\) The fact that man asks questions cannot be disputed.

Though the questioning cannot be disputed, it can be ignored. In practice, this most certainly takes place. We do not go on questioning, we stop at some point, satisfied with the answer. Or, we may ignore a question altogether. Thus, in practice, the raising of just any question will not lead us to being immediately.\(^{14}\)

The question which reveals being is the question about being. The reason for this is not that being springs out as the answer to the question. Being is always
questionable; it is never known as a clear-cut answer. But simply to ask about being, as will be shown shortly, does give enough of an answer to show being transcendentally.

First, there is another problem to be solved, however. How is it possible to ask about something without already knowing what is being asked about? Specifically, how can one ask about being unless there is a prior intuition of being? We can discern a twofold answer to this question in Rahner. The first aspect of the answer lies in the "location" of the question. The question for being is not an abstract conceptual one, but an existential one.

The sentence about the necessity of asking in human Dasein therefore includes its own ontological turn which is then expressed as: Man exists as the question of being. To be himself, he necessarily asks about being as a whole.¹⁵

The point is that as man experiences his own existence, he experiences it as questionable, and thus he will raise the question of his own being. But by doing so he also raises the question of being in its metaphysical totality. For it is precisely the manifestation of being in this-worldly, material existence, which is the only locus at which a man can know being at all.¹⁶ It is possible to raise the question of being, because the question of human existence demands it.

This argument is of course based on a Heideggerian
interpretation of human existence and being. Rahner's conclusions are premised on the assumption that human existence, Dasein, is the primary place for the disclosure of being. Heidegger states,

Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of Dasein's Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being - a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being this Being is disclosed to it. Understanding of Being is itself a characteristic of Dasein's Being. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological.\textsuperscript{17}

These are clearly considerations which may well have influenced Rahner; but it would be a grave mistake to simply understand Rahner as "Heideggerian,"\textsuperscript{18} and to see his arguments as a mere copy of Heidegger's. As we shall see in Chapter IV, there are many other influences on Rahner, prominently Hegel's.

Thus, we have our first possible solution to the problem of how it is possible to have sufficient knowledge to ask about being in the absence of an intuition of being. It is possible because the question about being derives from the questionableness of human existence. A second solution may be found by an analysis of the problem to show
that the problem is not as severe as we may think it is when we first consider it. We can say that the absence of an intuition of being does not preclude any prior knowledge of being at all. If that possibility is granted, we can see the problem we have set up not only as solved (because the problem vanishes), but also as showing us the answer to the question about being. Rather than looking at the fact that we can ask for being without direct knowledge of it as a problem, we could see it as the outcome of our transcendental reduction. Even though we have no direct explicit knowledge of being, the fact that we can and do ask about it shows that we must have some prior inkling of being. This is no intuition because no object of knowledge is presented immediately to the intellect. It is the unthematic knowledge of being. Baker defines "unthematic knowledge" as

\[\ldots\] that which is implicitly present in an express act of knowledge, that which accompanies a definite concept, that which is unreflexively present in any direct knowledge.\]

In other words, it is an \textit{a priori} notion which implicitly allows for express (or thematic) knowledge and thereby allows us to ask for that thematic knowledge. Because it is the nature of metaphysics to thematize unthematic knowledge, it might best be called pre-thematic. To use this terminology in the context of the issue of the knowability of being, we can now say that we have no direct
thematic knowledge of being; and to raise the question about being actually means to ask that our pre-thematic knowledge of being be made thematic.

Thus, Rahner's transcendental reduction has led us back to the first step in the quest for the possibility of doing metaphysics. We have now seen that at the bottom of the metaphysical question, the question about being, lies the pre-thematic a priori knowledge of being. The relationship between knowledge and being now needs to be explored further.

3. Being and Knowing

We have begun to expose a relationship between being and knowing based on the pre-thematic knowledge of being in the act of raising the metaphysical question. Now Rahner takes this relationship a step further, to show that thereby there is a unity between being and knowing. There are two steps in his argument for this unity. The first step, which we will discuss in detail further on, consists of showing the unity of human knowledge.21 Human knowledge is the product of two faculties: sensibility and the intellect. Sensibility is defined as "knowledge of a world entity in its here and now," and intellect is "knowledge of being as a whole."22 Just as in Kant, the sensible intuition and the act of judgment could not be severed from one another; so here in Rahner
it is not possible to hold these two phases of knowledge apart (except, of course, for purely theoretical, analytical discussions). How these two aspects of knowledge work needs to be explained in detail below; for the present, it is sufficient to see that it is not possible to know apart from both faculties. But then all knowledge, beginning with sense knowledge of entities, ultimately involves intellectual knowledge of being in its totality, for the intellect is always involved, and the intellect always extends to being as a whole. Thus, we have Rahner's statement,

In the presence of individual entities here and now, the man who has become a metaphysician always finds himself already with being as a whole.23

The second step is based on the already discussed idea of the pre-thematic knowledge of being.24 The fact that there is this pre-thematic knowledge allows the question for being to make sense at all, for, as we saw, if there were no rudimentary idea about being, it could never be asked for. The totally unknown is not even questionable. As Rahner puts it,

An entity essentially unknowable from its being is a non-concept. For if it would be asked for . . . it would have no whence [no point of origin] for such a question.25

It follows that in principle being must be knowable. All talk of in-principle-unknowable being is empty. Thus, we
have the conclusion:

But when this inner orderedness of each entity toward possible knowledge is an a priori and necessary proposition, then this can be only because the being of the entity and knowing form an original unity.26

Through this transcendental argument, Rahner has established the unity of being and knowing.

But now this new-found unity has some remarkable consequences for the act of knowing. We will now see this original unity turn epistemology inside out, beginning with the subject in himself, rather than with the external object.

4. Knowing and Being Known

Rahner's transcendental reduction has given us the knowledge of being. Further, it showed that there is such a unity between being and knowing that to be is to be known. Now we shall see that a direct result of this unity is the unity of the subject and object in knowledge. Rahner's conclusion is that

To know is being-present-to-itself of being, and this being-present-to-itself is the being of the [perceived] entity.27

There are two premises in Rahner's argument to support this conclusion. The first one is the just-discussed notion of the essential unity of knowing and being.28 For the second premise Rahner turns to Aquinas.
An aspect of St. Thomas' epistemology which we saw in the last chapter is that Aquinas rejects the kind of epistemology where the intellect extends itself to "make contact" with the known object. We saw in Aquinas that

... for knowledge it is not enough that contact take place between the knower and the known. It is necessary, rather, that the intelligible be united to the knower like a form, either by means of its own essence or by means of a likeness.²⁹

It followed that "understanding occurs as the result of the thing actually understood being one with the intellect actually understanding."³⁰

If we now think of a subject coming to know an object, we see that the object's being is known by the subject. But, we also see that the subject and object do not stand in opposition to each other, the subject being internal, the object external. Rather, we find the subject and the object united in the intellect. And this unity is not merely the simultaneous appearance of two representations of two essences. The unity is derived from the unity of knowing and being. Therefore, the unity in this act of knowledge is a unity of being. It is the being of the subject which is united with the being of the object.³¹ Nor is this unity an act of combining of the two beings. This would be the result if the act of knowledge were based on an intentional reaching of the subject toward the object. But Rahner expressly rejects such a
The astonishing conclusion drawn by Rahner is that in an act of knowledge, the subject actually becomes the object. This is Rahner's formulation of the relationship between the knower and the known.

If, according to the most basic starting point of Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge, only the knower itself is recognized as objectum proprium [proper object of knowledge], and there still is knowledge in which the known objectum proprium is the other, then both of these points are simultaneously understandable only through the fact that the knower is himself the other. 33

In short, in the first (logical, not temporal) moment of knowledge, the subject and object are identical.

Now we can see that by means of this understanding Rahner has reversed the traditional understanding of epistemology. Far more radical than Kant, for whom the thing-in-itself (although certainly unknown in itself) may have still existed as the object "out there" as referent of our knowledge, Rahner's epistemology begins with the unity of the subject and the object. Thus, the problems of his epistemology are also reversed from traditional epistemology.

Thus for Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge the problem is not how the chasm between knowing and object is somehow to be 'bridged': such a 'chasm' is only a pseudo-problem. Rather the problem is how the known which is identical with the knower can stand in opposition as the other to the knower, and how there can be a knowledge which receives such an other. There is no
chasm to be 'bridged', but it must be understood how it [the chasm] is at all possible. 34

In this way, by originally starting with a transcendent reduction, Rahner has achieved a complete reversal of the traditional view of knowledge. All aspects of knowledge, including the very being of the object, begin with the subject. In a later chapter we shall see this matter as one of the chief points of resemblance between Rahner and Hegel.

This concludes the first division of this chapter. We saw how Rahner made use of the transcendental method to uncover being, which would have been inaccessible to a direct approach, e.g., an intuition. Being, we saw, is first known pre-thematically as the ground for the possibility of the metaphysical question. It followed from this most basic knowability of being that being and knowledge are essentially united. Finally, we saw Rahner making use of this original unity to argue that at the core the knower and the known are also unified.

Thus, we have seen how the pre-thematic knowledge of being allows for knowledge of the "other," though so far at the level of supreme subjectivity. But now the question arises how the distinction between subject and object can be established. Does the known object have being only as the being of the knowing subject or can being
still be ascribed to the object? This problem must become the topic of the next division, which will deal more extensively with the details of Rahner's epistemology.

DIVISION II: THE KNOWLEDGE OF BEING IN THE CONVERSIO AD PHANTASMA

The last division raised the question of the possibility of knowing being apart from a direct intuition of being. We saw Rahner's answer in a pre-thematic knowledge of being; viz., transcendentally an implicit knowledge of being precedes all other knowledge; specifically, it precedes the questioning of metaphysical knowledge. By a series of complex arguments we saw how Rahner develops this basic notion to establish the unity of being and knowing, and the unity of subject and object. The problem now before us is to see if Rahner leaves this view of knowledge at such a subjective level or whether somehow it will still be possible to ascribe objective being to an object of knowledge. This problem is compounded by the fact that, after all, this view of knowledge does attempt to base itself on sensibility. Seen from that perspective, the question is whether idealism can be avoided. Can independent existence still be claimed for known objects of sensibility? The answer will arise out of an unfolding of Rahner's understanding of the functions of the intellect.
1. **Conversio ad Phantasma**

The answer to the question we have posed ourselves must begin with another very fundamental look at Rahner's transcendental method. Similarly to Kant's approach, it may be described in Hartmann's terminology as a "mixed transcendental methodology." This designation means that Rahner's method, as did Kant's, provides for two sources of input for knowledge: the transcendental *a priori* elements and the empirical sensible input. For Rahner, it becomes axiomatic that all knowledge for human beings is ultimately made possible by the existence of a sensible phantasm, and any act of knowledge must return to the phantasm. Utilizing Aquinas' terminology, Rahner calls this the **conversio ad phantasma**.

It must be made clear here that the phantasm which exists in the mind of the knower is not merely an image as, e.g., a photographic reproduction. That would be thoroughly un-Thomistic. Rather, the phantasm is the mode of existence of the object as it is united with the subject. Thus, when Rahner says that knowledge is always based on the **conversio ad phantasma**, he is actually still only saying that knowledge must begin with the sensible intuition of the "other" as object of knowledge. (The independent existence of the "other" is yet to be accounted for, of course.)
But something else is yielded by an investigation into the *conversio ad phantasma*. As Rahner himself argues, a *conversio* is called for only if it is somehow preceded by an *aversio*. The intellect must **return** to the phantasm because there is one aspect of the act of knowledge which turns away from the phantasm. This is the act of abstraction (**abstractio**). We shall see that it is this abstraction which allows us to see the object as actually existing.

It must be made clear, however, that we are here not talking about several acts of knowledge. Rahner emphasizes that "*conversio ad phantasma* and *abstractio* are constituents of a single process which are correlative in alternating priority." It is possible to emphasize one or the other of the aspects of knowing for their particular contribution, but we are always merely talking about different constituents of the unified act of knowledge. This understanding will then always leave us with the paradox that in the single act of knowing the object is united with and has separate existence from the subject. To summarize: Rahner's epistemology is epitomized by the *conversio ad phantasma* which combines the original sensible unity of subject and object with the distinction brought about between the two in the *aversio*. The result is knowledge.

This analysis will now be explained in more detail,
first by a closer look at sensibility in Rahner, and then by seeing how through abstraction the sensible object can in fact open up the possibility of a metaphysics of being.

2. Sensibility

We saw earlier that for Rahner sensible knowledge is knowledge of an object by the subject, or knowledge of an "other." Further, we saw that the subject and the object are not positioned opposite each other, but rather that the act of knowledge begins with a unity of subject and object. The knower and the known are one. They are united even according to their being. In short, the knower is the known, and it is now necessary to show why we still do have true knowledge.

Furthermore, we saw that there is no process of uniting. The mind does not first recognize an object apart from the subject and then bring them together. At the first (logical, not temporal) instant of incipient knowledge, they are united. What this amounts to is that knowledge does in fact begin with an intuition, but it is a sensible intuition. The intuition of being, so vehemently denied earlier, is an intellectual intuition, and it is still rejected by Rahner. But in this sensible intuition, which is at the basis of all knowledge, the knower intuits the being of the other as united with his.
Thus, Rahner can actually state, "Knowing is primarily intuition,"\textsuperscript{44} thought it must be kept very clear that he is not referring to an intellectual intuition. In this intuition, there is no opposition between the knower and the other; and the being of the object is something yet to be discovered as actually being independent; this is not given with the intuition.

In this initial stage of knowing, the being of the object is united with the being of the subject. But this is not to say, of course, that the subject and object are identical in all respects. Within sensibility we can already find a clue which will allow us eventually to recognize the fact that even at the point when all being is present as a unity in sensibility, the knower and the known are still just that. They are united, yet even then there is no question of a complete amalgamation of the knower and the known in their respective roles. Somehow, the intellect, even when united with the object, still recognizes it as distinct from itself. They are identical, but different. The "other" always retains its character of "otherness," even in its stage of sharing its being with the subject. How is this possible?

We can say off-hand that, whatever further analysis we may make, it is not possible because of a denial of the law of contradiction, keeping in mind here that we are analyzing different moments of the faculties of the intellect.
At this point in the discussion we come upon a method used by Rahner several times. It could be classed as a use of the method of difference. It is a negative judgment on what is given, which in this case is the being of the other as it is found in unity with the being of the subject. The judgment which the mind makes is that what is present in the subject is not pure unbounded being in the abstract, but something limited, something with certain characteristics. This something is therefore limited by a certain amount of non-being. The presence of non-being means that this something is material, on the premise that the degree of non-being present is proportional to the degree of prime-matter present. And it is this recognition of prime-matter which makes the subject realize the "otherness" of that which is present with him. Recognition of this otherness is the first step in recognizing the independent being of the object. Thus, sensibility is the recognition of an other because it is the recognition of materiality.

In this way sensible knowledge is the act of being immersed in the world. For knowledge of material being is synonymous with knowledge of the world. Conversely, Rahner describes the non-empirical side of knowledge as "spiritual." Thus, "spirit in world," or "Geist in Welt," is, for Rahner, another summary description of human epistemology. Following Aquinas, Rahner of course holds
that God and angels do not need a sensible element in their knowledge. They can know without turning to a phantasm, and, therefore, they are epistemologically "spirit independent of the world," though they also can know the world.

Rahner's understanding of how the sensible element of knowledge is found within the subject can further be explicated by pointing out another parallel to Kant. We saw in Kant that the transcendental method is operative on two levels. The categories are transcendentally imposed on the sensible intuition by means of the judgment, but already prior to that we saw that the sense impressions are received subject to the two a priori conditions of space and time. The same kind of relationship holds true for Rahner. The agent intellect acts transcendentally in judgment, but sensibility in Rahner is also subject to these "a priori structures of sensibility."

In keeping with the transcendental method, these structures render sensible knowledge possible. They cannot determine under what forms being is perceived, but they order the perception into the proper time and space arrangement. Thus, Rahner sees these structures as functions of quantity—proper sequences are established. In providing this orderliness, they provide the bedrock determinations for the sensible object from which all knowledge, including metaphysical speculation, must be
derived. Rahner calls this dependence on space and time the *imaginatio.* What Rahner says here about space also applies *mutatis mutandi* to time:

With this, the question as to what it is to which the intellect turns in the *conversio ad phantasma* has cleared itself up at least to some extent: The phantasm is the *actus imaginationis* as the basic source for sensibility; its *a priori* form is space as the demarkation of the quantitatively similar many.

In other words, we can distinguish between different objects because they are located in different parts of space; they are not all in the same location. Similarly, time also enables us to make proper perceptive distinctions. Thus, through the *imaginatio* the world is known.

In quantity as the expression of matter (in contrast with quality as the expression of form) are rooted space and time. As *sensibilia communia* they characterize therefore first and foremost the *imaginatio* and thereby sensibility as such.

3. Aversio

The second aspect of any act of knowledge is the temporary turning away from the phantasm. Ironically, it is the *aversio*, away from the object of sensibility, which establishes the being of the object. This takes place by means of the subject turning in upon himself, and there discovering in himself those transcendental conditions which allow the object to be understood as
instantiating being.

The basic situation, once again, from which the act of knowledge begins is the unity of subject and object. So far we have pointed out some facets of the manner in which the object is represented as the sensible phantasm. The object was seen to be the "other" because it is partially non-being, viz., it is material and derived from the world. Thus, in sensibility the subject loses himself to the world. Now, in the counter-move, the opposite takes place: the intellect loosens the object from the world, and abstraction takes place.

The subject's turning in upon himself, reditio subjecti in seipsum, is the transcendental perimeter for the possibility of judgment. Judgment consists in predicating universal concepts of particular items of knowledge. Rahner begins his analysis of judgment by pointing out that in Thomism "there are intellectually only universal concepts, and a universal concept is known only in a conversio ad phantasma." Thus, a judgment has two logically interdependent aspects. The first kind of partial judgment is the "concretizing synthesis." In this act, the predicate of a sentence is identified with its subject (which is the object of knowledge): e.g., this man is sleeping. In other words, the content of a proposition is judged by the intellect in the concretizing synthesis to be localized in a certain particular, a
concrete "this." In the second partial judgment the intellect affirms that the predicate describes the subject as the particular embodiment of a universal concept. This means that in this second move the subject becomes identified for us no longer as a "this" but as a particular which is knowable through a universal. This is the "affirmative synthesis." Both syntheses operate together in producing the judgment that makes knowledge possible. How this judgment works will now be discussed in greater detail.

Rahner takes great care to guard against misunderstanding of how the judgment takes place. As in Aquinas, it is the agent intellect which performs the judgment. We have spoken of the intellect "loosening" the object from the world, or of this object being "universalized." This could lead to the understanding that the object of knowledge consists of two "layers," as it were, and the agent intellect "peels off" the top layer, the universal form and being. But such a depiction goes against Rahner's intentions. The sensible object is neither dissected into two forms of being, nor is it transformed into a higher state of existence. It is always present as the sensible other. Thus, abstraction does not abstract in the sense of prescinding the universal from the particular; rather, in abstraction the universal conditions are found underlying the particular. This is performed by
the Vorgriff, once again using the method of difference.\textsuperscript{62}

Negatively speaking, the two most important points to remember about the Vorgriff (and the reason why any translation of this term into English is bound to be misleading\textsuperscript{63}), are that it is not "before" or "pre-" anything, and that nothing is "grasped"—for that would turn it into a form of object-knowledge.\textsuperscript{64} Instead, the Vorgriff is a transcendental "reaching out" (excessus in Latin), an anticipation, concomitant with the perception of any particular object.

We saw the method of difference used earlier as the means of recognizing that a particular object is never pure being, but always contains non-being as prime matter. Thus, we saw the object as the other. A similar line of argument is employed in the analysis of the Vorgriff. Rahner argues that it is the function of the Vorgriff to see the object of knowledge as essentially limited, this time not by non-being as such but by the particular form in which being is presented in the object. In the Vorgriff the intellect recognizes that the entity before it is limited; it is presented under such and such a form and essence and no other. But it could have possessed any one of innumerable possibilities of forms! Thus, the Vorgriff plunges ahead into a recognition of the unlimited potential which is particularized under certain limitations in any act of knowledge.\textsuperscript{65}
Rahner emphasizes that in the Vorgriff no other object than the original object of perception is known, and then makes five further qualifications.

(1) The "whither" of the Vorgriff (Rahner makes a noun of worauf, das Worauf) is no humanly conceivable object.

(2) This "whither" is reachable only under the limited form of a particular sensible object of knowledge.

(3) The Vorgriff, in seeing the particular object of knowledge as one particular, limited entity, provides awareness of the possibility of there being many other objects.

(4) The Vorgriff always goes beyond the particular concrete object in human knowledge. This must be seen, not as an inevitable consequence of knowing, but as the condition of the possibility of any objective knowledge at all. (Thus, the Vorgriff is a transcendental faculty.)

(5) More explicitly, "the Vorgriff can be interpreted as the movement of the spirit toward the whole of its possible objects." Thus, it does not reach into nothingness, but into complete wholeness.

But then the goal of the Vorgriff can be identified with being (esse). Being is then known as the ground for the possibility of knowing different entities. It is not found as an underlying, abstract, ideal entity itself,
but as the most fundamental transcendental potential for assuming the form of particular entities. In these entities, being (esse) manifests itself as commonly shared being (ens). 70 Rahner summarizes:

Each judgment directs itself . . . towards esse; or, to put it more accurately and more carefully for now, toward the actual entity, toward ens. Where that is not the case, there is no true judgment at all. 71

There may be judgment, but if it is not true to being, it will be false.

In this way our original problem has received a solution. How is being known? We argued with Rahner that there is no intellectual intuition of being, that all knowledge must begin with a sensible intuition, present as the phantasm. The phantasm is present as object in unity with the knowing subject, but it is recognized as an other because of its material condition. Still, objective being could not be attributed to it on the basis of sensibility because it was still located in the subject. Turning to the side of the intellect in knowledge, we saw that the intellect functions by turning in upon itself to discover its transcendental conditions, not as a reflective explication of these conditions, but as an implicit ascription which subsumes the object of perception under certain conditions which make it knowable. It performs a judgment which consists in ascribing a universal to the object of knowledge. The object is
limited by this universal, and the Vorgriff uncovers the forms underlying the limited object to see the unlimited potential for particular limited objects, only one of which is present in an act of knowledge. Rahner has stated that this unlimited potential, which expresses itself as any number of objects, is being.

But then, if the object is present as an expression of being, it is itself an entity with being. Then the "gulf" between the subject and the object has in fact been established. The object, which originally shared its being with the subject, can then, because of the Vorgriff, be recognized by the metaphysician as having being of its own.

Further, the possibility of metaphysics as a science of being is then also established. The difference from a classical (naive) conception of metaphysics is, however, that being still cannot be considered an object in itself. It must always be kept in mind that the way to arrive at knowledge of being is transcendentally.

An interesting corollary to this analysis is that here metaphysics lays the groundwork for natural theology. For, as the goal of the Vorgriff, being has to be absolute, and Rahner describes it as infinite.\(^{72}\) The Vorgriff, in affirming the being of the object of knowledge, does in fact simultaneously affirm Absolute Being. "In this, but only in this sense, can it be said that the Vorgriff
extends to God." Thus, God Himself is a transcendental condition of our knowledge. But one must be cautious in drawing conclusions from this phenomenon. First, it must be remembered that God does not here become an object of knowledge, for He is affirmed only through the Vorgriff of the intellect. Second, this affirmation of the infinite still leaves man finite in all aspects of knowledge. Third, God as Absolute Being is here disclosed to man only as it arises out of man's subjectivity, not in a self-disclosing act of revelation. Further implications of this analysis for the theological aspects of Rahner's thought will be discussed under the later heading of anthropology.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I/II, qu. 94, a. 2.


3Ibid., p. 120.


5Karl Rahner, *Geist in Welt* (hereafter referred to as GW) (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1957), p. 188.


7Ibid.

8Ibid.

9Ibid.


11GW, 47.

12GW, 71.
13 Ibid.

14 When Kenneth Baker states that any question will do in op. cit., p. 7, he is apparently relying on Coreth who seems to differ from Rahner at this point.

15 GW, 71.

16 GW, 71ff.


19 GW, 81.

20 Baker, op. cit., p. 68.

21 GW, 79.

22 Ibid.

23 GW, 80.

25 Ibid.

26 HW, 51.

27 GW, 82.

28 Ibid.


31 GW, 82.

32 GW, 83.

33 GW, 92.

34 GW, 88.


36 Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 84, a. 7.

37 Rahner points out (GW, 15) that "Conversio ad Phantasma" could just as well have been the title for Geist in Welt. This shows that the conversio, with the implied aversio, is the central notion of Rahner's
epistemology. See also GW, 270 and, of course, passim.


39 GW, 130, 131.

40 The sequence indicated here, needless to say, is not a temporal one. We are pointing out logical components of knowledge in their logical relationship, but knowledge is basically one, instantaneous act.

41 GW, 270.

42 GW, 92.

43 Ibid.


45 GW, 92.

46 GW, 93.

47 Ibid.

48 GW, 14.

49 GW, 50, 51.

50 Immanuel Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, A64-130; B89-169. This is the "transcendental analytic."
Kant, op. cit., A19-49; B33-73. This is the "transcendental aesthetic."

GW, 110.

GW, 115-123.

Rahner in fact calls the last section of his book "The Possibility of Metaphysics on the Ground of Imaginatio." GW, 386ff.

"Imagination" is not a good translation for imaginatio for this Latin term encompasses far more than what we mean by the English "imagination." William Dych, in his admirable translation of GW, Spirit in the World (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), translates it as "imagination" and promptly runs into difficulties with the translation of phantasia, which is the Latin equivalent to "imagination." Dych completely deletes the word on p. 107. In empathy with the frustrations suppose he must have felt, I have chosen to retain the Latin imaginatio, something Dych as translator apparently did not feel at liberty to do.

GW, 119.

GW, 127.

GW, 133.

GW, 135.

GW, 136.

GW, 149.

GW, 153.

64 Ibid.

65 GW, 153.

66 GW, 154.

67 GW, 154-155.

68 GW, 154.

69 GW, 175.

70 GW, 170.

71 GW, 179.

72 GW, 195.

73 GW, 190.
CHAPTER III

THE TRANSCENDENT METHOD IN HEGEL
CHAPTER III

THE TRANSCENDENT METHOD IN HEGEL

This third and last of the preparatory chapters will be an exposition of the way in which Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel used the transcendental method in his philosophy. Once this analysis is completed, we will be able to start showing how Rahner put forward many similar arguments in order to solve philosophical, anthropological, and Christological problems.

Hegel radicalizes Kant's Copernican revolution. Hegel starts with Kant's premises, but then finds Kant's conclusions unacceptable and moves on beyond Kant's "mixed" transcendental method to a "pure" transcendental method (to use Hartmann's classification\(^1\) once again). By "pure transcendental method" is meant the philosophical analysis of knowledge as not merely the interplay of sensible information with a \textit{a priori} categories, but as in all respects an extension of the \textit{a priori} faculties of the mind. Thus, Hegel's epistemology is an entirely holistic one. There is no separation between the sensible and the intelligible, between the subject and the object, between thinking and being. Hartmann points out that thus all knowledge in Hegel is circular: "The whole domain is self-grounding, self-validating."\(^2\) Thus, Hegel's

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celebrated identity of rationality and reality must be understood not in any way as a realistic view of knowledge, but, on the contrary, as the epitome of the transcendental approach, where reality as it is known is constituted in a transcendental "continuum."

We will now attempt to explicate Hegel's use of the transcendental method. The discussion will be divided into four sections, each of which will contribute to an understanding of Hegel's pure transcendental method:

1. The radical use of the transcendental method leads Hegel to a position that we must characterize as an idealism; but we must recognize that a naive understanding of idealism does not do justice to Hegel's intentions.

2. In the Introduction to the Phenomenology, Hegel takes exception to Kant's method and argues that all knowledge can be absolute. Instead of Kant's critical philosophy he proposes a holistic approach to knowledge, in which all appearances of knowledge, together with the standard of truth inherent in each one of them, can be seen to take their place in a progression toward absolute knowledge.

3. The first three chapters of the Phenomenology describe the way in which knowledge, though it may begin as naive sense-certainty, must ultimately lead to self-consciousness, thus issuing in a transcendental
epistemology.

4. The goal of Hegel's system, the Absolute, is the last stage of the development of consciousness. It represents the total identification of the knower (Spirit) and all the contents of knowledge. But it is never a static resting point. It is always the goal of the work of knowing.

1. Idealism in Hegel

Hegel's use of the transcendental method can best be approached through his understanding of idealism. In the *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Hegel makes the claim that

All philosophy is essentially idealism, or at least has it for its principle, and the question is only to what extent it has actually been carried out.

This view is echoed later in the *Encyclopedia* where he asserts: "The ideality of the finite is the main proposition of philosophy, and each truthful philosophy is therefore idealism." These are strong claims, and in need of much explanation. First of all, even though Hegel sees his transcendental philosophy as the truest form of idealism, he does not mean that all philosophy is transcendental. What he does claim is that no rational thinking can do without some basic transcendental grounding, and that all philosophies recognize that fact, though often very rudimentarily or even perhaps only implicitly.
Idealism means, for Hegel, recognizing that finite existences (Dasein) do not contain being (Sein) absolutely. For him, this is a very innocuous observation. Any philosophy worthy of its name will posit something beyond finite realities. All philosophies search for unifying principles or super-sensible realities. Even Thales' water cannot be taken in merely its empirical understanding, but must also be understood as the essence of all things, thereby as an ideal concept. "Therefore, the opposition of idealistic and realistic philosophy is of no significance." They are both idealistic, though one may be so more explicitly than the other.

This is the first understanding of idealism, a sense in which it is recognized that all philosophies deal to some extent with universals and thereby move into the realm of the ideal. But of course Hegel in his own philosophy wants to expand the meaning of idealism. He argues that if universals are considered as ideal, "how much more is the Concept, the Idea, Spirit to be called ideal." As a corollary, the individual sensible things which are sublimated in the totality of Spirit are then also ideal.

Now Hegel makes the transition that shows these considerations to be not merely metaphysical but are also transcendental.
In fact Spirit is the actual idealist per se; in him . . . the content exists not as so-called real existence; it is for me; it is ideal in me.¹⁰

Spirit is not an ideal metaphysical transcendent reality "out there," but is actually found as the ultimate transcendental condition in the subject. Hence, Hegel's idealism is a transcendental idealism; its roots are epistemological.

In the Phenomenology, idealism is found at the stage of reason (Vernunft).¹¹ Prior to this, Hegel had described how consciousness gives way to self-consciousness, and how then self-consciousness will lead to the unhappy consciousness. The unhappy consciousness was the result of an estranged relationship between the subject and the "other" beyond him. In fact, this "other" is as far beyond him as God is from man; it is the Beyond. But, Hegel will not stop at this unhappy stage. Self-consciousness must lead to reason, and in order for this to happen, the unsatisfactory unhappy relation must be reconciled.

In order for self-consciousness to become reason, its previously negative relation to being-other turns into a positive one.¹²

Thus, the gulf between the subject and the Beyond is bridged, and this bridging includes the overcoming of any distance between him and the world. Reason knows . . . that all reality is nothing other than itself. Its thinking is
immediately itself reality; thus it relates to [reality] as idealism.\textsuperscript{13}

Here, then, we can see idealism as the belief that all reality is constituted by reason.

This means that the whole world is an organic tissue woven by reason. There is no metaphysical or epistemological dualism here. There is no thing-in-itself inaccessible to human reason. There is one truth, and it belongs to reality in-itself (an sich) just as much as reality for itself (für sich).\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, idealism has arisen out of the view that all consciousness, including sensible consciousness, is basically self-consciousness. The tautology "I am I" becomes the foundation for epistemology.\textsuperscript{15} Insofar as I am conscious, "my object and essence is I: and nothing can deny it this truth."\textsuperscript{16} For an instant all knowledge has become pure subjectivity.

But the subjective moment is only of short duration. For the very certainty of self-consciousness of the "I" also guarantees the next aspect of knowledge, namely, "there is something other for me."\textsuperscript{17} The possibility of true knowledge based on the self-reflective property of knowledge now also allows for knowledge of the "other." But the "other" is of course not known as something outside of the self, standing in opposition to it. That would be a reversion to the very first kind of
consciousness which Hegel had already shown to lead to self-consciousness. Rather, knowledge of the "other" must be generated straight out of the phenomenon of self-consciousness. The "other" is then present already from the beginning together with the knowledge of the "I" in the self. Just as in self-consciousness the self is already given, so the "other" is already given. Then in order for the "other" to become object and essence, a distance must be created between the self and the "other." That is only possible "in that I draw myself back from the 'other' at all, and step as a reality alongside it." ¹⁸

It becomes clear that what we called subjectivity above is not really subjectivity at all. Reason in fact ceases to recognize any opposition of subjectivity and objectivity altogether.¹⁹ When we stated above that in idealism all reality is one kind of "tissue," that statement must be understood as including the further insight that all subject-object dualism has been sublimated as well. Thus, there is complete unity of thought and reality. "Only the one-sided bad idealism lets this unity move to one side and be confronted by an 'in-itself.'" ²⁰

But Hegel is never content to reach a plateau on which philosophy finds its culmination, and let it rest there, not even when we come to the attainment of Absolute Spirit. In keeping with his method, Hegel now begins to argue that this idealistic monism is not entirely
possible. For the otherness of the "other," once it has been established as distinct from the self, is recognized. To be sure, this does not take place by suddenly re-introducing the same subject-object distinction. But part of self-consciousness is recognition of the "difference."²¹ The "difference" shows us that in content knowledge still does turn out to be pluralistic. "It appears as a plurality of categories."²² The fact that there are many categories implies that within the unity there are differences and distinct species. Of course these categories are part and parcel of the original category of the unity of reason; to attempt to establish them from the nature of judgment, as Kant did, is a "disgrace to science,"²³ argues Hegel. Thus, all individual entities are in their essential determination species of the pure category of unity.

But the plurality of categories begins to cause difficulties for this unity. Hegel contends that plurality functions in providing unity for the differences, "a negative unity."²⁴ Thus, the actual content of knowledge is in fact not determined by the unity but by its negative counterpart, plurality. Then the original unity gives way to mere singleness and does once again stand in opposition to an other.²⁵

Therefore, now idealism has become empty. True enough, the transcendental unity is still present, a unity
which refers all consciousness back to the self. But simultaneously, when it comes to the actual content of knowledge, there is still no absolute unity between reason and reality. Something alien to unity has found its way back into knowledge, something once again akin to an unknowable reality beyond reason, namely some grounding for the otherness of the content of knowledge. 26

Thus, Hegel places both a positive and a negative evaluation on idealism, as discussed so far. On the one hand it overcomes the subject-object distinction and invokes a transcendental, categorial unity. As such, idealism is on the right track to absolute knowledge, and further philosophizing must be a stricter form of idealism. On the other hand, idealism is only a formal way of unifying knowledge and leaves the actual content untouched. For that reason, idealism per se is incomplete as philosophy. 27

Idealism stands at the center of Hegel's philosophy. It provides the clearest insight into his essential approach. We can see from the vantage point of idealism that his epistemology is transcendental, and that his "system," the progress toward Absolute Spirit, is also of the nature of establishing absolute transcendental unity, a unity which will include the content as well as the formal structures of knowledge. Hegel's further understanding of the need for this kind of transcendental
method is the subject matter of the next section, which
deals with his introduction to the Phenomenology.

2. The Way to Absolute Knowledge

We have now seen both how Hegel's goal is a "pure"
transcendental idealism and how the idealism of reason
falls short of that goal. Further progress must be made
until that goal is ultimately attained in Absolute Spirit.
This section will continue to explore how Hegel himself
saw his method and his approach to transcendental
philosophy.

Fortunately, Hegel has given us a relatively short
statement on exactly that topic. In the few pages of the
introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel makes
a comprehensive presentation of his view of the possibility
and methodology of the pure transcendental philosophy he
wants to espouse.

The object of scientific philosophy, he claims, is
absolute knowledge.28 This must not be understood as
knowledge of some metaphysical absolute, but as knowledge
of perfect a priori certitude. Hegel himself states that
the goal

... is there, where it is no longer
necessary for it to pass beyond itself,
where it finds itself, and the Concept
corresponds to the object, and the
object to the Concept.29
Thus, what must be attained is a complete harmony of self-reflective, unconditioned unity in knowledge. Absolute knowledge is indubitable knowledge, where everything is known with certainty.

The question to which Hegel now directs himself is whether there is any chance of ever reaching absolute knowledge. There seems to be a good argument to the contrary, an argument which furthermore is held to be true by popular opinion and by Kantian philosophy. Hegel states,

> It is a natural conception that it is necessary, before preceding to the subject matter of philosophy itself, i.e., to the actual knowledge of what is true, first to become clear about knowledge which is viewed as a tool with which to take hold of the absolute, or as the medium through which it can be seen.

But if this is true, then definite complications for the possibility of attaining absolute knowledge arise. For if you accept the fact that our knowledge of some object is never better than the method of knowing we are using, the chances of gaining true absolute knowledge become very slim. In fact, it becomes certain that a divisive boundary falls between knowing and the absolute. Ivan Soll argues that Hegel definitely has Kantian critical philosophy in mind as he sets up this problem. Soll states,

> Although Kant is not explicitly mentioned, and the metaphors of the tool and the medium replace the
Kantian terminology, Hegel is referring to Kant's denial of the possibility to know things as they are in themselves. If knowledge is an instrument, the thing-in-itself would be changed in the process of coming to know it; if it is a medium, things are known only as they appear through the medium. In either case, no immediate knowledge of the reality is possible.

Hegel wants to reject this critical understanding of knowledge. His purpose is to establish direct, absolute knowledge. Thus, it can be seen that Hegel's philosophy could go into either one of two directions. He could restore some form of naive realism in which things are known immediately in their essence. Heidegger, in his commentary, asks if, when Hegel rejects Kantian critical philosophy, he does not "thereby reject, in general, all critical examination, and favor a relapse into arbitrary assertions and assumptions?" But this is the alternative Hegel rejects. Heidegger answers his own question: "Far from it. Hegel is on the contrary only preparing the examination." For reasons which will be discussed extensively in the next section, Hegel passes up naive realism and chooses the other alternative for his project, namely that of achieving absolute knowledge transcendentally.

Hegel's basic argument against the critical philosophy in this discussion is very simple. He claims that it rests on a series of unfounded presuppositions.
which are arbitrarily imposed on our understanding of knowledge.

For it presupposes conceptions of knowledge as a tool and a medium, also a difference of ourselves from this knowledge, but pre-eminently this, that the absolute stands on one side and knowledge on the other.\textsuperscript{36}

Then, if it is understood that truth is to be found only in the absolute, then critical philosophy actually rejects truth. Hegel dismisses the idea of limited truth as double-talk which does not do justice to its own method since it presupposes that we know already to some extent what is meant by absolute knowledge—how else would one know that knowledge is limited?\textsuperscript{37}

It can be argued that the investigation of knowledge, seen as a science of absolute knowledge, must encounter difficulties because it is confined to the level of appearance. For all such words as "knowledge," "absolute," "subjective," and "objective" are derived from knowledge in its appearance. "They only constitute an empty appearance of knowledge, which must immediately vanish before the entrance of science."\textsuperscript{38} But why is then science not also merely an appearance? Critical philosophy claims that this is exactly the case, and the attempt of science to hold an absolute position precisely because it is more than appearance is in itself unconvincing because "one barren assurance amounts to just as much as another."\textsuperscript{39} Hegel takes this difficulty to heart, and thus his method
to achieve a science of absolute knowledge is to consider knowledge in its appearances and to investigate how these appearances eventually lead to Hegel's desired result.

The succession of forms which consciousness runs through on this way is the explicit history of the formation of consciousness itself into science.\(^{40}\)

This is the method of the Phenomenology, but it is also Hegel's method throughout. Kenley Royce Dove has shown that this phenomenological approach which deals with the shapes of consciousness is the true Hegelian method, rather than the so-called "dialectical method." Dove goes so far as to claim that the Phenomenology "was probably the first philosophical treatise whose method was radically and consistently non-dialectical."\(^{41}\) Hegel studies the shapes of consciousness and how they progress from one into the next, not because of some new form of logic superimposed on them,\(^{42}\) but because of negations arising out of their own constitutions. These are not merely formal or one-sided negations (which would only lead to skepticism), but the negations themselves carry a certain amount of content with them which leads to a further stage in the series of shapes of consciousness.\(^{43}\) To be sure, Hegel does refer to this process as "dialectical movement,"\(^{44}\) and Dove is well aware of that fact.\(^{45}\) But what Hegel means by "dialectical movement" is simply
the understanding that in human experience closer examination of a thing will often reveal it to be something different than was originally supposed, sometimes its very opposite.46

The key to understanding this method is that the standard for examining different forms of knowledge will in each case arise directly out of the form of knowledge of consciousness under consideration.47

In virtue of the fact that appearing knowledge is object, we will at first also take up its determinations as they immediately present themselves.48

Therefore, "consciousness provides its own standard, and the investigation thereby becomes a comparison of itself with itself."49

But all this turns out to be just another way of saying "pure transcendental method." For the object of study is our consciousness and thus the status of those standards is not ontological but transcendental.

In this way Hegel has given us a somewhat paradoxical understanding of knowledge. As we study shapes of consciousness, we do not impose a standard on those shapes from without. The standard arises from within the shapes. Yet, because they are shapes of consciousness the standards do in fact arise from within ourselves. What is accomplished is that the dualistic gap between the knower and his object, the known, is
abrogated. Hegel's phenomenological investigation of knowledge is one unified movement where the goal, absolute knowledge, is already the condition for the possibility of all knowledge. Thus true and indubitable knowledge can be had. 50

The crucial point in Hegel's transcendental method is that consciousness is self-consciousness. This is the conclusion of the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*, which will now be briefly described.

3. From Consciousness to Self-Consciousness

Whereas the introduction is the formal presentation by Hegel of his transcendental approach, the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* can be seen as his practical, epistemological apologetic for his transcendental method. In keeping with the method we have described above, we shall see Hegel begin with one form of consciousness and analyze it with the eventual result of having it grow into another form of consciousness. In this case, the beginning form of consciousness is naive sensible awareness. Reflection on what sensible awareness actually is will lead to several *ad hoc* modifications of the original analysis; but even those modifications will be found as insufficient to account for our consciousness. Finally, it will become clear that all
consciousness is self-consciousness; then we will have established the need for the transcendental method.

Hegel begins with a kind of knowledge we may want to call naive realism—sense certainty. This knowledge appears to make direct, immediate reference to a particular sensible individual. This kind of sense awareness presents itself as the most certain form of consciousness.

Furthermore, it appears as the most truthful, for it has deleted nothing from the object; rather it has it before itself in its complete perfection.\textsuperscript{51}

There is an unmediated relationship between the knower and the object of knowledge.\textsuperscript{52}

Now the question arises whether acceptance of this view of knowledge will stand scrutiny. What is it that is actually known? In the paradigm for this sense certainty it is claimed that a particular, individual (not universal) object is known. To maintain this particularity it is necessary to refrain even from classifying our object of knowledge. We know a "this."\textsuperscript{53} But what is "this?" Hegel states that any "this" is a "now and here."\textsuperscript{54} Now if we commit a certain temporal truth, e.g., "now is night," to writing, we will find that its truth is sometimes affirmed, but at other times negated. Therefore, there is something which persists through both affirmation and negation, and in which the truth of the particular observation is
grounded. But this, Hegel argues, is in fact a universal.55

The same argument obtains with reference to a "here." Change in location or observation vantage point will remove the immediate presence of something which was "here," but the knowledge of the universal persists. Even the denial of universals is based on their implicit affirmation, and thus Hegel contends that knowledge of sensible particulars actually always involves knowledge of universals. He quips that animals are wiser than some philosophers since the beasts do not concern themselves about sensible particulars and just go ahead and eat them.56

In any event, the fact that sensible truth does persist beyond its sensible conditions allows us to see that "the universal is in fact the truth of sensible certainty."57

Thus, the form of sense certainty gives way to a different form of knowing: perception. Perception is knowing through universals.

Perception receives its entity as universal . . . . For us or in itself the universal is as principle the essence of perception.58

The universal is mediated through a thing of many attributes. But in fact though we may make judgments on the basis of universals, the attributes or properties conveyed to our knowledge by the universals are actually thought to inhere the thing itself.
The universal is localized in a thing. Thus, the thing with its attributes is the center of truthful knowledge. Hegel summarizes what is entailed in the concept of a "thing." It is "a) the indifferent passive universality, the 'also' of many attributes--in other words, it is the originally formless entity in which the attributes inhere; "b) the negation as simple, or as one, the exclusion of opposite attributes"--no thing can be both red and green or even big and small in the same respect at the same time; "c) the many attributes themselves"--each thing is the sum total of innumerable qualities and properties. Thus, we see that the originally very simple and innocuous idea of a "thing" on inspection becomes an extremely complicated one.

At this point of his discussion Hegel begins to introduce a form of the transcendental method, though a very rudimentary one. He argues that our perception of things can be inconsistent. There are no absolute reasons for seeing a thing as large, rough, or round. We can be mistaken or disagree with other perceptions of the same thing. But when that occurs the fault surely does not lie with the thing but with the perceiving consciousness. Thus, consciousness itself is a factor in perception (transcendentally), and we can say that

... the disposition of consciousness
... is thus constituted that it no longer merely perceives but is also
conscious of its reflection into itself and separates this from the simple conception. 60

So far then, in this argument it is recognized that consciousness itself is essential to perception as a self-referential constituent of perception; but this insight is still treated as something to be divorced from the thing.

Consciousness integrates the many attributes which inhere in a thing. Thereby, consciousness begins to experience an oscillation between seeing the thing as one and as a collection of many attributes. In fact, the idea of the "thing" explodes in the face of consciousness. In the same sense in which a thing is a unity, it is a collection of attributes; in the same breath in which it is affirmed that the thing unifies the attributes, it must also be stated that the attributes are not related to each other except insofar as they belong to the thing—therefore, only as they are integrated by consciousness. 61

Thus, the idea of a "thing" as the manifestation of a universal and thereby as the incorporation of the sensible particular disintegrates. Nothing is gained by making a "thing" the object of sensible knowledge, for "the object is rather in one and the same respect the opposite of itself." 62 But then there is no advantage in bringing consciousness into the picture, for whether the perceived thing is inside or outside of consciousness does nothing
to alter its contradictoriness. Hence, perception cannot yield true knowledge, and we must proceed further.

The third form of knowing which Hegel now introduces is "understanding." In a very rough way, we have here a transition from an "Aristotelian" to a "Platonic" epistemology. Whereas in the mode of perception the universal was known as embodied in the thing, Hegel in the understanding introduces an entire super-sensible reality.

Understanding recognizes that there are unconditioned universals which make their appearance through the action of a set of forces. In fact, put more accurately, the force itself is the unconditioned universal. Force (Kraft) determines what sensible reality shall appear; its mode of determination is to be solicited by other parts of reality. But this soliciting reality must itself be due to other forces; therefore, there are many different forces.

But the interplay of forces needs somehow to be regulated. Hence, Hegel describes a kingdom of laws which actually govern the distinctions and appearances of sensible reality. This kingdom of laws is the exact copy of sensible reality, but now in a non-sensible realm.

The question now is how these laws, which are identical to the laws "discovered" by science, can determine appearances and differences in the sensible world.
Hegel's answer is that they cannot. Scientific laws are merely redescriptions of the same event observed naively, but with the kind of logical necessity that makes all events appear tautological. For example, redescribing lightning in terms of a scientific law of electricity does not explain lightning, it merely says tautologically what has been stated as an observation already. These laws do not cause any differences with respect to anything that happens in the sensible world. They are powerless.

What is needed is another super-sensible world which could cause differences in the sensible world. Now it must be remembered that to cause a difference, in Hegel's thought, means to negate or to deny something which is otherwise present. Something is sour, for instance, because sweetness has been negated in it. But then this new super-sensible world, if it is to cause differences within the sensible world, would then have to be the exact negation of the sensible world. It would be a topsy-turvy, an inverted, world. Thus, it can be seen that Hegel's inverted world is not an "extremely queer, arbitrary fantasy,"\textsuperscript{67} as Findlay claims, but a necessary outgrowth of the principles of understanding.\textsuperscript{68} In this world all attributes are the exact reverse of what they are in the sensible world and in the kingdom of laws: Sweet is sour, the north pole is the south pole, etc.\textsuperscript{69}
The inverted world can therefore supply differences in sensible reality.

But even this inverted world cannot account for sensible reality. In order for the kingdom of laws and the inverted world to determine reality, they have to be present together in unity. But that would make the inverted world equally as tautological as the kingdom of laws, for it is then the simple negation of what appears. Therefore, these differences still are no real differences, but only formal ones which are cancelled in the unity. But then neither one nor two super-sensible worlds can help us understand knowledge.

Hegel concludes that we are forced to abandon all notions of super-sensible worlds and the like, and that when we look behind the "curtain" of sensible reality, there is nothing more there than our own integrating consciousness. Therefore, consciousness of the world of appearance becomes consciousness of our own consciousness, viz., self-consciousness. But then we have arrived at the fact of idealism in general and the beginning of Hegel's pure transcendental method in particular.

Thus, by a very circuitous reduction Hegel has argued for the fact that a theory of knowledge cannot be content with sense-certainly, perception, or understanding. It must proceed to the transcendental level of self-consciousness. All consciousness is consciousness of self.
As we saw earlier, this is the principle of idealism which overcame the distinction between the knowing subject and the object. Of course, this distinction is not finally obliterated until we reach the Absolute. This is topic for the last section of this chapter.

4. The Elusive Absolute

The loss of objectivity and the concomitant dissolution of subjectivity are the final result of the striving after absolute knowledge, as Hegel himself has indicated.\textsuperscript{72} We encountered the overcoming of this distinction before, in the discussion of idealism, but this was only a limited overcoming. From a purely formal standpoint, idealism does away with the subject-object distinction, but its content still harbors an opposition between the knower and the known. Thus, idealism still preserved a finite, in some ways objectified, kind of knowledge.\textsuperscript{73}

The culmination of Hegel's system is the point of Absolute Spirit, in which all distinctions are overcome. This is "the idea of philosophy which has self-knowing reason, the absolute universal, for its center."\textsuperscript{74} Here the knowledge of an object is devoid of all polarity, as being, essence, and Concept are all completely unified. W. T. Stace points out that
... this is the same result as we reached at the end of the Logic. But the Absolute Idea as found at the end of the Logic was still abstract to this extent that it was merely a category.  

Our reading of Hegel is that in a sense even the last stage, Absolute Spirit, is still a category. But it is categorial, not abstractly or formally, but because it is the ultimate grounding of all knowledge and science, including all content. This is what was meant by "pure" transcendental philosophy. All knowledge is conditioned by this ultimate "category." This is the reason why in Hegel's philosophy "what is rational is actual, and what is actual is rational," or, more simply, "being is thought." 

All objectifying distinctions are abrogated. What is known, is known through the absolute. 

Being is mediated absolutely: - it is substantial content, which is just as much property of the I, 'selfishly' or of the Concept. 

This is possible because "the separation between knowing and truth is overcome." What we have here is true unity, not merely the temporary conjunction of two opposites. 

It is important to realize that this unity is not derived from an intuition or merely by positing it. That would make Hegel's philosophy no different from the formal absolutist philosophies, which Hegel charges with being like "the night in which all cows are black." Rather,
the absolute must be earned by way of the "seriousness, the pain, the patience and work of the negative." Even when the absolute has been attained, the negative is still present in its memory. Hegel invokes the imagery of the resurrection of the absolute after the "Calvary" of the long process of arriving at Absolute Spirit.

Strictly speaking, the absolute is never "attained." Through a reductive argument, philosophy may transcendentally arrive at the absolute, but then it is seen that it can once again be bifurcated into nature and Spirit, where nature gives rise to objectivity and Spirit to subjectivity, and we re-enter the never-ending circle of the system. In other words, the absolute is not "had" in itself, but is always only seen in movement as it is manifested through its content. And the content will give rise to the same old distinction of subject and object. This does not mean that the absolute is not absolute after all. What it does show us is that the absolute is a transcendental "category," which cannot be divorced from any of its manners of appearance. This circular approach is what makes Hegel's system a "pure" transcendental philosophy.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III


2. Ibid., p. 238.


6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 182. I am following the traditional custom of capitalizing words such as "Concept," "Spirit," "Absolute," etc. when the context indicates that the words are used in an ultimate sense.

10. Ibid.

12 PG, 175, 176.

13 PG, 176.

14 PG, 177.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Logik, p. 182.

20 PG, 178. It appears that Hegel had the philosophy of George Berkeley in mind here.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 PG, 179.

24 Ibid.

25 PG, 180.

26 PG, 181.

27 Logik, 182; PG, 181.

28 PG, 63. Cf. the commentary by Martin Heidegger,

29 PG, 69.

30 PG, 63.

31 Ibid.


33 PG, 64.

34 Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 120. Engl. in Dove, p. 31.

35 Ibid.

36 PG, 65.

37 Ibid.

38 PG, 66.

39 Ibid.

40 PG, 67.


42 Cf. e.g., "The Formalization of Hegel's Dialectical

43PG, 68.

44PG, 73.

45After all, Dove himself translated this section for Heidegger's Hegel's Concept of Experience, p. 23. The point is that Hegel's dialectic, as has become almost synonymous with the word, "dialectic," is no formal, logical scheme of thesis - antithesis - synthesis. Cf. my note 40 to Chapter I of this study.

46PG, 73.

47PG, 70.

48PG, 70, 71.

49PG, 71.

50PG, 72.


52PG, 80.

53Ibid.

54PG, 81.
55PG, 82.

56PG, 87.

57PG, 82.

58PG, 89.

59PG, 92.

60PG, 92-95. Quote on p. 95.

61PG, 96-99.


63PG, 105.

64PG, 108ff.

65PG, 115.

66PG, 118-121.

67Findlay, op. cit., p. 94.


69PG, 121ff.

70PG, 122-125.
71\textsuperscript{PG}, 128-9.

72\textsuperscript{PG}, 32.

73\textsuperscript{Logik}, 183.

74\textsuperscript{Enc.} 499.


77\textsuperscript{PG}, 45.

78\textsuperscript{PG}, 32-3.

79\textsuperscript{PG}, 32.

80\textsuperscript{PG}, 34.

81\textsuperscript{PG}, 19.

82\textsuperscript{PG}, 20.

83\textsuperscript{PG}, 564.

84\textsuperscript{Enz.} 499.
CHAPTER IV

COMMON PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES OF

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Having become acquainted with the transcendental method and its use by Rahner and Hegel, we will begin to relate the two thinkers. This chapter will deal with Rahner and Hegel on the level of philosophy: the next two chapters will treat the topics of anthropology and Christology, respectively.

Karl Rahner is not a Hegelian theologian, as e.g., F. C. Baur was. It should be clear from the second chapter of this study that Rahner's philosophy is, in so far as it is not original, for the most part based on the thought of Maréchal, Kant, and, above all, Aquinas. Thus, there is no point in attempting to align Rahner with any one thinker as the one who is decisive for his philosophy. Ultimately, that honor must remain with Rahner himself. Nor are we concerned with showing that Rahner at some point deliberately borrowed or adopted ideas from Hegel. Rather, we shall try to depict the way in which Rahner, in treating his own philosophical problems, in several crucial areas has developed arguments with conclusions which are quite like Hegel's. Thus, this chapter will be drawn up as a study in how these two thinkers attacked
similar problems in similar ways.

Kaufmann has shown in a somewhat different context how easily one can slip into a post hoc argument in discussing philosophical influences.¹ Thus, it must be with caution, when we assert that Hegel had some influence on Rahner, if we do so at all. The crux of this chapter is not that Rahner learned his ideas from Hegel, but that Rahner's arguments frequently follow Hegel's very closely. Still, all talk of influence cannot be dismissed. Rahner himself, at least on one occasion, flourished his familiarity with Hegel, and pointed out some equivalence with parts of Thomism.² Baker has argued that Rahner very definitely shared the German philosophical heritage, particularly of German idealism.³ In that case it would be inevitable for Hegel at least to be a background source for some of Rahner's ideas. That this is so is maintained by Sheehan who states that "... one senses that Hegel is never too far away from Rahner's terms and ideas."⁴

But we shall forego further historical speculation and concentrate on philosophical issues. This chapter will take three areas and show how in each one of them Rahner solved a philosophical problem by following a Hegel-like approach over other possible approaches. These three areas are:
1. The scope of the transcendental method. Using a statement made by Rahner himself, we will show how Rahner's philosophy follows the general plan of Hegel's *Phenomenology* with the threefold division of consciousness—self-consciousness—reason (Absolute Spirit). Both thinkers find sensible knowledge legitimated by the turn of the subject into himself (*reditio in seipsum*), but ultimately rely on the absolute as guaranteeing all knowledge.

2. The knowability of being. Both Rahner and Hegel go beyond Kant in asserting that all being is knowable (perhaps misrepresenting Kant in the process). They hold that all knowledge is certain; but they also both agree that complete absolute knowledge is attainable only on the absolute level, not on that of the finite subject.

3. The knowledge of an "other." Rahner follows Hegel very closely with the theory that the subject constitutes himself through the "other."

1. The Scope of the Transcendental Method

In its most basic form, the transcendental method asks for those conditions or constituents of knowledge which make any knowledge at all possible. These conditions we saw earlier, have to be *a priori* and themselves not subject to the questioning after their own certitude. They are the guarantors of knowledge.
Thus, the transcendental method is not only a way of searching for the possibility of knowledge, but even more a means of deriving the certitude of knowledge. Kant himself saw his philosophy as an attempt to provide criticism, and consequently greater certitude, to the area of metaphysical knowledge. The first philosophical problem that we want to deal with, then, is how and to what extent the transcendental method in Hegel and Rahner provides for epistemological and metaphysical certitude.

One of the goals of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to argue for the possibility of absolute knowledge. This is completely self-reflective indubitable knowledge. Knowledge of this kind is attained through the idealism of Hegel's "pure" transcendental method, where the ultimate "category" is Absolute Spirit. This absolute point is reached by Hegel after a long reductive argument in which negation of successively reached stages of knowledge slowly progress toward absolute knowledge.

This approach, carrying the transcendental reduction all the way back to the absolute, is shared by Rahner. In many ways, as will be described presently, his understanding of the quest for truth and certitude reflects that of Hegel. Rahner himself introduced a lecture on Thomistic epistemology by saying,

The reflections that we are going to make can be grouped into three equal parts. In Thomistic terms, these are: the judgment; the light of the agent
intellect; God, pure being, pure thought. And if we adopt Hegelian terminology corresponding to the three parts of his Phenomenology of Spirit, we would have: consciousness (Bewusstsein); self-consciousness (Selbstbewusstsein); absolute Spirit. We will now investigate how it is possible to draw up these three parallels.

(a) Judgment and Consciousness

First, Hegel and Rahner agree on the inadequacy of a naive realism and the insufficiency of an epistemology based on the simple abstraction of a universal.

Hegel began his Phenomenology by rejecting the self-evident certitude of immediate sense-awareness. This is also a foundational truth for Rahner. Rahner, much like Hegel, argues that sense-awareness which does not transcend the sensible particular in some way is inadequate for knowledge. What is necessary for real knowledge is for the intellect to recognize the universal which goes into the constitution of the essence. Thus, Rahner echoes Hegel's view (perception) that the individual sensible object is known only through its universals. This is the essence of Rahner's conversio ad phantasma: "Conversio is just the act of referring a universal to a 'this-here'." Specifically, this is Rahner's "affirmative synthesis," where the intellect judges a universal to be localized in a certain particular (derived
from the "concretizing synthesis".\textsuperscript{12} We see then that just as Hegel insists that knowledge is primarily of universals,\textsuperscript{13} so Rahner asserts that it is a Thomistic principle that the intellect knows only universals.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, both Rahner and Hegel reject sensible immediacy.

In both cases, the reason for this rejection is the same. Sensible immediacy cannot yield truth. It is not possible to have truth without affirmation. As soon as an affirmation is made, the perceived object is the object of a judgment which must consist of applying a universal.\textsuperscript{15}

But, of course, Hegel is not satisfied with this theory of perception, and neither is Rahner. Such a theory, if left simply as it stands, would be a return to the camera-image model we saw Rahner dismiss earlier. In that model we would have a thing with attributes reflected into the perceiver. The reflected image would then be the knowable aspect of that thing—the universal.

Rahner and Hegel do follow different paths in arguing against this model, but their underlying reasons are identical. For Hegel, as we have seen, the argument rests on the impossibility of attaining a reconciliation between the thing in its unity and its attributes in their plurality.\textsuperscript{16} Rahner, on the other hand, will not allow for the epistemology of perception because it presupposes a kind of "objectivity" which simply cannot be
had. For him, the subject is always already inextricably involved with the object which he perceives. There is no confrontation between the knowing subject on the one side, and the known object on the other side. 17 Man is already immersed in being and the entities which he knows. Hence, there is no absolute starting point, and hence knowledge of an object cannot simply consist of the subject's abstracting a universal from the object with which he is presented. Thereby, Rahner has taken the crucial step towards a transcendental methodology, and such is of course also Hegel's plan. For, just as Rahner argues that knowledge must thus find itself originating with the subject, so Hegel closes his discussion of perception with the observation that the (provisional) unity of a perceived thing with its attributes is the result of the perceiving consciousness. 18 (Still, we know that as yet this unity supplied by consciousness is not helpful in that it only evade the question of how to reconcile the unity and multiplicity within the thing itself.)

Following Hegel's side of the question, we see that the next step in his argument was an attempt to locate the objects of knowledge in a super-sensible world of the understanding, completely apart from the "thing." This led him to posit the forces which solicit each other in order to provide knowledge according to a kingdom of laws. This kingdom of laws, because of its tautological
character, gave way to the inverted world, the direct opposite of the normal world. The idea was that a world which negates the present one in every respect would be able to account for differences (as every difference is a negation of other possible alternatives). But the inverted world was also a tautological negation of the normal world, and thus also lacked the possibility of explaining real differences within the world. Hence, we get Hegel's conclusion to his discussion of the understanding: There is nothing to be seen behind the "curtain" of our understanding unless we ourselves go behind it. 19 In other words, the most foundational aspect of knowledge is our own consciousness.

Therefore, despite the apparently insurmountable difference between Rahner's and Hegel's arguments, it turns out that actually they are engaged in the same project: They dispense with "objective" epistemologies for the sake of epistemologies in which the subject plays a part. First of all, in following the tradition of Kant, this role takes the form of a judgment. Truth is not known merely by absorption of external data, but by the subject's making a judgment on those data, even as rudimentary a one as writing down the words, "Now it is night." 20 In this way both thinkers are laying the groundwork for the transcendental method. No elaborate attempt has been made yet to construct an epistemology
beyond this level of consciousness, but we have this provisional conclusion: Knowledge is more than a confrontation of a subject and an object; the subject himself is involved in the known object. For Rahner, following the Kantian tradition, the subject acts through a judgment (which is also of course true for Aquinas) made on the object to which it is united. In Hegel, the very fact that we can affirm an object of knowledge (another judgment!) leads circuitously to the conclusion that our own consciousness constitutes the objects of knowledge. Both theories need to be amplified, but we can clearly see that they share this common goal of subjectivity.

One more observation needs to be made at this stage. Even though Rahner and Hegel both reject the naive epistemologies of perception and understanding, this does not mean that they are eliminated from their own theories in toto. It is not that Hegel says that there is actually no such thing as consciousness. Rather, he argues that consciousness can only properly be understood as self-consciousness. Similarly, Rahner does not do away with all empirical knowledge along the line of perception. But he rejects naive perception as it stands because it is mistaken in its premises. Hegel, of course, retains the "thing," even the "thing-in-itself," and for Rahner the sensible phantasm remains of utmost importance.
(b) Self-Consciousness and the Light of the Agent Intellect

The second pair of similar notions which Rahner has given us aligns Hegel's self-consciousness with Rahner's light of the agent intellect. The key to understanding this similarity is found in Rahner's idea of *aversio*--the turn away from the object of perception.

We have the same situation here in this section as in the previous one: At first sight the detailed treatments of the basic idea by the two thinkers are so very different that they do not seem to have much in common. But once again the motivation is the same. The *aversio*, the turn away from the object, is simultaneously the *reditio in se ipsum*, the return into the subject himself. And this is what both Rahner and Hegel are arguing for--that the object of knowledge is constituted by the subject.

Hegel treats this topic under the heading of "self-consciousness." Consciousness brought with itself the realization that knowledge is unified and integrated by our consciousness itself, and that, therefore, knowledge is always self-consciousness. If no differentiated knowledge is possible except within the consciousness of the subject himself, then all knowledge by the subject has to be ultimately knowledge of himself. 22 But this does not mean that knowledge will be permanently caught
up in subjectivity. Self-consciousness must give way to reason, eventually. On its way it passes through several stages. Hegel lists three of these in the Encyclopedia.\textsuperscript{23}

Self-consciousness begins with desire (Begierde), the attempt by the subject to completely assimilate the object into himself.\textsuperscript{24} This would mean that the subject builds himself via the object. Therefore, it can be said that the subject needs the object.\textsuperscript{25} But then not only would the object be given independent status again, for it would stand apart from the subject as meeting his need, it would even appear as another subject in opposition to the first subject because the object itself, taking advantage of the subject's need, will now attempt to gain ascendancy over the subject. And the original subject becomes aware of this process, thus recognizing the existence of other free subjects outside of himself.\textsuperscript{26} This is the second stage of self-consciousness: \textit{recognitive} self-consciousness. Now we have several subjects, originally on equal footing, but now each engaged in a "life and death struggle" to turn the others into his objects, thereby establishing a master-slave relationship. But this phase cannot last forever. The master becomes dependent on the slave; the slave finds self-fulfillment through his service; and a new parity is established. When every subject is recognized as free, we are at the
third stage: universal self-consciousness. Here we are given a picture of all inclusiveness. In universal self-consciousness, the difference between individuals becomes unimportant, and thus unreal, and we enter on the plane of reason, the next step toward Absolute Spirit.

What has Hegel accomplished with this awkward and improbable-sounding argument? Two things: First, self-consciousness is still present, but it is expanded to universal proportions where it becomes the background of reason. Second, precisely because of this all-inclusiveness of self-consciousness, the reality and integrity of the object of knowledge is guaranteed. There is no mysterious and unknowable thing-in-itself beyond the reach of the subject. All things are encompassed in the universal self-consciousness of reason.

Rahner, of course, does not share Hegel's pure transcendental method. We have described his method as mixed.\textsuperscript{27} This means that he does not follow Hegel in the complete idealism he proposes, but retains a Thomistic empiricism. But he also uses the turn into the subject as a way of ultimately keeping knowledge away from pure subjectivity.

To be sure, Rahner's epistemology is definitely one of subjectivity, in the sense that the subject is always at the center of knowledge.\textsuperscript{28} This is already clear at the first "stage" in the complex act of knowledge. We may
remember that for Rahner knowledge does not begin with a subject and an object in opposition to each other, leading to the necessity of "bridging the gap" between the two. Rather, knowledge begins with the unity of subject and object: the knower is identical with the known. The first inkling of the "otherness" of the object comes subsequently on the basis of sensibility. But it is in turning away from the sensible phantasm and into the subject that actual being can be seen in the known object.

Actually, for Rahner, *aversio* is already taking place at the level which superficially corresponds to Hegel's perception: the recognition of the universal in the particular thing, the affirmative synthesis. But, as we said in the previous section, a simple kind of prescinding of a universal from an object is rejected by Rahner. The point of the affirmative synthesis is that it reaches into the subject where the object is found, not out to an object from which it abstracts something. The affirmative synthesis proceeds via the *Vorgriff* which negatively recognizes the object to have certain limitations (i.e., the embodiment of universals) and no others. Thereby, the *Vorgriff* endows the object with its actuality in knowledge.

Once again, then, we have two very different arguments. There is no question here of Rahner merely
borrowing an argument from Hegel. But there are points of contact. For both of them the knowing subject supplies the categories of judgment on an object of knowledge, but in such a way that the knower and the known become identical, and the knowledge of an object turns into knowledge of the subject. But then both thinkers make this very turn into subjectivity the way to overcome subjectivity. It is one and the same subjectivity which first centers all knowledge within the subject himself and then provides the basis for recognition of the independence of the object. Rahner himself equated Hegel's *Begierde* with the agent intellect because the purpose of both of these faculties is to enable the subject to make the object his own. But the light of the agent intellect, the nexus of first principles in the subject, comes to be similar to the universal consciousness, for they both overcome individual subjectivity and they both establish the actuality of being.

(c) God, Pure Being, Pure

Thought and Absolute Spirit

The progression of the previous two sections now leads up to this third parallel given by Rahner. For neither Hegel nor Rahner does the transcendental method stop with the subject and the subsequent establishment of the object, but both now go one step further back to the absolute. Rahner asserts,
For man truth is only in the judgment. The judgment supposes abstraction and self-consciousness. Both are possible only because of the transcendental a priori of spirit, which opens on the horizon of being as such.  

Strictly speaking, the third part of the *Phenomenology* is, of course, not entitled "Absolute Spirit" (as Rahner refers to it in the passage we have used for our starting point), but "Reason." But this poses no real problem as reason leads to its final stage in Absolute Spirit, which Hegel himself still subsumes under the rubric of "Reason."

We saw that for Rahner the absolute is invoked as the outcome of the function of the *Vorgriff*. The *Vorgriff* scans, as it were, the entity present to it and recognizes that out of the infinite number of possibilities, this object is delimited with only one particular set of universals. For example, the intellect might be presented with an object which the *Vorgriff* recognizes as being of a certain size (big, rather than small), round (rather than square or rectangular or triangular, etc.), brown (rather than green, blue, red, etc.), and so forth, to the point of accurately recognizing the object's particularity in distinction from all the other possibilities. But to accomplish this task, the *Vorgriff* must be able transcendently to take recourse to being without any limitations—otherwise it could not recognize
in what way any particular being is limited. Thus, the Vorgriff penetrates back to absolute Being as the condition for all knowledge.\textsuperscript{36}

For Hegel, Absolute Spirit is the outcome of the long, circuitous route travelled by reason. In the conclusion of the Phenomenology, Spirit manifests itself as absolute knowledge.

In knowledge, spirit has completed the process of its formation insofar as the process was burdened with the distinction of consciousness that has [at last] been overcome. Spirit has gained the pure element of its existence: the concept. The content, in accordance with the freedom of its being, is the self-divesting self, i.e., the immediate unity of self-knowledge.\textsuperscript{37}

In the Encyclopedia, Absolute Spirit culminates in reason which is in complete possession of itself.

In both Rahner's and Hegel's transcendental methods, then, we go back all the way to the absolute in our quest for true knowledge. The certitude which is sought for by way of the transcendental approach is guaranteed by the absolute as the ultimate "constituent" of all knowledge. Of course, this does not mean that, therefore, the absolute is included as object in every act of knowledge. Thus, we see how Rahner and Hegel approach one problem very similarly. The issue is the scope of the transcendental method with regard to the certitude it supplies. The details of their arguments
are very dissimilar, but the underlying rationale of
their reasonings is the same. To summarize:

(a) Truth can be had only through a judgment.
To make a judgment, knowledge must be of universals. But
naive "objective" epistemologies which simply abstract
the universal from the object are inadequate because the
subject is always inextricably involved with the object.

(b) Paradoxically, as the subject turns into
himself, the actual being of the object is established.

(c) The absolute stands as the ultimate trans-
scendental condition behind all knowledge.

2. The Knowability of Being

This section will recapitulate some points
touched on in the previous section in order to explicate
a theme which definitely allies Rahner and Hegel in
opposition to other possible philosophical positions.
The theme, we will see, is that being is knowable. The
question to bring us to that point is: How and to what
extent is it possible to know being?

There are many possible ways to answer this
question. One is skepticism: being cannot be known, or
can be known imperfectly at best. Another way is with
Maritain and Gilson to affirm an intuition, a direct
immediate acquaintance with being. Yet another way is
to follow Descartes (whose subject may be said to be
consciousness) in relying on the trustworthiness of the mind, guaranteed by a God Who is no deceiver, for clear and distinct (therefore: indubitable) knowledge of being.\textsuperscript{39} But of course Rahner and Hegel (whose subject is the self) chose a transcendental approach.

We can recognize two different solutions to the question of the knowability of being from the transcendental side. On the one hand, there is Kant's critical approach. This approach justifies knowledge of being in its empirical manifestations, but then calls a halt to any further attempt by reason to penetrate into a metaphysics of being--it can only become entangled in a series of irreconcilable antinomies. Specifically, the thing-in-itself, whatever that might be, is unknowable. This presented no great problem for Kant. His goal was to justify present knowledge, not to invent new kinds, and before Kant no one talked of knowledge of things-in-themselves. There was no need for him to justify knowledge of something we do not know to begin with. Kant left no doubt that the knowledge provided through the categories applies directly to the object of knowledge, not merely to the intellectual recognition thereof. Hence, the much-bemoaned loss of knowledge of a thing-in-itself did not lead to skepticism about our knowledge of the thing, and is, in fact, inconsequential for Kantian philosophy. A major result, however (and this is the
point where Kant has been accused of skepticism), is the elimination of any further metaphysics.\textsuperscript{40}

The second approach, the one shared by Rahner and Hegel, is to use the transcendental method, but in such a way as to leave the possibility of a complete knowledge of being including a metaphysics of being (placed, of course, in the context of idealism for Hegel\textsuperscript{41}). Those who take this approach will label Kant's philosophy as "skeptical," on the ground that it forbids an "absolute" knowledge. This was the point made by Hegel in his introduction to the Phenomenology.\textsuperscript{42} As long as it is argued that Kant's categories interfere with true knowledge as a distortive medium through which the objects of knowledge are perceived, the inevitable conclusion is that the critical philosophy is skeptical.

Thomists have of course long subjected Kant to criticism for his alleged skepticism, and these critiques have persisted into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{43} And Rahner's forerunner, Joseph Maréchal, based his transcendental Thomism on the double premise that Kant's philosophy as it stands is skeptical, but that with some basic modifications the skepticism can be avoided--being can be known.\textsuperscript{44} With an argument resembling more an affirmation than a transcendental reduction,\textsuperscript{45} he held that the basic relation of identity demands the positing of being as implicit in all knowledge. Rahner's argument is far more
complicated and subtle, but he inherited from Maréchal the belief that the transcendental reduction must lead to its ground in the true knowledge of being, not to skepticism.

Thus, both Rahner and Hegel share the belief that being can be known. For neither thinker is there an in-principle-unknowable area. Such a bald statement must quickly receive the qualification that this does not mean that any human subject is omniscient. That is true for neither Rahner nor Hegel. But the fact that knowledge is limited also does not mean that the problem lies with knowledge. Insofar as any subject knows something, he knows it "absolutely." "Non-absolute knowledge" is something like an "almost-round" circle. But the knowledge by the individual human subject is limited; its scope is not universal.

Rahner explains this fact with his analogy of having-being. Any entity is knowable insofar as it possesses being and to the degree that the intellect knowing that it is Spirit. Thus, knowability is related to the hierarchy of degrees of "lucidity" (Gelichtetheit) to which an entity can lay claim. God, Who is pure Spirit, is capable of knowing all entities exhaustively.

Hegel's very program does not permit universal knowledge by the individual. All lofty transcendental arguments notwithstanding, the individual subject always
finds himself on the level of subjective spirit. Only after the individual has become sublimated in objective spirit (society and state) can spirit proceed to the level of the absolute where knowledge is universal reflection into itself. This is one of the chief points which Hegel makes in opposition to Schelling and his followers.\textsuperscript{47} Absolute truth is not given intuitively, and we cannot take refuge in a philosophy in which everything can immediately be seen in terms of the absolute. Hegel chides this kind of philosophy:

To study anything as it is in the absolute here means merely that one says of it: to be sure, it has just been spoken of as something, but in the absolute, the $A = A$, there is nothing of the sort, for in the absolute everything is one. To pit this one piece of information, that in the absolute all is one, against all the distinctions of knowledge, both attained knowledge and the search and demand for knowledge—or to pass of one's absolute as the night in which, as one says, all cows are black—that is the naïveté of the emptiness of knowledge.\textsuperscript{48}

In short, the content of knowledge would be an undifferentiated tissue of absolutist thoughts which really do not express anything.\textsuperscript{49} What is necessary is the "seriousness, the pain, the patience and the work of the negative"\textsuperscript{50} which sees the absolute as being worked out throughout a series of stages. The absolute level of knowledge is not simply to be had for the asking, but must first have passed through its "Calvary."\textsuperscript{51}
Thus, we see Rahner and Hegel making use of two very similar ideas. First, both maintain that in principle--and on the absolute level--there is no such a thing as unknowability. Second, they both subscribe to a hierarchy of lucidity which prevents omniscience on the part of the individual subject. This second point allies Rahner and Hegel on a very important issue, one in which they stand together against many ancient and modern philosophies, e.g., against mysticism in various forms. Although both agree that philosophy strives for the absolute, they also prohibit it from beginning with the absolute as starting point. Rahner begins with the phantasm; the Phenomenology commences with sense certainty. Thus, they both raise their voices against any philosophy in the Neo-Platonic tradition which allows for an immediate intuition of the Absolute. Nevertheless, whatever knowledge there is, is absolute knowledge.

3. Knowledge of an Other

The third theme we want to look at is a very interesting link between Rahner and Hegel: the relationship of the subject to an "other." Some of this has already been described in the context of the first section which dealt to a great extent with the relation of the subject to the object. But now we want to zero in on one particular facet of this relation: the self-constitution
of the subject by means of the "other." This theme will become of paramount importance in Rahner's Christology.

Our discussion here can take its cue from this statement by Rahner, which is intended, not as an argument, but as a summary of his position:

If, according to the most basic starting point of Thomistic metaphysics of knowledge, only the knower himself is recognized as objectum proprium [proper object of knowledge], and there still is knowledge in which the objectum proprium is the other, then both of these points are simultaneously understandable only through the fact that the knower is himself the other.\textsuperscript{52}

We have seen that Rahner initiated his inquiry after being with man's existential situation.\textsuperscript{53} Only as man is in the world already can he begin to even raise the question of his own being, let alone being in general. Thus, the being of the world—supposedly "external" to himself—takes on the role of unveiling to the subject his own being—supposedly "internal." The mediation of the "other" is not only one factor, it is essential to the subject himself. If the knower is the "other," then it follows that whatever the subject may be, his being is the object which he knows. Thus, the subject actually constitutes himself by way of himself as the "other." This notion stems from an epistemological discussion, but the consequences carry over into metaphysics. Entities do not stand alone, severed from all other entities by a
principle of separation or non-being (a "chasm" between subject and object). Rather, all entities are immersed together in a world of mutual being (ens—common being). It is only after confrontation with the ens in the form of an "other," incorporated into himself, that the subject can find his own ens. In fact, this is the very foundation of Rahner's metaphysics.

All this is naturally very similar to the workings of Hegel's philosophy, the "dialectic." Already in the preface to the Phenomenology, Hegel maintained that philosophical progress is only possible through the work of the negative. This means that only the introduction of something other, something alien, can further the development of the subject we started with. In the Logic, we learn that this other is not externally introduced as an antithesis to an already existing thesis. Rather, we find a progressive development where our starting category actually becomes its opposite on closer inspection. For example, being itself becomes nothingness. The subject becomes the other.

This idea was also confirmed when we considered self-consciousness in Hegel. It was the task of Begierde to take over the object and to possess it so completely that it would have no reality apart from the self which owns it. But precisely this identification of the
subject with the other led to the establishment of the subject in reason, and the object as free and real.

We see Rahner, then, making use of a notion very much like one which Hegel also uses. It is true that already Aristotle and Aquinas spoke of the unity of the known phantasm with the knowing intellect. But for them the starting point of knowledge was not the union of subject and object, as it is for Rahner. For them, it was a subsequent result of the act of the intellect. Yet, Rahner boldly states that knowledge begins with the situation where the knower is the known, where the subject becomes himself through the other. Here he uses an approach more related to Hegel than to Aquinas.

We have now seen three areas in which Rahner's arguments are like Hegel's: the scope of the transcendental method, the knowability of being, the place of the other in the subject. That these areas of contact are significant similarities and not merely external resemblances may become clearer when we now see this philosophy applied in anthropology and Christology.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


2. Karl Rahner, "Aquinas: The Nature of Truth," Continuum, II (1964), 60-72. This is a translation by Andrew Tallon from the Portuguese. The German original is lost.


9. See the first chapter of PG, pp. 79-89.


11. GW, 132.

12. GW, 134-137.

14GW, 200, cf. 133.


16PG, 97.

17GW, 88.


19PG, 129.

20PG, 81.


23Enz., 349-354, #'s 424-437. I am going to emphasize the presentation of self-consciousness as given in the Encyclopedia since for purposes of this discussion conciseness is more helpful than an exhaustive presentation of the treatment the topic receives in the Phenomenology.

24Hegel's language here is very anthropomorphic, almost mythical. This can be explained at least partially by the fact that he is building a transition here from "pure" epistemology to a more concrete discussion of man and society.


Following Hartmann, *op. cit.*

Cf. the title of Sheehan's work, *op. cit.*

*GW*, 88.

*GW*, 92.


To be sure, Hegel does not establish a realism, but an idealism. But because this is a pure transcendental idealism which encompasses the content of knowledge as well as the formal structures, on the transcendental level being is real. Cf. Emerich Coreth, *Das dialektische Sein in Hegels Logik* (Vienna, 1952), passim.

Rahner, "Truth," p. 70.


*GW*, 153.

*GW*, 175, 393.

*PG*, 561-562.


Cf. Kant's method and intentions as given to us in his Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, in Kant's gesammelte Schriften, ed. by the Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911), Vol. IV.


PG, 63-75.


This is the methodology passim of Joseph Maréchal, S.J., Le Point de Départ de la Metaphysique, cahier V, Le Thomisme devant la Philosophie critique (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949).

Ibid., pp. 92-97.


See esp. PG, 9-75.


PG, 41.

PG, 20.

PG, 564.

GW, 92.

GW, 75-78.

PG, 20.


57 Enz., #428.

58 See Aquinas, De Veritate, Q. VIII, a. vii, ad 2.
CHAPTER V

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ANTHROPOLOGY IN RAHRER AND HEGEL

This chapter will carry on directly from the preceding one in tracing points of contact between Hegel and Rahner. Once again we are not out to prove historical dependence of Rahner on Hegel (though we cannot help but surmise that there must have been some), but we want to show how Rahner and Hegel approached a topic in a very similar way. Now the topic before us is anthropology—"Who is man?" Only after this question has been answered satisfactorily, is it possible for us to proceed to Christology in the next chapter.

It could be said that to single out anthropology as a special topic of consideration is an artificial severing of something which is integral to the totality of both of these thinkers' ideas. In fact, it is true that Rahner's chief contribution to theology lies in the transcendental anthropology which he drew up, and which is the unifying theme of his thought. In a transcendental system man is never merely one topic among others, but must always stand at a pivotal point which ties the whole system together. Nevertheless, even if man is seen as the unifying concept of a philosophy or theology, it still
makes sense to ask specifically who this "man" is who carries out this crucial function. What are his characteristics, and how does he relate to other entities and the absolute?

Looking back, it is fair to say that we have already done much "spade-work" toward the topic of anthropology when we dealt with those issues which seemed to be merely epistemological. For, there were two important points integral to that discussion: first, that in knowledge the human subject does not merely receive information, but experiences unity of his being with the being of the world around him; second, that behind all knowledge stands the absolute. These ideas are crucial for anthropology, and from them and their context we can now draw further implications about the nature of man.

Looking forward, we can say that we are already, except for some terminology, squarely in the middle of a theological discussion. Rahner asserts, "Dogmatic theology today has to be theological anthropology." This is in line with the observation we made earlier, viz., that anthropology is the key to all of Rahner's thinking. As he states,

The interpretation of dogmatic theology as transcendental anthropology does . . . demand that every theological question be considered from a transcendental point of view.

Similarly, Hegel completely endorsed the following assertion
by his disciple, C. F. Göschel:

The question, 'what is man?' stands in such interchangeability with the question, 'what is God?' that the answer to the one would also be the answer to the other, for actually in neither case are we asking anything except, 'what is God in relation to man?', 'what is man in relation to God?'.

Hegel adds to this assertion his own commentary:

A very important sentence, which is not accepted by those who only want to point out and recognize the relation of man to God, and thereby maintain that one cannot know anything of God.

We see then that both Rahner and Hegel see anthropology and theology as correlative. For our purposes here, we must recognize that in both thinkers talk of man cannot be severed from talk of God and vice versa.

Let us then proceed towards an answer to the question, "who is man?". Once again we are going to find an assortment of points of agreement and disagreement among Rahner and Hegel. But there is one outstanding feature in the anthropology of both men, and that is the place which man occupies in their thought. We already said that man is central to both Rahner and Hegel; but this centrality lies in the fact that man is the link between God and the material world. Where spirit and matter come together, at the interface of Deity and materiality, there man is found for both Rahner and Hegel. We will now develop this concept in greater detail.
This chapter will be divided into four sections as follows:

1. A description of the basic nature of man in Rahner and Hegel. This section has two parts.

   (a) Man in Hegel stands at the transition between nature and spirit. Of the three parts of Hegel's system, as given in the Encyclopedia, man is the link between the second and the third, the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit. Man himself is depicted as progressing from a predominantly physical being (natural soul) to free spirit.

   (b) Rahner expresses the essence of man with the term, "potentia obedientialis," the basic openness of man to God. Seen epistemologically, this can be accounted for by the Vorgriff, the fact that in each intellectual judgment knowledge of God is already implicitly included. Rahner reconciles a possible contradiction between this openness of man's nature and the need for grace (so that man may know God) with his doctrine of the supernatural existential of man, to be explained in this section.

2. In both thinkers man as spirit occupies a similar position in relation to the absolute. But Rahner raises the problem if Hegel does not mean something very different because Hegel wants to surpass revelation while Rahner wants to lead up to it. It is acknowledged that there are some divergences between the two, but that these
do not detract from the basic similarities.

3. The doctrine of man is placed by Rahner into the context of an evolutionary theory. We find similarities to Hegel in the ideas of a progression (towards the absolute) by means of self-negation, and of man as spirit emerging from matter.

4. One of the most important aspects of spirit in both thinkers is freedom. Three thoughts are shared with regard to the freedom of spirit:

(a) Freedom means independence of an "other."
(b) Freedom means self-enactment of the subject.
(c) The freedom of the individual man is finite, as his spirituality is finite. Absolute freedom would be pure negation, which is nothing but destructive terror. Freedom is found absolutely only in the absolute, where it is balanced between destruction and construction.

1. Basic Features of Man in Rahner and Hegel

First, it is necessary for us to take a look at Hegel's and Rahner's anthropologies within the contexts of their respective systems. Thus, this section will delineate the place, function, and characteristics of man for Rahner and Hegel. The next sections will then draw
ramifications from these observations. But the task at hand is now to give a preliminary answer to the question: "Who is man?" This is best accomplished by beginning to look at Hegel's and Rahner's conceptions separately.

(a) Man in Hegel

Hegel's most explicit teaching on man is found in the third section of the Encyclopedia, the philosophy of spirit. Right away we have to make a terminological qualification in order to do justice to Hegel. He has here a specific section entitled "anthropology" as a subsection to "subjective spirit." But for Hegel "anthropology" is a far less inclusive term than for us. We take "anthropology" to refer to the comprehensive study of man, his nature and attributes. When thus understood, "anthropology" is equivalent to the entire study of subjective spirit.

Hegel's system, like Gaul, is divided into three parts. The first part is the "Logic," the study of the pure Idea. In the Science of Logic, Hegel describes this project as the "representation of God, as He is in His eternal essence before the creation of nature and of finite spirit." But in creation, this pure spirituality gives way to materiality. In the second part of the system, the philosophy of nature, the Idea externalizes itself and is then expressed in purely material terms: mechanics,
physics, and organics. Now the third part of the
system is intended to present a reconciliation of the
first two. Neither spirit nor matter may be eliminated
at the other's expense, but both must be sublimated\textsuperscript{15} in
such a way as to bring them into a proper relationship.
What is needed is a transition from the material to a
renewed understanding of the spiritual. But this time
the spiritual must be seen, not before creation, but in,
through, and beyond creation.\textsuperscript{16}

This transition is provided by man. At the outset
of the philosophy of spirit we encounter Hegel's des-
cription of man.\textsuperscript{17} This description is given in three
divisions, each of which again is tripartite. The first
division is that which Hegel calls "anthropology." Here
we see man as he arises out of the philosophy of nature,
a sentient material being with an immaterial soul. But at
first this immaterial soul only serves to experience the
physical functions of man and to be receptive to those of
man's activities which he shares with the animals. This
is the "natural" soul. But in the next step, the "feeling"
soul takes on some self-recognition. Along with this
comes the step toward influencing the body by emotion.
But full coherence of the body-soul relationship does not
occur until the "actual" soul is reached, a soul which is
sensitive to the body, but firmly governs it.\textsuperscript{18}

The establishment of a self-conscious rational soul
now leads Hegel temporarily to turn away from the
material and to consider the activities of the soul by
themselves. This is the phenomenology of spirit with its
three well-known stages of consciousness, self-consciousness
and reason.\textsuperscript{19} It is with reason that the freedom and
spirituality of man is attained, and thus the third part
of subjective spirit is given over to considering man as
spirit. This, as we have stated, is the goal of this
argument. Man is seen as emerging from physical nature to
become the "spring-board" for spirit in greater and
greater purity. A smooth transition from nature to spirit
is possible because man combines in himself both elements,
with the lower (nature) tending to give way to the higher
(spirit). Of course this movement in the last division
will also take place in three stages. The phenomenology
of spirit had by way of reason led to seeing man as spirit.
But arising out of the quasi-epistemological analysis of
the phenomenology, this spirit is at first not much more
than the free self-consciousness of man. This is
"theoretical" spirit, for it is still beyond the practical
and the material. Its major functions lie in thinking
and the memory, the exhibition of intelligence. But this
stage must swing over to the other side, the strictly
practical. Spirit makes decisions in relating to the
world around it. The reconciliation of practical spirit
with theoretical spirit yields free spirit, the well-balanced
human being who is in charge of himself and his affairs. Man is completely himself when seen as spirit. Under that heading we can now see him progress to objective spirit (the state and the transcending of the individual), and from there to absolute spirit.

To summarize: Man stands as transition between nature and spirit. In man himself we can recognize the formation of spirit from nature. Man is elevated to spirit when he is seen as free. In his role as transition, man becomes the key to progress toward the absolute, which is manifested in him (though he himself is, of course, not the absolute).

(b) Man in Rahner

As has been indicated several times already, man is the key to understanding all of Rahner's theology. Everything pivots around his concept of a transcendental anthropology. But that cannot keep us from zeroing in on man as a particular to see who it is who stands at the center of Rahner's thought.

Let us begin by pulling together some points already touched on. The first thing to recall about Rahner's doctrine of man is that man is by nature a questioner. This was the first step in Rahner's epistemology, and it can also be seen as the cornerstone of his anthropology. Man questions, and to question this
statement would of course be self-defeating. But we saw that it is not just any question which motivates man in his metaphysical pursuits, but it is the questioning of his own existence. This is not merely an insight which Rahner might have uncritically taken over from Heidegger; it is based on the premise that there really is no other place to start questioning. For man is not confronted with being "out-there," but with his own existence within the world, his being enmeshed in other being. Far more important to him than the question of why there are any entities at all is the question of why he should exist at all. In that context we do not see Rahner provide us with an answer to this question, but we do discover the pre-thematic knowledge of being implicit in the question. Being cannot be questioned in any of its manifestations unless there is already some inkling of it present prior to questioning. Thus, there is in man himself the beginning of the knowledge of being; clearly this means that man himself is transcendentally open to being.\textsuperscript{22}

This openness to being was further amplified with the idea of the Vorgriff.\textsuperscript{23} As the agent intellect encounters an entity as object of knowledge it recognizes that this entity is present within certain limitations, namely those which describe its essence, to the exclusion of all other possible limitations which might have described it. Thus, in order to make this kind of judgment, the
intellect must be able to recognize not only the particular essence at hand, but must also be able to take recourse to the infinite pool of possibilities which were available, but not implemented. Hence, there is behind each individual judgment of knowledge of a particular being the plenitude of all possible being. But the sum total of all common being (ens) is grounded in being itself (esse), which is none other than God. The conclusion is that man is always transcendentally open to God.

This conclusion brings up an interesting question with regard to man's basic constitution. If man is always already open to God, where is the need for God's grace? However, if on the other hand the knowledge of God were something completely over and above man's basic nature (the "extrinsicism" we see here being denied), it becomes questionable what any outside revelation from God might be meant to accomplish. For in this case also it would appear that human nature is already complete in itself, and it is possible either to be skeptical about the existence of God and His grace or to deny the need for it. Still, a return to the first-mentioned position ("intrinsicism") where man already contains the seeds of grace within himself is no solution either, for it would deny the non-obligatory character of grace. Rahner proposes a mediating solution in which he proposes that part
of the basic constitution of man is a "supernatural existential." There are three points to this proposal:

(1) The content of grace is God's love in Jesus Christ. As such, it is experienceable by man, but never loses its gratuitous character.

(2) Man can receive grace because part of the make-up of his being is a supernatural existential. Since it is supernatural, it retains the distinction between nature and grace, viz., it is not merely a part of man's nature. Simultaneously, because it is an existential of man's being, there is an ontological ground for man's receptivity of God's grace. This ground is then first expressed by the Vorgriff, the fact that man in the judgment of knowledge transcendentally can and will reach to God.

(3) The gratuitous character of grace is retained because the existence of the supernatural existential itself is an expression of God's grace. Thus, we must also see the Vorgriff, integral part of man that it may be, as based first of all on God's grace.

The conclusion: man has been gratuitously endowed with an inherent ability to know God which is first seen in the transcendental faculty of the Vorgriff.

Now the ability to know God is intimately related to man's position in the hierarchy of being. We saw earlier that Rahner holds to an analogy of having-being
At the pinnacle stands God, and the degree to which entities participate in His being is directly proportionate to their knowability. (A necessary corollary of this statement is of course that most entities are to some degree material, which is non-being, knowable to the extent it is form.) This works in two ways. An entity knows in proportion to whatever degree it is being, and an entity is knowable to whatever degree it is being. God, Who is pure being, is thus supremely knowable, but only He can know Himself exhaustively; all creatures' being is too limited. An entity whose being is sufficient to know God at least in part is to that degree spirit. Man knows God and is thus spirit.

But we have seen already that man is spirit within the confines of matter—spirit in the world. Man is a dual being (not "dualistic," for he is a unity) with roots both into spirit and into matter. And as a material being he experiences a history. Into this history God has spoken His revelatory word, which man is equipped to hear. This event is now no longer transcendental but a posteriori. But the ability to hear is still transcendental.

Rahner's anthropology is best characterized and summarized with the term, "potentia obedientialis"—the ability to hear God and have communion with Him. This term includes all the aspects we have already mentioned: Man is spirit within matter. He is transcendently and
thanks to God's grace open to God and His revelation, not in the sense that this openness is an option for man, but in the sense that it is one of the necessary products of his basic nature. Rahner's summary of this grand idea is admirably clear:

Man is spirit; this means he lives his life in a permanent attitude of stretching himself toward the absolute, in openness to God. And this openness to God is not an event which may or may not occur here or there according to the wish of man, but it is the condition for the possibility of that which man is, and has to be, and must be, even in the most diffuse everyday life. He is man only because he is always already on the way to God, whether he knows it explicitly or not, whether he wants to or not, for he is always the infinite openness of the finite for God.32

2. Similarity and a Difference

We have now seen that the most basic feature of Rahner's anthropology is man's constitutional openness to God. Man as spirit reaches out to God Who is Absolute Spirit. And in this way Rahner's conception is certainly no different from Hegel's where man is also transcendentally (from the very nature of Hegel's system33) open and directed toward the Absolute; he is the link between finite and infinite.

However, Rahner himself interposes a difficulty here with which we must come to terms in order to be fair in drawing up any parallels between him and Hegel. This
difficulty can be seen as a two-stage argument, and it is similar to the one we already discussed in connection with the supernatural existential. The first stage is a theological difficulty with Rahner's anthropology. The question is: If man carries within himself already the transcendental knowledge of God in the Vorgriff, then where is the need for any revelation from God? After all, it seems to be sufficient to say that revelation is good and helpful to man, but it is not necessary for him since he already has the basic capability to know God within his own nature. Revelation could only be a temporary, conditioned approach to God which can be surpassed by the philosophical, i.e., transcendental, certainty of knowing God. We are going to see that the answer to this first stage carries with it the solution to the second one.  

Now the second stage, the crucial point for our argument, is that Rahner equates this inadequate view of revelation (from a theological standpoint) with the view of Hegel. If this is true, then even though Rahner and Hegel sound very much alike on the topic of man, their true intentions may be so different that it would not be possible to argue for any but trivial similarity between the two. Rahner obviously wants to make room for revelation in history beyond the Vorgriff, whereas Hegel apparently is satisfied with man's constitutional openness to spirit as spirit. The view which Rahner rejects, but which he
apparently attributes to Hegel, is that

...revelation would only be a pre-
liminary step to philosophy; it would
only be, in Hegelian formulation, the
knowledge of Absolute Spirit which
breaks through in man at the stage of
representation, a knowing which
necessarily changes itself into absolute
knowing in that finite spirit in the
form of the concept becomes conscious
of its unity with infinite spirit. 36

In short, Rahner wants to see man's basic openness to
God as ultimately inadequate, needing to be amplified by
revelation, while Hegel wants to give philosophical
knowledge of God the last word over revelation. And since
this a priori openness to God was found to be the basic
characteristic of man, their entire anthropologies seem
to be divergent.

Rahner solves the problem which we presented as
"stage one" of this difficulty by making the actually
rather obvious point that the knowledge of God which man
experiences on the basis of the Vorgriff is essentially
limited. In keeping with his analogy of "having-being,"
it must be recognized that even though man has the ability
to know God transcendentally, this ability is severely
restricted by the fact that he is only finite spirit. 37
Thus, there are limits both because of the shortcomings of
man's intellect, and because of God's own remoteness. 38
On the basis of philosophical knowledge alone, God remains
the "free unknown one." 39
But limitations obtain initially in Hegel's anthropology also. As we already saw in the last chapter, it is not man as an individual who has access to absolute knowledge. When we reach the pinnacle of subjective spirit--man as "free spirit"--the "man" whom we encounter is no longer one particular individual, but man as man, man-as-society (as the bridge to objective spirit). And the absolute is not attained until after we have seen a further expansion: man as God, the incarnation. Thus, in the case of Hegel also, when we speak of man's basic openness to God, we must recognize that this does not mean that subjective spirit is automatically identical with the absolute. Hegel's system does not end with subjective spirit any more than Rahner's theology ends with the Vorgriff. In neither case is full knowledge of God accessible to individual man.

This is not to say that Rahner is wrong in faulting Hegel's view of revelation from a theological point of view. There is no doubt that for Hegel revelation is only a moment in the ongoing attainment of the absolute, which will be reached through philosophy. Further, it is obvious that Hegel and Rahner do not share the same high view of the possibility of finite spirit's knowing (let alone becoming) infinite spirit through the process of the dialectic. In short, there are differences here which are clear, and which ought not to be minimized in
understanding the thoughts of these two men.

Nevertheless, it must be recognized that these differences cannot impeach the very clear similarities in the nature and position with which these thinkers characterize man. No matter what the final method of knowing God may be, the beginning phase of anthropology does see man in both thinkers as constitutionally open to God in very much the same way. Our concern is not to prove that Rahner's and Hegel's anthropologies are identical—which they are very definitely not—but to describe the striking similarities which persist despite all divergences.

These similarities will now be further amplified by looking at two very clear points of contact in their understanding of man as spirit.

3. Spirit as Evolutionary

Recapitulating for a moment, we may remember how Hegel placed man at the interface of matter and spirit. In the Encyclopedia, the study of man initiates the third part of the system. The system began with the logic (as God before creation), followed by the philosophy of nature as the study of creation. Of course, in keeping with Hegel's method, each small aspect of creation can be seen as a new progressive moment, exemplifying the on-going work of the negative. This work of the negative
must be seen, not as something alien which is antithetically imposed on the existing moment, but as a self-development of being. The principle is not that one entity demands its contradiction placed opposite itself, but that the very same entity, once better understood, will become its own negation. Thus, the progress of the Hegelian system is due to a self-propelled movement of negation. This fact can be understood from the perspective of Hegel's method as transcendental, where each step is seen as a necessary condition for the previous one, e.g., consciousness is possible only as self-consciousness, and self-consciousness is only properly understood in the light of reason, etc. At the pinnacle of this system emerges spirit, and the crucial step in that direction is taken in man, in whom spirit is first seen. But the underlying transcendental condition which allows any of this to occur is absolute spirit.

Now, in a remarkable article, "Christology within the Context of an Evolutionary World View," Karl Rahner presents us with a picture uncannily like Hegel's. The purpose of the article is to find the place of Christology, given the modern evolutionary conception of the world. To accomplish this, Rahner first gives us a sketch of where man fits into this picture. For the moment, this is the part that we are interested in.
When Rahner speaks of evolution, he is not primarily concerned with a scientific system of proliferation of species based on natural selection, a system on which he feels unqualified to speak as "poor theologian." Rather, what he has in mind is a philosophical and theological world view of cosmic evolution, similar to the one propounded by Teilhard de Chardin, whose contributions Rahner gratefully acknowledges, but on whom he does not feel dependent. In this view, there is a purpose to evolution, namely the production of higher and higher forms of being, from the inorganic to the organic, from the material to the spiritual. This teleological development is then not due to random natural selection, but to divine guidance. Rahner stresses the following notions:

1. Evolution moves into the direction of "progress," producing higher and better entities.

2. Evolution is unthinkable apart from the concept of true change in the world.

3. But this change is not something externally imposed on the world. Rather, it is a self-progression. Beings themselves change into something other than what they were before.

4. The self-progressive nature of evolution does not preclude the fact that God is the ultimate "category" determining the aim of the process.
(5) Material evolution reached its peak in the emergence of spirit. This took place with the arrival of man, the crown and goal of evolution.

(6) Now man stands as the connecting link between the world of matter and the world of spirit.

Given this picture, it is now very easy to point out the following elements which Rahner shares with Hegel here:

(a) the notion of a progression under the guidance of the Absolute;

(b) the conception of this progression as a self-alteration where an entity becomes its own other;

(c) the idea of man as spirit emerging from the material world, serving as link between the material and the spiritual.

Certainly, we have to be careful when we try to see parallels between Rahner's "evolution" and Hegel's dialectical system. It must always be kept in mind that the progression in Hegel is a negative transcendental reduction, not a cosmogony. But, on the other hand, evolutionary conceptions of the world were becoming very popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it would be most surprising if Hegel had not at all been influenced by that trend. In any event, this is not necessary for our purposes here, since it is ultimately inconsequential for the similarity of concepts we are
trying to depict. Even if both men come at the topic within very differing contexts, the pictures of man and his place in the world which they draw here are remarkably alike.

4. Spirit as Freedom

In his discussion of the *conversio ad phantasma*, Rahner raises a question with respect to the knowing subject. If knowledge is only possible through the object as sensible and material entity, what guarantee is there that the spiritual aspect of the subject will not be lost? Once the subject has turned to the phantasm, why does that move not preclude any further turn into self (*reditio in seipsum*)? The answer lies in the concept of freedom. Although the subject knows through the sensible, and makes the sensible other his own, this does not mean that he is not always still free to transcend the other and the material realm. Man is spirit, and as spirit he is free.

Here, Rahner establishes another point of view which he shares with Hegel. For both of them, it is part of the essential nature of man to be free spirit. In fact, both of them use the words "spirit" and "freedom" as though they are almost synonymous, or at least are mutually implicative of one another. "Captive spirit" would be a contradiction in terms for both thinkers. We
can point out three particular features of the freedom of spirit in Rahner and Hegel.

(a) Freedom means independence of the "other"

The most basic meaning of "freedom" is "independence." We have just seen that fact in Rahner: Spirit is not tied to the sensible "other," but is always able to transcend it.\(^{57}\) This is also true in Hegel. Freedom is possible only where the free subject as spirit is not dependent on any "other."\(^{58}\)

(b) Freedom is self-enactment of the subject

The transcendence of the "other" is not carried out by turning to some other--maybe higher--entity, but through the self-realization of the subject as spirit. This is an idea which we already began to encounter in the last chapter.\(^{59}\) There we saw both Rahner and Hegel construe arguments to the effect that the subject constitutes himself via the object.\(^{60}\) This looked like dependence on the object, but now we realize that the subject can always free himself of that dependence by turning into himself. Above we saw that this is Rahner's theory: The sensible object is severed from the subject by the \textit{reditio in seipsum}.\(^{61}\)

Hegel states that logically the essence of freedom is the thought that the other is determined by me, not
the other way around.

The spirit is purely with himself, and is thereby free, for just this is freedom: to be by oneself in the other, to depend on oneself, to be one's own determinant.62

Thus, freedom is not just the independence, but the "self-centeredness" of the subject. "Freedom is found only there where there is no other for me, which I am not myself."63 Hegel's freedom is a transcendental, subject-centered freedom. At the close of the Phenomenology, at the stage of absolute knowledge, the pure self-identification of spirit with himself is an achievement "due to the freedom of his being."64 Therefore, it follows that freedom in man is the self-realization of himself. "Man as man is free."65

Rahner similarly sees freedom as the self-realization of man. "Freedom exists only because spirit exists as transcendence,"66 and transcendence always means the turn into the subject.

Freedom does not consist in constantly being able to do the opposite of whatever is prevailing, but in once and for all in finality being able to 'do oneself'.67

Man is at the interface of materiality and pure spirit, but as spirit himself he is not chained to either realm. "Freedom is the self-enactment of a person within finite matter before an infinite God."68 In fact, man's freedom is so radical that, even though it is transcendentally
grounded in God's freedom, man can freely reject God. 69

(c) Freedom is not unbounded

In the Phenomenology, Hegel depicts an absolute freedom running totally unchecked. 70 Based probably on the reign of terror following the French Revolution, 71 the picture is of a freedom which is pure negation towards everything in existence. This freedom is terror; it destroys everything with which it comes into contact. But this kind of freedom cannot persist; its all-pervasiveness renders it meaningless and self-destructive. It is doomed to suffer an appropriately meaningless death, comparable in significance to the cleaving of a head of cabbage. 72

Translated into more human terms, this picture makes the point that the freedom of man in a society is never pure self-assertion by the individual or by a sub-group. Such absolute freedom can never result in anything but absolute destruction. Rather, true freedom is realized when society organizes itself into a state for the protection of the freedom of all. 73

Likewise, we have already seen Rahner argue that freedom is more than merely the arbitrary negation of the status quo. 74 Freedom is the self-enactment of the individual, but not in isolation. The world is populated with many subjects, and they all are free. But it must
be remembered that man is finite spirit, and, hence, his freedom as an individual is also finite. This finitude implies that each free subject must respect the freedom of all other subjects. In short, a society is established, and how freedom is actually appropriated there may not be unambiguous.

Thus, this observation must be made: Both Rahner and Hegel see man as spirit. In virtue of that fact, man is free—he can enact himself. But as finite spirit, man's freedom is always inferior to the freedom, the utter self-assertion, of absolute spirit. And man is free precisely because his spiritual nature stands open to this absolutely free absolute spirit.

This chapter was devoted to the question, "who is man?", in Hegel and Rahner. We began with the observation that for both thinkers an essential aspect of the nature of man is that he is transcendentally open to the absolute, to God. This capacity is what makes man spirit; man can turn into himself and find there the inherent ability to know himself and God. In the progression of the world man stands at the boundary between matter and spirit, with ties into both. As spirit man is free; he can enact himself.
NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1Cf. Josef Speck, Karl Rahners theologische Anthropologie (Munich: Kōsel Verlag, 1967), and Klaus P. Fischer, Der Mensch als Geheimnis (Freiburg: Herder, 1974). Both of these works present a complete introduction to Rahner's theology, but center it around anthropology. This focus is also seen, though to a lesser degree, in Louis Roberts, The Achievement of Karl Rahner (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).

2In Rahner, we can see this most clearly in Geist in Welt (2nd ed.; Munich: Kōsel Verlag, 1957), pp. 81 ff. Hereafter: GW.


5Ibid., p. 3.


7Ibid., 305.

8Of course this sounds very much like Feuerbach's maxim that theology is anthropology. However, whereas Feuerbach intended it to mean the establishment of anthropology at the expense of theology, for Rahner and
Hegel, even when they subscribe to the same slogan, it merely means that theology and anthropology mutually imply each other.

9 Rahner certainly did not write a "system" in the Hegelian sense. But inasmuch as all of his thought pivots around his theological anthropology, it is good and legitimate to occasionally describe it as a "system."

10 Enz., 315-388.

11 Enz., 318-344.

12 Subjective spirit as the epitome of Hegel's doctrine of man is the basis for the book by Irving Fetscher, Hegels Lehre vom Menschen (Stuttgart: Friedrich Fromman Verlag, 1970).

13 Enz., 53.


15 Viz., that they are "aufgehoben": "lifted up," thus losing their original character, but not their identity. This is, of course, the most basic aspect of Hegel's dialectic, the "identity-in-difference."

16 Cf. Erich Heintel, "Der Begriff des Menschen und der 'Spekulative Satz,'" Hegel-Studien, I (1961), 201-227. Heintel shows how man himself is the key to the infinite in Hegel.

One cannot help but be reminded of John Scotus Erigena. There seems to be a basic similarity between Hegel and Erigena, whose system also began with God in Himself and then eventually returned to God via creation and man. But, for one thing, we have no indication that Hegel was familiar with Erigena, and, for another, Hegel's system is transcendental, which Erigena's was not.

17 This, as indicated above, is the section on subjective spirit, Enz., 315-388.
18 Cf. Fetscher's analysis in op. cit., pp. 35-37. See also Jan van der Meulen, "Hegel's Lehre von Leib, Seele und Geist," Hegel-Studien, II, 251-274.

19 Cf. our analysis thereof in chapters III and IV.


21 Cf. our discussion in Chapter II. GW, 71.

22 See Rahner, Hörer des Wortes (2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1963), where this is the dominant idea passim. Hereafter: HW.

23 GW, 173-196; HW, 67-73.

24 GW, 208.


26 Ibid., pp. 336-345.

27 For even creation is ultimately an expression of God's grace.

28 In Chapter II.

29 HW, 56-62.

30 This is, of course, the underlying rationale of GW, passim.

31 HW, 77.

32 HW, 76.

HW, 82.

Ibid.

Ibid.

HW, 86.

HW, 91.

Ibid.

Cf. Chapter IV.


Enz., 449-50.

Enz., 53, 199.

Viz., the transcendental method which finds necessary preconditions through the negative reduction of a given stage of knowledge. Through this reduction, the given stage is not eliminated, but sublimated.

PG, 20.

Cf. Logik, 66 ff.

Cf. PG, 79-129.

SzT, V, 183-221.

Ibid., p. 183.
51 Ibid., p. 186.

52 Ibid., pp. 187-195.

53 We take exception here with Nietzsche's famous saying, "Ohne Hegel kein Darwin" (Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, V, 357). We can, for instance, make reference to Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, who anticipated his grandson's views in some ways. See the Article, "Darwin, Erasmus," in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (New York: Macmillan and Rees Press, 1967).

54 GW, 296. This conversio is of course the turn of the intellect to the sensible phantasm.

55 GW, 298.


57 GW, 298.

58 Hegel, System der Philosophie, Pt. I, Logik, Glockner edition, Vol. 8, p. 87, §24, Zusatz 2. This is of course the Encyclopedia, but the Meiner edition we have been citing has left out the Zusätze as unreliable.

59 Cf. Chapter IV.

60 Enz., 349-51. GW, 82.

61 GW, 298.

62 Glockner ed., Vol. 8, p. 82.

63 Ibid.

64 PG, 562.


SzT, II, 262.

Ibid., p. 260.

Ibid.

PG, 414ff.


PG, 419.


SzT, II, 262.

Ibid., p. 260.

See Rahner, Freiheit und Manipulation in Gesellschaft und Kirche (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1970), passim.
CHAPTER VI

CHRISTOLOGY IN RAHNER AND HEGEL
to Rahner's writings. But neither of these two writers shows how those Christological ideas arise out of the whole of Rahner's thought; one gets the impression from them that when Rahner was stuck with a Christological problem he invoked a Hegelian conception as a *deus ex machina* to solve the problem. The same criticism also applies to the very careful work by Klaus P. Fischer. Though his analysis is more complete, it still does not recognize that there are Hegelian themes pervading all of Rahner's writings. An effort in the direction of showing a conceptual unity is made by Thomas Pearl. In his article he correctly begins by depicting the philosophies of Rahner and Hegel to show how they are then carried over into the field of Christology. However, unfortunately, Pearl so misrepresents Hegel, and he has researched Rahner so inadequately, that the article is fairly useless as a solid contribution to the scholarly understanding of Rahner.

What needs to be done, and what this chapter is meant to do, is to show exactly how the particular Hegelian themes which we discovered in Rahner up to now find their natural expression in his doctrine of Christ. These are the links to Hegel which we have seen previously, and which we shall now see come to light in Christology. Rahner's and Hegel's Christologies are very similar, and it is our contention that this is the case, not because
Rahner patterned his Christology after Hegel's, but because they both shared some basic ideas which then are expressed in their Christologies. Five themes are shared by Rahner and Hegel in their approach to Christology:

1. In keeping with the transcendental method which both thinkers use, Christology also has a transcendent function. It is a necessary condition for man to approach the absolute.

2. The anthropological theme of the basic nature of man being openness to God is epitomized in the hypostatic union. The potential of man to know God is fully actualized by the human nature of Christ.

3. Earlier we had discovered a philosophical idea, the mutual implication of a subject and the "other," shared by Rahner and Hegel. This theme is given expression in two related areas:

   (a) the intra-trinitarian distinction of the Father from the Son, and

   (b) the relationship of God to man in the incarnation.

4. The principle that for a full realization of who man is we must turn to a universal man rather than any individual man is brought out in the fact that Christology for Rahner and Hegel makes reference to the universal conception of man.

5. Finally, as we have seen man as free spirit, so that freedom is exemplified in the incarnation.
(1) Transcendental Christology

It has been a basic contention of this study that both Hegel's and Rahner's systems of thought are transcendental in nature. In Hegel, we have the "pure" transcendental method (using Hartmann's terminology\(^7\)), an idealism of Absolute Spirit. The system consists of a gradual reduction, by means of negation, of shapes of consciousness, leading ultimately to the attainment of absolute knowledge. If Christology is to be a part of this system, it must be one stage in the transcendental approach to Absolute Spirit. Rahner's transcendental method, though "mixed" because it allows for a sensory intuition,\(^8\) nonetheless is found throughout his system of thought. The transcendental features of epistemology are determinative for anthropology, and anthropology stands at the center of the whole system.\(^9\) Thus, Christology in Rahner's thought must then also be approached transcendently, via anthropology.

Both of these expectations are indeed fulfilled. Christology is a crucial part of Hegel's system.\(^10\) The goal of this system, we may remember, is the realization of Absolute Spirit; the method to reach this goal is the transcendental dialectic, which we just mentioned above. In the system as presented in the Encyclopedia, we saw the emergence of man as the first step in a sublimation of spirit and matter.\(^11\) Man as spirit becomes the necessary
condition for further approximation to the absolute. But, whatever potentialities are inherent in the nature of man, they are in themselves insufficient in their efficacy to reach the absolute. It is necessary that man's powers be amplified (synergistically, as it were) through the sublimation of another set of supposed polar opposites: God and man. To bring this about, it must be recognized that God and man are not contradictories, but are unified in the God-man, Jesus Christ. Only with this insight is it possible to go any further toward the absolute. Thus, Christology can be seen as a transcendent condition for the knowledge of the absolute. This is Christianity's chief contribution to the philosophy of spirit.

Only Christianity, through its teachings of the incarnation of God and of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believing community, has provided for the human consciousness a completely free relationship to the infinite, and has therefore made possible the comprehending knowledge of spirit in its infinity. 12

In short, without an incarnation there could be no philosophy of absolute spirit. This is further amplified in Hegel's discussion of revealed religion. The incarnation is depicted as the particularization of the original absolute universality. Thus, the absolute is made knowable, and all particular entities are given the possibility of returning to the original unity out of
their plurality. \textsuperscript{13} Thereby the incarnation is again shown to be the necessary condition for the philosophy of absolute spirit. Hence, Hegel's incarnational Christology is basically transcendental. As man is the door from matter to spirit, so Christ is the door from man to the absolute.

Similar considerations hold true for Rahner. We saw that for him, too, man is the link between spirit and matter. And for Rahner it is of first importance that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God but also the highest fulfillment of man. \textsuperscript{14} Thus, Christ must be seen in Rahner's system in two aspects: first, as the logical continuation and completion of what we know of the nature of man, the axis of his theology, and, secondly, as the complete self-expression of God toward man, which has reached its pinnacle in this union of God and man. Thus, Christ becomes in Rahner also the necessary way for man to reach the absolute. Hence, Rahner's Christology can also be characterized as transcendental.

(2) Man's Openness to God

\underline{Epitomized in Christ}

When we discussed the nature of man in Rahner, we came across the fact that for him a basic definition of man was contained in the term, \textit{potentia obedientialis}. This meant that it is an essential aspect of the nature of man that man is open to God and has the ability to receive
His self-communication. This transcendental openness was not merely one of man's faculties among many others, but Rahner argued that it is the most important determinative characteristic of man. We found a similar understanding of man in Hegel.

Now such a understanding of man can cast much new light on the problems of Christology. The Chalcedonian definition, as well as the discussion before and after A.D. 451, was concerned with the paradox of two natures, human and divine, found in the one person of Jesus Christ. How can it be possible that true man and true God can both be present simultaneously in one person? Chalcedon did not resolve the paradox, but directed that both natures must be affirmed without either separating or confusing them. Thus, in the traditional formulation, the two opposites of finite man and infinite God are stated to be found in Christ. This formulation has of course caused numerous debates and much controversy. How can a man, who is by definition limited, finite, and imperfect exist in union with God, Who is infinite, unlimited and perfect?

Rahner does not propose any changes in the definition of Chalcedon, but his new understanding of man makes Chalcedon a little more intelligible. Rahner says that we must see man, not as primarily finite, limited and imperfect, but first of all as being open to reception of the infinite. Man is finite, to be sure, but in his
finitude he is directed toward the infinite, and this directedness is the chief characteristic of his nature. In that case, what are reconciled in Christ, following Chalcedon's statement, are not infinity and finitude as stark polar opposites, but infinity and finitude-as-openness-toward-infinity.\textsuperscript{15} If man is seen in this Rahnerian/Hegelian way, the two natures of Christ can be seen as complementary, not as mutually exclusive, and Christology may be a little bit less paradoxical, though of course the mystery is still not eliminated.

It follows from this analysis that from one side, Jesus Christ's exalted nature is not due to His Deity, but to the fact that his human nature, the potentia obedientialis, is perfectly realized. This means that from this aspect Jesus Christ is different from other men in degree only (though the difference in degree brings about numerous other distinctions, e.g., an elevation in being). The union of the two natures becomes an instantiation of something which in principle is available to every man, not just the man Jesus—the perfect fulfillment of potentia obedientialis. As Rahner states, the Chalcedonian definition

\[ \text{.. .becomes a thoroughgoing formulation for the relationship of the creature and God in all (onto-)logic dimensions, and has in the hypostatic union its highest and unique instantiation.} \textsuperscript{16} \]
Jesus Christ is God's only incarnation, but the relationship of creature and Creator seen in Him is exemplary of the ultimate possibility for a union of God and His creation.

If our observation that this view of Christ arises out of the view of man shared by Rahner and Hegel is correct, then we should be able to see a similar trait in Hegel's Christology. And this is indeed the case. Man as spirit is open to the Absolute, and this openness is what we find perfected in Christ. We have already seen that Christ can be understood as a pivotal transcendental condition necessary for man to realize the Absolute. But in this function Christ is different from other men, not in that His nature is essentially different, but in that His nature is basically the same, with the important distinction that the potential union with God is actualized completely. Hegel remarks concerning the incarnation,

There we have first man, who through this process attains spirituality, and second man as Christ, in whom the identity of both natures is known.

This gives the incarnation a didactic character, for far beyond being merely one historical event, it teaches a union with God which is accessible for man in general, not just the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

We see, then, Rahner and Hegel begin with a common anthropological conception, man's basic openness to the
absolute, and utilize it in their understanding of the relationship of man to God in the hypostatic union. The similarity is further carried through if we remember the progressive nature of both men's thoughts. Both Rahner and Hegel see man as emerging from matter as the first indication of spirit.\textsuperscript{20} And Christ as the perfect man is then one further step in the ongoing progression.

(3) God's Self-enactment via the "Other"

In the last section we looked at Christology from the side of Christ's humanity, the perfect fulfillment of the potentia obedientialis. But we must also take a look at it from the other side, the actions God took in the incarnation. This section can (somewhat artificially) be divided into two subsections, one dealing with the intratrinitarian distinction of the Father from the Logos, the other specifically with the assumption of humanity by God the Son.

Both of these two subsections illustrate the philosophical principle of the subject's self-enactment via an "other" which we found in both Rahner and Hegel.\textsuperscript{21} This principle runs as follows: The subject, in working out his own nature, is confronted with an object, an "other," not outside of himself, but within his own subjectivity. The subject turns into himself to find there two things: the conditions for understanding the object
as a free entity beyond himself and, at the same time, the recognition of his own constitutive nature. Thus, we have here a bivalent relationship between the subject and the "other" with mutual implications for both. This theme now reappears in Christology.

(a) The Relation of the Father and the Son

Rahner makes use of the theme we summarized above in an article on symbols in Christian theology. In the ontology of symbols which he draws up, the symbol is the expression of its referent, arising out of the reditio in seipsum of the referent. In other words, if a reality, which we can call "A," enacts itself according to its own nature, and thereby gives rise to its self-expression, "S," then "S" is the symbol for "A." "S" is other than "A," but "S" receives its true meaning from "A," and "A's" true nature is revealed through "S."

It is in this way, Rahner argues, that we can say that within the Trinity the Son is a symbol for the Father. Rahner states,

The Logos (a reality of the immanent life of the Deity) is generated as copy and expression of the Father, and this process is an occurrence which is given necessarily in the divine self-recognition. Without this process there could be no absolute act of knowing divine self-possession.

In short, as God the Father knows Himself in His true
nature, the Son, Who is "other" from Him, is generated. Now the Son's role is to be the self-expression of God in His nature. Thus, the Son is the symbol for the Father.

This analysis has significance for theology proper ad extra, for we know the Father through the Son. But it is important that we recognize here also that this dialectic supports the reality of the distinction of persons within the ontological Trinity. The Son is symbol for the Father, not merely in the "economic" sense of representing the Father to the world, but also in the "immanent" sense of being the self-expression of the Father within the God-head. In this way, Rahner has made use of the philosophical principle which he shares with Hegel to shed light on the position of Jesus Christ within the Trinity.

Once again the same principle is used by Hegel when he discusses the Trinity. Again, we have a bivalent relationship between the Father and the Son. Out of the expression of the completeness of God's perfection arises the "Other," Who is distinct from Him: the Son is generated. This expression is characterized by both distinction and unity; the Son and the Father are distinct and yet one. This is the picture of eternal love for Hegel.

We have seen, then, that both Rahner and Hegel make use of the philosophical relationship of the subject and
an "other" to make sense of the intra-trinitarian distinction between the Father and the Son.

(b) The Becoming of God in the Incarnation

Now looking at the incarnation itself more closely from the divine side, there is an important observation we must make at the outset. The incarnation can be described with the sentence, "God becomes man." Rahner is very concerned to emphasize that the verb, "becomes," retains its common meaning of referring to something which undergoes a change in time. He states most forcefully that the incarnation must in fact be seen as an event in the history of God. Rahner argues that it is wrong to think of God as totally immune to all change and flux of time.

What takes place this side of the abyss between God and creatures is precisely the history of God Himself. To begin with, at least in the case of Christ. Such a thing is possible.29

Here, Rahner is again in agreement with Hegel. Hegel maintains that the significance of the entire history of Christ lies in the fact that it is the history of God.30 The incarnation, life, passion, and resurrection are all not merely pertinent to the humanity of Jesus, but are in fact occurrences in the life of God Himself. Any appraisal short of this recognition is inadequate.
But what about the traditional doctrine of the immutability of God? Must we discard this dogma entirely in order to make room for the new insight that God has a true history? In answer to this problem, Rahner again makes use of the above-mentioned philosophical theme. This is the solution which Rahner proposes: God remains unchanged in Himself in His essence. But the very fact that He remains with His own nature allows Him to become other than Himself, and thus to undergo the change of the incarnation.\[31\] Rahner asserts,

> When we view the fact of the incarnation—to which the faith in the basic dogma of Christianity is our witness—without reserve and with a clear eye, then we will simply have to say: God can become something; the One Who is immutable in Himself can Himself become mutable in the 'other.'\[32\]

Hegel is not quite as committed as Rahner to maintaining some form of immutability in God. Nevertheless, he, too, holds to a dialectic in which the change involved in bringing about the hypostatic union does not change God's essential nature, for it is this basic nature which makes the union possible to begin with.\[33\] Hegel points out that there is a disproportion between God and man in the union, but

> . . . that despite the disproportion there is an identity of the two. The otherness, the finitude, the weakness, the fragility of human nature can have no bearing on that unity which is the substantive aspect of reconciliation.\[34\]
And if the unity of the union cannot be effected by this disproportion, nor can the ultimate unity of God be detracted from by the presence of man as an "other." Thus, here again is our motif: the subject (God) experiences unity with the "other," man, and both find the true expression of their natures in this process.

A word must be said about Rahner's occasional deliberately distancing himself from Hegel, which he brings up in this context. Rahner repeatedly protests that his Christological ideas did not originate with Hegel. For instance, in discussing the theory that God does not change in Himself, but does so in the "other," he says, "It would be a sorry state if it took a Hegel to teach us Christians that fact." This caution must be accepted: Rahner believes what he teaches to be Christian doctrine which is true independent of any possible link to Hegel. We can even concede that Rahner may have asserted his Christological ideas completely apart from Hegel's influence, but we would still not impeach the point of this project. It still remains true that the ideas are very similar to Hegel's, and that this similarity can be traced back to a similarity in philosophical notions (which Rahner himself has shown to be parallel to Hegel's).
(4) Universalized Christology

A thought which has recurred throughout our study of Rahner and Hegel has been the recognition that the
transcendental openness to the Absolute is not something
which is realized to its full potential in the individual
man. This was reserved for man seen as a universal, man
"categorically." Now, when we talk about the human side
of the hypostatic union, we must recognize another dia-
lectic: this time between the individual Christ and
Christ-as-universal. On the one hand, it is true that
both Hegel and Rahner emphasize the historicity of the in-
carnation, that God becoming man meant that God became
one particular historical individual. But at the same
time, God becoming man means that God became man in a
universal sense, and that man as a "category" has been
divinized. The strict division between God and man in
general has been abrogated.

This idea is very plain in Hegel. The historical
incarnation with the significance it contains in itself
serves to clarify a further point: it shows that

... man may become conscious of the
substantive nature of the unity of
divine and human natures.

Man, objective spirit, experiences a hypostatic union with
God, which, of course, is eventually sublimated into
Absolute Spirit. The transcendental character of Hegel's
thought surfaces here to show that even the incarnation
becomes a "category" to lead to the final "category" of Absolute Spirit. And this can only be achieved if the individual, Jesus, is seen as standing for all of humanity.

Rahner argues that the hypostatic union is the ultimate expression of the nature of man, the potentia obedientialis. As such, the mediating position of the nature of man between material creation and spirit is epitomized. In the incarnation Christ stands at the pinnacle of all creation and is simultaneously its complete realization into a perfect unmediated relationship with God. But what applies to all of creation applies a fortiori to the human nature God has assumed. Thus, humanity has been brought into an unmediated relationship with God also: man has been divinized. This idea stands behind Rahner's celebrated doctrine of the "anonymous Christian": In the incarnation God has truly become man, and anyone who is not a Christian, but who nonetheless devotes himself completely to the realization of the true humanity of himself and others, partakes of the relationship with God which was made possible through the incarnation.

(5) The Incarnation and Freedom

A final thought which must briefly be mentioned is the emphasis placed by Rahner and Hegel on freedom, as it
is expressed through the incarnation. This is certainly quite unsurprising if it is remembered that for Rahner and Hegel spirit always implies freedom.\textsuperscript{43} And the incarnation is of course the supreme expression of spirit, both human and divine, to the world.

Rahner makes a special point of this fact in his description of Christology in an evolutionary context.\textsuperscript{44} We have seen already how man is emerging spirit, and, as such, free spirit. Thus, when we consider the incarnation, which combines man with God, Who is Absolute Spirit, it follows that the incarnation is an act of the highest degree of freedom. The fact that God became man in Christ is an expression of the unbounded freedom which only God can possess.\textsuperscript{45}

Hegel seems at times to be saying that it was necessary for God to become man. He states, "The necessity that God appear in the world in flesh is an essential determination--it follows. . . necessarily."\textsuperscript{46} However, there are several uses of the word, "necessity," for Hegel.\textsuperscript{47} And what he means here is a transcendental necessity: the system could not proceed properly apart from the incarnation. But considered in Himself it cannot be said that God was under constraint to act as He did and incarnate Himself. And even more importantly, because the incarnation ultimately gives rise to Absolute Spirit, and through the incarnation man progresses to the absolute, we
see that man achieves his true freedom in the incarnation.⁴⁸

There are many areas within Christology where Rahner and Hegel do not agree. Hegel wants to sublimate God and man in the "death of God,"⁴⁹ so that Spirit may be released; and no such picture is found in Rahner. This just serves to re-emphasize that we do not want to say that Rahner holds to a Hegelian Christology. He does not. But there are a few ideas in philosophy and anthropology which he shares with Hegel, and, as we have seen, which then also show up in the Christology of the two men.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VI


6. Pearl understands Hegel only from the vantage point of a strict formal system of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, relying for the most part only on English secondary sources. He is familiar with only one time that Rahner mentioned Hegel by name, surely a completely inadequate basis for judgment on Rahner's relation to Hegel. The only works by Rahner he makes reference to are Spirit in the World and a few articles from Theological Investigations.


8. Ibid., pp. 229-236.
9 Cf. our analysis in Chapter V.

10 This is a major contention of Küng in op. cit., passim.


13 Enz., 448-449.


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 G 10,10.

18 G 19, 133.


21 Cf. our extensive analysis of this principle in Chapter IV.


24. Ibid., p. 290.


26. Ibid., p. 292.

27. XIV, p. 57.


29. SzT I, 196.

30. XIV, 166.

31. SzT IV, 147.

32. Ibid., pp. 146f. Emphasis mine.

33. Here again we see that in a Hegelian-type sublimation the constituents are "raised up," but are never eliminated.

34. XIV, 140, cf. 134f.

35. Ibid.

36. SzT I, 196, 202; IV, 147.

37. SzT IV, 147.

39 See, e.g., XIV, 137.

40 XIV, 141.

41 LThK, 955.


43 Cf. our analysis in Chapter V, the last section.

44 SzT V, 183-221.


46 XIV, 141.

47 Much of modern misunderstanding of Hegel can be attributed to the fact that when Hegel uses "necessity" he does not mean it always from a logical point of view.

48 G 10, 10; Enz. 564.

49 Cf. XiV, 157-158.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

In the last three chapters we have pointed out many similarities of thought between Rahner and Hegel. We found that even though on the surface many of their particular arguments seemed to have very little in common, the underlying rationale was quite often the same, showing us two systems of thought which have made extensive use of the transcendental method. We will now give a very brief evaluation of our results. This evaluation can be done best by posing ourselves four questions:

1) Why are these similarities important?
2) What causes these similarities?
3) What are the advantages of this transcendental approach?
4) What are the disadvantages of this transcendental approach?

(1) Why are these similarities important?

The answer to the first question must be an appraisal of whether the objectives given in the introduction to this work have been met. And it seems that we can say without reservation that exposing the philosophical themes which Rahner shares with Hegel does give us a better insight into his thought, philosophically and theologically. We can now
have a better understanding of Rahner's epistemology and what he means by knowledge of an "other." Further, we are better able to appreciate Rahner's view of man and his relation to the world. Moreover, much light has been shed on Rahner's treatment of Christology, both with respect to Christ's mediacy between God and man and his position as Son to the Father. Discerning those patterns which are akin to Hegel's ideas can help us clarify all those aspects of Rahner's thought.

Whether this study will encourage other studies in philosophical hermeneutics is of course one that cannot be answered as it would require clairvoyance.

We have certainly shown how the transcendental method is used by both Rahner and Hegel, and how it lies at the root of much of what they have in common. At the same time, it has become clear that what they have in common often manifested itself with arguments that often were, at least on the surface, very different. Thus, this study has been an exercise in observing the transcendental method in two of its uses. We will return to this point presently.

(2) What caused these similarities?

For the last time we must raise the question of why there are these similarities between the two thinkers. Of course, they could be due merely to coincidence, two
thinkers arriving at the same kinds of thought completely independently of each other for no apparent reason. We can dismiss this option, not only as too improbable, but also as being countermanded by evidence to the contrary.

A second possibility is that Rahner learned these ideas "at Hegel's feet," so to speak, having assimilated them through reading of Hegel's works and other direct exposure to Hegel. Such an influence of one thinker on another is definitely within the realm of possibility. However, at the outset of this study we had already decided that this kind of historical analysis can only be very tenuous (it could be fallacious) and is not very interesting conceptually.

A better analysis from a historical point of view would be to examine the philosophical heritage which Rahner and Hegel share. And we see that here we have two men who both were very much under the spell of Kantian philosophy. Hegel came a generation after Kant and saw "Father Kant" as the most significant philosopher up to his own era. Rahner, as he himself has acknowledged, was deeply influenced by the writings of Maréchal, who attempted to combine Kantian and Thomist thought. Thus, we see both thinkers writing in a milieu dominated by Kant and his ideas. But the particular issue which both gleaned from Kant and made their own was the transcendental method.

Here we come to the real cause of the two thinkers'
convergences. They occurred not merely because of historical proximity (which does not always lead to similarity) but because both men were committed to the transcendental method and a thorough application thereof. The transcendental method with its emphasis on the elements of knowledge as they are supplied by the subject himself, is the foundation for thought in both Rahner and Hegel. Whatever similarity exists between the two thinkers arose out of this common starting point.

As we have seen, superficially there is very little likeness between Rahner's use of this method and Hegel's. However, the similarities we have pointed out have gone deeper than the basic arguments themselves. We have shown that whatever arguments Rahner and Hegel used, were used precisely because of their use of the transcendental method. We saw a crass example of this procedure when we depicted Rahner's arguments against naive objectivity on the one hand, and Hegel's theory of Begierde on the other. Though these arguments were very different, we showed that they both were used to plead the case for transcendental subjectivity.³

Kant devised the transcendental method to account for the fact that it is within the human subject himself that the sensible intuition is turned into knowledge. Rahner and Hegel have certainly gone far beyond Kant's intentions, and Kant would have been as critical of Hegel
and Rahner as he was of Fichte. But the basic idea that knowledge is possible only from within the subject, first articulated by Kant, is shared by both Rahner and Hegel, giving rise to all the other similarities in thought.

(3) What are the advantages of this transcendental approach?

Now we must quickly go beyond a mere description of the two thinkers' use of the transcendental method. Granted, they make use of it, but is it helpful? By use of the transcendental method, do they shed light on some issues which would otherwise remain problematic? We can point to three areas in specific where using the transcendental method has been advantageous. Each one of these three areas was described in one of the last three chapters.

(a) The relationship of the subject to the object of perception has received many diverse treatments in the history of philosophy. How can the gulf between the internal "I" and the external "it" be bridged? Rahner and Hegel attempt to show that this question is a pseudo-problem. Actually, there is no gulf to be bridged between subject and object, but the object is part of the subject in the act of knowledge. The object is not known by means of an intentional reaching-out, but through a transcendental uncovering within the subject himself. For Rahner, in
specific, this meant also that being is not known through an intellectual intuition, but through a Vorgriff into all conditions which make knowledge possible.

(b) The transcendental method allows Rahner and Hegel to come to a comprehensive understanding of the nature of man. Both of them see man as material, but also as spirit, thus allowing man to be transcendentally open to the Absolute. Being spirit and being open to the Absolute is what makes man a free creature.

(c) Rahner and Hegel, in using the transcendental method in understanding Christology, have attempted to clarify some obscure points. The anthropological doctrine of the openness of man to God is epitomized in Christ as the highest expression of the nature of man at the point of the hypostatic union. The two bivalent relationships seen in the person of Christ, the relation between God and man and the relation between the Father and the Son, can both be understood from the pattern of the transcendental subject's assimilation of the "other."

(4) What are the disadvantages of this transcendental approach?

Here we must raise some critical questions with respect to the overall success in the use of the transcendental method by Rahner and Hegel. With all of its advantages, the question may still be asked if the
transcendental approach, as used by these two thinkers, is the most adequate one.

This question must be limited to the general issue of the use of the transcendental method. We will not go into a critique of the individual arguments by either Hegel or Rahner, though we do not want to imply that either is without problems.6

But, what about this use of the transcendental method by Rahner and Hegel? Did they really use it faithfully and consistently? Or, to turn the question around somewhat, is the use which Rahner and Hegel made of the transcendental method legitimate?

It must be remembered here that for Rahner this question is not synonymous with one of whether the transcendental method can be reconciled with Thomism, particularly the writings of Aquinas. Though Rahner frequently appeals to St. Thomas, he is not interested in having his philosophy be merely a gloss on or an exegesis of what Aquinas said already. Thus, when we ask this question, we are concerned with the success of Rahner's thoughts in their own right.

Nor would it be significant to question Rahner's and Hegel's fidelity to the writings of Immanuel Kant. Clearly they were not interested in abiding by Kant's own philosophical conclusions. Nonetheless, here we come to the crucial question with regard to Rahner's and Hegel's
use of the transcendental method: Is the transcendental method actually suited to yield the results which Rahner and Hegel claim to have derived from it? Do not Kant's restrictions on the use of the pure concepts of the mind prohibit the schemes advanced by Rahner and Hegel?

Both Rahner and Hegel, as we have seen, write in clear view of this aspect of the Kantian critique. Hegel's introduction to the Phenomenology is a challenge to Kant's critical philosophy; Hegel claims that with his method he can overcome the restrictions of Kantian knowledge and reach absolute knowledge. Likewise Rahner, at this point very definitely following Maréchal, uses his philosophy to establish a metaphysics of being, the possibility of which was denied by Kant.

How is this possible? The answer that we must recognize is that it is, of course, not possible. Rahner's and Hegel's philosophies are transcendental, to be sure, but not in the same sense as Kant's. We had earlier described Rahner's and Hegel's transcendental method as more radical than Kant's because it even wants to include content-knowledge in the domain of the subject. Their use of the transcendental method is less radical than Kant's because they again incorporate many of those pieces of metaphysics which Kant had consigned to the noumenal realm—where reason cannot trespass. 7

A final critical question which we may raise is
whether the transcendental schemes advanced by Rahner and Hegel in their theological explorations do justice to Biblical revelation. For both thinkers, man was characterized by his basic openness to God. Further, Christ was described as the epitome of this nature of man. We have here a very optimistic picture of man. It shows him in need of completion of his present state. Hegel says that man's basic nature is good and bad, but in need of being made all good through its fulfillment. Rahner deliberately sets out to show that man's basic nature is not in opposition to God. However, there seems to be much Biblical material supporting a theology which claims that man on his own has shut himself off from God, and what is needed is not a completion of or even a change in his nature, but for his present nature to be replaced with a new one.
NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1 See the last part of our "introduction," where we listed these three points as making this study a significant one:

1. as contributing to Rahner's philosophical hermeneutic;

2. as setting a pattern for further studies in philosophical hermeneutics;

3. as displaying the transcendental method in its various possible manifestations.


3 Cf. Chapter IV of this study.


5 Discounting here those interpretations of Aquinas which claim to find the Copernican Revolution in him already.

6 Nor would it be possible to come up with a brief list of all the criticisms leveled at either one, fairly or unfairly. Anyone familiar with the history of philosophy knows about the campaigns against Hegelianism waged in the latter part of the nineteenth century. We may point out that a thorough analysis of the logic of Rahner's arguments may lead to the discovery of some fallacies. However, these would not be significant for our particular project here.

7 Thus we have come full circle and are once again confronted with the question with which we began: the possibility of a reconciliation of metaphysics (in particular, Thomism for Rahner) and the Kantian method.

E. L. Mascall's criticism seems to be to the point
here. He states,

"Once you have refused to assume the reliability of your apprehension of beings other than yourself and have postulated that the objects of your perception are prima facie states of your own mind, you are launched on the endless process of trying ineffectually to escape from the prison of your own subjectivity."


9See LthK, V, 956.

10For opposition between man and God, see, e.g., Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3; for the need for a new nature, see Ezekiel 11:19, II Corinthians 5:17. Rather than intending to proof-text a point here, I merely intend to indicate that there are these passages, and some similar ones, to be reckoned with.
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