Hegel's goal in his philosophy of subjective spirit is an empirically sensitive yet basically a priori science of mind. That sounds oxymoronic: How can a discipline be at once a priori and empirically sensitive? Here the elaborate structure of the Hegelian system serves a clear purpose. We have, first of all, the logic—the a priori element in all thought. The system's following two parts, the philosophies of nature and of spirit, bring the a priori structures of logic to bear on the empirical phenomena and thus are empirically sensitive as well as containing an a priori element.

But empirical sensitivity is a matter of degree. What kinds of empirical discoveries would persuade Hegel (or us) to abandon the distinction between nature and spirit altogether? Certainly there are cases in which the distinction is far from clear, just as the distinction between the living and the non-living is unclear. But that there are indeed such distinctions, and that they are highly immune to empirical potshots, seems apparent. Hegel's system offers him a way

1. Philosophy, according to Hegel, is a circle of circles. One of the consequences of this doctrine, which I believe Hegel willingly accepts, is that even logic is not absolutely a priori. The system is a closed curve: the achievement of the final stage of the philosophy of spirit cycles one into the logic. Logic therefore also has roots in the empirical, for it has emerged out of nature itself. Hegel denies any absolute distinction between the a priori and the a posteriori—the a priori is rather an element or aspect of every truth in varying degrees (see §12).
to represent the differing empirical sensitivities of the distinctions and concepts used in the sciences. The more subordinate the concept is, the more sensitive it is to the empirical.\(^2\) Nature and spirit are superordinate concepts and relatively immune to empirical considerations, as is the essential contrast between them. The more subordinate concepts are more empirically sensitive. At least in the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, the placement or explanation of subordinate concepts (e.g., feeling) was more readily altered by Hegel in apparent response to empirical developments, and further research on the development of the *Encyclopedia* will probably show that to be a pattern throughout.

The fundamental conceptual relations are worked out in the *Logic*. Nature and spirit manifest the conceptual structures discussed in the *Logic*, and the general structures of nature and spirit can be determined without much empirical input accordingly. This means that within the realms of nature and spirit we can expect to find structures that embody the distinctions between being, essence, and concept, and that the subordinate structures of these divisions again roughly limn those of the *Logic*. But the further we move from the general features of the realization of the conceptual structures discussed in the *Logic*, the less able are we to describe a priori the more particular features and the more vulnerable to empirical refutation is our attempt to organize the phenomena.\(^3\)

We have not yet distinguished between the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit. The methodological remarks of my first two chapters hold equally for both. What is the difference between nature and spirit? We need some account of the differences and the relations between various stages of the *Encyclopedia*.

\(^2\) I call more subordinate those concepts occurring within tertiary, fourth-level, or deeper triads. Every philosophical concept occurs within some triad and most concepts have further triads subordinated to them. Perhaps ideally every concept governs some other concepts, but Hegel is not clear on this point. In a typical listing of the system's determinations (such as the outline of subjective spirit included here), simple indentation shows subordination. Thus the concepts of spirit and nature are superordinate concepts, whereas those of imagination and galvanism are subordinate concepts.

\(^3\) One might imagine Kant getting quite bothered trying to locate precisely the synthetic a priori and the empirical elements in, say, physics. But Hegel would not have thought such a project very sensible, for even the lowliest assertion presupposes and contains metaphysical categories. Seeking to draw a boundary between the a priori and the empirical in our knowledge shows a thorough lack of comprehension of the absolute interpenetration of the two.
And though we need to distinguish nature and spirit, we must also distinguish subjective spirit from objective spirit and from absolute spirit. Finally, we must be able to explain the relations between the various levels within the philosophy of subjective spirit.

One noticeable feature of the progression in the Encyclopedia is that at the higher levels the distinctions correspond fairly well with the disciplinary boundaries between sciences (at least to the degree they are still recognizable). It has been common in the twentieth century to treat questions about relations between the various sciences in a linguistic mode; I follow suit here, for little is lost by such a treatment, and it brings out with striking clarity the relevance of Hegel's philosophy to present concerns.

The Languages of Nature and Spirit

Let us ask, then, what Hegel takes to be the differences between the language by which we explain and describe nature and the language by which we explain and describe spirit. It is certainly not often easy to separate these two "languages," but it is clear that Hegel thinks that the concepts structuring these two different forms of discourse are quite different from each other. Furthermore, in his discussions of the differences between nature and spirit, Hegel does not intend to summarize and condense an understanding of their relation which is already common coin. We each possess the beginnings of a fully adequate understanding of the differences and relations between nature and spirit, but the common view is still mired in the rigid and reifying distinctions characteristic of the understanding. Hegel is therefore offering us a revised and improved understanding of nature and spirit, one that avoids the pitfalls plaguing the common understanding. In the linguistic mode,

4. Separating a language for describing and explaining the mental from the language for describing and explaining the physical is a convenient mode of speech. The two vocabularies are, of course, not separate languages at all, but parts of unitary natural languages. They are not separable in anything like the way two different natural languages are. With this warning, I adhere to present convention and talk of two (or more) languages. Discussing philosophical issues in a linguistic mode is not as foreign to Hegel as might be thought. It is not uncommon that he makes use of linguistic facts in his own argumentation, but, more important, he expressly affirms that "the forms of thought are, in the first instance, displayed and stored in human language" (SL p. 3, Miller tr.). Approaching philosophical problems through a focus on language is entirely consistent with Hegel's beliefs.
Hegel is trying to reveal the ideal language pointed at by our present, imperfect, ordinary languages of the understanding.

But in Hegel’s view there is no simple distinction between the language by which we describe and explain nature and the language by which we describe and explain spirit. Although he distinguishes nature and spirit, it would be a major mistake to think that that is the end of the matter. Beginning in the seventeenth century, a straightforward dichotomy between the two realms was common, typified in Descartes’s distinction between extended and thinking substances. Descartes’s distinction amounts to the claim that there are two (and only two) vocabularies necessary for a complete description and explanation of the world—the geometric vocabulary of physics and the mentalistic vocabulary of the soul. For Descartes, all extended things are of a kind, with only accidental differences between them; the animate body is just more complex than a stone, not in any other way different from it. Similarly, in the realm of the nonextended, all things are of a kind, namely, thinking substances and their modifications. Hegel, however, makes no such claims about the homogeneity of nature or spirit. In his system there is no one language of nature, nor any one language of spirit. We find, rather, that the language of nature includes languages for describing and explaining the mechanical, the chemical, the organic, and that none of these can be simply eliminated without loss. Both nature and spirit have various stages, each of which builds on its predecessors. To each of these stages corresponds a special science, and thus we have to consider not only the relation of the Naturwissenschaften to the Geisteswissenschaften but also the relations among the subdisciplines in each of these categories.

These relations have been a subject of much concern in contemporary philosophy of science, so we have several different models for them. The classical reductionist model claims that each of the predicates of a higher science is connected by some bridge law to (a set of) predicates of the reducing science. Any law of the higher science can then be rewritten, perhaps clumsily, but preserving its nomological character, in the vocabulary of the reducing science.  

This would be a convenient and pretty picture of the relation among the sciences, for then (supposedly) physics would be the only essential science, statements of any other science being mere abbreviations of much longer and more complex physical laws. But, unfortunately or not, this picture of a unified science is just too simple. There is no good reason to think that there are any such bridge laws between the realms of nature and spirit. To use Fodor's example, there is no good reason to believe that there is a bridge law connecting "monetary exchange," a theoretical term in economic theory, to any set of predicates from physics. Monetary exchanges vary widely; they can be exchanges of metal, paper, or wampum, or changes in binary data in a computer. There is simply no reason for believing that monetary exchanges are connected in a lawlike fashion with any set, however, disjunctive, of physical predicates.6

Once the reductionist model of interscience relations has been rejected, there are two different directions one can go. Those of strong reductionist conviction make the radical move to eliminative materialism, claiming that the reducing science, usually physics, answers every worthwhile question. Even if some slight expressive power is lost, it is argued, the language of higher theories, including psychology, can be simply eliminated without significant loss.

Because it is supposedly the inadequacies of the earlier stages that drive the dialectic onward in the philosophies of nature and spirit, it is clear that Hegel could not accept the eliminability of higher sciences; the whole Encyclopedia is an argument for their ineliminability. Eliminative materialism is not independently attractive either. One could at most claim that psychology and other higher sciences are totally eliminable only in principle. That we could never in practice eliminate them is clear. Second, to argue for eliminative materialism one has to maintain that in eliminating the vocabularies of the higher sciences nothing essential is lost. But what exactly counts as essential? Is the usefulness of the vocabulary essential? If so, the game is lost at the outset, for the vocabulary of physics is unusable for describing and explaining psychological or economic or many other kinds of events in any practical manner. The eliminative materialist must write a promissory note on an imperceivable future to claim plausibility for this doctrine.

A less radical and more attractive alternative to classical reduc-

Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity

tionism is the token-identity version of noneliminative materialism. According to this view, although the predicates of a higher science cannot be either eliminated or redefined in favor of the predicates of the reducing science, it is still the case that any instance of the predicates of a higher science is also an instance of the predicates of the lower science, and that the lower science (again, physics), as more universal, retains priority. Thus, although there is no lawlike relation between monetary exchanges and the predicates of physics, it is nonetheless the case that every monetary exchange is also a physical event (albeit a complex one). Instance by instance, then, there is an identity between the events described and explained by the higher science and those described and explained by physics.

There are several things to be noted about this position. Phrased as it often is as a thesis about objects, it says, for example, that one and the same object can have the mental property of now wanting to go sailing and the physical property of weighing 164 pounds—mental and physical predicates pertain to the same subject of predication. But this account does not yet clarify the relation between the mental and the physical. The token-identity thesis is that my wanting to go sailing is itself _identical_ to some (complex) physical property I instantiate. The difference between type and token identity is this: type identity would be correct if every desire to go sailing (or at least all _my_ desires to go sailing) were identical to one and the same physical property, whereas token identity requires only that any instance of a desire to go sailing be identical to some instance of some physical property (but not necessarily always the same one).

Here is an analogy. The quarters of the 6th Battalion are the quarters of Harry, Sammy, Ben. . . . But although this is an identity statement, it does not express a type identity, only a token identity, for when Harry is mustered out of the service, the quarters of the 6th Battalion are no longer the quarters of Harry, Sammy, Ben. . . . Surely there is a different identity statement, namely, that the quarters of the 6th Battalion are the quarters of Tommy, Sammy, Ben . . . , which has taken its place. There is no one set of persons to which the 6th Battalion is identical in every case, although in every case it is identical to some set of persons.

This view has seemed quite promising, but it too has difficulties.

7. Ibid.
The doctrine has often been framed in terms of events, with the assertion that, although mental events are not type-identical to physical events, they are token-identical to them. Let us assume for the moment that events are exemplifications of properties by individuals at a time (so-called Kim events); that is, we can identify an event with the ordered triple of an individual, a property, and a time. This is a simplification of our ordinary concept of an event, but it will do nicely for now. Token-identity theorists claim that all mental events are token-identical with physical events. This must mean that every exemplification of a mental property at a time is identical with some exemplification of a physical property at that time. Assuming that the individuals and times involved are the same, the ordered triples constituting the events can be identified only if the properties involved are the same. This seems inevitably to push us back toward type identity, for properties are types. It is difficult to say what exactly constitutes identity between properties, but it does seem clear that two properties could not be identical in one instantiation but disparate otherwise. If the properties are not identical, neither can we say that they are coextensive in one instance but not otherwise. We can at most say that they are coinstatiated in this instance but not otherwise. But coinstantiation is not strong enough to please a token-identity partisan.

In discussions of token-identity theories, these points are often obscured by the treatment of the mental and physical events themselves as particulars that are identified, apparently, in virtue of their properties. But we must not lose sight of the fact that it is one and the same thing—a person—that has both mental and physical attributes. We need not explicate the unity of the person by identifying the two different kinds of attributes with each other.

An important question remains to be answered: Is there no relation at all between a person's mental and physical properties? Are these so distinct that any set of mental properties can coexist with any set of physical properties? Our immediate reaction is that this cannot be the case; there is some important connection between one's physical and mental properties. It has long been supposed that there are at least causal connections between mental and physical states, but this is not the kind of relation we are looking for here. The causal relation is a dynamic relation; we are looking for some nondynamic, ontological relation between the mental and the phys-
ical that captures our belief that my mental attributes depend, in their very being, on my body and its attributes—that mental attributes require a physical substratum.

A new tack on this problem has received a great deal of attention lately, namely, the claim that mental properties supervene upon physical properties. The concept of supervenience was first introduced in discussions of the relations between moral properties and natural (or physical) properties. The idea is that what physical properties a person has determine that person’s mental (or moral) properties, so that anyone with just those physical properties (and relations, of course) has the same mental (or moral) properties, and a change in mental (or moral) properties means a change in physical properties as well. This claim that mental or moral properties can be determined by physical properties is then complemented by a claim that this determination does not yield a reduction of the mental or moral properties to the physical.

To avoid getting too technical for our purposes, I offer a metaphor. Philosophers often talk of properties or predicates as ways of “cutting up” or sorting the world. Let us take this metaphor seriously for a moment; suppose that there is no privileged catalogue of the entities in the world. It is possible that there are several different, nonconflicting ways of sorting the world but no direct way of getting from one way of sorting (or even the entities sorted) to another, or of inferring from an item’s place in one classification to its place (or even its occurrence) in another. In this sense the two sorting schemes are simply independent and no reduction is possible, although they sort “the same thing.” Nonetheless, it could still be the case that one sorting scheme is basic in the sense that a complete inventory of the world in the basic scheme determines the world sufficiently well that only one sorting in the other scheme is possible, though not vice versa. This is particularly possible if the second, supervenient scheme is in some way partial and simply does not attempt a universal classification. This is the picture that supervenience theorists propose of our world: there is no mapping on an entity-by-entity, or property-by-property basis, even using logical constructs of the entities or properties, between the mental...

8. See D. Davidson, “Mental Events,” in Experience and Theory, ed. L. Foster and J. W. Swanson, p. 88. Davidson uses the notion of supervenience to defend the token-identity thesis, but the two need not go together (see sources cited in note 10).
and the physical, but a complete physical history of the world suffices to fix the psychological history as well (and not vice versa).

My thinking that Cookie Rojas was a great ballplayer, although not identical with any physical state I am in, may supervene upon my physical states—that is, any person in an indistinguishable physical state is also thinking that Cookie Rojas was a great ballplayer. This leaves open the possibility that two persons have content-identical thoughts without being in physically indistinguishable states.

This notion has attracted attention because it seems to offer confirmation of our intuitions about the primacy of the material without the untoward consequences of identity theories. An interesting further development of this new position is that there also seems reason to abandon individualism, the position that the mental properties a person instantiates supervene only upon the physical state of that person’s body. The relevant physical state upon which a given mental state supervenes is certain to be very complex, and it may include states of objects outside the person’s body. The arguments against individualism are too complex to rehearse here, however.9

To recast the supervenience thesis in the linguistic mode, we can say that the statements of a higher language $S$ supervene upon those of a lower language $P$ if fixing all the truths of the lower language also fixes the truths of the higher language. Alternatively, we can also say that $S$ supervenes upon $P$ if two worlds indistinguishable with the resources of $P$ are also indistinguishable with those of $S$.10

Hegel as a Weak Monist

How does this modern speculation about intertheoretic relations bear on Hegel? Does one of these patterns fit the subdisciplines in


Hegel's system? Most of these models of intertheoretic relations were motivated by the unity-of-science doctrine, a doctrine with which, in its positivistic, particularly physicalistic, guise, Hegel would have had little patience. Hegel shows no interest in any form of reductionism, so the classical pictures of theory reduction and eliminative materialism are both nonstarters for capturing Hegel's view.

One might wonder whether Hegel's idealism is not just materialist reductionism stood on its head, but I find no indication that Hegel thinks he is reducing mechanics to psychology, nor any indication that he intends to eliminate mechanics. He could not eliminate, because he claims that each stage of the dialectic has a certain truth that must be preserved, and I take it that that means it makes some sort of ineliminable contribution to our ultimate understanding of the world. He never proposes that an earlier stage of the philosophies of nature or spirit be simply abandoned in favor of a later stage. Moreover, reductionism is not an open possibility, because then the stages he discovers in nature and spirit—the whole complex articulation of his system—would collapse into one basic level.

It seems more plausible that Hegel might be a token-identity theorist, for this position would at least preserve the specialness of the individual sciences while also accounting for the overall monism of the system. But this characterization does not work either. Hegel intimates that physical explanations are not applicable to functioning organisms, nor physiological explanations to rational agents. A token-identity theorist must claim that both explanatory forms are applicable; any differences can be only pragmatic or instrumental. Moreover, since identity is an equivalence relation, this would commit Hegel to the identity of spiritual events with natural (physical) events, and there is no indication that he would accept that position.

There are, however, some powerful reasons for thinking that Hegel has something like supervenience in mind as the relation between adjacent special sciences. This interpretation would account for the relative independence of each level of nature and spirit.

without losing sight of the unity of the world. It would also account for Hegel's ability to order the special sciences serially, for each would then supervene upon its immediate predecessor. It would also account for the systole and diastole of the dialectic, the movement from immediacy through mediation to return to a higher immediacy. At each stage of nature the vocabulary appropriate to that stage picks out certain basic objects that are not further analyzable in that language. Complexes of these objects and complex interactions among them can then be described and explained within the language, but at some point there may occur complexes that possess properties unanalyzable within the old vocabulary. A new vocabulary must be introduced in which these complexes are now treated as basic, simple units. These new, higher simples supervene upon the complexes of the old vocabulary. Most of all, such an interpretation would allow us to grant the autonomy of the spiritual without divorcing it entirely and irreparably from the natural.

Contemporary theories of supervenience are far from physicalistic positivism trumpeting the unity of science, yet they show their dialectical origin in such positivism by retaining a conviction that physics is the foundation on which all others supervene. Surely, one would think, this is counter to Hegelian idealism. We could, however, invert the supervenience hierarchy and take natural facts to supervene upon spiritual facts, but this is at best unconvincing. First, we would have to sacrifice the stepwise fashion of the hierarchy to make it work, since there are natural events where there are no biological or psychological events. Second, fixing the facts in the highest theory (which would be what exactly? history? philosophy itself?) would be tantamount to fixing all the other facts of the world. And while some of the things Hegel says point in this direction, this view is ultimately irreconcilable with his doctrine of the contingency of nature. As a matter of fact, the retention of matter as the basic set of objects/events upon which all others supervene is thoroughly consistent with Hegel's idealism. Hegel in general has no particular respect for beginning points; the result, the end of a process, is usually what he is interested in.\[12\]

\[12\] The end of a process need not be a final product. There are processes the end of which is the process itself (for example, the performance of a piece of music).
One might question whether a supervenience of spirit upon nature threatens the freedom of spirit, since supervenience is a form of dependence. Here several answers are possible. First, the facts of the spiritual realm are themselves a many-layered complex. The "dependence" on the natural would be very distant—mediated by the biological, the anthropological, the psychological, and so forth—by the time the true freedom of philosophical speculation is achieved. Second, supervenient dependence is definitely not a form of causal dependence, and there is no question of its constituting a form of freedom-depriving compulsion. The freedom of the spiritual is its self-determination, which essentially means that truths about spirit have their ground in the necessary ends of spirit. Given the global nature of the supervenience relation, there is no dependence relation between individual spiritual and material phenomena, only one form of general dependence of the spiritual on the material. The only real problem, then, is at the very beginning: the spiritual depends on nature at least as the object in which it realizes itself. How, then, can it turn around and determine nature's own existence as well? Hegel's answer is that spirit determines nature's own existence because spirit is nature's telos. Since nature is the realm of efficient causation, looking for an efficient cause of nature itself makes no sense. Thus, although supervenient on nature, spirit is still entirely self-determined and therefore free.

We can understand this point better by observing the deep similarities between Hegel and Aristotle. Aristotle's metaphysics is hylomorphic; every object is taken to be a certain form inhering in a matter appropriate to it. A hierarchy of forms is thus generated, the realization of each presupposing the availability of an appropriate matter. How far down this hierarchy reaches and what its bottom looks like has been the subject of much debate, which I can ignore. Aristotle's natural philosophy can be seen as a kind of nonreductive materialism, for matter is, in one sense, basic in his scheme. Yet calling Aristotle's philosophy a materialism is also quite misleading, for it plays down far too much the absolutely central role of form. It is Aristotle's emphasis on the notion of form, what Hegel calls the ideal element, that prompts Hegel to see Aristotle as an important predecessor of idealism.

13. We get something like this in E. Hartmann, Body, Soul, and Substance.
Hegel’s philosophies of nature and spirit are very much Aristotelian, and it is profitable to think of Hegel’s view of nature as similar to Aristotle’s hylomorphism; the objects of a lower stage offer the material for the further mediation, the new structures and forms of the higher stages.\textsuperscript{14} Even more important, Hegel also adopts a teleological worldview like that we find in Aristotle. That the lower stages of nature are material for the higher stages, are the potentiality of the higher stages, entails that their own actuality is achieved in the higher stage. Nature points toward and exists for the sake of spirit, not because nature is someone’s means for realizing an intention to create spirit, but because spirit is the force dwelling within the differentiation of nature. It is the nature of nature, its Concept, to provide the necessary conditions for the realization of spirit and to be itself an essential part of that realization. But make no mistake—spirit, the formal and final cause, retains metaphysical priority.

Hegel’s teleologism, his discounting of the philosophical importance of such natural relations as generation or material constitution (see \textit{PN} §249), makes it possible to assert that he believes that something like a supervenience relation holds between individual stages of nature without violating his idealism, his conviction that spirit is the true reality of the world, for his idealism is essentially supported by his teleologism.\textsuperscript{15} What we today most commonly see as a thoroughly contingent emergence of supervenient objects and events on top of a complex of subvenient objects and events, Hegel understands to be the embodiment of a goal-directed, self-actualizing process, the self-realization of the Idea, the Absolute.

Let me summarize what I take Hegel’s view to be. Nature is to be understood as consisting of various stages or levels. These levels form a hierarchy, one supervening upon another, and the whole ultimately serves the self-realization of the Absolute. For each level

\textsuperscript{14} G. R. G. Mure has emphasized Hegel’s indebtedness to Aristotle very heavily in his works on Hegel. See also N. Hartmann, “Hegel und Aristoteles,” \textit{Beiträgen zur Philosophie} (1923).

\textsuperscript{15} One could say that, according to Hegel, the real mistake materialists make is in thinking that what something consists of is the most important thing to know about it. He would rather have us ask about its role in the realization of the Absolute, without denying that questions of material constitution are also worthwhile. The materialist does not usually pay Hegel similar respect; materialism denies that asking about roles in the realization of the Absolute makes sense.
there is a set of concepts in which the objects of that stage can be described and explained; these concepts are neither eliminable nor reducible. The empirical sciences are consequently also irreducible; each develops and applies the concepts peculiar to a particular level to describe and explain individual phenomena at that level. Inquiry is not, however, exhausted by these empirical disciplines. We can inquire further into the nature of the concepts employed by the empirical disciplines and their interrelations (thus philosophies of nature and spirit), into the nature of concepts in general (logic), and finally into the self-realization of the Absolute (philosophy überhaupt). These philosophical inquiries are all highly nonempirical, of course.

**Distinguishing Nature and Spirit**

Externality and Self-determination

Given Hegel’s stepwise arrangement of empirical disciplines, we must now ask more specifically what motivates the distinction between nature and spirit for Hegel. How can he draw any deeper cleft between the language of organisms and the language of anthropology than he draws between any two other adjacent disciplines? The answer is that Hegel perceives certain structural similarities within the sciences of nature and within the Geisteswissenschaften, along with some important differences between nature and spirit, the first of which is a contrast between the external and the internal.\(^{16}\) I have already discussed this distinction briefly. Nature is self-external because it and natural objects are not self-determining. This means, first of all, that in explaining some natural phenomenon (the movement of a billiard ball, for instance), one looks outside that phenomenon for an external cause, some other natural phenomenon. Explanations continually lead into the thicket of natural phenomena; natural facts are determined by other, distinct natural facts. In contrast, the Absolute is totally self-determining; there is nowhere else to turn. The stages of nature and spirit leading up to the Absolute are stages of increasing self-determination.

\(^{16}\) *PN* §247ff; *PSS* §381, *Zusatz*; cf. *PSS*, vol. 1, pp. 105ff.
The externality of nature has another, deeper meaning in Hegel’s philosophy: “Nature’s essential and distinctive characteristic is to be the Idea in the form of otherness.” (PN §247, Zusatz). It is not just the case that understanding any natural phenomenon inevitably leads one to other natural phenomena, but also that understanding such phenomena as natural involves seeing them in contrast to the spiritual. Spirit is self-explanatory, self-subsistent, total actuality. In its contrast to spirit, nature is none of these. It must, according to Hegel, be conceived of as pointing to spirit, working toward its own fulfillment in the complete actuality of spirit. Nature as a whole is itself a spiritual phenomenon; the existence and general structure of nature cannot be understood solely on natural principles but must be referred to spirit. In that the very being of nature is realized only through spirit, nature is self-external.

These characteristics constitute the externality of nature in general, but not all the levels of nature are self-external to the same degree. In particular, in the final stage of nature, the animal organism, the first form of externality is almost completely overcome, for the organism is a self-maintaining system: “An even more complete triumph over externality is exhibited in the animal organism; in this not only does each member generate the other, is its cause and effect, its means and end, so that it is at the same time itself and its Other, but the whole is so pervaded by its unity that nothing in it appears as independent, every determinateness is at once ideal, the animal remaining in every determinateness the same one universal, so that in the animal body the complete untruth of asunderness is revealed” (PN §381, Zusatz, Miller tr.). The story of nature is the story of the increasing self-determination present in nature, a story that continues with spirit, for it is not brought to an end with the animal organism. Although the animal has acquired considerable freedom within its environment, it is still bound to its natural conditions. Any further step toward greater self-determination would involve somehow transcending the animal’s natural conditions. There is therefore no truly self-sustaining being in the natural world. The closest thing to a self-sustaining being in nature is the animal genus, which persists in and through the demise of its members. But the genus is also self-external in that it has no existence apart from the manifold individuals, which have no consciousness of their species being. The genus is still scattered in
mutually external objects. In the realm of spirit, the universal is to come into its own—to achieve an existence that is not merely scattered among different, mutually external individuals. How exactly this occurs we discuss in detail later.

The distinction between nature and spirit, then, is not an absolute cleft; nature itself has successively more spiritual stages. In this sense the break between nature and spirit is arbitrary; there is place for a line here somewhere, but Hegel could have displaced it in either direction without obviously upsetting the fine-grained structure of the whole. Sensation, for instance, occurs as a major topic of consideration in both the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, and it offers us an interesting case study. In the post-Cartesian tradition, sensation is clearly mental, not physical. Denying minds to animals entailed denying them sensations. In Hegel's system, sensation is clearly a property of complex organisms, but it is also the immediate, simple, first reality of the spiritual. Sensation offers a pivot point, a phenomenon with one foot in both the natural and the spiritual realms. The dualist would like to force a decision one way or the other; sensation is either natural or spiritual, but not both. Hegel rejects this simple disjunction. Sensation emerges as a property of complex organisms and is a form of assimilation of the external object. It is correctly considered natural because in sensation the animal organism is still largely determined from the outside, not self-determined. On the other hand, as a form of the assimilation of the external object, sensation is also spiritual insofar as it is an internalization of the external object which allows further, new relations to that external object to develop as forms of self-determination on the part of the organism; that is, in organizing its sensations in ever more complex ways, the organism also acquires new relations to the external object, but now through a process that is self-determined and internal. Thus sensation has two faces—and the point of view from which one looks at it becomes crucial. As a simple property of complex organisms, sensation is decidedly natural; as the nondestructive internalization of the external object, it is the fundament of the spiritual.

17. Descartes himself was not so straightforward.
18. In my discussion here it sounds as if sensation is the turning point between nature and spirit—the last stage of nature and the first of spirit. This is not, however, the case. The Philosophy of Nature ends with 'the process of the genus' (that is, the life cycle of the organism), and the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit begins with 'the
There is no clear break between nature and spirit; rather, these are two poles between which there is a complex series of intermediate stages. Hegel draws the line between nature and spirit where he does, not because there is some one clear mark of the spiritual that suddenly appears on the scene, but because at that point a sufficient number of the characteristics of the spiritual have appeared to justify a distinction. From this point on, the spiritual makes itself ever more evident.

The Nature of Spirit

I have so far talked of spirit as if the only feature distinguishing it from nature were degree of self-determination. Hegel does, however, say quite a bit more than this, and we must now turn to his fuller pronouncements about the nature of spirit to see how these further illuminate the status of the individual mind in his theory.

Three principle characteristics emerge in his exposition of the concept of spirit at the beginning of the *Philosophy of Spirit*—the ideality of spirit, its freedom, and its existence as self-manifestation: "We must designate as the distinctive determinateness of the concept of Spirit, ideality, that is, the overcoming of the Idea's otherness, the process of returning—and the accomplished return—into itself of the Idea from its Other" (§381, Zusatz). Hegel probably derives this use of "ideality" from the Kantian notion of the Ideal of Reason, the unconditioned. Spirit overcomes its other in that that other is the manifestation of spirit, its revelation. By overcoming its other, making its other a moment within itself, spirit ceases to be conditioned by anything external. It is as unconditioned that it is ideal. Since spirit is precisely its self-revelation, nature—as one form of this revelation of spirit—is no longer absolutely opposed to spirit. Nonetheless, nature is not the complete or perfect revelation of spirit, and insofar as spirit's essential nature is this self-revelation, nature is not yet spirit.

Spirit reveals itself in three forms (§383, Zusatz). The first and

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natural soul" (including discussions of the ways the soul is attuned to large-scale phenomena and situations, such as geographic location, climate, and cosmic influences). I have therefore oversimplified the complex relations between spirit and nature to some extent, but without losing anything essential for our purposes.
lowest form, the form we find in nature, is revelation of spirit only to another, that is, some external observer. Second, the idea “creates for itself an existence conformable to its inwardness and universality” (§384, Zusatz), that is, it creates the human being. In the human being, spirit not only reveals itself but, more important, it reveals itself to itself. We know ourselves to be the revelation of spirit. Yet, even so, as finite minds we are not yet the perfect revelation of spirit, the revelation in which all otherness is overcome:

Spirit converts nature into an object confronting it, reflects upon it, takes back the externality of nature into its own inwardness, idealizes nature and thus in the object becomes for itself. But this first being-for-self of spirit is itself still immediate, abstract, not absolute; the self-externality of spirit is not absolutely overcome by it. The awakening spirit does not yet discern here its unity with the spirit concealed and implicit in nature, to which it stands, therefore, in an external relation. (§384, Zusatz, Miller tr., adapted)

In the third and last form of spirit’s self-revelation, spirit knows nature as its own creation, and nature and finite spirit lose all externality; they are but forms of spirit’s self-revelation. We normally distinguish between what is manifested or revealed (the content of the revelation) and how it is revealed (the form). I may manifest an inner insecurity either by withdrawing from responsibility or by seeking out ever new responsibilities with which to prove myself, for example. But the self-revelation of spirit is not subject to this distinction (§383, Zusatz); rather, spirit’s self-revelation is precisely what is revealed.

So far we have connected two of the three important characteristics of spirit, its ideality and its self-revelation. Spirit is ideal, without an absolute other, because its apparent other—nature—is already a form of the self-manifestation that spirit is. Spirit is, further, free. Hegel also calls this “absolute negativity.” But freedom is precisely the absence of dependence on an other (§382, Zusatz), self-determination. Spirit is only what it makes itself.

Hegel’s concept of spirit is difficult and confusing. Even with the above list of major characteristics, one cannot seem to put one’s
finger on the concept. But because I am concerned only with one particular set of stages of finite spirit, I shall not try to do what I think I cannot do—make all the aspects of Hegel’s concept of Geist perfectly clear. It is helpful to think of spirit as the ordering activity operative within the universe, an activity that is capable of self-reflection in that it is in some sense capable of metaordering, ordering its own ordering activity. Such a conception of spirit fits the three characteristics I have focused on here. The universal ordering activity is the overcoming of its other, namely, the lack of order. Even a lack of order is not absolutely opposed to such an activity, for it is the presupposition of such activity, and it is far from clear that the notion of an absolute lack of order makes real sense. Order makes itself manifest, it need not reveal something else. And the ordering activity is free, for determination is a form of order, so nothing else can determine it, bind it. Determination is a form of order, so the source of all order can only be self-determined. This account is still very general, but it is enough to give us a sense of the direction of Hegel’s thought. In later chapters more detail about the way finite, subjective spirit is an ordering activity is added, piece by piece, supporting this approach to spirit.

We must still specify the notion of spirit a bit further, so that we can finally begin to deal with finite, subjective spirit, the subject of the philosophy of mind. According to Hegel, the point of calling anything finite is to assert a discrepancy between its concept and the reality (§386) and, in particular, to claim that the reality falls short of the concept. In finite mind (spirit is in itself infinite, although it contains finitude) we therefore have spirit that is not fully manifest, nor fully ideal, nor fully free. Finite mind is, as it were, spirit still struggling to gain control of itself, to free itself from nature, which is something it simply finds over against it. Absolute spirit finds itself everywhere; finite spirit “does not yet discern here its unity with the spirit concealed and implicit in nature, to which it

19. But see Solomon, “Hegel’s Concept of Geist”; and Charles Taylor, Hegel. I also find Josiah Royce’s Lectures on Modern Idealism, which seems to have been forgotten lately, quite helpful.

20. In view of the fact that nature is spirit’s other, and that nature itself is not a complete lack of order, I think that we should conclude that the notion of a complete lack of order cannot be made out according to Hegel any more than a concept of pure nothing can.
stands, therefore, in an external relation. . . . Here, consequently, spirit still has in nature a limitation and just by this limitation is finite spirit’’ (§384, Zusatz, my tr.).

But we are concerned in particular with subjective spirit, which is a stage of finite spirit. How does it differ from objective spirit? “As long as spirit stands related to itself as to an Other, it is only subjective spirit, originating in Nature and at first itself natural spirit. But the entire activity of subjective spirit is directed to grasping itself as its own self, proving itself to be the ideality of its immediate reality. When it has attained to a being-for-self, then it is no longer merely subjective, but objective spirit’’ (§385, Zusatz, Miller tr.). The distinction seems primarily to be that, in subjective spirit, spirit finds itself revealed in a given material, whereas in objective spirit, spirit is set on constructing its own revelation, making the world over in its own image, as it were, by constructing a society and a civil state. Subjective spirit is still essentially tinged with passivity; it receives a given passively, as if from the outside, which it subsequently recognizes as being a manifestation of the spiritual. Equally important, objective spirit is the realm of intersubjectivity. Subjective spirit is the treatment of the individual “I.” Objective spirit treats the “We,” a no less essential phase in spirit’s self-actualization. This leads to a peculiarity in the Hegelian system: theorization and cognition seem already to be perfected in subjective spirit, whereas practical being must still traverse all of objective and absolute spirit.21 This imbalance, I believe, can be overcome only if absolute spirit is also the fulfillment of man’s cognitive being as well as his practical being.

21. This imbalance is tellingly pointed out in T. Litt, Hegel: Versuch einer kritischen Erneuerung.