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Position of Imagination in Hegel: Critique of the political economy of memory and imagination, Part III¹⁾

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Abstract

This article is the third (Part III) in a series of six to eight parts. Alloying philosophy, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies, this series seeks to articulate the relationship between the essential nature of Western philosophy's metaphysical method of dialectics and the structure of memory in human beings. Covering Western philosophers from the ancient to modern periods, such as Plato, Socrates, Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Hegel, Lacan, Derrida, and Jakobson, and quoting social, cultural, and psychopathological materials such as *Sarashina Diary* (the daughter of Sugawara no Takasue in 11c Japan), *Funes the Memorious* (Jorge Luis Borges), *Norwegian Wood* (Haruki Murakami), *1984* (Apple Computer television commercial), autism spectrum disorder, late capitalism, and even the Quest Atlantis boom, this series endeavors to elucidate the nature of memory in the neurotypical (NT), or the so-called normal—the majority of human beings. It is only in comparison with the so-called abnormal that the so-called normal can be defined. As a conclusion, the author elucidates that it is the being of “the otherness” that always and already permeates the normal and stable functioning of memory, and it is that which frames the structure and content of the *ego*. In other words, this study depicts the heteronomous nature of the capability of memory and imagination of typical developed individuals.

In Part I, I traced the position of the imagination from Augustine to Descartes, and in Part II, its position in Kant and Heidegger. In Part III, I will examine Hegel's theory of the imagination with precision. Hegel locates the function of the imagination in the chapter “Psychology” in the “Philosophy of Spirit” in his *Enzyklopädie*. Hegel's theory of imagination builds on Kant's distinction between reproductive imagination and productive imagination, but Hegel transforms the productive imagination into an imagination that makes “sign.”

In Hegel's psychology, the function of representation follows the reception of sense data through intuition (*Anschauung*). The action of representation has three stages: recall

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(Erinnerung), imagination (Einbildungskraft), and memory (Gedächtnis). Imagination lies between recall and memory. The distinction between recall and memory is also unique to Hegel. In recall, the sensations received by intuition are made into images and stored in the “shaft” of the mind. Then, when the next intuition occurs, the stored images are called up and superimposed. This allows the human mind to receive the external world through images of its own. This is the beginning of intellectualization. Imagination, as the next higher stage, is the ability to call up images in an arbitrary manner, even in the absence of intuitive stimulation. Imagination furthermore functions as a productive imagination that produces “sign (Zeichen)” in the next stage. The position of this imagination is unique to Hegel. Sign is distinct from symbol. Symbols have sensory characteristics—their forms, which express their meanings—whereas signs are representations that have meanings independent of their sensory characteristics. Thus, to separate the sensible image from its individuality and subsume it in the abstract and general meaning world is to become an intellectual mind for Hegel, and such a general system of meanings is what Hegel calls “memory.” Thus, memory has nothing to do with personal recollections. In Hegel’s view, imagination thus leads human to live in “memory” as a general intelligence.

Key words: *Enzyklopädie*; Hegel; imagination; memory; Philosophy of Mind; sign

Contents

4. Imagination and Signs: Hegel (1)

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Interestingly, in Hegel's "Philosophy of Spirit," especially the chapter on "Subjective Spirit," he discusses the occurrence of what we today would call occult and paranormal phenomena in the process by which the spirit, from a state unaware of the expansion of its substantial totality, gradually acquires all of that expansion as itself. This is followed by discussions of phenomenological consciousness (i.e., the modern ego), imagination, and semiotics (evaluated by Derrida as a precursor to modern semiotics).²⁾ In other words, Hegel is trying to paint a picture wherein the functions of our "consciousness," "imagination," and "signs" are not established in advance as partial functions of the ego but are formed as "spirit," which possesses pneumatic permeation and expansion in nature, and gains its form and structure so that the "ego" rather arises as a phenomenon of that process. To summarize the topic as a whole in advance, he argues that the human mind changing from a natural state to spirit as an intellectual activity means *awakening from a dream and living in a "memory."* Put differently, you slip out of living in a dazzling space of intuition and images to live in a temporal structure, after which you come to *hear the voice of the guardian spirit as your own voice.* If we look at the composition of the "Philosophy of Spirit," including that of the *Enzyklopädie* as a whole, it is as shown below. An accurate translation of the title of the *Enzyklopädie* is *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*.

Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline (3rd edition, 1830)

Volume 1. Science of Logic

Volume 2. Philosophy of Nature

Volume 3. Philosophy of Spirit

Introduction

Chapter 1. Subjective Spirit

A. Anthropology. Soul

a. Natural Soul

b. Feeling Soul

c. Actual Soul

B. Phenomenology of Spirit. Consciousness

a. Consciousness in General

b. Self-consciousness

c. Reason

C. Psychology. Spirit

a. Theoretical Spirit

b. Practical Spirit

c. Free Spirit

Chapter 2. Objective Spirit

Chapter 3. Absolute Spirit

I focus on the chapter “Subjective Spirit.” “Subjective Spirit” can be understood as describing the process by which the human spirit, especially modern consciousness, arises from nature. “Objective Spirit” describes the social process of the development of states and laws, and “Absolute Spirit” describes the process by which the human spirit perceives the totality of the world (universe) through the techniques of art, religion, and philosophy and attains a state of unity with it. Of these, we focus on “Subjective Spirit,” which is divided into three chapters: “Anthropology. **Soul**,” “Phenomenology of Spirit. **Consciousness**,” and “Psychology. **Spirit**” [Bold emphasis added by Nojiri. The same applies throughout].

The following is a brief summary of the contents of the three chapters. “Anthropology. **Soul**” (Anthropologie. **Die Seele**) discusses the basic activities of the human mind—temperament, emotions, and habits—where we live in a state close to nature just like animals. Thus, Hegel assigned the lectures on human studies (which is broader than today’s “anthropology” and refers to the entire human sciences, including philosophical considerations) that Kant emphasized to the first part of the subjective mind. You could say that this is a statement of his position on anthropology itself, a discipline that considers the human mind a natural object. A qualitative description of the human mind is, for Hegel, merely a beginning. The theme of this anthropology chapter is the “awakening” of the soul. The spirit as a “soul” is in oneness with nature and is in a dreaming state; the “awakening” of the soul means knowing that what comes to that “soul” in “dreams,” “premonitions,” and messages from a “guardian spirit” are actually messages from the main body of your self. “The purpose of the human soul is for that which *latently and originally* is the spirit to manifest itself *to the soul* or the spirit as well as for the universes that are *latently and originally* contained in the spirit to enter the *consciousness* of the spirit” [Hegel (Enz-III) 121. Japanese translation 157–158].³⁾

Next, “Phenomenology of Spirit. **Consciousness**” (Die Phänomenologie des Geistes. **Das Bewußtsein**) describes the mental state of human beings that emerged from merely being part of nature by the power of culture in the formation of habits and awakened as cultural and social beings—the structure and experience of modern consciousness, as it were. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, another major work of Hegel, is incorporated here as part of the subjective mind. The human mental state transitions to a mode in which it frees itself from oneness with nature, sees nature as an external object, and becomes conscious of the self as “consciousness” that sees nature. This is the so-called state of subject-object separation. The subject that perceives the object using the functions of its spirit (sensibility, perception, understanding) reaches a state where the world is the world because it perceives it. However, eventually, that conviction is shaken again by entering into a relationship with another consciousness, after which it becomes “self-consciousness” through a series of struggles and mutual recognitions, completing its awakening as “consciousness.” After undergoing this process, human consciousness establishes its perspective as *us*, meaning as *human consciousness in general*, and becomes “reason” that confronts the world.

Finally, “Psychology. **Spirit**” (Psychologie. **Der Geist**) describes the state in which this “reason” can be convinced to the effect that the world is identical with human activity itself—the process leading up to the spirit. In this, the functions of “imagination,” “memory,” and “language (signs)” are emphasized; in the language of modern psychoanalysis, it describes the process of symbolic castration as a social process. It is the process by which the human spirit creates social structure that becomes independent as a dynamic structure, leading to the creation of a human world by humans and for humans. This may be considered a description of the process of the establishment of modern social structure that is dynamic and generates history. Hegel overlaps the processes of human spiritual history and infants growing into adults as those of coming to live in memory. He argues that the human spirit stops seeing the world by direct intuition (sense) and instead superimposes memories on it to become an intellectual mind—spirit. “In this way, *children* advance from intuition to *recall*. The more educated a person is, the more he stops living in direct intuition, instead living in recall at the same time as all his intuitions” [Ibid. 262. Ibid. 360]. “A man with great sense and great education has perfect intuition about what lies before him. Such a person possesses sense that wholly exhibits the characteristics of recall” [Ibid. 250. Ibid. 343].⁴⁾ Thus, for Hegel, recall as a function of imagination comes from the essence of the human spirit being intellectual. *A human being is spirit when they live in recall.*



As discussed earlier in this series, in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), Hegel stated that imagination is primary and most fundamental. However, in *Enzyklopädie* (1830), imagination appears as an ability that is given a specific position and function—the human ability which works only after the establishment of the structure of individual consciousness which has already experienced the mutual recognition process with other consciousnesses to reach the universal intellect by creating and symbolizing the representations. Moreover, the part about “anthropology,” which discusses a state prior to the establishment of individual consciousness, describes the functions of uncastrated primordial imagination under topics such as dreaming, premonition, and mental confusion.

Regarding “anthropology,” Hegel himself did not use the term “primordial imagination” that we use. However, as mentioned earlier, Hegel changed his way of thinking from simply regarding imagination as a fundamental force to seeing it as a force with clearly limited functions. Hence, it is perhaps possible to read this as a story in which there is a primitive function of what may be termed the imaginary of human, and it transforms into “imagination” with limited function in the process of the structure of individual consciousness is established.

As persons who have examined the functions of imagination in human beings, especially regarding the differences between imagination in pre-modern times and that in the modern individual, we must note the two parts “*Feeling Soul*” in “Anthropology. **Soul**” and “*Theoretical Spirit*” in “Psychology. **Spirit**.” In “Feeling Soul,” what we today may call supernatural experiences are observed and analyzed in the process by which the human mind gradually awakens from a state of being undifferentiated from

Chapter 1: Subjective Spirit

A. Anthropology. Soul

a. Natural Soul

b. *Feeling Soul*

c. Actual Soul

B. Phenomenology of Spirit. Consciousness

a. Consciousness in General

b. Self-consciousness

c. Reason

C. Psychology. Spirit

a. *Theoretical Spirit*

b. Practical Spirit

c. Free Spirit

[Dreams, premonitions, mental confusion]
 ○ Dreams (natural dreaming, child in the mother's body, oracle of the guardian spirit)
 ○ Premonitions (dowsing, clairvoyance, hallucination, telepathy, remote co-reaction)
 ○ Mental confusion (schizophrenia?)
 → habits as corporeal memories, training bodily expression as "symbols" of the mind

[Imagination and symbols]
 ○ Associating fantasies with "symbols" and storing them as mechanical memories
 → Establishing intelligence

nature to distinguish itself from nature. In "Theoretical Spirit," the theory of "imagination" as the ability to form "representations" unique to the late Hegel is developed, and this is further linked to the formation of the human spirit (the formation of "signs") that incorporates linguistic structure.

Interestingly, these two parts have a common structure. Both see the establishment of "mechanical memory" as a way through which symptoms such as supernatural phenomena, psychopathologies, and fantasies, which are assumed to arise from the individualization of parts that deviate from the wholeness of the spirit, are developed into sound intelligence.

The final stage of the "feeling soul" is to bring your physicality under control through habit-forming efforts. Hegel refers to this as education and culture formation, and it may be interpreted as what Foucault called education through discipline and training (*Bildungs*) from today's point of view. Thus, human beings overcome the magical aspects of things, various supernatural phenomena, and psychiatric ailments that we experience because the *substance* of the spirit is operating outside of ourselves. Hegel explains that such phenomena and symptoms came to be because the spirit saw what was originally itself as phenomena in the external world. Hegel believed that by controlling the body through habits, these phenomena disappear. Hegel writes that habits are memory/recall. They are the spirit reincorporating its substance into itself. The German word "Erinnerung" also means internalization. Hegel says this is the spirit casting magic on the body. Education and spiritual development—modernity—signify the formation of a spirit-body relationship that goes from experiencing the world as magical to the spirit withdrawing inward and controlling the body by casting magic on it [Ibid. 191. Ibid. 254].

Interestingly, with the "feeling soul," which is in a semi-natural state, human beings hear the voice of the guardian spirit (Genius) and make decisions according to its power. The guardian spirit is the one who bears my determination and determines my destiny, and it is with this guardian spirit that I live.

We should understand the *peculiarity* of human beings as making decisions about our behavior and destiny amid all states and relations, under the guardian spirit. In other words, I am *double* within myself. On the one hand, I am the person whom I know from my *external* life and my *general* representation; on the other hand, I am an *inner* existence regulated in a *peculiar* way. This peculiarity within me forms my *destiny*. This is because my inner peculiarity is an oracle, and every individual determination depends on the revelation of this oracle. [Ibid. 131–32. Ibid. 172–73]

In other words, it is a voice that comes from within, but, in the “feeling soul” on its way to awaken, it is at once “me” and “not me.” Hegel also calls it “a selfish other” (*ein selbstisches Anderes*) or, after Freud we would call it my unconscious. In any case, to hear the voice that you hear from your other / yourself as another as your own voice is the education process of the “feeling soul.” Eventually, the “feeling soul” ceases to hear the voice of the guardian spirit and only hears the voice of the self. Thus, the soul becomes the modern “consciousness.” “In the realm of the soul that *does nothing but feel*, the self appears in the form of the *guardian spirit* as a force that influences existing individuality *exclusively from the outside* and *exclusively from the inside*. Conversely, having reached the current development stage of the soul, as previously stated, the self *manifests* in the *current existence* of the soul—the corporeality of the soul—while *existence* is assumed within yourself (oneself). Consequently, the self or the ego has intuition of its self in its *other*, being *the very action of self-intuition itself*” [Ibid. 198. Ibid. 265]. The ego as modern consciousness is spirit that has turned the revelation from the guardian spirit into itself. We must leave the exploration of what Hegel meant by “guardian spirit” for another time. Perhaps Hegel was imagining the ancient Greek “daimon.” Hannah Arendt suggests the following about the daimon:

It is impossible to control who you are. Further, who you are will most likely remain concealed to the person in question who is standing before the world, although the world will see them as unmistakably unambiguous without any room for misinterpretation. It is very much like the ancient Greek *δαίμων*. The daimon was a guardian spirit who followed a human being for the entirety of their life but always only revealing its presence over the shoulder behind that person, which is why it was clearly visible to those around the person but never visible to him/herself. [Arendt (2016) 219–20. Japanese translation 224]

If this is the case, then, for the Greeks, the guardian spirit was external to the self, invisible to the self, and visible only to others; however, for Hegel’s awakening “feeling soul,” it is a voice whispering from within. When it becomes the voice of the self rather than that of the other within the self, “consciousness” arises. He writes that the soul, having withdrawn from the magically charged world and having acquired magic to control its body through the formation of mechanical memories called habits, as well as having internalized the voice of the guardian spirit and having begun to hear it as the voice of the self, is “consciousness” as the subject of “phenomenology.”

Another aspect of importance is Hegel's theory of imagination in "The Theoretical Soul," wherein he discusses "imagination" and "signs." This part about semiotics was also highlighted by Derrida as a precursor to modern semiotics (the divergence between symbolic signs and semantic contents). Here, imagination functions in a special manner along with the function played by memory. For Hegel, imagination and memory are not the same. Imagination not only associates intuition with understanding but also fills the contents of "signs" with stored memories. Here, "signs" lose the inherent meaning they originally possessed and receive the contents given by the imagination. In other words, for Hegel, imagination deprives signs of their original meaning and replaces the inherent memories of signs with the memories of the spirit.

Hegel's theory of imagination can be found under "ββ. Imagination," "a. Theoretical Spirit," "C. Psychology. Spirit." In short, it has the following structure.

C. Psychology. Spirit

a. Theoretical Spirit

α. Intuition

β. Representation (Die Vorstellung)

αα. Recollection (Die Erinnerung)

ββ. Imagination (Die Einbildungskraft)

γγ. Memory (Das Gedächtnis)

γ. Thinking

b. Practical Spirit

c. Free Spirit

In short, the spirit, which has already become general self-consciousness and intelligence, receives the material of its emotions and sensations as an objective and external present in "intuition," incorporates it into the self in "representation," generalizes it through the functions of signs and memories, and constitutes it as conceptual judgment and inference in "thinking." [reference: Vieweg (2008)]. In this part about representation, "imagination" is positioned in parallel with "recollection" and "memory." A characteristic of Hegel's theory of imagination is that he gives imagination a role different from the functions of mere recall and memory. Instead, it is the function of creating "signs" (Zeichen). Signs are the unity of representation and intuition, and "It is a direct intuition that represents contents wholly different from its own contents" [Hegel (Enz-III) 270. Japanese translation 371].

Let us follow the process through which signs are generated from intuition and developed into thinking. This process expresses the core characteristics of how the human soul is spirit, unlike animal soul. However, it is not the process by which spirit becomes spirit. As Hegel himself mentions several times, here the human spirit is spirit from the outset; in a sense, it is thinking intuition from the very first intuition. Hegel then offers a step-by-step description of the mechanisms of the spirit—the mechanisms by which human thinking is established. Through this process, the human spirit finds itself in the world.

In other words, the spirit signifies the self-conviction that the world is oneself (ourselves). This stance of the spirit naturally erases otherness; more precisely, it is the self that has sublated otherness and incorporated it into the self. Although it is easy to critique how Hegel turns the other into the self here, the more important issue should be to elucidate the mechanisms of how such a sublation comes about; I believe that Hegel's philosophy is of value today because it can be read as doing just that. According to Hegel, humanity means *confronting the world with signs*. From a contemporary perspective, this can be said to provide us with clues to analyze the mechanisms by which modern humanity arises.

The spirit, referred to as the theoretical spirit, is also called intellect. It is a mode of intellectual spirit that has already acquired generality. The first step of intellect is "intuition" (*Anschauung*). Intuition is a direct received sense data already inserted into the form of time and space. In that sense, it is not raw sensation itself but sense data already having intellectual ordering. Simultaneously, it is sense data objectively assumed on the outside. Speaking of intuition, it works to bring to mind the intuition (sensibility) of Kant's epistemology (*Critique of Pure Reason*). Nonetheless, Hegel says that it is sense data permeated by the form of time and space while cautioning that this form of time and space is not just a subjective form. He criticizes Kant for trying to make them into just a subjective form [Ibid. 253. Ibid. 346]. Hegel's philosophy of spirit already discusses "soul" and "consciousness" as precursors to this and "spirit" as having already gone through a stage of struggles and recognition among consciousnesses awakening from the natural soul. In other words, he writes about his perception of the modern person's spirit as having been generalized and intellectualized as well as having acquired common sense.

At the stage of intuition, the spirit as intellect is concerned with existence outside itself. This is followed by a process by which the spirit reconsiders this externally assumed intuition as its own, making it internal. Through this process, the spirit gains freedom of being with the self and proceeds from the theoretical to the practical spirit. The next stage of intuition is representation (*Vorstellung*). A representation is an intuition imaged by the human abilities of recall and memory. By being imaged, intuitive knowledge goes from being outside the spirit and facing the spirit to becoming internalized and becoming the spirit's own.

The spirit assumes intuition to *belong to itself*, penetrating the intuition, making it a certain *internal object*, *recalling itself in the intuition*, *manifesting* itself in the intuition, and thereby becoming *free*. The intellect raises itself to the stage of *representation* through this *internal progression*. [Ibid. 256. Ibid. 351]

What is interesting is this part about "representation." Hegel describes representation or imaging by distinguishing between three types or stages: (1) **recollection (Erinnerung)**, (2) **imagination (Einbildungskraft)**, and (3) **memory (Gedächtnis)**. The word Erinnerung is usually used to mean "remember," but Hegel insisted on using this Erinnerung to emphasize the meaning "internalize," which originally belongs to the word form. As for memory, he intentionally uses another word: Gedächtnis. As

I will explain later, Hegel did not regard “memory” as calling to mind an experienced scene as a scene or a visualization of that place at that time. This may differ from how modern people think about memory. This might partly be due to living in an age of moving pictures since the invention of the medium of film, but we tend to think of memories as visual memories. In fact, the flashback technique is probably one of the most popular directing techniques in visual media today. However, Hegel did not think of memory as visual recall. What is memory that distinguishes it from mere recall? Further, how is the function of imagination positioned here? Simply put, imagination is the ability to abstract as well as to recall, being the ability to generate signs. For Hegel, imagination has two stages. This, of course, comes from Kant. It is a distinction between reproductive and productive imagination. Hegel brought a qualitative transition or severance to this distinction, and position productive imagination as “sign-making imagination.” Unlike Kant’s imagination, *Hegel’s imagination* (especially sign-making imagination) is characterized by the fact that it is auditory rather than visual. The reason is that hearing is what makes temporality and dialectic possible. One reason why we think visually/in images when we think about the issue of imagination and memory may be the influence of Kant using visual and image examples when discussing it. Nevertheless, surprisingly, Hegel had already moved away from the visual Kantian imagination and considered auditory and phonetic imagination. He seemed to think that this auditory imagination is the key to establishing a dialectic. To see this, let us trace the three stages of representation in that order: **(1) recollection**, **(2) imagination**, and **(3) memory**.

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(1) The first stage of representation, “**recollection**” produces a “mental image” (Bild). “Bild” corresponds to Latin “imago”; thus, it might be fine to translate it as “image,” but I do not know if the image he refers to is limited to visual images. Hegel states that the original sensory apparatus of intuition is sight. Moreover, he regards vision as the sense of material ideative independence and objectivity, positioning it as a sense of externality (the senses of taste and smell are distinguished as the material extinction of the object, while hearing is the sense of material existence and ideative extinction of matter) [Ibid. 251–52. Ibid. 344–45]. Since internalizing and abstracting the senses is the order of progress in Hegel’s theory of representation, the “mental image” formed at the first stage of representation can be considered a visual-dominant representation. Now, the intellect receives intuition by recollection. In other words, direct sensations are transformed into images within oneself. This separates intuition from the concrete temporality and spatiality it had. Hegel says that intuition is light, while mental images are darkened versions of that. He goes on to say that the mental images are stored in the darkness of the unconscious realm of the mind. Here, Hegel imagines a dark shaft [Ibid. 259–261. Ibid. 356–58]. Interestingly, Hegel thinks that this hoard of mental images is not something that can be arbitrarily controlled by your will. Mental images accumulate in large quantities in this shaft, unconsciously and automatically. To invoke these accumulated mental images, existing intuition is required. When the intellect experiences concrete intuition, the intellect superimposes on it stored mental images with the

same contents. Hence, intellect is spirit that always experiences intuition, but perceives with its own images. Thus, intellect can take possession of intuition. Hegel believed that the growth of the human spirit, becoming an adult and becoming educated, is to live in recall. “In this way, *children* advance from *intuition* to *recollection*. The more educated a person is, the more he stops living in direct intuition, instead living in recall at the same time as all his intuitions” [Ibid. 262. Ibid. 360]. Furthermore, Hegel states that this superposition of mental images over intuition is what allows us to make the mental images our own for the first time. Unless we are awakened and drawn out of the darkness of our mind by the light that actual intuition brings, the mental images stored in our unconscious realm are something other and not yet ours. The images stored in the darkness are our inner other. Thus, on each side, external and internal, things not left to our arbitrariness are united, and internalized representations are born in us. This experience is repeated, and as the mental images are often invoked by intuition, they acquire independent life and eventually begin to move without the need for external intuition. This is the working of imagination.

(2) The second stage of representation, “**imagination**,” enables the arbitrary invocation of mental images (reproductive imagination) and association (associative imagination), as well as the production of signs (productive imagination) and utilizing general representation. In recollection, mental images are only invoked in conjunction with the existence of actual intuition, but the intellect can invoke mental images arbitrarily or electively by imagination. Hegel emphasized that this imagination allows us to evoke mental images arbitrarily as proof that the spirit is a general intelligence. Although it is said that the simplest function of imagination—reproductive imagination—is a formality because it merely reproduces mental images and draws them into existence, without making creative changes to the contents of mental images, it is a function of the intellect and is distinguished from mere “recollection.” Recollection does not work without present intuition, and its workings are not arbitrary—it is not something that can be controlled. Dark mental images accumulated in the aforementioned unconscious and dark shaft—the darkness of the mind that can be compared to the night—are invoked by the light of real intuition; this is recollection. Nonetheless, Hegel says that when you can make these dark mental images shine brightly on your own, that is imagination.

Intellect [...] pulls apart the black darkness that hides the treasures comprising all the mental images that you possess and banishes the darkness with the brightness of the light that presentness possesses. The *first* form of representational action—*recollection*—is thus enhanced into imagination, [Ibid. 264. Ibid. 362]

Being able to draw out mental images arbitrarily from the darkness of the depths of the mind is what Hegel describes as the power of the intellect, distinguishing it from mere recollection as imagination. Therefore, imagination is already more intellectual than mere recollection at the stage of its simplest function, reproductive imagination. What triggers the power of recollection to be “enhanced” into imagination? “[With reproductive imagination] the ego has now become a power that controls all

kinds of mental images” [Ibid. 262. Ibid. 360]. Hence, what enhances mere recollection to this imagination? What illuminates the power of the mental images when the ego cannot control them or succumbs to their power, transforming mere recollection into imagination, which is the power of the ego? Where does the “light” come from? With this issue in mind, let us continue to read Hegel’s narrative.

Imagination secondly allows us not only to invoke mental images, but also to relate them to each other, and elevate them into general representations. This is the associating imagination. Here, Hegel criticizes the concept of “association of ideas” (*Ideenassoziation*) that arose in early modern philosophy, especially the genealogy of empiricism and the empirical psychology based on it [Ibid. 262. Ibid. 361]. Against association of ideas, he argues “associating imagination” (*die assoziierende Einbildungskraft*) [Ibid. 265. Ibid. 364], emphasizing the arbitrariness, autonomy, and intelligence of imagination. Here, Hegel gives an example of conversations that include intellectual plays on words that constitute wit and puns, rather than ordinary social conversation led by chance associations—empty talk. Hegel emphasizes that the association of mental images is not merely natural “mutual successive meeting” (*Aufeinanderfallen*). In other words, he rejects the idea that mental images are naturally connected by their similarity to each other, as if by attraction. Hegel thought that binding is wholly artificial through the workings of the intellect.

For these *mutual successive meetings* not to be utterly *accidental* or completely devoid of concept, it is assumed that similar mental images have *a force that pull them to each*, something similar to such a force, or a negative force [negative Macht]. It is a negative force that mutually wears down the unequal things possessed by the mental images. This force is actually intellect itself, the ego identical to the self. This ego directly gives generality to the mental images through its recollection (internalization) and *subsumes* individual intuition into the already internalized mental images. [Ibid. 263. Ibid. 362. Revised translation]

Hegel disapproved of the idea that mental images are naturally united by something like mutual similarity. Rather, intellect creates general representation by dissolving and breaking down natural and experiential bonds.

Thus, when intellect creates general representation, it behaves as *spontaneous activity*. Therefore, it is a meaningless fallacy to suppose that general representations arise from the mutual fall of many similar representations [...] without the aid of the spirit. [Ibid. 266. Ibid. 366]

Hegel emphasized that the binding of representations is a “subjective bond” (*ein subjektives Band*) through the spontaneous activation of imagination. This power spontaneously activated by the ego is imagination, and that is the very reason why imagination is the power of the intellect. Hegel recognized as intellect the power to deny the concrete uniqueness of the mental images and connect them by the

generality it grants, and equated that power with the ego. In other words, establishing the ego means to deny the natural binding of mental images. This is interesting from the viewpoint of contemporary psychoanalysis. To extend what Hegel was saying, we can derive the idea that, if we succumb to the power of the mental images and allow them to bind with each other, that is a state in which we have lost our ego (i.e., mental illness). How can the ego be established as a power to control the mental images without allowing a chain of such images? Hegel did not answer this question here. What he revealed here is that because the ego as this *negative force* has already been established, the chain of various mental images does not come from *mutual successive meetings* but *binding through imaginations*. This part about intellect assumes that the ego has already been established. Conversely, the power to establish the structure of the ego is the source of imagination. We shall return to this point later. From the viewpoint of contemporary psychoanalysis, it is further interesting that Hegel exemplified the binding function of imagination in a scene of conversation. In the case of a normal social conversation, the representations exchanged are influenced by the scene in which they are exchanged, and the conversation connects from one representation to another in an external and accidental way by the influence of the situation, such as with whom you talk about the representation and who is talking about the representation. However, the resourceful and genius person weaves conversations by chasing mental images that include the certain and the deep. Hegel wrote that wit and puns are the intellectual union of representations of these brilliant and great spirit. [Ibid. 265. Ibid. 364]. For Hegel, “representation” (*Vorstellung*) thus includes linguistic expressions. More precisely, a more representation-like representation, a true representation, is an intellectualized representation—a verbalized representation. The ability to exchange verbalized representations is, for Hegel, proof that the ego has reached intellect. The perfect form of such verbalized representations is “signs” (*Zeichen*), which possess semantic contents no longer related to the original intuitive mental images. The user of the signs puts their semantic contents into them and release the signs to the world.⁵⁾

The third form of imagination is imagination to create signs. It is productive imagination, but for Hegel, when this productive imagination advanced to mechanical “memory,” the intellect shifted from representation to thinking (thought). Hegel’s association of memory with mechanicality, as well as his appreciation of mechanical memory, are perhaps most puzzling to the reader. To understand this, it is necessary to understand that Hegel considered productive imagination a linguistic ability and the ability to generate signs. In general, artistic activity is an example of the workings of productive imagination, but Hegel cites the linguistic arts. In Hegel’s view, art is the intellect’s work to subsume the individuality of mental images into a relationship with a certain generality, freely transforming them into a synthesis with unique contents. Here, there is a creativity different from simply reproducing intuition as it is. Hegel uses the term “fantasy” (*Phantasie*) for this. Fantasy is the arbitrary manipulation of mental images derived from intuition. “The intellect is thus fantasy and the same as *symbolizing* imagination, *allegorizing* imagination, and *poeticizing* imagination” [Ibid. 266. Ibid. 365]. Here, the essence of art is to transform sense contents into an expression with intellectual cohesion through language, with higher praise being reserved for arts that apply linguistic abilities such as symbols, allegory, and poetry. At the

fantasy stage, the intellect completely internalizes as its own the stock material derived from intuition stored as mental images, puts them under its control, and subsumes them under its unique contents. In other words, the stored intuitive material is used as a means of self-expression.⁶⁾ The function of productive imagination, in Hegel's view, is to subsume the peculiar into the general. In other words, it is generalization that incorporates the peculiarity of intuition's stored mental images into the realm of one's imagination.

Today, we tend to think of fantasies as personal daydreams. It is therefore not surprising that you find it disconcerting that Hegel here considers fantasy to be an intellectual function of the productive imagination. This is an important point for understanding Hegel's theory of imagination. Now, I wrote "incorporating peculiarity into the realm of one's own imagination." The key is that what I referred to as "one's own" here is what is the already *generalized self* at this stage in Hegel's philosophy of spirit. This is what was established as "general self-consciousness" [Ibid. 226. Ibid. 308] at the end of "Phenomenology of Spirit," the preceding chapter in the "Philosophy of Spirit". In modern terms, it may be considered a socialized self that has woven the perspectives of others into the self. Therefore, the imagination exhibited here is not daydreaming or fantasizing based on personal freedom and desire. It is an already socialized/historicized, limited, and castrated imagination demonstrated in the context of verbal communication. For example, Hegel believed that art is an expression of the generalities that the self has already acquired—sociality and historicity—using the sense materials they have accumulated in themselves. We should understand Hegel's theory of art as works of art and culture always expressing sociality and historicity. Here, sociality and historicity are modern terms that I use, while Hegel called it the spirit of the general being.

This unity [of mental images and general representations] becomes manifest by functioning of general representation as a *substantive force* which governs mental images, lending certainty to the notion that the self is such, subjugating the mental images to the self as being accidental, making the self the soul of the mind images, becoming *present* and *self-aware*, recollecting (internalizing) the self, and revealing the self. Intellect creates this unity of *the general* and *the peculiar*, *the internal* and *the external*, and *the representation* and *the intuition*, *recovering totality* existing within intuition as *confirmed* totality.

Hegel said that intuition also contains totality in a sense. This is because this intuition, although referred to as just intuition, is one that is experienced by intellect as already generalized self-consciousness. As such, the workings of productive imagination are nothing more than consciously extracting and restoring it. Hegel believed that art is an example of such activity.⁷⁾

(To be continued in *Part IV*)

Notes

- 1) This article is based on “Memories of the Future: An Essay on the Origin of Philosophy and Hegel’s imagination” from the general book *The Battlefield of Philosophy (Tetsugaku no senjou)*, edited by Seigen Nasu and Eiichi Nojiri, Kojinsha, 2018), with additions, revisions, and restructuring into a series for publication in this bulletin.
- 2) Hegel’s treatment of imagination, especially his relationship with mental illness, differed from one period to another, but I will discuss those differences on another occasion. Here, I refer to the third edition of the *Enzyklopädie* from his final years.
- 3) The emphasis basically follows the Japanese translation by Funayama, but I have deleted emphasis that I could not confirm in the original text.
- 4) See also [Hegel (Enz-III) 86. Japanese translation 110], [Ibid. 191. Ibid. 254–55].
- 5) In Hegel’s view, the theoretical spirit discussed here belongs to the realm of the subjective spirit together with the practical spirit, with the subjective spirit being something that creates and produces. Moreover, what the theoretical spirit produces is “word” (Wort) [Hegel (Enz-III) 238. Japanese translation 326]. Incidentally, the same part states that what the practical spirit produces is “enjoyment” (Genuß).
- 6) Charles Taylor, a contemporary Hegelian scholar from Canada, positions Hegel’s philosophy as “expressionism.” Certainly, looking at Hegel’s thoughts on fantasy and poetry in this part, it appears to be expressionism, not romanticism or impressionism [Taylor (2015=1979)].
- 7) De Man (1996) appreciates that Hegel’s view of art, which radically penetrates into the sociality and historicity of works of art as shown here, can function as a critique of “aesthetic ideology”—it can rebuke the ideological nature that the aesthetic perspective contains. When doing so, he raises the question of how art still can be art [De Man (1996) 91–104, “Sign and Symbol in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*”]. This question, which we will revisit later in this series, appears to have to do with Hegel not questioning why what our imagination produces is not merely personal limited delusion. Borrowing from the ideas in psychoanalysis after Lacan and representational culture theory after Jameson, the representations (images) we create, whether from a state considered healthy or one considered pathological or disordered, may be formularized as possessing a character or role of being imaginative solutions generated within the real or symbolic alienation of human beings living in social structures. In line with the development of the “Philosophy of Spirit” discussed here, one important question about Hegelian philosophy is whether “self-consciousness” should reach or already has reached “spirit.” Hegel’s descriptions are constantly intersecting developmental and structural descriptions. These intersections always mean that self-consciousness always already *should* reach spirit. However, as long as this holds true, self-consciousness *has not* fully reached spirit. This is because the complete attainment of spirit is assumed to mean the complete extinction of self-consciousness or the self falling into oblivion. Art is possible only in this state prior to attaining perfect spirit—the “middle state”—where there is no complete disappearance of self-consciousness. Nevertheless, art in this case is art before Hegel. The completion of the history

of an artwork that Hegel spoke about means the end of art in a conventional sense. In his attempt to discuss this issue, de Man singled out Hegel's state, "art is for us a thing of the past" [De Man (1996) 103]. De Man brings up how if Hegel were to purely formularize a middle state that carries the narratives of "Philosophy of Spirit" and *Lectures on Aesthetics* and allow it to take the form of work as a material manifestation, it would be an "allegory," a "belated, self-consciously symbolic modes." In a manner of speaking, this would be a symbolic mode that meaningfully conveys only that it once had some meaning, although we can no longer remember that meaning. De Man develops his argument here based on Hegel's differentiation between "symbol" (form expressing meaning) and "sign" (form expressing meaning different from the form itself). He should have expressed it more clearly by saying that the "belated, self-consciously symbolic modes," the forgotten allegory, can materially manifest the middle state between "symbol" and "sign," between the erasure of old meaning and the impartation of new meaning. It is what should be called a *pure sign*. In terms of modern philosophy of language, since the coupling of a speech content with a speech act is a "sign", this *pure sign* is a state of the material manifestation of the "sign" of genuine speech act, the action of signification itself, the process itself, and the movement by which the sign comes into being. Another way to express this "forgotten allegory" was proposed by science fiction writer J. G. Ballard, who described the essence of science fiction literature, which had a new tendency to express psychological mechanisms since the 1970s. He said that "The first true s-f story, and one I intend to write myself if no one else will, is about a man with amnesia lying on a beach and looking at a rusty bicycle wheel, trying to work out the absolute essence of the relationship between them." [Ballad (2017) 103]. Taking this a step further, this man suffering from amnesia on the beach in front of a rusty bicycle is nothing less than a metaphor for our daily life awakening to self-consciousness in a developed capitalist society surrounded by "commodities." A commodity is nothing but a work in which "speech act" is being materialized or crystalized. And it is our self-consciousness being awakened in the middle of commodity space that is this signifying effect itself activated by contact with these works. It is also possible to connect these findings to today's psychoanalytic theories. It may be possible to hypothesize that the complete "disappearance" of self-consciousness is different from the "forgetting" of self-consciousness. By applying the psychoanalytic concepts of "repression" and "exclusion" here, it becomes possible to differentiate and discuss this "middle state" more precisely. Such an undertaking ties in with Lacan's discussion of literary works as symptoms/adaptation by using term "sinthome" toward the end of his life, and it should also tie in with how Žižek called Hegel "Le plus sublime des hystériques" [Žižek 2014].

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- * The original sources were referred to, if they were important to the discussion, and were listed in the order of source information, followed by information on the Japanese translation. Books where only the Japanese translation was referred to have been cited with information on the translated version first. Wherever the author has revised a translation, it is indicated.

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