

A Theory of the Origin and Evolution of Man Based on Hegel's Philosophy

A Theory of the Origin and Evolution of Man Based on Hegel's Philosophy

*On the Historically Promising
State Ideology*

By

Sergey Peruanskiy

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



A Theory of the Origin and Evolution of Man Based on Hegel's Philosophy

By Sergey Peruanskiy

Translated by L. Novoselova and S. Peruanskiy

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2020 by Sergey Peruanskiy

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4771-X

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4771-1

*Dedicated to the blessed memory
of my son Ivan, Peruanskiy.*

CONTENTS

Foreword	xi
----------------	----

Part One: On the Content of the Categories of Hegel's Philosophy ("Deciphering" Hegelian Terminology)

Chapter 1	3
The myth of mysticism in teachings on the concept	

Chapter 2	11
The myth of mysticism in the teaching of the idea	
§ 1. The absolute as spirit development.....	12
§ 2. The development of spirit as the transformation.....	17
of a logical idea into an absolute idea	17
§ 3. How an idea becomes nature	18
§ 4. Development of the actual idea.....	21
§ 5. Is there mysticism in Hegel's philosophy?	25

Chapter 3	27
The myth of panlogism in Hegel's philosophy	

Chapter 4	30
The myth that Hegel denied evolution	

Chapter 5	35
Is Hegel an idealist?	

Chapter 6	41
Concluding remarks on Hegel's philosophy	

Part Two: Unravelling the mystery of human origins

Preface	47
---------------	----

Chapter 1	49
Different versions of the philosophical approach to explaining the origins of man	
§1. The approach of A. Kojève and F. Fukuyama to understanding the beginning of world history	49
§2 Understanding the origins of man, as proposed by Friedrich Engels.....	51
§3 A systematic approach to explaining the origins of man	53
Chapter Two.....	56
Some general scientific concepts and principles	
§1 General principles of inanimate and living movements.....	56
§ 2 A.N. Leontiev's activity theory.....	57
§ 3 The need principle.....	59
§ 4. Does a man act under the principle of the pursuit of the optimum satisfaction of needs?	60
§ 5. What is the "purpose" of life?	61
Chapter Three	63
Natural Selection	
§ 1. The general concept of natural selection.....	63
§ 2. On the theory of Malthus	64
§ 3. The laws of development for the needs-and-aptitude structure of living beings.....	66
Chapter 4	68
A philosophical solution to the problem of the origin of man and society	
§ 1. What is man?	68
§ 2. Why does man walk on two legs?.....	69
§ 3. Dividing the explanation of the origin of man into subtasks.....	70
§ 4. The last animal act	71
§ 5. The initial historical act	73
§ 6. The formation of the needs-aptitude structure of man	75
§ 7. Prey distribution as the source of political and economic institutions	76
§ 8. Permanent struggle among communities	77

Chapter 5	79
The law of the development of society	
§ 1. Deducing the law	79
§ 2. A discussion of the wording in the law of society's humanisation	81
Chapter 6	86
Comparing the systems approach to other concepts; the application of these to the problem of the origin of man	
§ 1. Socio-natural selection and Darwinian group Selection	86
§ 2. Socio-group selection.....	90
§ 3. Biosocial selection	90
§ 4. Socio-natural selection and a Marxist-materialistic understanding of history	92
Chapter 7	95
The law of society's humanisation against the background of history	
§ 1. A correlation between historic events and the development of the law of society	95
§ 2. The law of society's development and the break-up of the USSR.....	98
Chapter 8	114
Historically-promising state ideology	
§ 1. On the concept of historically-promising state ideology.....	114
§ 2. The principle of social justice in the Platonic state, as the first version of an historically-promising state ideology	115
§ 3. State ideology in the understanding of socialist-utopians.	116
§ 4. The Marxist approach to the formulation of state ideology	117
§ 5. Alexander Zinoviev's concept of state ideology	118
§ 6. Social-humanism as state ideology	122
Chapter 10	126
State ideology in modern Russia	
§ 1. On the official ideology of modern Russia	126
§ 2. The consequences of ideology in the absence of any ideology...	126
§ 3. State ideology and the Russian national idea	132
Appendix	137
Annex I.....	139
The opportunities of contextual translation	

Annex II.....	143
What is the truth? Or, great people may be wrong too	
Annex III	147
Analysis of the main provisions of the Marxist theory of social development	
Annex IV	171
A complete solution to the ancient problem: which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Or, What is primary — spirit or matter?	
Annex V	174
On the Christian religion as a source of the humanisation of society	
Annex VI	194
What does the New Testament bequeath?	
Annex VII.....	207
What is Time?	
Conclusion.....	217
Index of Names.....	221

FOREWORD

My potential reader! Opening the preface, you, as usual, think: what interesting information does this book offer? I'd like to explain: there are two parts to this book. The second part explains how man has descended and how he has been humanising from his "birthday" to the present day. An outstanding comrade-in-arms, Darwin E. Haeckel, in his famous speech at the Congress of Zoologists in Cambridge in 1898, spoke about the issues of zoology: "Of these issues, none represents such great common interest, such a profound philosophical significance as the question of the origin of man, it is the colossal 'question of all questions.'" ¹

In our time, huge interest in this issue has not been lost. The Russian biologist, A. Markov, writes: "On my popular science website, 'Problems of Evolution' (<http://evolbiol.ru>), pages devoted to human evolution are far ahead of everything else in traffic. The second most popular topic — the origin of life — lags by about an order of magnitude." ²

The content of the first part is as follows. There is a wonderful book (a collection of essays) called *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ³ edited by John Stuart, who writes: "The objective of this anthology is not merely to set the historical record straight and to clear Hegel's name of unjust charges, but also to be an aid to the already difficult task of teaching Hegel." ⁴ In my article "On the Interpretation of Hegel's Teaching on the Concept," ⁵ I set just the same goal. Therefore, in the first part of this book, I take up the baton from Stuart's book and consider the myths about Hegel, which interfere with an understanding of the very foundations of his philosophy, for they contain accusations of mysticism, laid by eminent philosophers.

This is strange. Why did Kant, Spinoza, etc. (here one can list all the great philosophers) face no such accusations while Hegel failed to escape

¹ Porshnev, B., *On the Beginning of Human History*, "Mysl", Moscow, 1974, 27.

² Markov, A., *Evolution Human: Apes, Bones and Genes*, Corpus, Moscow, 2011, 3.

³ Stewart, J. (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, North-Western University Press, Chicago, 1996.

⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵ Peruanskiy, S., *On the Interpretation of the Hegelian Doctrine of the Concept*, Hegel-Jahrbuch, 2016, 132-136.

them? Wherein the authors of these myths are Feuerbach, Marx and Engels. The explanation is simple: they had a great co-author in Hegel himself. How is one supposed to understand these words: “Nature is posited by the spirit and the spirit itself makes nature its presupposition.”⁶

Mysticism!

“The idea is *at the outset* only the one, universal *substance*, but its developed, true actuality is that it is as *subject* and thus as spirit.”⁷ The idea is a universal *substance*! Mysticism!

What has since changed in the interpretation of Hegel’s philosophy? In a recognised English-language encyclopaedia we read: “In spite of the relatively abstract metaphysical background of his philosophy, which is difficult to reconcile with common sense, Hegel’s insights in his analysis of concrete facts have guaranteed him a permanent place in the history of philosophy.”⁸

Indeed, it is not difficult to find in Hegel’s philosophy the words which are incompatible with common sense: “The concept is what is truly first and the things are what they are, thanks to the activity of the concept dwelling in them and revealing itself in them.”⁹ The concept acts in things and creates them! Nonsense! Further: “Life, or organic nature, is the stage on which first originates the concept.”¹⁰ What is the concept, which originates before the human mind at the stage of elementary organic nature? “The Notion distinguishes according to qualitative determinateness, making leaps in the process.”¹¹ What sort of notion makes leaps? These Hegelian provisions are not like mysticism but, in the words of the cited encyclopaedia, they are “difficult to reconcile with common sense.”

But there is another kind of mysticism. Hegel repeatedly warned that he understood the concept “in a sense different from and higher than occurs in logic at the level of the understanding.”¹²

⁶ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 302.

⁷ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 283.

⁸ *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Volume 4*, London and New York, 1998, 260.

⁹ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 238.

¹⁰ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 517.

¹¹ Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature, Volume I*, edited by M.J. Petry, London and New York, 1970, 214.

¹² Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 234.

It is mysticism again and, since Schelling, none of his great critics have ever commented on these warnings.

But the modern authors of encyclopaedias do not seem to notice them. I read articles entitled “Hegel” in the most popular encyclopaedias:

Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (London and New York, 1998).

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.

The Encyclopaedia Americana (New York, 1993).

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago, 2007).

The Columbia Encyclopaedia (New York, 1946).

The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Simon & Schuster, 1967).

The New Philosophy Encyclopaedia (Moscow, 2000).

None of the encyclopaedias discusses Hegel's warning about the special meaning of a concept in his philosophy — mysticism!

How could this happen? Did the writers not read them? Or did they read but not understand? Or perhaps they did not want to understand the new meaning Hegel had given to “concept”? But in this case, it would be logical to stop any discussions about the concept in the context of Hegelian philosophy. However, the critics did something strange: as if nothing had happened, they attributed the usual traditional meaning to the term “concept” in Hegelian texts.

For some reason, they did not mind that this made Hegel's statements “difficult to reconcile with common sense.” Their behaviour defies explanation. This is just mysticism!

Apparently, for the first time in the history of philosophy, Hegel used terms with existing generally-accepted meanings to denote something else that had nothing in common with the known meaning. Evidently, the idea that old terms could be used with new meanings could not cross anyone's mind.

I studied philosophy through self-education. When I started to study Hegel closely, my first task was to “decode” the specifically Hegelian meaning of the category of “concept.” It took years. It was a success only when I applied the method that I call the contextual translation method. The book provides examples of its application to certain texts of Hegel and Plato. The result of “deciphering” the meaning of the concept was a real breakthrough in understanding Hegel's philosophy. His attempt to explain his great discoveries on the verge of philosophy and science replaced “mysticism,” which “is difficult to combine with common sense.” (Like the authors of adventure novels, I will save the most interesting part for later.) And the most interesting aspect, contrary to general opinion, is that Hegel is not an idealist philosopher, but a materialist philosopher!

With his terminology, it was as if Hegel had brought his readers into a fairy-tale Kingdom of Crooked Mirrors. He himself created a kindly soil for the myths about mysticism in his philosophy. These myths have survived to the present day, and the crooked mirrors of anomalous Hegelian terminology have not gone away.

No wonder Bertrand Russell — a pre-eminent mind — wrote:

Hegel's philosophy is very difficult — he is, I should say, the hardest to understand of all the great philosophers."¹³

At the same time, according to Engels:

But all this did not prevent the Hegelian system from covering an incomparably greater domain than any earlier system, nor from developing in this domain a wealth of thought, which is astounding even today.¹⁴

Engels had no idea of the extent of the wealth of the thoughts in the Hegelian system, for where he saw mysticism, Hegel spoke of his discoveries.

In our time, the discoveries of Hegel have long been rediscovered and described in adequate terminology. This allowed me to make a “translation” of the anomalous Hegelian terminology into a modern scientific language. I am glad that, thanks to my efforts, the “most difficult to understand philosopher” will now be less difficult.

The “decoding” of the doctrine of concept helped me to explain the origin of man. And, paradoxically, the philosophical approach to this problem allows us to explain the stages of human origin more fully than the paleoanthropological finds.

Paleoanthropologists have found traces left by hominids millions of years ago in volcanic ash. From these, scientists learned a lot about hominids. But our ancestors also left numerous “traces” in our behaviour, from which we can learn much more about them than from traces in volcanic ash. But the primary “legacy” of the most ancient ancestors is hidden under the numerous layers created by civilisation. It is necessary to carry out a kind of excavation in order to find in our life the “traces” left by the most ancient ancestors, to release them from the layers of later epochs. It is exactly Hegelian philosophy which makes it possible to

¹³ Russell, B., *A History of Western Philosophy*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1967, 730.

¹⁴ Engels, F., *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *Marx & Engels, Collected Works, Volume 26*, Lawrence & Wishart, Electric Book, 2010, 361.

identify the “traces” of hominids among the later cultural phenomena and “to read” them, i.e., to replace hypotheses about how hominids turned into people with logical conclusions. This makes the section on Hegel's philosophy interesting, not only for those interested in this philosophy, but also for a wider circle of people interested in the problem of human origins.

The heuristic potential of Hegel's philosophy is enormous. It allows us to solve the serious problem of which came first, spirit or matter; and the amusing paradox of which came first, the chicken or the egg, with equal success. Relying on the philosophy of Hegel, I ventured to answer one of the unsolvable “accursed” questions of philosophy: what is time?

If Darwinism and Marxism are added to Hegel's philosophy, then we can derive the law of the development of society. The empirical material for verification of this law is the course of world history, from primitive societies to the collapse of the USSR. The proposed wording of the law stood this test successfully.

Of course, the reader is interested — to whom is the book addressed? I write for professional philosophers, but I try to write in such a way that my interpretations of Hegelian philosophy and its application to explain the origins of man are understandable to readers who have never read Hegel. There are two facts that allow me to hope that I was able to do this. Firstly, I successfully discussed these problems with various people who are without a philosophical education.

Secondly, the manuscript of my book went through the hands of an experienced proof-reader who, when asked about the quality of English in my manuscript, said: “To have written a book that communicates complex ideas in an accessible way for the general reader, in a language which is not your first, is a remarkable achievement.” So, any inquisitive persevering reader will be able to understand my ideas.

The aforementioned book by John Stewart, *Myths and Legends of Hegel*, says: “In the last few decades there has been an outpouring of literature on Hegel in the world of Anglo-American philosophy. The so-called ‘Hegel renaissance’ is indeed in full swing, particularly in America. However, in the face of the resurgence of interest in Hegel, a number of the same intransigent prejudices still persist. The new Hegel commentators are faced with a reading audience that knows little about Hegel and still suffers from the numerous misconceptions stemming from the various myths and legends. The time is ripe to correct these long-standing prejudices once and for all, and at present the means are happily at our

disposal for doing so.”¹⁵ I was glad to read these words, for I have long been preoccupied with the achievement of this noble goal.

But not only Hegel’s philosophy suffers from myths and legends. Myths about Marxism began to be created since the life of Marx. They forced him to say: “I only know one thing, that I am not a Marxist.”¹⁶ Since then, Marxism has thoroughly overgrown with myths. Therefore, an appendix to the book gives an analysis of the basic principles of Marxism.

When discussing the issue of state ideology, attempts are often made to connect it with religion. Therefore, in one application, the potential of religion as a factor in the humanisation of society is considered. In this regard, an analysis of the main gospel myths is made. As the publication of this book in Russian showed, the analysis of gospel mythology turned out to be interesting not only for ordinary readers, but also for professional religious scholars.

Authors write forewords for different purposes. I honestly confess: I wrote the preface to intrigue a potential reader about my book. For this purpose, I will tell about the unusual history of its creation. It began almost 60 years ago when I was a fourth-year student at the Faculty of Physics, Kazan University. I passed the exams ahead of schedule in order to sit down to study Hegel’s *Minor Logic*. Why Hegel? Why not Kant or Spinoza? Perhaps it was a sign from above. Then I could not even think that I would be able to contribute to the understanding of this most difficult philosophy. From time to time, I returned to the study of Hegel, although I taught astronomy and geodesy at the University of Kazan.

In the late 1980s in the USSR, *perestroika* began, and I went into politics. In 1990, I became a people’s deputy for the RSFSR (that is, a member of the RSFSR Parliament). October 4th, 1993, was the day of a slaughterous tragedy in Russian history: The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR was shot from tank guns. On that day, I set the goal to formulate a scientifically-based state ideology of Russia. I came to the conclusion that humanism should become the principle of state ideology. In solving such a political-philosophical problem, one must take an example from Marx: to define the ideology of the Communist Party, he built a theory for the evolution of private property. Therefore, there is no utopianism in the Manifesto of the Communist Party. It is easy to fall into utopianism and start composing humanistic utopias on the basis of humanism.

¹⁵ Steward, J., *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, North-Western University Press, Chicago, 1996, 20.

¹⁶ Engels, F., to Schmidt. 5 August 1890, *Marx & Engels Collected Works, Volume 49*, Lawrence & Wishart Electric Book, 2010, 7.

Consequently, I had to find an objective law of mankind's humanisation. It is this law that should become the principle of humanistic ideology.

And here I got a scare: after all, humanisation began with the origin of man! My goodness, what a task! But what the eye fears, the hands do. I began to study literature on the origins of man. Pretty soon I came to my own hypothesis. But I wanted to explain the origins of man without hypotheses. And here I took note of the system approach and evolutionary views of Hegel. They helped me to replace hypotheses with purely logical conclusions. The absence of hypotheses and a reliance on reliable observational data allowed me to assign to my reasoning on the origin of man the proud name of a theory.

The book was intended to solve an applied scientific - political task. The theory developed to solve this problem is an auxiliary section of the book. But the significance of this theory goes far beyond the original problem. Therefore, the title of the book speaks of the theory, since it is more attractive to the general reader than state ideology. Therefore, a greater number of readers will get acquainted with the problems of state ideology, if the name of the book will comprise a theory of human origin, and not the state ideology itself.

I know only two countries in which the problems of state ideology are discussed at the national level – they are the Great China and small Belarus. These problems are solved in Russia in a very peculiar way. The thirteenth article of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states: "No ideology can be established as a state or mandatory one." This norm reminds us of Rudin - the character of the novel by I. Turgenev. A provincial philosopher said that, in his opinion, no convictions exist at all. When he was asked whether he was convinced of that, he answered in the affirmative. "Well, here's the first conviction for you to begin with," replied his opponent. Analogically, does Russia have no state ideology? Here is the first wording of the Russian state ideology for a start. A real state ideology is a political-economic strategy of the state. The constitution of the state documents this strategy. The constitution of the state is the documentary embodiment of the state ideology. Therefore, the assertion that the state does not have an ideology disavows the constitution. It is tantamount to asserting that the state does not have a constitution. The hero of F. Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* argues as follows: if there is no God, then everything is allowed. Similarly, if there is no state ideology, then those in power are allowed everything. This situation removes all kinds of moral guidelines and gives the authorities free rein for political and economic arbitrariness. Do not think that the Constitution of the Russian Federation was written by people who are at odds with

logic. The constitution was written for President B. Yeltsin, who had elevated state arbitrariness and demagoguery to the rank of domestic politics where they manifested itself in monstrous ways.

We must pay tribute to the political flair of V. Putin. During his first presidential term, he spoke out in favor of Russia having a clearly formulated state ideology. He said that the United Russia party had a great shortcoming lacking a certain ideology. However, unfortunately, no concrete steps were taken in this direction. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the formulation of the state ideology is a difficult philosophical question, and judging by some objective signs, the team of President V. Putin does not have highly professional philosophers. Secondly, it is obvious that for many people directly related to the authorities, disengagement from any moral obligations arising in the absence of a state ideology is very convenient. Therefore, it is not surprising that when the campaign to amend the Constitution of the Russian Federation was launched, the amendment to change the shameful thirteenth article of the Constitution of the Russian Federation was not discussed.

The problem of how to make scientists understand my ideas arose. The obvious solution is scientific congresses. But the effectiveness of the sectional reports at the scientific congress equals zero, as just between five and seven people who deal with completely different problems listen to the speaker. Only one congress has “non-zero efficiency” — the Hegelian congress that takes place every two years. The fact is that the speakers have the opportunity to publish an article on the subject of the report in the collection, *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, and can be heard by the wider scientific community. In 2016, my article “On the Interpretation of the Hegelian Doctrine of the Concept” was published in this collection. I described in it two discoveries at once: 1) Hegel is not a mystic, but the forerunner of genetics; 2) Hegel is not an idealist, but a materialist. The article produced an unexpected resonance: I received letters inviting me to cooperate with the editors of various print media. The most important response was a letter from Commissioning Editor for Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Adam Rummens, with a proposal to publish a monograph. The result of this offer is this book. I hope that, after reading the book, you will appreciate Adam Rummens’ highly professional intuition and, together with me, will thank him for creating the opportunity to publish this book.

My dear reader, if you wish, correspondence with the author can be conducted at ivan534@mail.ru.

PART ONE

ON THE CONTENT OF THE CATEGORIES OF HEGEL’S PHILOSOPHY (“DECIPHERING” HEGELIAN TERMINOLOGY)

Introduction

The famous difficulty with Hegel’s philosophy is caused not only by the depth and richness of his thought. If the philosopher’s thoughts are not understood, even by geniuses, it means that the philosopher writes in an individual language that only he understands. Consequently, before trying to understand his philosophy, it is necessary to do the preparatory work on the “translation” of his language into a language comprehensible to all. Before it became possible to read and understand cuneiform documents it was necessary to use all of them to decipher the cuneiform itself. It is the same with Hegel: first one must use his works to establish the meanings of his categories, i.e., literally, to decipher his terminology, as it has some specific features that doom the reader to inevitable confusion. Hegel attached new unusual meanings to philosophical categories that already had meanings that were generally accepted. Hegel understood that such an approach to building terminology could confuse readers, and wrote that “there is only one question that could still be raised. If in speculative logic ‘concept’ has a meaning completely different from the one that would otherwise be ordinarily associated with the expression, why is what is completely different in this sense nonetheless called the ‘concept’ here, when doing so occasions misunderstanding and confusion?”¹ Hegel’s answer to this question is to state that “one speaks of the derivation of a content, such as, for example, the derivation of legal determinations concerning property from the concept of property, and one speaks also

¹ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 234.

conversely of tracing such a content back to the concept. With this, however, it is recognized that the concept is not merely a form devoid of content in itself, since, on the one hand, there would be nothing to derive from the latter and, on the other, in tracing a given content back to the empty form of the concept, the content would not only be robbed of its determinacy; it would also not be known.”² It is just amazing how illogical the author of two logics — both small and big — can reason when dealing with practical life issues. After all, the fact that someone formerly put into the term “concept” a meaning different from the one present in the formal logic, in no way helps readers overcome the confusion caused by Hegel’s terminology. Experience has shown that his terminological innovations were “fertile ground” for the illusions that formed the basis of three myths about Hegel’s philosophy. In his philosophy, Hegel’s critics observed: 1) mysticism; 2) panlogism; 3) denial of evolution in nature. Let’s consider the logic of the origin of these myths.

² Ibid.

CHAPTER 1

THE MYTH OF MYSTICISM IN TEACHINGS ON THE CONCEPT

A very important point in Hegel's philosophy is that its main category is indicated. Hegel writes that "we could, indeed, embrace the whole in the single principle of development; if this were clear, all else would result and follow of its own accord."¹ Hegel stresses that the simplicity of this concept is deceptive: "The idea of development is well known, but it is the special characteristic of Philosophy to investigate such matters as were formerly held as known. What is dealt with or made use of without consideration as an aid to daily life, is certainly the unknown to man unless he be informed in Philosophy. The further discussion of this idea belongs to the science of Logic."²

The complexity of terminology begins here: the well-known term is used to refer to processes not known to anyone.

"In order to comprehend what development is, what may be called two different states must be distinguished. The first is what is known as capacity, power, and what I call being-in-itself (*potentia*); the second principle is that of being-for-itself, actuality (*actus*)."³ Development is the process of transition from the state of *in-itself* to the state of *for-itself*. The most important property of development is its *manageability*. "Because that which is implicit comes into existence, it certainly passes into change, yet it remains one and the same, for the whole process is dominated by it."⁴ This description of development shows that it is a programmed process. *In-itself* plays a role in the program, while *for-itself* is a result of the implementation of the program. Thus, the logic of Hegel as a development theory is the theory of programmed processes taking place in the world.

¹ Hegel, G.W.F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd. London, 1892, 20.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, 21.

⁴ Ibid, 22.

The description of a new class of phenomena requires new terminology. The term “being-in-itself” accurately conveys the meaning of the term “program” but it is cumbersome. Perhaps that was why Hegel found another name for the development program.

Let’s compare two categories: “being-in-itself” and “concept.” Hegel writes that “the seed can [...] be regarded as the plant-in-itself”⁵ and “a seed of a plant is a sensual real concept.”⁶ We see that the meanings of these categories are identical and can be considered synonyms. Therefore, *the concept in the understanding of Hegel is a program from a programmed process.*

This important finding needs to be confirmed by other Hegel texts, of which there are many. It is known that Leibniz suggested a distinction between *eficientes* and *finalis* causes. Hegel explained this using the example of plant growth: “According to this distinction [...] light, warmth, moistness are [...] to be considered as *causae efficientes* but not as the *causa finalis* of the plant’s growth, the *causa finalis* being, of course, nothing other than the concept of the plant itself.”⁷ For two seeds growing near each other the *causae efficientes* (light, warmth, moistness) is the same, but from one seed grows wheat and from another seed grows oat. Therefore, the *causa finalis* for a plant’s growth is the reason, which determines the genus of a plant, i.e. the genotype or genetic programming of a plant. Consequently, according to modern terminology, the Hegelian term “concept of the plant itself” should be replaced by the term “genotype” or “genetic programming of the plant.”

The interpretation of the Hegelian category “concept” as the organism’s genetic program provides the opportunity to “decipher” fragments that are completely incomprehensible if we consider this category in its ordinary meaning. Hegel states that “the concept is something that dwells within things themselves, by means of which, they are what they are.”⁸ If we believe he writes here about the concept in its traditional sense, then the fragment looks like pure mysticism. However, it is understandable if things are seen as organisms, and the concept as their genetic program. The latter lives in things themselves and determines their properties.

⁵ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 192.

⁶ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part III, Philosophy of Mind* (§ 379), “Mysl”, Moscow, 1977, 12.

⁷ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 189.

⁸ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 242.

“Life, or organic nature, is the stage on which first originates the concept.”⁹ If the concept here is a category of logic, then it is unclear how the concept can arise at the stage of elementary organic nature before the emergence of the human mind, but it is precisely on this stage that the genetic program of organisms arises.

The most important confirmation of the proposed interpretation, though, is the provision that Hegel developed in his *Philosophy of Nature*: “Nature is to be regarded as a *system of stages* wherein one comes forth necessarily out of the other and is the nearest truth to that one out of which it results, but not in such a way that the one would be naturally engendered, out of the other, but rather in the inner idea which constitutes the ground of nature. Metamorphosis accrues only to the concept as such, for development is nothing but the alteration of the same. In nature the concept is, however, partly a mere inner principle, and partly an existence which is simply a living individuality.”¹⁰ What does it mean? If we give “concept as such” its conventional meaning, then it will not be of absolute idealism and will actually be absolute nonsense. Conversely, if “concept as such” is considered as a genetic program of living beings, then everything falls into place. New stages of organic life arise from alteration of organisms’ genetic programs. Thus, from an entirely different context we can conclude that, by the category of “concept,” Hegel understands the same as we understand by the “genetic program of an organism.” This interpretation completely conforms with Hegel’s statement that the “concept as such” is partly an inner principle (a genetic program) and partly a living individuality (a product of the realisation of this program).

Hegel thereby anticipates the idea of mutagenesis as a mechanism of the emergence of new species. It is impossible not to admire the genius of Hegel, who is not only a pioneer of the theory of programmed processes, but also the forerunner of theorists working in genetics.

Hegel extends the findings derived concerning organic nature to the development of spirit: “Just as for living beings: ideally all are already contained in the germ, exactly the same with all special forms of living spirit which should emerge from its concept as if from its germ.”¹¹ Hegel also considers world history and the development of religion as processes which are managed by a program: “As the germ bears in itself the whole

⁹ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 517.

¹⁰ Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature, Volume I*, edited by M.J. Petry, London and New York, 1970, 212.

¹¹ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part III, Philosophy of Mind* (§ 379), “Mysl”, Moscow, 1977, 11.

nature of the tree, so the first traces of spirit virtually contain the whole of the History.”¹² And “it is thus essential to religion not only to exist in its notion, but also to be the consciousness of that which the notion is, and the material in which the notion as the plan, so to speak, realises itself, which it makes its own, which it moulds in accordance with itself, is human consciousness.”¹³ The words that “*the notion as the plan, realises itself*” are the most interesting from the point of view of the interpretation of Hegel’s concept as a program of a programmed process. It is very similar to how we talk about the realisation of a programme.

Hegel generalises the doctrine of the concept as a source of development, to the development of the world as a whole. The source of the development of the world is the absolute concept. Hegel writes: “Logic considers absolute concepts as the absolutely true ground of everything”¹⁴ and that “the concept is all, and [...] its movement is the universal absolute activity, the self-determining and self-realising movement.”¹⁵ These statements make it possible to call the absolute concept the concept of the universe (the development program of the universe).

The proposed interpretation of the category “notion” shows its ambiguity. Hegel states that “logic considers the content of Understanding and reason in-and-for themselves and the absolute concepts as the absolutely true ground of everything, or the intellectual and rational in so far as it is not merely a subjective comprehension. Consequently logic is in its own self speculative philosophy, for the speculative way of considering things is nothing else but a consideration of the essence of things which is just as much the pure concept peculiar to reason as the nature and the law of things.”¹⁶ Hence, the notion of *being* is seen by Hegel not only as a category of logic but as a category that characterises “the nature and law of things” as well. This fact not only demystifies “the most central and mysterious” part of Hegel’s philosophy but also offers a key to demystification of the whole of Hegel’s philosophy, which are otherwise regarded as ambiguous. When reading Hegel, it is necessary to

¹² Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophy of History*, Kitchener, Ontario, 2001, 31.

¹³ HEGEL, G.W.F., *Philosophy of Religion*, Introduction, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/reindex.htm>

¹⁴ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 126.

¹⁵ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 737.

¹⁶ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 126.

continuously analyse in which sense the category is considered in the present context: in its traditional, formal logic context or as a characteristic of nature and the law of things. This fact escaped the notice of the great critics of Hegel's philosophy, who thought that Hegel considered logical categories only in terms of generally-accepted meanings and, therefore, rather inevitably, found mysticism in his philosophy. But the notion which dwells within things themselves and defines their properties is not mysticism but the program for the development of things if we understand them as organisms and various manifestations of the spirit, while in inorganic nature there is no "concept as such," only concept *in-itself*.¹⁷

Moreover, idealism disappears (together with the mysticism) from the doctrine on the notion because, as the idealistic "ideological perversion," Engels considers "the self-movement of the concept going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain."¹⁸ But the program of the programmed process just carries out self-motion "independently of any thinking human brain." So, Hegel's perversion was merely terminological rather than ideological and, after translation of his terminology into modern scientific language, we can see that his teachings about the concept lie within the limits of the completely materialistic scientific theory.

Experience has shown that Hegel's use of the category "concept," not only as a "pure concept inherent in the mind" but also as a way to describe the "nature and law of things," turned out to be inaccessible for even the great philosophers to understand. Here is what they wrote:

F. Schelling: "Concepts as such exist only in the consciousness. Objectively they do not precede to nature, and follow for it. Hegel deprived them of their natural place, putting them at the beginning of the philosophy."¹⁹

Feuerbach: "The essence of Hegel's *Logic* is *transcendent* thinking, the thinking of the human-being *supposed outside human beings*."²⁰

Engels: "According to Hegel, therefore, the dialectical development apparent in nature and history — that is, the causal interconnection of the

¹⁷ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, 69.

¹⁸ Engels, F., *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, Marx & Engels, Collected Works, Volume 26*, Lawrence & Wishart, Electric Book, 2010, 383.

¹⁹ Schelling, F.W.J., *Samtliche Werke*. Bd. X. S. 140. Quoted from A.V. Guliga, *The German Classical Philosophy*, "Mysl", Moscow, 1986, 276.

²⁰ Feuerbach, L., *Preliminary theses on the reform of philosophy*, <http://users.sussex.ac.uk/~sefd0/tx/pt.htm>

progressive movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zigzag movements and temporary retrogression — is only a copy of the self-movement of the concept going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain. This ideological perversion had to be done away with. We again took a materialistic view of the thoughts in our heads, regarding them as images of real things instead of regarding real things as images of this or that stage of the absolute concept.”²¹

Marx: “To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of “the idea,” he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of “the idea.” With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.”²²

This is very interesting from the point of view of hermeneutics — the art of interpreting texts. For some reason, none of the great critics of Hegel paid attention to the warnings of the philosopher about the special meaning of the concept in his philosophy. The fact that Hegel had confined himself with the statements that he understood the concept differently than the formal logic and did not give a definition of the concept in his sense of the word, somewhat excused the critics. He could not give a definition, as he made the discovery at the intersection of philosophy and natural science. He discovered the genic mechanism of evolution. For its description, fundamentally new categories of gene, genotype, etc. were necessary. These terms emerged only at the beginning of the 20th century. Hegel understood the mechanism of evolution that he discovered only in general terms. Therefore, he did not find the appropriate term “program” to denote the factor that controls the development of the organism. Of course, it would be better from the point of view of understanding his ideas if he dwelt on the term “being-in-itself”. Then there would be no grounds for talking about mysticism, the illusion of which was created by the term “concept.”

Perhaps Hegel decided that the factor governing development had something in common with the concept that he, like the concept in logic, determined to be the most essential properties of the organism. Not having

²¹ Engels, F., *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 26, Lawrence & Wishart, Electric Book, 2010, 383.

²² Marx, K., *Capital*, Afterword to the Second German Edition, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>.

a word to define the concept in the new meaning, he wrote: “The concept is *something* that dwells within the things themselves, by means of which they are what they are.”²³ This definition does not even show that the term “concept” is used as the *name* of some *material factor* acting in things. It creates the illusion that the concept itself is living in things and defines their properties.

So, Hegel’s idea of using familiar terms but with new meanings confirmed the fact that it was extremely difficult for people to use old terms with new meanings. Moreover, the category “concept” was used to name the factor that Hegel discovered, of which no one but him was aware. With this terminological anomaly, Hegel doomed his philosophy to general incomprehension. Even the great philosophers misunderstood Hegel’s teaching about the concept, seeing in it a type of mysticism. Hegel could reproach them for inattentive reading of his texts. That would be fair. Critics disregarded not only explanations of the doctrine of the concept, but also the fact that Hegel vigorously opposed mystification in philosophy.

Marx wrote: “Hegel fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself, whereas the method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being.”²⁴

Hence, we see how difficult it is for a great philosopher to express his thoughts when they are ahead of their time. Hegel’s terminology made Marx believe in the illusion that Hegel understood the categories of “concept” and “idea” as categories of thinking. But Hegel called these terms the factors of objective reality, “for the speculative way of considering things is nothing else but a consideration of the essence of things which is just as much the pure concept peculiar to reason as the nature and the law of things.” Hegel, of course, was enthralled by the illusion, but not the one about which Marx spoke. Hegel knew that giving the categories “concept” and “idea” a second meaning would give rise to confusion. But his illusion consisted of the hope (in vain) to protect his readers from confusion with his warnings. It is difficult or even impossible for readers to abandon the usual meanings of terms, especially since no

²³ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 242.

²⁴ Marx, K., *Economic manuscripts of 1857-58* (first version, *Capital*).
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch01.htm>

one had any practice in solving such problems, and the new meanings remained unclear.

In using the terms “concept” and “idea” Hegel talked about the processes of objective reality, and readers believed that he spoke of categories of thought that were beyond the scope of human thinking and were endowed with mystical properties. As a result, the phenomenon emerged that can be called the *terminological effect*. Its essence consists in the illusion that thinking is viewed by Hegel as the “demiurge of real.” The terminological effect is a phenomenon analogous to the inversion of an image of an object observed through an optical tube. Not realising this effect, Marx saw mysticism in the writings of Hegel. He was under the illusion that “in Hegel the dialectic stands on the head” not in a seeming, but quite a real way. But at the same time, Marx recognised that “the mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel’s hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general.”²⁵ But this would have been impossible if there were alien mystical elements in Hegel’s dialectic. Thus, the assessment given by Marx shows that there was no mystification, that the impression that Hegel attributed the role of the demiurge of reality to thinking, etc. is an illusion arising from the use of categories from the sphere of thinking to describe the processes occurring in objective reality. Consequently, the mystification in the writings of Hegel is an illusory, purely terminological effect.

In confirmation of this conclusion one can lead with Prof. A. Arndt, who investigated the question of mysticism in Hegel’s philosophy and wrote: “I could not find any mysticism in Hegel anywhere.”²⁶

²⁵ Marx, K., *Capital*, Afterword to the Second German Edition.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>.

²⁶ Arndt, A., *Beyond Idealism and Materialism: Hegel’s Concept of Dialectic and Marx’s Critique of Hegel’s ‘Mystifications’*, Hegel-Jahrbuch, in print.

CHAPTER 2

THE MYTH OF MYSTICISM IN THE TEACHING OF THE IDEA

The approach to the interpretation of the category “concept” is fully applicable to the interpretation of another major category – the category of “idea.” We already know that this category is ambiguous and one must first define its meaning as a characteristic of “nature and the law of things” for a proper understanding of the philosophy of Hegel. “The idea is the unity of the concept and reality, the concept in so far as it determines its own reality or actuality which is what it ought to be and which itself contains its concept.”¹ In other words, the idea is the process and the result of the realisation of the program of a programmed process. If, according to Hegel, “the embryo of plants is a sensually existing concept”² then, consequently, the full-grown plant is a sensually existing idea.

However, it would be a major mistake to understand these words to mean that the embryo is the concept and the plant is the idea in their corporeity. Hegel writes: “We cannot grasp the concept as such with our hands and, when it comes to the concept, we generally have to take leave of seeing and hearing. Nonetheless, the concept is, at the same time and as already noted, the absolutely concrete, and indeed is so insofar as it contains in itself being and essence, and accordingly contains the entire richness of these two spheres in an ideal unity.”³ Therefore, the embryo is a concept only in the sense that “it contains in itself being and essence in an ideal unity,” i.e., in potency, the entire richness of the future plant, and this ideal content, of course, cannot be perceived sensually. It would be more accurate to say that the embryo is a sensual carrier of the concept, rather than the concept itself (similar to how they distinguish between a material carrier of computer programs and the program itself). Similarly, a

¹ Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 104.

² Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part III, Philosophy of Mind* (§ 379), “Mysl”, Moscow, 1977, 12.

³ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 233.

plant as an idea, as a *posited* concept (i.e. as a realised program) is the carrier of the plant idea as a posited unity of being and essence, and such unity is the subject of thinking, not of physical sensation.

The fact that the relationship between the concept and ideas should be understood as the relationship between the development program and the process of its implementation is clearly seen from the following statement: “The *germ* is that from which the whole Notion of the plant unfolds; it is the nature of the plant, but as it still lacks reality, it is not yet an Idea.”⁴ This statement shows how far Hegel’s critics were from understanding Hegel’s terminology, and that they believed that he understood the products of human thinking as the concept and idea.

§ 1. The absolute as spirit development

Speaking of the absolute, we must remember that Hegel did not put any mystical content into those concepts: “We typically believe that the absolute must lie somewhere far yonder. But it is precisely that which is wholly present, and which we as thinking beings always carry with us and make use of, even if without explicit consciousness of the fact.”⁵

What is this absolute, which is infinite and eternal, but at the same time “concrete and completely available”? *Motion!* Absolutely everything moves, from elementary particles to galaxies; our thoughts and feelings are moving. Therefore, the absolute is movement! On movement, Hegel wrote such lofty words: “Motion is the Notion of the true soul of the world. We habitually regard it as a predicate or state, but it is in fact the self, the subject as subject, and the persistence, even of disappearance.”⁶

Universal movement is the process of developing a universal idea. The universal idea is the process of the embodiment of the universal (absolute) concept. We have already cited the definition of an absolute concept as the true basis of everything. The absolute concept is the program for the development of the absolute, and the absolute idea is the process and the result of the realisation of the absolute concept:

⁴ Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature, Volume III*, edited by M.J. Petry, Routledge, London and New York, 1970, 68.

⁵ Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part I, Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2010, 61.

⁶ Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature, Volume I*, edited by M.J. Petry, Routledge, London and New York, 1970, 239.