

**István Drimál**  
**Structure of Consciousness in Hegel and Heidegger**  
**Theses of PhD Dissertation**

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*Methods of dissertation*

1. *Analytic method.* The essay aims at a rigorous text interpretation that builds on Hegel's, Heidegger's and Kant's texts only to disentangle several layers of conception of consciousness. Sentences and paragraphs are analyzed and referred to in an analytic manner. This method is to build a ground for synthetic analyses. The analysis focuses closely on the text itself and enlightens the inner structure and meaning of it.

2. *Synthetic method.* It aims at building up a holistic assessment of a philosopher, his way of thinking or his philosophical stream in question, respectively. Its role is to make clear directions of elaboration and interpretation of sources. Of course we need to have an acquaintance with some spirituality of the whole text, indeed we have to have a foreknowledge of the era, of the philosophical tradition of the author. But all this serves a deeper understanding of the corpus. Our analytic method stresses on the fact that no understanding of the real content is possible without strict reading, however, the background information of the synthetic approach is vital to cast light on the obscured content. The synthetic way of interpretation presupposes a speculative dialectic point of view. The method applied here is not phenomenological, as far as we understand it as a way of getting rid of presuppositions or putting them in parentheses, because this strain's presupposition is: that it has no presuppositions.

3. The tradition of hermeneutics is applied though in a way of not separating the original idea from us hermetically. It is proved in analyses focused on text that the labels stuck on the texts are often false and the author speaks about something completely different from what is assigned to him. Naturally, there is no objective interpretation. The interpreter counting upon his bents, knowledge, and presuppositions wants to understand the topic. Therefore,

hermeneutics has three aims: outlining the history of ideas, researching the text itself, and these two intersecting each other to disclose the inner context of a text.

*Thesis 1. The consciousness is not only understood as an epistemic notion, or a ground for philosophical theory, but for every human act, meaning the Spirit in Hegel's words.*

I do not analyze the priority of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* from its historic-cultural point of view that is from the Spirit's view, but from its onto-logical framework. My main theoretical strive was to build the controversy against Heidegger's conception before his change. Heidegger claims that everyday life, the Being itself has priority to consciousness. So in Hegel's terminology, we have to differentiate between "consciousness" and "Spirit", furthermore, between Hegel's and Heidegger's conception of "human". I will describe my view on the priority of consciousness by disclosing these distinctions.

It may be questioned whether we can speak about a concept of consciousness in Heidegger's philosophy regarding his late thoughts. But we may investigate the traditional concept of the consciousness before his change of mind because Heidegger's alienation from consciousness understood as subject has grown from a transcendental standpoint transmitted by phenomenology. A transcendental point of view cannot be obtained without presupposing a conscious mind. I outline this problem in the last chapter of my essay.

The concept of consciousness examined in the first chapter of my essay is based on the text of *Introduction of Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit*. The result of my examination is that the *Introduction of Phenomenology* is a methodical lead-in to the analysis of the Spirit so that the Spirit can become the ground of consciousness retrospectively as being the entity and way to it. I have just mentioned above that we have to make a distinction between the consciousness and the Spirit: former meaning an ontological (existential) and epistemological starting point from which has grown and which is named by Hegel as Spirit. I make an attempt at investigating the I-consciousness, which is a presupposition for interpreting the self and the world.

The investigation consists of three stages. First, the difference between a "consciousness" and a consciousness that is described in the main text of *Phenomenology* is defined as being a

difference between the self-consciousness and the consciousness of the object. Nevertheless, Hegel explains this matter in the *Introduction* not as the problem of distinction between the consciousness of the self and that of the object, but wants to refer with this to the most abstract structure of human existence. That is the reason why he emphasises the notion of the “consciousness” on its the way to the absolute knowledge with self-criticism. Secondly, we investigate Hegel’s notion of experience that reveals the “science of the consciousness’ experience”. Thirdly, we analyse how Hegel exceeds the myth of actuality by this conception of experience. The canon of truth is not actual, not given, but it is a cultural stage that has been just reached. The analyses of the *Introduction* conclude that there is no actually given origin, but only the reflexion created by the “consciousness” for itself by its every conscious act.

*Thesis 2. In the Introductions to Phenomenology and Encyclopedia, the “consciousness” vs. the thinking in general precedes and establishes the Spirit’s concept.*

The same structure can be observed in the system of Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*. In its *Introduction*, Hegel defines the general starting point as “thinking”. It is the essence of man preceding the Spirit and even the philosophy of nature and the logic. The analysis of this is not described here because the relationship of both systems, that of *Phenomenology* and *Encyclopedia* should have to be investigated. This would go beyond the limits and aims of this essay. On the other hand, some parts of the *Encyclopedia* will be interpreted because the interpretation of Heidegger’s thoughts would be meaningless without them. Therefore, I am going to point out the main characteristics of the relationship mentioned above by analysing the distinction between “consciousness” and Spirit.

The *Phenomenology* prepares and leads up the everyday consciousness to the scientific that is to the explicitly reflective consciousness, to the philosophy itself. From this point of view there is no inconsistency between the system of *Phenomenology* and of *Encyclopedia*, indeed, their relationship is well grounded and continuous. So the conclusion of the *Introductions* of *Phenomenology* and *Encyclopedia* – and that of the first part of the essay – may be the same: the Spirit is based on the reflective Self. Hegel claims in the *Introduction* to the *Encyclopedia* that man’s essence is thinking. Although we find a different matter of fact according to the chronological order of experience because the parts of cognition build up on each other as follows: intuition is followed by representation and the latter is followed by thinking. On the

other hand, the coordination of Hegel's system has an inverted alignment (logic: pure thinking; nature: intuition; Spirit: intuition, representation and thinking). One can observe it in the *Introduction* to the *Encyclopedia* where Hegel does not speak about actual thinking as part of the actual abilities of the Spirit, but about thinking as such which precedes the Spirit. Thinking as such appears in the intuition, representation, and notion. So in both *Introductions* the Spirit's concept is preceded and established by the "consciousness" vs. the thinking as such.

*Thesis 3. The end of the Hegelian system reveals a new prospect to step out of the theory*

So far only the starting point before the beginning of the system, the first stage of reflexion has been investigated, therefore, the end of the *Encyclopedia's* system need to undergo an examination, too. In the second chapter of the essay, paragraphs 574–577 of *Encyclopedia* are analyzed. This investigation is also a step towards establishing a part of philosophy's history that is necessary for interpreting Heidegger. The quest originates from Heidegger's criticism on Hegel. According to Heidegger, a philosophical system is only a theory, which strives for gulping down the reality in order to rule it. When philosophy endeavours it, but cannot reach the actual being. The essay aims at answering the questions raised by this problem: what is after the immediacy, after a conceptual structure, after a system? In short: is there an exit of the system? The answer is: since the Hegelian system embracing the Idea (a metaphysical unity) has been divided in itself, so it steps out of itself. Leaving the system – it is one of the most important questions of philosophy after Hegel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because philosophers of this era are struggling with this speculative system created by their philosophies.

*Thesis 4. Actuality, intermediation in itself is only a myth.*

In the third chapter, I return to the actual beginning of the system. It is the start of the *Encyclopedia*, which is defined as the speculative centre of this thinking structure. This centre is the Hegelian thesis of the being's and nothing's unity - so this is the thesis to analyze. Why is this needed? The point is here the antecedent of the question of being. The Heideggerian work was most influenced by this question. Heidegger was not willing (or able?) to make a deep analysis in his vast work on Hegel's thesis of being. So in the third chapter I compare Hegel's and Heidegger's theses about the being and the nothing.

I summarize the assertions of this chapter as follows. Hegel's thesis is: being is an identity and difference at the same time, and because of this it can be nothing, too. On the other hand, Heidegger insists upon his criticism on Hegel's theory on the intermediation between being and nothing as a most evident formula of nihilism. Heidegger justifies this by referring to the ontological difference: one has to make a distinction between Sein (general term for beings, being) and Seyn (the everyday lived life, Being). It is stated that Hegel has missed to make this difference and wrote only about the generalised term for beings (Seiendheit) when describing Being. Heidegger points out that the real meaning of Being is unutterable in philosophical notions, It establishes Itself, but it cannot be grounded by us, mortal entities: It is a groundless ground, the nothing self. In opposition to Heidegger, I aim to demonstrate that Hegel does not speak about a being abstracted from the beings, does not speak about a general, empty notion, the nothing, but about a difference prototyped in the origin of the absolute. Since according to Hegel the starting point has been divided in itself (being and nothing at the same time), Hegel's system is based much more on the alienation than on the identity and synthesizes the difference as an onto-logical process. Furthermore, I try to point out that while Heidegger speaks about a Being that is different from every being, which is the actual and given being of individuals, Hegel does not accept such a particularity because in the beginning there is originally a duality and the intermediation between two sides. Regarding my investigations in the second and the third chapter, when comparing the Hegelian identity of being and nothing and the Heideggerian concept of an intermediate being, I can conclude that intermediation, actuality is in itself only a myth. A given thing is born only as a particular stage in the system of mediations, within the process of reflexion. The appearance of reflexion brings us back to the „consciousness”, to the topic of the first chapter: the actuality, a given thing is created by the process of consciousness. According to Hegel Being is not identical with nothing because of its undefined character, as Heidegger states, but because its essence is transformation to something else, moving, that is temporality.

*Thesis 5. You must escape consciousness. The program of escape is fulfilled by a transformation of the transcendental conception to a fundamental ontology.*

In the fourth chapter some paragraphs of Heidegger's *Kant and the problem of the metaphysics* is analyzed from the point of view of the results achieved in my interpretation on Hegel that is from point of view of the different identity. Heidegger's interpretation on Kant

has grown from his criticism on metaphysics. According to this, the metaphysical way of thinking constructs bare abstract conceptual structures and by doing this it does not refer to the Being itself, but to reflected beings embedded in a theory. In addition to it, metaphysics makes the conceptual way of thinking autochthonous, prior to the everyday lived life. Therefore, you must escape from the consciousness and its structures. The escape has grown to an existential problem. The program of escape is fulfilled by a transformation of the transcendental conception to a fundamental ontology.

To demonstrate thesis 5, first it is necessary to show how Heidegger reinterprets the meaning of the transcendental's concept. This concept by Kant and Husserl was meant as man's consciousness or as a method to investigate it. On the other hand, Heidegger takes the meaning of this concept from the Middle Ages when it referred to the transcendent, that is beyond the consciousness; nevertheless, Heidegger does not mean the divine sphere by this, he thinks merely of the world surrounding man, which is immanent, and its structure is the being-in-the-world itself. Heidegger indicates the transformation of transcendental in order to get back to the factuality from the ceaseless intermediating business of consciousness. We return to the factuality by the transcendental aesthetical horizon, and the opportunity to experience this as an actual being is disclosed on time's horizon. A hidden forest path (Holzweg) is being disclosed, which runs in an opposite direction to the Kant-interpretation of the German idealism. This direction endeavours to reinterpret the thing-in-itself as a stand-alone ontological entity. Its effect is that Heidegger reduces the fundamental ontology to a sensualism, that is to perceiving and beings disclosing in it. The result of the last chapter is that Heidegger obtains the actual factual (the Being) by a non-idealistic conception of transcendental.

It can be understood why I was engaged in the concept of the „consciousness” in the *Introduction of Phenomenology* and in the syllogism of the last four paragraphs at the end of the *Encyclopedia. Phenomenology* was for Heidegger a substantial one of Hegel's works to interpret because „consciousness” is self-confident only in referring to an object in the concept of *Phenomenology*. From Heidegger's point of view, the thing-in-itself here has an ontological position, that is the object is prior to the (self-)definition of consciousness. On the other hand, Hegel's conviction in the *Encyclopedia* was that the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is not able to express the syllogism at the end of the *Encyclopedia* because the „consciousness” described in the *Phenomenology* is not apt to articulate perfectly the identity

and the difference because its compulsion to the object sets neither itself nor the object free. Hegel's belief was that the completion of the *Encyclopedia*' system made by the syllogism at its end induces human freedom. If one is free, the sphere of objectivity is also free because otherness (Andersheit) can be free, which is free from human theory. Otherness articulated that way can appear in a closed and absolute system only. In a system like this one can be free. According to Heidegger one can set objectivity free if he releases himself from objectivity.

#### *Thesis 6. On the speculative method*

After having outlined some of the essay's theses I think it is necessary to give an explanation on how I approached the problem of consciousness. I analysed it from point of the history of influences. It is not the same as the point of the history of philosophy because its aim is not to write a history of philosophy. A special problem is pointed out here from a special point of view: that of the „consciousness” interpreted through a speculative view. Speculative is understood as the parts being approached from the whole, and the former is always interpreted by taking the latter into consideration. I refuse that the speculative method would cease the rights of the individuum, indeed, their places and rights are disclosed by this method. The Whole (the Absolute) is not presupposed as a factuality, as an originality, but it is understood as a system of intermediations living and breathing in the vortex of phenomena despite of having a framework that controls the parts.

#### *7. The „I” as the presupposition of the Spirit*

In the course of the philosophy of modernity Descartes' meditations on the „I”'s structure would naturally offer a starting point to the history of the consciousness, but it is just touched shortly upon. According to Thévenaz the Cartesian, the ego is not meant in a psychological sense of a „lonely I”, but suggesting the direction of the German idealism: the „I” is a fore-structure for every human action, it enables us to understand the functionality of mankind. The „I” is transcendental and speculative, and it is the presupposition of the Spirit, but not in an onto-logical meaning stated by Heidegger. All human being is related to „I” – this kind of nature of the „I” is asserted by Hegel in the *Phenomenology* - meaning that the „I” is „We”. Self-consciousness can be only defined as a community of all self consciousnesses; the

formula as I have given above: the „I” is a transcendental that means a common human feature.

*Thesis 8: Transition and difference as a substantial element of the system*

The *Introduction* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* deals with the ego’s original form, the „consciousness” as it is mentioned there. The analysis of the structure of human’s essence is just preliminary, preparative in the *Introduction*; it is not a part of the later system of *Encyclopedia*, respectively, it can become its part after the construction of the system being a preparatory element of it. The „consciousness” has – as it is composed by Hegel in the *Introduction* – yet a transitive position from the point of view of the system. It is a link between the factual everyday life and the reflected philosophical creation of theory. The same feature of a transition is tried to achieve in the analysis of the last four paragraphs of *Encyclopedia*, since there is a transition, an exit from the system back to the lived everyday life – at least from the point of view of the post Hegelian philosophical movements.

My efforts are directed towards pointing out this transitive character by interpreting the starting thesis – being is nothing – of *Encyclopedia*. The matter is here not an introduction to the system anymore, but with this thesis begins the system as such. The system is transitive itself. Hegel deduces here that he does not stay in the immanent sphere of making theories that is he does not negate anything to the identity of being, but he transforms the moment of difference into the beginning of the system, that is into every later figure of it. My analyses refer to the Heideggerian criticism against metaphysics, according to which the theory „eats up” the reality, it does not give any space in the identity of concept for other, for the actually lived everyday life, where man lives for ever in transient conditions, in the time, in homelessness. How distorting is Heidegger’s aspect in connection to Hegel’s logic, so to the system of *Encyclopedia*, is established in the third chapter of the essay and the results are concluded in the fourth chapter. Heidegger’s prospect regarding the history of metaphysics is also distorting as from the platonic-neoplatonic tradition through Christianity it becomes omnipresent in the German idealism that the identity bears a dialectical character, that is not abstract because it contains the difference negated and preserved in itself. Otherness, the recognition of life lived out of theory appears in the dialectical character of the „consciousness”, in the play of being and nothing, in the problem that the system can be



completed – but not closed. All this refers to the fact that identity is not abstract and formal according to Hegel.

In the fourth chapter of the essay I show that Heidegger refers to an anticipated concept of factuality as a last ground for his considerations, but he is willing to accept this givenness only as an immediated one. By doing so Heidegger, does not reflect on himself using peculiar as a general term. If Being is the actual, peculiar being of all beings, which Being cannot be generalized without a loss of its peculiarity, then Heidegger has just committed an „error” of generalizing: if Being is being for every being, then it has a universal meaning. But inasmuch under a Heideggerian concept of Being one has had to understand the factual existence (present-at-hand-being, *Vorhandensein*) of a being so far, its space in the Being (being-there, *Da-Sein* means originally the existence mentioned above), then he does not want to allude to a concept having general meaning. If Heidegger wants to put Being in such words that are contradictory to a universal notion of being, then he wants to refer to the otherness, which cannot be conceptualized as notion because the latter is identical compared to a given thing. A universal notion of the being can be accumulated only in an inductive way. That is the reason why Heidegger works out the meaning of Being based on a sensualistic epistemology. But one has to bear in mind an earlier meaning, a form according to which you can collect the meaning of beings. Behind the inductive notion of Being stands a speculative one. That is the reason why it is questionable to speak about a *meaning* of Being, while you would not like to grasp its logos, but Being in itself. Heidegger recognized the problem and changed his ideas.

So Heidegger creates a real speculative notion of Being: universal and peculiar at the same time by fulfilling the Hegelian criteria of the concrete general. Structured totality is lost by Heidegger’s hints to the preliminarity of an „ever first”, to a factuality (givenness). A wholeness structured in itself was a guarantee for a concept of identity not to be taken as abstract. Inasmuch Heidegger refers to an ever first immediateness, to the Being, his concept of identity is formal, and so his representation of the difference is also abstract. If a concept of Being articulates only factuality, articulates *every* fact, then it means a universal structure unorganized in itself and the temporal evolving of individuals. Referring to the immediate individual, to a thing being sensed, referring to an *intentum*, to a phenomenon – this sensualism misses Hegel’s task. Heidegger called Being as an event, as a becoming thing– it

is only another name for the metaphysical concept of the differing identity and not an alternative for it.

The chapters of the discussion outlined here are not presented in a chronological order because the topic of this discussion is timeless in a sense. Hegel's reflective and Heidegger's reductional standpoints are contrasted with the help of a Kant-interpretation, therefore, they are not analyzed chronologically. The reason for it is that I investigate a particular issue (that of the consciousness and the other), and I am focusing on the problem of the intermediation-immediateness. However, this problem has a deeper root, i.e. the relation between the conception and the representation of pictures. Therefore, the essay is closed by a series of thoughts of sensualism.