

ELEUTHERIA

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Message from the President

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I

This instalment of *ELEUTHERIA* contains the first part of an essay on *Reason and Religion* by James Lowry as well as Part One of an article by me entitled *Hegel, Habermas, Piaget and Epistemology*. Both articles deal with the critique of reason and knowledge that pervades the modern retreat from a single and unified concept of mind.

The Enlightenment emphasis on reason has been transformed into rationalities, perspectives and situational epistemologies. The Kantian critique of Enlightenment reason nevertheless resulted in a circumscribed doctrine of knowing. Kant laid down the objective conditions for a possible experience and a science of knowledge while postulating a scientifically impenetrable noumenal world. Hegel proceeded into this noumenal world, exposed it and its phenomenal counterpart as moments in the unfolding of the Idea, and thus brought back to any doctrine of knowing the issues of totality, unity and internal coherence.

Post-Hegelian modernity quickly lost sight of any principle of reason or knowing predicated upon a concept of truth that is necessarily all-encompassing. Truth, knowing, mind and hence philosophy itself fell into a fracas of

historicized doctrines, reductionisms and eventually formalized sub-disciplines. Many of these disciplines have forgot their own history and evolution. Philosophy is now slated for extinction in many of our most prestigious universities.

The essays in this issue of *ELEUTHERIA* show that philosophy must be unitarily rational and coherent. It is an undertaking that is prior to and comprehensive of religion and science. Modern epistemology is an attempt to be a de-philosophized doctrine of knowing that presumably will have some relevance to our socio-political and economic institutions. This is a contradiction that cannot be resolved by the assumptions of this epistemology. The same is true for religious doctrine. Only speculative philosophy sustains these contradictions while completing their resolution.

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The Institute now has available for purchase at \$5.00 per copy Volume One in its *MONOGRAPH SERIES*. The monograph, entitled, *Speculative Philosophy and Practical Life*, is by James Lowry, and originally appeared in the *Fall, 1990* issue of *ELEUTHERIA*. Each volume in the *MONOGRAPH SERIES* contains a *Concordance* and *Line Numbering* for easy reference.

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REASON AND RELIGION

James Lowry

The following essay on "Reason and Religion" has two distinct parts. The first is a consideration of the unique nature of reason itself and an explanation of why it cannot be subsumed by any other activity - especially by either religion or science - or be devalued into some form of ambiguity such as poetry. The second is an example of how reason, speculatively understood, might help to give an insight into the Christian religion - particularly its Liturgy.

As a backdrop to these two undertakings, I have also tried to indicate that the very real problems of our century - especially its proneness to violence and the destruction of the earth - are not solvable if perceived unspeculatively.

Due to space considerations the first purely speculative part of the essay and the Introduction to the second part, which consists of an introduction, commentary and text of an actual Christian liturgy will be contained in the present Fall 1993 issue of *ELEUTHERIA*. The Commentary and Text of the second part will appear in the Spring 1994 issue of *ELEUTHERIA*.

REASON AND RELIGION

The title of this essay seems straightforward enough to us as heirs of a long history in which the two terms "reason" and "religion" can be assumed as having a meaning commonly understood. Nowadays it is usual for intellectuals, particularly philosophers, to speak of "reason" in deprecating tones and in terms which assume that there can be many types of "reason". Likewise these same intellectuals assume that there can certainly be many "religions". With respect at least to "reason", philosophers in particular should know better, for of all opinions, none is so destructive of philosophy as to think it possible that there can be more than one rationality or more than one "thinking".

There have been, of course, historically,

many "philosophies" and not a few "philosophers". In religion the same can be said. There is a certain irony that in both cases when the activity becomes turned into a "profession" the number of philosophies and religions become enshrined and idealized. "Ideologies" and "founders" become idols. There have been no wars over philosophy outside of the rather low level disputes in academe - many going back to ancient times. Religion, which has so many million more adherents, can lay claim to the all time record for blood shed - albeit in the name of God. And in this single fact, as prevalent today as ever before, lies a certain mark about religion that should not be allowed to be overlooked.

The clarity of the question here, of the fact that the most violent parts of the world are those most "religionized" cannot be under-

stood simply as ethnic warfare or economic deprivation or lack of education. More than these "politically correct" *naïvetés* are needed to even begin to understand the question. The violence of religion, of religious war, is palpable in itself just because it contradicts the main tenets of the religion(s) involved - tenets which place the highest priority on loving co-operation, wisdom, contemplation, peacefulness.

What is most curious in discussing this question of religious violence is that it cannot be discussed "within" religion. The religious consciousness cannot be aware of other religions having equal rights to claiming truth, cannot be aware of secularity as a possible alternative, cannot have the historical consciousness of social science. These natural assumptions of modernity have arisen out of *breaks* with religion, which laid claim to going beyond a simple religious consciousness.

More curious still and more instructive is how the religious consciousness has in various forms tried to *absorb* these assertions of independence. The most general and pervasive way to characterize this effort of religious consciousness to stay with itself and the counter offensive of consciousness trying to be independent of religion is to see the dispute as a struggle between "religion" and "science".

There is historical merit to this characterization in so far as every scientific advance, that is, new or "improved" empirical understanding of physical existence, has always been rejected by religious authorities, who then in the fulness of time and self-interest have been forced to accommodate it.

There is also a certain intellectual merit in the characterization of the struggle between "religion" and "science" in so far as each is intellectually speaking, that is speaking from a standpoint outside of either one, the opposite of the other. Religion is a deductive activity dwelling on eternal universality unknowable empirically - hence, its claim to faith. Science is an inductive discipline hopelessly immersed in a strict temporality of instances only knowable as possibility. Its "method" is its "faith". The dogma of the religious consciousness must reject the inevitable scepticism of the scientific consciousness. Equally the scepticism of the scientific consciousness cannot bear the burden of invisible truth and must opt for the idolatry of possibility.

While there may be merit both historically and intellectually in the reasons for the dispute's insolubility, there is little merit in thinking it possible that the insolubility is absolute. As absolute the dispute can have only two outcomes. Either it will go on forever with each side becoming ghettoized and intractable, or one side will annihilate the other. Put more colourfully, either science is the work of the devil or religion is a nest of superstition.

The violence of religion is also the violence of science. Science has immensely encouraged and expanded the ability of violence. All the "techniques" of war are scientific techniques. And throughout the ages men of empirical bent have been drafted by rulers to help them kill their enemies more efficiently. Leonard da Vinci spent as much time on weaponry as on theory and serves as a link between the artisans of Greece and Rome and the scientists of Europe and America.

There has been no doubt a steady increase in "technique" from phosphorous to cruise missiles. Unfortunately the thinking, if such it be, behind the use of the techniques is about as primitive as ever.

And what in all this is the role of reason, and how is it to be related to religion and science? Our essay is entitled *Reason and Religion* not "Reason, Religion and Science" because in understanding the violence of our time it is necessary to understand science as "technique" - no more, no less. As such it has a certain neutrality. A neutrality no doubt often deplored by those who want to use it for their own ends. But the idea that science as such has anything useful to say about its "use" is more deplorable still. The point at which the scientific consciousness becomes conscious of itself as "scientific" is just the point at which it must become "religious". And this is just what happens when scientists become politically or socially active. They must then be drawn into ethical issues. As soon as this happens they step into the fold of religion and cease to be able to do their work - which is nothing else than to seek out the secrets of the physical universe without the restriction of "consequences".

The religious consciousness enlists the scientific one for its own ends. It uses it to destroy its enemies. This is easier the more purely "religious" it is. It is not difficult to die and to kill if this life is seen as merely a means to heaven. And the more empirical that heaven is - paved with gold or peopled with nubile women and sumptuous feasts and laughter - the easier is the destruction of the here and now. This understanding alone should make everyone justly afraid of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of religious fanatics, that is, true believers.

Again, what is the role of reason. By this point it should be clear by implication at least that the question of violence cannot be addressed very clearly by either a religious or a scientific consciousness. There is no particular impetus for either to end it. The one sees it as a furtherance of eternal ends, the other is by nature indifferent. To really deal with the question is to get outside both consciousnesses. And to do this is only possible through reason.

Once again there is merit, historical and intellectual, for this priority of rationality. Historically it was the discovery of "reason" by the Greeks that made possible the discovery of both "religion" and "science". Without the Greek insight into the independence of reason there would be no "religious" or "scientific" consciousness - only a kind of undifferentiated eclecticism with various rituals, largely inefficacious either in reducing physical ills or in increasing knowledge of the physical or psychical universe.

The distinction between "religion" and "science" is a *rational* distinction. This scares theologians and scientists. The history of this fear has taken and will always take the form of suppression on the one hand, absorption on the other. Greek philosophy flourished for a long time - about a thousand years before it was shut down initially by a Christian emperor, Justinian. The piety of the emperor did to philosophy what Greek piety did to Socrates - both in the name of religion. The historical upshot was the absorption of philosophy by Christianity. Theology became the highest activity. Philosophy was relegated to "natural" reason unaided by "revelation". Philosophy as handmaiden to Faith became "useful" or prolegomena to faith and the "underivability" of dogma.

Dogma could be thought of as defensible logically. This defense reached its apotheosis in the Middle Ages when litigation was religious rather than, as in our time, economic.

The revenge of philosophy, metaphorically and historically, was the triumph of science beginning about five hundred years ago. The triumph was rather a slow affair, only gaining momentum in the twentieth century. The result is the increasing violence of our era. The demise of Communism has let out a Pandora's box of ethnic hatred and religious fundamentalism. Scientific secularism is powerless against this violence as it is, as much as anything, its author.

The authority of science, now unchallenged in the West, except by various fundamentalist groups still surviving as anachronisms from an earlier age, is based, like that of Christianity ten centuries ago, on the scepticism of reason. In the case of science reason is used as an instrument of "mathematical" rather than "theological" precision. The scientific imprisonment of reason is like its religious one, a self-destructive act of rational consciousness. The mark of this self-destruction is a lack of self-confidence in the hierarchy of rationality.

The discovery of rationality by the Greeks became possible only because the Greek philosophers were perfectly clear that the highest activity was *thinking* and that *reason* was itself the mark of divinity in man. This confidence was dissolved first by Christianity - and likewise among other religions such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism when Greek rationality was introduced - and then again by modern science. It is only

within the small but devoted remnant of philosophers remaining in the Greek philosophical tradition that has maintained itself through the centuries that this confidence remains alive. This is the confidence of speculative philosophy which unswervingly maintains that Reason is indeed the highest mark of mankind and the true essence of an *imago dei*.

The uniqueness of the claim lies in its "speculative" nature. Speculative reason cannot be a tool because out of it, speculatively speaking, arise both religion and science. How can this be? Certainly no modern person, either Western or Eastern, can conceive of such a claim. Yet only a little reflection will show it. No species other than the human has religion or science. All other animal species have sensation. Many of these species have one or more of the five senses more abundantly than do we. Yet only men and women go to Church, attend university, idolize the theory of relativity. No other species kills so systematically, destroys the planet so effectively, or loves so universally and cares for the earth so passionately. Why? How can this be? Simply because no other species is so capable of rationality - of, in a word, self-consciousness.

Consciousness of self is indeed our conundrum, our *mysterium*. It is self-referential - the brain studying itself! It parallels the theology of divine self-reference found in all higher religions - especially developed in the Christian Trinity - and the same belief in natural self-reference found in all nature religions and in science.

To go back again to the question of violence. The character of our century is of violent

hatred in the name of race or ideology carried out with systematic technique. In all instances such violence has been generated by either a scientific ("survival of the fittest" or the "inevitable demands of history") or a religious (a "holy war" against infidels or some form of "ethnic cleansing") consciousness.

How can we characterize these forms of consciousness. We have already seen that they are, when viewed intellectually, opposite. One is deductive and dogmatic, the other inductive and sceptical. What we can now add is that they are both, in the end, not primarily rational. They "use" reason but they are not *in themselves* rational. They are without speculative reason. And it is this lack of speculative reason, we contend, that creates the violence and environmental malaise of our century.

A further proof of this contention, if one feels the need for further proof, is the sad spectacle of philosophy's self-destruction in the twentieth century. Never has speculative philosophy been so marginalized and lacking in confidence. Nothing could be more pathetic, if it was not also so tragic, than the sight of philosophers, calling themselves "professionals", and policing themselves for political "correctness", proclaiming philosophy as in one form or another a cult of the irrational.

The Greeks put the irrational into Tartarus and placed rationality on the peaks of Olympus. Modern philosophy in all its forms, Marxism, phenomenology, existentialism, Anglo-American empiricism, language cults, aesthetics, and philosophy "of's" cannot evidence reason. This is because reason is not at the convenience of history or a matter

of convention or of race. Reason is not a plurality of possibilities like geometry or species of plants. It is one, universal activity. And the proof of it is simple. Every effort to *prove* otherwise *always* depends on either the inherent "logic" of reason or on a move to a sphere of ambiguity such as poetry or instinct. For it is simply *not possible* for reason to be irrational. One can escape the discipline of reason by becoming a poet or aesthete, or by becoming a theologian or a scientist, social or natural. But there is no other rationality but rationality itself.

Plato and Aristotle both sought to clearly distinguish between rationality and sophistry, between the "really real" and the "apparent", between a reason masquerading as truth and a reason, beyond possibility, as actual. And these distinctions are indeed the most crucial. For reason is unique in that of all activities it is the only one which is truly self-referential. Thinking *only* can think *about* thinking. Hence it is quite capable of thinking about *everything else*. But, where it does so *only*, it loses its truth in *itself*, and always devolves into the tool of religion or science.

When thinking does not so devolve, it can throw a light upon religion and science which can stabilize them and keep them from becoming irrational, from becoming self-destructive and negative. This is the true role of reason. When reason is so recognized as being at the top of a tripartite hierarchy, reconciliation can take the place of the exclusivity of opposites. Just as religion should be a brake to any form of state absolutism, and just as science should be a brake to religious dogmatism, so is speculative philosophy a brake on all three. The proof of this is that only speculative philosophy can provide a consciousness that can

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relate the activity of religion and science adequately by explicating the inherent relativity of both and at the same time the limits of each. This is not an idle claim but

merely the realization that the actuality of mankind is its ability to be rational and that that ability is the root of religion and science.

The following is an *Introduction* to the *Text* and *Commentary* to a *Liturgy* which was used once a week at evening services in the Chapel of the University of King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, during the winter and spring terms of 1971-1972. This Liturgy is an attempt to effect a form of worship which would express as fully and concisely as possible the full content of Christian theology and faith. Although the liturgy has been used experimentally in Anglican worship it gets its inspiration from many liturgies, both Roman and Greek as well as English. The Introduction and Commentary explain the context within which the liturgy is conceived and the reasons for its particular form and content.

Introduction

It would seem strange that the Christian Church is in a perpetual state of change for it proposes to worship a God who has revealed Himself to it as omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, a God who ever loves and cares for his ever erring creatures. It seems strange that this unchanging God is approached in ever changing ways. And it seems even stranger still that those to whom He has especially revealed Himself should be especially confused as to what precisely this revelation is, or was, or will be. The nature of this confusion lies in the inability of Christian believers to comprehend their belief. They recognize that they worship the unchanging, yet they also find their world in a state of continual flux. For some, the flux moves faster or slower, but it is always moving. This movement is the endless interrelated moments of the finite world as they pass in and out of their momentariness. Humanly it is history. Divinely it is phenomenology. To the modern Christian it is unintelligible in either form, though it is present to him in the form of Sin and Suffering; Repentance and Forgiveness. For Sin is the loving of change for its own

sake; Suffering is the inevitable result of never being able to come to a halt, of never reaching one's God-intended end. Repentance is the simple recognition that change is only finite activity which exists as media to end, while Forgiveness is that state of peace which results from being able, upon such recognition to be united to one's inner principle. Christians have always seemed to non-believers to be overly concerned with Sin: yet it is just this concern with sin that opens up to Christians a total view of reality which is otherwise closed. This total view presents itself in the question of how change can be understood as having for its principle the un-changing: how the finite can be reconciled with the infinite; how movement is only such within its end. The older Christians felt the answer lay in the concepts of Grace and Love whereby God reconciled these seeming oppositions. For them the Church was that institution wherein that mediation could fruitfully take place. Today's Christian churches hardly seem even to themselves like such adequate forms. They are divided within themselves and lie apart from one another.

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This troubles them, and, doubting their role, they look to the world for the ground of their own intelligibility. Not finding it they seek for Inspiration. Yet inspirations, because personal in nature, are hard to translate into institutional or communal form. The solution to this double frustration is for the church to be thereby forced to its knees so that finally penitent, it may become once again (this time more fully) conscious of the knowledge of its own implicit form and, as so self-conscious, arise and make that form explicit. For the Church is the medial form of consciousness wherein men recognize their finitude as material creatures and their infinitude as divine creatures; it is that form wherein they come to know themselves as worldly *and* other worldly beings; and that as both, as seemingly hopelessly divided, they come to know that they are saved because their division is also perfectly united.

The centre of the Church must always be its sacramental life. For the Sacraments are those spiritual forms wherein the unity of the divided self can immediately take place in the heart of each Christian believer. The Sacraments are the concrete forms wherein the mediation of the Church takes place, wherein the Creation and the Creator are reconciled and reunited. The form of this immediate individual mediation is the Divine Service or Liturgy. For the Liturgy is the point at which Theology and Faith coincide. Theology is the intelligible understanding of the content of faith; it is faith in its form as universal truth. Faith is the heartfelt assurance of that same content in the individual as intuitive conviction of it as personal truth. It is the Liturgy only which can bring these two forms together. And it can only do so if it, as form, mirrors the content of its connecting purpose. The Liturgy is, on the one hand, universal structural form; it is on the other hand individual heartfelt content.

Thus, in its structure it should be able to transcend finite particularity, while in expression of that structure it is always modifiable. Such a structure can only so transcend the malleable if it takes as its form the divine. And, as this divine form in its perfect completeness is the Holy Trinity, the Liturgy should be tripartite as well. The question of what the appropriate liturgical structure should be is of the highest importance because it is the medium which is the foundation stone of the divine-creature relation. The foundation of this liturgical structure is also, as theological and sensual union, identical with any self-conscious understanding on the part of the Christian Church of the full content of belief. Traditionally the Christian liturgy has been structurally divided into two parts: the preaching of the Word and the sacrament of the Eucharistic Meal. The reason for this tradition is that for Christians from earliest times to the very present God and the world are imperfectly reconciled. The early church waited for the final worldly dissolution but it would not come. This division between Now and Then became hardened in medieval times into "this world" and the "next". One looked to the next world where one's true interest lay. This world was only a veil of tears from which one would be released at death. Thus the real world was the Heavenly Kingdom. The reconciliation took the form of retreat into spiritual life. Modern Christians have simply reversed the medieval view. Despite their protestations, it is this world to which modern Christians are tied. Contemplation must be exchanged for social action so that the Heavenly Kingdom may come to pass Here and Now. The medieval view leads to an abstract concentration on the human as divine, the God/Man is God and reigns in Heaven. The modern view leads to an abstract concentration on the divine as human, the God/Man is man and must reign on earth. Both sides fail to adequately comprehend their

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intended reconciliation between God and His creatures. The historical proof of this is the death of the medieval and modern Church. They have lost both their structural integrity and their believers. For they have impeded what they wished to achieve. And since their intended achievement is too profound and sublime for their imposition of form, the forms are destroyed.

The solution to this deceptive demise of Christianity is embedded in the Trinitarian doctrine itself, for it is the doctrine upon which the whole edifice of the Church must stand. The medieval reconciliation took the form of emphasizing the transcendence of God, of seeing the world as essentially a fall from God in his perfect self-unity. The modern reconciliation has taken the form of emphasizing the immanence of God, of seeing the world as essentially man's only home. Both forms look to the future for reconciliation: the one because the world is inadequate to it; the other because this inadequacy is unrecognized. And the Christian Church can and will never achieve its intended reconciliation until it reconciles itself to the demands of its own belief; namely, that it has received the Revelation of the divine as Holy Trinity. The Jews had revealed to them God as transcendent One of which no world image could be adequate. The Greeks saw God revealed in every rock and stream and plant and living creature. The whole of Nature was full of gods. The ancient Christian Church absorbed these two beliefs and tried to hold them both at the same time. But the most strenuous efforts could only arrive at a *mysterium* to which medieval and modern believers could only relate to abstractly. For the medievals Nature is an alien form in which man has no proper life. For the moderns Nature is equally alien, but, as such is a means to an earthly heaven. Both sides are

the results of polytheistic suppression. For polytheism is the insight that Nature is essentially divine. It does not recognize Nature as a fall from Grace but as essentially graceful. For the polytheists the Word is not made flesh by accident but by necessity. There is no salvation without the World. The medieval and modern view is simply a glorification of a monotheism that begrudges the world of Nature its existence. The full content of Christianity is neither such glorified monotheism or polytheism as simply unsuppressed. It is *both* monotheism *and* polytheism in their full concrete opposition as pure reconciliation. The Holy Trinity is nothing else than the form of this reconciliation. The medieval and modern forms of Christianity have both found as their forms the second Person of the Trinity. Both are aware of being neither Jews or Greeks. In fact Christians have always consciously opposed themselves to pagan polytheists and to Jewish and Muslim monotheists. And in this opposition has been the downfall of their institutions. For they failed to recognize that there is no opposition from the Christian side, nor can there truly be from the other, whatever its diversity. For there is no form of religion that is not fully present in Christianity. Christianity is the full revelation simply because it is every form of religion in its unity. The failure to recognize this total comprehension is the simple result of not relating the Incarnation to the extreme oppositions which it unifies. For it is the focal mediation of the divine with its own creative activity. We will consider this Revelation more fully in our commentary on the Liturgy.

The modern ecumenical movement is the inevitable result of a church which, having little contact with reality, takes its worldly focus as insufficiently worldly. Its concept of unity is not reconciliation but compromise because

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for modern Christians difference is unintelligible. Difference must be laid aside so that the world may survive. Theologically this is tantamount either to a reversion to the very monotheism which is implicit to both the medieval and modern forms of Christianity or a reversion to some form of pre-Christian nature religion. What is different in the present approach is that even the sense of opposition to other religions has been dropped. With the dropping of the internal struggle comes the dropping of the external one as well. But what such a self-reversion proclaims is that the Church is in itself in a coma. It thinks its mission is a Dream and that the secular world, which is full of life and struggle, is the Real. So it strives to be more like it. And more like it, it becomes. Heaven as the Secular opens the modern Christian to a delusion from which even his medieval brothers were immune; namely, that the Secular and Natural is capable of being Heaven. The failure of the modern Church is just this delusion. The medievals may not have recognized worldly truth but they did understand, as did the ancients, that the Finite is open-ended. The medievals therefore fled the World. The moderns want not to embrace the world but to *use* it for their own ends. But these ends seem to be neither in Nature nor in God and so one bows to change as an inevitable lot. At the same time the modern belief in Progress takes the place of

the medieval one in miracles and so Nature is in either case set aside and a belief in God is arbitrarily maintained.

The solution to the contradiction which Christians find themselves with today - namely, that they have a Church and no World, or a World and no Church - lies in the essential intelligibility of the divine totality as providential *and* as immanent, as transcendent *and* as pantheistic multiplicity. Christian theology is the working out of this revelation in imaginative thoughts and images. The Liturgy is this poetic form. And its house the Church is its proper artistic milieu. The Christian Church has always had internal quarrels over what this art should be. The Jewish element found more abundantly in Protestant forms decries the efficacy of art; the Greek element found more abundantly in Eastern and Roman forms finds in its art a full-blown medium. Both elements liturgically, as theologically, must be maintained because the Sensual and the Spiritual only as fully present can be fully reconciled. An intelligible service can only be beautiful. For Ritual is the conscious self-relation of the individual to the universality of the divine love. The formality of ritual is the personal expression wherein the world is reconciled with its principle, or wherein the Creation and Creator are united.

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HEGEL, HABERMAS, PIAGET AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Francis Peddle

This essay considers some of the broad themes of Jürgen Habermas' treatment in *Knowledge and Human Interests* and *Theory and Practice* of Hegel's philosophy. Part One is concerned primarily with logic and epistemology. There is in this part a brief consideration of Jean Piaget's genetic epistemology as found in his *Psychology and Epistemology*. Piaget and Habermas complement each other as the modern re-articulation of Hegel's philosophy of mind and the classical German position on the interrelation of subjectivity and objectivity.

Part Two of the essay, which will appear in the next issue of *ELEUTHERIA*, deals with Hegel's political writings, especially his comments on the French Revolution. It is an endeavour to show the continuity between these writings and Hegel's logico-metaphysical vision. The general intent of the essay is to formulate a reply, from a speculative standpoint, to certain theses and criticisms postulated by Habermas with respect to Hegel's philosophy.

HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

It would be impossible to find within the Hegelian corpus a theory of epistemology as such. Habermas remarks that the epistemological enterprise was replaced by Hegel with the phenomenological self-reflection of mind.¹ This process of phenomenological self-reflection is often held to be Hegel's way of radicalizing the Kantian critique of theoretical reason.² The radicalization by Hegel of certain aspects of the Kantian theoretical endeavour must not be construed as a rejection of the basic tenets of the critical philosophy. With few exceptions these tenets are retained within the Hegelian system. In this retention they are, however, given a new orientation and are qualified by the strictures of Hegel's dialectical and speculative logic.

In the following I shall show that Habermas is mistaken when he asserts that the Hegelian radicalization of the critique of knowledge destroyed the secure foundation of transcen-

dental consciousness and thus the *a priori* demarcation between transcendental and empirical determinants.³ Indeed, the Hegelian endeavour, at least in its intention if not in its final result, is to build as secure a foundation as possible for consciousness. Hegel was acutely aware of the fragility of the Kantian transcendental ego. The subsequent detranscendentalization of philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is more a fulfilment of the Hegelian criticisms of the Kantian position than a result of Hegel's own reformulations.

The question of the subjection of presuppositions to critical analysis and the overall circularity of the Hegelian system is a multi-tiered one. Hegel conceived of absolute Spirit (Geist) in an essentially circular manner. The *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, as a comprehensive explication of the manifoldness of Spirit (Geist), contains a bidirectional movement from the Idea to Nature and out of Nature back to Spirit and the Idea. This two-

ἀλλ' ὑπεράνω κείμενον μόνον τοῦτο ἀληθείᾳ ἐλεύθερον, ὅτι μὴδὲ δουλεῦδον ἐστὶν ἑαυτῷ, ἀλλὰ μόνον αὐτὸ καὶ ὄντος αὐτό
Alone, it rests above in truth and free, since it is not enslaved to itself, but is itself alone, absolutely.

fold movement is circular because everything starts from the Idea and returns to the Idea. Philosophical science (*Wissenschaft*) is a totality within which each part is in an intimate relation with that from which it came and to that which evolves out of it. The *Enzyklopädie* is therefore not an eclectic compilation of sciences but rather an organic unity which has an underlying logical continuity within which there can be found the parameters of the specific sciences.

In a section entitled "With what must the science begin?" at the beginning of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* Hegel tries to explain why logic must begin with pure being.⁴ The category of pure being is the most empty, abstract and immediate of all logical categories. Within it there is no differentiation. It is complete indeterminacy and as such it is pure nothingness. At the same time, pure being is absolutely mediated with all other possible logical differentiations. It is for this reason that when one arrives at the absolute Idea one has come around to Being again. Being is the absolute Idea and the absolute Idea is Being. Pure being *qua* the beginning of logic is, however, totally unmediated with anything else. As mediated with the whole logical spectrum it is both the beginning and the end of logic. A beginning in order to be a beginning must be abstract. In other words it must be distinct from that of which it is a beginning. If it were not, then the beginning would not be pre-suppositionless. If the beginning is not without presupposition, then the whole system will be assuming a given or an externality. Such an assumption would falsify the system's claim to comprehensiveness and also destroy its claim to complete self-determination and self-formation.

This analysis of the beginning of Hegel's logic demonstrates *in nuce* the close relation between the circularity of the system and its self-critical awareness of presuppositions. There is a delicate balance between presuppositions and the unpresupposing activity which

undergirds the movement of the dialectic. Pure being is totally presuppositionless when considered from the angle of a beginning. From the standpoint of the rest of all logic it is that which has the most presuppositions for all the categories are *in* Being.

The dialectical unfolding of logic has both a forward and a backward movement. Any given category, and the science of measure, presupposes the categories of quality and quantity. It does not presuppose them in the sense that it takes them for granted or merely accepts their givenness but in the sense that it recognizes these categories to be necessary aspects or moments of itself. This recognition is equally un presupposing of the status of these previous categories because what evolves out of them is equally the ground of their being what they are. The dialectic is therefore forward assuming because the categories to come further substantiate the categories already explicated and conversely the already posited categories make possible the transition to further levels of speculative integration.

Hegel conceives of logic as a realm of pure knowing or the Idea in the abstract element of thought.⁵ In other words, the knowing that takes place in this realm is thoroughly separated from the contingent and manifold determinateness of nature and finite Mind. It is well known that Hegel later came to view the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* of 1807 as an introduction to his mature system. The *Phänomenologie des Geistes* was an attempt by him to overcome the limitations of the subjective philosophies of his time by developing the dialectic of consciousness to the point where the opposing sides of its correlative mode of appearance are resolved into a unity of absolute knowing. In the *Enzyklopädie* the phenomenology of mind is treated as the second stage of 'Subjective Mind' coming after Anthropology and preceding Psychology. We need not concern ourselves here with the transition from Anthropology to Phenomenology, but it is quite clear that

Hegel intends to make no assumptions whatsoever with regard to either transcendental subjectivism or a pre-existing world of external reality that is in a certain opposition over and against subjectivity.

The pure knowing of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* assumes that the subject/object dichotomy has already been resolved. This resolution suspends the question of whether or not logical science is a valid epistemology. Logic because of its very nature must abstract from all figurate conceptions or representations (*Vorstellungen*). This abstraction is, however, only possible upon the basis of the fact that logic is the inner essential nature of all that is. As such it cannot be separated from that which takes its life from it. The connection of the purely logical with the representational and determinative is a function of absolute knowing and speculation. The separation of the two makes possible a realm of pure knowing. The purity of this knowing is a function of theoretical abstraction.

The resolution of the subject/object dichotomy is the task of phenomenology. A completed phenomenology is the assumption of the Idea considered logically and abstractly. As a science of pure knowing, logic, for Hegel, is the exhaustive analysis and critique of all possible epistemological positions. Hegel avoids an epistemology of the Kantian variety because it abstractly formulates a method which is then externally imposed upon an already given material that is understood to be somehow there unintelligibly before this imposition. This separation of structure from what is structured is, in Hegel's view, an abstract metaphysics of the understanding (*Verstand*).

Hegel interpreted many of the early Enlightenment rationalists such as Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, and Wolff as moving primarily within this realm of abstract metaphysics. I think it can also be argued that Hegel would

consider many of the methodological ruminations of the natural and social sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as unjustifiably assuming and/or formulating a method in abstraction from that to which the method is intended to apply. Methodological considerations cannot be articulated prior to the explication of the content of what is being considered. It is for this reason that Hegel consistently avoids terminology such as 'method' or 'application'. He prefers to use such terms as unfold, self-mediation, self-differentiation and so on.

Hegel criticizes the Kantian position for remaining at the correlational or phenomenological mode of mind.⁶ At the same time, however, he sees the Kantian attempt to articulate synthetic *a priori* judgements as a great speculative endeavour in intention no matter how inadequate its formulation. The Kantian transcendental ego, as the basis of the structure of the pure concepts of the understanding, points to something that is over and beyond itself or to use Kant's terminology it points to the intuitions (*Anschauungen*) of sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*). Kant's presentation of this position is, in Hegel's view, fundamentally flawed because it finitizes the transcendental ego by holding it in radical abstraction from that of which it is the basis. All the fixed characters which result from abstract thought are limited through their own self-identity and self-reference. The supposed infinity of the transcendental ego is therefore de-infinitized because of its sheer transcendentalness.

On the one hand it may be argued that the stability of the Kantian transcendental ego is a function of its *a priori* purity or its abstraction from both the determinations of the *a priori* categories of the understanding and empirical intuitions. It is the abstraction from the former that has allowed the transcendental ego to survive in later nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy (*vide* Husserl) since it is

not inseparably conjoined with the Newtonian and formal logic categories that Kant somewhat unquestioningly appropriates for his logical architectonic as the pure concepts of the understanding. Hegel's criticism of Kant for his lack of deduction with regard to the categories was an anticipation of the later revolt against the historical conditionedness of Kant's logical architectonic - a revolt which eventually undermined the metaphysical foundation of Kant's Newtonian world-view and indeed of any transcendental endeavour whatsoever. Hegel, on the other hand, views the Kantian transcendental ego as an inadequate and unstable foundation for metaphysical knowing precisely because it is in complete abstraction from all representations and as such contains the self-sublating and self-contradictory character that all finite entities must have.

In Hegel's eyes Kant is a subjective idealist who unreflectingly accepts certain thought forms that arise spontaneously out of our *a priori* faculty and which have nothing to do with the world as it actually is in itself. The transcendental ego is the ultimate principle of this subjectivism, which contains static thought categories that are in an external relation to the content of experience. Dialectical and speculative thought, on the other hand, treats these categories dynamically as one moves through their content and their necessary interrelation is demonstrated.

HABERMAS' CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE

Habermas sees Hegel's treatment of the transcendental thought determinations as a self-formative process. However, he mistakenly infers from this that the self-formative process contains no absolutely fixed point.⁷ This interpretation over-emphasizes the dynamic and discursive element in the self-formative process to the detriment of the static and definitive quality of the categories explicated

and their reference back to absolute Spirit. The standpoint of absolute knowledge does not proceed with immanent necessity from phenomenological experience, as Habermas maintains, but from absolute Spirit.⁸ Phenomenological experience is a mode or moment in Spirit's revelation of its content to itself. This position is, of course, much clearer in the *Enzyklopädie* than in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* of 1807.

The whole purpose of Hegel's work of 1807 is to get beyond the strictly phenomenological standpoint. The equivocation of the phenomenology of mind lies not so much in the question of whether it justifies the absolute or the absolute makes the justification of phenomenological experience possible but what type of mind (*Geist*) or subjectivity is being referred to. Hegel's answer to this is crucial because it is his reformulation of the principle of subjectivity that places consciousness and phenomenological experience on more secure ground than the Kantian transcendental ego.

Kant's transcendental ego and the rational autonomy that it ensures in the sphere of practical reason is a distinctively human faculty. Its origin must ultimately remain a mystery to us, according to Kant, yet we know that we have this faculty which makes possible *a priori* knowledge and autonomous moral action. This faculty does not result in a completely self-enclosed subjectivity nor is it in a productive relation with what is held to be external to it. On the contrary, our *a priori* faculty, as Kant shows in the transcendental deduction, is in a necessary relation to a world beyond itself. Likewise, in practical reason the categorical imperative is necessarily determinative of specific moral situations. The necessary reference to a non-*a priori* realm in the *a priori* faculty is traditionally understood as Kant's *tertium quid* to the classical empiricism of Hume and Locke and the rationalism of Leibniz and Spinoza. Kant's doctrine of metaphysical knowing sets strict limits to human understanding. The noumenal world

must forever remain impenetrable to us. All forms of knowing must therefore, in Kant's view, take place within the realm of phenomenological experience. It is only within this experience that knowledge is both possible and valid.

Hegel transfers the Kantian principle of subjectivity or the transcendental ego from the human realm to the cosmological. The unfolding of the subjective "I" is now understood as the self-mediation of an absolute subjectivity which has a necessary moment in the development of the finite subjectivity of human beings.⁹ In Hegel's philosophy, subjectivity is a thoroughly equivocal term. Lack of sensitivity to this equivocation and to the sense in which the term is being used in different contexts has led many commentators astray.¹⁰ The issue of subjectivity is also closely related to the many problems that cluster around "Identitätsphilosophie". Habermas states that it was Hegel's pre-occupation with the postulates of the philosophy of identity that precluded the logical development of his radicalization of the critique of reason.¹¹

Against the Kantian limitation of knowledge to phenomenological experience, Hegel's system explicates an absolute subjectivity within which phenomenological experience is possible. This explication does not presume a knowledge of the Absolute but rather the explication itself shows that such a knowledge is possible. The Kantian principle of self-consciousness is now transposed to a supra-human realm. Nevertheless the principle retains the Kantian characteristic of reference to other. The transcendental ego makes possible the accompaniment of the 'I think' with each and every representation. At the same time all representations have their ultimate ground or principle of unity in the transcendental ego. This ultimate principle of unity is therefore intrinsically referential to all representations. Likewise, Hegel's absolute subjectivity must necessarily become negatively

related to itself. This means that the pure realm of the abstract Idea must go over into Nature and out of this otherness the absolute subject or Spirit becomes fully mediated with itself. It is only within absolute Mind and ultimately in philosophy that this mediation of Spirit with all its determinations can become completely transparent to us.

What is the status of human knowledge at the highest levels of absolute Mind? For Hegel it is certainly not phenomenological. Correlational grades of mind, and the knowledge attained at the phenomenological level, must always be tentative. At this stage subject and object relate to each other in an external manner. Both sides are therefore susceptible to extrinsic influences by the other side. For example, a certain theory may have to be revised in the light of new empirical findings or conversely observational data may be looked upon from a wholly new theoretical angle. The affirmation of the possibility of epistemological revision by new vistas of thought and experience is a powerful theme in nineteenth and twentieth century thought. It is a theme that harbours a pervasive mis-trust of any position proclaiming absolute certainty, finality and knowledge.

Kant's doctrine of metaphysical knowing attempts to formulate a system of certain and definitive understanding. Its purely phenomenological status, however, makes it a tentative system because its thought categories are grafted on to representations in a manner irrespective of the nature of the content of these representations. Kant's clear and rigid demarcation between empirical and transcendental determinants was to Hegel a great step forward in the history of philosophy. Hegel nevertheless saw this distinction as the limitation of the Kantian philosophy because it demonstrated its inability to go beyond the level of phenomenological knowledge.

A fundamental question to be put to the

Hegelian system concerns the degree to which our knowledge is necessarily phenomenological and the extent to which it is philosophical or non-tentative and absolute. In essence this is a question concerning the parameters of our finite subjectivity and the degree to which that subjectivity participates in absolute subjectivity. Not to make the distinction is to leave Hegel open to the criticism of turning human beings into gods (some have made light of this 'Aryan Pelagianism') or at least destroying the distinction between human and divine knowledge. Indeed, it has been the supposed secularization of Hegel's self-creative subjectivity that is the cornerstone of certain interpretations of intellectual history in the post-Hegelian era.¹² It is undeniably true that the modern epoch has tasted the evils and the anxiety of an unbridled, self-enclosed subjectivity be it of an existentialist or technical-analytical hue. Hegel himself would have found anathema a subjective hybris of this sort.

It is Habermas' emphasis on the phenomenological and the finitely subjective that gives his first essay in *Knowledge and Human Interests* an overly anthropomorphic aura. Habermas states that in a critical philosophy "there can be no concept of knowledge that can be explicated independently of the subjective conditions of the objectivity of possible knowledge".¹³ This is a position that Hegel would agree with fully. However one has to be careful with regard to what is meant by 'subjective conditions'.

Hegel's criticism of the Kantian epistemology is not based on the view that the subjective principles of this epistemology are in a confrontation with his own concept of absolute knowledge. Hegel, on the contrary, affirms this subjective principle but not as a private or exclusively human-oriented concept. The subjective is the substantial and the non-arbitrary just as much for Hegel as it is for Kant. Pure transcendental thought determinations are, in Hegel's system, the essential ground and inner

life of all natural and finitely subjective determinations. The interrelation between the logical and the natural realms is only possible upon the basis of their rigid distinction. The central locus and fixed point of the Hegelian system is Spirit which preserves the distinction between empirical and non-empirical determinations. The subjective conditions of knowledge lie not only in the self-formative processes of human beings as thinking creatures but also in the internal structure of absolute Spirit which is revealed to us more luculently through thought and also in a more impure form in nature. Our knowledge must always be in a certain sense phenomenological and tentative because as finite beings the gulf between subject and object is an intrinsic aspect of our existence that can only be temporarily suspended in pure thought. Hegel often reminds us that the categories of his logic are historical and provisional, although I doubt that he was uncertain or had a provisional attitude toward the main divisions of the system. As finite beings our knowledge must always be ready to appropriate new domains of empirical understanding and as theoretically finite beings our perspectival and interpretative capacities give us the potential for more enlightened insight into both the empirical and non-empirical domains.

Hegel's absolute Spirit, and the knowledge we have of it, is not opposed to the knowledge that results from the phenomenological region. Absolute knowledge contextualizes this knowledge and provides the overall framework for various levels of epistemological endeavour. In this contextualization there is also a thorough-going critique of the limitations of knowledge obtained at the phenomenological level. Absolute subjectivity and finite subjectivity are interrelated in their distinction from one another. The dialectics of this situation become most obvious toward the end of the *Enzyklopädie*. In the absolute syllogism the Idea, Nature and Spirit all mediate one another and as such are mutually interchangeable.¹⁴ For non-absolute beings, however, this

interchangeability is not possible because we exist at definite points in space and time in which there cannot possibly be telescoped the whole range of determinations present in the absolute Idea. So while philosophical knowing is for us possible it can never be the exclusive stage at which we function epistemologically.

PIAGET'S GENETIC EPISTEMOLOGY

Both Hegel's logic and the epistemological claims that are interwoven with it attempt to balance fixed states and the processes whereby these states are actualized. A situation of pure dialectical fluidity is complemented both by the limited rigidities of the understanding and the higher order resolutions of speculative and negative reasoning. The genetic epistemology of Jean Piaget appears on the surface to take its departure from Kant by seeking to describe and deepen our understanding of the processes through which thought is adapted to reality. Piaget remarks that knowledge in the modern world has tended to be regarded more as a process than a state.¹⁵ Certainly the attention given by Bergson, Dewey, Whitehead and others to the changeable and the variable substantiates this.

The staticity of the Kantian categories has today almost totally precluded their citation as the ultimate structural components of knowledge. Piaget's genetic epistemology seeks to avoid any purely empirical or purely a priorist interpretation of cognitive development. According to Piaget the starting point for all knowledge is essentially the equilibrium which is established between the assimilation of objects to the subject's activity and conversely the accommodation of this activity to the objects. There is thus a reciprocal interrelation between subjects and objects, and knowledge can only arise in the matrix of this relation. While there has been much dispute about the validity of Piaget's four primary stages in intellectual development, it is nevertheless recognized by most psychologists

that such delineations in the continuum of cognitive development are absolutely necessary even if they involve a certain degree of arbitrariness. If categorization is totally suspended, then there is no equilibrium. If there is no equilibrium, then knowledge is impossible. Piaget does not therefore deal solely with processes in his genetic epistemology but also with static states.

Hegel's dynamic categories and Piaget's genetic epistemology are at one with respect to their attempts to effect an adequate interrelation between the fluid and the static, the changing and the unchanging. Critics of both thinkers usually fall into the trap of unjustifiably castigating them for coming down too heavily on one side or the other. For example, Hegel is accused of either arbitrarily putting everything into preconceived patterns or cited as the founding father of the modern crisis in philosophical certainty. After all dialectics can unseat almost any ensconced position. Hegel was well aware of the possible abuses of dialectic and if he forgot he was reminded well enough by the poet Goethe.

Among contemporary commentators J.N. Findlay, for example, is one who sees Hegel as being far too much of a this-world resident to do justice to absolute theory.¹⁶ Piaget likewise is either attacked by the behaviorists for being too Kantian or savaged by the apriorists for being too empirical. As a rejoinder to this situation Hegel would appeal coterminously to what can be obtained within the phenomenological reflection of mind and what is obtained at the level of philosophical knowing. In other words the problem as Hegel sees it is one of determining the epistemological limits of phenomenological reflection in contradistinction to the contextualization of these limits by absolute knowing.

Dialectics plays a prominent role in Piaget's work in the sense that it expresses the dynamic aspect of mental development and the acquisi-

tion of knowledge. This dynamic aspect is integral to Piaget's notion of equilibration. The concept of equilibration is the most important locus for the explication of mental development in Piaget's late work and is, at the same time, one of the most difficult notions to understand in his thought. The difficulty lies primarily in the fact that equilibration is an equivocal concept or in other words it necessarily involves two poles of activity and two poles of meaning. At every stage of mental development there occurs a process of assimilation where external stimuli either correspond with the structure existing within the organism or change in accordance with this structure. On the other hand there is a process of accommodation where the structure itself undergoes a transformation as an adaptive response to environmental intrusions or stimuli. Equilibration establishes or maintains a synthesis of these opposed tendencies. To put it in another way it conserves the integrity of the internal and external systems. Each stage of mental development and conceptualization establishes a new level of equilibrium which in itself opens up the possibility of new forms of information and novel potentialities for dialectical development.

Hegel would find much that is laudatory in Piaget's work. The dialectic of the phenomenological reflection of mind has as its *telos* a subject/object correlation that is not unlike Piaget's conception of equilibration. There are, of course, many problems in drawing parallels between the two thinkers. For exam-

ple, at what levels can it be said that consciousness and self-consciousness obtain. In this regard Hegel is straddled by the limitations of empirical knowledge in his time. Nevertheless, there are important theoretical parallels between the two thinkers that transcend historical and empirical differences. Hegel's primary criticisms of Piaget would center around the lack of explanation in categorical and level transformations and transitions which, for Hegel, would involve the negativity present in all logical and categorical progressions. Hegel would also criticize Piaget's lack of differentiation of various levels of reason and knowing in the fully formed adult or the stage of formal operations. Both thinkers in a general way tend to complement one another. In Hegel there are vast lacunae in the areas of developmental and child psychology. For the most part it would probably not be unfair to say that Hegel has the typical pre-nineteenth century view of children as small adults - a quantitative, and not a qualitative, difference between the two. Piaget on the other hand seems to come to an abrupt stop at adolescence. One seeks in vain at the formal operational stage for accounts of the various levels of conceptualization that range throughout our adult endeavours philosophical or otherwise, or for suspensions of optional policy alternatives or discursive argument in intuitionism, mystical visions, or the rapture of love - divine or mundane. Habermas' critical theory could be considerably enhanced by a thorough and rigorous analysis of the relationship between Hegel and Piaget.

NOTES

1. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* translated by Jeremy Shapiro (Boston, Beacon Press, 1971), p. 7.
2. Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1967), "The Hegelian Philosophy as the Consummation of German Idealism",

pp. 225 - 233.

3. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
4. "Womit muss der Anfang der Wissenschaft gemacht werden?", G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik I* (Hamburg, Meiner, 1932), pp. 51 - 64.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (Hamburg, Meiner, 1969), p. 53.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
7. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
9. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II* (Hamburg, Meiner, 1932), pp. 213 - 234.
10. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 316. Taylor confuses the distinctive meanings of the twofold use of 'subjectivity' in the third part of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*. He also fails to show the congruency that is present in these distinctive meanings.
11. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
12. Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 537 - 569.
13. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
14. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 462 - 463.
15. Jean Piaget, *Psychology and Epistemology* (Penguin, 1977), p. 6.
16. J.N. Findlay, "Hegel's Contribution to Absolute-Theory", *The Owl of Minerva*, Vol.10, No.3, March, 1979. pp. 6 - 10. See also *Hegel: a Re-Examination* (London, Unwin, 1958), pp. 346 - 354.

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