

## The Cunning of Reason and the World-Historical Individual

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### I

In this paper I intend to explicate Hegel's notion of the 'cunning of Reason' and the role of the world-historical individual in the process of historical development. Given the complex and multi-faceted nature of Hegel's philosophical system, I will approach this topic from three different perspectives, which correspond to the three main divisions within the paper. In the first part, I begin with a general overview of Hegel's philosophical conception of history, especially with regard to the notions of Spirit and Nature, and the relationship between passion and the Idea. This will lead to the second part of the paper wherein I will focus on the unique status of the world-historical individual. Of particular interest will be an investigation of the dialectic between the subjective intentions of the historical individual and the objective results of his actions which Hegel refers to as the 'cunning of Reason'--that which mediates between intent and consequence and which is capable of realizing consequences which go beyond the conscious intent of the historical actor. Finally, in the third part, I will return to a discussion of the 'cunning of Reason', but this time considered in the purely theoretical context of Hegel's Logic. It is hoped that by approaching Hegel from these various levels, what Hegel means by the 'cunning of Reason' and how he understands the position of the world-historical individual will be made apparent.

### II

In the context of Hegel's philosophical system, world history is "the exhibition of Spirit in the

process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially." [1] Since the essence of Spirit is freedom and self-consciousness, the history of the world, as well as its final cause, is none other than the development of Spirit's awareness of its own freedom, and consequently, the reality of that freedom. [2]

Given this general conception of history, Hegel emphasizes that if one is to understand this process of the self-development of Spirit then one must be aware of the difference between the Idea or principle of Spirit and its realization in the world of concrete existence. [3] What he calls the aim, principle, or Idea of Spirit is something 'merely general and abstract'. This principle is the implicit or undeveloped essence of Spirit which as such is not completely real or actual. Hegel conceives of the Idea of Spirit as being analogous to those aims and ideas that we have in our thoughts, but which have not been made actual in the real world. [4] These aims and ideas, like the Idea of Spirit, present themselves as possibilities or potentialities which have yet to achieve actual existence. In order to produce actuality, in order for this abstract principle to attain realization, a second element is required. The introduction of this second element brings us to a discussion of the means whereby this principle of freedom is realized or made actual. It is with the means that we come face to face with the phenomenon of history itself, for the power of this second element is revealed in the activity of man. It is only in human activity, i.e., human history, that the abstract Idea of Spirit as freedom can be fully actualized. Furthermore, the motive power of human activity which actualizes the Idea of Spirit and its characteristics, that is, makes it conscious of itself by giving this abstract essence determinate, objective existence, is the need, passion, and instinct of man.

The first glance of History convinces us that the actions of men proceed from their needs, their passions, their characteristics and talents; and impresses us with the belief that such needs, passions and instincts are the sole springs of action--the efficient agents in this scene of activity. . . . Their power lies in the fact that they respect none of the limitations which justice and morality would impose on them; and that these natural impulses have a more direct influence over man than the artificial and

tedious discipline that tends to order and self-restraint, law and morality.[5]

With the introduction of this second element it must be noted that this element is not something other than Spirit which is merely used by Spirit as a means or an instrument for achieving its own ends. On the contrary:

The realm of Spirit is all-comprehensive; it includes everything that ever has interested or ever will interest man. Man is active in it; whatever he does, he is the creature within which Spirit works. Hence it is of interest, in the course of history, to learn to know spiritual nature in its existence, that is, the point where Spirit and Nature unite, namely, human nature.[6]

In this way, two elements in conjunction compose the object of historical investigation: the first is the Idea (of Spirit), and the second is the complex of human passions (Nature).[7] It is only in human nature that these two elements are found united in one being. The Idea of freedom is the essence of Spirit and the absolute goal of historical development. Human passions, informed by the Idea, are the means by which the subjective, abstract Idea of freedom, latent in human nature, is realized or actualized in the objective world.

Hegel's consideration of passion and its role in history is somewhat complicated and involves a combination of the following terms: 'will', 'character', and 'intelligence'. [8] As a preliminary definition, he characterizes passion as that human activity resulting from private interests toward which is focused the whole energy of both will and character. The use of the term 'will' is to designate the principle source of human activity, while 'character' is said to indicate the conjunction of will and intelligence. Since 'character' also refers to all the peculiar idiosyncrasies which constitute a particular individual and his concerns, Hegel chooses to use the word 'passion' in order to comprehend that particular inclination of character in which the will is directed toward the attainment, not of private goals alone, but of purposes shared in by the community as a whole. Passion, as the motivating force in history, is not irrational passion, which as Hegel remarks, falls outside the scope of history.[9] Rather, it is passion which is informed by reason or the Idea, as such it has as its ultimate

purpose, not some particular aim, but the developing universal aim of Spirit. It is only in this sense, then, that Hegel can proclaim that "nothing great in the World has been accomplished without passion." [10]

In order to clarify the function of human activity in Hegel's philosophy of history it may be useful to consider Charles Taylor's discussion of Hegel as an exemplification of what he calls the 'expressionist tradition'. [11] As defined by Taylor, expressionism is a way of thinking that stresses unity and its expressive manifestations; it regards freedom, conceived in terms of authentic self-expression, as the central value of human life, and it characterizes 'expressive unity' as the unity of the individual with himself, nature, and other men. For expressivism, the concept of human nature involves the notion of an inner force or drive seeking to impose itself on external reality. The development of man and the realization of human potential, therefore, is viewed as the manifestation of this immanent drive seeking to realize itself.

From this expressionist perspective emerged the passionate desire for unity, as well as a reaction to the Enlightenment conception of nature, especially human nature, as an aggregate of universal and unchangeable facts. Furthermore, the maintenance of this unity necessitated the rejection of the division of life into separate and distinct regions or activities, including the familiar distinctions between soul and body, reason and passion, man and nature. All of these dichotomies were seen as distorting the true nature of man conceived as a unified stream of life in which no single aspect could be properly understood in abstraction from all others. Taylor correctly argues that this feature of the expressionist tradition is of prime importance for grasping Hegel's philosophical project which is strongly anti-dualistic. It attempts to overcome all rigid dichotomies, especially the distinction between Spirit and Nature, or more abstractly, the division between subjectivity and objectivity.

The problem faced by Hegel, then, is to provide an adequate ontological foundation for this (assumed) unity between Spirit and Nature. As we have already seen, the locus of this unity is human nature; but if the highest spiritual aspect of man, his freedom and self-consciousness, is to be harmonized with his natural being, then nature must be seen as having an inclination toward the realization of spiritual goals. [12] If this is so, then nature can no longer be looked upon as being a conglomeration of brute, irrational forces in opposition to reason, rather, it

must be the implicit essence of nature to tend toward spirituality. In other words, underlying or immanent in nature must be a spiritual principle struggling to make itself known. For Hegel, this notion of a spiritual principle immanent in nature takes the form of an absolute Spirit which, while implicit in nature, reaches its fullest expression in human consciousness. Man is the means whereby the absolute Spirit achieves a completeness of self-expression which was only potentially present in nature. It must be recalled, however, that Spirit is not entirely reducible to the consciousness of man, for it is also present throughout nature as a whole, albeit in an unconscious (potential) state which is moving towards a consciousness of itself (actuality) which is only ultimately achieved in man.

Since the process of history is still incomplete, the final aim of historical progress is not made explicit as a distinct object of human knowledge or desire. Although human individuals may be unaware of the purpose they are fulfilling, the universal principle is present in them as an unconscious, natural instinct, which is ever seeking to express itself. Hence, the history of the world does not begin with a fully conscious aim, rather, it

begins with its general aim--the realization of the Idea of Spirit--only in an implicit form (an *sich*) that is, as Nature; a hidden, most profoundly hidden, unconscious instinct; and the whole process of History (as already observed), is directed to rendering this unconscious impulse a conscious one.[13]

In order to make this immanent drive fully conscious, Spirit must realize its aim in the world of objective existence and thereby make it an object for consciousness. By becoming conscious of a state of affairs in the world as one which engenders freedom, Spirit (i.e., human consciousness) recognizes that the objective world, as its own product, is none other than the realization of its own inner drive toward freedom. In realizing this aim, Spirit finds and contemplates itself in concrete existence.

History reaches its culmination in a community or people which is in conformity with the Idea of Spirit as freedom, as it develops and unfolds itself in human activity. As Hegel observes, the social instinct of man implies a conscious purpose for life and property, but when society has been established, this purpose becomes more comprehensive.[14] For it is only in the

community, within a social context, that self-consciousness and freedom can be achieved. In this way, the Idea is realized in history, not all at once, but in definite historical stages which are identified with actual historical peoples or cultures. Each stage of history is embodied in a certain people who are more or less adequate embodiments of Spirit and who struggle to express the Idea of freedom at that particular stage of development.

Given the view that history is the succession of world-historical peoples, in the course of history two factors are important.[15] The first is the preservation of a people or a state. This period in the life of a people represents the activity of individual men who participate in a common purpose and labor to actualize those possibilities inherent in that historical stage. Once this purpose is achieved, however, the people find themselves without a common goal; as a result, the society begins to break down. Hence, the second factor is the decline and fall of a people. World history, however, continues on, progressing toward an even higher conception of itself. This progression is the result of the inner development of the Idea of Spirit as it works itself out in the activity of individuals who are its 'agents'. At this point, says Hegel, occur "those momentous collisions between existing, acknowledged duties, laws, and rights, and those contingencies which are adverse to this fixed system; which assail and even destroy its foundations and existence." [16] These new possibilities are now in the process of becoming historical fact, for they represent a universal which, while surpassing the previous state of affairs, was potentially (but not yet actually) present in that state. Those members of society who 'grasp' this higher universal and make it their own purpose are called by Hegel: world-historical individuals.

It is here, however, that we seem to be presented with a problem. Contemporary commentators on Hegel disagree with regard to the extent that the world-historical individual can be said to 'grasp' this higher universal. In other words, it is far from clear to what degree that historical individual is aware of the significance of his actions. It is to this problem that we must now turn.

### III

One of the distinctive features of Hegel's philosophy of history is the apparent disparity between sub-

jective intentions and objective historical results. For Hegel, world-historical events are not necessarily the result of the conscious intentions of the historical actors. The connection of events produced by passion,

involves also the fact that in history an additional result is commonly produced by human actions beyond that which they aim at and obtain--that which they immediately recognize and desire. They gratify their own interest; but something further is thereby accomplished, latent in the actions in question, though not present to their consciousness, and not included in their design.[17]

Hegel calls this phenomenon the 'cunning of Reason'. In this image, Reason is represented as using the passions of men to fulfill its own purposes. Particular men and their subjective intentions clash in the battle of history, but the universal purpose remains concealed in the background.

It is not the general idea that is implicated in opposition and combat, and that is exposed to danger. It remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the cunning of reason--that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that which develops its existence through such impulsion pays the penalty, and suffers loss.[18]

Hegel's view of the hero in history, then, seems to have this double aspect: on the one hand, the world-historical individual is the efficient agent of change and historical progress; on the other hand, he appears to be only the means or instrument of a higher and broader purpose, in the face of which his own aims and interests are of little or no importance.[19] So while a Caesar or a Napoleon may have been motivated by their own ambitions, Reason, in its subtle act of cunning, managed to use these passions and ambitions to further its own goals.[20]

According to Shlomo Avineri, this scenario contains an epistemological difficulty which indicates a number of questions that Hegel failed to answer properly.[21] When Hegel refers to the world-historical individual as an 'agent' or an 'instrument' he assumes not only that these individuals may have been motivated by interests far inferior to the ultimate end of history, but also

that they may not even have been aware of the historical significance of their actions. Yet textual evidence suggests, says Avineri, that Hegel had problems deciding just to what extent the historical individuals were aware of the significance of what they were doing. Avineri cites passages from Reason in History which, in his opinion, illustrate three variations on this theme:

- (a) The historical men, world historical individuals, are those who grasp . . . a higher universal, make it their own purpose and realize this purpose in accordance with the higher law of Spirit. . . . The world historical persons, the heroes of their age, must therefore be recognized as its seers.
- (b) Caesar was motivated not only by his own private interest, but acted instinctively to bring to pass that which the times required.
- (c) Such individuals have no consciousness of the Idea as such. They are practical and political men. [22]

From these passages, Avineri finds Hegel describing the world-historical individual as either (a) wholly conscious of the universal Idea as such, (b) only instinctively conscious of it, or (c) totally unaware of it. He goes on to conclude that "with all the possible allowance for the varieties of expression and nuance, no adequate explanation can be given for what must in the last resort be viewed as a series of contradictory statements." [23] It is my contention, however, that these statements are not contradictory, and when considered in the context of Hegel's philosophy of history, can be seen to form, if not a correct, at least a consistent position. [24]

Beginning with (c) the last variation, we are told that the historical individuals possess no consciousness of the Idea as such, they are totally unaware of it. If this is meant to say that the individual, at some given moment in the process of historical development, is unaware of the final aim of history--the Idea of Spirit in and for itself--then far from being a debatable issue, is quite to the point. It is not even correct to question whether or not such individuals were, in fact, aware of the Idea as such, for in principle, they could not have known it.

According to Hegel, reason or the Idea is immanent in historical existence and only reaches its own per-



fection in and through this existence. But in the actual historical development of the Idea, the subjective side, consciousness as such, is not yet able to know the (abstract) final aim of history, for it is at that moment in the process of unfolding itself and hence incomplete. The complete Idea of Spirit, then, cannot serve as the distinctively known object of interest for the historical individual. If Hegel is pressed into revealing who is aware of the Idea implicit in history, his answer is readily forthcoming--the philosopher, or at least Hegel himself. But knowledge of the Idea is relative and dependent upon one's position in the process of the Idea's historical self-unfolding. The Idea can only be known to the degree that it has actualized itself in objective existence and thereby renders itself knowable. Hegel is careful to point out that philosophy cannot give instruction as to what the world ought to be, for it can only understand the Idea insofar as it has been actualized in the real world.[25]

If the historical actors are not and, in principle, cannot be aware of the final aim of history, what is it that they are aware of, or are we to conclude that they are totally ignorant of what they are doing? What is it that distinguishes them from their fellowmen? Given Avineri's analysis, we appear to have two choices: either (a) the world-historical individuals are those who grasp a higher universal and make it their purpose or (b) they are those who acted instinctively to bring about that which the times required. If Hegel is to be seen as holding a consistent position, however, then these two statements cannot be mutually exclusive alternatives, but rather, two ways of expressing one and the same fundamental insight.

In discussing Caesar, Hegel asserts that he was motivated not only by personal ambition, but that "he acted instinctively to bring to pass that which the times required", it was "an unconscious impulse that occasioned the accomplishment of that for which the time was ripe".[26] Such is the position of all great historical men: their own particular wills coincide with the general will of Spirit as it strives toward self-realization. They may be called 'Heroes' only insofar as they derive their purpose:

. . . from a secret source whose content is still hidden and has not yet broken through to existence. The source of their actions is the inner spirit, still hidden beneath the surface but already knocking against the outer world as

against a shell, in order finally, to burst forth and break it into pieces; for it is a kernel different from that which belongs to the shell.[27]

What is essential is that the will of Spirit is not something other than the will of man, for this 'inner spirit' is the unconscious instinct of all men. The people follow the historical hero because he shows them what their own inner drive or instinct is and carries it out. Thus the power of Spirit is identical with an inner drive which is present in all men, one that is instinctual and, therefore, not always fully comprehended in thought. Only after what is implicitly present as an instinctual drive has been made explicit in actual reality can it be comprehended as an object of thought.

It has already been noted that this instinctual drive is not to be regarded as blind, irrational passion, which as such falls outside the scope of history. Man is the unity of Spirit and Nature, and his passion is imbued by reason, informed by the Idea. Historical individuals are intelligent, thinking beings, who had an insight into the conditions of their own time and realized (if only vaguely) what was 'ripe for development'. They were aware of the possibilities, inherent in those conditions, which were about to be actualized.

This was the very Truth for their age, for their world; the species next in order, so to speak, and which was already formed in the womb of time. It was theirs to know this nascent principle, the necessary, directly sequent step in progress, which the world was to take; to make this their aim, and to expend their energy in promoting it.[28]

In understanding the conditions of their time, the world-historical individuals instinctively grasp a higher universal in terms of the possibilities implicit in the present state of affairs.[29] As we have seen, once a given society has fully actualized its own potential, it ceases to have a purpose or goal to strive for and consequently, begins to collapse. Concealed in this process of decline, however, are new possibilities which will serve as the basis for the next stage of development. It is the historical individuals who grasp these latent possibilities and struggle to make them a reality. By so doing, they do

not theoretically comprehend the universal principle they are actualizing, for they are primarily men of action. These men follow their own passions and wills, but what they pursue is the universal which is implicit in these passions and instinctual drives. In this way, "the special interest of passion is thus inseparable from the actualization of the universal." [30]

The greatness of historical individuals, therefore, does not lie in their being the instruments of Spirit. In fact, the metaphors of 'instrument' and 'agent', if understood in the usual sense, are not applicable in this context, although Hegel does use them. Ordinarily, an instrument is that which is used by an agent in order to accomplish some task. One is tempted to conclude that in history the real agent is Spirit, which merely uses men as instruments for its own purposes. But in the process of historical development, the instrument and the agent are not two separate entities, rather, they are identical, "for the Spirit which had taken this fresh step in history is the inmost soul of all individuals, but in a state of unconsciousness which the great men in question aroused." [31] The great men are those who are first to give a voice to this unconscious instinct present in all men. In knowing the conditions of their time, these men are instinctively aware of what is to come. Historical peoples follow these great men, for they sense the power of their own 'inner spirit' embodied there. It is the historical individuals who show the way to what all men instinctively desire. [32]

If what has been said thus far is accurate, how are we to explain the role of the 'cunning of Reason' in historical progress? Walter Kaufmann, for example, asserts that the 'cunning of Reason' amounts to no more than another way of saying that "in world history the actions of men also produce results quite different from their purposes." [33] Although this is correct as far as it goes, it doesn't go far enough. In fact, it seems to be a rather cavalier way of avoiding a much deeper issue. For with the introduction of this notion, Hegel still appears to be saying that the actions of men are nothing but the means used by Spirit or Reason for its own purposes which often go against man's will and conscious intention.

#### IV

In order to adequately grasp what Hegel understands by the 'cunning of Reason' as it operates in history,

it is necessary to consider this notion in its purely theoretical context, that is, in the context of Hegel's Logic, and more precisely, in the third category of the objective notion, namely, teleology. While I will focus my attention only on this category, it should be noted that teleology presupposes the two previous categories of mechanism and chemism.

Teleological development, according to Hegel, proceeds in three stages: the subjective End, the End in process of accomplishment, and the End accomplished. Briefly speaking, the first element is the purely abstract universal; the second element represents the activity of the universal wherein it acquires a particular content; and the third element indicates the culmination of this process in which the universal "returns by its own means back to itself, and coalesces with itself." [34]

What should be evident from even this brief description is that in teleological development these three elements are not separate and distinct, but are really three aspects of one process viewed at various stages of development. This is the highest form of teleology which is called 'immanent teleology'. Hegel, however, does not begin with the highest form, rather, he begins with the lower form of 'external teleology', in which these elements do appear to be distinct from one another. Let us now consider the details of this process, as well as the movement from external to internal teleology.

First of all, Hegel discusses the subjective End, by which he means not necessarily an end entertained in consciousness, but rather, a tendency toward an end, whether this tendency is conscious or not. As subjective End, the notion is an essential urge to posit itself externally by imposing itself on a mechanical or chemical process and thereby directing its performance toward a definite result. In this effort to realize itself, the End 'lays hold' of the object, immediately given, which it appropriates as a means. What had initially been in the subjective End as a mere urge is now an activity in which the End operates through its means in an attempt to realize itself in external reality. In this activity, however, the finitude of external teleology is revealed. For in this form, the subjective End appears as something external to the means, which presents itself as a mechanical or chemical whole already given, but not yet determined by the End. [35]

In external teleology, then, the activity of the End through its means is directed against objectivity

as an 'original presupposition', the nature of which is to be indifferent or opposed to this type of external coercion. If the activity of the End were to consist in merely determining the immediate objectivity, the result of this determination would again be only a means and so on to infinity.[36] This positing of a spurious infinite is the radical defect of external design. In the relation of the means to the End, the objective return of the End to itself is not achieved, rather the product of this activity of the End is only a further means or a relative end, but not the realized End itself. To resolve this problem, the End, which is active in the means, must not determine the object as something external to it, rather the object must spontaneously conform to the End toward which it is directed, it must conform to the unity of the Notion.[37]

In this discussion of the End and its object, Hegel introduces the distinction between 'violence' (Gewalt) and the 'cunning of Reason' (List der Vernunft).[38] If the End enters into an immediate relationship with the object as something external and appropriates it as a means, and through this means determines another object, it may be regarded as 'violence', insofar as the End appears to be of quite a different nature than the objects involved. Here we have only a form extraneously impressed on a pre-existing material. The End achieved is consequently only an object which again becomes a means, and so on forever. Furthermore, in this immediate relation with objectivity, the End must surrender itself to the sphere of mechanism or chemism and thereby become subject to contingency and the loss of its own nature as it is in and for itself. It is this relationship of 'violence' that predominates in the sphere of external teleology. But if the End "posits itself in a mediate relation with the object and interposes another object between itself and it, (this) may be regarded as the cunning of reason." [39] By the 'cunning of Reason', the subjective End, which is the power guiding this process, contrives to keep itself free and preserve itself, while the objective things clash in 'mechanical violence' and wear themselves out. Reason is cunning in that while it permits the objects to follow their own tendencies and act upon one another until they waste away, not directly interfering in this process, it is nevertheless only working out its own aims.[40] Finally, it is with the 'cunning of Reason' that we have the concept of immanent teleology as it operates in the historical development of the Idea.

If we apply this conception to the philosophy of history, we again seem to be presented with the image of Reason or Spirit cunningly using the passions of men in order to achieve its own purposes which differ from those of the individuals involved. But we must not stop here, for Hegel immediately goes on to add that in the 'cunning of Reason' the End does not simply keep itself outside the process of mechanical determination. Rather, it maintains itself in this process and is its determination.[41] What virtually happens in realizing the End is that "the one-sided subjectivity and the show of objective independence confronting it are both cancelled", they coalesce into a unity.[42] In 'laying hold' of the means, the notion itself, as subjective End, constitutes the implicit essence of the object, and thus when the End is realized in the object, we have but the realization of the inner essence of the object itself. This absolute unity of subjectivity and objectivity, the End accomplished, is the realization of the Idea in and for itself.

To sum up: the finitude of external teleology, under the aspect of 'violence', consists in the fact that in the process of realizing itself, the object which is employed as a means is only externally subsumed under the End. But under the higher principle of immanent teleology and the 'cunning of Reason', the object is shown to be the End implicitly. So when the End is realized in the object, we have in actuality the manifestation of the inner nature of the object itself. Thus, the immanent teleological view of the world, under the metaphorical guise of the 'cunning of Reason', reveals the world as struggling in time to manifest a purposiveness already implicit in it.

Hegel further concludes that in immanent teleology, the end is the beginning, the consequent the ground, the effect the cause, and so on. His explanation is that in the light of immanent teleology all the earlier determinations of relationship belonging to the realm of 'immediate' being have lost their distinctions, and what was enunciated as an 'other', such as end, consequent, or effect, no longer can be viewed as being determined by an 'other', but on the contrary, are now posited as being identical with the simple Notion and as self-determining.[43] As such, the necessity and external determination inherent in mechanism and chemism is 'sublated' in teleology which expresses the Notion as self-determining and, therefore, free.

The following considerations may help in clarifying Hegel's meaning. When Hegel writes that the end is the beginning, he is saying nothing more than that the

realized End is implicitly contained in the subjective End as an urge or innate tendency which is later made explicit. When he observes that the consequent is the ground, he is saying that the consequent is just the explication of what is already implicit in the ground. And when he says that the effect is the cause, he is actually referring to a previous distinction between end as final cause and mere efficient causes. Efficient causes belong to the sphere of mechanical necessity. Here cause appears as passing into its correlations and losing its primordially by sinking into dependency. The End as final cause, however, implicitly contains the effect in itself. The End, therefore, does not pass over into dependency, but retains itself, that is, it carries into effect only itself, and is at the end (explicitly) what it was (implicitly) in the beginning.[44] Hence, all the previous distinctions of the understanding: end-beginning, consequent-ground, effect-cause, etc., have lost their rigid distinction in the sphere of reason and immanent teleology.

It should now be quite evident that Hegel's 'cunning of Reason' is not meant to express the conception of some transcendent Spirit who uses the actions of men as a means to fulfill its own particular end or purpose. In the context of Hegel's usage, the notions of means and end no longer retain their usual meanings, nor can they be understood as being completely distinct from one another. Nor is it the case that Hegel sees the 'cunning of Reason' as going against man's will and conscious intentions. It does, at least minimally, remind us that in world history the actions of men may produce results which in the long run differ from the immediate purpose envisioned by the agents. But this is not to say that Reason opposes these actions and purposes. Rather, it indicates that there is a meaning and a purpose latent in historical actions of which the agents are not fully cognizant and which can only be recognized in retrospect. This in itself is not too extraordinary, often actions undertaken at some given time will have ramifications which can be understood only at a later date.

If we consider the fate of historical individuals, we find that their desires and ambitions do appear as only a means to a greater end. In some sense, individuals do seem to fall under the category of means. But the first idea which presents itself with regard to means is that of something external to the end, which the object used as a means has no share in. But this is only the partial truth of mechanism and chemism.

Even natural objects, which are used as a means, must be of such a nature as to adapt themselves to their purposes, they must possess something in common with it. If this is true of natural objects, then human beings, as the unity of Nature and Spirit, least of all sustain the bare external relation of a means to a greater ideal aim. Not only do they in the very act of realizing this aim, make it an occasion for satisfying their personal ambitions, whose content is diverse from that aim, but they also participate in that ideal aim itself. With regard to the intrinsic import of this aim, men must be considered as ends in themselves, for the end or purpose being achieved in history is Freedom--Human Freedom.[45] So while individual agents consciously pursue their own particular ends, the ends or goals of freedom and self-consciousness, which belong to the nature of man in general, are also being fulfilled. As Taylor concludes, far from being another incomprehensible Hegelian idea, the 'cunning of Reason' is essential for any theory of history that wants to give a role to unconscious motivation.[46]

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), pp. 17-18. In general, all references will be cited from this text. In some cases, however, passages from the third edition of this work which are translated by R. Hartman have been used and will be designated accordingly: Reason in History, translated Robert Hartman, (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1953).

<sup>2</sup>The Philosophy of History, pp. 17-19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 12,19,22.

<sup>4</sup>This analogy will be shown to be inaccurate, in the sense that the Idea of Spirit is not a consciously held aim. cf. The Philosophy of History, pp. 25-26.

<sup>5</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 20.



<sup>6</sup>Reason in History, pp. 20-21.

<sup>7</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 24. For a more in depth discussion of the notion of passion in Hegel's philosophy of history see George Dennis O'Brien, Hegel on Reason and History: A Contemporary Interpretation, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 116-21.

<sup>9</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Taylor, Hegel, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978), especially pages 15-28. Taylor's discussion of Hegel in light of the 'expressionist tradition' is, in my opinion, essential to a full understanding of Hegel's philosophy of history.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>13</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>15</sup>Reason in History, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>19</sup>This double aspect of the world-historical individual has been discussed by Shlomo Avineri, Hegel's Theory of the State, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 230-34.

<sup>20</sup>In Hegel's Philosophy of Right, translated by T. M. Knox, (Oxford University Press, 1978), paragraph 348, these individuals are described as "the living instruments of what is in substance the deed of the world mind and therefore directly at one with the deed though it is concealed from them and is not their aim and object."

<sup>21</sup>Avineri, pp. 233.

<sup>22</sup>These passages are from Reason in History, pages 39-40, 39, and 40 respectively.

<sup>23</sup>Avineri, p. 233.

<sup>24</sup>Taylor, cf. Hegel, p. 392, notes that "the texts can fairly easily be reconciled around the notion that world-historical individuals have a sense of the higher truth they serve, but they see it through a glass darkly." Taylor and I appear to be in agreement on this point, my task is simply to demonstrate in a more concrete manner why this is the case.

<sup>25</sup>See The Philosophy of Right, pp. 12-13.

<sup>26</sup>Reason in History, p. 39; The Philosophy of History, p. 30.

<sup>27</sup>Reason in History, p. 40. (emphasis mine)

<sup>28</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 30.

<sup>29</sup>When Hegel speaks of the historical individual as being aware of a higher universal, this is meant to denote, not a conceptual comprehension, but rather an instinctual awareness. Even an instinct must in some sense 'know' its object. In The Philosophy of History, p. 8, Hegel writes: "In sensation, cognition, and intellection; in our instincts and volitions, so far as they are truly human, Thought is an invariable element."

<sup>30</sup>Reason in History, p. 43. See also p. 42, ". . . the purpose of passion and the purpose of the Idea are one and the same."

<sup>31</sup>The Philosophy of History, p. 30-31.

<sup>32</sup>In The Philosophy of Right, addition to paragraph 318, Hegel writes: "The great man of the ages is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and the essence of his age, he actualizes his age."

<sup>33</sup>Walter Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinterpretation, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), p. 262.

<sup>34</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Logic, translated by William Wallace, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), paragraph 206 and 'Zusatz.'

<sup>35</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, Hegel's Science of Logic, A. V. Miller, translator, (New York: Humanities Press, 1976), pp. 742-44.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 745.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 745-46.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 746-47.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 746.

<sup>40</sup>Hegel's Logic, paragraph 209 and Zusatze.

<sup>41</sup>The Science of Logic, p. 747.

<sup>42</sup>Hegel's Logic, paragraph 212 and Zusatze.

<sup>43</sup>The Science of Logic, p. 748.

<sup>44</sup>See Hegel's Logic, paragraph 204.

<sup>45</sup>Reason in History, p. 45; see also B. T. Wilkins, Hegel's Philosophy of History, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 135.

<sup>46</sup>Taylor, p. 393.