



HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY: A ROAD TOWARDS THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Arup Jyoti Sarma

Assistant Professor

Department of Philosophy

Tripura University, Tripura

A

In this paper, I shall discuss how Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) shows that human cognition takes a journey from the sphere of ordinary consciousness, which is the field of daily experience to the knowledge of the absolute truth. However, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* does not alone give us the knowledge of the absolute truth. The foundation of the absolute truth that Hegel gives in his *Phenomenology* is also found in his *Science of Logic* (1812-16). Hegel's logic deals with not only the general forms of thought-with the notion, the judgment and the syllogism-but the structure of Being *per se*. Hegel's logic is therefore both an epistemology and an ontology. Hegel's epistemology is an important aspect of his ontology. The epistemological position of Hegel can be discussed with reference to his criticism of the Kantian theory of knowledge. In the epistemological situations, Hegel uses three sources of knowledge. They are sense-certainty, perception, understanding and the reason. Sense-certainty is the source of our knowledge of the ordinary consciousness of things. Hegelian notion of sense-certainty can be compared with the Kantian view that human knowledge begins with and terminates in sensibility. Understanding is the capacity of reflective interpretation. Understanding conceives a world of finite entities, governed by the principle of identity and opposition. The understanding introduces the conception of force and its expressions. The force is manifested in its expressions. Hegel in order to overcome the Kantian distinction between thing-in-itself and the appearance or between the reality and the appearance draws the analogy of force and its expressions. Just as the force experiences through its expressions, similarly the thing-in-itself has revealed through its appearances. Hegel strongly criticizes Kantian unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself. He points out that there is nothing like the mysterious unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself behind the veil of appearances. There is no dualism between thing-in-itself and the appearance. In the process of unifying the opposites between the finite and its expressions, reason plays an important role. Here I can compare Hegel's view with that of Bradley. According to Bradley, all appearances must belong to reality. Hegel's epistemology is an important aspect of his ontology. Therefore, I shall take up Hegelian epistemology with special bearings on his ontology. We deal with Hegel's deduction of categories vis-à-vis his ontological positions. Hegel says that categories have dual purposes. First, through the categories, we do our thinking and therefore it is an epistemology. Secondly, categories are applied to know the objective reality and therefore it is ontology. Therefore epistemological and the metaphysical positions are interrelated in Hegel's



philosophy. The method of dialectic plays a crucial role in Hegel's deduction of the categories. The dialectical method unites the laws of thought with the laws of reality. For the sake of clarity and precision, I shall discuss the epistemological, ontological and the dialectical positions of Hegel one by one.

B

(I) **Epistemological Position:** in the epistemological situation, Hegel starts with a form of consciousness known as sense certainty. Sense certainty is a form of consciousness in which we are immediately aware of things in our sensory world. However, this certainty should be immediate or receptive, free from conceptual comprehension. It is because of its immediate or receptive nature, free from conceptualization, sense certainty is regarded as the richest knowledge. However, this kind of knowledge is also regarded as the poorest and the most abstract because as it merely acknowledges the being of the object. As Hegel says, "but, in the event, this very *certainty* proves itself to be the most abstract and *poorest* truth. All that it says about what it knows is just that it *is...*"¹ The consciousness that we are aware is simply there. It is devoid of any content. The thing for its pure being or simple immediacy is the essential aspect for its sense knowledge.

Hegel argues that knowledge definitely depends upon the sense certainty but not upon non-conceptual sensible particulars. Hegel brings here 'perception' to replace the ineffability of the bare particulars of sense-certainty. By 'perception', Hegel refers to a form of consciousness in which the world is regarded as the collection of things with properties. But the question arises- Hegel asks, how is that we take the properties to be properties of anything particular? To answer this problem, Hegel refers to the form of consciousness known as 'understanding'. By understanding, Hegel means the capacity of reflective interpretation. The understanding takes the 'unconditioned universal' as the object of consciousness. The unconditioned universal has been contrasted with the conditioned universal or the properties. The understanding introduces the notion of force as the supersensible medium that has properties. According to him, the force experiences itself through the properties.

Hegel introduces this force in order to overcome the Kantian dichotomy between thing-in-itself and the appearance. Just as the force experiences through its expressions, similarly the thing-in-itself has revealed through its appearance. Hegel brings out this analogy of force and its expression in terms of dynamism. There is a law of force present in the world. It is through this law of force, Hegel believes, the unbridgeable gulf between the thing-in-itself and the appearance can be removed. Hegel explains this point in the following words, "...the *supersensible* world is an inert *realm of laws* which, though beyond the perceived world-for this exhibits law only through incessant change-is equally *present* in it and is its direct tranquil image."²

Hegel strongly criticizes Kantian unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself. He points out that there is nothing like the mysterious unknown and unknowable thing in itself behind the veil of appearances. There is no dualism between thing-in-itself



and the appearance. Hegel argues, “the two distinguished moments both subsist; they are *implicit* and are *opposites in themselves*, i.e. each is the opposite of itself; each has its ‘other’ within it and they are only one unity.”³

Now the question arises, how does it possible to overcome the gap between thing-in-itself and the appearance? To solve this situation, Hegel has referred to logic. Just as in a deductive logic, two syllogisms are connected by a middle term, similarly, here also Hegel applies middle term to connect the two syllogisms-thing-in-itself and the appearance. Hegel says that there is a middle term that unites the thing-in-itself and the appearance. According to Hegel, “the middle term which unites the two extremes, the understanding and the inner world, is the developed *being* of force which, for the understanding itself, is henceforth only a vanishing. This ‘being’ is therefore called *appearance*; for we call *being* that is directly and in its own self a *non-being* a surface show. But it is not merely a surface show; it is appearance, a *totality* of show. This *totality*, as totality or as a *universal*, is what constitutes the inner [of things], the play of forces as a reflection of the inner into itself.”⁴

The supersensible world is beyond the sensible world. But it also carries within itself the sensible world. He states, “thus the supersensible world, which is the inverted world, has at the same time overreached the other world and has it within it; it is *for itself* the inverted world, i.e. the inversion of itself, it is itself and its opposite in one unity.”⁵ In this way, the two extremes- the pure inner world and the inner being have coincided. Hegel points out that the veil of appearance that lies behind the inner world is withdrawn, and we will arrive at the inner being, the ‘I’ or the self-consciousness. Hegel argues, “since this Notion of infinity is an object for consciousness, the latter is consciousness of a difference that is no less *immediately* cancelled; consciousness is for its own self, it is a distinguishing of that which contains no difference, or *self-consciousness*.”⁶

Hegel begins the dialectic of self-consciousness with a discussion of its relation to life. Charles Taylor states, “the dialectic of self-consciousness is thus a dialectic of human longing and aspiration, and their vicissitudes.”⁷ Man lives in an environment with other creatures. He always depends on a surrounding universe. Work plays an important role in forming man’s struggle for integrity. But in order to achieve man’s struggle for integrity, we must transform ourselves from limited individuals to self-conscious universal. According to Taylor, “the real thing can only be attained when men come to see themselves as emanation of universal *Geist*... Because man starts off with a notion of himself as a finite being, and with a raw undeveloped form of life reflecting this, his longing for integrity is doomed to frustration until he can undergo the transformations which will raise him to a grasp of the universal.”⁸

The transition from limited individuality to the higher form of life is a stage where people can see that *reason* underlies all reality. Hegel argues, “reason is the certainty of consciousness that it is all reality.”⁹ We see that at the level of understanding the world is conceived as finite entities and is governed by the principle of identity and opposition. Now the role of reason is to unite and sublimate them. The



process of unifying the opposites touches every part of reality and it ends only when reason has organized the whole, where the particulars can participate in it. Hegel argues, “every individual entity has meaning and significance only in its relation to the totality.”¹⁰

Now, how do the differences and oppositions of the understanding are preserved and sublated in reason? Hegel here refers to his famous dialectical method. I shall discuss in brief Hegel’s dialectical method.

(ii) **Dialectical Method:** Hegel while formulating the dialectical method is very much inspired by Kantian exposition of the antinomies and dialectics. There are two operative terms in Hegel’s dialectical method. They are contradiction and sublation. We know that every entity is identical with itself and by virtue of its self-identity, it is different from all other entities. Therefore, identity and opposition are inseparable but distinguishable features of opposition. Reason has the task of reconciling the opposites and sublating them. Karl Popper in his famous article, ‘*What is Dialectic?*’ has pointed out that “Dialectic is a theory which maintains that something-for instance, human thought-develops in a way characterized by the so-called dialectic triad: thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis. First, some idea or theory or movement is given, which may be called “thesis”. Such a thesis will often produce opposition, because probably it will be, like most things in the world, of limited value-it will have its weak spots. This opposing idea or movement is called “antithesis” because it is directed against the first, the thesis. The struggle between the thesis and the anti-thesis goes on until some solutions develop which will, in a certain sense, go beyond both thesis and anti-thesis by recognizing the relative value of both, i.e., by trying to preserve the merits and to avoid the limitations of both. This solution, which is the third step, is called “synthesis”.¹¹ However, it should be noted that Hegel while developing the dialectical method does not frequently refer to the terms ‘thesis’, ‘anti-thesis’ and ‘synthesis’. They are the characteristic feature of Fichte’s dialectical method. Fichte says that “without synthesis there can be no anti-thesis and without anti-thesis no synthesis.”¹²

The dialectical method plays a major role in the German idealist tradition. Kant has used it in his ‘Transcendental Dialectic’ in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Fichte has developed it through ‘thesis’-‘anti-thesis’ and ‘synthesis’ formula. But the term ‘dialectic’ goes back to the Greek period, where it refers to discussion. By the term ‘dialectic’, Plato refers to confrontation or discussion to arrive at truth. In Kant’s philosophy, we know that the term ‘dialectic’ is used as ‘logic of illusions’. He shows in his discussion of the antinomies that the dialectical use of reason beyond the limits of experience has resulted in contradictions. Thus, we have two opposite viewpoints regarding the notion of ‘dialectic’. The Platonic idea in which dialectical confrontation as a means to discover the truth and the Kantian notion in which truth is not to be found beyond the world of ‘phenomena’. Hegel in fact fuses these together. In R.C. Solomon’s words, “Hegel’s use of dialectics is a combination of both of these. He agrees with Kant that the use of reason allows for the creation of antinomies or contradictions, but he also agrees with the ancients that these contradictions are not a



dead-end or an absurdity but rather a clue to the truth. That truth is, according to Hegel, that consciousness is capable of opposing points of view and feels the necessity to resolve them.”¹³

It should be noted that some philosophers after Hegel has pointed out that Hegel does not refer to any method while philosophizing. Even, dialectic is not confined to any philosophical method. R.C. Solomon, in his book, *In the Spirit of Hegel: A Study of G.W.F. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, points out that, “...Hegel rejects the idea of a “method” in philosophy... *The Phenomenology* does not have a “method”, therefore, but rather we (the philosophers reading Hegel) will follow the concept as it transforms itself.”¹⁴ Solomon further states, “...I will be arguing that Hegel *has no method* as such-at least, not in the *Phenomenology*. He does have a number of arguments and strategies which might be gathered under the same title; but let us be clear about one point from the start. Hegel mentions the word “dialectic” only a few times in the entire book. He has at least a dozen different moves which the commentators have struggled to squeeze into a single logical form and a dozen more that have left the commentators in despair. Hegel himself argues vehemently against the very idea of a philosophical “method”... But this is not to say, along with many commentators, that Hegel’s dialectic is “loose” or a “failure” or that he does not apply it well.”¹⁵ Solomon argues that Hegel, in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* broaches the topic of ‘method’. Solomon here refers to a passage from *Phenomenology* where Hegel argues, “it might seem necessary at the outset to say more about the *method* of this movement, i.e., of Science. However, its Notion is already to be found in what has been said, and its proper exposition belongs to Logic, or rather, it is Logic. For the method is nothing but the structure set forth in its pure essentiality. We should realize, however, that the system of ideas concerning philosophical method is yet another set of current beliefs that belongs to a bygone culture.”¹⁶ Errol E. Harris¹⁷ points out that even though dialectic has not been found in the philosophical method, yet it directs the movement of thought. Our thought and consciousness are the result of the dialectical processes in nature.

R.C. Solomon’s view is comment able. After a careful study, it reveals that Hegel in fact adopts a proper method for philosophy. In the preface to the first edition of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel states that philosophy has an absolute method of knowing, and this is the only method for philosophy to become an objective and demonstrated science. Hegel ferrets out, “...the simple is also a universal which is in itself concrete; under this universal a given particular is not subsumed; but, in that determination, and in the solution thereof, the particular has already been coincidentally determined. This movement of mind, which in its simplicity gives itself its determinateness and hence self-equality, and which does is the immanent development of the Notion-this movement is the Absolute Method of knowledge, and at the same time the immanent soul of the content of knowledge.-It is, I maintain, along this path of self-construction alone that philosophy can become objective and demonstrated science.”¹⁸ J.N. Findlay while writing the foreword to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of*



Spirit, mentions that conscious spirit takes the dialectical method to transgress from sensuous immediacy to the Absolute knowledge. Findlay writes, “there is no reason then to think that Hegel thought that the path traced in the *Phenomenology*, though consisting throughout of necessary steps, was the only path that the conscious spirit could have taken in rising from sensuous immediacy to absolute knowledge... For, on Hegel’s view, all dialectical thought-paths lead to the Absolute Idea and to the knowledge of it which it itself.”¹⁹ From this discussion, we can point out that Hegel in fact applies his dialectical method in the whole sphere of his philosophy.

The dialectical method can be found not only in the field of knowledge, but also in the sphere of ontology and morality. In the ontological positions, Hegel discusses about the role of categories. Dialectic as a method can be applied in the deduction of the categories.

(iii) **Deduction of categories vis-à-vis his ontological position:** Hegel in the *Science of Logic* formulates categories both subjectively and objectively. In the field of knowledge, categories are the subjective concepts through which we do our thinking. In the field of ontology, categories are the objective concepts designating the Absolute Truth. Thus, there is a unity between the laws of thought and the laws operate in the objective reality. Hegel remarks, “logic was there found to determine itself as the science of pure thought, having pure knowledge as its principle, which is not abstract, but a concrete living unity; for in it the opposition in consciousness between a subjective unity existing for itself, and another similar objective entity, is known to be overcome, and existence is known as pure concept in itself, and the pure concept known as true existence. These are then the two *Moments* which are contained in logic. But they are now known as existing inseparably, and not as in consciousness each existing for itself; it is only because they are known as distinct and yet not merely self-existent that their unity is not abstract, dead, and immobile, but concrete.”²⁰ In this way, one can easily say that Hegel’s logic presents us with a new way of thinking and describing the reality in a novel way. Keeping in view of the dual functions that logic offers, Hegel divides logic into objective and subjective logic. The former deals with the objective part, that is, the reality. The latter deals with the subjective part, that is, the categories of understanding through which we think.

Hegel’s division of logic into objective and subjective has three interrelated parts. They are- (1) The Logic of Being (2) The Logic of Essence and (3) The Logic of the Notion

Hegel says that the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence constitutes the mutually interrelated aspects of the Objective Logic. At the same time, the Logic of Notion represents the aspect of Subjective Logic, where these two aspects of Objective Logic are sublated. We shall begin our investigation with the Logic of Being, the first category in Hegelian logic. Hegel defines the category Being in the following words, “Being, pure Being-without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is similar to itself alone, and also not dissimilar from any other; it has no differentiation



either within itself or relatively to anything external; nor would it remain fixed in its purity, were there any determination or content which could be distinguished within it, or whereby it could be posited as distinct from an other. It is pure indeterminateness and vacuity.-Nothing can be intuited in it, if there is any question here of intuition, or again it is merely this pure and empty intuition itself; equally there is in it no object for thought, or again it is just this empty thought. In fact, Being, indeterminate immediacy, is Nothing, neither more nor less.”²¹ Being has no determinations. It is therefore completely indeterminate and empty of a pure vacuum. But it posits itself in the following three determinations:

- I. as Determinateness, as such: Quality;
- II. as Determinateness transcended: Magnitude, Quantity;
- III. as Quantity qualitatively determined: Measure.”²²

Now the question arises, if Pure Being excludes all determinations, then how does the deduction of the other categories possible? Hegel has found the solution that Pure Being, though excludes any determinations, contains within itself the opposite-the mediation, which is hidden within the category Being. The absence of everything is simply nothing. Pure Being which is completely empty is the same as Pure Nothing. Pure Being is therefore identical with Pure Nothing. Hegel states, “Nothing, pure Nothing: it is simple equality with itself, complete emptiness, without determination or content: undifferentiatedness in itself.-in so far as mention can here be made of intuition or thought, it is considered a distinction whether we intuit, or think, something or nothing. In that case, to intuit, or think, nothing, has a meaning: so if intuition or thought of Being and of Nothing are distinguished, then Nothing *is* (or does exist) in our intuition or thought; or rather, it is this empty intuition and thought itself: the same empty intuition or thought, as pure Being.-Nothing, therefore, is the same determination (or rather lack of determination), and thus altogether the same thing, as pure Being.”²³

Thus, Hegel tries to show that the category Being contains within itself the contrary category Nothing and conversely, the category Nothing contains within itself the category Being. In this way, he tries to show that both the categories are contradictory. He then seeks to explain that this negative result has a positive outcome, a new category, Becoming. This new category unites the previous contrary categories in such a way that their distinctions are not annihilated but they are preserved in a higher category. This is a dialectical principle of the ‘negation of the negation’ or sometimes referred to as the ‘determinate negation’. This principle is operative in the entire process of the deduction of the one category into the other. Hegel defines the category Becoming in the following words, “Pure Being and pure Nothing are, then, the same; the truth is, not either Being or Nothing, but that Being-not passes-but has passed over into Nothing, and Nothing into Being. But equally the truth is not their lack of distinction, but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet unseparated and inseparable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite. Their truth is therefore this movement, this immediate disappearance of the one into the other, in a word, Becoming; a movement wherein both are distinct, but in virtue of a



distinction which has equally immediately dissolved itself.”²⁴

The unity of the categories Being and Nothing is possible because they pass into each other. The category Becoming sublates the differences between them. Hegel points out that Being, Nothing and Becoming are not only the categories through which we do our thinking but they are also the concepts that study the objective reality.

The pure Being with which we begin our analysis is completely indeterminate and therefore it is without any quality. As Hegel says, “since it is indeterminate it lacks all quality...”²⁵ From pure indeterminateness, Hegel moves on towards determinations. The Being of the determinateness is identical with its quality. By virtue of its self-identity, a determinate Being is different from what it is not. The moments of identity and difference are regarded by Hegel as ‘attraction’ and ‘repulsion’. The unity between the identity and the difference is the quantity. Quality, Hegel regards as the internal self-development, and is therefore, identical with Being. Quantity is an external self-determination. Quantity is related to the quality in such a way that one is passing into the other so that unity is identical within difference. This unity is always dynamic. The unity between quality and the quantity is the ‘Measure’. It is a new category. Measure is that in which quality is dependent on the quantity and vice-versa.

Being is the first category and it is completely indeterminate. Essence presents the sphere of determinacy and is therefore opposite of Being. Hegel argues, “Being is indeterminate immediacy; it is free from all determinateness as contrasted with Essence, and similarly from all that it can hold within itself.”²⁶ With Essence, we come to the second part of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*. Hegel speaks about Essence in the following words, “the truth of Being is Essence. Being is that which is immediate. Knowledge seeks to understand that truth which Being is, in and for itself, and therefore, pressing beyond the immediate and its determinations, penetrates further, assuming that behind this Being there is something other than Being itself, and that this background constitutes the truth of Being. This cognition is mediated knowledge, for it is not lodged immediately with and in Essence, but begins at an other, Being, and has to make a preliminary passage, the passage of transition beyond Being, or rather of entrance into it. Only when knowledge, coming out from the sphere of immediate Being, *internalizes* itself, does it through this mediation discover Essence.”²⁷

Hegel says that Essence is not something foreign to Being. Being undergoes infinite processes. Essence refers to those processes of Being. As Hegel states, Essence is “by virtue of its own movement, which is the infinite movement of Being. It is Being-in-and-for-self:-absolute Being-in-self, since it is indifferent to every determinateness of Being...”²⁸

With Essence, we move on to the category of Notion. According to Hegel, “Essence is midway between Being and Notion: it is the mean between them, and its movement constitutes the transition from Being to Notion.”²⁹ The category of Notion is the third aspect of Hegel’s subjective logic. In this sphere, the dichotomy between



the two aspects (category of Being and the category of Notion) is sublated. Hegel remarks about Notion in the following words, "...the Notion must be looked upon as the third term (where Being and Essence, or the immediate and Reflection, are the other two). In this regard, Being and Essence are the moments of its becoming; but the Notion is their foundation and truth, as that in which they have been submerged and are contained."³⁰

Hegel believes Notion as a sort of new immediacy where the distinctions between Being and Essence are overcome. Professor, R.P. Singh remarks, "the unity in which Being and Essence thus disappear is, for that reason, a new immediacy-an immediacy resulting from the absorption of all mediation, an immediacy which is higher than its earlier stage."³¹

Hegel says that the category of Notion exists only in the thinking subject. Freedom is a quality of the Notion. He argues that the Notion that is free is identical with Ego or the pure self-consciousness. According to Hegel, "The Notion, in so far as it has advanced into such an existence as is free itself, is just the Ego, or pure self-consciousness. It is true that I have Notions-that is, determinate notions; but Ego is the pure Notion itself, which as Notion has reached Existence."³² Hegel further states, "The Notion, when it has developed into a *concrete existence* that is itself free, is none other than the *I* or pure self-consciousness."³³

The Notion as the subject realizes in the objective reality. Similarly, the object gets its objectivity by being participating in the subject or the Notion. According to Hegel, "the object therefore has its objectivity in the *Notion* and this is the *unity of self-consciousness* into which it has been received; consequently its objectivity, or the Notion, is itself none other than the nature of self-consciousness, has no other moments or determinations than the *I* itself."³⁴ Thus, with the category of Notion in Hegel's dialectical method, we come to hold that the objective logic turns into the subjective logic.

With this, we can come to the point that Hegelian categories have both epistemological and the ontological use. In the sphere of epistemology, through the categories we do our thinking. Ontologically, the categories refer to the objective reality. Unlike Kant, Hegel does not give categories a subjective meaning only. Categories have both subjective and objective applications. In this way, Hegel overcomes the Kantian dichotomy between the subject and the object, appearance and reality, knowledge and morality, 'is' and the 'ought to be' etc.

According to Hegel, there is always a unity between knowledge and reality or between epistemology and ontology. Hegel rejects the unknown and unknowability of Kant's thing-in-itself. He points out that all reality is accessible to cognition. No part of it is unknowable and inaccessible to cognition, behind the cover of the phenomena. In Kantian philosophy, there is always a gap between appearance and reality or between epistemology and metaphysics. Hegel criticizes Kantian thesis that the thing-in-itself is the ground and the cause of phenomenon yet thing-in-itself is something beyond phenomenon. Kantian dichotomy between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon



cannot bridge the gap between reality and the appearance. The reason is that Kant gives categories subjective meaning and put aside the reality or the thing-in-itself outside the grasp of human cognition. As long as the thing-in-itself exists beyond the grasp of cognition, epistemology will remain separate from the objective reality. Hegel wants to set aside this dichotomy. Hegel in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* argues, “to regard the categories as subjective only, i.e., as part of ourselves, must seem very odd to the natural mind...It is quite true that the categories are not contained in the sensation as it is given to us. When for instance, we look at a piece of sugar, we find it hard, white, sweet etc. All those properties we say are united in one object. Now it is this unity that is not found in the sensation. The same thing happens if we conceive two events to stand in the relation of cause and effect. The senses only inform us of the two several occurrences which follow each other in time. But that the one is cause, the other effect-in other words, the causal nexus between the two-is not perceived by the senses; it is evident only to thought. Still, though the categories such as unity, or cause and effect are strictly the property of thought, it by no means follows that they must be ours only and not also characteristic of the objects. Kant, however, confines them to the subject mind, and his philosophy may be styled subjective idealism: for he holds that both the form and the matter of knowledge are supplied by the Ego-or knowing subject-the form by our intellectual, the matter by our sentient ego.”³⁵

Paul Guyer says that, “Hegel treats Kant’s subjectivism, his insistence on an impassable gulf between thought and object, as mere dogma, indeed almost as a failure of nerve, and is confident that he can himself display knowledge of an absolute realm of being in which the merely apparently opposed poles of thought and object have the underlying identity that Kant failed to see.”³⁶

In this way, Hegel tries to solve the Kantian dichotomy between subjectivity and the objectivity or between knowledge and reality.

F.H. Bradley (1846-1924), is very much influenced by Hegel’s philosophy. Bradley like his predecessor points out that the absolute and the finite things do not form two separate reels. The latter are the appearances of the former. The nature of the whole is revealed in the elements of the whole. He clearly explains this point in the following words, “Reality is one in this sense that it has a positive nature exclusive of discord, a nature which must hold throughout everything that is to be real. Its diversity can be diverse only so far as not to clash, and what seems otherwise anywhere cannot be real. And, from the other side, everything which appears must be real. Appearance must belong to reality, and it must therefore be concordant and other than it seems. The bewildering mass of phenomenal diversity must hence somehow be at unity and self-consistent; for it cannot be elsewhere than in reality, and reality excludes discord. Or again we may put it so: the real is individual. It is one in the sense that its positive character embraces all differences in an inclusive harmony...So far as it goes, it gives us positive news about absolute reality.”³⁷

We may conclude this paper by saying that in the writings of Hegel and the neo-Hegelians like Bradley, it clearly reveals that they have genuine purposes. They have



the plan to solve the Kantian unknown and unknowability of thing-in-itself. They have argued that there is no mysterious unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself beyond the cover of appearance. Hegel points out that if there are objects, which one cannot know is his claim that it is incoherent. According to him, “it is... the height of inconsistency to concede, on the one hand, that the understanding knows only appearances and, on the other hand, to assert this knowledge as *something absolute*, by saying that knowledge *can* go no further, that this is the *natural*, absolute *limit* of human awareness...one is aware of, even feels, something as a defect, a *limit*, only when one is at the same beyond it.”³⁸ Similarly, Bradley also argues that “the unknowable must, of course, be prepared either to deserve its name or not. But, if it actually were not knowable, we could not know that such a thing even existed.”³⁹ Bradley further comments, “the assertion of a reality falling outside knowledge, is quite nonsensical.”⁴⁰

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²⁹ Ibid, p.17.
³⁰ Ibid, p.211.
³¹ Singh, R.P., (1995), *Dialectic of Reason: A Comparative Study of Kant and Hegel*, New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, p.67.
³² Hegel, G.W.F., *Science of Logic*, vol. II, etc., p.217.
³³ Hegel, G.W.F., (1969), *Science of Logic*, translated by A.V. Miller, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, p.583.
³⁴ Ibid, p.585.
³⁵ Paul Guyer, "Thought and being: Hegel's Critique of Kant's theoretical philosophy", in Frederic C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, p.188.
³⁶ Ibid, p.171.
³⁷ Bradley, F.H. (1930), *Appearance and Reality*, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, pp.123-124.
³⁸ Inwood, M.J., (1983), *Hegel*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.118.
³⁹ Bradley, F.H., *Appearance and Reality*, etc., p.111.
⁴⁰ Ibid, p.114.

