

Space for Notes



**Excerpts from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*
(1821)
concerning education.**

Introduction

§ 20

The reflection which is brought to bear upon impulses, placing them before itself, estimating them, comparing them with one another, and contrasting them with their means and consequences, and also with a whole of satisfaction, namely happiness, brings the formal universal to this material, and in an external way purifies it of its crudity and barbarism. This propulsion by the universality of thought is the absolute worth of education (§ 187). [NB: the 1897 Dyde translation has "civilization" instead of education in this paragraph and in the Addition below.]

Addition: In happiness thought has already the upper hand with the force of natural impulse, since it is not satisfied with what is momentary, but requires happiness as a whole. This happiness is dependent upon education to the extent to which education confirms the universal. But in the ideal of happiness there are two elements. There is a universal that is higher than all particulars; yet, as the content of this universal is in turn only universal pleasure, there arises once more the individual, particular and finite, and retreat must be made to impulse;

Since the content of happiness lies in the subjective perception of each individual, this universal end is again particular; nor is there present in it any true unity of content and form

Third Part: Ethical Life

§ 151

But when individuals are simply identified with the actual order, ethical life (*das Sittliche*) appears as their general mode of conduct, i.e. as custom (*Sitte*), while the habitual practice of ethical living appears as a second nature which, put in the place of the initial, purely natural will, is the soul of custom permeating it through and through, the significance and the actuality of its existence. It is mind living and present as a world, and the substance of mind thus exists now for the first time as mind.

Addition: Just as nature has its laws, and as animals, trees, and the sun fulfil their law, so custom (*Sitte*) is the law appropriate to free mind. Right and morality are not yet what ethics (*Sitte*) is, namely mind. In right, particularity is still not the particularity of the concept, but only that of the natural will. So, too, at the standpoint of morality, self-consciousness is not yet *mind's* consciousness of itself. At that level it is only the worth of the subject in himself that is in question, i.e. the subject who determines himself by reference to good in contrast with evil, who still has self-will as the form of his willing. Here, however, at the standpoint of ethics, the will is mind's will and it has a content which is substantive and in conformity with itself.

Education is the art of making men ethical. It begins with pupils

whose life is at the instinctive level and shows them the way to a second birth, the way to change their instinctive nature into a second, intellectual, nature, and makes this intellectual level habitual to them. At this point the clash between the natural and the subjective will disappears, the subject's internal struggle dies away. To this extent, habit is part of ethical life as it is of philosophic thought also, since such thought demands that mind be trained against capricious fancies, and that these be destroyed and overcome to leave the way clear for rational thinking. It is true that a man is killed by habit, i.e. if he has once come to feel completely at home in life, if he has become mentally and physically dull, and if the clash between subjective consciousness and mental activity has disappeared; for man is active only in so far as he has not attained his end and wills to develop his potentialities and vindicate himself in struggling to attain it. When this has been fully achieved, activity and vitality are at an end, and the result - loss of interest in life - is mental or physical death.

§ 153

The right of individuals to be subjectively destined to freedom is fulfilled when they belong to an actual ethical order, because their conviction of their freedom finds its truth in such an objective order, and it is in an ethical order that they are actually in possession of their own essence or their own inner universality (see § 147).

Remark: When a father inquired about the best method of educating his son in ethical conduct, a Pythagorean replied: 'Make him a citizen of a state with good laws.' (The phrase has also been attributed to others.)

Addition: The educational experiments, advocated by Rousseau in *Emile*, of withdrawing children from the common life of every day and bringing them up in the country, have turned out to be futile, since no success can attend an attempt to estrange people from the laws of the world. Even if the young have to be educated in solitude, it is still useless to hope that the fragrance of the intellectual world will not ultimately permeate this solitude or that the power of the world mind is too feeble to gain the mastery of those outlying regions. It is by becoming a citizen of a good state that the individual first comes into his right.

Subsection I: The Family

C. The Education of Children and the Dissolution of the Family

§ 173

In substance marriage is a unity, though only a unity of inwardness or disposition; in outward existence, however, the unity is sundered in the two parties. It is only in the children that the unity itself exists externally, objectively, and explicitly as a unity, because the parents love the children as their love, as the embodiment of their own substance. From the physical point of view, the presupposition — persons immediately existent (as parents) — here becomes a result, a process which runs away into the infinite series of generations, each producing the next and presupposing the one before. This is the mode in which the single mind of the *Penates* reveals its existence in the finite sphere of nature as a race.

Addition: The relation of love between husband and wife is in itself not objective, because even if their feeling is their substantial unity, still this unity has no objectivity. Such an objectivity parents first acquire in their children, in whom they can see objectified the entirety of their union. In the child, a mother loves its father and he its mother. Both have their love objectified for them in the child. While in their goods their unity is embodied only in an external thing, in their children it is embodied in a spiritual one in which the parents are loved and which they love.

§ 174

Children have the right to maintenance and education at the expense of the family's common capital. The right of the parents to the service as service of their children is based upon and is restricted by the common task of looking after the family generally. Similarly, the right of the parents over the wishes of their children is determined by the object in view — discipline and education. The punishment of children does not aim at justice as such; the aim is more subjective and moral in character, i.e. to deter them from exercising a freedom still in the tolls of nature and to lift the universal into their consciousness and will.

Addition: Man has to acquire for himself the position which he ought to attain; he is not already in possession of it by instinct. It is on this fact that the child's right to education is based. Peoples under patriarchal government are in the same position as children; they are fed from central stores and not regarded as self-subsistent and adults. The services which may be demanded from children should therefore have education as their sole end and be relevant thereto; they must not be ends in themselves, since a child in slavery is in the most unethical of all situations whatever. One of the chief factors in education is discipline, the purport of which is to break down the child's self-will and thereby eradicate his purely natural and sensuous self. We must not expect to achieve this by mere goodness, since it is just the immediate will which acts on immediate fancies and caprices, not on reasons and representative thinking. If we advance reasons to children, we leave it open to them to decide whether the reasons are weighty or not, and thus we make everything depend on their whim. So far as children are concerned, universality and the substance of things reside in, their parents, and this implies that children must be obedient. If the feeling of subordination, producing the longing to grow up, is not fostered in children, they become forward and impertinent.

§ 175

Children are potentially free and their life directly embodies nothing save potential freedom. Consequently they are not things and cannot be the property either of their parents or others. In respect of his relation to the family, the child's education has the positive aim of instilling ethical principles into him in the form of an immediate feeling for which differences are not yet explicit, so that thus equipped with the foundation of an ethical life, his heart may live its early years in love, trust, and obedience. In respect of the same relation, this education has the negative aim of raising children out of the instinctive, physical, level on which they are originally, to self-subsistence and freedom of personality and so to the level on which they have power to leave the natural unity of the family.

Remark: One of the blackest marks against Roman legislation is the law whereby children were treated by their fathers as slaves. This gangrene of the ethical order at the tenderest point of its innermost life is one of the most important clues for understanding the place of the Romans in the history of the world and their tendency towards legal formalism.

The necessity for education is present in children as their own feeling of dissatisfaction with themselves as they are, as the desire to belong to the adult world whose superiority they divine, as the longing to grow up. The play theory of education assumes that what is childish is itself already something of inherent worth and presents it as such to the children; in their eyes it lowers serious pursuits, and education itself, to a form of childishness for which the children themselves have scant respect. The advocates of this method represent the child, in the immaturity in which he feels himself to be, as really mature and they struggle to make him satisfied with himself as he is. But they corrupt and distort his genuine and proper need for something better, and create in him a blind indifference to the substantial ties of the intellectual world, a contempt of his elders because they have thus posed before him, a child, in a contemptible and childish fashion, and finally a vanity and conceit which feeds on the notion of its own superiority.

Addition: As a child, man must have lived with his parents encircled by their love and trust, and rationality must appear in him as his very own subjectivity. In the early years it is education by the mother especially which is important, since ethical principles must be implanted in the child in the form of feeling. It is noteworthy that on the whole children love their parents less than their parents love them. The reason for this is that they are gradually increasing in strength, and are learning to stand on their own feet, and so are leaving their parents behind them. The parents, on the other hand, possess in their children the objective embodiment of their union.

Subsection 2: Civil Society

§ 187

Individuals in their capacity as burghers in this state are private persons whose end is their own interest. This end is *mediated* through the universal which thus *appears* as a *means* to its realisation. Consequently, individuals can attain their ends only in so far as they themselves determine their knowing, willing, and acting in a universal way and make themselves links in this chain of social connections. In these circumstances, the interest of the Idea — an interest of which these members of civil society are as such unconscious — lies in the process whereby their singularity and their natural condition are raised, as a result of the necessities imposed by nature as well as of arbitrary needs, to formal freedom and formal universality of knowing and willing — the process whereby their particularity is educated up to subjectivity.

Remark: The idea that the state of nature is one of innocence and that there is a simplicity of manners in uncivilised (*ungebildeter*) peoples, implies treating education (*Bildung*) as something purely external, the ally of corruption. Similarly, the feeling that needs, their satisfaction, the pleasures and comforts of private life, and so forth, are absolute ends, implies treating education as a mere means to these ends. Both these views display lack of acquaintance with the nature of mind and the end of reason.

Mind attains its actuality only by creating a dualism within itself, by submitting itself to physical needs and the chain of these external necessities, and so imposing on itself this barrier and this finitude, and finally by maturing (*bildet*) itself inwardly even when under this barrier until it overcomes it and attains its objective reality in the finite. The end of reason, therefore, is neither the manners of an unsophisticated state of nature, nor, as particularity develops, the pleasure for pleasure's sake which education procures. On the contrary, its end is to banish natural simplicity, whether the passivity which is the absence of the self, or the crude type of knowing and willing, i.e. immediacy and singularity, in which mind is absorbed. It aims in the first instance at securing for this, its external condition, the rationality of which it is capable, i.e. the form of universality or the Understanding (*Verständigkeit*). By this means alone does mind become at home with itself within this pure externality.

There, then, mind's freedom is existent and mind becomes objective to itself in this element which is implicitly inimical to mind's appointed end, freedom; it has to do there only with what it has itself produced and stamped with its seal. It is in this way then that the form of universality comes explicitly into existence in thought, and this form is the only worthy element for the existence of the Idea. The final purpose of education, therefore, is liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still; education is the absolute transition from an ethical substantiality which is immediate and natural to the one which is intellectual and so both infinitely subjective and lofty enough to have attained universality of form. In the individual subject, this liberation is the hard struggle against pure subjectivity of demeanor, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of inclination. The disfavour showered on education is due in part to its being this hard struggle; but it is through this educational struggle that the subjective will itself attains objectivity within, an objectivity in which alone it is for its part capable and worthy of being the actuality of the Idea.

Moreover, this form of universality — the Understanding, to which particularity has worked its way and developed itself, brings it about at the same time that particularity becomes individuality genuinely existent in its own eyes. And since it is from this particularity that the universal derives the content which fills it as well as its character as infinite self-determination, particularity itself is present in ethical life as infinitely independent free subjectivity. This is the position which reveals education as a moment immanent in the Absolute and which makes plain its infinite value.

Addition: By educated men, we may *prima facie* understand those who without the obtrusion of personal idiosyncrasy can do what others do. It is precisely this idiosyncrasy, however, which uneducated men display, since their behaviour is not governed by the universal characteristics of the situation. Similarly, an uneducated man is apt to hurt the feelings of his neighbours. He simply lets himself go and does not reflect on the susceptibilities of others. It is not that he intends to hurt them, but his conduct is not consonant with his intention. Thus education rubs the edges off particular characteristics until a man conducts himself in accordance with the nature of the thing. Genuine originality, which produces the real thing, demands genuine education, while bastard originality adopts eccentricities which only enter the heads of the uneducated.

A. The System of Needs
b) The Kind of Work

§ 197

The multiplicity of objects and situations which excite interest is the stage on which theoretical education develops. This education consists in possessing not simply a multiplicity of ideas and facts, but also a flexibility and rapidity of mind, ability to pass from one idea to another, to grasp complex and general relations, and so on. It is the education of the understanding in every way, and so also the building up of language. Practical education, acquired through working, consists first in the automatically recurrent need for something to do and the habit of simply being busy; next, in the strict adaptation of one's activity according not only to the nature of the material worked on, but also, and especially, to the pleasure of other workers; and finally, in a habit, produced by this discipline, of objective activity and universally recognised aptitudes.

Addition: The savage is lazy and is distinguished from the educated man by his brooding stupidity, because practical education is just education in the need and habit of being busy. A clumsy man always produces a result he does not intend; he is not master of his own job. The skilled worker, on the other hand, may be said to be the man who produces the thing as it ought to be and who hits the nail on the head without shrinking (*keine Sprödigkeit in seinem subjektiven Tun gegen den Zweck findet*).

B) The Administration of Justice

§ 209

The relatedness arising from the reciprocal bearing on one another of needs and labour to satisfy these is first of all reflected into itself as infinite personality, as abstract right. But it is this very sphere of relatedness — a sphere of education, which gives abstract right the determinate existence of being something universally recognised, known, and willed, and having a validity and an objective actuality mediated by this known and willed character.

Remark: It is part of education, of thinking as the consciousness of the single in the form of universality, that the ego comes to be apprehended as a universal person in which all are identical. A man counts as 'a man in virtue of his manhood alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, &c. This is an assertion which thinking ratifies and to be conscious of it is of infinite importance. It is defective only when it is crystallised, e.g. as a cosmopolitanism in opposition to the concrete life of the state.

Addition: From one point of view, it is through the working of the system of particularity that right becomes an external compulsion as a protection of particular interests. Even though this result is due to the concept, right nonetheless only becomes something existent because this is useful for men's needs. To become conscious in thought of his right, man must be trained to think and give up dallying with mere sensation. We must invest

the objects of our thought with the form of universality and similarly we must direct our willing by a universal principle. It is only after man has devised numerous needs and after their acquisition has become intertwined with his satisfaction, that he can frame laws for himself.

C. The Police & the Corporation

(a) Police

§ 239

In its character as a universal family, civil society has the right and duty of superintending and influencing education, inasmuch as education bears upon the child's capacity to become a member of society. Society's right here is paramount over the arbitrary and contingent preferences of parents, particularly in cases where education is to be completed not by the parents but by others. To the same end, society must provide public educational facilities so far as is practicable.

Addition: The line which demarcates the rights of parents from those of civil society is very hard to draw here. Parents usually suppose that in the matter of education they have complete freedom and may arrange everything as they like. The chief opposition to any form of public education usually comes from parents and it is they who talk and make an outcry about teachers and schools because they have a faddish dislike of them. None the less, society has a right to act on principles tested by its experience and to compel parents to send their children to school, to have them vaccinated, and so forth. The disputes that have arisen in France between the advocates of state supervision and those who demand that education shall be free, i.e. at the option of the parents, are relevant here.

Subsection 3: The State

A. Constitutional Law

§ 270

(1) The abstract actuality or the substantiality of the state consists in the fact that its end is the universal interest as such and the conservation therein of particular interests since the universal interest is the substance of these.

(2) But this substantiality of the state is also its necessity, since its substantiality is divided into the distinct spheres of its activity which correspond to the moments of its concept, and these spheres, owing to this substantiality, are thus actually fixed determinate characteristics of the state, i.e. its Powers.

(3) But this very substantiality of the state is mind knowing and willing itself after passing through the forming process of education. The state, therefore, knows what it wills and knows it in its universality, i.e. as something thought.

Hence it works and acts by reference to consciously adopted ends, known principles, and laws which are not merely implicit but are actually present to consciousness; and further, it acts with precise knowledge of existing conditions and circumstances, inasmuch as its actions have a bearing on these.

Remark: This is the place to allude to the relation of the state to religion,

because it is often reiterated nowadays that religion is the basis of the state, and because those who make this assertion even have the impertinence to suggest that, once it is made, political science has said its last word. No doctrine is more fitted to produce so much confusion, more fitted - indeed to exalt confusion itself to be the constitution of the state and the proper form of knowledge.

In the first place, it may seem suspicious that religion is principally sought and recommended for times of public calamity, disorder, and oppression, and that people are referred to it as a solace in face of wrong or as a hope in compensation for loss. Then further, while the state is mind on earth (*der Geist der in der Welt steht*), religion may sometimes be looked upon as commanding downright indifference to earthly interests, the march of events, and current affairs, and so to turn men's attention to religion does not seem to be the way to exalt the interest and business of the state into the fundamental and serious aim of life. On the contrary, this suggestion seems to assert that politics is wholly a matter of caprice and indifference, either because this way of talking merely amounts to saying that it is only the aims of passion and lawless force, &c., which bear sway in the state, or because this recommendation of religion is supposed to be of self-sufficient validity, and religion is to claim to decide the law and administer it. While it might seem a bitter jest to stifle all animus against tyranny by asserting that the oppressed find their consolation in religion, it still must not be forgotten that religion may take a form leading to the harshest bondage in the fetters of superstition and man's degraded subservience to animals. (The Egyptians and the Hindus, for instance, revere animals as beings higher than themselves.) This phenomenon may at least make it evident that we ought not to speak of religion at all in general terms and that we really need a power to protect us from it in some of its forms and to espouse against them the rights of reason and self-consciousness.

The essence of the relation between religion and the state can be determined, however, only if we recall the concept of religion. The content of religion is absolute truth, and consequently the religious is the most sublime of all dispositions. As intuition, feeling, representative knowledge, its task is concentrated upon God as the unrestricted principle and cause on which everything hangs. It thus involves the demand that everything else shall be seen in this light and depend on it for corroboration, justification, and verification. It is in being thus related to religion that state, laws, and duties all alike acquire for consciousness their supreme confirmation and their supreme obligatoriness, because even the state, laws, and duties are in their actuality something determinate which passes over into a higher sphere and so into that on which it is grounded. It is for this reason that in religion there lies the place where man is always assured of finding a consciousness of the unchangeable, of the highest freedom and satisfaction, even within all the mutability of the world and despite the frustration of his aims and the loss of his interests and possessions.

Footnote: Religion, knowledge and science have as their principle a form peculiar to each and different from that of the state. They therefore enter the state partly as *means* - means to education and (a higher) mentality - partly in so far as they are in essence *ends* in themselves, for the reason that they are embodied in existent institutions. In both these respects the principles of the state have, in their application, a bearing on them. A comprehensive, concrete treatise on the state would also have to deal with those spheres of life as well as with art and such things as mere geographical matters, and to consider their place in the state and their

bearing on it. In this book, however, it is the principle of the state in its own special sphere which is being fully expounded in accordance with the Ideal, and it is only in passing that reference can be made to the principles of religion, &c., and to the application of the right of the state to them.

(b) The Executive

§ 296

But the fact that a dispassionate, upright, and polite demeanor becomes customary [in civil servants] is (i) partly a result of direct education in thought and ethical conduct. Such an education is a mental counterpoise to the mechanical and semi-mechanical activity involved in acquiring the so-called 'sciences' of matters connected with administration, in the requisite business training, in the actual work done, &c. (ii) The size of the state, however, is an important factor in producing this result, since it diminishes the stress of family and other personal ties, and also makes less potent and so less keen such passions as hatred, revenge, &c. In those who are busy with the important questions arising in a great state, these subjective interests automatically disappear, and the habit is generated of adopting universal interests, points of view, and activities.

(c) The Legislature

§ 314

The purpose of the Estates as an institution is not to be an inherent *sine qua non* of maximum efficiency in the consideration and dispatch of state business, since in fact it is only an added efficiency that they can supply (see § 301). Their distinctive purpose is that in their pooled political knowledge, deliberations, and decisions, the moment of formal freedom shall come into its right in respect of those members of civil society who are without any share in the executive. Consequently, it is knowledge of public business above all which is extended by the publicity of Estates debates.

§ 315

The opening of this opportunity to know has a more universal aspect because by this means public opinion first reaches thoughts that are true and attains insight into the situation and concept of the state and its affairs, and so first acquires ability to estimate these more rationally. By this means also, it becomes acquainted with and learns to respect the work, abilities, virtues, and dexterity of ministers and officials. While such publicity provides these abilities with a potent means of development and a theatre of higher distinction, it is at the same time another antidote to the self-conceit of individuals singly and en masse, and another means — indeed one of the chief means — of their education.

Addition: Estates Assemblies, open to the public, are a great spectacle and an excellent education for the citizen, and it is from them that the people learns best how to recognise the true character of its interests. The idea usually dominant is that everyone knows from the start what is best for the state and that the Assembly debate is a more discussion of this knowledge. In fact, however, the precise contrary is the truth. It is here that there first

begin to develop the virtues, abilities, dexterities, which have to serve as examples to the public. Of course such debates are irksome to ministers, who have to equip themselves with wit and eloquence to meet the criticisms there directed against them. None the less, publicity here is the chief means of educating the public in national affairs. A nation which has such public sittings is far more vitally related to the state than one which has no Estates Assembly or one which meets in private. It is only because their every step is made known publicly in this way that the two Houses keep pace with the advance of public opinion, and it then becomes clear that a man's castle building at his fireside with his wife and his friends is one thing, while what happens in a great Assembly, where one shrewd idea devours another, is something quite different.