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Some Remarks on Education and Recognition in Hegel

1. Hegel as Educator

Some of the reflections of Hegel on education are related to the specific difficulties he faced in a formal educational institution as the Gymnasium of Nuremberg where, with the help of Niethammer, he occupied the position of headmaster and teacher before securing an academic post in Heidelberg. Thanks to his work as a teacher he experienced the difficulties of teaching philosophy to his students and as the courses progressed, noticed that the students did not feel particularly committed to such matters and wrote to Niethammer: "I made a beginning with the basic concepts of logic. I have not repeated the experience."¹ Thanks to this experience of failure Hegel realized that it was necessary to adapt the content of his lectures to the needs of his students. After making some changes in the way of presentation of the matters, making them more accessible to the students he later confirmed that "their contents find support in the natural feelings of the pupils ... Freedom, law, property and so forth are practical determinations with which we deal on a daily basis."² Within a more familiar context, the student could be able to adequately reflect on the presuppositions that underlie these matters to overcome its abstraction in order to reach the next reflective level. It is interesting to highlight that the reflection made by the teacher Hegel has some relevant consequences within the sphere of the speculative knowledge. On the one hand there is a reflection that is being exerted by the teacher when noticing some difficulties in the engagement of the students, and, on the other hand, there is a reflection exerted by the students, expressed in their lack of engagement with the knowledge provided by the teacher.

As Hegel noticed, the content of the courses was not appealing to the students, because it was not connected to their immediate experience. Their poor engagement can be interpreted as a consequence of the lack of experience to deal with such complex issues. What Hegel displayed in changing the order of the contents was the ability to adapt his pedagogical practice to the requirements of the students, acknowledging their own criterion to decide to a certain extent what

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Letters*, Bloomington 1984, 276.

² *Ibid.*, 276.