Chapter 6
Hegel

INTRODUCTION
At the beginning of this chapter it is helpful, I think, to announce that we will be presenting an interpretation of Hegel that challenges some of the more common perceptions within educational theorising and philosophy of education regarding the nature of Hegel’s philosophy. To be blunt, this philosophy is often dismissed as teleological and totalitarian. The argument runs as follows: as a teleological account of the history of Western reason, Hegel’s philosophy works with the imperialist pre-judgement that all events and structures in Western history are stages in which reason gradually unfolds, until in post-Enlightenment Europe it culminates in Absolute Spirit. Thus, Hegel is seen as largely responsible for the idea of ‘the end of history’—that is, that capitalist liberal democracy marks the very zenith of human rational, social and political achievement. There may still remain a bit of tinkering to be done around the edges, but to all intents and purposes the job is done.

The idea of Hegel’s philosophy as totalitarian is drawn from this view of the end of history. What for Hegel were the achievements of reason are now, in fact, taken to be evidence of the terror of reason and its domination over other forms of thinking, identity and social organisation. Reason has colonised thinking as an imperialist power colonises other parts of the world (and maybe of ourselves). It suppresses, even obliterates, the voices of those it colonises, and imposes itself against the indigenous and the local. Only now, in post-foundational thinking, are these voices beginning to be heard again. Only now is the dominance and hegemony of reason being questioned and undermined, right down to its most basic building block: subjectivity and the cogito. Only now, thanks to the insights into contingency and historicism of the postmodernist and the post-structuralist, are we able to mount a critique of the sovereignty of the project of reason, a project that delivered so little of what it promised. In sum, what belonged to reason was honoured; what was different was outlawed.

This is the same story that we told in Chapter 4, only here we have placed the emphasis upon the pivotal role that Hegel’s ideas play in this tale of woe. But this version of Hegel’s philosophy, so widespread as to be almost unquestioned, even unquestionable, in educational theory and in the philosophy of education—this version is wrong, plain and simple. Let me meet assertion with counter-assertion.

First, Hegel’s philosophy is teleological only in the sense that the present understands how the conflicts that have preceded it have been and
continue to be formative to its own development. This includes the ways in which, at times, reason has been terroristic. This understanding of the present as the relation to the past is a dependency of relation that undermines all attempts to announce the end of history. Teleology does not end by knowing its formative and educative path to itself; this education continues as education, and therein refuses dogma, refuses any stability. Second, and following from this, Hegel’s view of historical development is one characterised not by an endpoint, but by continuing development, understood now as its own educative development. This understanding is not a closure of history. It is a radical and undogmatic openness to the necessity of this education as its own contingency. The present in Hegel is the contingency of Time itself. Third, reason is a totality not in the sense that it colonises what is other, but in the sense that it imposes upon itself the necessity of understanding and respecting the complexities and the challenges posed by the very idea of the other. Indeed, with regard to post-foundational critiques that accuse reason of totalitarianism, there is the irony of all ironies. Where Hegel is prepared to yield to the truth of otherness as it is experienced, by yielding to the truth of the absolute contingency of this experience, post-foundational critics most often oppose this truth of contingency by presupposing the relation to the other as containing the identity of otherness. This presupposition posits otherness even before it is experienced; it posits it as incommensurability or exteriority. Domination over the other lies in the other’s being posited. It is in Hegel that the other is recognised as an otherness within a relation of contingency that does not suppress that inevitable and necessary presupposition, and which, in fact, knows it to be the shape of otherness within particular and specific social relations.

These are all-too-brief responses to some of the most common misreadings—if indeed they are readings at all—of Hegel. But perhaps there is one misreading that, above all others, lends itself to such views. This concerns the term Aufhebung or, as it is commonly translated, sublation. It is a common fallacy that Hegel’s philosophy is based around the triadic relationship of thesis–antithesis–synthesis. It is mostly overlooked that in Hegel any such movement changes the consciousness that experiences it. This change is the culture, the formation and re-formation, of the consciousness. Merely to observe this development and to comment upon its apparent logic from a vantage point, or as a voyeur, is both to presuppose and to misunderstand this culture of experience, and of subjectivity. Indeed, it is to eschew precisely the education that the sequence of the terms describes. In the mind of, let us say, a critic of Hegel, this formula is interpreted as one in which the synthesis overcomes the opposition of thesis and antithesis. Equally, in the same mind, a critique of this overcoming might be made on the grounds of the imperialism and domination outlined above. Overcoming and resolving oppositions is the terror imposed by reason over all oppositions or dualisms. The resulting standpoint may champion the views, on the one hand, that differences should not be overcome or, on the other, that overcoming falls to the way that the oppositions always exceed the
illusory sovereignty of the synthesis that reason seeks to impose. The
former might be called the pluralism of the postmodern, the latter the
excess of the post-structural.

Hegel does not, however, have a philosophy based on the overcoming or
resolution of opposing dualisms. As we saw earlier in Chapter 1, Hegel’s
philosophy is centred round the relations that serve as the conditions of the
possibility for the thinking of objects. The sense of contingency found here
is more radical, more penetrating and more significant than versions of
contingency that seek only to assert relations of dependence. Such
assertions are forced to presuppose the relation they wish to acknowledge.
Or, put another way, the relation to the object is always made possible by,
and is contingent upon, a prior relation to that object. This means not only
that even assertions of contingency are contingent, but also that this
realisation must in turn collapse under the weight of itself, even, or
especially, when it is posited as difference or possibility, or as the relation,
or as the impossibility of absolute thinking This insight into philosophy as
the relation or as the relation of the relation does not, of course, belong
exclusively to Hegel. On the contrary, it is the insight into the dialectic that
gives form and content to Western philosophy from Plato to Derrida. What
is significant about Hegel’s contribution to this debate1 is that his whole
philosophy works not with the one relation or the other, but within the
relation of both relations; that is, within the relation to the object and the
relation to that relation. This is, we might say here, to work within the
broken middle of the natural standpoint of thought’s relation to an object
and the philosophical standpoint of thought’s relation to that relation. There
is no overcoming here although there is a double negation; the negation of
the object in relation to consciousness and the negation of that relation in
relation to consciousness (now as its own object). Hegel’s ‘system’ is a
detailed exploration into the implications of each relation upon the other. It
is not a system where mediation or negation are overcome, but rather one
where critique is precisely the subject and substance of those implications.
As an essentially educative experience, this broken middle cannot be
resolved, for it precedes thinking as the latter’s condition of possibility. But
what it can learn from this impossibility of resolution is its own truth, a
truth known in and as the form and content of the contradictory and
inevitable conjunction of abstraction and mediation. It is the truth within
the relation of contingency to itself.

Again there is here a most wonderful irony. It is the standpoints that
seek to retrieve contingency from its closure and finality as they perceive
it in Hegel, that, in fact, oppose the universal implications of contingency
and, indeed, the necessity that contingency is universal. Hegel is the
modern guardian of reason, which is ‘the critical criterion [that] is forever
without ground’ (Rose, 1995, p. 119). The only way that overcoming
could be introduced into this universality of contingency is abstractly,
from a standpoint posited as contingent in its judgement upon (the open-
endedness of) contingency. As we stated above in the Introduction to Part
III, the evidence of this abstract and dogmatic standpoint lies precisely in
the way that, where contingency is posited as understood too well, it is

overcome (for example, as praxis) and, where it is posited as understood too little, it is not overcome (for example, as difference). This dualism falls within the universality of contingency. To judge Hegel’s Aufhebung as overcoming or as not-overcoming is to suppress the relation to the object that makes the judgements possible. Overcoming and not-overcoming, to be blunt, are the abstraction of philosophical education from itself; this is, as we have argued above, the end of culture and the dialectic of nihilism.

Before exploring, albeit in a limited way, the way that Hegel’s philosophy of contingency works itself out in, and as, the relation of (the relation of) philosophy and education, it will be helpful to explain systematically some of the key terms upon which this account depends.

1. The relation to the object as it precedes experience is our natural consciousness.
2. But as there is no such standpoint available to us prior to experience, natural consciousness appears to be the relation to an object; in fact it is an object already in relation to experience.
3. To miss the dynamics of this relation is to misrecognise the contingency of thought upon its prior form and content—that is, upon a prior form and content that is already thinking.
4. Our relation to the relation between consciousness and its object is our philosophical consciousness. As it negates the immediacy of the latter relation (between consciousness and its object), so it posits itself in that same relation to its object. Thus, the standpoint of our modern critical philosophical consciousness is the standpoint, also, of our natural consciousness. Our philosophical consciousness cannot escape this realisation as positing, and critique functions as a resistance to this even within it. Natural consciousness rises and falls in this circle of negation and abstraction.
5. This abstract philosophical consciousness is posited as the standpoint of reflection. But, unaware of its necessary and prior determination within the circle, this standpoint is illusion, or illusory being (Schein).
6. Illusion masks the political pre-determination within modern property relations of freedom as subjectivity by positing subjectivity as freedom. Our inner life owes its formation to a relation that is already the illusion of the inner life; or, a relation in which positing posits itself. As such, illusion carries the abstract freedom that subjectivity takes to be itself, unaware of its contingency upon and re-presentation of dominant (abstract) social relations.
7. Illusory being is, therefore, the re-presentation of the relation to the object that does not recognise that re-presentation as itself. This representation is both the domination and the critique of the domination of modern property relations.
8. When illusion is known, this is neither an overcoming nor a not-overcoming. It is a self-determination of consciousness within the circle of its own paradoxical contingency. This is the only sense in
which the re-cognition of the misrecognition can be said to be a ‘revolution’—that is, as its own continuing, self-turning wheel of philosophical education.

9. Thereafter, to know freedom is only ever to re-present the conditions for the lack of freedom. But it is also to know the education that freedom demands.

10. This is the real social and political significance of Hegel’s philosophy of absolute contingency. Natural consciousness, the illusory ground of modern political freedom, is a subjectivity that cannot be overcome. It is how we know freedom and the negation of freedom, and our determination within their relation to each other. To elide subjectivity is to suppress the lack of freedom, which is, put differently, to suppress political experience per se. The recognition of misrecognition is the education of illusion by illusion. This is the substance and subjectivity of absolute contingency.

Hegel’s philosophy here heralds a deeper sense of contingency than emancipatory or post-foundational viewpoints. Our education about illusion, within illusion, is determinative of substance and subjectivity in a way that those two standpoints deny to themselves. The point is often made that we should keep all the negations in Hegel’s philosophy but decapitate from it its absolutist pretensions. This is again to suppress the political culture of subjectivity. As we shall see below, if the absolute cannot be known, then we have no stake in our philosophical critique of modern social relations, and subjectivity is relieved of its political import. It is, as Kierkegaard might say, as if those theorists who try to comprehend contingency are walking around ‘like a man who is wearing his glasses and nevertheless looking for his glasses—that is, he is looking for something right in front of his nose, but does not look right in front of his nose and therefore never finds it’ (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 272).

Having now set out this interpretation of Hegel in advance, it behoves us to see how this contributes to the philosophy of the teacher as we are presenting it here. Parts I and II of our study of the philosophy of the teacher have employed speculative philosophy, and Rose’s notion of the broken middle in particular, in two ways: as a means of critique of the elision of aporia within perspectives in the philosophy of education and educational theory; and as a way of theorising the contradiction of master and servant that arises in, and therein constitutes, some of the most persistent difficulties for the practising teacher. In addition, Parts I and II have begun to reveal ways in which familiar educational theorisations typically refuse such difficult experiences their own integrity, presupposing them as incapable of being substantial in and for themselves, or in and as our philosophical education.

Furthermore, we have seen how various attempts to explain or resolve the dilemmas presented in these experiences—praxis, difference and (political or spiritual) intersubjectivity—succeed only in suppressing again their philosophical and political significance. Chapter I in particular explored some of the ways in which the absolute is eschewed within
educational theorising, an eschewal which, in different ways, seeks to avoid exposing itself to, or facing up to, the re-presentation of thinking the absolute as contradiction. Additionally, Chapter 2 argued in part that this denial of re-presentation can be seen as characteristic of what we called the end of culture. Culture is precisely the non-fixing of things, the maintaining of an openness to the political education that is carried in re-presentation. As far as post-foundational critiques in education are concerned, culture is denied—as philosophy, as education, and as their relation to each other. This denial therefore manifests itself as the end, the exhaustion, of metaphysics, and the end, the exhaustion, of modern reason. From within the philosophical subject and substance of the broken middle, however, such denials are formed in and by a despair that refuses to know itself. Such ‘despairing rationalism without reason’ (Rose, 1996, p. 7) marks the end of culture as a way of understanding the formation and re-formation of consciousness in modern social relations. It is, then, a fetishism of a despair that will not recognise its social and political determination, nor, therefore, the philosophical significance of such a refusal. The end of culture, in sum, threatens the absolute and total overcoming by abstraction of our political education.

It is against this background that Part III now offers interpretations of philosophies which do recognise the philosophical substance of aporetic experiences. In Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and first in Hegel, we will present the relation between philosophy and education in their work as precisely the formation and re-formation (the culture) of subjectivity and of substance that is lacking in educational theorising and in the philosophy of education. In particular, in the present chapter, we intend to explore the educational and philosophical significance of the Hegelian notion of illusion, sketched briefly above, in order to illustrate how illusion can retrieve from the end of culture a notion of learning as absolute. Within the hegemony of these post-foundational times, readers are asked to suspend their disbelief that such a thing could even be suggested. The argument will be made here that the notion of the absolute is absolutely necessary in any rigorous critique of modern social relations, and is itself formed in and by the relation therein of philosophy and education. As such, this chapter begins the re-thinking of the experiences discussed in Part I and in particular in Part II. We have witnessed for ourselves, as teachers, the attempts by educational theorists to overcome or not-overcome our experiences—of dualisms such as theory and practice, teacher and student, power and freedom; and we have observed the way these dualisms return to undermine the belief that these dilemmas have been overcome or not-overcome. Mindful of this circle we can now attempt to re-educate ourselves about the nature of this ‘totality’. Within all the difficulties of Hegelian terminology, and within all the complexities of his thinking, Hegel nevertheless offers us an opportunity ‘to know these oppositions in a wholly changed way’ (Rose, 1981, p. 151).

The chapter is structured as follows: the first section, ‘Hegel’s Philosophy of Education’, takes a short description by Hegel of his system and uses it to illustrate how it acts as a critique of perspectives.
outlined in Parts I and II above, and how it structures his own philosophy of education whilst the Head of the Gymnasium in Nuremberg. The second section maps the celebrated master–slave relationship onto the teacher–student relationship. Lastly, using some of the concepts explained a moment ago, the third and fourth sections—respectively ‘Hegel’s Education of Philosophy’ and ‘Freedom and the Teacher’—explore ways in which Hegel’s philosophy of education is also an education for philosophy regarding its fundamentally educative character, and for the teacher.

HEGEL’S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In his letter to Immanuel Niethammer of 23 October 1812, Hegel outlined his philosophical system in the following terms.

Philosophical content has in its method and soul three forms: it is, 1, abstract, 2, dialectical, and 3, speculative. It is abstract in so far as it takes place generally in the element of thought. Yet as merely abstract it becomes—in contrast to the dialectical and speculative forms—the so-called understanding which holds determinations fast and comes to know them in their fixed distinction. The dialectical is the movement and confusion of such fixed determinateness; it is negative reason. The speculative is positive reason, the spiritual, and it alone is really philosophical (Hegel, 1984b, p. 280).

This template of philosophical experience as philosophical education enables us to revisit the experiences of the teacher described in Part II to explore how, when taken together, they re-present this structure. The first element is the abstraction of the teacher who is master. The second element, with its emphasis on contingency, power, negation and deconstruction, is the dialectical. Obviously post-enlightenment theorists would resist this incorporation into anything resembling the dialectical. However, emancipatory and post-enlightenment pedagogies are included because both hold to the educational significance of doubt and uncertainty in their work. For Freire as for Ellsworth, critical education involves the critique of the shadows that hold the students prisoners to ideologies, be they political, textual or cognitive. Part II illustrates the common ground in critical education—that students need, in a sense, to be ‘torn away from concrete representations’ (ibid.). But it also reveals the difficulty of the speculative, the spiritual or the positive form of reason. In the way that Part II above is presented, three different interpretations of (negative) critique are apparent. First, in critical pedagogy, critique was seen to be able to unify theory and practice, thought and being, and as such to produce positive interventions in the world as praxis. Second, post-enlightenment pedagogy was shown to eschew such unifications, and even the presupposition of oppositions, with a view to finding the positive affirmed in difference rather than resolution or reconciliation. Third, spiritual pedagogy tried to hold on to opposites without dominating them or refusing them, as encounter in Buber, attention in Weil and as
questioning without interpretation in Heidegger. In each case there is the affirmation or denial of a third, but not the affirmation and the denial that constitutes philosophical experience.

It is now, however, that a philosophical critique can be made of all three of these responses. Each of them successfully undermines abstractions, not least of the identities of teachers as masters, yet they resist, in different ways, making the experience of the education of natural consciousness the education also of the experience. They resist philosophical learning; and they resist the truth that self-consciousness is known to participate ‘in this antithesis as its own act’ (Rose, 1981, p. 181). In critical, post-enlightenment and spiritual pedagogies this participation is never made content or concept. Thus, education is never recognised as necessarily philosophical, and philosophy is never recognised as necessarily educational. It is not so much that these approaches are ‘wrong’; it is more that they fail to know the oppositions that they depend upon in any changed way. Philosophical difficulty—the site of our philosophical education—is suppressed by the imposition of resolutions of difficulty. These take form as ‘third ways’, or ‘middles’, not just as praxis or intersubjectivity, but also as difference and incommensurability which, even as the denial of such middles, repeat the illusory standpoint of thought and object. Impositions from outside, be they judgements of truth or untruth, of closed or open, are only required when the truth of learning is suspended. In such mis-recognitions of learning ‘truth is thus defined as in itself, as outside any relation to consciousness’ (p. 153). This represents the continuing domination of abstract social relations and objectified thinking. As a result, even the spiritual pedagogies impose spirit in the form of a third way against the philosophical experiences that the teacher has. The irony is that it is protestations against truth in the name of being open-ended that in fact fail to be open-ended, for, in finding third ways, they avoid making their own difficulties the content of their education. It is Hegel who goes that step further, being always open to experience as content, or being always open to learning about the truth of learning from learning. It is the third ways, even in the form of denials of such third ways, which close down this continuing and continual education.

It would also be wrong to see Hegel as having in some way solved the aporia of learning. Rather, learning is aporetic. Doing philosophy in this case is both true and incomplete. This is what Hegel tried to capture in his idea of the Concept. His own difficulties in trying to teach this philosophy, this learning of truth and truth of learning, are illustrated in his correspondence from the period that he was the Head of the Nuremberg Gymnasium (1808–1816). In trying to design a curriculum that would teach the structure of philosophical experience—the abstract, the dialectical and the speculative—he came up against the difficulties of teaching for such learning.

Within the philosophy of the teacher as we are now presenting it and out of the experiences presented above in Part II, Hegel understood the demand that he be both master and slave. (I shall explore the structure of this relationship for the teacher in a moment.) As the master, Hegel had
very definite views on what should be expected from the pupils. He
discouraged duelling, fighting and smoking as well as political activity. In
his school address of 1810 he stated that, ‘from those who attend our
school we expect quiet behaviour, the habit of continuous attention,
respect and obedience to the teachers and proper and seemly conduct both
towards these and towards their fellow pupils’ (Mackenzie, 1909, p. 163).
He also introduced military drill into the school day, as it helped students
to learn quickly and ‘to have the presence of mind, to carry out a
command on the spot without previous reflection’ (p. 165). He cited the
pupils of Pythagoras as an example of such discipline, for ‘Pythagoras
demanded four years’ silence of his followers’ (Hegel, 1984b, p. 293).
Surely, adds Hegel, ‘the philosopher at least has the right to ask the reader
to keep his own thoughts quiet until he has gone through the whole’
(ibid.). Such comments as these, and the two that follow, give the
impression of a dominating teacher, one who did not encourage his pupils
to think for themselves nor express their own opinions: ‘It has become the
prejudice not only of philosophical study but also—and indeed even more
extensively—of pedagogy that thinking for oneself is to be developed and
practised in the first place as if the subject matter were of no importance’
(p. 340). Four years earlier, Hegel had written to Niethammer that ‘the
unfortunate urge to educate the individual in thinking for himself and
being self-productive has cast a shadow over truth’ (p. 279).

However, (as servant) it seems he was much liked by his students and
that his ‘genuine enthusiasm for knowledge’ was infectious (Mackenzie,
1909, p. 32). He could teach most subjects with ease, he encouraged wide
reading, and took a personal interest in the students’ reading material. He
interviewed all students before they left the Gymnasium, whether they
were proceeding to university or not. Moreover, his distaste for traditional
didactic instruction is clear in his reproach of the District School
Councillor, whose

only concept of educating the young is the misery of endless inculcating,
reprimanding, memorising—not even learning by heart but merely the
misery of endless repetition, pressure and stupefaction, ceaseless spoon-
feeding and stuffing. He cannot comprehend that in learning a young mind
must in fact behave independently (Hegel, 1984b, p. 199).

The importance of the students’ independence to Hegel is clearly revealed
in his comments that teachers should not

induce in children a feeling of subjection and bondage—to make them
obey another’s will even in unimportant matters—to demand absolute
obedience for obedience’s sake, and by severity to obtain what really
belongs alone to the feeling of love and reverence . . . A society of
students cannot be regarded as an assemblage of servants, nor should
they have the appearance or behaviour of such. Education to
independence demands that young people should be accustomed early
to consult their own sense of propriety and their own reason (Mackenzie,
1909, p. 175).
If Hegel held necessarily ambivalent views on the independence of the student it was no more than a reflection of what would be required by pupils if they were to understand philosophy. As Hegel remarks, ‘the process of coming to know a substantial philosophy is nothing else than learning’ (Hegel, 1984b, p. 279). However, it appears that he had to learn how to teach this philosophy the hard way. He admits that starting the pupils with abstract logical exercises proved a failure. In a sense, he was risking the very kind of rote learning that he earlier criticised. He quickly abandoned this, choosing instead to begin with the abstractions that the pupils dealt with on a daily basis, in particular those found in law, morality and religion. The question ‘where to begin’ is crucial to understanding the difficulty that defines philosophy for Hegel. He understands that any beginning to thinking, ‘precisely because it is the beginning, is imperfect’ (p. 293). He means here that, since the thought of an object is already the mediation of that object, a beginning can never be made with the object itself. Every abstract beginning is negated for ‘thinking is always the negation of what we have immediately before us’ (Hegel, 1975, p. 17). In a sense then, Hegel was not required to teach how to mediate or negate an object, only to help the pupils recognise that they have already done this for themselves. In a remark that stands as an essential critique of critical, post-enlightenment and spiritual pedagogies, he notes that the dialectic can ‘be taught more through the deficiency of this or that thought determination than according to its real nature’ (Hegel, 1984b, p. 264). What would oppose this experiential learning (to borrow a phrase) would be if thought itself were ‘reduced to a lifeless schema [or] a table of terms’ (Hegel, 1977, p. 29). A textbook cannot contain ‘the developments necessary’ (1984b, p. 175) for the dialectic or the negative to be known by the student. As to the extent that the pupils comprehended the truth of their work to be philosophy itself, or learning in and for itself, Hegel is cautious. He notes that very few achieve this higher education, and so, he argued that the aim of philosophy in schools should not be to teach ‘the absolute standpoint of philosophy’ (p. 264). Needless to say this caution should not be applied to university education.

MASTER AND SLAVE, TEACHER AND STUDENT

We will now describe briefly one of the most contested areas of Hegel’s writing, that of the relationship of the lord and the bondsman as it appears in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and relate this relationship to that of the teacher and the student.\(^5\) Hegel uses the master–slave relationship as a template for understanding experience, or, as it has been explored above, for the truth that is learning. The Hegel scholar H. S. Harris states very clearly that the ‘lord and bondsman are partners in one self-consciousness’ (Harris, 1997, p. 15). In addition, the master–slave relationship is Hegel’s template for understanding the determination of identity in, and by, prevailing property relations. I shall bring out the significance of this for
teachers in a moment. First, a short description of the relationship as Hegel presents it.

The master, says Hegel, is ‘the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself’ (Hegel, 1977, p. 115). This master owns the slave in the same way that he owns all other ‘things’. The master makes the slave do his work for him. In consequence, and not surprisingly, Hegel says of the relationship that it is ‘one-sided and unequal’ (p. 116). In this relationship the master enjoys a particular kind of status. He appears to be independent, a person in his own right, and, unlike the slave, not dependent upon anyone else to tell him what he must do. His life is one of independent pleasure.

It is not difficult to spot the problem with the master’s so-called independence. He is, of course, dependent upon the slave for that independence. He needs someone else to do his work for him so that he can be this independent person. If the master needs the slave for his independence, then he is not independent at all. Thus Hegel says, ‘the truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the servile consciousness of the bondsman’ (p. 117). Here, then, is the first way in which the master and the slave are in relation to each other. The slave is nothing to the master, yet the master is nothing without the slave.

From the slave’s point of view, the situation looks a little different. Hegel points out that the slave has had two experiences here. The first is that he has experienced the pure fear of his being nothing in himself. He has ‘trembled in every fibre of [his] being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations’ (ibid.). This experience, says Hegel, is his experience of death in the sense that the slave knows himself to have no life of his own, no firm ground on which to base any kind of identity; he is, in the eyes of the law, for the master, and for himself, literally nothing. We might say here that the life of the slave, because it belongs to someone else, is a living death, a life lived totally without being itself. In a difficult sentence, Hegel says that this ‘absolute negativity’ (ibid.) is a ‘universal moment, the absolute melting away of everything stable’ (ibid.). He is saying that implicitly the truth of the slave is negative, i.e. he has to live as not-himself, but still has to live.

The slave also has another characteristic, however. Not only is he implicitly negative; he is also explicitly negative for he lives out his own truth. Every time he works for the master he repeats his truth as negative. In his work, as in his ‘identity’, he is not-himself.

For Hegel something truly remarkable is happening here, something that has already been described above as the truth of learning. The slave is achieving something that the master cannot. The slave, in fear and in work, reproduces his own negative truth. As with consciousness, he participates in the act of his own negation. He can now come to know the oppositions between the master and slave in a wholly changed way, for he does what he is and is what he does. In contrast, this unity of theory and practice, or of thought and being, is denied to the master, for the contradiction of his independence only negates his self-certainty. It does
not create his truth; it destroys it. So, whereas the master loses his truth, the slave gains his. Thus, says Hegel, ‘through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realises that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own’ (pp. 118–119).

The tables then are well and truly turned. It is the slave and not the master who has integrity, for he, and not the master, is true to himself. The slave is true to his identity in a way that escapes the master. The master’s supposed self-identity is merely an hypocrisy because it negates itself. The slave, on the other hand, remains true to what he is.

This, however, is not the end of the story. It is all very well saying that the slave gains himself whilst the master loses himself. But what kind of gain is it that the slave achieves? Because he is true to himself, does he have some kind of independence in his slavery? He may well be the only one leading a life of truth, but how does it help him? What kind of independence is ‘negativity’? He seems to have a mind of his own, and yet he is not ‘free’.

The fact that the slave experiences the truth of himself, yet is not free, is the same truth of learning that is not closed. Both participate in their own negation, both require work on abstractions to do so, and both achieve minds of their own. They are both the same relation: learning as philosophy and the slave as himself. With philosophy, if this experience of itself changes nothing, then the experience has no educational significance. Yet it is precisely because we can know the experience, that the experience is for us, that already marks the development or the education. There is a very important point here in regard to all of the pedagogical models explored in Part II. The philosophical education that is borne within negative experience is not the production of a wholly new consciousness. That it is seen as such is often the presupposition behind notions of praxis, or difference, or intersubjectivity (spirit); i.e. that a new consciousness has overcome previous ideological or identitarian notions of subjectivity. This, as we saw above with illusion, is not the case. The consciousness that appears in variously distorted forms as our natural consciousness is the same consciousness that experiences itself as, and therein negates, those distortions. It is in the relation, the broken middle of the ‘two’ consciousnesses, that they are also, and still, the one consciousness. The slave does not overcome the master. The slave still works for the master. But, contra the influential reading of the master and slave relationship by Kojève that the future belongs to the slave/worker, the future in fact belongs to the master and the slave. As master, the modern person is free only formally; and as slave the truth of this freedom is its incompleteness. Politics in this sense is learning and it is oppression. Not only is the modern person dependent for his mastery upon economic slaves in poorer parts of the world as well as in his own back yard, but also he is slave to the negation of that illusory mastery. The modern, as modern, is master and slave, having a mind of his own in relation to this unfreedom. The contradiction here is both the truth of the slave and his participation in its own act.
The same template can now be explored in and through the speculative relation of the teacher and the student. The experience in question is that described above in Part II. Abstractly the identity of the teacher is the master, and his work, on first view, appears to be ‘teaching’. But on closer inspection it can be seen that in fact the work of education is performed by the student. Thus, the relationship is one-sided and unequal. The power and the authority lie within the identity of the teacher. He enjoys an independent status as the one who knows. The one who does not know is the student, and his identity is purely the lack of independence because of his lack of knowledge.

But of course the relationship is more complicated than it at first appears. From the teacher’s point of view, his authority is the independence that his possession of knowledge (literally) buys for him. However, there is a contradiction within the identity and independence of the teacher as master. His knowledge counts for nothing unless it can be ‘taught’. There must be teaching if his identity as teacher is to hold secure, but this in turn means there must also be learning. At this stage, then, as with Hegel’s master, the teacher is dependent for his identity upon the work of the student. Learning is what binds them together: the teacher has it; the student does not. But, just as the slave did the work of the master, freeing the master for his life of pleasure, so the student must do the work of the teacher in both senses—that is, because the student must obey and because the master is free (abstracted) from such work. As the master is the owner, so the teacher is the learned. The conclusion to be drawn here is that the truth of the independent teacher is accordingly the obedience and work of the student.

However, the relationship has been viewed only from the one side, that of the master. We now need to view the relationship from the perspective of the slave, that is, the student. As with the slave, the student has two experiences here, which are the same experience. One is that he has experienced himself as unknowledgeable, as ignorant and without the property of the teacher, or in short, without education. His attending school or college, where he sits, when he learns, how he learns and how worthy his work is—all remind the student of his nothingness, his negative status, in terms of education or knowledge. The person who arrives at the educational institution leaves behind him the knowledge and identities of home, family, friends and so on, and has to become the student, where, in terms of educational property, everything solid and stable in his identity is shaken to its foundations. It is a popular observation, at least in England, that as the student moves through the education system he is repeatedly told by one institution that what was learned in the previous one needs to be forgotten and will be of little use in the present one. It is also a common experience that a student can be made to look and feel stupid by teachers and lecturers. What else is the student’s fear of being humiliated by his lack of knowledge, whether in front of others or alone, but the pure fear of being nothing in himself, of being property-less, within the educational relation?

As with the slave, there is another characteristic of the student in addition to the universal moment where everything stable melts away. Not
only is the student implicitly nothing in educational (property) terms; he actually reproduces this nothingness in his work. In each lesson or lecture, in each essay and presentation, the student reveals his absolute dependence upon the teacher. In being asked to show a positive increase in educational property, he is being asked to repeat his status as lacking such property. In his work, as in his ‘identity’, the student is of negative status.

Something remarkable can be revealed, however, in terms of education within this double negation—in work as in being—of the student. The student is achieving something the master cannot. The student, in fear and in work, reproduces his own negative educational truth. He does what he is and is what he does. This unity of theory and practice, and of thought and being in education, is denied to the master, the teacher, for his negation by and dependence upon the student do not unite him and his work; they undermine and oppose it. But for the student, this rediscovery of himself consists in the realisation that it is precisely in his work, wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence, that he acquires a mind of his own. There is an integrity here denied to the (abstract) teacher.

What kind of ‘mind of his own’ is it exactly that the student gains here? How can he be the truth of himself yet still be a student and still, therefore, be defined as the one without educational property? This is the same broken middle that has been seen in consciousness as the master and slave, and also in the truth of experience where consciousness participates in its own act of opposition. Hegel’s philosophy carries no political import if the absolute cannot be known. Now we can add that education carries no significance if the truth of learning cannot be known. Indeed, this truth of learning can be known here, as the truth of the student who learns about himself, from himself, in his relation to the teacher. It is where we can experience the truth of education as learning. But this is not the truth of education that brings education to an end. It is not some sort of final closure. On the contrary, it is only realised in being brought about by oppositions in experience. This is why Part II of this book has the structure that it has. The truth of learning has to arise out of the contradictory experiences of the teacher. It is these experiences that, when unrecognised as of philosophical significance, demand resolutions of their dilemmas—praxis, undecideability and intersubjectivity—and therein close down their philosophical investigation. The philosophy of the teacher arises in these experiences and brings nothing to them from the outside. When the teacher participates in the thinking of these oppositions, these dilemmas, then she can come to know them differently, and to do so is to comprehend their truth in and as the philosophy of the teacher.

It would be wrong to interpret the teacher–student relation presented here as simply existing between two persons, the teacher and the student. We saw above that Harris is clear that the relationship is within the one consciousness. There are two complementary movements here. The teacher experiences the contradictions of her abstract identity in relation to her students. These experiences constitute Part II above. But the teacher becomes her own student when she is able to turn the experience of

difficulty and aporia into philosophical content. In doing so, the truth of
the student as learning in and for itself is the truth of the difficult
experiences of the teacher who has become her own philosophical student
of those experiences. It is when these experiences are not made
philosophical content that philosophy of education and educational theory
remain merely assertive and one-sided. This amounts to refusing to the
teacher the meaning of her difficulties.

When the teacher–student relation is the truth of the teacher become
student to herself, then the relation in the one consciousness is the same as
that described above. Her identity as master collapses into the doubts
generated by teaching the students. But when these doubts remain
unsuppressed and are able to become both content and activity, then the
teacher is open to the truth of the student as her own truth, but always in
the relationship to him. Doubt is the identity of this content in that it is a
pure nothingness, a despair. This is particularly true for teachers. I suspect
there have been moments for all of us when we felt everything solid and
stable melting away as we doubted our abilities, our effectiveness and
therein ourselves. But doubt is also the activity, the work, that produces
this fear and trembling of negation. In doubt there is the unity of theory
and practice, for doubt is what it does and does what it is. It is not,
however, a unification that ends the work; it is the unity of the work and its
identity only in the experience of teaching, of being the teacher. Its
essentially negative character assures that no closure is possible. If there
is no dilemma, there is no philosophical education.

What does this mean then for the teacher? It means, first, that her
dilemmas in theory and practice, and of theory and practice, are true—not
only true because they are real, but true also because of their philosophical
significance. It means, second, that in her philosophical work she can
comprehend the truth of the learner. Her doubts are not to be suppressed or
even resolved. They are to be thought about. In becoming philosophical
content, they become her philosophical education. As this philosophical
teacher she comes to know her dilemmas in a changed way. She
comprehends the truth of learning within them—that in doubting her
practice and herself she is both not-the-teacher and the work of the learner.
It is in philosophy, in this philosophy of the teacher, that she undertakes
this different and formative work. It is formative because she is both
content and activity of this learning. She cannot remain unchanged, for in
making doubt the content and activity of her own thinking she is already
changed. She is neither master nor servant; she is both. Abstractly she is
master, dialectically she is servant and speculatively she is the truth of
their relation, as master and servant, in the philosophy of the teacher.

The question ‘How does this change her practice?’ is misleading.
Changes of practice brought about by different methodologies may appear
to make a difference. But they are seldom if ever truly different, at least
politically and philosophically. What has changed is the teacher herself.
Her work embodies its own truth. There is no telling how any teacher will
bring the philosophy of the teacher into her work. But there will be a
difference, all the difference in the world. She will now know the meaning
and the significance of her work in all its joys and sorrows, difficulties and
dilemmas. She will have found the truth of learning in her work and the
truth of her work in learning. Her doubts will now have substance. They
will make the difference. She is returned to herself as the teacher aware of
significance and meaning in what she does. This is how and where the
philosophy of the teacher retrieves for teaching its notions of vocation and
service, and where the humanity of the work opposes any technical,
bureaucratic or instrumental deformities. It returns the teacher to Luther’s
noble sentiment that there is no higher virtue than being a teacher whose
life is devoted to the truth of learning by working for that truth in the
learning of others.

HEGEL’S EDUCATION OF PHILOSOPHY

One way to approach Hegel’s education of philosophy is through the
structure and significance of illusion.12 As we saw above, illusion in its
Hegelian sense has its own logic, its own relation in thought, and can,
therefore, retrieve its own educational and philosophical significance as
spirit. Illusion here refers to the sphere of essence in the Science of Logic
where essence presents itself as illusory being (Schein). In brief, illusion is
present in the standpoint of reflection and for Hegel is positing, or
presupposition. The one illusion has two characteristics. First, it is an
immediacy, a non-essence, and counts for itself as nothing. Second, when
this nothingness is known to itself it is reflection. The crucial point here is
that, as with the slave above, the nothingness of positing and the activity
of positing have their actuality in the subjectivity on behalf of whom, so it
appears, the positing is carried out. We saw how, in Hegel’s famous
relation of master and slave, the master is the truth of the slave because the
truth of the slave is nothingness in his work for the master. Equally, here,
subjectivity is the truth of positing, or illusory being, because the truth of
positing is also nothingness and work for that subjectivity. Illusory being
cannot be avoided for it is already the ‘beginning’ of thinking. Thinking is
posed and what is posited is thinking. Thus, as Gillian Rose says,
‘reflection has presupposed what it claims it is positing’ (Rose, 1981,
p. 196).

This is significant for us in two ways. First it means that reflection is
determinate within illusion and as such all beginnings in reflection are
illusion. Second, the way that illusion is determinative of itself is, as we
will see, the truth of the slave and its consequent political representation
as the master. Thus, illusion is not only determinate, it knows its
determinateness as illusion. This is the education of consciousness as
subject and substance where education, here, means ‘realised’ both as
achieved and as known. For Hegel, unless we work with illusion to
comprehend the determinative truth of illusion’s own re-presentation of
itself in our critical thinking, our critique of illusion will remain an empty
repetition of illusion, one without its own educational import. That illusion
is determinative of subject and substance is the educational advantage that

the speculative has over other forms of philosophising and is, as we saw above, the structure of experience and of philosophical education in the relationship of the master and the slave.

Illusion is also the positing that defines the character of the Hegelian system. Rose observes here,

The *Phenomenology* is not a teleological development towards the reconciliation of all oppositions between consciousness and its objects, to the abolition of ‘natural’ consciousness as such, but a speculative presentation of the perpetual deformations of natural consciousness. The *Phenomenology* is the education of our abstract philosophical consciousness (Rose, 1981, p. 150)

—such that it might learn of itself, from itself. ‘If the *Phenomenology* is successful it will educate philosophical consciousness to know these oppositions in a wholly changed way, by making it look and see into (intuit) their formation as the experiences of a natural consciousness’ (p. 151). Therefore, and against readings of Hegel’s system that judge it teleological but closed, and merely a dogmatic assertion of spirit as the true, we are offered a system of thought that is teleological, unresolved in its contradictions and able to recognise past, current and future deformations: a system where illusion learns the truth of itself within the social relations that embody it.

Why, then, if the system is only about mis-recognitions of the true, can Hegel produce a system? The answer is because there is systematic mis-recognition in natural consciousness of its relation to itself in experience. Illusion is both the presupposition and the work of that relation. So, because it is we who are having the experience that knows of re-cognition, or education, we are being educated in mis-recognition about mis-recognition. There is truth in illusion here, because we experience illusion through illusion. The criterion for such a judgement has not been imported from outside, even though on each occasion our experiences repeat the relation of inner and outer, and of true and false. The experience of negation is thought’s own act upon itself. It can, therefore, judge its truth as its own object in a way denied to other objects.¹³

But, as also outlined above in Part I, I want to argue that this work, where natural consciousness, in Rose’s words, ‘experiences the contradiction between its definition and its real existence’ (p. 150), can be identified not just as a philosophical experience but as the work that is the broken middle of philosophy and education. The nature of the true in Hegel is not merely philosophy; it is philosophy as education and education as philosophy. This is because natural consciousness, in being negated, is not overcome; it is made aware of itself, and this change in its perspective is its philosophical education. All philosophy and social theory that heralds this change of perspective, this education, as either an overcoming of the illusions of natural consciousness or as a scepticism towards their ever being overcome, fails to recognise the educational and
philosophical significance of natural consciousness’s experience of itself. 

Retrieving education and learning as the core of the speculative experience not only opens up an absolute yet non-foundational reading of Hegel; it also retrieves the Hegelian system as an education of philosophy. As the truth of the slave and the student are retrieved in the integrity of their negative education, so the truth of Hegel’s system as a whole can be read in the same way. Some of Hegel’s frustrations at being misunderstood in his own lifetime are revealed early in his *Science of Logic*. He states

I have been only too often and too vehemently attacked by opponents who were incapable of making the simple reflection that their opinions and objections contain categories which are presuppositions and which themselves need to be criticised first before they are employed. Ignorance in this matter reaches incredible lengths (Hegel, 1969, pp. 40–41).

There are three observations made by Rose that help us here to address the most fundamental of these presuppositions and that go to the core of any coherent reading of Hegel’s education of philosophy. These observations are: that the foundations of the state and religion are identical; that ‘social relations contain illusion’ (Rose, 1981, p. 81); and that the absolute can be known. I shall very briefly explain each of these in turn.

In his lectures on the philosophy of religion Hegel put forward the view that ‘religion and the foundation of the state are one and the same’ (Hegel, 1984a, p. 452). It is the case, he argues elsewhere, that the state and its laws ‘are nothing else than religion manifesting itself in the relations of the actual world’ (Hegel, 1956, p. 417). Such propositions at first sight strike one as empirically wrong. How can religion, the subjective disposition regarding truth, become the foundation of a legal relation? How can love be the foundation of law? It seems more to be the case that they are incommensurable with each other, one subjectively and freely given, the other objectively and heteronomously demanded.

So what does Hegel mean by his claim about religion and the state? Rose argues that this proposition, as with many of Hegel’s most difficult statements, requires reading speculatively, that is, according to the broken middle of its being experienced, and not merely as an abstract assertion. To read a proposition speculatively, she says, ‘means that the identity that is affirmed between subject and predicate is seen equally to affirm a lack of identity between subject and predicate. This reading implies an identity different from the merely formal one of the ordinary proposition’ (Rose, 1981, pp. 48–49). Read in this way, the statement about the common foundation of state and religion becomes a statement that contains our experience of our lack of freedom. In Rose’s view of the speculative proposition it is precisely the lack of freedom and autonomy that religion represents. To affirm the identity of state and religion as an experience, therefore, is, for Hegel, to know ‘this divorce in the idea of the absolute [the lack of freedom] as the state and as religion’ (p. 93).
Rose’s second observation concerns the role played by illusion in thinking in general and in philosophy in particular. As we will see in a moment there is illusion in social relations for Hegel and Rose in that our natural consciousness takes its relation to the object as the standpoint of reflection. As argued above, even hermeneutics, along with critical and post-enlightenment philosophies, contains illusion in this way. They may well be alive to the contingency and historicism of reflection but it is this observation, this positing of the relation, that is then precluded from being its own philosophical content. The refusal of illusion as self-determinative is the continued domination of modern, abstract, rational consciousness. Style, perhaps irony, is often called upon to register that awareness of illusion deconstructs even the critique of illusion. However, perspectives that claim to be post the illusions of natural consciousness are in fact denials—unphilosophical denials—of the domination of illusion. Illusion remains unrecognised philosophically when it is not pursued as constitutive of abstract consciousness, as the critique of abstract consciousness and as the abstract philosophical doctrine that can be recorded of these relations.

It is here, in the self-determination of illusion, that Adorno, for example, cannot follow Hegel. For Adorno,

Hegel’s philosophy contains a moment by which that philosophy, despite having made the principle of determinate negation its vital nerve, passes over into affirmation and therefore into ideology: the belief that negation, by being pushed far enough and by reflecting itself, is one with positivity. That . . . is precisely and strictly the point at which I refuse to follow Hegel . . . for if I said that the negation of the negation is the positive, that idea would contain within itself a thesis of the philosophy of identity and could only be carried through if I had already assumed the unity of subject and object which is supposed to emerge at the end (Adorno, 2000, p. 144).

Hegel’s response can be taken from the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*:

Should we not be concerned as to whether this fear of error is not just the error itself? Indeed, this fear takes something—a great deal in fact—for granted . . . To be specific it takes for granted certain ideas about cognition as an instrument and as a medium, and assumes that there is a difference between ourselves and this cognition. Above all, it presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it . . . or in other words, it presupposes that cognition which, since it is excluded from the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true, an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth (Hegel, 1977, 47, emphasis removed).

Adorno’s ‘fear of the truth’ (ibid.), then, prevents him from pursuing the educational and philosophical implications of knowing illusion. Adorno is well-known for his melancholic view that reification is total and that it is,
therefore, hard to see how even critique itself can any longer be effective. With Horkheimer he famously observed that ‘even the best-intentioned reformer . . . strengthens the very power of the established order he is trying to break’ (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p. xiv). Yet even though Adorno finds positivity in the idea that negative dialectics is able to ‘crash through’ (Adorno, 1973, p. 17) the illusions of identity thinking, he still does not follow the path of despair to the point where it can articulate itself as an education, or as philosophy. It is in illusion, Rose reminds us, where natural consciousness experiences the contradiction between itself and its self-consciousness, that it can find the criterion of this education in itself. Knowing this criterion brings education and philosophy together, but not, as Rose says, as the ‘reconciliation of all oppositions’ (Rose, 1981, p. 150).

This leads to Rose’s third point, that the absolute can be known in philosophy as social critique. Within the illusions of the modern abstract culture of Verstand—that is, of abstract rational consciousness—this is tantamount to a theoretical blasphemy. Nevertheless, it is the very fact that illusion knows itself that contains the criterion by which truth can be judged. The following quotation from Rose presents her interpretation of how it is that, amidst all the dualisms and mis-recognitions that illusion provides,

once the shapes of consciousness have been experienced, one thing can be stated. It can be stated that the absolute or substance is negative, which means that it is determined as the knowing and acting self-consciousness which does not know itself to be substance, but which knows itself by denying or negating substance, and is certain of itself in opposition to its objects. This is not an abstract statement about the absolute, but an observation to which we have now attained, by looking at the experiences of a consciousness which knows itself as an antithesis, as negative, and thus ‘participates’ in this antithesis as its own act (p. 181).

This participation can be understood as thinking knowing itself through its own work, or as the relation of activity and result, or of education and philosophy. What Hegel draws attention to is that there is a notion of truth here that does not have to assert itself dogmatically against prevailing conceptions of the true, for such assertion is already part of the philosophical experience in question. Critiques of the Hegelian absolute depend upon the presupposition of the categories that they have to employ. As Hegel remarked above, such critiques become purely arbitrary, selecting those presuppositions that suit their case and rejecting others. Thus, whilst spirit repeats political and religious mis-recognition as its own determination, the critiques repeat the very oppositions that form the absolute, but without the re-formation of the critique that the political and religious preconditions ensure. The difference can be summed up in the different recognitions of subjectivity. Spirit is subjectivity become political and religious substance, whilst the critiques of the absolute reject subjectivity as merely a posited identity, as illusory. It is spirit
however that is the truth of the illusion, for spirit knows illusion as its own self-determination. Rejecting illusion, or even trying to embrace it as myth, merely dominates our abstract philosophical education, from one side of the relation (the overcoming of illusion—that is, the principle of praxis) or the other (non-overcoming—that is, the principle of difference).

Within Hegelianism the ambivalence of this philosophical education in and as spirit is illustrated by the way the relation is itself often reproduced only one-sidedly. For example, in a right-wing reading of Hegel, the absolute can be imposed as the truth of existing law over and against illusion; and in a left-wing reading, the absolute can be critiqued as the illusion of existing law. In both cases the substance of illusion is suppressed beneath the posited relation of theory and practice. Hegel’s triadic philosophy, however, takes this experience of the broken relation as substantive, and as such, it re-presents the relation of theory and practice not only as a critique of each position, but also as a critique of their critiques of each other. The right-wing and left-wing readings are themselves the re-presentation of the abstract oppositions of philosophy and education. The former, philosophy without education, reinforces the idea of philosophy as at its end in the sense that it is teleologically completed; the latter, education without philosophy, repeats the aspiration to change the world without recognising the way in which philosophy itself is re-formed in the process. Neither allow for the culture, for the formation and re-formation of consciousness in their work.

**FREEDOM AND THE TEACHER**

We are now in a position to assess the political and philosophical import for the teacher of Hegel’s philosophy of education and education of philosophy as it has been presented here. This will be a difficult task for we are being asked to think about the way that contradiction and dichotomy are the truth of thinking, and that education is the truth of that truth. Furthermore, we will see how freedom, experienced in the aporia of the former, is present in the latter.

When Rose says that ‘Hegel’s philosophy has no social import if the absolute cannot be thought’ (Rose, 1981, p. 204) she is not saying that truth lies outside of the political experiences in which we fail to think truth. It must be the case that we can think the absolute, else all philosophy—taken as the realisation of thought’s own work in and by itself—is not our thinking. If coming to think something new about previous conceptions is not our thinking, then philosophy has no educational significance at all. It is hard to imagine even those philosophers who are vehemently opposed to the absolute also arguing that the philosophical case they make for such claims has no educational import. Such writers may not hold with the absolute, but by producing philosophical work they are already claimed by a notion of philosophy that knows such work as its being thought, and as being at least assumed to be transformative. When attention is being given to the ways in which our
thinking is distorted, suppressed, wrongly conceived and so on, and when arguments are made for the educational importance of deconstruction, critique and other anti-foundationalist shibboleths, these are in essence arguments for philosophy as education. Moreover, even within the critiques and deconstructions of the subject as thinking agent, there is still posited the assumption that such thinking is work and has formative significance for us.

The political significance of the relation of philosophy and education lies in the concept of work or transformative activity. The ambivalence of re-presentation is that in it we think the truth and fail to think the truth; we know of relation but also we are relation. As philosophical experience, this aporia is the truth of our political education in regard to our social determination. What makes this assertion true rather than merely assertion has to do with the illusions that are carried in each historical period by the notion of transformative activity or work.

Rose argues that for Hegel ‘a society’s relation to nature, to transformative activity determines its political and property relations, its concept of law, and its subjective or natural consciousness’ (p. 204). In Ancient Greece, for example, work represented a relation to nature characterised by ethical life as custom. Here, the individual ‘sees the whole of himself in the totality of his productions’ (p. 129). Now, whereas here the individual knew work as his own, for he knew the totality of ethical life as his own, in Roman law this unity was broken into objective law and subjective will. This separation also characterises modern social relations. The result is that freedom, once known in the custom of immediate ethical life, can now be known only in the opposition between individual and law. This opposition is actual as private property for private property is not one’s own work, it is work performed by others and appropriated by persons. Work is now the re-presentation of freedom based in self-interest and the priority of the private person over the social (and indeed global) totality. Thus, freedom is in the aporia of universal property law that enshrines the freedom of each person as freedom from every other person. Asking which came first, that is, work or law, or which caused the other, misses the significance of illusion here. As illusory being posits itself in reflection and in the relation of subject to object, so, freedom posits itself in the relation of work and law. ‘A change in relation to nature is in itself a change in the political relation’ (p. 138).

In relations of private property, then, freedom is the decay of communal relations, the strengthening of private interest and, as we saw earlier in Chapter 2, the beginning of a subjective inwardness that laments this decay and, at times, reproduces that relation as political intrigue and as Fascism. There is a great deal at stake here. The (political) relation to nature becomes the determination of political freedom. All freedom in this sense is ‘natural law’, for all law represents the relation to and the work upon nature. Natural law is itself a positing, an illusion of freedom. It is in the experience of freedom as illusion or as positing, then, that freedom is self-determinative; not merely abstractly, as it must be, but also as the relation to nature that is philosophical consciousness. This is not a
reconciliation of the community and the person. It is, rather, an education about the unfree conditions in which freedom appears. Thus, freedom is essentially an educational undertaking, one in which the relation of work or transformative activity to nature is both illusory and actual. The ‘and’ here is our representation of real political relations and their philosophical critique. Even, or especially, in the political re-presentation of freedom as the broken middle of subjectivity and substance, this experience is our experience, and it is our experience of the truth of social and political relations as they are reproduced as subjectivity itself. Rose notes here that ‘recognising our transformative or productive activity has a special claim as a mode of acknowledging actuality that transcends the dichotomies between theoretical and practical reason, between positing and posited. Transformative activity acknowledges actuality in the act and does not oppose act to non-act’ (p. 204). This ‘special claim’ is our philosophical education, for the lack of identity between law and work, or between metaphysics and ethics, or even between God and Caesar, ‘gives rise to experience, to a re-cognition that sees what the act did not immediately see’ (pp. 204–205). If this is not the case, then there is no political education, and it marks the end of culture within a totality of act without law, ethics without metaphysics and Caesar without God. If we cannot recognise in our subjectivity the mis-recognition that is subjectivity, then political education, the truth of thinking and the thinking of truth are at an end.

This relation of work to nature, realised as subjective formation and reformation, is precisely the notion of culture that we argued earlier is missing from educational theory and philosophy of education. Culture is the philosophical work of illusion known to itself. But the philosophy of education has little idea of itself as a culture because it recognises no speculative experience able to know how it is reformed in its being known as formed. Here, there lies a potential advantage within the philosophy of education denied to philosophy in general. The former is the relation of culture but its moments are held in stasis by the inability, the refusal, of the philosophy of education to recognise its mis-recognition within modernity. Philosophy in general has to find its educational subject and substance within the domination of abstract philosophical consciousness (Verstand). Philosophy of education carries the illusions of Verstand up front, as it were, and keeps the speculative truth of education and philosophy in view. But still it has not recognised itself as re-formed by property relations in such a way as to be the truth of the experience of modernity. Why this resistance? Cruelly, it is because the philosophy of education and educational theory derive from modern experience no concept of the formation and re-formation of (the relation that is) philosophy and education. Much is written about education; much less is written about the illusions that dominate the relation of philosophy and education; and even less is written about this relation as culture.

To draw this chapter to a close I want to relate these thoughts more directly to the teacher–student relationship. The significance of the master–slave relation is nothing less than the re-presentation of freedom in
unfree social relations. The master–slave relation is how freedom is known, by itself, where its actuality is unfreedom. Freedom, here, is our political education. But in the teacher–student relation our political education is also our education regarding freedom. Since the truth of the master–slave relation in its re-presentation of freedom is education, it is not surprising that the teacher–student relation bears the weight of being the re-presentation of education itself. In other words, the philosophy of the teacher can maintain a transparency of the truth of the experience of freedom, a transparency of which the modern master–slave relation is deprived. In modernity the latter has taken the form and content of formal equality and freedom. There are no legal slaves—although there are many visible and many more invisible slaves. Formal freedom is the freedom of the master and the suppression of the slave; their relation is rendered opaque. But in the teacher–student relation, the truth of that merely formal equality cannot survive the dialectic of education that attacks it. The classroom is not defined by formal equality. Neither is the philosophy of the teacher able to define itself without the negative work of the productive activity of the student or learning. Even when domination is masked by formal legal relations, the educational relation is not.

The aporia of education that Parts I and II have traced, then, is known now to be a political experience, just as the teacher is now also seen as a determination of that experience. This political experience is the site of our experience of ourselves within existing property law, where relation to nature is also the definition of subjectivity. The teacher must take his place as part of that experience for the student. For the teacher, however, as for the student, "subjective meaning" can only re-present actuality, it cannot present it (Rose, 1981, p. 213). A beginning cannot be made with the thought of contingency (myth); only with the contingency of the thought of contingency (myth and enlightenment). ‘Thus,’ says Rose, ‘the inversion of actuality in the media of re-presentation should be the point of departure’ (ibid.). The teacher, in other words, must teach, must be the teacher, for as such he is this re-presentation. To refuse the teacher as being this point of departure is to refuse our experience of freedom and the absolute in all its difficulties. It is to deny the student the truth of his own experience and is, in itself, potentially a new form of terror and domination over actuality.

What does this mean in and for the philosophy of the teacher? First, it means that any talk of overcoming domination in the classroom carries illusions. This covers all of the pedagogies outlined above in Chapter 4, which sought to overcome domination or political reality in some way. Second, these illusions are far more powerful forms of political education even than the mastery of the teacher. The domination of the teacher, exemplified in Chapter 3, is a direct political experience. The failure by teachers to re-present political reality refuses the student their own subjectivity for it refuses a validity to the latter’s discrimination between illusion and actuality. In short, it refuses them their formative and re-formative political experiences. Intrigue, in Benjamin’s sense, characterises this teacher who therein creates new tyrannies over the students.
within the broken relation between the hypertrophy of his inner life and the decay of the universal. They, the students, will have to look elsewhere for the recognition of their political experience of this intrigue. Third, it means that those classrooms and seminars that take illusion to be political education give a representation of the truth of freedom as education that, whilst acknowledging the prior determination of social relations, do so without suppressing either of its political moments, that of the teacher or that of the student. This means, as we have seen, that teachers must risk the re-presentation of the political reality of the classroom and of the teacher–student relationship and have faith in the power of education to ensure that these illusions become formative political experiences. The point here is not that teachers can go into their classrooms and seminars and ‘pretend’ to be teachers until the students can critique their identities. Rather, it is the case that teachers can remain true to the (untruth of the) formation of their subjectivity in and by social relations by refusing their own abstract suppression of philosophical and political education, both theirs and their students’. The reduction of the teacher to the pretence of ‘the facilitator’ is just such political intrigue. It is, says Rose, to risk ‘recreating a terror, or reinforcing lawlessness, or strengthening bourgeois law in its universality and arbitrariness’ (1981, p. 219). The whole point is that we *are* teachers: we are partly exactly what we appear to be, a domination. But it is by remaining teachers that we can work for the re-formation of the experience of education as a whole. The teacher–student relationship carries truths within it that will become educational if the ambivalence that they re-present is not itself dominated. For those who work in education it is of added significance to know the true as this learning. Nothing is closed down; learning will continue; and indeed, it will find itself in all the struggles that learning commends. There is always learning; there is always the true; but, alas, there is not always the courage, the philosophical *character*, in education or in philosophy, to pursue the true in the ambivalence of modern freedom, or, in other words, to keep learning.

**NOTES**

1. And, I would argue, to Kant, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard; see Tubbs, 2004.
2. Niethammer was the man responsible for the reorganisation of the Bavarian education system at the time that Hegel was in charge of the Nuremberg *Gymnasium*.
3. With younger children Hegel remarks that ‘this stage is more difficult than the abstract; and is at once the stage in which the young, eager for material content and sustenance, are least interested’ (Hegel, 1984b, p. 281). For teachers coming to the negation and/or deconstruction of their own taken-for-granted assumptions and identities, however, one can anticipate greater curiosity, at least in pursuing the pathway of despair that such critique stretches out before them. I shall return in a moment to a discussion of this education as it applies specifically to teachers.
4. Yet he also makes clear the benefits for him of doing so. Of his years in Jena, during which he wrote the *Phenomenology*, he says he was ‘bound to the letter of my notebook’ (Hegel, 1984b, p. 331). But, in contrast, of his time as a school teacher he remarks that it ‘has helped me gain a freedom in my lecturing that probably can be attained nowhere better than in such a position. It is’, he continues, ‘an equally good way of attaining clarity’ (ibid.), even more advantageous to clarity than having ‘a university professorship’ (p. 332).
5. I have to note a change of terminology here. Throughout the book we have referred to the master and the servant. Yet Hegel’s bondsman is very clearly a slave. I have not yet employed the term ‘slave’ within the philosophy of the teacher because it could so obviously be rejected by teachers as inappropriate to their position. The term ‘servant’ carries greater spiritual connotations of service to others and the consequent struggles with power, identity and authority. Nevertheless, whether as servant or slave, it is still the case that the teacher has no self-certainty within the negative experience of herself as master.


7. Remember that the teacher with no knowledge at all, Socrates, did not get paid.

8. Such a model may look as if it falsely separates the teacher from learning. The point, however, is that the identity of the teacher is precisely the abstraction of learning. We have seen this in Part II, not just where the teacher is master, but also where the teacher is servant. It is the contradiction here for the teacher in terms of learning and teaching that is the substance of the teacher’s speculative, aporetic experience of her work and identity.

9. One might say here, that this is only nothingness in terms of the knowledge that passes for education, or curriculum knowledge. But we are dealing with the concept of the teacher here and thus are exploring the components of the experience that is constructed by ‘education’ between teachers and students. There are many examples of ‘sociologies’ that explore the particular ways by which the identity of the students is constructed. But the educational import of such sociologies will remain suppressed without the idea of sociology as culture—which is, then, philosophy.

10. See Chapter 1 above.

11. Thus, the philosophy of the teacher could never countenance a life in higher education that did not involve teaching.

12. It is more usual to undertake such an exploration through the more familiar notions of spirit, or recognition, or logic. But, in the reading of Hegel being presented here, the formation and re-formation of illusion in and by itself underpins the triadic structures of those notions.

13. But that can, thereafter, educate us about the notion of an object and of objectivity per se.

14. Elsewhere I have explored this as ‘philosophy’s higher education’ (Tubbs, 2004). For present purposes, however, it can be stated as follows. Spirit that participates in its own act as the broken middle of a separation and a unity—this can be called learning.

15. This question of the import of ‘and’ is taken up again in Chapter 7, and in Tubbs, 2004, Chapter 6.

16. Or else posit for himself an alternative form of law altogether as, for example, Heidegger does. When Hegel says in his letter of 1812 that knowledge or science is ‘a treasure of hard-won, ready-prepared, formed content . . . [and that] the teacher possesses this treasure, [and that] he pre-thinks it [whilst] the pupils re-think it’ (Hegel, 1848b, p. 280), this looks like an unpalatable domination of the slave by the master. One could then turn to Heidegger’s comments to find a pedagogical relationship in which the truth of the student remains ‘without interpretation’ (Krell, 1993, p. 375). Michael Bonnett has taken up this theme. He finds in Heidegger a teacher–student relation that is ‘a genuinely creative, because genuinely open, encounter’, one wherein the teacher has ‘to attend to the withdrawn (the as yet unthought, the incipient) that alone draws thought forward’ (Peters, 2002, p. 240). This poetic relationship, as he calls it, would be ‘highly reciprocal and based on trust, which preserves both the integrity of the learner and of the material’ (ibid.). The differences between this view and that found in Hegel’s letter, however, serve as exemplars of the differences between Heideggerian and Hegelian higher education as a whole. The actuality of Hegel’s teacher means that he is already in relation to the student as other, and in relation to himself as student. The teacher is other, but the other is not the teacher. It is precisely because he cannot think for or on behalf of the student that his mastery is negated and collapses. It is in this negation and collapse that the student and the teacher gain minds of their own. This is the humility and necessary vulnerability of ‘pre-thinking’, for pre-thinking is only the re-cognition of the teacher’s own necessary negation by the other. But Heidegger’s teacher only has the pretence of learning from the student because Heidegger refuses the actuality of property relations. In the call to the subject of the question by the teacher, and, in the approach of the student, heeding the question, to the teacher, the question is deprived of its own object. Each withdraws from that which also withdraws. This is what might be called the dialectic of nihilism. The teacher never actually becomes the owner, and the student never actually becomes the property-less. This is not the result of any successful overcoming of universal equivalence by
Dasein. This is due solely to the fact that the abstractions that pre-determine the teacher–student relation are denied by Heidegger in such a way that neither actually experiences the totality of these property relations. And to fail, or to be prevented from experiencing oneself in property relations, is to be prevented from the experience of the other, and of otherness in general. Where the Hegelian philosophy of the teacher takes its ‘starting point in the contingent’ (Hegel, 1969, p. 549), in the limits that prevailing law impose, the Heideggerian philosophy of the teacher posits a starting point in Being and beyond the reception of the law. It is, as Rose says, ‘Yahweh without Torah’ (Rose, 1984, p. 80). Indeed, the Heideggerian teacher only finds law in the error of metaphysics and theory. Eschewing the difficulties of universal political experience, rather than seeing oneself as determined within them, is the characteristic of fascism that rises above the state of emergency of present relations via a myth of past or future relations. Heidegger’s concept of education, and of the teacher–student relationship in particular, turns the inequalities and despair of real class relations into a myth of authentic purity. Heidegger turns to the law of the individuality of the Führer, rather than the law, the broken middle, of actual modern, property-based social relations. He thus embodies a philosopher of the teacher as the intriguer whose political machinations of 1933, events that are so well documented, are rationalised according to a mythical representation of spiritual authenticity that re-presents the loss of metaphysics as a state of Being. Heidegger’s philosophy of the teacher, if it is to teach anything, must teach us how the refusal of the absolute in real relations leaves the way open for myth, for intrigue, and for a way of life that is potentially at one with death-heads and destruction.