

DOI: https://doi.org/10.56550/d.1.2.5	Original research article	
Received on: October 28, 2022	Accepted on: December 21, 2022	Published on: April 27, 2023

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HEGEL'S HERMENEUTICS AND INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY

Abstract

I argue that Hegel uses two distinct approaches to hermeneutics in his works, viz. the assimilative and the reconstructive approach. I characterize them, explain why Hegel uses both, and focus on their presuppositions. In light of these reflections, I address the alleged contradiction between Hegel's reflections on interpretation and their application. Contrary to some literature, I argue that Hegel's hermeneutical practice does not deviate from his theoretical approach to interpretation. Then I focus on the issue of whether and to what extent these two approaches are intellectually humble practices. I argue that only the reconstructive approach advanced in the *Phenomenology* is intellectually humble in contrast to the assimilative approach advanced in Hegel's *Lectures*.

Keywords: hermeneutics; intellectual humility; assimilative hermeneutics; reconstructive hermeneutics; Hegel

HEGELS HERMENEUTIK UND INTELLEKTUELLE DEMUT

Zusammenfassung

Ich behaupte, dass Hegel in seinen Werken zwei unterschiedliche hermeneutische Ansätze anwendet, nämlich den assimilativen und den rekonstruktiven Ansatz. Ich charakterisiere sie, und erkläre, warum Hegel beide verwendet, sowie ich auf ihre Voraussetzungen eingehe. Im Zuge dieser Überlegungen gehe ich auf den angeblichen Widerspruch zwischen Hegels Reflexionen zur Interpretation und ihrer Anwendung

ein. Konträr zu einem Teil der Literatur, argumentiere ich, dass Hegels hermeneutische Praxis nicht von seinem theoretischen Interpretationsansatz abweicht. Dann konzentriere ich mich auf die Frage, ob und inwieweit diese beiden Ansätze intellektuell demütige Praktiken sind. Ich behaupte, dass nur der rekonstruktive Ansatz in der Phänomenologie intellektuell demütig ist, im Gegensatz zum assimilativen Ansatz in Hegels Vorlesungen.

Schlüsselwörter: Hermeneutik; intellektuelle Demut; assimilative Hermeneutik; rekonstruktive Hermeneutik; Hegel

Introduction

There are two basic approaches in hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1976, 87). Reconstructive hermeneutics tries to understand a phenomenon on its own terms. Assimilative hermeneutics assesses the phenomena by taking into account one's own point of view. I claim that in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel uses reconstructive hermeneutics, while in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, he applies assimilative hermeneutics. I will explain the reason for this diversity by considering the relation of the texts to the system of Hegel's philosophy and their presumptions. I take into account the connection between history and the system and its influence on the choice of hermeneutic approach. Stating the presuppositions of Hegel's hermeneutic stance may allow researchers to identify philosophers who take over a specific hermeneutic approach without further commitments and those who also anchor it in a similar way.

I evaluate Hegel's hermeneutics with respect to a standard of intellectual humility. Intellectual humility is a virtuous mean between intellectual arrogance and servility which is accompanied by proven benefits. It is as a virtue desirable on its own and it also helps to fulfill one of the goals of philosophy. That is the acquisition of knowledge of how things really are. I have chosen this concept for the evaluation of hermeneutics because it can distinguish more and less valuable approaches. In the article, I focus on the issue of whether and to what extent Hegel's approaches are intellectually humble practices.

The article is organized as follows:

In the first section, I shall deal with intellectual humility. There are different theoretical approaches to the notion that I sketch. I will further show its practical benefits for philosophical inquiry with reference to empirical research. I also shortly discuss the interconnected topic of peer disagreement.

I shall address the questions of who the peers are and how we can know. Due to the unclear answer to the last question, I believe that when in doubt, we should prefer peerhood.

In the second section, I will examine Hegel's hermeneutic approaches. I claim that in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel interprets the shape of consciousness in question from within, but he applies his own terminology. He distinguishes the perspective of the shape of consciousness and the perspective of *We*. In contrast, in the *Lectures*, he interprets history in his own terms and assimilates it into his own account. Contrary to some literature (Beiser 1993, 287) I claim that Hegel's practice is in accord with his theoretical reflections. Considering the relation between logic and history and their object, I argue that Hegel uses an assimilative approach to stay true to his philosophy. I explain why he uses both assimilative and reconstructive approaches without contradicting himself. Different presuppositions and goals of the *Phenomenology* on the one side and the *Lectures* on the other base the distinction.

In the last section, I shall briefly explain how I apply the concept of intellectual humility to Hegel's hermeneutics. Then I argue that the assimilative approach of both *Lectures* is not intellectually humble. It is intellectually arrogant. Hegel does not take past philosophers to be his peers, or at least he does not treat them as such. He assumes that he knows better because he lives later; in his terms because the *Spirit* has already evolved beyond past systems. He does not acknowledge the perspectives of historical others as fully valid. The assimilative approach may seem for Hegel to be an interpretive charity, but I argue that it contradicts the desired open-mindedness. In contrast, the reconstructive approach of the *Phenomenology* fulfills the criteria of intellectually humble practice.

1. Intellectual Humility

There are two main approaches to intellectual humility; intrapersonal and interpersonal (Wright 2020, 402). Some claim that intellectual humility is directed toward the agent himself (Dormandy 2020, 295), and others claim that it is a virtue concerning our attitudes and acts directed toward others (Priest 2017, 464). For our purposes, we accept the position of Wong and Wong (2021, 1) that intellectual humility entails both a self- and other-oriented component.

Recent literature contains several distinct accounts of intellectual humility. According to the doxastic account, it is the virtue of accurately tracking what one could non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's own beliefs (Church and Samuelson 2017, 25). According to Whitcomb et al., it consists in proper attentiveness to and owning of one's intellectual limitations; it is an intellectual virtue just when one is appropriately attentive to and owns one's intellectual limitations because one is appropriately motivated to pursue epistemic goods, e.g., truth, knowledge, and understanding (2017, 520). It can also be defined as an unusually low concern for the status usually ascribed to skilled and accomplished people (Roberts and Wood 2003, 271).

It is not the aim of this article to solve the theoretical issues concerning intellectual humility. This section only serves as a short survey of existing accounts. Essential for the purposes of the article are the traits of an intellectually humble person and the benefits of the virtue listed below.

Intellectually humble people value their beliefs as they ought to (Church and Samuelson 2017, 7). They are epistemically motivated (Dormandy 2020, 294), seek knowledge (Wong and Wong 2021, 2), and they are curious (Porter et al. 2022, 7). Individuals higher in intellectual humility have more awareness of their knowledge (Krumrei-Mancuso et al. 2020, 163). Intellectual humility also involves the realization of gaps in one's own knowledge (Porter et al. 2022, 1) and appreciation of one's epistemic dependence on others (Greco 2020, 271). An intellectually humble person respects the intellect of others as she does her own (Priest 2017, 469) and she does not feel entitled to dismiss criticism (Priest 2017, 471). Intellectually humble people show greater openness and readiness to revise opinions based on countervailing evidence (Wong and Wong 2021, 2). They recognize others as critical to their personal epistemic life, which consists of membership in a community (Priest 2017, 476).

In general, an intellectually humble person is open to experience and criticism. Presented with argumentation, she is able to revise her opinions. She is aware of her knowledge and, at the same time, she knows its limits and gaps in it. She knows that she is a member of an epistemic community and respects the intellect of others.

There are benefits associated with being an intellectually humble person. For example, these people have more general knowledge (Krumrei-Mancuso et al. 2020, 167). Intellectual humility correlates with openness to experience (Samuelson and Church 2020, 379) and is closely related to

open-minded thinking (Krumrei-Mancuso et al. 2020, 157), which opposes dogmatism and may lead to new knowledge. It was associated with more reflective thinking (Krumrei-Mancuso et al. 2020, 168), which can also lead to more and deeper knowledge. It mitigates biases as well, for instance, overconfidence (Church and Samuelson 2017, 152), which is a fairly common bias (Light and Fernbach 2020, 412).

Intellectual humility is beneficial in assessing the opinions of other people and in discussions of among people who disagree. The most significant disagreement in these situations is a peer disagreement (Church and Samuelson 2017, 258; Martin 2020, 80). It occurs if similarly or equally qualified agents opine upon matters in a certain domain (Simpson 2013, 563). A peer is someone who is as likely as oneself to be right about the matter, with exposure to relevant evidence and arguments (Martin 2020, 81).

The problem is the assessment of peerhood. No two persons have exactly the same evidence and the same rational faculties (Lutz 2019, 815). There is a gulf of worldviews that prohibits the assessment of peerhood (Simpson 2013, 575), because of the lack of common ground (Martin 2020, 86). Especially in philosophy, it is hard to find evidence that someone is a peer (Kelly 2016, 384). What is more, in assessing complex controversies, we are self-biased and others feel inferior (Simpson 2013, 573). We are also disposed to overestimate our capacity to know the truth (Church and Samuelson 2017, 133).

Thus, it seems that we cannot assess peerhood at all. We might use vague vulgar conceptions of it, but this approach does not provide exact criteria. In a situation without an exact criterion for peerhood, with a vague conception and with regard to our biases and natural self-centredness, it is rational to prefer peerhood over non-peerhood. We should take everyone to be equally able as ourselves unless proven otherwise. Presupposing peerhood helps bypass some theoretical problems with its assessment and is consistent with intellectual humility because it is respectful of the intellect of others and it promotes the acquisition of new knowledge by being open to discussion.

I reflect on the aforementioned considerations later when I apply the concept of intellectual humility to Hegel's hermeneutics. In particular, I will use them to establish criteria for intellectually humble conduct and to discuss the implications of Hegel's approach.

2. Hegel's Hermeneutics

The goal of the *Phenomenology* is to overcome dualisms of modernity that cause misery to people (Forster 1998, 79) with a practical end of happiness of a modern person (Forster 1998, 18). In other words, Hegel tries to overcome our modern alienation from the world (Westphal 2008, 309). On a more specific level, the task of the *Phenomenology* is to show how we acquire knowledge (Burbidge 2020, 177). It shows how to understand truth as a fulfillment of special criteria (Stekeler-Weithofer 2020, 111). Hegel pursues a new paradigm in epistemology (Horstmann 2008, 49) and his general aim is to show that a variety of things (from Greek cults to the French revolution) are best understood as forms of knowledge and consequently as forms of social practice (Pinkard 2005, 20).

In contrast, for some, the major issue of the *Phenomenology* is the notion of subjectivity (Pippin 2008, 211; Bykova 2009, 265-266). It is a philosophical reflection on who we are in modern life (Pinkard 2005, 267). Identification of the goal of the *Phenomenology* depends on the interpretative approach used. There were three main lines: metaphysical, transcendental, and social, and nowadays there is a fourth – epistemological (Heidemann 2008, 1).

Regardless of the differences in approaches, it is an established conclusion that the *Phenomenology* was intended and actually serves as an introduction to Hegel's philosophy (Forster 2011, 145). Hegel himself claims that it belongs to the first part of his system (PS § 27). As an introduction, the *Phenomenology* was also supposed to bring into usage novel concepts or change old ones (Forster 1998, 223). These aspects will be later important in distinguishing it from the *Lectures*.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel shows that every non-Hegelian shape of consciousness, for example *Sense certainty* (PS §§ 103-110) or even *Enlightenment* (PS § 548), is contradictory (Forster 1998, 169). For this purpose, he reveals implicit contradictions in them and their necessary resolution in the following conception (Forster 1998, 114). Hegel shows that only absolute knowing is not self-contradictory and in the *Phenomenology* he tries to lead us to it.

To show that all other possible accounts are self-contradictory and self-undermining, Hegel let them fail on their own. For instance, knowledge claimed for perceptual experience fails on its own terms (Pinkard 2005, 33). The accounts themselves find their inherent contradictions and, by trying

to resolve them, they go through sublation (*Aufhebung*). Hegel does not want to apply his own scientific standard to other accounts, because the *Phenomenology* is only the path to science, it is not yet established (PS § 81). He is trying to convince his readers to abolish their views and follow him instead. In the introduction to the system, he cannot just present his paradigm; first, he needs to destroy other views in accordance with their own standards. As Hegel says, “[every shape of] consciousness in its own self provides its own standard, and the investigation will thereby be a comparison of it with itself” (PS § 84).

According to Forster, Hegel, after recognizing that the other views in the *Phenomenology* are contradictory, approaches some of them in a charitable manner and assimilates them into his own account (2008, 187). However, I believe that Hegel does not assimilate *per se* because he uses this “charitable” approach when evaluating from the perspective of *We*. This is one of two perspectives in the *Phenomenology*, the other one is the view of the examined shapes of consciousness. *We* represents philosophical knowledge (Fulda 2008, 31), it is *us* of modern European culture (Pinkard 2005, 334). *We*, the readers, are being introduced to Hegel’s system and *We* are on the brink of knowledge. It is true that for evaluation *We* use our own criteria. However, when interpreting, *We* should just look and leave our criteria aside (Staehler 2003, 112; PS § 84). So, if we distinguish evaluation from interpretation, Forster’s claim seems to be inaccurate. In the interpretation of others, Hegel applies their criteria, and he reconstructs them, therefore he uses reconstructive hermeneutics.

In spite of the effort not to introduce his own point of view into other shapes of consciousness, Hegel uses his own terminology. For example, he uses *self-consciousness* (e.g. PS §§ 165, 198, 202, 463), *objectivity* (e.g. PS §§ 322, 345, 410), *particularity* (e.g. PS §§ 148, 488, 665), and *universality* (e.g. PS §§ 169, 659, 729). In the introduction to the system, he already uses the system’s terminology, which is a trace of an assimilative approach. The hermeneutics in the *Phenomenology* is then still generally reconstructive but with a slight assimilative tendency.

In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel uses his own terminology and reinterprets other philosophers. He speaks from the position of his philosophy (Forster 1998, 417). He assimilates accounts of others into his own, and thus he applies assimilative hermeneutics (Forster 2008, 179). In his view, it is possible because there were many philosophical systems in the past, but “there is only one philosophy” (LHP I, 58). There is only one

substance of all systems in history and that is absolute spirit (Hösle 2003, 191). History of philosophy is for Hegel the history of the development of the universal principle (Nuzzo 2003, 22).

All the non-Hegelian approaches are considered to be contradictory (as in the *Phenomenology*) so it does not make sense to reconstruct them (in opposition to the *Phenomenology*). The difference in the perspectives of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and the *Phenomenology* is due to their different relations to Hegel's philosophical system. The *Phenomenology* is the introduction to the system that cannot fully assume its perspective; on the other hand, the *Lectures* are composed while the system is already established and they use the system's perspective.

The aforementioned approach shows itself in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* on multiple occasions. For example, according to Hegel, Socrates traced "the truth of what is back to the subject's consciousness" (LHP II, 124). Socrates's principle is characterized as objective, "meaning not outward objectivity but spiritual universality" (LHP II, 126). The Platonic philosophy is an "elevation of consciousness into the spiritual realm" (LHP II, 176). Plato values philosophy as cognition through "thinking of what is in and for itself" (LHP II, 184). Aristotle seems to be empirical, but he made "simple speculative concepts stand out and this is where he is properly philosophical" (LHP II, 233). Skepticism fails to recognize that "negative is also affirmative, that it has positive determination within itself, for it is negation of negation" (LHP II, 302). The Neoplatonists did not show that "three-in-oneness is what is true— and one must become conscious that this alone is what is true" (LHP III, 19). In Bruno's philosophy, the form is "the universal understanding, which has the same relationship to the production of natural things as the human understanding has to the formation of the concept" (LHP III, 78). For Descartes, God is "the absolute linkage between concept and actuality" (LHP III, 145). In Spinoza's philosophy, we have two determinations, "the universal or what has being in and for itself, and secondly the determination of the particular and singular" (LHP III, 154). Leibniz's expression that the monad "has representations" is precisely what is inapt, "because we ascribe having representations only to consciousness and to consciousness as such" (LHP III, 192). We can call Hume's remarks completely correct if we understand "experience" to mean "outer experience" (LHP III, 215). All of these instances show the import of Hegel's terminology and philosophy in history. This conclusion is in conformity with the secondary literature according to which he inter alia misinterprets

Aristotle (Gadamer 1976, 29) and reinterprets Spinoza in his own terms (Westphal 2003, 147).

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel follows the same assimilative approach as in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. It makes sense since there is a close relation between world history and the history of philosophy; both of them are seen as necessary progressions and rational processes. Hegel in both *Lectures* highlights the same aspects, for example, philosopher Socrates as a world historical figure (LPH, 417). External contingent events do not concern Hegel in his history; it is not a reflection on individual situations or individual aspects (LPH, 142). Spirit's "guidance is what we wish to learn about" (LPH, 140). According to Hegel, philosophy also corresponds to its historical epoch.

The presupposition that world history is a rational process is a presupposition only from the point of view of world history. "Within philosophy itself this is no presupposition: by means of speculative cognition it is proved that reason is substance and infinite power" (LPH, 79). In the introduction of the *Lectures on Philosophy of World History of 1830-1*, Hegel urges those who are not yet acquainted with philosophy to approach his lectures with faith in reason. The rationality of world history can also be seen as an overview of the whole, a result. For Hegel personally, it is "a result that is known to me because I am already familiar with the whole" (LPH, 80). Hegel is aware that one must know beforehand what counts as rational to evaluate history as rational and to choose the right moments (LPH, 144). What is rational is assessed from the perspective of his philosophy. So Hegel needs the system of philosophy to perform rational philosophical history and that is possible because the system was already established.

Hegel interprets world history in his own terms. For example, according to him, Chinese history involves few external relationships "which offer little in the way of anything universal" (LPH, 220). "As opposed to China", India appears to be a land of fantasy, a land of wonders (LPH, 251). In India, what is "objective appears as spirit's imaginative construct, but as nonconceptual and accordingly as unfree" (LPH, 253). The main form in which change came to the Greek people has its basis in the inception of "a thinking that is a self-comprehending". It came about through "thought or conception, [and it resides] in the principle of inferiority, of the freedom of subjective self-consciousness" (LPH, 415). In the Greek world, we have "individuality"; in the Roman Empire, we have "abstract universality" (LPH, 462). The character of Normans and Saxons is "an undivided unity of

culture— an unbroken inwardness or subjectivity” (LPH, 466). In the transition to modernity, “the corruption of Church is necessary” (LPH, 501). Hegel interprets the emergence of sciences as a “reflective spirit positioning itself in relation to nature by letting nature be as it is” (LPH, 515). These examples show the import of Hegel’s terminology into world history and its reinterpretation.

Beiser claims that the method of philosophical history is analogous to that of the *Phenomenology* because “like the phenomenologist, the philosopher of history suspends his own *a priori* metaphysical principles and examines his subject matter according to its own internal standards” (1993, 284) and that Hegel violates his own ideas (1993, 287). In contrast, I suggest that Hegel’s philosopher of history does not suspend her own principles and does not examine the matter according to its internal standards. At least she presupposes that world history, is a rational process which is a proven claim within Hegel’s philosophy itself (LPH, 79). She also presupposes that she has the right overview of the whole (LPH, 80). However, it is true that the two works have similar methodological features. Both show a necessary dialectical development grounded in contradictions. From this point of view, Hegel’s method in the *Lectures on the World History* may seem to be analogous to that of the *Phenomenology*. However, we need to distinguish the internal dialectic of these works from external hermeneutical understanding. This discrimination can be seen in distinguishing points of view of the examined shape of consciousness and *We* in the *Phenomenology*. However, there is no distinction in the *Lectures*. Although the *Phenomenology* and the *Lectures* share an (internal) dialectic, their (external) hermeneutical methods differ. And thus, Hegel does not violate his own ideas.

The hermeneutics in the *Lectures on Philosophy of World History* is assimilative. Hegel applies his own systematic perspective and uses his terminology. This approach is in accordance with the relation of world history to Hegel’s philosophical system and its relative closeness to the history of philosophy.

In conclusion of this section, I can assert that Hegel uses two different hermeneutical approaches. In the *Phenomenology*, the hermeneutics is reconstructive with slightly assimilative tendencies, while in the *Lectures* it is assimilative. Both of these approaches are in accordance with Hegel’s methodological reflections. The difference is mainly based on the fact that the *Phenomenology* is an introduction to the system while both *Lectures* presuppose it.

3. Intellectually Arrogant Hegel?

My aim is to evaluate Hegel's interpretative approaches using the concept of intellectual humility. For this reason, I need to distinguish intellectually humble behavior from arrogance or servility. People are generally able to do this, but according to research, they tend to overestimate their knowledge and are overconfident (Light and Fernbach 2020, 412). Furthermore, they are often susceptible to self-justifying cycles of reasoning that make them progressively more self-righteous (Mellers, Tetlock, and Arkes 2019, 20) and most of them believe they are better than average (Church and Samuelson 2017, 105). One way to mitigate the aforementioned biases is slow methodological reasoning. Applied to the matter at hand, before evaluating Hegel's hermeneutics, we should establish criteria of intellectually humble interpretation. I do not claim that these criteria are universal. They are particular because they correspond to my subject (hermeneutics).

Intellectually humble behavior is generally respectful of the intellect of others. In the field of interpretation, this is expressed by the fact that the authors should be taken to be intellectual peers of the interpreter. The interpreter should not take herself to be superior. In intellectually humble interpretation, we should take the perspective of others seriously even if it does not fit our epistemic framework because the fact that our values and beliefs are ours does not make them more likely to be true or appropriate (Wright 2020, 403). That entails that we should interpret others primarily on their terms. Otherwise, we do not take their epistemic framework seriously and we presume its inferiority. The goal should be to learn something new, to gain knowledge, not to show that the interpreter was right all along. The interpreter should be aware of her own limitations.

In sum, the intellectually humble interpretation aims at gaining knowledge, not an assertion of the interpreter's own truth or social status. It takes others seriously as intellectual peers within their perspective, i.e., on their own terms. Criteria of intellectually humble interpretation can be thus stated as follows: intellectually humble interpretation is 1) aimed at gaining knowledge, 2) it takes others seriously as intellectual peers, 3) within their perspective, i.e., on their own terms. In what follows, I apply these criteria to Hegel's hermeneutical approaches.

The interpretation of the shapes of consciousness in the *Phenomenology* is not aimed at gaining knowledge of them *per se*. The goal is to show the contradictions in them. However, in doing so, we must first gain knowledge

of the shapes of consciousness and then we see the contradictions. Throughout the process of interpretation of the shapes of consciousness, Hegel and *We* gained knowledge of them as a side effect. The interpretation is unintentionally aimed at gaining knowledge. The first criterion is thus fulfilled.

The second criterion includes respect for the intellect of others without assuming one's own superiority, which entails taking others as intellectual peers. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel does not assume the superiority of his own system. It is the result of the book's line of argument, but it is not presupposed. In interpreting other shapes of consciousness, he respects the intellect of their representatives. He takes them to be his peers, or more precisely, his rational predecessors. The second criterion is thus also met.

Hegel investigates every shape of consciousness by its own standards (PS § 84) but he uses his own terminology. I consider the choice of his methodological standard to be crucial, not the terminology used. Hegel applies the perspective of others in an interpretive endeavor and the perspective of *We* is the enlightened perspective of evaluation. So, as was already said before, Hegel uses his paradigm only in evaluation, not in interpretation. There is a difference between interpreting and evaluating and Hegel does not mix them together here. His practice takes others seriously within their perspective, so it fulfills the third condition of intellectually humble interpretation.

We can thus conclude that the reconstructive hermeneutics of the *Phenomenology* represents an intellectually humble interpretation.

Hegel's hermeneutics in both *Lectures* is assimilative, and because of their similarity, I will evaluate them together. The interpretation of others in the *Lectures* is not aimed at gaining knowledge of the past, but rather at gaining knowledge of ourselves and our practices. History (of philosophy) is undertaken to better understand ourselves and to be prepared for a better future (Fiala 2003, 52). The reader learns something new because she gains knowledge about her current condition. However, it can be argued that this interpretative approach distorts the original meaning because it reinterprets the philosophical tradition or world history by using the paradigm of the interpreter. So the first criterion is met in an odd way. The assimilative approach is aimed at gaining knowledge, but its goal is not historical knowledge but rather practical knowledge of the roots of our current practice, its development, justification, and understanding of it.

Hegel believes that he knows better than philosophers of the past, which means that he takes himself to be their superior. It does not make sense for Hegel to reconstruct self-contradictory non-Hegelian approaches, so he

assimilates them into his own true account (Forster 2011, 229). This is a consequence of dialectical progress advanced by Hegel. The history of philosophy is seen as the history of the development of the universal principle. In world history, the situation is similar. World history is a development of the spirit, it is a labor of the world spirit by which it arrives at self-consciousness. This one substance (Spirit), one principle (of freedom) binds all history (of philosophy) into one whole which dialectically develops. This leads to an assimilative interpretative approach which is in accord with the relation of *Lectures* to Hegel's system of philosophy. The system is already established, so it is possible to assume its perspective. For the present study, it is important that Hegel, in both *Lectures*, does not take others as his intellectual peers and thus the second criterion of intellectually humble interpretation is not fulfilled.

Hegel does not interpret historical accounts and events on their contemporary terms, he applies his own paradigm. From Hegel's point of view, he treats others in a charitable manner (Forster 2008, 187). He does not emphasize their inner contradiction, but he shows how they fit into progress towards our true account. However, this charity can be also assessed as arrogance. It is an attempt to see hints, implicit commitments that only later become fully explicit. The charity is then not so much oriented towards past phenomena but towards Hegel's own account. It shows that his account of progressive development fits. History is seen as his system's experiential proof (Thompson 2003, 180).

Hegel does not claim that the development is over and that his system is the final standpoint. However, for the time being, it is the most developed account which encompassed all the previous ones. Hegel does not consider the possibility that systems of the past might be closer to the truth than he is, which is contrary to desired open-mindedness. The problem is that there is no outside super-criterion by which we could assess the accuracy of philosophical theory. All the criteria are internal to the specific system as Hegel is well aware of in the *Phenomenology*. Nevertheless, in the *Lectures*, Hegel applies the standard of the last system, which happens to be his own.

From this developmental approach stems the problem of choosing the single correct "final" account from different systems of the interpreter's era. In the history of the world, Hegel solves this difficulty with the concept of *world historical people*, which is always only one in successive movement from the East to the West. From the structure of the *Lectures on History of Philosophy*, we can assume that Hegel applies the same principle here. Even

if the philosophies were practiced at the same time, Hegel presents them as consequential. *The Spirit* cannot have more than one shape at the same time. An example is the development of Hellenistic philosophies which existed at the same time: Stoicism with its principle that thinking is the determinant (LHP II, 265 et seq.) has opposition in Epicureanism with the principle that sensation is the determinant (LHP II, 279 et seq.) and their contrast is Scepticism, which also absorbs the New Academy, with the negation of every criterion, of all determinate principles and affirmation of the negative (LHP II, 294 et seq.). In Hegel's view, there is only one leading philosophy at the time.

In the *Lectures*, Hegel does not take others seriously within their perspective, i.e., on their own terms. He uses his own terminology and the perspective of his own system. Similarly as in the assessment of the second criterion, he presumes that he knows better because he lives later. Hence, the third criterion of intellectually humble interpretation is not met.

In conclusion, Hegel's hermeneutic practice in both *Lectures* cannot be considered to be intellectually humble because it does not fulfill the second and the third criterion of intellectually humble action, and the first is met only particularly. From this finding, it can be inferred that the hermeneutics in the *Lectures* is not in accordance with a desired openness to experience and open-minded thinking. It does not carry the benefits of intellectually humble conduct. It yields less knowledge acquired and does not oppose dogmatism. It may also hinder reflective thinking, which leads to more and deeper knowledge. And crucially, it does not mitigate biases such as overconfidence, my side bias, or above-average bias.

In this section, I argued that the assimilative approach of both *Lectures* cannot be considered intellectually humble. It is intellectually arrogant. Hegel does not take past philosophers to be his peers, or at least he does not treat them as such. He assumes that he knows better because he lives later. He does not acknowledge the perspectives of historical others as fully valid. From Hegel's point of view, the assimilative approach can be seen as interpretive charity. I nevertheless claimed that it can deprive the interpreter of the acquisition of (historical) knowledge and it is contrary to open-mindedness. In contrast, the reconstructive approach of the *Phenomenology* is intellectually humble.

Conclusion

I have dealt with Hegel's hermeneutics and intellectual humility. I showed that intellectual humility has practical benefits for philosophical inquiry with reference to up-to-date empirical research. Further, I discussed the closely related topic of peer disagreement. I believe that when we have doubts about the assessment of peerhood, we should presume it. In the second section, I examined Hegel's hermeneutics in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Lectures on History of Philosophy*, and the *Lectures on Philosophy of World History*, respectively. I claimed that Hegel applies reconstructive hermeneutics with assimilative tendencies in the *Phenomenology*. However, in both *Lectures*, he uses an assimilative approach. He interprets history in his own terms and assimilates it into his own account. I claimed that even this approach is in accord with his methodological reflections. I explained why Hegel uses both approaches without contradicting himself. The distinction is based on the fact that the *Phenomenology* and the *Lectures* have different presuppositions, goals, and relations to Hegel's system. I argued that the assimilative approach of the *Lectures* is not intellectually humble, but intellectually arrogant. Hegel does not take past philosophers to be his peers, and he assumes that he knows better. From Hegel's point of view, the assimilative approach can be seen as interpretive charity, but it is contrary to desired open-mindedness. The reconstructive approach Hegel uses in the *Phenomenology* is intellectually humble.

Intellectual humility opens a new perspective on hermeneutics. Evaluations of Gadamerian hermeneutics and its fusion of horizons or more contemporarily Brandom's inferentialist approach would certainly be interesting contributions. I also showed that intellectual humility has practical benefits. On the presupposition that one of the goals of philosophy is the acquisition of knowledge and finding out how things really are, it can be stated that a virtuous, intellectually humble approach is more conducive to achieving philosophy's goal. It seems that for assimilative approaches, it is difficult to fulfill the requirements of an intellectually humble practice, and so the assumption that reconstructive hermeneutics is better naturally comes to mind. This statement can become a hypothesis for future investigations, and research may confirm or refute whether it holds for all assimilative approaches and what causes it.

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