

Artículo de investigación**The figure of the narrator as an element of a strategy in the interpretation of Hegel's "the phenomenology of spirit"****ФИГУРА РАССКАЗЧИКА КАК ЭЛЕМЕНТ СТРАТЕГИИ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ «ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИИ ДУХА» ГЕГЕЛЯ**

Recibido: 16 de agosto del 2019

Aceptado: 25 de septiembre del 2019

Written by:

Vyacheslav Ivanovich Korotkikh³⁶

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9205-0157

Researcher ID-A-9755-2017

https://elibrary.ru/author_profile.asp?id=692252**Abstract**

The subject of the study is the influence that the narrator's image has on the understanding of the specific content of the basic concepts of "The Phenomenology of Spirit" – "time," "history," "recollection." The author establishes that the narrator in "The Phenomenology of Spirit" appears in the form of "our consciousness," "consciousness itself" and "object," which, from the formal point of view, follow the same path of constitution and sublation of objectivity. "Time," "history" and "recollection" act as the objective equivalents of the mediation of consciousness and objectivity, corresponding to the models specified by the narrator. To adequately understand the development of the "experience of consciousness" one must consider the specifics of each image of the narrator expressed in the peculiarity of the vocabulary and style of the book fragments, corresponding to each of them. The need to recognize the dialogical nature of "The Phenomenology of Spirit" is due to the fact that the meaning of the narrative as a whole is built out of the correlation of the same "experience" plot lines told from different points of view. An analysis of Hegel's consideration of "history" as an object of a "consciousness experience" leads to the conclusion that he had developed a peculiar "phenomenology of history," which is fundamentally different from the subsequent "Philosophy of History." In this phenomenology not the logical concept, but the images of consciousness are the core of the historical process. "Recollection," sublating "time" and "history," not only opens the way to

Аннотация

Предметом исследования является влияние образа рассказчика на понимание конкретного содержания базовых концептов «Феноменологии духа» – «времени, «истории», «воспоминания». Автор устанавливает, что рассказчик предстаёт в «Феноменологии духа» в образе «нашего сознания», «самого сознания» и «предмета», проходящих один и тот же с формальной точки зрения путь конституирования и снятия предметности. «Время», «история» и «воспоминание» выступают в качестве предметных эквивалентов опосредования сознания и предметности, соответствующих указанным моделям рассказчика. Адекватное понимание развития «опыта сознания» требует учёта особенностей каждого из типов рассказчика, выражающихся в своеобразии лексики и стилистики соответствующих им фрагментов произведения. Необходимость признания диалогического характера «Феноменологии духа» связывается с тем, что смысл повествования как целого складывается из переключек, возникающих вследствие воспроизведения одних и тех же сюжетов «опыта» с разных точек зрения. Анализ рассмотрения Гегелем «истории» как предмета «опыта сознания» побуждает сделать вывод, что им была разработана своеобразная «феноменология истории», принципиально отличная от последующей «Философии истории»: в качестве глубинного слоя исторического процесса в ней выступает не логическое понятие, а

³⁶ Doctor of Philosophical Science, Associate Professor, Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Journalism, Bunin Yelets State University, Russian Federation

the logical objectivity, but also allows us to imagine the completed “experience of consciousness” as a whole, which retains its significance at all subsequent stages of the evolution of Hegel’s philosophical and systematic thought. Based on the obtained results, the author suggests that the crisis of the Hegelian encyclopedic model was largely due to the oblivion of Phenomenology as its transcendental foundation, which retains its significance even after the development of Logic as a speculative justification of the system.

Keywords: Hegel’s philosophy, “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” “experience of consciousness,” narrator’s image, structure of the subject of experience, dialogical nature, time, history, recollection.

Introduction

The traditional concept of philosophical texts as messages claiming the status of “sub specie aeternitatis” is only partially true. In reality, the modern reader must take into account not only the time of the creation and circumstances that influenced the philosophical works, which is traditionally considered in the process of acquaintance with the historically philosophical literature, but also the special features of the subject, whose “voice” in the end “freezes” in the form of a philosophical text and thereby perpetuates the image of its author and the spiritual atmosphere of the era. The history of philosophy has brought us many monuments, which we can comprehend only by realizing “with whom” we are entering into a conversation, by envisioning the narrator’s image chosen or constructed by the author, and by answering the question, which role in the flow of the narration has been assigned to us, readers. Perhaps the Plato’s dialogues will forever remain the most significant among such monuments; it is in them the image of Socrates is recreated, a person, which has become an indispensable companion for anyone who decides to study philosophy.

To explain the focus of the present study, the mention of Socrates is also advisable, because his image in the dialogues of Plato has, as is known, evolved, and he gradually lost his historically

образы сознания. «Воспоминание», снимая «время» и «историю», не только открывает путь к логической предметности, но и позволяет представить завершившийся «опыт сознания» как единое целое, которое сохраняет значимость и на всех последующих этапах эволюции философско-систематической мысли Гегеля. На основании полученных результатов автор высказывает предположение, что кризис энциклопедической модели философской системы Гегеля был в значительной степени обусловлен забвением Феноменологии как её трансцендентального основания, которое сохраняет своё значение и после разработки Логики как спекулятивного обоснования системы.

Ключевые слова: Философия Гегеля, «Феноменология духа», «опыт сознания», образ рассказчика, структура субъекта опыта, диалогический характер произведения, время, история, воспоминание

concrete and personal character, acquiring the features of a mask of a “crafty questioner.” Similarly, in the present article, the “narrator’s figure” is comprehended as an instance of the text that is not connected with any historically concrete subject, and is specially modeled by the author to engage the reader in the movement of the “experience of consciousness.”

However, in this respect, “The Phenomenology of Spirit” turns out to be extremely demanding of its reader because of the special way it is constructed, representing not only one, but several narrators. In this work the “experience of consciousness” unfolds itself “non-linearly,” which prompts the reader to reconstruct the flow of the narrative on the basis of the echoes that are produced in the process of “phenomenological dialogue” between the fragments of the text told by different narrators. Having joined this dialogue, the reader, according to Hegel’s intention, has to go through all stages of self-knowledge, at which he will meet different narrators, whose “messages” differ from each other not only in the way the material is presented, but also in the peculiarities of the vocabulary and the style of the narrative. The most important of these specific features of “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” which are difficult to directly see without additional explanation, especially when referring only to the translations

of Hegel's work in other languages (For instance, as Kenley R. Dove noted, the dative case is used in the process of describing the objective mode of the experience existence, which is assessible to the consciousness already under study, and accusative case is used in the process of describing the flow of the "certainty," in which (initially only for the "phenomenologist" observing consciousnesses) the process of the emergence of a new object is being revealed (Dove, 1970; 1983). However, this most important feature of the phenomenological narrative is not reflected in the translations of Hegel's work.), will be the subject of our consideration.

It should also be noted that the method of the text construction and the nature of the narration of "The Phenomenology of Spirit" can not be considered as a consequence of some random circumstances that happened to be a reflection, for example, only of the subjective intentions of the author at the time of writing the book. In that case the nature of the presentation of Hegel's ideas could have been changed, the book could have been written differently, if the author had made other decisions. However, it is necessary to discard of such assumptions every time, after each reading, for the reason of their complete inconsistency with the book's structure and meaning, and to admit that in this ingenious creation its "formal" components, characterizing not individual ideas, but the method of constructing the whole, could not be different without destroying at the same time the whole complex structure of Hegel's thought.

Methodology

A reader immersed in "The Phenomenology of Spirit" after the acquaintance with the other works of the philosopher, in particular with "The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences" and "Science of Logic" (seeing that Hegel's works are usually read in that order), will be surprised by the fact that the language of "The Phenomenology" is not very similar to that "ballet of categories," as A.F. Losev put it (Troickij, 2007), which is often considered almost the most memorable of Hegel's trademarks. Of course, the language of "The Phenomenology of Spirit" is also very complex, but it is a completely different kind of complexity, it does not come down to the abundance of words that are "incomprehensible" to an unprepared reader and the strict order of their arrangement. In this regard, it should be noted that even very competent studies, which are focused on the understanding of the nature

and characteristics of Hegel's language and style as a whole (Bodamer, 1969; Suhachev, 2007; Vernon, 2007), are insufficient for the reader of "The Phenomenology," since its intricate composition and language need special explanations even against the backdrop of the proverbial complexity of Hegelian philosophy. Reading "The Phenomenology of the Spirit" implies the need to take into account the universal significance of the concept of the experience (*die Erfahrung*) for the very construction of the work, which determines the transcendental orientation of the interpretation of objectivity in the Hegelian system as a whole: you should only embrace what has become your experience, was verified by reasoning, acted as certainty independent of the existential status of its substrate. This paradigm has been living in European culture since the era of Bacon and Descartes, it is especially substantiated in "critical philosophy" and Hegel agrees with it completely and, in "The Phenomenology," proves the "constructual" nature of all types of objectivity that will be the object of consideration in his philosophical system, their dependence on the transcendental subject determining their existential status and structure. Thus, the key to understanding the subject is the activity of the subject, a certain type of consciousness, which does not appear to Hegel as a "difficult problem," because the "experience" does not go beyond its borders and is located entirely in the space of the active subject's awareness of its objective content of his cognitive activity.

The "experience of consciousness" recreated by the philosopher in this work turns out to be thematically heterogeneous, not reducible to the problems of the scientific disciplines, that's why it is expressed mainly using the vocabulary of everyday speech. However, in places, this vocabulary "rises" to the level of scientific terminology, if the author finds it possible to delve into the internal content, into the "structure" of the described objectivity. The imagery in "The Phenomenology of Spirit" is also exceptionally important (Verene, 1985; 2007). For instance, it is no coincidence that the last lines of the book were a changed Schiller's couplet: the need to synthesize the diverse content and the "simplicity of the outlook," to bring it into one single "image," "Gestalt" (Kohl, 2003), no longer allows the author to be satisfied with the conversational unhurried speech, so common in philosophy. In this regard, it should be noted that the main mistake that the interpreter can make in his perception of the book's narrative is an unjustified striving to "conceptualize" the Hegelian text, forcibly

building a certain “category system” out of the sequence of the many “remarks” made by the participants of the dialogue. Gustav Shpet had correctly noted that “the terminology that is clear in the application to one stage turns into a complete allegory at the other”. On the other hand, as was noted above, we do not always have reasons to perceive this “repeating unity of the verbal expression” (Spet, 1959) as “terminology,” because the latter presupposes a substantial unity as well as stability and certainty of expression, which are not at all characteristic of “The Phenomenology of Spirit.”

Of course, these particularities of the language of “The Phenomenology” are caused not only by the thematic heterogeneity of the “consciousness experience” and the dialogical nature of its presentation to the reader, but also by the varying degree of the “elaboration” of the text. Carefully edited Introduction and the first four chapters look more concise and definite in meaning, while the last chapters of the book, on which Hegel worked in a catastrophic hurry, seem more like a sequence of drafts coordinated by the integrity of the unfolding plot. However, it is clear that all of them were to some extent prepared by the author for publication. But be that as it may, the noted features still require the reader to pay attention to the authorship of the remarks made by different “characters” in the dialogue, and how these remarks form a substantial unity (if only relative), and consider which strategy of interpretation of this complex work is capable to become a source of new, deeper ideas about its actual content.

In a similar manner, the method of historically philosophical reading of “The Phenomenology of Spirit” should take the heterogeneity of its subjects, dialogism as a characteristic of the presentation method and the forced rush that did not allow Hegel, by his own admission, to achieve proper perfection of the book’s “form” as the most important factors determining the substantial and stylistic diversity of Hegel’s work (In his letter to Schelling dated May 1st 1807, Hegel speaks about the “wretched confusion,” which did not only surround the whole process of publishing of “The Phenomenology,” but also “in some way affected the composition of the book,” regretfully acknowledging the “disturbance of the form in the last parts” (“Unform der letzten Parteien”), which was caused by the influence of the external circumstances (Hegel, 1971).), as well as the demarcation established and consistently sustained by the author between those “images of consciousness,” to which he “gives the floor” at successive stages of

“experience,” and which become, albeit “constructed,” but completely independent “subjects of speech” within the boundaries of their sections.

Results

But what are these “stages”, these “images” and “types” of consciousness? As it often happens in the humanities, the answer to this question actually lies “on the surface” and is presented in the text under study, you only need to see it as an “answer,” to understand the significance of the seemingly well-known and repeatedly quoted formulas, in which only one thing went unnoticed – the fact that they *are* the answer to questions that were not raised by the interpreters before. So, let’s try and read the first sentence of the main text of the work: “Knowledge which is our object at the outset, that is, immediately, can be nothing but immediate knowledge, *knowledge* of the *immediate*, that is, of *what is*” (Hegel, 2008) (hereinafter, “The Phenomenology of Spirit” is cited in the translation of Terry Pinkard). The Hegelian formula indicates the following: 1) the consciousness of the author and the reader is “our consciousness,” for which the forthcoming movement will be unrevealed; 2) the consciousness, which constitutes “our” object is “consciousness itself”; and 3) “its” object is “immediate or actual.” Thus, in the very beginning, Hegel singles out the perspectives of the “observing” and the “observed” consciousnesses, and from the moment of crossing the boundaries of the initial concept of the “Science of the Experience of Consciousness,” i.e. from the beginning of Chapter VI, he distinguishes the self-consciousness of its “object”, and thereby introduces the reader to the “characters,” which are engaged in the dialogue. And the reader, following the author himself, has to identify these three levels in his consciousness (since we, strictly speaking, have no other consciousness except our own) and imagine them as the subject of the narrative, give them the status of the narrator. (Already at this point it becomes clear that the task of this extraordinary book is not to communicate some information to the reader, but to clarify and “structure” his consciousness, his “constitution” in the broadest sense.) And since each of these levels resides in the initial unity of consciousness (author’s and reader’s), the result of the “experience of consciousness” from a formal, logical point of view should turn out to be one and the same – it must identify the very specific model of mediation of consciousness and objectivity, which Hegel named “infinity” (“true infinity” in “Logic”).

In accordance with the indicated “assignment of roles,” “experience,” which ends with the achievement of “infinity,” is first gained by “our consciousness,” then by “consciousness itself” and, finally, by the “object.” Of course, it is unacceptable to describe the phenomenological movement in a simplified, unnecessarily “mechanical” manner, as if its stages could be presented as parts in different to each other. In fact, all the “participants of the dialogue” interact in the process of revealing the “experience of consciousness,” and, in order to understand the structure and dynamics of this complex dramatic “play”, it is necessary to carefully delimitate the “statements” of the “characters” and to see them as a whole that is ending with the “Absolute knowing” chapter. Right after he finished working on the book, Hegel had said that “The Phenomenology” is a whole that “by its very nature is ... an interweaving of transitions” (Hegel, 1971).

So, “The Phenomenology of Spirit” does not so much provide some “information about the world” (in the end, the sections, in which Hegel did not manage to get rid of the corresponding fragments or which he couldn’t reduce to extremely concise formulas, he recognized as the least successful) (The author admits: “The inclusion of the particulars, as I feel, has prevented the consideration of the whole” (Hegel, 1971).), but restores, as a whole, a “structure of consciousness” that makes possible cognition (“experience,” “die Erfahrung des Bewusstseins”) and self-reflection of the subject involved in this process. Of course, to some extent, it can be said that any real philosophy pushes the subject to self-reflection, which has no place in the “ordinary” world. As Merab Mamardashvili (2002) notes in his “Kantian Themes,” “we see the cause-and-effect relationship and don’t see ourselves as part of the order, which, having established itself as an order, allowed us to see the cause-and-effect relationship in the world”. Kant and Hegel merely ended the two millennia-old tradition of “concentrating the attention” on the thinking and acting subject that was considered “excessive” for the conventional world. “The Phenomenology of Spirit” turned out to be extremely deep and diversified, therefore, its consideration as one of the first attempts to identify the structure and dynamics of the “experience of consciousness,” which requires the delimitation of the “subjects” of the narrative and the reconstruction of the “dialogue” connecting them, seems especially promising as a basis for analysis of all the substantive aspects of the work.

The presented correlation of the subjects of the narrative also determines the special structure of the phenomenological objectivity, and the comparison of the movement of “The Phenomenology” content with the categories of “The Philosophy of Spirit” (“subjective spirit,” “objective spirit” and “absolute spirit”), which is often seen in the historically philosophical literature (for instance, in the works of György Lukács), clearly does not correspond with the structure of this objectivity. Highlighting these categories within the boundaries of the encyclopedic system (mainly for pedagogical purposes), Hegel takes into consideration not only the differences in the certainty and the nature of the process expression of spirit formation, but also the existential status of the spirit “carriers.” However, the latter circumstance has no significance for the movement of the “experience of consciousness” described in “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” which unfolds in the direction of concretization, complication of the consciousness correlation structure and the objectivity, regardless of which substrate or “material” this structure is realized in.

It is also fundamentally important that the dynamics of the “experience of consciousness” is defined in “The Phenomenology” as the place that “our consciousness” occupies in the structure of phenomenological objectivity, providing it with a “leading” role in the movement of the “experience.” Quite often, the activity of “our consciousness,” which underlies the development of the plot, appears immediately, as, for example, in the famous place of Chapter I, where Hegel says that “we” must “force” “consciousness itself” to show us those “here” and “now” which it implies (Hegel, 2008). In the Introduction, Hegel brilliantly shows that “our consciousness” is “one step ahead” of “consciousness itself” precisely because it sees the emergence of its object, a process inaccessible for observing consciousness immersed in experience that occurs as if “behind the back of consciousness” (Hegel, 2008); what for “our consciousness” appears “at the same time as a movement and a coming-to-be,” appears in experience “only as an object” for the “consciousness itself” (Hegel, 2008). Due to the fact that “our consciousness” is freed from a direct connection with the object (looks at it “through the eyes of consciousness itself”), it also sees the need for the entire sequence of forms of consciousness existence, i.e. it elevates the “experience of consciousness” to a systematic form, to “science.”

“Our consciousness” is not “woven” in this process by itself and is spared from the errors that accompany any experience, and therefore, it sees the “trajectory” of further development of the experience even before the “consciousness itself.” That’s why the reader, plunging into this unusual book, should be aware of the “dialogical” nature of Hegelian narrative from the very beginning, should clearly distinguish the “remarks” of the three indicated “characters,” sequentially identifying his own position with them. Their “voices” possess an individuality, and so, the interpreter should try and recognize it, adequately understand and convey it using the language of his culture and era. In the movement of the “experience of consciousness,” each of the “actors” – each consciousness – performed his role in the “play” of “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” responding to the signs from the author – “director.” In similar manner, the interpretation can also take place only in the event that these “voices” will not be confused, that the “volume” of the philosophical speech of the author will be reproduced.

Now, the main point of the article can finally be secured: to understand the idea, the principle orientation of “The Phenomenology of Spirit” and its real philosophical content, one must take into consideration the position of the narrator. However, any “formal” principle of interpretation can be assessed as fruitful only if it allows to better understand the real “fabric” of the text, line by line revealing the meaning, lurking in the statements that form the narrative; the significance of the “method” of reading is determined only by how new and significant the results of its use in the process of solving specific research problems are able to turn out, how significant is the “content” obtained with its help. In this case, considering the distinction between “our consciousness,” “consciousness itself” and “object” as participants in the tripartite dialogue, allows not only to give an innovative solution to the problem of the structure of the work and its relation to the “mature” Hegelian system (Korotkikh, 2011; 2015), but also to take a fresh look at the entire figuratively conceptual course of “The Phenomenology,” give a critical assessment of the previous interpretations that did not take into account the dialogical nature of Hegel’s work (Korotkikh, 2019). However, selecting the material for the confirmation of the value of the proposed understanding of the phenomenological experience by the subject, we had to consider the length of the article, therefore, were strict ourselves to clarifications that relate only to the three concepts of “The Phenomenology of Spirit”, which seem to be the

sequential steps of understanding the same structure of mediation of objectivity at the level of “our consciousness,” “consciousness itself” and “object.” However, on the other hand, these concepts are so fundamental and significant for “The Phenomenology of Spirit” that each of them deserves to become an object of independent detailed consideration.

The concepts, the reflection in the phenomenological experience of which we will try to identify and analyze, are time, history and “recollection” (die Erinnerung). In accordance with the approach proposed above, what consciousness initially comprehends as time, the universal form of mediation of existence and otherness, then appears in the form of history, an infinitely diverse extensive sequence, merging into the immediately experienced existence of an individual, and then, at the level of the spirit, as the “deep objectivity,” acts as “recollection,” “self-deepening” of the initial subject of the “experience,” of “our consciousness.” It should be said here, that it would be extremely difficult to see the unity of these concepts outside of a clear understanding of the status of “our consciousness,” “consciousness itself” and “object” as subjects of experience that go deeper and deeper into the objectivity constituted by consciousness. Indeed, why must “time” lead to “recollection” through “history”? However, the “hierarchy” of the subjects of experience reveals also the order of change in the process of experience of the mediation forms of objectivity, starting with the model of “time” and ending with “recollection.” The emphasis on “recollection,” which Hegel makes in chapter VIII, convinces us that “The Phenomenology of Spirit” as a whole is a discursive description of “experience” corresponding with “time” and “history,” the only way of understanding the spirit as the source of all reality within the boundaries of philosophical knowledge (at least Hegel thought so in the Jena period of creativity) (Verene, 1985; 2007).

As a basic concept defining a conceptual and discursive comprehension of the moments of the whole that appear in it, the time allows us to see the connection between universal and singular (what Hegel calls “the middle term of the syllogism” in accordance with the terminology of formal logic), and to find specificity for the philosophical consideration of objectivity. However, the concept of history is, of course, the central among these three concepts. The specifics of the interpretation of history in “The Phenomenology” can be judged by the famous fragment of chapter V, in which Hegel proclaims

his (so often criticized) position that wild life has “no history” (Hegel, 2008). However, let’s take notice of the fact that comparing history and organic being as two “middle terms” of the “syllogisms” for “our consciousness” demonstrates not only the fact that the wild life world has “no history” because its “middle term” does not have real unity (from life as a universal, organic nature directly falls into the unity of the existing being), but also that the familiar history of events and acts is only an objective existing being of a certain “deep” system of the formations of consciousness, phenomenology of the spirit: Hegel presents the world history here as the objective existence of the system of the shapes of consciousness. Therefore, history in its direct concept only reflects a more fundamental and exclusively spiritual process in the form of “random” events and actions of individuals, and to understand history means to reproduce this process as an internal content of what is given in an ordinary form only externally. The presented conclusion defines the fundamental role that “recollection,” “die Erinnerung,” receives in “The Phenomenology.” Donald P. Verene (1985) fairly correlates “die Erinnerung” not only with “the recollection,” the accumulation of images of consciousness, but also with “the inwardizing,” the “deeper” penetration into the content under study, noting that “The Phenomenology” as a whole can be represented as a “process of the inwardizing of the subject”. Therefore, in time, says the philosopher, “real history” appears before the comprehension, which happens by penetrating its essence (die Erinnerung, the inwardizing), in the form of phenomenology of the spirit, but only this comprehension allows us to understand both history and time, which act as conditions of the philosophical knowledge (die Erinnerung, the recollection).

Thus, on the foundation of “recollection,” Hegel builds a certain “phenomenology of history,” which, it seems, has not been noticed by any of the researchers so far! Indeed, the substance of history here is not a concept, but a stream of images (“gestalt”) of consciousness. It is unacceptable to reduce them to concepts, as is stated by the same Donald P. Verene, therefore, it is also impossible to identify the “phenomenology of history” with the familiar to us lecture course on “The Philosophy of History.” In addition, “The Phenomenology of Spirit” has a complex linear-cyclic structure (Korotkikh, 2011), which means that the problem of assessing the specifics of the Hegelian approach to comprehending history in each of the sections of “The Phenomenology” is surfaced. And already the first look at the formulas of the

various parts of the text, which indicate the role of time and history in the phenomenological movement, reveals how much there is of the non-trivial and still not explored by philosophy historians in the Hegelian judgments, how much the analysis of “The Phenomenology” from the indicated point of view can enrich our ideas about Hegelian “historicism.”

However, the culmination of the development of the “phenomenology of history” – that layer of the phenomenological narration that until now has not attracted the interest of researchers (after all, we admit that all the plots of “The Phenomenology” in one way or another came down to the scheme of “The Philosophy of History”) – happens in the last fragments of chapter VIII. There, the comprehension of history as the “middle term” of “the syllogism” that brings together “time” and “recollection”, acts as a result no less important than the constitution of speculative objectivity, which gives the logical idea the freedom to unfold. The “phenomenology of history” is like a glance that the philosopher casts back, examining (in “recollection”) once again the entire path of the finished “journey to discovery,” and “The Science of Logic” is a “new country” opened through the phenomenological movement, a sphere of the activity of the spirit, which is not restrained by “objectivity” anymore. Unlike the “Logic,” which overcomes time and “falls out” of history, in the “phenomenology of history” time is alive, “Spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time as long as it does not grasp its pure concept, which is to say, as long as it does not annul time... Time thus appears as the destiny and necessity of the spirit that is not yet consummated within itself” (Hegel, 2008).

Discussion

The problems of interpretation of “The Phenomenology of Spirit” considered in our article are not among the most discussed in modern Hegel studies. Nevertheless, articulating one’s own position even in this situation is possible only by taking into account already expressed points of view on the problem and the discussions that have taken place. Thus, an important step in studying the structure and dynamics of the “experience of consciousness” was made by the American researcher Kenley R. Dove (1983), who, by analyzing the “Introduction,” showed the fundamental importance of the author’s and reader’s point view for understanding the specifics of the method and the nature of the narrative in “The Phenomenology of Spirit”. In the following years

some other (mainly American) researchers had addressed this topic (Costelloe, 2000; Gauvin, 1970; Parry, 1988; Stern, 2002; Stewart, 1998). In German Hegelian studies, the role of “our consciousness” as the initiator of the phenomenological movement and the systematizer of “experience,” revealing its systematic, “scientific” character, was most consistently pointed out in the profound works of Werner Marx (1975; 1981). However, a significant drawback of these attempts to distinguish the “two modes of consciousness” in “The Phenomenology of Spirit” is that the researchers did not draw the necessary conclusions about the structure of the work, its relation to the “mature” Hegel system, about the particularities of the language and style of the work that are impossible to explain without the consideration of its dialogic nature. Meanwhile, without solving these problems, it is hardly possible to see the uniqueness of “The Phenomenology” among the dozens of volumes of Hegel’s “Collected Works.”

In addition, none of the researchers we know considers the “object” itself as an independent subject of “experience” (and therefore, we have to admit, as the narrator as well!). This “being-in-itself” that initially appears for “our consciousness” (in connection with which Hegel constantly identifies “itself” with “forus”) and is then given to “consciousness itself,” and finally, in chapter VI, unfolds as an independent movement of the substance of experience, of the spirit as an “absolute, real entity.” With respect to it, all previous images of consciousness now act as “abstractions,” as predicates, in the logical sense, of the real subject of the phenomenological narrative. And thus, the Hegelists basically pass by the distinction between “images of only consciousness” and “images of a certain world,” so clearly presented by the philosopher at the beginning of Chapter VI: “Spirit is there by the self-supporting, absolute, real essence. All the previous shapes of consciousness are abstractions from it. They are just this, that spirit analyses itself, distinguishes its moments, and lingers at each individual moment. This activity of isolating such moments has spirit itself as its *presupposition* and its *durable existence*, that is, this activity of isolating only exists in the spirit which is existence” (Hegel, 2008). From this moment on, the new “stations” of the phenomenological movement are starting to act as “real spirits, genuine actualities,” in connection with which Hegel speaks of them as “shapes of a world” and not “shapes only of consciousness” (Hegel, 2008).

The correct understanding of the role of the “formal” aspects of Hegel’s work has so far been often hindered by the fact that researchers did not see the “objective instance” of the text in the author-reader’s “we” and reduced the meaning of “we,” “forus” to Hegel’s “personal position” (or, less often, to a certain “absolute” point of view on an object that is supposedly accessible to the philosopher from the very beginning of the story). Although, taking this circumstance into account, some Hegelists could not help but notice the natural boundaries in the description of the experience of “consciousness itself” and its assessment by the philosopher. They were also able to draw the right conclusions about the role of “philosophical reflection” in the movement of experience. So, Wolfgang Bonsiepen (1974) speaks of the “central role of the philosopher” in the process of narrative movement, about the fact that consciousness is led by the philosopher, in particular, he says that “the emergence of a new real object and the accompanying it “introduction of consciousness” is realized through the philosopher’s actions”. The circumstance noted by Bonsiepen is important for the correct understanding of the “reading strategy” required by “The Phenomenology,” which is indicated by the requirement contained in the second sentence of the main text: “Likewise we ourselves have to conduct ourselves immediately, that is, *receptively*. We therefore are to alter nothing in the object as it presents itself, and we must keep our conceptual grasp apart from our apprehension of it” (Hegel, 2008). This requirement made by the author applies only to the historical and individual components of the author’s and reader’s consciousness. It does not negate the activity of the subject at all, the subject as a transcendental structure “embedded” in the text itself, it should not hamper the understanding of the leading role of “our consciousness” as an instance of the narrative itself. It is “our consciousness” – as the unity of the “real” and transcendental components – that acts as the source and initiator of the “experience” systematically described in “The Phenomenology,” which deeply penetrates the content (“the inwardizing”) and reduces it to a concrete unity as “the recollection.”

Furthermore, the issue we are considering about understanding the significance of the narrator’s figure in “The Phenomenology” for adequate characterization of its basic concepts (“time,” “history,” “recollection”), as far as we know, has not yet been brought up in Hegel studies. At the same time, the meaning of “recollection” for the description of the figuratively conceptual structure of “The Phenomenology of Spirit” was

revealed and very clearly represented in the works of Donald P. Verene (1985; 2007). In most other publications about time, history and recollection, which come to the fore in the conclusive fragments of Chapter VIII (Baptist, 2006; Blumenfeld, 2013; Falke, 1996; Flay, 1991; Ricci & Sanguinetti, 2013; Ricci, 2013), the authors restrict themselves to disclosing the provision on the sublation of “time” and “history” in the “Absolute knowing.” In essence, they refused to comprehend why Hegel nevertheless focuses here on concepts that “remain in the past” of the movement of systemic thought and do not go into “Logic.” The philosophy historians don’t pay due attention to the path traveled as a condition for speculatively concrete thought, and it may seem extremely strange, seeing as Hegel’s words from the “Preface” about how not only the result is significant, but also the path leading to it, are cited in almost every second publication on Hegel’s philosophy. It is unlikely that the answer to the question of why this is still the case can be simple and monosyllabic. But it seems that the reason for that lies mainly in the fact that “overcoming the objective element” as the main characteristic of “absolute idealism” in Hegel studies is still understood in an extremely abstract way.

Let us refer to the statement of a thinker who went beyond the framework of “professional Hegelian studies,” both because of his stylistic merits and because he reflected a certain “general impression” of Hegelian philosophy, so widespread and influential that ignoring it is unacceptable even for professional historians of philosophy. This is a formula of Merab Mamardashvili (2002) from his course on Kantian philosophy, presented to the reader in the form of “Kantian Themes”: “Hegel had built this concept of development, enunciating it in “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” where it was not a question of consistent empirical development, but of a certain development of living entities, which I call ontological abstractions of order that unfold in the fourth dimension. And Hegel’s madness consisted of the fact that he presented this, firstly, as a kind of soon-to-be-over process in which a person at a certain moment drops out of the dimension of history and drops into such a dimension where time has no meaning at all. Of course, Hegel did not consider that the real history ends as an empirical history; he simply believed that something was coming to which the term “time” was not applicable. It’s like the Kingdom of God realized on Earth, and therefore it is indivisible and undivided within itself in terms of time”. The first question that arises after

getting acquainted with this brilliant fragment is what is this “fourth dimension,” what it should be identified with – with the concept (*der Begriff*) or with the shape (*die Gestalt*)? Indeed, the impression of Hegel’s “madness” arises if we “forget” about the “earthly path” of the formation of the spirit after turning the last page of “The Phenomenology,” as if by the wave of a magic wand we transfer it “to heaven,” in that sphere, where speculative thought dominates, where there are no traces of feelings, suffering, of a person who “takes himself off” in temporary and historical existence, thereby freeing up a place for the spirit. And to avoid such “oblivion,” “time” and “history” are drawn by Hegel into “The Phenomenology” – “the chalice of the realm of spirits” (Hegel, 2008), over which the “recollection” always hovers, which preserves the warmth of the human spirit.

Conclusion

Consideration of the narrator’s image in “The Phenomenology of Spirit” is important for understanding the internal structure and mechanisms of the movement of the “experience of consciousness” as the main theme of Hegel’s work. The dialogical nature of text, which presents descriptions of “experience” made from the point of view of “our consciousness,” “consciousness itself” and “object,” prompts a modern researcher to consider the specifics of each of the objects in connection with the corresponding type of consciousness. The analysis of the exemplary concepts “time,” “history” and “recollection” in relation to the structure of the subject of phenomenological experience allows us to see the connection between the “formal” and substantive aspects of the narration, to understand the need to interpret individual plots of the “experience of consciousness” in the context of a holistic view of the object, method and structure of the work. This, in turn, brings historically philosophical science closer to overcoming the tendencies of selectivity and fragmentation of interpretations so characteristic of Hegelian studies of recent decades.

The main result of the study of “The Phenomenology of Spirit,” which affects the understanding of Hegelian philosophy as a whole, is the conclusion about the inadequacy of the “logicistic” approach, which ignores the significance of the first fundamental work of the philosopher for the building of the philosophical system and ruthlessly downplays the methodological, substantial and stylistic features of “The Phenomenology of Spirit.” The

interpretation strategy of this unique philosophical work should be guided by a consistently transcendental method of analysis of the “experience of consciousness.” In accordance with this method, consciousness, on the one hand, is freed from the “empirical history” (as said by Merab Mamardashvili), and, on the other hand, its structural characteristics turn out to be crucial for the search for a further way to build a system of philosophy. In this case, the “experience of consciousness”, while remaining the foundation of the philosophical system, no longer disappears into the “whirlwind” of logical categories. As the experience of the “encyclopedic system” shows, these categories, having lost the connection with the element of the “experience of consciousness” that has procreated them, are faced with the need for “naturalization,” correlation of their existential status with the nature and the ultimate spirit, which causes the degradation of the “System of Science” Jena project and subsequent Hegel’s systemic crisis. It seems that the noted circumstances should prompt the researcher to carefully study “The Phenomenology of Spirit” as a distinctive and “unremovable” element of Hegel’s systemic philosophical thought. Researchers should look for adequate means of interpretation, on the basis of which the reader would also be able to go through the “labyrinths of lines” of “The Phenomenology”, so that, in accordance with the author’s intention, he would be able to recognize and understand the “message” about that magnificent “Entdeckungsreise” that was once created by the philosopher in the element of the language and culture of his time. Because without such a companion even the most perfect spirit is doomed to remain “lifeless and alone” (Hegel, 2008).

References

- Baptist, G. (2006). Das absolute Wissen: Zeit, Geschichte, Wissenschaft. In D. Köhler and O. Pöggeler (Eds.), Hegel G.W.F. Phänomenologie des Geistes (p. 245-262). Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Blumenfeld, J. (2013). The Abolition of Time in Hegel’s “Absolute Knowing”. *Idealistic Studies*, 43(1-2), pp. 111–119.
- Bodamer, Th. (1969). *Hegels Deutung der Sprache: Interpretationen zu Hegels Äußerungen über die Sprache*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.
- Bonsiepen, W. (1974). *Dialektik und Negativität in der Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Hegel-Jahrbuch. Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag.
- Costelloe, T.M. (2000). Science, Consciousness and the “We” in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. *International Studies in Philosophy*, 32(2), pp. 15–27.
- Dove, K.R. (1970). Hegel’s Phenomenological Method. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 23(4), pp. 615–641.
- Dove, K.R. (1983). Die Epoche der Phänomenologie des Geistes. In Hegel-Studien. Beiheft 11 (p. 605-621). Bonn: Bouvier Verlag.
- Falke, G.-H.H. (1996). *Begriffne Geschichte: Das historische Substrat und die systematische Anordnung der Bewußtseinsgestalten in Hegels „Phänomenologie des Geistes“: Interpretation und Kommentar*. Berlin: Lukas Verlag.
- Flay, J.C. (1991). Time in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 31, pp. 259–273.
- Gauvin, J. (1970). Le „für uns“ dans la Phénoméologie de l’Esprit. *Archives de Philosophie*, 33(4), pp. 829–854.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1971). *Letters. Works of Different Years*. Volume 2. Moscow: Thought.
- Hegel, G.W.H. (2008). *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kohl, E. (2003). „Gestalt“: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundbegriff in Hegels „Phänomenologie des Geistes“. München: Hutz Verlag.
- Korotkikh, V.I. (2011). “Phenomenology of the Spirit” and the Problem of the Structure of the System of Philosophy in the Works of Hegel. Moscow: INFRA-M.
- Korotkikh, V.I. (2015). The Idea of the System of Philosophy in Hegel’s Works. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 8(Special Issue 10). Retrieved from <http://www.indjst.org/index.php/indjst/article/view/84849/65794>
- Korotkikh, V.I. (2019). The Structural Principles of Hegel’s Narrative in “The Phenomenology of Spirit”. *Amazonia Investiga*, 8(18), pp. 185-197.
- Mamardashvili, M.K. (2002). *Kantian Themes*. Moscow: Agraf.
- Marx, W. (1975). *Die Dialektik und die Rolle des Phänomenologen*. Hegel-Jahrbuch. Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag.
- Marx, W. (1981). *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes. Die Bestimmung ihrer Idee in „Vorrede“ und «Einleitung»*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Parry, D.M. (1988). *Hegel’s Phenomenology of the “We”*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ricci, V. (2013). The Role of Erinnerung in Absolute Knowing: History and Absoluteness. In V. Ricci and F. Sanguinetti (Eds.), Hegel on Recollection: Essays on the Concept of Erinnerung in Hegel’s System (p. 1–20). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Ricci, V. and Sanguinetti, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Hegel on Recollection: Essays on the Concept of Erinnerung in Hegel's System*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Spet, G.G. (1959). Translator's Preface. In Hegel G.W.F. Works. Volume 4 (p. 46-48). Moscow.
- Stern, R. (2002). *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit*. New York: Routledge.
- Stewart, J. (Ed.). (1998). *The Phenomenology of Spirit Reader*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Suhachev, N.L. (2007). *Concepts of Language in European Philosophy (Essays on G.W.F. Hegel, Ch.S. Peirce, M. Heidegger)*. Saint Petersburg: Nestor-History.
- Troickij, V.P. (2007). *Investigations on the Life and Work of A.F. Losev*. Moscow: Agraf.
- Verene, D.Ph. (1985). *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Verene, D.Ph. (2007). *Hegel's Absolute: An Introduction to Reading the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Vernon, J. (2007). *Hegel's Philosophy Language*. London: Continuum.