1. Hegel’s life and works:

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, is the greatest German idealist, and he is one of the most dominant western philosophers. He was born in 1770, in Stuttgart, a city in Germany. His father was a government official. During his studies in Stuttgart he became interested in Greek culture; specially his interest was drawn to Sophocles’s plays and more he became fond of *Antigone*.

In 1788, Hegel became the scholar of Protestant theology foundation in Tubingen University and got friendship with F.W.J. Schelling and F. Holderlin. They made a group and read the works of Jean – Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) and loved the ideals of French Revolution. In Tubingen University Hegel had a good progress in the ground of theology and philology (the study of words, especially the history and development of the words in a particular language or group of languages). His interest was drawn to the relation between philosophy and theology. Hegel after leaving the university took the tutorship first in Burn a city in Swiss (1793 – 1800). During his tutorship years, Hegel’s philosophical thoughts flourished. His philosophy always has
been a type of theology, i.e., its essence is the absolute being it meant God an its relation to the nature and human beings. In 1799 his father died, and after two years in 1801 he went to Jena and got a lectureship position without pay in the University of Jena. In 1806, the army of Napoleon attacked Jena. It led to the closing of the University of Jena. In search of job, Hegel took editorship of a newspaper in the city of Bamberg in the state of Bavaria (1807 – 1808), then he went to the city of Nuremberg in 1808 and became a principal of a high school and till 1816 continued. In 1811 he married and got children. During his managing the high school he created one of his main philosophical works that is Science of Logic in three volumes (1812 – 1816). He accepted the invitation of Heidelberg University and became the professor of philosophy. His fame was increasing as the philosopher. In 1817 he published his work under the title of Encyclopedia of the philosophical Sciences in Outline. This work caused his fame more increasing. In 1818 he was invited from the University of Berlin and accepted it, and remained there until he died due to Cholera disease in 1831.

The influence of Hegel was because of his devotion to the pure thought. His students always felt that they can obtain the essential understanding of truth and its process including the history of human
being and his political life and spiritual achievements. He was a hardworking, methodic, conscientious and easygoing. He had very deep interest in finding the movement and meaning of the human and world history, and he devoted his life to express it. He believed that, truth is only in the talon of philosophy; and that, the real is rational and the rational is real.

Hegel’s works in English translations are as follows:


2. A revolution in Thought ------ The Dialectic ------ The Real is the Rational:

The Problem of Dialectic was propounded in different forms in ancient Greek thought, even it goes back to Pre – Socratic time. The theory of four elements that says the reality is made up of soil (earth) and air which are constantly in opposition to each other, and also water and fire. Then it appeared in Heraclitus’s thought who said that all of the nature is in conflict and everything changes to its opposite. Socrates
used dialectic by propounding a concept between two persons; then made them to have a dialogue, discussion and argument about it and examined the various definitions of that concept until reaching a clear understanding of something real like justice, beauty, good, ... and this process continued until attaining a true definition of the propounded concept.

For Plato, dialectic was the highest level of knowledge. It was a philosophical method on which the process of knowledge begins with a lower concept and little by little ascends the higher concept; then finally attains the first principle namely the highest idea of Good.

But the method of dialectic which Hegel used in his philosophy, was the most complete method of dialectic which was ever seen in the history of philosophy; that is why, it is said the dialectical method of Hegel made a revolution in thought.

“Hegel is the master of dialectic. He incorporates Heraclitus, Socrates and Plato in his theory of dialectic and offers the most completely developed, ambitious, and powerful theory of dialectic that was ever been formulated. What does Hegel mean by dialectic? Dialectic, he says, is the synthesis of opposites. Every concept, as we
think about it, begins to show us its limitations, and passes over into its opposite, into the very negation of itself. As a result, dialectic in the Heraclitean sense of opposition, conflict, polarity, or contradiction characterized all human thought.”

For Hegel, dialectic has three parts or moments; so according these three moments, his theory of dialectic is known to triadic. Hegel’s triadic is the central core of his philosophy. Dialectic --- triadic ---- of Hegel is the soul of his philosophy. It is present in whole part of his philosophy, as blood runs in the vessels. Hegel propounds and develops all parts of his philosophy on the base of dialectic. His philosophy of spirit, philosophy of nature, the relation of master and slave (Lordship and Bondage), and etc. all are based on dialectical method.

“The process of dialectic moves from a first stage or moment (the thesis) to a second stage or moment which negates, opposes, or contradicts the first --- antithesis ---; and this opposition is overcome by a third stage in which a new concept --- the synthesis --- emerges as a higher truth which transcends them. Synthesis has these three functions:
1. It *cancels* the conflict between thesis and antithesis.

2. It *preserves* or retains the elements of truth within the thesis and antithesis.

3. It *transcends* the opposition and raises up or *sublimes* the conflict into a higher truth.

This *triadic* process of dialectic, says Hegel, is not restricted to the history of philosophy. Far from it. For Hegel, dialectic as the *triadic* process of the synthesis of opposites is the rhythm of all reality.”

“Dialectic is both an essential character of reality itself, and the method for understanding reality. It is both the rhythmic movement of all human thought and history, and the method for understanding them.”

3. The Absolute:

For understanding the philosophy of Hegel, it is necessary to know the *Absolute*. In fact the main subject of philosophy is the Absolute Being. But the Absolute is totality, namely the universe. Philosophy deals with true being, and "true" means the whole, integrity, total. Moreover, this whole or totality, is infinite life and a process of self–development. The Absolute is the process of its becoming, it is like
a circle; its end is the same as its beginning. It can be said that, the absolute can be real or objective only through developing itself and its end. In fact, the absolute is a result, i.e. the end of this process is manifestation of the nature of the Absolute. Of course, the whole process is that very (same) Absolute; but in a teleological process, it is the Telos or the End that shows the nature i.e. meaning of that process; and here, it is the philosophy that should understand systematically this teleological process.

For Hegel, the true philosophy is in which the truth is placed; in other words, philosophy is the house of truth. For Hegel, the Absolute is total of reality i.e. it is the universe as an object. But when the universe is universe, that, it is understood by the human mind, as the subject. From here it is drawn a conclusion that the absolute consists of mind, and in simple word, the Absolute is the same mind ------- subject -------. Now, if it is so, then a question could be asked that what can be the object of this subject ------- mind ------- ? In this case, it could be answered that, the absolute is the object of itself, that is to say, the Absolute is the same though which thinks of itself, i.e it is self–contemplative and it means that the Absolute is the same the Spirit, i.e. infinite "self–conscious mind". Therefore, Absolute is a self –
contemplative process, it (Absolute) is the truth that reaches knowing itself. It reaches knowing itself only in human spirit and through it.

“That the truth is only realized in the form of system, that substance is essentially subject, is expressed in the idea which represents the Absolute as Spirit (Geist) – the grandest conception of all, and one which is due [86] to modern times and its religion. Spirit is alone Reality. It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is *per se*; it assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself – it is externality (otherness), and exists for self, yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself – it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself at once. This self-containedness, however, is first something known by us, it is implicit in its nature (*as sich*); it is Substance spiritual. It has to become self-contained *for itself*, on its own account; it must be knowledge of spirit, and must be consciousness of itself as spirit. This means, it must be presented to itself as an object, but at the same time straightway annual and transcend this objective form; it must be its own object in which it finds itself reflected. So for as its spiritual content is produced by its own activity, it is only we [thinkers] who know spirit to be for itself, to be objective to itself, but in so far as spirit knows itself, then this self-production, the pure notion, is the sphere and element in which...
its objectification takes effect, and where it gets its existential form. In this way it is in its existence aware of itself as an object in which its own self is reflected.”

The nature is precondition of human consciousness in general. The nature is producer of objective sphere such that without it subjective sphere is meaningless. But the mind and nature as the subject and object both are moments in the life of the Absolute. In the nature, the Absolute enters into the sphere of objectivity or expresses itself in the nature. It is the sphere of human conscious in which the Absolute as spirit turns to itself; and the human philosophic accuracy is indeed, knowing the Absolute itself; namely, becoming the absolute aware of itself. In other words, the history of philosophy is the process through which the Absolute or truth in its totality reflects on itself. Philosphic wisdom comes to the vision that, finds the history of whole universe and the whole human history is the same self-unfolding of Absolute. And this vision is the same awareness of Absolute to itself.

The life of Absolute consists of three main phases (stages):

1. Logical idea (Concept or Notion)
2. Nature
3. Spirit
Now, for Hegel, it is the task of philosophy to study the life of Absolute; therefore the philosophic system of Hegel for studying the Absolute, is accordingly dividing into three parts:

1. Logic that, for Hegel is the science of metaphysics, studies the nature of Absolute in–itself.

2. Philosophy of Nature

3. Philosophy of Spirit (Mind)

These three parts together organizes the philosophic life of Absolute. The nature and the sphere of human spirit is the same realm in which an eternal idea or everlasting substance manifests itself. So, the distinction can be made between the idea or the virtual substance and the realm of its virtuality. Then, there is an image of eternal idea or Logos which presents itself in the nature and in the spirit. Logos, so to speak enters into objectivity in the nature i.e. in the material world. Material world is as the antithesis of Logos. Logos, turns to itself in the spirit i.e. in the sphere of human spirit, namely Logos manifests itself such that it is in its essence. Thus, as the mention was made above, the life of Absolute consists of three main phases (stages): Logical idea (Concept or Notion), Nature and Spirit.
Hegel, in his philosophy applies a lot of religious language and speaks about the logical idea as "God in its essence"; inevitably, he puts up an understanding for discussion that, for him, Logos is the most sublime truth which manifests itself in the nature in external form. But applying the religious language by Hegel, does not show that his mean is just the same. Of course, it is a controversial problem in Hegel’s philosophy.

Now, it is very important to point out that, the three parts of Hegel’s philosophy deal with the Absolute.

1. Logic, studies the Absolute in the state of in–itself.

2. Philosophy of Nature studies the Absolute in the state of for–itself.

3. And philosophy of Spirit studies the Absolute in the state of in–itself and for–itself.

These three parts on the whole, form and organize the thorough structure of the life of Absolute.

For Hegel, it is the duty of philosophy to present the life of Absolute in conceptual form. In other words, if the Absolute is the same totality then a really expressive philosophy for Hegel should be a
widespread and universal system of truth and of entire truth; thus, a philosophy is a thorough conceptual reflection upon the life of Absolute. In fact, such a philosophy is the knowledge of Absolute to itself through the human mind and in human mind, namely self–reflection of totality.

For Hegel, the Absolute is "identity–in–difference". It is "identity–in–difference" of infinite and finite, unity or oneness and plurality or multiplicity. But it seems that the concepts of "identity" and "difference" as well the concepts of "unity" and "plurality" are mutually exclusive with each other.

Of course Hegel is aware of this problem; he accepts that the mutually exclusiveness of mentioned concepts occurs in the level of "understanding"; but when the mind endeavours to understand the life of "Absolute" or "identity–in–difference", it cannot stay more in the level of understanding and be satisfied of it. Since the level of understanding for Hegel, is a superficial level. Mind should penetrate into deeper concepts which are the categories of reality so that consider how a certain concept intends to or summons its opposite. For example, if the mind reflects deeply upon the concept of infinite then finds out that how this concept gives away its "rigid implication–in–itself " and arises the
concept of finite from it. Thus in theoretical philosophy, mind should transcend itself from the level of dialectical thought so that to overcome the rigidity of concepts of understanding; then it will find out how every concept is a generator of its opposite concept and also mingles (associates) with it.

Philosophy for Hegel, only in this way could have a trust on the perception of life of the Absolute; a life which every moment or stage of it inevitably results another moment or stage. In philosophy of Hegel, it is the task of intelligence, reason (Vernunft) to understand the moment of "identity—in—difference". Therefore philosophy intends the derivation of understanding through dialectical thought to the level of intelligence or theoretical thought which has ability of understanding and perception of "identity—in—difference". Dialectic of Hegel is the mirror of life of the Absolute; and the "contradiction" is the motive power of so to speak dialectical movement. For Hegel, when philosophy considers human history for an example, it finds out that, there is a dialectical movement in it. Then it can be said that, philosophy of Hegel is dialectical philosophy that mainly pays to the "Absolute".

The Dialectical method takes place in the whole philosophy of Hegel. Thus, as the mention was made, there are three main stages in the
structure of the life of Absolute: Logical Idea, Nature and Spirit. And each stage is divided into *triads*.

Human knowledge of Absolute is indeed the knowledge of Absolute of itself, or in other words it is self-knowledge of Absolute. Therefore the human intelligence develops to the extent that, takes part in the self-knowledge of Absolute.

Hegel convinced that, the theoretical reason is able to know the essence of Absolute. The essence of Absolute is what that, manifests itself in the nature and in the history of human spirit.

The task of Logic as a part of philosophy for Hegel is presenting the essence of *Absolute*. The Absolute is the same pure *thought*. And for Hegel, it is possible to consider this thought itself separate of its externalization or its self-manifestation. So the knowledge of pure thought in itself is the same Logic.

Hegel speaks about the "Absolute in itself " as "God in itself ". The subject–matter of Logic is "truth–in–itself " without any ornament or embellishment; therefore the content of Logic consists of the
representation of God such as in its eternal essence before creation of nature and a finite spirit. Hegel’s "Absolute" is doubtlessly transcendent.

The Absolute is totality, such a totality that through and in finite spirit comes to know itself. Logic of Hegel is categorical system, and this system is thoroughly a "step by step−definition" of "Absolute−in−itself".

Hegel, in his Logic starts from the concept (Notion) of "being" which is the most indefinite and uncertain concept; and from the logical point of view, it is the most antecedent concept; then gradually shows that how the concept of "being" by necessity and successively attains from a concept to another concept so that we attain absolute idea, namely a concept or category of self−knowledge or self−conscious or "self−reflective thought". But Absolute is not a range or chain of categories or concepts. Then what is Absolute in Hegel’s philosophy? In answer to this question, it could be said that, Absolute is "Being". And if it is asked then what is Being? It could be answered that, Being is "self−contemplative (reflective) thought" or Spirit. Hegel wants to show that, his whole system of categories is wrapped and rolled in itself; and the beginning of the system is the end of it and its end is the beginning of it; namely the whole categories or concepts are concealed in the first category or concept; and the last one is the final illumination of the first one and shows its true meaning.
God in Hegel’s philosophic system is Being and also is "self–reflective thought". But there is great difference between Hegel’s Absolute and the God of Christian theology.

“God, then, is here revealed, as He is; He actually exists as He is in Himself, He is real as Spirit. God is attainable in pure speculative knowledge alone, and only is that knowledge, and is merely that knowledge itself, for He is spirit, and this speculative knowledge is the knowledge furnished by revealed religion. That knowledge knows God to be thought, or pure Essence; and knows this thought as actual being and as a real existence, and existence as the negativity of itself, hence as Self, and individual "this" and a universal self. It is just this that revealed religion knows.”

Dialectical movement of Hegel’s Logic can be presented by its first three categories. That concept of Absolute which from logical point of view has priority over other concepts, is the concept of "being". But the concept or the category of pure being is thoroughly indefinite. And the thoroughly indefinite concept of being, attains the concept of non–being. Namely if we try to think about the being without any determination, we will consider that we have thought about nothing. Mind attains non–being through being and again attains being through
non-being; and cannot rely on non of them, and each of them disappears in its opposite. Thus their truth is the same movement of immediate disappearing one in another. And the movement from being to non-being and from non-being to being is "becoming".

Therefore, "becoming" is the synthesis of being and non-being; and it is their unity and truth. Thus, "being" should be considered as "becoming". In other words, the concept of absolute as "being" is equal to the concept of Absolute as "becoming"; namely a process of self-development.

In our common attitude upon the things, contradiction has no place and "being" and "non-being" are impenetrable and mutually exclusive. But the reason that we think such, is because we consider "being" as "determinate being"; and consider non-being as "nothingness" of this determination. But for Hegel, pure being is indeterminate and void or empty; therefore, pure being attains its opposite or contrary.

But, as the mention was made, contradiction for Hegel is the positive strength, potentiality and dynamism which manifest the thesis
and antithesis as abstract moments in a higher unity or synthesis. And the unity of concept of being and non-being — nothing — is the concept of becoming.

“Nothing, if it be thus immediate and equal to itself, is also conversely the same as Being is. The truth of Being and of Nothing is accordingly the unity of the two: and this unity is Becoming.”

“Becoming is the first concrete thought, and therefore the first notion: whereas Being and Nought are empty abstractions. The notion of Being, therefore, of which we sometimes speak, must mean Becoming; not the mere point of being, which is empty Nothing, any more than Nothing which is empty Being > in Being then we have Nothing, and in Nothing, Being; but this being which does not lose itself in Nothing is Becoming. Nor must we omit the distinction, while we emphasise the unity of Becoming; without that distinction we should once more return to abstract Being. Becoming is only the explicit statement of what Being is in its trugh.”

The mind on the track of meaning of Being, goes ahead for finding out the nature or essence of "Absolute for itself".
Hegel’s Logic as it was said before, is the gradual definition of nature of "Absolute for itself". Absolute as an actual being is the same essence that manifests itself. it is a unity and at the same time is diverse; it is "identity—in—difference".

Hegel in the last division of logic of notion, considers the life and knowledge and unity of the subjectivity and objectivity both in the absolute Idea. The idea has intellectual life. In other words, the absolute Idea is the notion or category of "self—awareness", personality; and it is "self—reflective thought" that knows itself in its object; and knows its object as itself. Thus, it is the same category of Spirit. In religious language, it is the same notion of "God in—itself " and "for—itself " which knows (awars of) itself as totality.

Therefore, "Being" finally manifests itself as absolute Idea, "self—reflective thought". Then Absolute is the same Being. For Hegel, only the absolute Idea is "Being" ; it is eternal life; it is "self—knowledge truth" and it is the whole of truth. And it is the only subject matter and the content of philosophy. So philosophy always deals with the Idea.
Another definition of Absolute in Hegel’s philosophy is that the Absolute, is Spirit. This is the most exalted definition of the Absolute. “Absolute in–itself " is Spirit, but it is potential Spirit not actual. The "Absolute for–itself " namely the Nature, is Spirit; but self–alienated Spirit, it is God but in its Otherness. When the Spirit becomes Spirit that we attain human Spirit.

4. Position of Human being in the philosophy of Hegel :

Discussion about human being from Hegel’s point of view, is a discussion about the soul; the soul of Hegel’s philosophy is human being (man); since in his philosophy, even the cosmology without considering the human existence is not possible. And the nature conveys or implies its main meaning only through interference of and meddling with human being ; and only in this manner, the nature gets logical and dialectical aspect.

Moreover, the mere reality does not have meaning ; and only the truth has meaning, and the truth is the same reality in addition to the word (speech, statement) which interprets that reality. And since man is the only being who has faculty of speech, therefore he is the only being who can fulfill the truth.
In philosophy of Hegel, the world of existence, the universe without human being will not only be mute and silent but also will be truthless.

Now, paying attention to the extraordinary significance of human being in Hegel’s philosophy; and finding out his part in establishing the truth; so it is necessary to know that what exactly is human? And who is he?

Man, physically is a natural being with constant qualities, attributes and characters. Man is an animal (a living creature) of a particular kind with certain distinguishing characteristics or features that lives as any other animal within material conditions of nature. In this respect, man is captive and subdued of nature as like all of other animals. But man is not merely animal, or it is better to say he is an animal in which the humanity is fulfilled. Man is an animal that essentially has capability and ability of becoming human being. And this capability manifests in man as a negator (negating) factor. He negates the material reality, namely he endeavors on the one hand to negate the animality (animal nature) in himself; and on the other hand he efforts to dominate over the nature by resorting to the labour and struggle.
The end of man’s activity is, achieving the freedom and liberty against the material expedience and exigency of the world. Therefore, man is not only absolutely different from animal but also he is different from any other given being; since man is not a given and determined being so that to distinguish constant characteristics and features in him, and define him and write his name in the list of beings; rather he is the essence of creativeness, and because of this reason he is the mere dialectical and historical process.

In fact the dialectical principles of Hegel are fulfilled through thought and reflection on man; and the characteristics of man are drawn and designed in the heart of Hegel’s logic. In Hegel’s philosophy, it is only through human existence that the dialectical and historical process becomes visible in the world, and becomes extended and generalized to whole universe. Man is a being that lives by taking into consideration a future and an end in his life. Futurism in Hegelian meaning is the negation of standing (current) affairs, and attempt on fulfilling the affairs that have not reality at present. Here the power of negation and the power of creation are applied synonymously and are followed each other; Man negates, because the end of his action is creation and making; and because of the same reason, human reality appears as the result of his action; Man, is a being which will "become" in future, not a
being which "is" at present. In other words, man is a being which will make himself in future.

For this reason, the man who is taken into consideration by Hegel, is different from man for Greek philosophers. Man in philosophy of ancient Greece is merely a natural being; every man is an individual of human species. He has his certain and determined species just like any animal which has its certain species. He has sense, perception and intelligence, he has memory; and finally his distinguishing characteristic is Logos (reason, rational faculty) which makes him different from other animals. Aristotle defined man as a "Rational Animal". In fact Aristotle’s definition does not present the humanity of man; but rather it presents that the Logos or reason is a distinguishing limb of an animal specious which is called man (human being); as well Khartoum (Proboscis) or ivory is distinguishing limb of an animal species which is called elephant. So, in Aristotle’s definition of man as a "rational animal", merely a species of animal kinds is defined that, it is constant and unchanging; and since the Logos or reason in man is not considered as the origin of creation and negation, so the humanity is not only negated at present from this animate (rational animal, man) but also it is not given the least possibility ---- achieving the freedom ---- to him in the process of human history.
Anyhow, man for Hegel is not the same ------ Man is a rational animal ------ for Greeks. It seems, Hegel in this regard, rather, pays attention to Abrahamian tradition namely, the tradition of religions like Jew and Christian so that to Greeks’ thought, as even it maybe said that Hegel attained the concept (notion) of "historical, free and individual man" through reflection upon the story of Jesus Christ. Ofcourse, it is not only because of Jesus’ thought but also because the action he did. That is to say, being mere natural for man, is considered as sin; and because of this reason, human life becomes changed into an epic of his struggle against the nature and his animal instincts.

Man, in spite of the fact that, he lives in the nature, but he does not become obedient of its rules. Man, for attaining his freedom and liberty, negates the nature. He is alienated in this world, namely makes himself such (alienated); and as a result, he establishes his own specific human world that, is the same his historical world. In this historical world, man is no more a representative of one of constant and eternal species of the beings.

But he is a being that, is created a new and over again. He creates himself over again and is born as a definite individual.
As the mention was made above, Hegel’s opinion on man is rather placed on the tradition of Abrahamian religions; in other words, Hegel adapted and excerpted the spirituality of human existence in this world from the same tradition.

Nevertheless, from other point of view, there is a main difference between his thoughts and the beliefs of others in this tradition. Since according to the Abrahamian tradition, the absolute spirituality reaches fulfillment only in other world; and God is the only infinite and eternal being that, has objectivity and reality as mere and Absolute Spirit. Moreover in this tradition, the world of "after–life" (eternity) is different from present world, namely it is settled beyond the time and place. And this supernatural world is independent of human being; and man has not any power to enter it unless after his death. Whereas, for Hegel a being like man who has spirituality, is placed necessarily within time; and in any case he is finite. In Hegel’s opinion, man could not be a "free and historical" individual, namely a dialectical being unless, he should be mortal i.e. he should be placed in finite time; and should be aware of his finitude. For the same reason, for Hegel, the life in other world (eternity) is not possible for man. When man is man that, he is within the nature; since, man beyond the nature is "mere non–existence" namely non–being (nothingness). In Hegel’s philosophy the real eternity for
man is the same human historical world of human being which could not exceed the limit of time and place. Therefore Hegel adapts the Abrahamian tradition only in specific form; and he believes that the fulfillment of human spirituality is possible only in this world and in the process of history.

Conscious man is a man who is aware of his spiritual power and meanwhile he is aware of his finitude too.

5. "Understanding", the spiritual power of man

Spiritual power of man manifests in the form of "Understanding". The "Understanding" is not passive; and it is not a mere reflection of existence of things in the mind of man. Human Understanding has real power and even maybe it is the most marvelous and amazing power which exists in the world. For Hegel it is a power that, changes the reality of the world; and makes possible the fulfillment of truth. The Understanding is Absolute and manifests through its segregative activity. It means that, the faculty of Understanding is absolutely discursive.

“Understanding, which is our object here, finds itself in this position, that, for it, the inner world has come about to begin with, only as the implicit inherent being, universal and still without a filling. The
play of forces has simply and solely this negative significance of not being something *per se*; and its only positive significance is that of being the mediating agency, but outside understanding. The relation of understanding to the inner world through mediation is, however, its own process, by which the inner world will be found to receive fullness of content.”

Human mind abstracts the affairs and makes the Notion (Concept) but it could not achieve the totality of reality through one or some Notions; and consequently the truth is fulfilled part by part and little by little through Notions; and for achieving the Absolute truth, the whole notions which have been necessary for expressing it during the time, should be obtained. In other words, it can be said that, the faculty of Human Understanding through its abstractive action makes the world unreal; and for receiving the totality of reality which is the same Absolute Truth, it should reach ultimate (final) synthesis at the end of history.

6. The importance of "Notion" in Hegel’s Philosophy:

The Notion (Concept) ------ Rational Form ------ in philosophy of Hegel has a very special meaning; and whatever he says about it, is extremely considerable; and it is different of whatever is said about it until his time.
In Hegel’s opinion, when man describes a specific thing, he abstracts it from other things of the world by the faculty of his Understanding. For example when we say "this table" or "this dog", we speak in a manner that, as if "this table" or "this dog" is separate from natural world; whereas both "this table" and "this dog" have occupied (filled up) a certain and specified place in this world; and it is not possible to separate them from other things and affairs.

Consequently, Understanding makes an effort to combine them with the reality of the world; namely the power of attaching the affairs to each other, becomes complementary of abstractive power, and these two powers with together make an absolute power of Understanding; in other words, they make Understanding as an absolute power. This power could not be artificial, since it is by the faculty of Understanding that, man, actually fulfills his technical and industrial projects and changes the face of natural world; and creates cultural world.

Generally, when we make a Notion of a specified real affair (thing), in fact we release it from the limit and bond of time. For example the Notion of dog differs from its extention (denotation) ------- real dog ------- namely, this dog here in specific place and moment; whereas its Notion, in a sense, is everywhere and nowhere; it is for ever
(eternal, permanent, everlasting) and never is. Abstracting a thing from its material base, is meanwhile, generalizing (universalizing) and extending it ’too. for example the dog as a Notion and a rational form is no more this or that specific and certain dog, but it is included in ”every dog”. In this case, the universal dog which is a quadruped animal, is taken into consideration. And of course, it is correct that the Universal Notion in relation to its extention, is beyond the time and place ; but since the notion is caused to speak by man in a certain time and place ; therefore, it could not be absolutely beyond the time and place ’too. In this respect, for Hegel, Aristotle is right and his criticism of Plato’s Ideas (Forms) is wholly justified and reasonable.

The Notions are like the meanings of affairs, but these meanings are not placed beyond the world and not superior to sky in which time and place have no way ; but they ------- Notions ------- appear in a certain and specific man’s word and speech (with considering in general both written or oral speech).

Now, when these meanings are genuine that, a concrete and real man namely who is bound to certain and specific time and place, perceives them. Ofcourse, as the mention was made, abstraction of meanings and quiddities from realities, is not automatically
accomplished in the heart of nature, but it is the result of Understanding; and man by his marvelous power ------- the faculty of Understanding ---- --- undertakes the duty (task) of establishing the philosophical thought and scientific research.

For Hegel, "Being" is not only "Notion" but also the Notion is the truth of Being.

“Thus the Notion is the truth of Being and Essence, inasmuch as the shining or show of self-reflection is itself at the same time independent immidiacy, and this being of a different actuality is immediately only a shining or show on itself.

The Notion has exhibited itself as the truth of Being and Essence as the ground to which the regress of both leads. Conversely it has been developed out of being as its ground. The former aspect of the advance may be regarded as a concentration of being into its depth, thereby disclosing its inner nature: the latter aspect as an issuing of the more perfect from the less perfect. When such development is viewed on the latter side only, it does prejudice to the method of philosophy. The special meaning which these superficial thoughts of more imperfect and more perfect have in this place is to indicate the distinction of being, as
an immediate unity with itself, from the notion, as free mediation with itself. Since being has shown that it is an element in the notion, the latter has thus exhibited itself as the truth of being. As this its reflection in itself and as an absorption of the mediation, the notion is the presupposition of the immediate ——— a presupposition which is identical with the return to self; and in this identity lie freedom and the notion. If the partial element therefore be called the imperfect, then notion, or the perfect, is certainly a development from the imperfect; since its very nature is thus to suspend its presupposition. At the same time it is the notion alone which, in the act of supposing itself, makes its presupposition; as has been made apparent in causality in general and especially in reciprocal action.

Thus in reference to Being and Essence the Notion is defined as Essence reverted to the simple immediacy of Being ——— the shining or show of Essence thereby having actuality, and its actuality being at the same time a free shining or show in itself. In this manner the notion has being as its simple self–relation, or as the immediacy of its immanent unity. Being is so poor category that it is the least thing which can be shown to be found in the notion. The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality into the notion, is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality.
in the passing over and identity with the other independent actuality. The notion, too, is extremely hard, because it is itself just this very identity. But the actual substance as such, the cause, which in its exclusiveness resists all invasion, is ipso facto subjected to necessity or the destiny of passing into dependency: and it is this subjection rather where the chief hardness lies. To think necessity, on the contrary, rather tends to melt that hardness. For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one’s self. It means a liberation, which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not as something else, but as its own being and creation, in the other actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity. As existing in an individual form, this liberation is called I: as developed to its totality, it is free spirit; as feeling, it is Love; and as enjoyment, it is Blessedness. The great vision of substance in Spinoza is only a potential liberation from finite exclusiveness and egotism: but the notion itself realises for its own both the power of necessity and actual freedom.”

For Hegel, previous philosophers, did not satisfactorily answer this question that why “Being” is “Notion”? In the case of universals, belief in “Realism” or “Nominalism” and the opposition between these two schools, arises from a false problem and it has an abstractive aspect, and does not conform to the totality of concrete reality. These philosophers have acted carelessly in the case of the problem of “Being” and “Notion”.
Parmenides believed in unity of "Being" and "Thought"; Aristotle believed in a "Being" which in its totality, eternally thinks for itself. Spinoza who is inspired from Descartes and inspired to Schelling, conceives the thought as the attribute of substance.

Hegel, does not deny the thoughts and opinions of previous philosophers, but he believes that, those philosophers have taken only one aspect of the problem into consideration; and consequently they have not been properly able to clarify the relation between "Thought" and "Being".

Therefore, in Hegel’s opinion, at first, the Notion (Rational Form) and Time are so related to each other that, maybe possible to consider them as one and united. Secondly, "Being" has absolute temporality. Namely, at first, the "Notion of Being" is not separated from "Being" itself; secondly, Being is that very Becoming. The Notion through Time, retains "Being" in that very Becoming; and it connects the "Past" and "Present" and "Future" with together.

When "Being" conveys a meaning that, there would be "Time". Since a being is not only a being that exists merely in the present time,
but also it is the same being which has been in the past and will become in the future. "Being” through the ”Time” and "Notion” (Rational Form) conveys a meaning and attains a mode and an end. This mode and end is, turning the future into the present that, it is not different of turning the present into the past.

This matter could be explained in other form ’too. "Being” and "Thought” join together in "Time". Strictly speaking, “Thought” and "Speech” are fulfilled and come into existence within "Time".

What is marvellous is the being of “meaning”; and in fact, it is nothing but the marvel of being and existence of man himself in the world. Man is the result of his own thought and action. Thought and action reverse the process of time; and demonstrate the priority of future in the process of time, since the action means an effort to fulfill a project in future. Action means the real presence of future in the present time.

Now, this action belongs to a man who gradually creates the cultural world within the natural world and this permanent creation demonstrates that, man, as the mention was made above, is not primary
certain and specific being, but he gradually manifests himself by the lapse of time and in the process of history. Such a man, in spite of the fact that does not step in direction of natural affairs, but he is necessarily exposed to the natural reality. Namely, such man has at first animal needs, and secondly, is necessarily not only mortal, but also he is aware of his mortality.

7. The problem of Death in Hegel’s Philosophy:

The problem of death in Hegel’s philosophy is a key for knowing the man. Hegel, in a sense believes that, man is the death itself which, has attained human life. A being that, has spirit namely man, could not be immortal and infinite. The phenomenon of human death is a manifestation of his being historical; and it indicates to his individuality and freedom.

Death is freedom of "the Universal and Absolute Spirit" from the bound of a certain and specific man.

It is true that, human individuals, through their freedom which gives them a kind of independence against the nature, originate the history; but the history does not take place unless in direction to negate them ------- human individuals -------.
8. Human Freedom and Necessity:

Freedom and necessity are complementary to each other. Namely, the essential condition of origination of history and its necessary process, is freedom; and in fact without freedom, neither history nor human being, originate.

For knowing exactly the definition and significance of the Necessity and Freedom in Hegel’s philosophy and that, what is their relation to each other, it is advantageous to refer to his own words from his great work, the *Logic*:

Necessity:

“This pure self-reciprocation is therefore Necessity unveiled or realised. The link of necessity *qua* necessity is identity, as still inward and concealed, because it is the identity of what are esteemed actual things, although their very self-subsistence is bound to be necessity. The circulation of substance through causality and reciprocity therefore only expressly makes out or states that self-subsistence is the infinite negative self-relation -------- a relation *negative* in general, for in it the act of distinguishing and intermediating becomes a primariness of actual things independent one against the other -------- and *infinite self-relation*, because their independence only lies in their identity.”

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Freedom:

“The truth of necessity is, therefore, Freedom: and the truth of substance is the Notion – an independence which, though self–repulsive into distinct independent elements, yet in that repulsion is self–identical, and in the movement of reciprocity still at home and conversant only with itself.”

Freedom and Necessity:

“Necessity is often called hard, and rightly so, if we keep to necessity as such, i.e., to its immediate shape. Here we have, first of all, some state or, generally speaking, fact, possessing an independent subsistence: and necessity primarily implies that there falls upon such a fact something else by which it is brought low. This is what is hard and sad in necessity immediate or abstract. The identity of two things, which necessity presents as bound to each other and thus bereft of their independence, is at first only inward, and therefore has no existence for those under the yoke of necessity. Freedom too from this point of view is only abstract, and in preserved only by renouncing all that we immediately are and have. But, as we have already seen, the process of necessity is so directed that it overcomes the rigid externality which it first had and reveals its inward nature. It then appears that the members, linked to one another, are not really foreign to each other, but only
elements of one whole, each of them, in its connection with the other, being, as it were, at home, and combining with itself. In this way, necessity is transfigured into freedom – not the freedom that consists in abstract negation, but freedom concrete and positive. From which we may learn what a mistake it is to regard freedom and necessity as mutually exclusive. Necessity indeed, *qua* necessity, is far from being freedom: yet freedom presupposes necessity, and contains it as an unsubstantial element in itself.

A good man aware that the tenor of his conduct is essentially obligatory and necessary. But this consciousness is so far from making any abatement from his freedom, that without it, real and reasonable freedom could not be distinguished from arbitrary choice—a freedom which has no reality and is merely potential. A criminal, when punished, may look upon his punishment as a restriction of his freedom. Really the punishment is not foreign constraint to which he is subjected, but manifestation of his own act. In short, man is most independent when he knows himself to be determined by the absolute idea throughout. It was this phase of mind and conduct which Spinoza called *Amor intellectualis Dei.*\(^{12}\)
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Vide : Socrates to Sartre : A History of Philosophy,

SAMUEL ENOCH STUMPF,

Professor of Philosophy

Vanderbilt University,

Mc GRAW–HILL BOOK COMPANY

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And see also : What is the Hegelian Dialectic?

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