

## Hegel's Philosophy of Nature

### III Organic Physics

#### A. Geological Nature - B. Vegetable Nature - C. The Animal Organism

##### § 260.

The real totality of the individual body, in which its particularity is made into a product and equally suspends itself — elevates itself in the process into the first ideality of nature, but an ideality which is fulfilled, and as self-related negative unity has essentially attained selfhood and become subjective. With this accomplished, the idea has entered into existence, initially as an immediate existence, Life. This is: **(a)** as shape, the general image of life, the geological organism; **(b)** as particular or formal subjectivity, vegetable nature; **(c)** as individual, concrete subjectivity, animal nature.

#### **A. Geological Nature**

##### § 261.

The general system of individual bodies is the earth, which in the chemical process initially has its abstract individuality in particularisation, but as the totality it has an infinite relation to itself as a general, self-dividing process; - and is, immediately, the subject and its product. As the immediate totality, however, presupposed by subjective totality itself the body of the earth is only the shape of the organism.

##### § 262.

The members of this organism do not contain, therefore, the generality of the process within themselves, they are the particular individuals, and constitute a system whose forms manifest themselves as members of the unfolding of an underlying idea, whose process of development is a past one.

##### § 263.

The powers of this process, which nature leaves behind as independent entities beyond earth, are the connection and the position of the earth in

the solar system, its solar, lunar, and cometary life, the inclination of its axis to the orbit and the magnetic axis. Standing in closer relation to these axes and their polarisation is the distribution of sea and land: the compact spreading of land in the north, the division and sharp tapering of the parts towards the south, the further separation into an old and a new world, and the further division of the former into continents distinguished from one another and from the new world by their physical, organic, and anthropological character, to which an even younger and more immature continent is joined; — mountain ranges, and so on.

#### **§ 264.**

The physical organisation of the earth shows a series of stages of granitic activity, involving a core of mountains in which the trinity of determinations is displayed, and leads through other forms which are partly transitions and modifications, though its totality remains the existing foundation, only more unequal and unformed within itself. This is partly also an elaboration of its moments into a more determinate difference and more abstract mineral moments, such as metals and fossil objects generally, until it loses itself in mechanical stratifications and alluvial terrains lacking any immanent formative development.

#### **§ 265.**

This crystal of life, the inanimate organism of the earth which has its concept in the sidereal connection but possesses its own process as a presupposed past, is the immediate subject of the meteorological process, which as an organised whole is in its complete determinateness. In this objective subject the formerly elementary process is now objective and individual, — the suspension of immediacy takes place, through which general individuality now emerges for itself and life becomes vital or real. The first real vitality, which the fructified earth brings forth, is vegetable nature.

### **B.**

## **Vegetable Nature**

#### **§ 266.**

The generality and individuality of life are still immediately identical in immediate vitality. Consequently the process by which the plant differentiates itself into distinct parts and sustains itself is one in which it comes out of itself and falls into pieces as several individuals, for which the whole plant is more the basis than a subjective unity. A further consequence is that the differentiation of the organic parts is only a

superficial metamorphosis, and one part can easily pass into the function of the other.

#### **§ 267.**

The process of shaping and reproduction of the single individual coincides in this way with the process of genus formation. And because self-like generality, the subjective unit of individuality, does not separate itself from real particularisation but is only submerged in it, the plant does not move from its place, nor is it a selfinterrupting individualisation, but a continually flowing self-nourishment. It does not relate itself to individualised inorganic nature, but to the general elements. Nor is it capable of feeling and animal warmth.

#### **§ 268.**

Insofar, however, as life is essentially the concept which realises itself only through self-division and reunification, the plant processes also diverge from each other. (1) But their inner process of formation is to be seen partly as the positive, merely immediate transformation of nourishment supplies into the specific nature of plants. On the one hand, and for the sake of essential simplicity, this is the division into abstract generality of an implicitly inseparable individuality, as into the negative of vitality, becoming wood. But on the other hand, on the side of individuality and vitality, this is the process specifying itself in an outward direction.

#### **§ 269.**

(2) This is the unfolding of the parts as organs of different elementary relations, the division partly into the relation to earth and into the air and water process which mediates them. Since the plant does not hold itself back in inner, subjective generality against outer individuality, it is equally torn out of itself by light, from which it takes the specific confirmation and individualisation of itself knotted and multiplied into a multiplicity of individuals.

#### **§ 270.**

Since, however, the reproduction of the individual vegetable as a singularity is not the subjective return into itself a feeling of self but inwardly becomes wooden, the production of the self of the plant consequently moves in an outward direction. The plant brings forth its light as its own self in the blossom, in which the neutral colour green is determined as a specific coloration, or, too, light is produced as a white colour, purified from the dark.

### § 271.

Since the plant in this way offers itself as a sacrifice, this exteriorisation is at the same time the concept realised by the process, the plant, which has produced itself as a whole, but which in the process has come into opposition with itself. This, the highest point of the process, is therefore the beginning of the process of sexual differentiation which occurs in the process of genus formation.

### § 272.

(3) The process of genus formation, as distinct from the processes of formation and reproduction of the individual, is an excess in the actuality of plant nature, because those processes also directly involve a dissolution into many individuals. But in the concept the process is, like subjectivity which has converged with itself that generality in which the plant suspends the immediate individuality of its organic life, and thereby grounds the transition into the higher organism.

## C.

### The Animal Organism

### § 273.

Organic individuality exists as subjectivity insofar as its individuality is not merely immediate actuality but also and to the same extent suspended, exists as a concrete moment of generality, and in its outward process the organism inwardly preserves the unity of the self. This is the nature of the animal which, in the reality and externality of individuality, is equally, by contrast, immediately and inwardly self-reflected individuality, inwardly existing subjective generality.

### § 274.

The animal has contingent self-movement because its subjectivity is, like light and fire, ideality torn from gravity, — a free time, which, as removed at the same time from real externality, determines its place on the basis of inner chance. Bound up with this is the animal's possession of a voice in which its subjectivity, existing in and for itself dominates the abstract ideality of time and space, and manifests its self-movement as a free vibration within itself. It has animal warmth, as a permanent preservation of the shape; interrupted intussusception; but primarily feeling, as the individuality which in its determinacy is immediately general for itself and really selfdifferentiating individuality.

### § 275.

The animal organism, as living generality, is the concept which passes through its three determinations, each of which is in itself the same total identity of substantial unity and, at the same time and as determined for itself by the form, is the transition into others, so that the totality results from this process. It is only as this selfreproducing entity, not as an existing one, that the animal organism is living.

### § 276.

The animal organism is therefore: **(a)** a simple, general being in itself in its externality, whereby real determinacy is immediately taken up as particularity into the general, and is thereby the unseparated identity of the subject with itself; — sensibility; — **(b)** particularity, as excitability from the outside and, on the other hand, the counter-effect coming from the outward movement of the subject; — irritability; — **(c)** the unity of these moments, the negative return to itself through the relation of externality, and thereby the generation and positing of itself as an individual; — reproduction. Inwardly, this is the reality and foundation of the first moments, and outwardly, this is the articulation of the organism and its armament.

### § 277.

These three moments of the concept have their reality in three systems, namely, the nervous system, the circulatory system, and the digestive system. The first is in the systems of the bones and sensory apparatus, whereas the second turns outwardly on two sides in the lungs and the muscles. The digestive system is, however, as a system of glands with skin and cellular tissue, immediate, vegetative, reproductive, but as part of the actual system of the intestines it is the mediating reproduction. The animal thus divides itself in the center (*insectum*) into three systems, the head, thorax, and the abdomen, though, on the other hand, the extremities used for mechanical movement and grasping constitute the moment of the individuality outwardly positing and differentiating itself.

### § 278.

The idea of the living organism is the manifested unity of the concept with its reality; as the antithesis of that subjectivity and objectivity, however, this unity exists essentially only as process. It exists at the same time as the movement of the abstract relation of the living entity to itself which dissolves itself into particularity, and, as the return into itself it is the negative unity of subjectivity and totality. Each of these moments is itself a

process, however as a concrete moment of the living, and the whole is the unity of the three processes.

### § 279.

(1) The abstract process of living individuality is the process of inner formation in which the organism converts its own members into a inorganic nature, into means, and feeds on itself Thus it produces precisely this totality of its self-organisation, so that each member is reciprocally the end and the means, and maintains itself through the others and in opposition to them. It is the process which has the simple feeling of self as a result.

### § 280.

(2) The self-feeling of individuality is, in its negative return into itself immediately exclusive and in a state of tension with inorganic nature as with real and external nature. (3) Since animal organisation is immediately reflected into itself in this external relation, this ideal relationship is the theoretical process and, indeed, the determinate feeling, which differentiates itself into the multiple sensory qualities of inorganic nature.

### § 281.

The senses and the theoretical processes are therefore: (1) the sense of the mechanical sphere of gravity, of cohesion and its variation, of heat, and feeling as such; (2) the senses of antithesis, of the particularised principle of air, and of equally realised neutrality, of water, and of the antitheses of its dissolution; — smell and taste; (3) the sense of the pure, essential, but exterior identity, of the side belonging to the materials of gravity: fire, light, and colour; and (4) the sense for the depiction of subjective reality, or of the independent inner ideality of the body standing in opposition, the sense of hearing.

The threefold moments of the concept therefore convert here into a fivefold number, because the moment of particularity or of the antithesis in its totality is itself threefold. Another reason for the transition is that the animal organism is the reduction of inorganic nature split apart from itself but at the same time it is its developed totality. Because it is still natural subjectivity, the moments of nature's developed totality exist separately, but as an infinite unity. The determinations of this subjectivity, therefore, have the sense of touch as their particular sense, the most fundamental, general sense, which thus could also better be called feeling. Particularity is the antithesis, and this is the identity and the antithesis itself Thus the sense of light belongs to this particularity, an identity which constitutes one side of the antithesis, as abstract, but precisely therefore

determines itself. Also belonging here are the two senses of the antithesis itself as such, air and water, both like the others in their embodied specification and individualisation. To the sense of individuality belongs that subjectivity which, as purely self-demonstrating subjectivity, is tone.

## § 282.

The real process of inorganic nature begins equally with feeling, namely, the feeling of real externality, and with this feeling the negation of the subject, which is at the same time the positive relation to itself and its certainty in contrast to its negation. It begins with the feeling of a lack, and the drive to suspend the lack, which is the condition of being stimulated externally.

Only what is living feels a lack, for it alone in nature is the concept, the unity of itself and of its specific opposite; in this relation it is a subject. Where there is a limitation, it is a negation only for a third, an external reflection. It is lack, however, insofar as in one sense the overcoming of the lack is also at hand, and the contradiction is posited as such. A being which is capable of having and enduring the contradiction of itself in itself is the subject; this constitutes its finitude. — Reason proves its infinitude precisely at that point when reference is made to finite reason, since it determines itself as finite. For negation is finitude and a lack only for that which is the suspended being of itself the infinite relation to itself. Thoughtlessness, however, stops short at the abstraction of the limitation, and in life, too, where the concept itself enters into existence, it fails to grasp the concept, but remains fixed on the determinations of representation: drives, instincts, and needs.

An important step towards a true representation of the organism is the substitution of the category of stimulation by external forces for the category of the intervention of external causes. This latter contains the beginning of idealism, the assertion that nothing at all can have a positive relation to the living if the living being is not in and for itself the possibility of the relation itself that is, not determined by the concept, and thus in general not immanent to the subject.

But perhaps the most unphilosophical of any such scientific concoctions of the reflective categories is the introduction of such formal and material relationships into the theory of stimulation, which has long been regarded as philosophical. This includes for example the entirely abstract antithesis of receptivity to active capacity, which supposedly stand to each other as factors in inverse relations of magnitude. The result of this is to reduce all differences in the organism to the formalism of a merely quantitative differentiation, involving increase and decrease, strengthening and weakening, in other words, removing all possible traces of the concept. A



theory of medicine built on these and determinations of the understanding is complete in half a dozen propositions, and it is no wonder that it spread rapidly and found many adherents.

The cause of this philosophical confusion, which initiated the tendency to befriend nature, lay in the basic error of initially determining the absolute as the absolute indifference of subject and object, and then treating all determinations as only quantitative differences. It is the case, rather, that the absolute form, the concept and the principle of life, has for its soul only the qualitative difference which consumes itself in itself. But because this truly infinite negativity was not recognised, it was believed that the absolute identity of life, as the attributes and the modes in the external understanding are for Spinoza, can not be fixed without making the difference into a merely external difference of the reflection. In this way, however, life is left altogether lacking the salient point of selfhood, the principle of self-movement, the differentiation of the self and the principle of individuality in general.

Another crude and utterly unphilosophical procedure is the one which attempted to give the formal determinations a real meaning by replacing the conceptual determinations with carbon and nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen, and determined the difference previously characterised as intensive as now more or less of the one or another substance, whereas the active and positive relation of the external stimulus would be the addition of a lacking substance. One example is the assertion that in an asthenia, or a nerve fever, nitrogen has the upper hand in the organism because the brain and nerves are supposedly in general intensified nitrogen, since chemical analysis has shown this to be the principal ingredient of these organic structures. The ingestion of carbon is therefore supposedly indicated in order to restore the balance of these substances, in other words, in order to restore health. The remedies which have been shown to work empirically against nerve fever are, for this same reason, regarded as belonging to the side of carbon, and this superficial compilation and opinion are presented as explanation and proof. The crudity of this procedure consists in taking the external *Caput mortuum*, the dead substance, a dead life which chemistry has already destroyed a second time, for the essence of a living organ, and indeed, for its concept.

This last argument gives rise to that highly facile formalism which replaces the determinations of the concept with sensuous materials like chemical substances, as well as relationships belonging to the sphere of inorganic nature, like the north and south polarity of magnetism, or the differences between magnetism and electricity. This is a formalism which conceives the natural universe and develops its conception in such a way that it attaches a readymade schema of north and south or east and west polarities externally to the spheres and differences it uses. For this



purpose there is a great variety of forms possible. For it remains a matter of choice whether one employs the determinations of the totality for the schema, as they appear for example in the chemical sphere, oxygen, hydrogen, and so on, and transfers them to magnetism, mechanism, electricity, and the masculine and the feminine, contraction and expansion, and so on, then applies them to the other spheres.

### **§ 283.**

Need and excitement are connected to the relation between the universal and the particular mechanism (sleeping and waking), the relation to air (breathing and skin processes), water (thirst), and the individualised earth, namely, the particular forms of the earth (cf. hunger, § 275). Life, the subject of these moments of totality, develops inwardly a tension between itself as concept and the moments of a reality external to itself and is the ongoing conflict in which it overcomes this externality. Because the animal can only exist as an essentially individual entity, and this only individually, this objectification is not adequate to its concept and therefore turns back constantly from its satisfaction to the condition of need.

### **§ 284.**

The mechanical seizure of the external object is only the beginning of the unification of the object with the living animal. Since the animal is hence a subject, the simple negativity of the punctured unity, the assimilation can be neither of a mechanical nor a chemical nature, for in these processes both the material substances as the conditions and the activity remain externally in opposition to each other, and lack living, absolute unity.

### **§ 285.**

In the first place, because the living organism is the general power over the nature external and opposed to it, assimilation is the immediate fusion of the ingested material with animality, an infection by the latter and simple transformation (cf. § 278). Secondly, since the power of the living organism is the relation of itself to itself in mediation, assimilation is digestion. It is the opposition of the subject to its immediate assimilation, so that the former stimulates itself on the other hand as a negative, and emerges as the process of the antithesis, the process of animal water (of stomach and pancreatic juices, animal lymph as such) and of animal fire (of the gall, in which the accomplished return of the organism into itself from its concentration in the spleen is determined as being for itself as active consumption).

### **§ 286.**

This animal stimulation is turned at first against the external potency, which, however, is placed immediately on the side of the organism by the infection (§ 277). But this stimulus, as the antithesis and the being for itself of the process, has at the same time the determination of externality over against the generality and simple self-relation of the living organism. Both aspects together, initially appearing on the side of the subject as means, actually constitute therefore the object and the negative side in conflict with the organism, which has to overcome and to digest.

### § 287.

This inversion of attitude is the reflection of the organism into itself the negation of its own negativity of outwardly directed activity. As a natural being it combines the individuality which it reaches in the process with its generality as disjunctive, in such a way that on the one hand it separates from itself the first negation, the externality of the object and its own activity, on the other hand, and as immediately identical with this negation, with this means reproduces itself. Thus the outward moving process is transformed and transposed into the first formal processes of reproduction from its own self.

The primary moment in digestion is the immediate action of life as the power over the inorganic object, which it sets against itself and presupposes as its stimulating attraction only insofar as it is itself identical with it. This action is infection and immediate transformation. It has been empirically demonstrated and shown to accord with the concept, by the experiments of Spallanzani and others and by recent physiology, that this immediacy, which the living organism has as a generality, continues itself into its food without any further mediation, by its mere contact with it and simply by taking it up into its own warmth and sphere. This is a refutation of both the theory of a mechanical, fictitious sorting out and separating of parts already homogeneous and useful, and the theory of mediation conceived as a chemical process. But the investigations of the mediating actions have not found more specific moments in this transformation (as appears, for example, in vegetable substances as a series of fermentations). On the contrary, they have shown for example that a great deal of food moves straight from the stomach into the mass of gastric juices, without passing through other mediating stages, that the pancreatic juice is further nothing more than saliva, that the pancreas could quite as well be dispensed with, and so on.

The last product, the chyle, which the thoracic duct takes up and which is discharged into the blood, is the same lymph which is secreted by each intestine and organ, effects the skin and lymphatic system in the immediate process of transformation, and is everywhere found already prepared. The lower organisms of animal life, which, moreover, are

nothing more than lymph coagulated into a membranous point or tube — a simple intestinal canal — do not go beyond this immediate transformation. The mediated digestive process in the higher organisations of animal life is, in respect of its characteristic product, just such a superfluity as, in the plant, the generation of seeds mediated by "sexual difference." The *faeces* often show, especially in children, in whom after all the increase of material is most apparent, the greatest part of the food unchanged, mixed mainly with animal substances, bile, phosphorus, and the like, and the primary action of the organism to be to overcome and to eliminate its own products.

The syllogism of the organism is not, therefore, the syllogism of external purposiveness, for it does not stop at directing its activity and form against the outer subject but makes this process, which because of its externality is on the verge of becoming mechanical and chemical, into an object itself. And since it is nature, in the uniting of itself with itself in its outward process, it is no less a disjunctive activity, which rids itself of this process, abstracts itself away from its anger towards the object, from this one-sided subjectivity, and thereby becomes for itself what it is in itself: the identity of its concept and its reality. Thus the end and the product of its activity are found to be that which it already is originally and at the beginning. In this way the satisfaction accords with reason: the process outward into external differentiation is converted into the process of the organism with itself and the result is not the mere production of a means, but of the end.

#### § 288.

Through the process with external nature the animal achieves self-certainty and its subjective concept, truth and objectivity as a single individual. And it is the production of itself just as much as its self-preservation, or reproduction as production of its first concept. Thus the concept joins together with itself and is, as concrete generality, genus. The disjunction of the individual finding itself in the genus is the sexual difference, the relation of the subject to an object which is itself such a subject.

#### § 289.

This relation is the drive: the individual as such is not adequate to its genus, nor does this adequacy fall into an external reflection. The individual is at the same time, in this limitation of the genus, the identical relation of the genus to itself in one unity. The individual thus has the feeling of this lack and exists in the natural difference of the sexes.

#### § 290.

**(3)** The process of genus formation has, as in the inorganic process of chemism, taken the general concept as the essence of individuals to a general extreme. The tension between the individual and the inadequacy of its single actuality drives each to have its self-feeling only in the other of its genus, and to integrate itself through union with the other. Through this mediation the concrete generality joins together with itself and yields individual reality.

### **§ 291.**

This product is the negative identity of the differentiated individuals and is, as realised genus, an asexual life. But on the side of nature the product is only implicitly this genus and distinct from the individuals which have perished in it. It is thus itself an individual which has in itself the determination of the same difference and transiency. But at the same time, in this new life in which individuality is suspended, the same subjectivity is retained positively and in this, its return into itself the genus as such has emerged for itself in reality, and has become a higher being than nature.

### **§ 292.**

Underlying the various orders and structures of the animals lies the general type of the animal determined by the concept, which nature manifests partly in the different steps of its development from the simplest organisation to the most complete, in which it is the instrument of the spirit, and partly in the different circumstances and conditions of elementary nature.

The concept of the animal has the concept itself as its essence, because it is the actuality of the idea of life. The nature of its generality enables it to have a simpler and more developed existence which corresponds more or less to it. Thus the concept in its determinacy can not be grasped from existence itself. The classes, in which it emerges developed and manifested completely in its moments, appear as a particular existence in contrast to the others, and can also have a bad existence in them. The concept is already presupposed for the judgment of whether the existence is bad. If, as usual, existence is presupposed, then it will undoubtedly be used in an empirical way to reach no fixed determination, and all particular attributes will also seem to be lacking. Acephalous animals, for example, have been used as proof that people can live without brains.

Zoology, like the natural sciences generally, has concerned itself primarily with discovering more certain and simpler signs for subjective cognition. Only since this goal of an "artificial" system for classifying animals was given up has the way been opened for a broader view, and among the empirical sciences there is hardly one which in recent times has expanded

as much as zoology, particularly through its auxiliary science of comparative anatomy. This expansion has not occurred solely in the sense of more observations, for none of the sciences lacks these, but in the sense of arranging its material to accord with reason.

Partly it is the habits of individual animals, viewed as a coherent whole determining the construction of every part, which have become the main point, so that the great founder of comparative anatomy, Cuvier, could boast that he could recognise the essential nature of the entire animal from a single bone. Partly it is that the general type of the animal has been traced in the various, still apparently incomplete and disparate forms, and its importance recognised in the hardly noticed suggestion, as well as in the mixture of organs and functions, and in this way has been raised above and beyond its particularity into its generality. A primary feature of this method is the recognition of how nature shapes and adapts this organism to the particular element in which it is placed, an environment which can also be one particular species of plant or another of animal. It is due to the immediacy of the idea of life that the concept, whether or not it is only determined in and for itself does not exist as such in life. Its existence is therefore subjected to the manifold conditions and circumstances of external nature, and can appear in the most inadequate forms. The fecundity of the earth causes life to break out in every way. Even perhaps less than the other spheres of nature, therefore, can the animal world present in itself an independent, rational system of organisation, or retain a hold on forms determined by the concept and preserve them against the imperfection and mixture of conditions, from confusion, degeneration, and transitional forms. This weakness of the concept, which exists in the animal though not in its fixed, independent freedom, entirely subjects even the genus to the changes that are shared by the life of the animal. And the environment of external contingency in which the animal must live exercises perpetual violence against the individual. Hence the life of the animal seems in general to be sick, and the animal's feeling seems to be insecure, anxious, and unhappy.

### **§ 293.**

Due to the externality of its existence, the individual organism can not accord with its determination. It finds itself in a state of disease when one of its systems or organs, stimulated to conflict with an organic power, establishes itself for itself and persists in its particular activity against the activity of the whole. For the fluidity and pervasive process of the activity is thus obstructed.

### **§ 294.**

The characteristic manifestation of disease is, thus, when the identity of the entire organic concept, as the successive course of life's movement through its different moments, sensibility, irritability, and reproduction, presents itself as fever. This fever is to the same extent both the isolated activity in opposition to the course of totality, and the effort towards and beginning of healing.

### § 295.

Medicine provokes the organism to remove the inorganic power with which the activity of the individual organ or system is entangled and thereby isolated. Essentially, however, the irritation of the formal activity of the particular organ or system is suspended, and its fluidity is restored within the whole. The medicine achieves this as an irritant, but one which is even more difficult to assimilate and to overcome, and against which the organism is compelled to exert its entire strength. While it acts in this way against an external entity, the organism steps out of the limitation with which it had become identical and in which it had become involved.

Medication must in general be viewed as an indigestible substance. But indigestibility is only a relative category, though not in the vague sense in which it is usually taken, as if it really meant something easily digestible by weaker constitutions. On the contrary, such an easily digestible substance is indigestible for stronger individuals. The true relativity, that of the concept, which has its actuality in life, consists, when expressed in the quantitative terms which count as valid here, in homogeneity being greater, the more the opposed terms are intrinsically self-subsistent. The highest qualitative form of relativity in the living organism has manifested itself as the sexual relation, in which independent individualities are identical to each other.

For the lower forms of animal life, which have not achieved a difference within themselves, the digestible substance is the substance without individuality, such as water for plants. For children, the digestible substance is partly the completely homogeneous animal lymph, mother's milk, a substance which is already digested or rather has further differentiated within itself and partly the least individualised of mixed substances. Substances of this kind, on the other hand, are indigestible for stronger natures. These natures digest more easily individualised animal substances, or plant juices which sunlight has matured to a more powerful self and are therefore "spirituous," instead of for example, the vegetable products still in their merely neutral colour and closer to the chemical process proper. Through this more intensive selfhood the former substances form an even stronger contrast, but for that very reason they are more homogeneous irritants. Taken together, medications are negative irritants, poisons, a stimulant and at the same time an indigestible



substance, to the extent that the organism alienated from itself in disease must gather up its strength, turn against the medication as an external, foreign body, and thereby achieve again the self-feeling of its individuality.

But Brownianism, regarded as a complete system of medicine, is merely an empty formalism, especially in its determination of diseases and the actions of medications according to sthenic or asthenic body types, the latter further divided into direct and indirect asthenia. Brown's theory is, moreover, too often limited by formulations derived from the natural sciences, such as his recourse to the factors of carbon and nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen as explanations, or magnetic, electrical, and chemical moments. Nevertheless, his theory did have two important consequences: through him, the view of merely particular and specific issues, both in diseases and medications, was expanded to the general in them as essential elements; and through his opposition to the previously used method, which was even more fixed on asthenic and asthenising questions than the subsequent phases, he showed that the organism does not react to the most antithetical kind of treatment in such an opposite way, but that frequently, at least in the final results, it reacts in a similar and hence general way. Thus the simple identity of the organism with itself as its true essence is demonstrated in opposition to a particular entanglement of one of its systems with specific irritants.

#### **§ 296.**

The animal individual, in overcoming and moving beyond particular inadequacies in conflict with its concept, does not suspend the inadequacy in general which it has within it, namely, that its idea is the immediate idea, or that the animal stands within nature. Its subjectivity is only the concept in itself but not itself for itself and exists only as an immediate individuality. That inner generality is thus opposed to its actuality as a negative power, from which the animal suffers violence and perishes, because its existence does not itself contain this generality within itself.

#### **§ 297.**

As abstract, this negative generality is an external actuality which exerts mechanical violence against the animal and destroys it. As its own concrete generality it is the genus, and the living organism submerges its different individuality partly in the process of genus formation. Partly, however, the living organism directly suspends its inadequacy in relation to the genus, which is its original sickness and the inborn seed of death, since it imagines the individuality of its death. But because this generality is immediate, the individual achieves only an abstract objectivity, it blunts its activity, grows ossified, and thus kills itself by itself.



## § 298.

But the subjectivity of the living organism is just as essentially in itself identical to concrete generality and the genus. Its identity with the genus is thus only the suspension of the formal antithesis, of immediacy, and of the generality of individuality. Since this subjectivity is, moreover, the concept in the idea of life, it is in itself the absolute being in itself of reality. Through this suspension of its immediacy subjectivity coalesces itself absolutely with itself and the last self-externality of nature is suspended. In this way nature has passed over into its truth, into the subjectivity of the concept, whose objectivity is itself the suspended immediacy of individuality, the concrete generality, the concept which has the concept as its existence — into the spirit.