

168. But *for us*, or *in itself*, the object which for self-consciousness is the negative element has, on its side, returned into itself, just as on the other side consciousness has done. Through this reflection into itself the object has become Life. What self-consciousness distinguishes from itself as having *being*, also has in it, in so far as it is posited as being, not merely the character of sense-certainty and perception, but it is being that is reflected into itself, and the object of immediate desire is a *living thing*. For the *in-itself*, or the *universal* result of the relation of the Understanding to the inwardness of things, is the distinguishing of what is *not* to be distinguished, or the *unity* of what is distinguished. But this unity is, as we have seen, just as much its repulsion from itself; and this Notion sunders itself into the antithesis of self-consciousness and life: the former is the unity *for which* the infinite unity of the differences is; the latter, however, is only this unity itself, so that it is not at the same time *for itself*. To the extent, then, that consciousness is independent, so too is its object, but only *implicitly*. Self-consciousness which is simply *for itself* and directly characterizes its object as a negative element, or is primarily *desire*, will therefore, on the contrary, learn through experience that the object is independent.

169. The determination of Life as it has issued from the Notion, or the general result with which we enter this sphere, is sufficient to characterize it without having further to develop its nature. Its sphere is completely determined in the following moments. *Essence* is infinity as the *supersession* of all distinctions, the pure movement of axial rotation, its self-repose being an absolutely restless infinity; *independence* itself, in which the differences of the movement are resolved, the simple essence of Time which, in this equality with itself, has the stable shape of Space. The differences, however, are just as much present as *differences* in this simple universal medium; for this universal flux has its negative nature only in being the supersession of them; but it cannot supersede the different moments if they do not have an enduring existence [*Bestehen*]. It is this very flux, as a self-identical independence which is itself an *enduring existence*, in which, therefore, they are present as distinct members and parts existing on their own account. *Being* no longer has the significance of *abstract* being, nor has their pure essentiality the significance of *abstract* universality; on the contrary, their